ARGUMENT PAPER PROMPT, FIRST YEAR WRITING

Throughout the semester, we’ve talked about a number of villains across all kinds of literature. We’ve discussed Disney villains: Ursula, Maleficent, the Evil Queen, Frollo, and Captain Hook. We’ve discussed villains in popular television: Walter White, Frank Underwood, and Dexter. In reading *Peter Pan*, we debated who the real hero is and who is the real villain—is Peter Pan, the mischievous, reckless, selfish boy really a hero? In reading *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, we discussed Elphaba’s background, her intentions, the background story that proceeds *The Wizard of Oz*—knowing Elphaba/the Wicked Witch through this lens, do you still consider her a villain? Or is she actually a hero? And what of Galinda? Is she a coward, a villain, or a hero?

Consider some of your favorite characters. What makes them good? What makes them bad? Are they somewhere in between? If so, why? What characteristics make someone a hero? A villain? Is it possible to be somewhere in between? Is everything black and white, or are there circumstances that make something okay? Are someone’s evil actions justified if we know where they’re coming from, what happened to make them this way? Why or why not?

Choose a character from a story: it can be a character from a book, movie, television series, graphic novel, whatever. Decide if you think this person is a hero or a villain. Make a case for why this person should be regarded as hero or villain.