



Lillian Gish in *The Scarlet Letter*, 1926

“There is no law, nor reverence for authority, no regard for human ordinances or opinions, right or wrong, mixed up with that child’s composition...What, in Heaven’s name is she?...Hath she any discoverable principle of being?”
“None – save the freedom of a broken law,” answered Dimmesdale.”

The Prompt

Shortly before Chillingworth fiendishly pries Dimmesdale’s terrible secret from him, the two are observing Pearl as she dances playfully through a graveyard, prompting Chillingworth to wonder whether there is any goodness at all in the “imp,” and whether she has any “principle” or foundation of being (130). Dimmesdale responds that her only foundation seems to be one of freedom of a broken law (130). Based upon what you have read thus far, do you agree that freedom can come with broken law? In your response consider whether Hester and Pearl seem more free than Dimmesdale. Be sure to discuss why you agree with or disagree with Dimmesdale’s statement.

Suggested Format

- Start by introducing the texts that you have selected and briefly summarizing them.
- Provide your take on the authors’ writing. Try to answer the following questions:
 - Do you agree with their opinions?
 - Do you disagree?
 - Are there particular phrases that catch your attention? If so, explain why.
 - Do you have questions about what the author meant?