

## **Madison Long's Response to Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"**

When reading this article, there were many things that stood out to me, but one thing that I really felt I should share. Throughout the whole article the writer uses the word "perfect" many times. The writer talks about how the birthmark is either seen as adding on to her perfect look or as flawing her showing that humanity can be close to perfect but not quite attain it. This led me to thinking about what perfect is. Is there really such a thing as perfect. I mean, we say the word as if it is achievable but really it is quite the opposite. I believe that the purpose of the word perfect is not actually to achieve perfection but to show how something is flawed or is in actuality, not perfect. I think that people often use the word "perfect" in sentences that actually belittles what they are talking about. When thinking about how perfection is related to disabilities, really all I can think about is how none of it is true. What is the perfect body? What is the perfect mental ability? We often see the disabled as not perfect because of what they are missing but who is to say that "perfect" is having that thing? Who is to say that "perfect" is being like everyone else? I believe and like to think of it as the perfect body or the perfect mental ability is all depending on how you use it and own it. I think that just because you are disabled, does not mean that you should think of yourself as any less. You should own your disability and this is how you will be the best you can and how you will achieve your own version of perfect.

At the beginning of the article Georgiana has always owned her special mark. She has taken the good that people have said about it and used it to feel comfortable with it and because of this I don't feel that it makes her less attractive or any less "perfect", but in actuality, even more attractive. However, she starts to just see it as upsetting, not because of how she feels about it, but because Aylmer thinks so poorly of it and doesn't hide this from her. He sees this mark as an imperfection on her "perfect" face. Once again this leads me to wonder what is

considered perfection to him? Is it because the mark is different that he sees it as a flaw? This article just goes to show that everyone has a different way of seeing "perfect".

As time goes on the idea of "perfect" is ever changing and yet going back through history there is not one time period that saw disabled as perfect. All the different variations of perfect that humans have gone through and yet we still do not understand that perfect is unattainable. We have to look at it as we are what we are and that is great, no matter the disability.

In the end she realizes too late that the perfection that he was trying to make her achieve was too much to ask for because, it was unattainable without consequence. She dies looking "perfect" but it is this "perfect look" that was the end of her.

I pledge: Madison Long

Word count: 549