

# The count of monte cristo essay response



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The Count of Monte Cristo Essay Response In the novel The Count Of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas, the symbolism created by multiple motifs forms many themes throughout the story. The use of direct statements, plot elements settings, symbols, and motifs help to create these themes.

Two themes present in the novel include the notion that no man's power over his fellow man should near the Divine power of justice given by God; also that men who know no suffering can not truly appreciate the peace of contentment. Instead these men become greedy, while only the people who have suffered can truly experience happiness. The idea that power over human justice is only God's right and no man has this same right is supported by many motifs and scenes from the story.

The first motif that supports this theme is the limits of human justice. This is shown throughout the entire novel displaying that no man is entirely crime-free and has the right to justify his deeds over another man's wrongs, while condemning the other and not himself. Due to human nature, and mankind's inability to be selfless or all seeing, as God is, true justice is never truly achieved because man's personal intentions intervene with true, selfless justice. No one person is completely innocent, and with their personal selfishness, as shown in Villefort's decision to unjustly condemn the innocent Edmond Dantes, for the sake of his own personal status.

Villefort's selfish thoughts are shown in the novel as he is described to have put on the air of a man called upon to decide on the life or death of his fellow man... [he] thought of his father's political opinions, which might prove disastrous for his future if he did not separate himself completely from them; (23) By taking the law into his own hands and

cruelly condemning a promising young life into doom, his first priority is to secure his future.

Villefort does this by hiding away a direct link of his family name to the Bonapartist revolution, over saving the life of someone more innocent. Villefort's life changing decision to condemn others before himself, a murderer, happens not once but twice as he condemns Dantes and his own murdering wife before himself. No person is completely innocent or without fault and therefore cannot place himself above another who has also committed a crime. Secondly, they cannot put aside their own selfish desires, which almost always leads to corruption and injustice.

Providence; or divine right or care often granted by God, also supports this theme. Monte Cristo states that he felt he was given this right by God, to reward and punish those who played a part in his life by stating, "I maintain my pride in the face of men, but I abandon it before God, who drew me out of nothingness to make me what I am." (212) By taking this extreme amount of power over the lives of others, and feeling that it was his complete right to carry out God's wishes; The Count places himself above others and believes that with this right, he is more God than he is man. The Count openly admits his self-righteousness by exclaiming that in a bargain with the devil and boasting, "I want to be Providence, for the greatest, the most beautiful and the most sublime thing I know of in this world is to reward and punish." (213). After trading away his soul, he claims he was granted the life as an agent of Providence. By taking on this responsibility he alone placed on himself, The Count plays God and even convinces Caderousse before his death that he is the Lord as shown in

Caderousse's shocked response, and repentance. By acting as an agent of providence the count's ultimate downfall occurs.

While punishing his enemies, the count accidentally effects the lives of the innocent, as shown when the Count's deeds lead to the death of little Edouard. Dumas describes The Count's remorse and concern after he could not bring the young boy back to life by explaining that Monte Cristo, "realized that he had gone beyond the limits of rightful vengeance and that he could no longer say 'God is with me'" (485). For the first time Monte Cristo begins to question whether he ever had the right to decide the fates of the people around him. Only God has true power and this truth also supports the idea of the limits of human justice. In the end of the novel, as the Count of Monte Cristo evaluates what he has done and what pain he has caused, he realizes that he is only man.

By facing this realization he opens up his once alienated and cold heart, to love again and to move on past vengeance by placing his self-appointed duty as the agent of providence back into God's hands. The Count specifically describes this realization in his farewell letter to Maximilien; "Tell the angel who will watch over your life to pray now and then for a man who, like Satan, believed himself for an instant to be equal to God, but who realized in all humility the supreme power and wisdom are in the hands of God alone." (530). The other important theme created by the novel is that people who have never experienced loss or suffering can not truly appreciate the peace of contentment and instead become greedy, while only the people who have suffered can truly experience happiness. This is supported by a

variety of motifs and plot elements, one specific one including the motif of imprisonment/freedom.

When Edmund Dantes is originally imprisoned in the beginning of the novel, he is deprived of all the luxuries and comforts of freedom. While he lives in dank circumstances, being deprived of light, company, and knowledge, he is only being supplied with the bare necessities for physical survival. The affects of living in a dungeon include Dantes being driven towards near insanity and complete hopelessness. Death is all he desires, and Dantes nearly gives up all willingness to live until the friendship and love of Abbe Faria gives him hope.

Piece by piece the simplicity of friendship allows him to be patient and to again experience the please of learning and the desire of freedom. After being completely deprived of all of the luxuries of freedom, Dantes truly begins to appreciate life and chooses to continue onward, even though his main drive was due to vengeance. Poison is used throughout the novel to display the corruption and greed of the wealthy. The Count of Monte Cristo is originally introduced to the powers and evils of poison when he hears the story of Caesar Borgia and his evil practice of killing off his dinner guests to gain their fortunes; one such victim including the newly appointed Cardinal Spada.

With this first use of poison also comes the cause of it; greed for more wealth. The use of poison to murder someone and to acquire their fortune is repeated when Madame de Villefort plots against and poisons her relatives and own stepdaughter to gain the massive inheritance for her own son,

Edouard. This is not caused by her desperation to provide for her son (who would have lived most comfortably without it) but out of greed consuming the woman and her every thought. These two examples include some of the most wealthy and respected people in the novel, the pope himself and the public prosecutor's wife, who although living in great comfort and splendor become consumed by unhappiness and a desire to harm anyone to simply gain more wealth. Suffering is also commonly used throughout the story to show and express the significance of complete happiness.

While people such as the Villeforts, Danglars and Morterfs live comfortable lives free of suffering, they never achieved true happiness and their selfish and ungrateful lives end in their ultimate downfall. Meanwhile, the Morrel family experiences near poverty, disgrace, financial ruin and near-suicide due to this shame. After having to face some of the most degrading and hopeless of circumstances, the rescue of their lives by Sinbad the Sailor makes them truly appreciate everything they have, and allows them to continue their lives in comfort without extreme wealth. Instead they continue their lives with a sense of love for each other and thankfulness for what they have. As Maximilien explained to The Count of Monte Cristo, 'a man saved my father from death, us from ruin and our name from dishonor. This letter was written by him on a day when my father had made an extremely desperate resolution, and the same unknown benefactor gave this diamond to her sister for her dowry' (219).

Their gratitude and suffering allows the Morrel family to never forget their savior and how lucky they are to be together surrounded by love. As The Count describes most clearly in the end, 'There is neither happiness nor

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unhappiness in this world; there is only the comparison of one state with another. Only a man who has felt ultimate despair is capable of feeling ultimate bliss. It is necessary to have wished for death. In order to know how good it is to live (531).

With these two major themes shown throughout the story, displaying God's divine power of justice and the limits of man's, and the only way to acquire true happiness is to first feel pain, two of the most powerful motifs emerge; God and love. With The Count's original quest for vengeance, he comes to realize that he is still as human as the rest, and his hidden emotions emerge when he rediscovers love and accepts giving up control to God. The novel concludes with the majority of the criminals being justly punished, although the lives of many were destroyed by The Count's hatred, a message of hope is apparent as The Count sails off into the sunset, and as love brings the characters together in happiness at the end.