

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

SCORE/GRADE:

WORLDVIEW: *The Scarlet Letter*

On the lines below, cite a passage from the story that illustrates the story's worldview. Use correct punctuation and author-page citation format. Explain your choice in an oral presentation of no more than five minutes. Turn this sheet in before you begin.

Example 1:

“Walking to and fro with those lonely footsteps in the little world with which she was outwardly connected, it now and then appeared to Hester—if altogether fancy, it was nevertheless too potent to be resisted—she felt or fancied, then, that the scarlet letter had endowed her with a new sense. She shuddered to believe, yet could not help believing, that it gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts. She was terror-stricken by the revelations that were thus made. . . . Sometimes the red infamy upon her breast would give a sympathetic throb, as she passed near a venerable minister or magistrate, the model of piety and justice, to whom that age of antique reverence looked up as to a mortal in fellowship with angels. ‘What evil thing is at hand?’ would Hester say to herself. Lifting her reluctant eyes, there would be nothing human within the scope of view, save the form of this earthly saint!” (Hawthorne 89-90).

-An appropriate defense would elaborate upon the quote's intimations of **universal human depravity**. Likewise, a full answer would notice intimations of the Christian doctrine of **fellowship in suffering**. Hester's suffering tunes her heart to the sufferings of others. She understands **the severity of the Law on transgressors**. So too, the irony inherent in the subject of this passage plays on the idea of discrepancies between appearances and reality – calling into question the **idea of visible sainthood**, which the Puritans themselves would dispute in the historic subscription controversy of the 18th century.

Example 2:

“His inward trouble drove him to practices more in accordance with the old, corrupted faith of Rome than with the better light of the church in which he had been born and bred. In Mr. Dimmesdale’s secret closet, under lock and key, there was a bloody scourge. Oftentimes, this Protestant and Puritan divine had plied it on his own shoulders, laughing bitterly at himself the while, and smiting so much the more piteously because of that bitter laugh...He thus typified the constant introspection wherewith he tortured, but could not purify, himself...” (Hawthorne 141).

-An appropriate defense would notice that the quote betrays a **gospel-centered, Reformed Christian worldview**. The narrator finds fault with the performance-oriented, Catholic penance the Reverend Dimmesdale’s actions betray. Dimmesdale clearly attributes divine forgiveness to the doctrine of personal merit, even as he strenuously preaches the doctrines of grace. The narrator indicates the ironic **discontinuity between his stated Protestant faith and his more Catholic behavior**. The narrative tone, however, betrays empathy rather than scorn at the discrepancy. He depicts his characters’ plights piteously, as one who himself understood.