Summer Holiday Reading 2021

Wuthering Heights

For our reading classes together over the summer holidays, we will be exploring each book in three lessons, with the first offering a general overview, the second delving into the stylistic and narrative elements of the writing and the final lesson offering a closer, more thorough examination of the text itself through the use of close textual analysis and with particular attention paid to literary techniques and structural devices. These lessons are designed to help the students develop new frameworks through which to read and understand literature, equipping them with the vocabulary with which to discuss themes, genre and morals.

*Lesson 1:* **Introduction to *Wuthering Heights***

In lesson 1 we will consider the context and introductory material surrounding *Wuthering Heights,* spending the lesson thinking about the genre of the gothic, and considering the lives of the Bronte sisters. From here the students will learn about the Victorian context of the book, thinking about where they can see Victorian ideas reflected or rebuffed, and the reputation it has as a classic despite its initial failure. They will be given the chance to evaluate their own feelings and opinions on the novel through this lens, thinking about why the history matters. We will discuss the core themes and look at the impact genre has on the book, thinking about the moral of the story. We will consider why the book caused a scandal when it was published and think about what the key relationship at the centre of the work- that between Heathcliff and Cathy- says about the Victorian era, the lives of women and, more specifically, the life of Emily Bronte herself.

*Lesson 2:* **Exploring Style and Narrative**

In lesson 2 we will dive further into the novel, thinking about some of the influences on Bronte that lurk beneath the surface of the story and focusing on the importance of the landscape in *Wuthering Heights*. We will consider the role of the supernatural in the story, connecting it back to the gothic, and unearthing the religiosity that sits below Victorian obsessions with ghost stories. We will also be debating the question “is this a romance story?” thinking about the debate that rages over the nature of Heathcliff and Cathy’s relationship, and looking at what this says about social class, considering the academic debate over Heathcliff’s character and his role as a Byronic hero. We will also look at narrative voice and perspective, and the class will have a chance to experiment with changing the point of view the novel is written from, evaluating how that marks the content of the book itself. Finally, we will consider the importance of emotion in this book, thinking about how this reflects contemporary trends to take emotion seriously in some context whilst not at all in other. Overall, the class will be asked to consider *why* the author has made the stylistic and narrative choices she has made, thinking about author intent and why it is important to infer it.

*Lesson 3:* **Close Textual Analysis**

In lesson 3 we will be focusing on developing the students’ analytical skills, looking at closely analysing the text of the novel. The class will be asked to analyse and evaluate how characterisation and symbolism exist side by side in this novel, considering the centrality of symbols to the plot. We will work on analysing key passages and quotations from the book, asking ourselves what particular wisdom can be drawn from this. This lesson will focus particularly on the use of techniques such as pathetic fallacy, metaphor, sarcasm and foils. The class will also have a chance to collaborate as a group in this lesson in creatively re-imagining parts of the novel, thinking about how to mirror Bronte’s style whilst also putting their own innovative twist on her writing and ideas. This lesson will teach the class to read literature as both the audience and writer, analysing and explicating in equal measure, in order to develop their relationship with reading and understanding the deeper meaning beneath *Wuthering Height’s* surface.