

Scarlet letter analysis

Literature



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The strategies that Dimmesdale uses while juggling two rhetorical situations are his high standings in the community as a source of credibility and authority, his purpose as a minister to help convince the sinner to come forward and reveal the truth, and his ability to convey underlying messages to the reader. His effectiveness of communication is successful for the reader but not for the characters in the story.

Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale was a respected and well know man in the Puritan community. In paragraph twenty-two of the third chapter of the story, it states, “ His eloquence and religious fervor had already given the earnest of high eminence in his profession. ” This statement gives him credibility, and it also notes that he “ had come from one of the great English universities,” and that he “ brought all the learning of the age” into their new land.

His place in the community and his high quality character help the reader understand why he is the one responsible for prying the truth out of Hester Prynne and getting her to confess her sin to all. Dimmesdale’s purpose as a minister was to make Hester Prynne confess who the father of her child was to the Puritan town. In the book, he is said to “ come forth... with a freshness, and fragrance, and dewy purity of thought,” really implying that he brings something new to the table in regards to speaking with people and communicating with others.

“ As many people said, affected them like the speech of an angel. ” His voice is referred to as “ tremulously sweet, rich, deep, and broken,” showing his speaking and sermons are effective to the people of the Puritan community, including Hester Prynne. In Chapter 3, The Recognition, Dimmesdale conveys hidden messages through his speaking to Hester. During the scaffold scene

where Hester is being mocked by the community, Reverend Dimmesdale tries to get Hester to reveal who the father of her baby is.

He tells her, “ I charge thee to speak out the name of thy fellow sinner and fellow-sufferer! ” He continues to say, “ Be not silent from any mistaken pity and tenderness for him; for, believe me, Hester, though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame...” Dimmesdale hints to the reader that the father of Hester’s child is someone of very high standing in the community, leading the reader to conclude that the other partaker in the sin is himself.

Dimmesdale creates effective communication throughout the story to give the reader a better understanding of the happenings and events. Although his purpose as a minister is to convince Hester to come clean, he still uses his accountability and his authority to create messages to the reader and to move the story along.