**Feminism and *The Scarlet Letter***

*Read the following passages and annotate using a feminist lens—that is focus on how women are represented throughout. Then answer the questions that follow.*

**From Chapter 8**

As they descended the steps, it is averred that the lattice of a chamber-window was thrown open, and

forth into the sunny day was thrust the face of Mistress Hibbins, Governor Bellingham’s bitter-tempered

sister, and the same who, a few years later, was executed as a witch.

“Hist, hist!” said she, while her ill-omened physiognomy seemed to cast a shadow over the cheerful

newness of the house. “Wilt thou go with us to-night? There will be a merry company in the forest; and

I well-nigh promised the Black Man that comely Hester Prynne should make one.”

“Make my excuse to him, so please you!” answered Hester, with a triumphant smile. “I must tarry at

home, and keep watch over my little Pearl. Had they taken her from me, I would willingly have gone with thee into the forest, and signed my name in the Black Man’s book too, and that with mine own blood!”

“We shall have thee there anon!” said the witch-lady, frowning, as she drew back her head.

But here—if we suppose this interview betwixt Mistress Hibbins and Hester Prynne to be authentic,

and not a parable—was already an illustration of the young minister’s argument against sundering the

relation of a fallen mother to the offspring of her frailty. Even thus early had the child saved her from

Satan’s snare.

1. What does Hawthorne mean when he notes Mistress Hibbins’ “ill-omened physiognomy”?
2. Mistress Hibbins was the widow of one Massachusetts governor and the sister of another. What is Hawthorne suggesting when he notes that she was indeed executed as a witch?