

# Opening Writing

## Exploring Visual Fairy Tale Retellings

Choose a fairy tale and watch/read a corresponding visual text (a film, graphic novel, or television show) and sign up for it in e-learning (google docs). Then, compose an essay in which you use at least one critical article or theorist to interpret some of the key ways the visual retelling differs from the early variant.



The purpose of this essay is to begin our consideration of how visual texts engage theory differently than the source texts upon which they are based by examining fairy tale retellings in comparison to corresponding early variants. Additionally, students will work on incorporating sources by utilizing at least one critical reading into their analysis. Strong essays will:

- Consider texts comparatively, but focus on why the retelling's interpretation of the early variant matters in terms of what it uniquely offers to the viewer.
- Engage theory/criticism by articulating how the thesis of the secondary text fits or changes when applied to the retelling.
- Argue a key point about the retelling, using details to focus on one specific aspect worthy of particular note (rather than summarizing the entire visual text).
- Focus on visual elements (not simply plot, characterization, theme) and ideology. Explore how messages, social constructs, and power dynamics are altered or represented in the retelling.

In some ways, this is a "benchmark" essay, giving me a sense of individual analytical strengths and areas for improvement, so I can provide some tailored writing attention. Graduate and undergraduate students, therefore, have differing expectations for the level of their analytical writing. While strong essays all share some key approaches (see "tips and resources" for some suggestions), graduate students will be able to engage more fully with theory and criticism, while undergraduate students might focus more comparison and contrast, with critical sources used in a supporting role.

## Requirements

- Length** Undergraduate essays should be 2-4 double spaced pages. Graduate students are encouraged to write 4-6 pages.
- Source** Meaningfully engage with at least one critical article, cited using MLA.
- Primary Text** Early fairy tales variants can be found in Maria Tatar's *The Classic Fairy Tales* (on reserve at Waldo library), and most film/graphic options are available at the KPL and/or via Netflix, Amazon or other services.
- Note: "Rapunzel" and "Sleeping Beauty" are not found in Tatar's text, but can be read whole-text at [www.surlalunefairytales.com](http://www.surlalunefairytales.com)

If you have any questions about analytical writing techniques or would like me to look at an early draft, please don't hesitate to ask. Drafts must be submitted 48 hours before the due date.