

Worksheet 1.1: A Villain is a Villain is a Villain?

engl 131 / sec. A4 / winter quarter 2005-06 / chang

One of the central questions of the quarter will be about difference, as in “what makes me different from you?” We will identify, explore, and critique the constructions, manifestations, celebrations, and politics of difference. We will consider how difference plays a major role as cause, symptom, effect, and complication in all sorts of -isms as well as in all sorts of resistance and world-making. To that end, we begin with an excavation of our own assumptions, stereotypes, identifications, similarities, and differences.

In the following exercise, first answer each of the questions to the best of your knowledge drawing only on personal experience. Some questions may require you to go to the Internet to find supplementary material (e.g. images). Second, once you are done answering each question, discuss in a group of 3-4 (preferably a single pod) and compare and contrast your answers noting telling similarities or divergences. Finally, answer the final group question and be prepared to present your answers to the class.

I. And the MTV Movie Award for Best Villain Goes To... (answer individually)

1. Identify a villain you remember vividly from literature.

- a. Find an image or quote that reveals their villainy.
- b. What qualities, characteristics, or descriptions make them a villain?

2. Identify a villain you remember from television or film.

- a. Find a clear image of the villain.
- b. What qualities, characteristics, or descriptions make them a villain?

3. Identify a villain you remember from an animated film or cartoon.

- a. Find a clear image of the villain.
- b. What qualities, characteristics, or descriptions make them a villain?

II. I'll Trade You Dr. Evil, Serpantor, and Gargamel for Darth Vader... (discuss as a group)

1. What do your villains have in common? What are the common characteristics shared by most or all of your villains?

2. Are there any significant differences? What might be the reasons for those differences?

III. My Villain Can Totally Beat Up Your Villain... (answer as a group)

1. Choose one of your group's villains to be representative of most of the qualities you have identified. Come up with a composite list of their characteristics and features. What makes this particular villain interesting, special, “unique”?

2. What would it take for your villain to change, to turn around, to be redeemed? Is that even possible?