

#1. “It was the fatal flaw of humanity, which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions, either to imply that they are temporary and finite, or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain.”

#2. “The Crimson Hand expressed the ineludible gripe, in which mortality clutches the highest and purest of earthly mould, degrading them into kindred with the lowest, and even with the very brutes, like whom their visible frames return to dust” (Hawthorne 766).

#1. “Here, too, at an earlier period, he had studied the wonders of the human frame, and attempted to fathom the very process by which Nature assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, and from the spiritual world, to create and foster Man, her masterpiece.”

#2. “The latter pursuit, however, Aylmer had long laid aside, in unwilling recognition of the truth, against which all seekers sooner or later stumble, that our great creative Mother, while she amuses us with apparently working in the broadest sunshine, is yet severely careful to keep her own secrets, and, in spite of her pretended openness, shows us nothing but results” (Hawthorne 769).

#1. “This personage [Aminadab] had been Aylmer’s under-worker during his whole scientific career, and was admirably fitted for that office by his great mechanical readiness, and the skill with which, while incapable of comprehending a single principle, he executed all the practical details of his master’s experiments.

#2. “With his [Aminadab’s] vast strength, his shaggy hair, his smoky aspect, and the indescribable earthiness that incrustated him, he seemed to represent man’s physical nature; while Aylmer’s slender figure, and pale, intellectual face, were no less apt a type of the spiritual element” (Hawthorne 770).

#1. “He handled physical details, as if there were nothing beyond them; yet spiritualized them all, and redeemed himself from materialism, by his strong and eager aspiration towards the infinite. In his grasp, the veriest clod of earth assumed a soul.”

#2. “Georgiana, as she read, revered Aylmer, and loved him more profoundly than ever, but with a less entire dependence on his judgment than heretofore. Much as he had accomplished, she could not but observe that his most splendid successes were almost invariably failures, if compared with the ideal at which he aimed” (Hawthorne 774).

#1. “Her heart exulted, while it trembled, at his honorable love, so pure and lofty that it would accept nothing less than perfection, nor miserably make itself contented with an earthlier nature than he had dreamed of” (Hawthorne 777).

#2. “As the last crimson tint of the birth-mark--that sole token of human imperfection--faded from her cheek, the parting breath of the now perfect woman passed into the atmosphere, and her soul, lingering a moment near her husband, took its heavenward flight” (Hawthorne 780).

November 8: “The Birthmark”

“It was the fatal flaw of humanity, which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps ineffaceably on all her productions, either to imply that they are temporary and finite, or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain. The Crimson Hand expressed the ineludible gripe, in which mortality clutches the highest and purest of earthly mould, degrading them into kindred with the lowest, and even with the very brutes, like whom their visible frames return to dust” (Hawthorne 766).

- Everything dies, everything is equally susceptible to death
- Voice of narrator
- "It" = death, mortality, birthmark...
- There is a reason for imperfection - nature's creations are all perfect, even in their flaws
- "Ineludible gripe" as fatal flaw, inescapable dilemma, essential plight
- The purist, most beautiful things are inherently flawed because they too must wither and die
- Crimson hand, grip(e), clutches

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- The feminine personification of "Mother Nature" juxtaposes Georgianna's character, as Georgianna is subject to Aylmer's cruelty and obsessive nature, but Mother Nature has power over Aylmer, as she'll always know more than he will
- These dynamics are multifaceted, Georgianna is subject to Aylmer, but she also has power over him because he's so obsessed with fixing her that it becomes his weakness
- Aylmer's pursuit of "playing God" is blasphemous
- Obsession with mankind: similarity with Dr. Victor Frankenstein's madness and singular obsession over "creating life," just as Aylmer was so fixated on removing Georgianna's birthmark

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- Who decides the definition of beauty?
- Aylmer has many insecurities and Aminadab does not.
- Aminadab seems to be portrayed more positively than Aylmer; This possibly stems from Aminadab saying "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birthmark." about Georgiana;
- Their different physical descriptions serve as dichotomy between them mentally
- "Encrusted": Skin color?

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- He treated his subjects as if there is nothing more to them; reaffirms his God complex. The subjects only have meaning when he gives it to them.
- Kills them all
- Even when he succeeds it is still not enough, he always wants more
- Hungry for perfection
- She is like nature, innocent, uncorrupted
- She is closer to heaven, not of this earth
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- Georgiana previously seen as heavenly creature, paradox of “earthlier nature” and the lack of beauty perceived in it; eventually returns with “heavenward flight”
- Separation between Aylmer and his love
- Submissive nature still apparent in dying moment