

MOUNT SAINT MARY ACADEMY
English III Honors
SUMMER READING 2010

TEXTS

Villette
The Picture of Dorian Gray

Brontë, Charlotte
Wilde, Oscar

ASSIGNMENTS: Annotate both of the texts thoroughly, paying particular attention to the questions listed below. Annotations will be checked and graded within the first week of school.

The questions below will also serve as the focus of an analytical essay. Books will be discussed in class prior to the completion of a formal essay.

Villette

Consider the following questions as you read. Be prepared to discuss these in class, and write an essay on one of these topics.

What does Brontë show or imply about the status of women in the society depicted in the novel? How does Bronte accomplish this?

To what extent is Lucy an unreliable narrator? Explain.

What is the significance of Lucy's name?

Consider the role of weather in the novel. How does it serve the story?

Do some research on the Gothic genre. How does *Villette* conform to or differ from this type of narrative?

Compare and contrast Dr. John and Mr. Paul. What are each man's flaws? What are their redeeming qualities? Why is it not realistic for Lucy and Dr. John to form a romantic relationship?

Why is the ending of the work left so ambiguous?

The Picture of Dorian Gray

(You will submit an essay on this work the last week of September. We will discuss the work in class prior to essay submission.) **Before you begin reading**, do some research on *modernism* and the philosophy of *aestheticism*. While reading, consider how these movements apply to the work. It will also be illuminating to do some research on Oscar Wilde's life.

Consider the questions below **while you read**, and be prepared to discuss these and other topics in class. In addition to specific questions about the text, also keep a log of all of Lord Henry's epigrams, explaining them as well as *reacting to* them.

- What does the novel reveal about racism, class prejudice, and/or values in the late 1800's?
- What is the moral of the story?
- What kinds of arguments does the novel make? How are these arguments made and are they effective? Explain. Which character or characters do you think may be the voice of the author? (consider your research on Oscar Wilde's life)

- Develop your own questions (at least 5) in response to the text. These may include questions about theme, writing style, author intention/purpose or devices (such as foreshadowing, symbolism, allusions, character development etc.)

Excerpt from **How to Mark a Book**

By **Mortimer J. Adler, Ph.D.**

“Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious; I mean awake.) In the second place; reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed....”

“If reading is to accomplish anything more than passing time, it must be active.... But, you may ask, why is writing necessary? Well, the physical act of writing, with your own hand, brings words and sentences more sharply before your mind and preserves them better in your memory. To set down your reaction to important words and sentences you have read, and the questions they have raised in your mind, is to preserve those reactions and sharpen those questions.....”

“There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:

- **Underlining (or highlighting):** of major points, of important or forceful statements.
- **Vertical lines at the margin:** to emphasize a statement already underlined.
- **Star, asterisk, or other doo-dad at the margin:** to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book. (You may want to fold the bottom corner of each page on which you use such marks. It won't hurt the sturdy paper on which most modern books are printed, and you will be able take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.)
- **Numbers in the margin:** to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
- **Numbers of other pages in the margin:** to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.
- **Circling or highlighting of key words or phrases.**
- **Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of:** recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; reducing a complicated discussion to a simple statement; recording the sequence of major points right through the books. I use the end-papers at the back of the book to make a personal index of the author's points in the order of their appearance.”