

CHAPTER 3 “THE RECOGNITION”

WORDS:

abate	heterogeneous	plaintive
behooves	hue	purport
demeanour	ignominious	sages
earnest	inevitable	sojourn
eloquence	infernal	token
eminence	iniquity	tremulous
erring (err)	intervolutions	trode
fervor	keen	unadulterated
furrowed	lurid	vileness
genial	mien	visage
gravely	multitude	withal
grievous	obstinacy	wont
heathen	periods	

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the man who is standing on the outskirts of the crowd. How is he dressed?
2. What prior reference was made in Chapter 2 that reminds the reader of this man?
3. Look up the etymology of sinister. How can we apply this to the stranger’s initial description?
4. Hawthorne is very interested in the dichotomy (or not) between the external and internal parts of a person. How does he make this particularly explicit regarding the mysterious stranger (in ch. 3)?
5. What language does Hawthorne describe the man’s “recognition”? What can we infer about his character so far?
6. What does the stranger learn from the townsman next to him?
7. Who is the father of Hester’s baby?
8. What is the usual punishment for adultery? Why is Hester’s punishment less severe?
9. What are Hester’s feelings toward the stranger?
10. Who is Bellingham? John Wilson?
11. What do Bellingham and Wilson want Hester to do?
12. Describe Dimmesdale.
13. What is his relationship to Hester? What does he ask her to reveal?
14. Why won’t Hester name the child’s father?
15. How is Wilson subtly characterized as a child?
16. How does Hester’s baby respond to Dimmesdale’s plea?
17. Summarize the descriptions of Bellingham, Wilson, Dimmesdale, and “the stranger”. What inferences about their characters can we draw from Hawthorne’s language?

18. How is Hester's character compared to natural things/nature?

19. Identify at least one moment of foreshadowing.

20. Identify at least one paradox.

21. Identify at least one irony.

22. Identify at least two examples of litotes.

23. *Explicate:*

He [Bellingham] was not ill fitted to be the head and representative of a community, which owed its origin and progress and its present state of development, not to the impulses of youth, but to the stern and tempered energies of manhood, and the somber sagacity of age; accomplishing so much, precisely because it imagined and hoped so little.

24. *Explicate:*

The other eminent characters, by whom the chief ruler was surrounded, were distinguished by a dignity of mien, belonging to a period when the forms of authority were felt to possess the sacredness of divine institutions.

25. *Explicate:*

They [the colony leaders] were, doubtless, good men, just and sage. But, out of the whole human family, it would not have been easy to select the same number of wise and virtuous persons, who should be less capable of sitting in judgment on an erring woman's heart, and disentangling its mesh of good and evil, than the sages of rigid aspect towards whom Hester Prynne now turned her face.

26. *Explicate:*

She [Hester] seemed conscious, indeed, that whatever sympathy she might expect lay in the larger and warmer heart of the multitude...

NOTES:

Daniel: Hebraic Biblical figure who was blessed with the gift of prophecy.

Governor Bellingham: Bellingham, Richard (1591-1667) immigrated to New England in 1634. After several terms as deputy-governor, he served as governor (1641, 1654, 1665) until his death.

John Wilson: Wilson, John (1591-1667): after taking a BA and an MA from King's College, Cambridge, he began reading law but abandoned law in favor of preaching. He went to New England in 1630 and became teacher at First Church, Boston, where he remained until his death.