

## Interpretation/Adaptation

### Essay #2

Rough Draft Workshop: <b>March 21st</b> 1200-1400 words	Final Draft: <b>March 23rd</b> via <i>Dropbox</i> MLA-style (at least 3 scholarly resources)
--	---

### Texts

“The Grand Inquisitor” from *The Brothers Karamazov*, Fyodor Dostoevsky.

*Adaptation* dir. by Spike Jonze, screenplay by Charlie and Donald Kaufman

“The Lovers” (1928) Rene Magritte

“Any Other Way” versions by William Bell, Chuck Jackson, and Jackie Shane<sup>1</sup>

### Prompt

The essay will perform an interpretation of one of the above texts by synthesizing at least three (3) critical commentaries on the work in question. Basically, your goal here is to produce an *informed* interpretation of the works noted above. By interpretation, we mean the activity of close reading--engaged, observant, responsive, analytical--that utilizes the *evidence* of the text to create possibilities of insight and meaning. It is the interaction, the *transaction*, between the reader and the text that not only creates meaning but creates the reason to read<sup>2</sup>.

Think of the essay as a version of a *meat and three* where your interpretation is the “meat” and the resources are the “three<sup>3</sup>” sides. This here reader is a hearty eater, so don’t skimp me on the sides, and the meat should be *falling off the bone*, as it were. (Bone being a kind of metaphor for idea or *motivating insight*). The essay will provide an interpretative framework and will curate the selection of commentaries, thus performing a two-fold action. Firstly, you will research and select commentaries that you value and believe offer insight into the work. This will demonstrate an understanding of the scholarly conversation inspired by the work, which should then clarify and enrich your own interpretation of the work. The essay should strive to present its research with fairness and objectivity, yet utilize the material to refine one’s OWN distinct perspective.

Familiarity with the primary and secondary texts is crucial, and this is bred by relevance and engagement. Your ability to properly synthesize the material depends upon developing a nuanced understanding of the texts. The essay should be an expression of your thought and consideration of the text (after, of course, subjecting yourself to the paranoia of what others think). But really, the research should be a quick, responsible survey of interesting opinions/perspectives on the thing you (read, watched, heard) before beginning the work of extracting value from the text by getting on its wavelength and turning the coin of detail. As Susan Orlean, or some version of her, states in *Adaptation*:

“There are too many ideas and things and people. Too many directions to go. I was starting to believe the reason it matters to care passionately about something, is that it whittles the world down to a more manageable size<sup>4</sup>.”

There are two broad paths to take here. One would be the *theoretical*, which would prosecute a determined interpretation of the text. This active option works from an intuitive hypothesis, an insight into the text, that builds a case using evidence and expert commentary. The other option would be the *critical*, which takes its energy from surveying possible interpretations and

---

<sup>1</sup> Video for “I wouldn’t have it any other way” by Aaron Tippin

<sup>2</sup> Miller, J. Hillis, “Derrida and literature” in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, Tom Cohen, ed.

<sup>3</sup> There are *threes* all over the place here. Laroche, Orlean, and Kaufman; Christ, Inquisitor, Christ; three temptations by the wise and dreadful spirit, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Adaptation*. Dir. Spike Jonze. Sony Pictures, 2003

providing corrective shifts of emphasis. This option chooses among perspectives to highlight or discourage various alternatives, and works by adapting those interpretations into something new<sup>5</sup>.

CRITERIA (points)	Emerging		Developing		Mastering	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Identifies, summarizes (and appropriately reformulates) the problem, question, or issue.</b>	Does not attempt to or fails to identify and summarize accurately.		Summarizes issue, though some aspects are incorrect or confused.  Nuances and key details are missing or glossed over.		Clearly identifies the challenge and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the issue.  Identifies <b>integral relationships</b> essential to analyzing the issue.	
<b>Develops, presents, and communicates individual perspective, hypothesis or position.</b>	Addresses a single source or view of the argument, failing to clarify the established position relative to one's own.  Fails to present and justify own opinion or forward hypothesis.		Position includes some original thinking that acknowledges, refutes, synthesizes or extends other assertions, although some aspects may have been adopted.  Presents own position or hypothesis, though inconsistently.		Clearly presents and justifies own view or hypothesis while qualifying or integrating contrary views or interpretations.  Position demonstrates <b>ownership</b> for constructing knowledge or framing original questions, integrating objective analysis and intuition.	
<b>Presents, assesses, and analyzes appropriate supporting data/evidence.</b>	Repeats information provided without question or dismisses evidence without adequate justification.  Does not distinguish among fact, opinion, and value judgments.  Data/evidence or sources are simplistic, inappropriate, or not related to topic		Use of evidence is qualified and selective.  Discerns fact from opinion and may recognize bias in evidence, although attribution is inappropriate.  Appropriate data/evidence or sources provided, although exploration appears to have been routine.		Examines evidence and its source; questions its accuracy, relevance, and completeness.  Demonstrates understanding of how facts shape but may not confirm opinion.  Recognizes bias, including selection bias.	
<b>Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications, and consequences.</b>	Fails to identify conclusions, implications, and consequences, or conclusion is a simplistic summary.  Conclusions presented as absolute, and may attribute conclusion to external authority.		Conclusions consider or provide evidence of consequences extending beyond a single discipline or issue.  Presents conclusions as relative and only loosely related to consequences.  Implications may include vague reference to conclusions.		Identifies, discusses, and extends conclusions, implications, and consequences. Qualifies own assertions with balance. Considers context, assumptions, data, and evidence.  <b>Implications are clearly developed, and consider ambiguities</b>	

<sup>5</sup> If I may risk a musical analogy: you will learn how to play a specific piece of music through study of its vital interpretations, which your performance will incorporate but ultimately transcend through the struggle of artistic creation. As such, in the theoretical mode, you would be the soloist in a concerto. In the critical mode, you would be the conductor.

<b>Communicates effectively.</b>	In many places, language obscures meaning. Work is unfocused and poorly organized; lacks logical connection of ideas. Format is absent, inconsistent or distracting.	Basic organization is apparent; transitions connect ideas, although they may be mechanical. Format is appropriate although at times inconsistent.	Language clearly and effectively communicates ideas. May at times be nuanced and eloquent.
----------------------------------	--	---	--

Note for short answer questions:

reread the original passage until you understand its full meaning. Write a brief rendition of the essential information and ideas expressed in the passage. Check your rendition with the original to make sure that your version accurately expresses all the essential information in a new form. A NEW FORM. Don't piggyback and try to hide your scalpel.

“No science will give them bread so long as they remain free.” The masses will gladly exchange slavery for bread: “They will understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share between them! They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless and rebellious. Thou didst promise them the bread of Heaven, but, I repeat again, how can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, ever sinful and ignoble race of man?” (300).

- a) If the people that followed Jesus' way goes back to the church, the church will falsely feed them and make them feel worthless for turning against them.
- b) Sounds like some \*cough\* caucasian \*cough\* conversation about the creation of race and religion to control the masses.
- c) The promises of freedom are false, the control of the people just switches from one ruler to another.
- d) They want something in return for giving you bread and that is your freedom. They want the power over you.
- e) People think they want to have an absolute future.
- f) You always owe someone something
- g) People are worried about earthly pleasures over eternal happiness. Temptation and hunger is always around us but in order to gain what you want you have to resist temptation.
- h) The sinful want the bread now, instead of suffering to maybe get some later.
- i) If man cannot get bread themselves then they cannot be free.
- j) freedom is a myth. bread rules all