

## *Heart of Darkness* 71, 76, 79, 82, 91, 94, 96, 00, 01

**1971** The significance of a title such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is easy to discover. However, in other works (for example, *Measure for Measure*) the full significance of the title becomes apparent to the reader only gradually. Choose two works and show how the significance of their respective titles is developed through the authors' use of devices such as contrast, repetition, allusion, and point of view.

**1976** The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. Select the work of an essayist who is in opposition to his or her society; or from a work of recognized literary merit, select a fictional character who is in opposition to his or her society. In a critical essay, analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society. Do not summarize the plot or action of the work you choose.

**1979** Choose a complex and important character in a novel or play of recognized literary merit who might - on the basis of the character's actions alone -- be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

**1982** "The struggle to achieve dominance over others frequently appears in fiction." Choose a novel in which such a struggle for dominance occurs, and write an essay showing for what purposes the author uses the struggle. Do not merely retell the story

**1991** Many plays and novels use contrasting places (for example, two countries, two cities or towns, two houses, or the land and sea) to represent opposed forces or ideas that are central to the meaning of the work. Choose a novel or a play that contrasts two such places. Write an essay explaining how the places differ, what each place represents, and how their contrast contributes to the meaning of the work.

**1994** In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or who does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Choose a novel or play of literary merit and write an essay in which you show how such a character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

**1996** The British novelist Fay Weldon offers this observation about happy endings: "The writers, I do believe, who get the best and most lasting response from readers are the writers who offer a happy ending through moral development. By a happy ending, I do not mean mere fortunate events... a marriage or a last-minute rescue from death... but some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation, even with the self, even at death." Choose a novel or play that has the kind of ending Weldon describes. In a well-written essay, identify the "spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation" evident in the ending and explain its significance in the work as a whole. You may select a work from the list below or another novel or play of literary merit.

**2000** Many works of literature not readily identified with the mystery or detective story genre nonetheless involve the investigation of a mystery. In these works, the solution to the mystery may be less important than the knowledge gained in the process of its investigation. Choose a novel or play in which one or more of the characters confront a mystery. Then write an essay in which you identify the mystery and explain how the investigation illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

**2001** One definition of madness is "mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it." But Emily Dickinson wrote--

Much madness is divinest Sense--

To a discerning Eye--

Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a "discerning Eye." Select a novel or play in which a character's apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the "madness" to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.