

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

SCORE/GRADE:

WORLDVIEW: *The Scarlet Letter*

Study questions 7a. through 7d. in the Worldview Socratic List. Answer the questions with respect to this story in your own notes. Then, in the lines below, answer the following question in a single page, using the details of the story to support and explain your response. For page-length answers, attach a separate sheet if necessary.

***Do the story's answers to these questions
tell the truth as the author saw it?
Are the author's answers to these questions
consistent with the worldview he builds into his story?***

Possible student response:

Hawthorne's characters are captive to their sin within the story. Regardless of their pious intentions, they fall prey to diverse temptations and act unwisely. Not only is this illustrated by their primary infidelity, but by their subsequent actions. Hester meets public censure with pride and obstinance. Dimmesdale covers and hides. Chillingworth plots revenge. The townspeople make a scapegoat and hide their eyes from her likeness.

Each needs help from beyond themselves to overcome their natural tendencies. For Dimmesdale, the Law quickens his conscience, pricking him to public confession and repentance. Even his enemy, Chillingworth, functions as a divine cattle prod to nag him to repentance. For Hester, Dimmesdale's forgiveness, mercy, and personal faith draw her to honest penitence. Even Chillingworth requires the work of the "other" to draw him from the pit he digs for himself. That he finds some kind of redemption is implied in the legacy he leaves to Pearl at his death. The townspeople find mercy at Hester's knee upon her return to the colony at the story's conclusion.

The whole of Hawthorne's narrative suggests that human relationships figure centrally in the exposure and redemption of sin in the life of the individual, not only through confrontation, but also through the physical extension of divine forgiveness, grace, and mercy. Hawthorne suggests that the



body of Christ likewise ministers to itself on earth, each joint supplying the needs of the whole to become a redeemed church, an elect people. In this way, while no utopia be possible, human community may flourish in a fallen world.