



Gothic Literature

Focus: Pastiche

A pastiche is an exercise in literary criticism: it involves changing one or more elements in a work of prose or poetry in order to examine the effects of stylistic variations. Writers can use pastiches to hone their own style, and a pastiche may even lead further, to an original story or essay.

How does one go about it? There are any number of ways, depending on your objective:

- Plot: Take any story and outline its plot. Change the plot outline from a tragedy to a comedy or vice-versa.
- Setting: Change the setting of a story. If the action takes place in a big city, change it to a small town or jungle or vice-versa. Likewise, if the action takes place in the present, change it to the past or future.
- Character: Transform a character from male to female or vice-versa. How will that affect dialogue and action? Or turn a villain into a hero by making the fewest changes possible. Can your character be a villain or hero by actions alone, without talking or looking like one? What's the least you can do to avoid inconsistency? And, of course, how do these changes affect the meaning of the story?
- Point of view: Rewrite a scene in a story from the point of view of another character. Or change a scene by adding senses other than sight and hearing.
- Dialogue: Take a scene in a novel or play and change the level or mode of language: how would the characters speak if they were from another region or social class?

(Webb, Don. "The Critics Corner." *Writing Pastiches*. Bewildering Stories. Web. 22 Mar. 2012. <http://www.bewilderingstories.com/issue197/cc_pastiche.html>.)

Procedure:

1. You will be rewriting your assigned Poe story as a pastiche. You will need to retain enough of the original plot and story to make it recognizable.
2. Choose one of the methods discussed above: plot, setting, character, point of view, or dialogue.
3. Final word count: 1,200 -2,000
4. MLA format: Calibri font, 11 pt, double spaced, standard heading, title, and page numbers. No Works Cited needed.