Allusion Assignment

AP English 12

Allen

This assignment is designed to examine how Biblical histories, parables, events, and figures have influenced the development of Western and world literature. Just as Greek and Roman histories, mythologies, and philosophies have had a transforming effect upon the themes, conflicts, characters, symbols, images, and language employed in Western literature, so too has the Bible. This assignment will reflect on the great works of literature in conjunction with Biblical material in order to recognize and analyze how archetypal characters, themes, and symbols have borrowed from, been influenced, and/or inspired by the Old and New Testaments.

ALLUSION – (n) – an implied or indirect reference to another literary work or event in history in literature.

Two basic sources from which writers draw allusions and metaphors are the Bible and the ancient classical writings (mainly Greek and Roman). Knowledge of the characters and stories contained in the Bible and in the body of myths and legends will add appreciably to the enjoyment, analysis, and understanding of good literature of all kinds. From the very beginning of the literary canon, writers have borrowed characters, plots, and themes from these sources.

Requirements of this assignment included the following:

1. Choose ten of the thirty-three choices listed on the next page. Some of these are from mythology and others are from the Bible. You need to have a minimum of three examples from the Bible and three from mythology. You can split the other four however you would like. These can be all Bible, all mythology, or a mix.
2. For each of your choices, please list the name of the allusion, from where it comes (i.e. Greek/Roman mythology or the book, chapter, and verse or verses from the Bible).
3. Write a few sentences for each of your allusions where you explain what the story is and who the character(s) is/are – basically, you are writing a brief (3-5 sentences) summary of each story.
4. I would recommend that you obtain a translation of the Bible with which you are comfortable and a book on mythology. You can also research most of this online – particularly the mythological allusions.
5. Last but not least, each group will give a short presentation 3-5 minutes on a set of allusions which I will specifically assign to you explaining your allusion to the rest

of the class. You will “teach” the allusion to your classmates. I would include the three assigned to you as one of your ten.

We will continue to refer to these allusions throughout the year so I recommend you are thorough in your research and preparation and that you take notes on the allusions you did not select to research. You are expected to be familiar with all 33 allusions.

**Due typed Wednesday, August 17. Presentations begin on Wednesday.**

1. Book of Ruth (Bible)
2. The Tower of Babel (Genesis 11)
3. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
4. Odysseus and the Trojan Horse
5. Noah and the Flood (Genesis 6-9)
6. Pygmalion and Galatea
7. The Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-3)
8. Daphne and the Laurel Wreath
9. The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha (Genesis 18-19)
10. Echo and Narcissus
11. Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 21-22)
12. Jason and the Golden Fleece
13. Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25)
14. Cupid and Psyche
15. Joseph, His Brothers, and the Coat of Many Colors (Genesis 37)
16. The Birth of Christ (Luke 1-2)
17. Rescue of the Child Moses (Exodus 1-2)
18. The Burning Bush (Exodus 3)
19. The Passover (Exodus 12)
20. Passage Through the Red Sea (Exodus 14)
21. Midas and the Golden Touch
22. Arachne and Athena
23. Daedalus and Icarus
24. Orpheus and Eurydice
25. Samson and Philistines (Judges 13-16)
26. Paris and the Golden Apple
27. Pandora’s Box
28. Perseus and Medusa
29. Jesus and Lazarus (John 11)
30. David and Johnathon (Samuel 18-20)
31. The Death of John the Baptist (Mark 6)
32. Pilate and Jesus (Matt 27)
33. The Agony of Christ (Mark 14)