

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

SCORE/GRADE:

WORLDVIEW: *The Scarlet Letter*

Study questions 8a. through 8d. 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 answers to these questions consistent
with the worldview built into the narrative?***

Possible student response:

Hawthorne presents death as a fearful threat that prevents individuals from confessing their sins. Hester's words to Dimmesdale as he climbs the scaffold at the story's conclusion betray this fear; yet, his reply suggests that there are worse things to fear.

"Is not this better," murmured he, "than what we dreamed of in the forest?"

"I know not!..." she hurriedly replied. "Better? Yea; so we may both die, and little Pearl die with us!"

"For thee and Pearl, be it as God shall order," said the minister; "and God is merciful!" (Hawthorne 236)

According to Dimmesdale, death and the pangs that bring it function as divine scourges to drive us to God's mercy. "God knows; and he is merciful! He hath proved his mercy, most of all, in my afflictions...By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before the people! Had either of these been wanting, I had been lost forever!" (Hawthorne 239). According to the narrative, eternal life and death exist beyond this world. To die to reputation and pride in this world is to secure life in the next. This comports with Christian ideas of redemption and the afterlife. "He that believeth in Me, though he die, yet shall he live... Believest thou this?" (John 11: 25-26).