

The birthmark nathaniel hawthorne essay example

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Examine Aylmer's obsession with perfection. How does perfection connect with science? Why does it motivate him?

Introduction

The birthmark is a novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne that highlights the life of a scientist and his wife. It is all about Georgiana's birthmark which Aylmer is obsessed with removing. It should be remembered that Aylmer married Georgiana because she was the most beautiful girl she had seen. It was however a surprise to her when he mentioned to her that he did not like the spot on her cheek and that it scared him. He is so much obsessed about removing it that his wife finally obliges to it. Aylmer is determined to make her already beautiful wife into a perfect one by ensuring that the mark is removed (Hawthorne, 67). Aylmer having dealt with science has resolved to test his scientific skills on his wife. He even postpones his scientific studies just to work on his wife. This he insists despite the risks that are involved in the process. Thesis: the obsession to ensure perfection makes him to transform his beautiful wife into a scientific specimen.

Body

His obsession with perfection can be related to science in a way that science seeks new discoveries and tends to give meaning to life. Before science, people relied on myths and believed what they had been told (Hawthorne, 110). They never bothered to know whether it was right or wrong as long as the same had been communicated to them by the senior elders. However, science came to prove and disapprove nature. There was still a feeling in the minds of scientists that people were being fed on the wrong information.

Science was also meant to clarify some of the things that people had assumed. In the process of carrying out such discoveries, nature had to be interfered with. In the process of seeking perfection of nature through science, a lot of harm and damage has been done to nature. The world is yet to recover from most of the consequences that have been brought about by science. As if this is not enough, scientists are still spending sleepless nights in the laboratories trying to find solutions to the very problems they have caused. There will never be a satisfaction within them until when they have corrected all mistakes they see around even if it means creating other problems.

In the novel, we realize that the birthmark on Georgiana's face motivates him to find a way to clear her face. The belief and the imagination that the mark is more than just a physical scar but rather has spiritual implications becomes a constant motivating factor. Despite having other alternative remedies to remove the scars, he resorts to deeper measures, " Here is a powerful cosmetic. With a few drops of this in a vase of water, freckles may be washed away. . . . A stronger infusion would take the blood out of the cheek, and leave the rosiest beauty a pale ghost. . . . Your case demands a remedy that shall go deeper" (Hawthorne, 53).

Scientists careless about the consequences of their actions, they are always ready to take a risk just to achieve their goals. Aylmer turns her wife into a scientific specimen, even though this does not please her, her constant pestering makes her oblige to (Hawthorne, 99). Even though Aylmer achieves his goal of removing the mark from Georgiana's face, he loses her to death. This basically displays the flaws that science has in the process of

perfecting nature. The fact that they are not willing to appreciate things just the way they are makes them go to the level of destroying nature just to perfect it. " With her whole spirit she prayed that, for a single moment, she might satisfy his highest and deepest conception. Longer than one moment she well knew it could not be; for his spirit was ever on the march, ever ascending requiring something that was beyond the scope of the instant before" (Hawthorne, 95).

Conclusion

Despite all this, science is there to stay, many things will be destroyed and numerous risks taken to perfect nature. It is however uncalculated risk for a scientist to risk even some of their biggest treasures just to prove their skills. In such events, many people are hurt just as they hurt nature. As scientists become more and more obsessed with changing the universe, so are they hurting the environment and the very people thyme were meant to improve.

Works cited

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Birthmark*. London: Perfection Learning, 2007.