

Mirror, mirror on the wall essay

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Lesser's argument has merit because Hawthorne not only uses mirror imagery in relation to Hester's guilt, but also in regards to the emotions of all characters. In "Mirror Imagery in The Scarlet Letter," Michael Lesser argues that Hawthorne uses mirror imagery to reveal a character's innermost secrets and ulterior motives. The child Pearl is described as, "the scarlet letter in another form; the scarlet letter endowed with life." Having made this statement, he explains his argument through Hester's impressions of Pearl's eyes: "full of smiling malice."

When Hester and Pearl visit the governor's mansion, Hester notices a look of "naughty merriment" in the little girl's eyes. Hawthorne also mentions a "fiend" that occasionally peeps out of Pearl's eyes. Through his description of Hester's impression of the evil that lurks within Pearl, Lesser comments on the notion that Pearl is evil by using the Puritan statement that "no good comes from evil." Since Pearl is illegitimate and the result of an act of sin, the ultimate Puritan evil, she is seen as evil as well.

Lesser explains further that Pearl is not only the embodiment of Hester's sin, but also of her conscience. Lesser explains that Pearl knows her mother's deepest feelings in a way uncommon to a child of her age. Thus, Lesser illustrates that Pearl is used as a symbol, a mirror, for Hester's guilt. Lesser argues that Hawthorne uses similar mirror imagery techniques with Dimmesdale and Chillingworth as he does with Hester.

In his final moments, Dimmesdale holds a private vigil by his mirror in which he sees "diabolical shapes" representing Dimmesdale's untold sin, angels, and finally Hester and Pearl. The ascription "the soul beheld its features in the

mirror of the passing moment compares time to a mirror and the soul contemplating its past as the image that appears on the mirror. On the other hand, Chlorinating is a reflection of his own malevolence. His warped body represents his Inner ill will? his desire to torture light glimmered out of the physician's eyes, burning blue and ominous, like the reflection of a furnace, or, let us say, like one of those gleams of ghastly fire that darted from Banyan's awful doorway in the hillside, and quivered on the pilgrim's face.

Slingshot's eyes are used as a reflection of his evil? the ghastly fire that lives within him. Lesser concludes that Hawthorne uses such imagery to imply certain 1 OFF If we look closely at the reactions Hester sees in her child, we can see the characteristics of a guilt-ridden mind. People are constantly Judging me and their Judgment is important to me is how someone psychologically bothered by his or her guilt would think.

This perception of continuous Judgment is very obvious with Hester reaction seeing even her child demonstrating accusations in various forms. A hill does not know how to be polite and socially appropriate when speaking. Such habits come from years of training.

Often maturity is Judged by the tolerance one develops towards others mistakes. Even her normal reaction of trying to play with her own reflection in water is described with reference to a mirror. The picturesque detail found in the sentence Here and there, she came to a full stop, and peeped curiously into a pool, left by the retiring tide as a mirror for Pearl to see her face in ties in the mirror as one of the objects connected with the story in readers mind. The brook itself is a mirror of Pearl. Hawthorne describes the

brook as, [Gushing] from a Nell-spring as mysterious, and had flowed through scenes shadowed as heavily with gloom. Pearl, like the brook, springs from an unknown source? her mysterious parentage? and flows through a world filled with gloom and guilt. In addition to making explicit references to mirror and reflections of images, there are many instances where mirror is implied.

For example, whenever Hester suffers Pearls playful acts, it is her inner turmoil that is mirrored in the acts of the child. Hester views her child as the product of a crime and, therefore, an evil entity; this is no surprise knowing the ideas that existed in a puritanical society wherein they saw the child as an extension of his or her parents characteristics. Thus the society ideas are reflected and perpetuated by even those who are victims. Since such behavior has not been eradicated even in the current, modern society, it is only natural to expect a puritanical society to have brainwashed Hester to feel guilt towards her Chills actions.

One day, as her mother stooped over the cradle, the infant's eyes had en caught by the glimmering of the gold embroidery about the letter; and, putting Jp her little hand, she grasped at it, smiling, not doubtfully, but with a decided gleam that gave her face the look of a much older child. Then, gasping for breath, did Hester Prone clutch the fatal token, instinctively endeavoring to tear it away; so infinite was the torture inflicted by the intelligent touch of Pearl's baby-hand. By describing Pearls intuitive grasp of Hester guilt? her letter A? Hawthorne enforces Pearls role as a mirror of Hester conscience.