



Retelling *Hamlet*

Draft due dates:

2/21—2-1

2/28—2-2

3/4—2-3

Project Introduction:

Remember our metaphors for writing—a tennis ball and legos. I have tried to impress upon you that writing essentially is an activity of constructing and forming. It is a pulling together of thoughts through language to shape and communicate meaning. Also, a major aspect of this class is to see and experience the link between reading and writing, that the same type of "construing" (shaping, forming, interpreting) we do as we read occurs as we write (and visa versa). Our next project calls on you to this kind of lego writing. Start with curiosity; take ownership of your own inquiry.

Essay Topic--general description

You will be creating a "retelling" of Hamlet. That means you will creatively refashion some part of the play or the world of the play. It could be a creative filling in of a gap in the story or it could be seeing a scene from another angle. But this project is NOT about just being clever for cleverness's sake. You will want to have some idea, some thing you are curious or have a question about, some interpretation springing from the play, that you will want to communicate with your retelling. You have a lot of freedom as far as the topic for your retelling as well as the media you use to communicate it.

We will get models and ideas for our own "rewriting" and "retelling" from the rest of the casebook on Hamlet pp. 1318-1369. I urge you to skim through some of these texts for some ideas. The "casebook" readings will also present different interpretations of the play that you may want to engage with in our own retelling.

The assignment will have two parts: one part will be the "retelling" itself. The second part will be the critical explanation surrounding this "retelling" piece where you talk about how you are coming to terms, forwarding, or countering some aspect of the play or some other piece in the rest of the casebook text.

Finding a Topic?

I suggest that you follow what catches your interest or engage in some question you have about the play and its characters. Explore something YOU noticed. We'll call it your "INSIGHT." (What you see inside the play.) Explore this "insight" by doing some rereading of the play. Look over the casebook readings 1318-1369 to see if you find any connections there to your "insight." You are encouraged to do some more investigation of this "insight" through research. Try to deepen and gain better understanding of your "insight."

You may be thinking of this simultaneously as you explore your "insight," but once you have explored and deepened your "insight," then it is time to think of how you will present this insight through a "retelling" of Hamlet. As I mentioned, you have a lot of freedom here to choose your media and medium of presentation (text, audio, video, puppets?).

Requirements (guidelines):

Part 1: The Retelling Piece

The Retelling Piece is the creative retelling presenting your "insight." This retelling should be something that has a text or language base to it—i.e. text, audio, video, but not painting. Even a video will have a script (and you should produce it if you do a video). So will a podcast.

Staying true to the text: You will want your "retelling" to stay generally true to the overall meaning and spirit of the play. You certainly can pursue a "what if" topic, but the "what if" should at least be plausible.

Length: 1-3 pages or 5-10 minutes in length

Shorter pieces need to reflect that they too were products of careful work and may require more crafting (for example, a poem that is thirty lines as opposed to a prose retelling of a scene that is three pages long).

Part 2: About the Retelling Piece

This a more academic and analytic piece where you will explain and justify your retelling piece. You'll present the basis for your "insight" with discussion and evidence from Hamlet. You'll also explain and interpret your own "retelling" piece and how it is communicating your "insight." In your discussion, you will seek to use at least two of these three of Harris' "rewriting" strategies: coming to terms, forwarding, countering. You will use MLA Documentation Style and Format for this piece.

Length: 2-5 pages
