

Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"
Homework Questions AS 9

Name _____

1. Is Aylmer, in inventing this elixir, trying to play god? Explain.
2. Did Aylmer's obsession with the birthmark reflect his obsession with science or his obsession with his wife? Explain why you think this.
3. Aylmer was forced to spend eternity without the one that truly loved him unconditionally. He believed he had the power and intelligence to alter nature. Explain this quote: "...Aylmer failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of Time, and living once and for all in Eternity, to find the perfect Future in the present."

Read the following scripture verses and explain how they are applicable to this story.
I Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 31:30.

3. (Honors Question)

The Nineteenth Century was a time of great change. The advances in science and technology made possible the Industrial Revolution, a revolution which fundamentally altered the way in which millions of people lived their lives. However, not everyone was willing to accept the notion that such change was, by its nature, inevitably beneficial to humanity. Indeed, the wisdom of placing too much faith in science is called into question in some of the literature of the time, particularly in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark." Hawthorne seems to be suggesting, amongst other things, that raising science to the status of godhood carries with it inherent risks that demand careful consideration.

After doing a little research, what is the role that science and technology plays in our own time?

From that research and your own thinking about the topic, explain how you think science and technology may be advancing much more rapidly than is our wisdom to use them properly, and thus are becoming the equivalent of modern day 'monsters' that we have created.

List several scripture verses you think are appropriate to address this issue.

How do you think today's questions are similar to the questions asked through Hawthorne's story?