

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORE/GRADE:**

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: *The Scarlet Letter***

Research three or more critical works discussing this story and use them to create an annotated bibliography. Your bibliography should consist of a properly formatted bibliographic entry for each title, followed by a short paragraph of your own summarizing the work's thesis and characterizing its contribution to a conversation about the story and its themes.

Do not write on this sheet; attach it to your annotated bibliography before submitting.

Sample student response:

*Annotated Bibliography*

Hawthorne, Julian. "The Scarlet Letter' by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Reviewed." *The Atlantic*, ed. Jeffrey Goldberg, Emerson Collective Atlantic Media Inc., April 1886 issue, reprinted for theatlantic.com. Accessed 11 July 2019.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's son considers the themes and artistic significance of *The Scarlet Letter* 36 years after its initial publication. He notes his father's skillful depiction of human nature and his adept characterization of the consequences of sin in the individual's life. In relation to this, he examines his father's depiction of the effects of civil punishment versus the natural effects of divine consequences, which are built into the created order. He lauds the author's revolutionary departure from didactic moralizing to living art. His interpretation of the novel makes the author's stylistic

innovations and ideas the object. His interesting appraisal of the narrative's thematic contribution to the nature of man, sin, punishment, and redemption support my own reading of the text.

Lundin, Roger. "Nathaniel Hawthorne The Scarlet Letter 1850." *Invitation to the Classics*, edited by Louise Cowan and Os Guinness, Baker Books, 1998, pp. 237-240.

Mr. Lundin surveys Hawthorne's themes of law and guilt, grace and liberty as they occur in *The Scarlet Letter*. He speaks to the author's skillful portrayal of not only the nature of man, but also the Puritan project. His comments speak to the tension between individual liberty and human law. He traces Hawthorne's exploration of the effects of public shame, hidden sin, and bitter unforgiveness in the individual. Simultaneously, he studies the nature of legalism and corporate hypocrisy on community relationships. His argument regarding Hawthorne's treatment of Puritan Law and judgment prove relevant to the central argument of my paper.

Wolfe, Gregory. "The Redemption of Hester Prynne." *Image Journal*, ed. James K. A. Smith, The Center for Religious Humanism, Issue 96, [imagejournal.org/article/the-redemption-of-hester-prynne/](http://imagejournal.org/article/the-redemption-of-hester-prynne/). Accessed 12 July 2019.

Gregory Wolfe argues Hawthorne creates an intentional ambiguity around Hester Prynne in order to challenge cultural movements in his own time. In this way, the author is able to critique not only the fundamental Puritanism that he characterizes in his novel's setting, but also transcendentalist ideals within his own society. Wolfe notices in each an unnatural bifurcation of nature and grace. He locates the seeds of Puritan thought in Emerson's libertine individualism: "Emerson separates nature and grace in a way that mirrored what the Puritans had done before him" (Wolfe). Wolfe argues that this separation led proponents of both communities to a practical Gnosticism and an inevitable exaltation of intellect and industry. A performance economy that advocates production as a means to self-actualization followed. Wolfe sees Hawthorne intentionally misleading readers through his ambiguous posturing of Hester as heroine; they share her impulse to assert their own paradigm and become their own gods. He sees in the conclusion of Hawthorne's narrative, not the tragic triumph of repressive Puritanism over the natural impulses of the human spirit, but the redemptive nature of suffering in the presence of community. Likewise, Wolfe ties Hawthorne's narrative form to this ideal, suggesting the author makes this same redemption available through his art, which reimagines the ties between nature and grace in compelling images of humanity.

Wolfe's argument explains the ambiguous tension feminist critics exploit through deconstruction without marginalizing the explicitly Christian tone of Hawthorne's narrative voice. His interpretation of Hawthorne's work reasserts the novel's relevance for modern readers: the impulse to self-justification and self-salvation stems from a common seed in every generation. Art functions as a repository of memory that fosters the study of such continuity between the generations.