

Second Session: Questions to Consider: Women, Children, Natural Law, Hypocrisy,

Chapter 5 “Hester at her Needle” This chapter picks up on Hawthorne’s preoccupation with womenkind. How would you describe his toward “the ladies”?

1. Isolated, taunted, scorned, Hester arrives at ways of coping with her outlier status. What is the theology that she develops?
 2. Any connection with Hawthorne’s short story “The Minister’s Black Veil?”
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Chapter 6 “Pearl” Hawthorne based much of Pearl’s character on his observations of his first-born daughter, Una.

1. In the first chapter we have contrasts between the so-called laws of civilization and the laws of the natural world. Pearl is a product of which law?
 2. Contrast Pearl’s behavior with Hawthorne’s observations about Puritan children and their games. What’s the undertone here?
 3. Again, we return to the motifs of concealment and revelation. What does Pearl want to know?
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Chapter 7 “The Governor’s Hall”

1. Hawthorne has some fun in this chapter with Pearl and her appearance. Some details?
 2. What plans are afoot that make Hester approach Governor Bellingham?
 3. Hawthorne can’t help himself with the subtle sarcasm he directs towards the Puritan establishment. One or two details? This tone carries over into the next chapter, especially with Reverend Wilson.
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Chapter 8 “The Elf-Child and the Minister”

1. What do you make of Pearl’s answer to the catechism question about who made her?
2. Hester appeals for help from Reverend Dimmesdale and he makes some interesting arguments. What are these?
3. How does Pearl behave toward the young minister? Recall her behavior in the third chapter, “The Recognition?”