MCM Essay, Research Paper

The Count of Monte Cristo

Theme:

The Count of Monte Cristo is a very powerful book.

So powerful in fact, that was controversial when it was

first released. The Catholic church in France condemned it

because of its powerful message it presented the reader.

This theme was one of revenge and vengeance. Monte Cristo

had two goals- to reward those who were kind to him and his

aging father, and to punish those responsible for his

imprisonment and suffering. For the latter, he plans slow

and painful punishment. To have spent fourteen years barely

subsisting in a dungeon demands cruel and prolonged

castigation.

Setting:

The Count of Monte Cristo is set within the

nineteenth century of France in large and populous cities.

This was a time of great disruption. There was confusion all

over the land in regards to who led France, King Louis or

Napoleon. The citizens of France became divided by the two

ruling parties. Royalists and the Bonapartist cut at each

others throats in order to declare that their ruler was

supreme. This situation has a profound effect on the events

of the story. Dantes’ enemies used the rivalry between the

two parties in order to convince the Royalists that Edmond

is a Bonapartist, therefore it is the basis for his arrest

and inevitable captivity in the Chateau D’If..

Basic Plot:

The Count of Monte Cristo is a story about a sailor,

Edmond Dantes, who was betrayed during the prime of his

life and career by the jealousy of his friends. His

shipmate, Danglars, coveted his designation as the captain

of the mighty Pharon. Ferdinand Mondego wished to wed

Mercedes, who was affianced to Edmond.

Danglars and Ferdinand wrote a letter accusing

Edmond of carrying a letter from Elba to the Bonapartist

committee in Paris. Caderousse, a neighbor, learned of the

plot but kept silent. On his wedding day Edmond was arrested

and taken before a deputy named Villefort, a political

apostate, who, to protect himself, had Edmond secretly

imprisoned in the deepest dungeons of the Chateau D’If.

There Dantes’ incarceration was secured by the plotting of

his enemies outside the prison, particularly towards

Villefort, who wished to cover up his own father’s

connections with the Bonapartists. Dantes suffered for

fourteen grueling years. While in prison, he was determined

to escape and began digging a tunnel in hopes that it would

lead to freedom. During this exercise, he met an elderly

inmate named Abbe Faria whose attempt to dig his way to his

salvation had led him only to Edmond’s cell. The two meet

daily and an incredible relationship flourished. The old man

taught Edmond history, mathematics, and languages. In

Edmond’s fourteenth year, Faria became mortally ill. The

wise elder told Edmond where to find a massive buried

fortune. When Faria finally did die, his body was placed in

a burial sac. Edmond seized the opportunity of escaping and

replaced Faria’s corpse with himself. Jailers threw the sack

into the sea which allowed Dantes to escape. He is rescued

by a passing ship which gives him a position on the boat.

After paying homage for the noble act, Dantes recovered the

buried treasure and became extremely wealthy. He returned as

the mysterious Count of Monte Cristo and dazzled all of

Paris with his extreme wealth and social graces and also he

ingeniously managed to be introduced to the cream of French

society, among who he goes unrecognized. But, Monte Cristo,

in contrariety, recognized all of his enemies, which now are

all powerful and influential men. Therefore, he was slowly

plotting the ruin of the four men who had caused him to be

sent to the Chateau D’If.

Ferdinand had married Mercedes and was now the Count

de Morcef. Monte Cristo released information to the press

that proved that Morcef is a traitor, and Morcef is ruined

socially. Then Monte Cristo destroyed Morcef’s relationship

with his family, whom he adored. When they leave him, he was

so distraught that he committed suicide.

To revenge himself on Caderousse, Monte Cristo

easily trapped Caderousse because of his voracious greed.

Monte Cristo awakened this greed with the gift of a diamond.

Later, urged by his wife, Caderousse committed robbery and

murder. Now escaped from prison, Caderousse unsuccessfully

attempted to rob Monte Cristo. The Count watched as one of

Caderousse’s companions mortally wounding him. As the man

lay dying, Monte Cristo exposed his true name- Edmond

Dantes. To revenge himself on Danglars, who loves money more

than life it self, Monte Cristo ruins him financially. To

revenge himself on Villefront, Monte Cristo slowly reveals

to Villefront that he knows about a love affair that

Villefront had long ago with Madam Danglars. He also

revealed to him, by hints, that he knows about the

illegitimate child whom he fathered, a child whom Villefront

had believed to be buried alive. The child lived, however,

and was now engaged to Mademoiselle Danglars, who is really

his half-sister.

Ironically, Villefront’s wives proves to be more

villainous than her husband, for she poisons her parents and

her daughter so that her real son can have the full

inheritance. Villefront, however, discovers the plot and

Threatens to kill her if she doesn’t do it first, and so she

kills herself and her son.

The Count had rescued Valentine from a drug induced

coma and reunited her with her love, Maximilian, on the

island of Monte Cristo leaving the two young loves his

entire fortune. The Count sailed off into the sunset never

to be seen again.

Major Characters:

Edmond Dantes (alias the Count of Monte Cristo,

Sinbad the Sailor, Abbe Busoni, and Lord Wilmore)

Edmond Dantes is the dashing and idyllic champion of the

novel. He is a sailor who, at the prime of his life and

career, is betrayed by close friends because of their

jealousy. He is imprisoned for fourteen grueling years

during his imprisonment he meets another prisoner named Abbe

Faria, who teaches Dantes many languages, sciences, history

and other subjects, they become like father and son, and

when the Abbe was about to die, he revealed to Dantes the

hiding place of a long-secret buried treasure consisting of

untold wealth, diamond, gold coins, and other precious

jewelry. After his miraculous escape from the prison,

Dantes recovers buried treasure on the island of Monte

Cristo. The rest of his life is spent, at first, performing

acts of goodness and charity for the good people whom he has

known, then he devotes his life to brining about gods

retribution against the evil people who were responsible for

his imprisonment.

Monsieur De Villefort

Villefort is the type of person, as describe

early in the novel, which sacrifice anything to his

ambition, even his own father. Villefort, the prosecuting

attorney, is most responsible for the suffering of Dantes

because it was he who ordered that Edmond be sent to prison

which ignited his spark for revenge. Villefort is willing to

have an innocent man imprisoned for life. Thus, he becomes

the central enemy against whom the Count of Monte Cristo

affects revenge.

Fernand Mondego (alias the Count de Morcerf)

During the time in which Edmond was a

sailor, Fernand was a simple fisherman and sometime smuggler

who was in love with the same woman whom Edmond Dantes was

ingaged to. Because of his jealousy, Fernand mailed the

letter condemning Dantes, hoping that if Dantes was

arrested, he would then be able to marry Mercedes. Fernand

gained much wealth by smuggling and by betraying the great

Ali Pasha. When all of his treachery was exposed, he

discovers that his wife and son have deserted him, thus he

commits suicide.