

ENG 2-111B Be Transformed: Fairy Tales, Literary Lives, and the Creative Process



Class meets: 9-11 and 1-3 PM (details in schedule)

Student blogs @ <http://blogs.cornellcollege.edu/betransformed>

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Hours by appointment

TEXTS

Required: Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*
 Donoghue, *Kissing the Witch*
 Graff and Birkenstein, “*They Say/I Say*”
 Sears, *Harlem Duet*
 Shakespeare, *Othello*
 Warner, *Once Upon a Time*
 Moodle and open-access online readings, as indicated in the schedule

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Fairy tales have ignited the imagination of children and sophisticated salon readers, storytellers and political activists, authors and film-makers. They have provoked vigorous critical arguments: they have been dismissed as trite little (girl) stories or escapist fantasies, viewed as illuminating the imperatives of desire, or as windows into the history of childhood and the family, or as emancipatory dreams, or as creative powerhouses. Typically ending with a happy resolution, they are nonetheless full of danger and violence. Case in point: their prominence in Shakespeare’s tragedy *Othello*, the focal text of this First-Year Writing course, which reworks the familiar “Beauty and the Beast” tale, contains echoes from “Bluebeard,” and fragments from tales featuring slaves and cannibals, an Egyptian witch, a maid from Barbary, and a conniving devil. *Othello* itself has been re-worked in a variety of media and we will explore the fairy-tale qualities of two of these transformations: Bulgarian film-maker Ivan Mladenov’s 2005 documentary *Othello*, shot in the prison of Varna, Bulgaria, with a cast of the inmates, and the award-winning 1997 play *Harlem Duet*, by African-Canadian feminist playwright Djanet Sears.

Course objectives for students:

- Develop a fundamental vocabulary for the analysis of fairy tales, literature, and literary and film adaptation;
- Practice and hone analytical and critical reading skills of literary texts, film, and student writing;
- Learn a variety of techniques, including informal and creative writing, for generating and sustaining an argument in an academic paper in literary and cultural studies;
- Appreciate re-vision as a creative process.

As a First-Year Writing course, “Be Transformed” also sets the following learning goals for students:

Be introduced to:

- conventions of formal academic writing in contrast to informal writing
- some types of writing assignments in the discipline

Gain guided practice in:

- critical reading
- analyzing student writing
- writing as a process
- incorporating feedback and revision
- writing appropriately for a given audience

Know:About writing

- that conventions of good writing are different from spoken language and are dependent on discipline, audience, subject and media
- that writing is an iterative process
- the distinction between topic and thesis (thesis=assertion)
- the distinction between primary and secondary sources

About writing as a process

- that pre-writing, composing, and revising are distinct intellectual activities
- the value of varied pre-writing activities (brainstorming, critical reading, etc.)
- the distinction between revising and editing/correcting
- some useful roles readers can play in the revising process

About academic honesty

- when to document sources
- ethical, legal, and professional reasons for documenting sources
- that citation styles vary among disciplines

Be able to do the following at the basic level:Literacy

- read critically
- identify a thesis
- identify and paraphrase argument

Writing

- limit scope of argument appropriately
- develop a clear, arguable thesis
- introduce and conclude a topic
- develop and sustain an argument

- target claims to specific text/data
- judiciously select and effectively integrate evidence/supporting details
- follow conventions of formal academic writing
- make appropriate stylistic choices
- cite and document sources properly
- write grammatically
- strive to write with clarity, coherence, and unity, whether writing narrative, argument, or summary

This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, communication, intercultural literacy, and ethical behavior.

FORMAT, ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION

“Be Transformed” is a seminar, which means that we all share the responsibility for learning. Read all assigned texts (literary as well as scholarly) closely, paying attention not just to content (what happens, what is the argument), but also to form (how the content is brought to life). Thus you may think – and write in your blog – about characters’ actions and groupings; recurrent themes (love, desire, ambition, revenge); striking props and motifs; setting (inside and outside, familiar and strange, center and margin), but also about narrative pacing, structure, and conflict; as well as language (word choice, imagery, style). The ideology, social and cultural contexts of our fairy tales and their literary transformations will also be foci of discussion.

Come to class with passages and topics that you deem worthy of discussion, and be ready to voice your emotional and intellectual response to the readings. Don’t be afraid to ask questions, even though they may seem basic: the art of questioning is at the heart of discovery! I will urge you to pursue possible answers to the questions that arise as you write your blogs; make sure that you bring up in class discussion both the questions and the discoveries you have made in your informal writing in class discussion.

Another important set of texts we will read and analyze are those you will author. Discussions of these works-in-progress aim to develop important skills for success in college and beyond: identifying a topic, developing a strong thesis, structuring an effective and engaging argument, incorporating and documenting appropriate sources. Most of these workshops will be facilitated by Gabriella Torres, our Writing Consultant. A number of them will be conducted as peer workshops. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your writing in small-group conferences with your instructors for the course.

To earn full credit for participation, you must complete all in-class involvement opportunities:

- Provide definitions and illustrations of analytical concepts.
- Advance the discussion raising pertinent questions or making a point with a specific reference to the text under discussion. You should feel free to make use of your blog work at any time.
- Listen attentively and engage productively with the contributions made by the professor, presenters, or other class members. This means listening to what each class member is saying, and what they may *not* be saying. Make an effort to engage with and build on the

contributions of your peers. Be clear and respectful when disagreeing, and refrain from speech-making.

- Put your best professional effort into providing feedback on your peers’ papers.
- Take into serious consideration the feedback of peers and instructors when revising papers.
- There may be unannounced quizzes, should the need arise.

Writer’s Blog (6 entries). This is your lab space to discover ideas, experiment with your writing style and creative techniques for generating ideas, integrate research into your writing. **Only class members will be able to access your blog; assessment will be private.** Blog entries must be **posted before class starts**. They will help you formulate topics and ideas for your formal writing assignments – no easy task to accomplish when faced with the blank computer screen. **Each week, you will respond to the ideas articulated in two blog entries** (more if you like). Try to respond to the work of different writers. The quality of your engagement with other writers’ blog entries will affect your participation grade.

For a more detailed description of the assignment and its evaluation criteria, please **consult the course blog**.

Three formal papers. The first (4+ pages/1,200-1,300 words) will explore the gaps, dissonances, and tensions in the narrative of one of the tales by Emma Donoghue assigned for week 1, as well as what Marina Warner calls the “surprisingness” of their resolution. The second (5+ pages/1,500-1,600 words) will analyze a fairy-tale aspect in *Othello* and will explain how it has been transformed by Shakespeare and to what end (effect). The third (6+ pages/1,600-1,800 words) will explore a relevant political or cultural context of *Harlem Duet* and develop an interpretation of an aspect of the play in view of this context. The third paper thus entails targeted research of the play.

Detailed descriptions of the paper assignments are available on Moodle. Formal papers must be uploaded to Moodle as MS Word or pdf attachments. They should be typed in Times New Roman 12 and double-spaced. Number the pages. Do not include a cover page. Indicate the draft number and date of composition. Paraphrased or quoted sources must be documented in MLA style. For a summary of MLA and other documentation styles, see the Bedford/ St. Martin’s Student Site for Re-Writing (http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting2e/#526483_933800).

A final exam on the literary readings and your grasp of the writing process.

Evaluation

- 10% Contribution to class discussion, peer reviews, blog responses
- 20% Writer's blog
- 60% Formal papers (20% each)
- 10% Final exam

POLICIES

Attendance: Class attendance is assumed; you are individually responsible to cover missed topics and exercises; excessive tardiness or missing more than two class sessions (workshops count as class session) will lower your final grade by one increments for each additional absence (e.g., from B+ to B).

Workshops: Failing to participate in a peer workshop automatically results in a grade of C or lower for the particular paper. No papers will be accepted if you have missed both the all-class and the small-group workshop for the assignment.

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you have a sports or other co-curricular activity that could interfere with class attendance, or plan to observe a religious holiday, please notify me in writing at the beginning of class. Consult the syllabus and check with your classmates on what you may have missed. If you need help with the material, arrange to meet with me as soon as possible before or after the missed session.

E-mail communication: Students must check their Cornell e-mail at least once daily and respond promptly to all course-related communication. Failing to respond to course-relevant e-mail communication within 24 hours will be treated as tardiness to class. Please indicate the course title (or number) in the subject heading of your e-mail.

Paper format and submission: Papers or other assignments turned in late get a grade of F. If you need an extension for health or other sound reasons, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance. All papers must be submitted electronically through the class Moodle website. Acceptable file formats are MS Word or pdf.

Plagiarism (also known as intellectual theft) and cheating will not be tolerated. The official College policy stipulates:

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.

The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in the 2015-16 *Catalogue* (34-35).

You will be sharing a lot of ideas with other students in this class during class discussions and peer workshops. Professional collaboration, however, does **not** involve re-writing other people's ideas, nor asking others to re-write your ideas. Take responsibility for your thinking and your language; give credit where credit is due.

If you're ever in doubt about how to credit a source, don't hesitate to ask me, the Writing Consultant, or a Reference Librarian.

Cell phones, laptops, food: Turn off your cell phone and put it away before class. You may bring your laptop to class, but unless I ask a specific student to look up information, or unless you have a documented disability that necessitates its use, your laptop should remain closed during class. Taking notes with pen and paper keeps you focused; transcribing them is an excellent review strategy. You may bring a drink to class, but not food. This policy, which applies to both the discussion classes and the workshops, is meant to secure your undivided attention and thoughtful contributions to the class.

Help: Please talk to me if you're struggling with a reading or are concerned about an assignment. I'm happy to meet with my students outside of class, and besides, there's always tea in my office. Please note that on Fridays, I hold office hours for students in the adjunct course on Book Arts in the atmospheric print shop in the basement of the VanEtten-Lacey House. You can find me there from 3:15 to 5:15 if there's any urgent need, or if you're interested in the mystery of letterpress printing. If you need to reach me urgently in the evening or on weekends, you may call me at home at 319/337-3879 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

Accessibility and help: If you have a documented disability that requires accommodation, please come see me during the first two days of classes.

Students who need accommodations for learning disabilities must provide documentation from a professional qualified to diagnose learning disabilities. For more information see the section on “Disability Services and Resources” on the Cornell web site

(<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>).

Students requesting services may schedule a meeting with the disabilities services coordinator as early as possible to discuss their needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan. Ideally, this meeting would take place well before the start of classes.

For help with writing, I highly recommend the services of the Writing Studio in the library (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/ctl/ws>) .

SCHEDULE

This schedule is not written in stone. Needed changes will be announced in class.

KW= Donoghue, *Kissing the Witch*

OUT= Warner, *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of the Fairy Tale*

TSIS= “*They Say, I Say*”: *The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*

Week 1

Mon AM Meet Gabriella Torres, our Writing Consultant. Introduction to the class. Fairy tales, folk tales, literary fairy tales, myths. “The Fitcher’s Bird.”

PM Class blog sign-up and intro with Brooke Bergantzel.

Reading HW for Tuesday: 1) *TSIS*, ch. 12 “Reading for the Conversation” (173-83) and *TSIS*, Introduction “Entering the Conversation” (1-14); 2) *OUT* ch. 1 (1-18); 3) *KW*: “The Tale of the Shoe,” “The Tale of the Bird,” “The Tale of the Rose” (1-40). Print and bring to class “The Writing Situation” (Moodle handout).

Writing HW for Tuesday: Blog entry #1 on reading from *KW*. Focus on the making and glimpsing of the Other-world in one of Donoghue’s tales: its geography, qualities, the freedoms and dangers it offers. Try applying the lessons learned from *TSIS*, ch. 12.

Tue PM Discussion of tales 1-3 from *KW*. In-class writing on transforming a literary tale. Introduce paper 1: getting started on an assignment; the working thesis.

Reading HW: 1) *TSIS*, ch. 12 “Entering Class Discussions” (163-66) and ch. 1 “Starting with What Others Are Saying” (19-28); 2) *OUT* ch. 2 (19-43); 3) *KW* Tales of the Apple, Handkerchief, Hair (43-99).

Writing HW: Blog entry #2 on reading from *KW*. Refer to Warner’s discussion of magic and put into practice what you learned from *TSIS*, ch. 1. Focus on a character, creature, or inorganic object from the Other-world in one of Donoghue’s tales and consider its function. Briefly refer to Warner’s chapter on magic and metamorphosis as you explore the motif that has drawn your interest.

Wed AM Discussion of tales 4-6 from *KW*. In-class writing: supplying the missing dialogue; incorporating others’ ideas in your text. **Blog assessment (#1 and 2) starts this afternoon.**

Reading HW: Read 1) *OUT*, ch 4 (73-96); 2) *KW*, Tales of the Skin, Needle, Voice (145-204); the annotated versions and history of either Donkeyskin, or Sleeping Beauty at www.surlalunefairytales.com; Miller and Jurecic, “On Working with the Words of Others” (on Moodle).

Writing HW: Start drafting paper #1. Respond to **two** blog entries by different authors.

Week 2

Mon PM Discussion of the interaction fairy tale/historical experience as evidenced in the tales. For full-class workshop tomorrow, read *TSIS*, ch. 4 “Three Ways to Respond” (55-67) and *TSIS*, ch. “The Art of Quoting” (42-51).

Writing HW Finish a rough draft of paper 1 (at least 3 pages) and bring three copies to Tuesday class.

Tue 9:30 to noon **Writing exercise** integration of quotes in your text (Stavreva); **paper 1 whole-class workshop** on strengthening your thesis and shaping paragraphs (facilitated by Gabriella Torres). Sign up for Wednesday small group conferences (no whole class meeting).

Writing HW: Develop draft 2 and share it with your workshop group members and facilitators by 4 p.m. Additional instructions in the paper assignment.

Wed Small group conferences starting at 9 a.m.

Writing HW: Revise paper 1 in light of feedback (draft #3). Number the drafts and prepare a folder documenting your revision process (including feedback received and self-critique). **Reading HW:** *Othello* acts 1 through 2.1 at least. Hint: read the play out loud and always try to keep in mind where the action is unfolding and what characters are on stage.

Thur **Paper 1, final draft due by 10 a.m.** (Moodle).

PM Discussion of *Othello* acts 1 through 2.1. Consider the setting of the two acts: what are some realistic qualities of life in Venice and on Cyprus? How about magical/Other-worldly ones? What fairy-tale components of characterization would you point out? Is there a tension between realistic and magical representation of the characters?

Introduction of paper 2.

Reading HW: *Othello* 2.2-3.4.

Writing HW: Start work on blog entry #3 (due in PM class tomorrow).

Fri **10 a.m.** Discussion of *Othello* 2.2-3.4.

PM Come to class having written a **research quick-write blog entry #3**. Start by identifying a point of need for additional information: a site whose geography may be important, or a piece of cultural knowledge that you don't quite get, or a myth or fairy tale referenced that it would be great to have a better grasp of. Look for the information in a source from the reference collection of Cole Library, the historical documents or articles in your edition of the play, or Heidi Anne Heiner's web site

www.surlalunefairytales.com. (You may want to consult a librarian. Wikipedia does not cut it.) Pose your question at the opening of the entry, summarize your findings from the source, then write about the new or better understanding of a passage/action/character from *Othello* acquired through the research. Don't forget to list the source. **Class visit by Emily Martin** who will introduce her artist's book *What Desdemona Doesn't Say*.

Reading HW: Finish *Othello*; Carter, “The Bloody Chamber”; Bristol, “Charivari and the Comedy of Abjection in *Othello*,” in the Norton Critical Edition of *Othello*, 350-65.

Week 3

Mon **AM** Discussion of Carter, “The Bloody Chamber” and *Othello* acts 4-5. Discussion of the fairy-tale elements and their transformation in Carter's tale and *Othello* (focus on the murderous groom, on the bride anticipating death, and the role of the helper).

PM Discussion continues. Responding to secondary sources: Bristol, “Charivari.” After class, compose **blog entry #4** testing some of Bristol's ideas against passages or action from the play that he does not discuss. Alternatively, you may want to reflect on the ideas on *Othello* presented by Emily Martin, or compare Bristol's and Martin's approaches.

Writing HW: Respond to **two** blog entries by different authors. Write a finished rough draft of paper 2 and **print 3 copies** to class on Tuesday.

- Tue** **PM** Workshop on paper 2 with a focus on argument and organization, facilitated by Gabriella Torres. Writing exercise on incorporating and documenting quotes from classical drama in verse.
Writing HW: Develop draft 2 and share it with your workshop group members and facilitators by 8 a.m. on Wednesday. Additional instructions in the paper assignment.
- Wed** Small-group conferences as scheduled, starting at noon with Stavreva, at 1 p.m. with Torres.
Writing HW: Finish revising paper 2 in view of the feedback received (draft #3).
Reading HW: *OUT*, chapter 7 “Don’t Bet on the Prince” (132-45); Carter, “The Tiger’s Bride”; Kay Stone, “Burning Brightly” (on Moodle, print and bring to class).
- Thur** **9 a.m.** Upload your final draft to Moodle in one of the approved file formats.
PM Bring to class a printed copy of the final draft of paper 2 and all accompanying materials (folders appreciated). Some final thoughts on Shakespeare’s *Othello* in view of Warner, “Don’t Bet on the Prince.” Discussion of Carter, “The Tiger’s Bride,” Kay Stone, “Burning Brightly.”
Writing HW: by 10 a.m. on Friday, submit **blog entry #5**: reflection on feminist revisions of fairy tales by Carter or Stone (open topic).
- Fri:** 10-11 AM Screening of Ivan Mladenov, *Othello*. For 1 PM class, read *They Say/I Say*, chapter 7 “So What? Who Cares” (92-101) and 11 “He Says Contends” (139-44). We will discuss the film and then look at ways that my writing on the film addresses (or not) the “so what” question (in-class reading and response). Introduce paper 3.

Week 4

- Mon** No class. Read *Harlem Duet*, then identify a historical aspect of the world of the play, or of the play’s composition (where does it fit within the author’s creative agenda?), or of its production history that you would like to research further in order to gain a better understanding of Sears’s work. If in doubt about your ideas for research, check with Stavreva (I’ll be in my office from 9 to noon and 1 to 3).
3 PM: Blog entry #6 due (research quick-write on *Harlem Duet*).
No later than 5 PM: Post responses to two of your classmates’ blogs on *Harlem Duet*.
- Tue** **AM** Discussion of the play with brief presentations on your research findings and the light that they shed on the play. [Blog evaluation starts this afternoon.]
- Wed** **10 AM** Workshop on style with Stavreva: in preparation, read *They Say/ISay*, ch. 9 “Ain’t So/Is Not” (121-28) and bring a section of your final paper in which you’re grappling with a complicated or difficult content.
PM workshop on introductions and conclusions with Gabriella Torres.
- Thur** **AM** Final.
PM Individual conferences by appointment.
- Fri** Post your final papers on Moodle by noon. Leave a hard copy of the last draft and copies of your research materials in front of my office.