

IN-CLASS WORKSHOP: OSCAR WILDE

In the “Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*” and “The Critic as Artist,” Wilde articulates the main concepts of his theory of AESTHETICISM, often reduced to the aphorism: “Art for Art’s Sake.”

Here are some of the key concepts and relationships he raises in his discussion of CRITICISM and ART:

the INDIVIDUAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS EXPRESSION IMPRESSION FORM INCOMPLETENESS BEAUTY	ACTION HISTORY ETHICS and MORALITY INTENT (AUTHORIAL) CONTENT NATURE MIMESIS REAL IDEAL
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Ask yourselves the following questions:

- What does art DO? What does criticism DO?
- What does Wilde VALUE? To what does he assign the most importance?
- What is the relationship between:
 - ART and CRITICISM;
 - SUBJECTIVE and OBJECTIVE worlds;
 - FORM and CONTENT;
 - INTENT (context of production) and IMPRESSION (context of reception)
 - ART and ETHICS?
- What other theorists/theories are relevant to understanding Wilde’s philosophy? What echoes do you hear?

We will be working in groups to map out the relationships among these concepts. You may produce a concept map, some other kind of diagram, a discursive (paragraph or bullet-point list) summation, a narrative, an alternative dialogue, or some other way of demonstrating your ideas.

You will have ONE CLASS to work in your group and then the NEXT CLASS we will do a “gallery walk” and you can share your ideas with your colleagues. Therefore, you’ll need to keep good notes and assign someone to be in charge of bringing your demonstration to class for the gallery.