

ENGLISH 10: Heroes and Villains

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Read Parts 1 and 2 of *Cassandra Speaks: When Women are the Storytellers, The Human Story Changes*. Then, using the list of “Suggested Choice Texts,” respond to TWO of the following prompts, writing a body paragraph in response to each prompt. You may choose to analyze the same text for both prompts (but focusing on a different moment/scene in your analysis), or you may analyze a different choice text for each prompt. You should complete your work in a google doc.

Each body paragraph should begin with a clear topic sentence that clearly answers the question posed in the prompt and analyze a specific scene from the choice text. Thoughtful and thorough responses will begin with clear claims in each topic sentence, integrate specific evidence from your choice text (direct quotations or detailed paraphrases of key moments in the scene), and provide focused commentary that analyzes the moment/scene in detail and clearly explains your reasoning for choosing this text. **You may also use a choice text that is not on the list, but you must obtain approval to do so first. Please email Ms. Cutalo before moving forward with your choice.**

Suggested Choice Texts:

Films:

Mean Girls (either film version or the stage production)

Wonder Woman

Barbie

Frozen

Moana

The Little Mermaid

Wish

Encanto

Legally Blonde (film version or the stage production)

She Said

Clueless

The Devil Wears Prada

A League of Their Own

The Color Purple

The Force Awakens

Aliens (note that *Aliens* is the second movie in the series, not the first, which is called *Alien*)

The Hunger Games

Across the Spider Verse

Black Panther: Wakanda Forever

Ghostbusters (2016 version)

Television Series:

Gilmore Girls

Mrs. America

Wanda Vision

Short stories or novellas:

"A Jury of Her Peers" by Susan Glaspell

"The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

The Awakening by Kate Chopin

Prompt Choices:

1. In the "Eve" chapter, Lesser reframes the Genesis story, calling Eve the "first grown up" because the "temptation she succumbs to is the most fundamental human yearning- to know oneself, to find one's own path, and to courageously engage with the big world beyond the garden of childhood" (30). As Lesser says, "in mythological terms," this type of narrative is called a "hero's journey," a story that has long been associated exclusively with men. **Choose a text that contains a female hero's journey and explain how the female protagonist embraces "the inner calling to push off from the shore of mother and father, to test limits, to know [her] worth, to speak [her] truth, and to claim authentic selfhood."** Discuss at least one specific scene/example from the text that thoroughly explains your reasoning for choosing this text.
2. In the "Galatea" chapter, after mentioning texts like *My Fair Lady* and *Pretty Woman*, Lesser asserts that "countless other films, books, and the spate of reality-TV makeover shows perpetuate the theme that the arbiter and molder of acceptable female beauty and behavior is men, or the marketplace, or the culture at large. She says that, for her, to awaken from the "spell" of Galatea would mean "letting go of [an] obsession with thinness and [a] resistance to aging, and, instead, loving the form [she] is lucky enough to inhabit, just as is. For [others], breaking the spell will be about losing other kinds of exhausting, self-negating feelings about their bodies and behavior" (71). Choose a text that you feel reinforces the ideal of Galatea, challenges it, or does a combination of the two. Discuss at least one specific scene/example from the text that thoroughly explains your reasoning for choosing this text.
3. In the "Galatea" chapter, Lesser observes a double standard: "When men compete, there's an aura of respectability, sportsmanship, the whole 'band of brotherhood' trope. But when women are in conflict, the stereotype is far from the noble warrior. Rather, it's mean girls, bi****, backbiters, Queen Bees. When women compete, when we try to outpace someone else (each other, or God forbid, a man), words like *ambitious* and *assertive* take on negative, accusatory tones" (62). Choose a text that you feel reinforces this stereotype of women and this portrayal of female relationships, challenges it by representing female relationships differently, or does a combination of the two. Discuss at least one specific scene/example from the text that thoroughly explains your reasoning for choosing this text.

4. In the “In Praise of Fathers” chapter, Lesser argues that “deep inside we all have the capacity to nurture, sacrifice, teach, love- all qualities we normally attribute to mothers” (156). Later, in the “*First First Responders*” chapter, Lesser suggests that there are “other ways to be strong, other ways to show courage. Not always the strong and silent type. Maybe brave and open would be a good alternative” (181). In both cases, she calls for a reexamination of masculine roles and behavior. Choose a text that you feel reinforces typical masculine roles and behavior, seeks to redefine and expand them and presents these changes in a positive light, or does a combination of the two. Discuss at least one specific scene/example from the text that thoroughly explains your reasoning for choosing this text.

5. Choose a text and explore the way that this text portrays power. Do the characters in power display behavior represented in the “Old-Story Power” model (i.e. authoritarian and self-interested, collaborates competitively, withholds praise/encouragement, dominates, interrupts, overrides), or the “Doing Power Differently” model (collaborates connectively, values relationship, empathy, listens, processes, includes), or do we see examples of both at some point? Which of the models does the text seem to value or call for by the end of the story? Discuss at least one specific scene/example from the text that thoroughly explains your reasoning for choosing this text.

Note: Refer to p. 167 for the entire chart of both power models.