Short Paper 2.1: The Mirror of Erised

engl 111 / sec. G / winter quarter 2011-12 / chang

Our lives are filled with rich, curious, overlapping, and at times contested texts. Some of these texts we encounter on purpose, by way of outside direction, accidentally, and sometimes by serendipity. Via these texts, you will explore and accept and reject conventions, theories, facts, histories, experiments, and visions across disciplines. It is then in the many and varied spaces and voices where the difficulty and delight of what Mary Louise Pratt, professor at NYU, calls the *contact zone*: "I use this term to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (586). In a sense, texts as well as how we read them (and write them) can meet in the contact zone.

For this short paper, your task is to again make a claim about *Harry Potter*, but this paper will ask you to argue it and to prove it in a very different way. Consider the secondary readings we've read about *Harry Potter*. Revisit a claim in a previous Short Paper or your Major Paper and revise it for this assignment. Be very specific in your claim. Focus on a single concept or a specific question or a critique that came up in class, such as race, gender, sexuality, nationality, or stereotype. Consider then the kinds of evidence that you might use to support or illustrate or demonstrate your claim. Is that evidence always written text? What other kinds of evidence might you engage? In a sense, this paper will be a kind of Mirror of Erised that reveals, reflects, and reifies "neither knowledge nor truth," or does it in fact do both? In only 3 pages—**and you must fill all three pages**—articulate your claim and evidence. However, these 3 pages **must contain** all of the following kinds of evidence (use your space well):

1) prose or standard essay writing or narrative,

2) quotes from essays or novels from the class,

3) verse or poetry, and

4) images, drawings, figures.

Your text, a kind of argumentative pastiche, must claim something, critique something, imagine something, have a stake in showing your reader something about your text of analysis. **Consider how you wish to put together your text, how you wish to arrange or mix the pieces, how the pages work together.** The composition of your text is up to you, but keep in mind your overall goal and your audience. Could it be more than a traditional essay mixed with verse and image? What about a comic book? A mixed-media collage? A newsletter? **The most successful texts establish a clear relationship between the different kinds of evidence.** Again, the text must have writing and image, prose and poetry, argument and art. Push the idea that your text is a space where cultures and ideas "meet, clash, and grapple." **Have fun, be creative.**

Targeted outcomes: _____

Turn in: 3 pages

Draft Due: Monday, February 13

Final Due: Wednesday, February 15, at the start of class