

Professor Elizabeth Mazzola

#### WHUM Essay #4

Your final essay is due in class on Mon May 11<sup>th</sup>. Once again, it should be typed and titled and carefully proofread, and run 750-1000 words. But the aims are a bit different this time, since the tools of literary analysis will be put to use in a creative writing task. I'd like you to rewrite a scene from *King Lear* or *Death of a Salesman* using a different pair of siblings. A scene involving Biff and Happy might now make use of Goneril and Regan—or Edmund and Edgar; and a scene involving Regan and Cordelia might now instead use Biff and Happy. (You could use Cordelia in place of one of her sisters, but this would mean a huge—but fascinating --shift in how the sisters are paired, right?). You want to choose an important scene and explore what happens when a different set of siblings makes their needs or feelings or ideas known. Ideally, this task will help you: 1) understand a particular scene more fully; 2) get a sense of the considerable craft involved in shaping a play; and 3) force you to deeply consider the different ways siblings relate to each other on stage.

The format of the paper *might* follow these guidelines:

*Opening:* First, introduce the scene and its importance, spelling out what we come to learn about the original set of siblings and how they are connected (or divided) at this point in the play.

*Body:* Rewrite the scene, working with the language of the play, and particularly concerning yourself with the way each character handles speech, shows feelings, and views other people. Although you'll be working with the rest of the original characters in the scene you choose, you might also need to change what they say since they're now responding or listening to a very different set of brothers/sisters.

*Conclusion:* You might, in your conclusion, consider one or more of the following questions. What does this rewrite teach you about Shakespeare or Miller's ideas about family, sibling rivalry, and the role of fathers and/or mothers? What can you say about the original play now that you've examined part of its deep structure in such an extended way? In what ways are Miller and Shakespeare working on the very same project, and in what ways are their goals and perspectives entirely different? What difference does it make that daughters rather than sons (or vice versa) carry such important weight?