

Introduction:

Retellings of conventional stories from the viewpoints of villains (such as *Wicked* or *Maleficent*) have become a popular trend in media. Beyond their entertainment value, these narratives also allow us to shift our perspectives and see a story from a different angle. This activity asks you to create your own retelling of a popular movie, comic, novel, or historical event and reflect on your experience of shifting perspectives.

Activity Instructions:

1. First, choose a movie, comic, novel, event you experienced, or historical event in which there's a clear dichotomy of characters that you like and characters you hate, i.e., one where there's "good guys and bad guys." Take a moment to reflect on the characters or people involved in that piece of media or event:
 - Whose perspective is highlighted the most in that piece of media or event? Why?
 - Who gets pushed to the background? Which perspectives might get downplayed, or which perspectives might be misunderstood? Why?
 - Which characters or people involved in the piece of media or event do you identify with the most? Why?
 - Which ones do you identify with the least? Why?
 - How might your values influence which characters you respect/admire and which that you dislike?
2. Based on your answers to the above questions, pick a character or person whose perspective is not the central focus AND who you don't naturally identify with. Retell the central narrative of your chosen piece of media or event from their perspective. You might draw inspiration from stories—such as *Wicked*; *Maleficent*; *Joker*; *Cruella*; *Confessions of an Ugly Step Sister*; *Mirror, Mirror*; or *Twilight*—that take on the perspectives of the traditional villains in popular media. You can choose to either write your narrative or record yourself telling the story you came up with. If you choose to create a recording, make sure you create an outline first to stay on track. Use the following questions to help you generate ideas and begin to understand their perspective:
 - What do you know about this character's or person's background?
 - Where are they from?
 - Who do they consider their family or friends?
 - What are some characteristics associated with their identity?
 - Did they experience any significant life events that might have shaped who they are?
 - What would you need to know about them to make them more human or likable?
 - Think more deeply about that person's perspective:
 - What do you think motivated this character or person throughout the narrative or event? What do you think they wanted to accomplish?
 - How do you think this character or person felt throughout the narrative or event?
 - How do other characters or people interact with them? How might those interactions influence or shape their thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors? Is there a history between them and the "hero" or the group to which the hero belongs?
 - If you were that character, can you see yourself making some of the same choices or feeling similar ways? *Note:* You are not being asked you to say that the way this character is behaving is ethically right. You just want to imagine how they might have made their choices.



3. Write answers to the following reflection prompts:
 - How did you feel taking on a perspective so different from your own?
 - What did you find most difficult about this activity?
 - What did you learn about perspective-taking?
 - How can you use what you learned in a real-life situation?
4. Once you are finished, upload your written story or recording to the submission link on the course management system.