

## **Greek Roots of Our Western Literary Canon**

*Glenda Thompson*

"Plutarch taught me high thoughts; he elevated me above the wretched sphere of my own reflections, to admire and love the heroes of past ages." *The Monster*

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* 1817

### **Academic Setting**

The Greek Roots of Our Western Literary Canon is a six week unit plan developed for students at Freedom High School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Freedom High is an alternative school for "at risk" students within the Albuquerque Public Schools system. Freedom's maximum student enrollment is 220 and class sizes are capped at twenty. Students with at least ten high school credits may apply, but in cases of extreme need students with less than ten may be accepted. Students may request admission on their own, or may be referred by a counselor, teacher, or principal.

The philosophy at Freedom High includes such ideals as democratic decision making by the staff and students, tolerance and acceptance of diversity, active participation in school, in the classroom, and in the community, challenging academic and intellectual courses, the importance of a safe and caring environment, and acceptance of responsibility. For the most part, these ideals are reality. Due to our small size (which provides lack of anonymity) and encouragement of working together, there is a high level of acceptance and camaraderie. We assess our curriculum yearly and every six weeks as a staff, and continually as teachers to maintain state and district standards and our own standards for academic, intellectual, and personal achievement. And it could be clearly argued that Freedom High is the safest secondary school in the district. Even though we have many kids whom others would regard as "tough," we have virtually no discipline problems. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and their own success, and for the most part they do. For multiple reasons, our main on-going struggle is with student attendance.

The student population at Freedom is always diverse and interesting. There are as many reasons that students come to Freedom as there are students. Some students request to come because they have become disillusioned with "the system." Often, these students are highly intellectual and have high academic skills. Many of them are involved

in various forms of local activism, art, music, and are very well read. Their disillusionment, however, often accompanied by difficult or dysfunctional living situations, has caused them to make poor choices which have affected their success in school. Freedom provides these students with the opportunity to seek out teachers and classes which they find challenging and which provide an environment in which they feel free to be and fully express themselves.

Many other students come to Freedom because they have made unwise choices. Some of them have had legal problems and are on probation. Some have fallen behind from failure to attend or have created life problems which make it impossible to succeed in the regular school setting. Others of them live on their own and/or support families. Our scheduling options make it possible for these students to continue their academic career. As in the collegiate environment, our classes are scheduled Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday. Classes each morning are structured, while classes after 12:30 are self-paced and independent. Freedom operates on a "point system" whereby students earn points for all work they have finished and never lose those points. If a student's baby becomes ill, for example, and the student must miss two weeks of school, that student won't fail the entire semester. In a regular school setting that student would have to repeat the entire semester to earn credit. Instead, when the student returns, he will pick up where he left off and will receive points again for all work completed. Points are added up to earn credits. Some of these students who have fallen behind come to Freedom to work at an accelerated pace. Often they are able to graduate on schedule. In the case of older returning students, they can push themselves, get done quickly, and move on to higher education or employment. In any given year, our students range in age from fifteen to twenty-five; most of them, however, are seventeen or eighteen years of age. Most of our older students live on their own or have families. Often they are working full time while attending school. It takes a great deal of courage to return to high school in those situations.

We also have students at Freedom who have had a hard time in regular school due to emotional or psychological difficulties. Many of these students have suffered and continue to suffer from abuse, and many more from neglect. A sad number of these students have been forced to leave home or find living there very difficult. Small classes and a safe and supportive environment make all the difference for these students. Most of our students, no matter what their reason for coming to Freedom, fall into this category to some degree.

Every teacher at Freedom acts as an advisor. We are each assigned

twenty students whom we are to advise academically and support emotionally throughout their career at Freedom. This relationship is vital to the success of our program and of each individual student. Students meet with their advisor on a regular basis to monitor points, grades, credits completed, schedule changes, and overall academic success. Advisors also make sure that their advisees are making it to school, that they have a place to sleep each night and enough to eat, that they are not abusing drugs, alcohol, or themselves, and that they are getting any help they need outside of school. This relationship is often very intense, almost a parent/child relationship, and can be the most crucial factor in a student's success. It is a tremendously rewarding aspect of teaching at Freedom, and relationships are formed which extend well past graduation. For students, it is very much about learning to trust adults and other people, and learning to form relationships. Students call their teachers, and the principal, by first names. This adds a great deal of "realness" to their experience and helps them to see adults as people and less as authority figures. All of these factors contribute to the students' ability to begin to look at themselves as adults and to take on adult responsibility. Freedom has a very high graduation rate, but our greatest success lies in helping students grow up.

The student population at Freedom is varied and intense. Every kind of kid there is, there is at Freedom. Their academic standings range from B level special education to advanced placement. Every class, except those designed specifically for a certain level of need, will have all levels of students. One thing almost all our students have in common is that they have gotten behind. Most students show up at Freedom with rather frightening transcripts; they are usually at least one semester behind and have earned rather poor grades. The main reason most of them have received poor grades is due to lack of attendance or emotional investment in learning, certainly not lack of ability. Most students, once they have settled into their new environment, regain their true abilities, raise their grades, and get back on track. When they arrive they are not only behind in credits and in literacy skills, but also in "cultural literacy." I never cease to be amazed at the number of students who will tell me that they have never read an entire novel, or how many of them were simply given books by teachers and told to read.

Students learn to read in first and second grades. Students in high school should be learning to read at much deeper, analytically complex levels. This requires instruction. For example, in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, the character Mildred reads a passage from a book:

It is  
computed  
that eleven  
thousand  
persons have  
at several  
times  
suffered  
death rather  
than submit  
to break  
their eggs at  
the smaller  
end.

She then remarks, "What does it mean? It doesn't mean anything!" A student given this book and told to read it independently will have the exact same reaction. In a teacher guided setting a student would understand that this quote is taken from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The passage refers to the characters' refusal to conform to arbitrary and ridiculous societal rules. It is saying that there will always be people who are strong enough and insightful enough to challenge the system when it needs challenging. The main character in *451*, Montag, is challenging the system he lives in and standing up for his right to read and be educated. Students would also understand that *Gulliver's Travels* is political satire, poking fun at British society in the seventeenth century, and not at all a simply plotted story about cute little people. *Fahrenheit 451* is a brilliant lesson in the importance of true literacy. It is loaded with symbolism, Biblical and literary reference and allusion, and truly important themes and philosophical ideas. If taught well, this novel can blow a kid's mind. I have had many kids tell me, after reading this book with guided lessons, that they never knew how much could be in a book, and how satisfying learning to read on a deep analytical level can be. This is the kind of book that opens a person's eyes to the pure joy of reading and learning. With enough strong and meaningful reading experiences like this, a student will develop the skills to read a complicated piece of literature (or a voting ballot with lots of bond issues, for that matter) on their own. It requires challenging academic work and meaningful texts. Cultural literacy comes in part from exposure to our literary canon, and I believe it is our duty as teachers to expose our students to as much of it as we can. This means works with many levels of meaning, complex use of language, symbolism, and challenging philosophical ideas. This applies to students in seventh grade as well as twelfth. "Adolescent literature" is often pablum for

the masses: a nice little plot with some decorative historical stuff at best and no deeper value. It is our job as teachers to educate ourselves and expose ourselves to enough challenging literature that we have many options with which to provide our students. This unit will provide students with the opportunity to sample such pivotal works as *Antigone*, *Medea*, and the Judeo-Christian Bible's Old Testament. Many other works that they will read in their lives will have references and allusions to these. A background in our literary canon makes all of their future reading experiences richer and more meaningful, and also provides students with a greater understanding of their own history.

The Greek Roots of Our Western Literary Canon is designed for my Regular Junior/Senior English class. This class is structured to meet all state and district standards for ninth through twelfth grades over the course of a year. All English classes at Freedom are open to all students: Advanced Modern Literature, Advanced Reading Seminar, Asian Philosophy and Literature, Basics of Reading and Writing, Radical Poetry, and others. Because of the nature of our point system and scheduling, all English classes must be designed to meet the standards for all grades. This means we have to cover a lot of ground. This is difficult, but ultimately our students come away with a very thorough background in Language Arts and Literature. Regular Junior/Senior English is comprised mostly of juniors and seniors, but many of them may have no credit for freshman or sophomore English; this is why we must be so thorough. Freedom, instead of working in four nine-week quarters, is structured in six six-week sections. This provides students with more opportunity to change classes as credits are completed, and as they find teachers with whom they learn best. This can make teaching a lengthy novel such as George Orwell's *1984* very challenging, but we get the job done. In Junior/Senior English we read one novel each six weeks, or a thematic group of readings. Writing assignments are almost always tied in with the reading materials and are varied and progressively more challenging. My classes focus heavily on reading analysis and the development of critical thinking skills. We also do a great deal of discussion and debate. Almost all reading is done in class, out loud, and together. This allows us to address questions as they come up, tackle analysis thoroughly, and helps lower-level readers and higher-level readers alike.

### Goals and Objectives

My goals and objectives for The Greek Roots of Our Western Literary Canon are many. Obviously, my goals include covering all necessary state and district standards and benchmarks. How we as teachers meet

those standards becomes the crucial factor in how deeply our students become invested in learning what we have to teach them, and in how much they enjoy school. Often, that is the one factor that keeps them in school. There is a great misconception in our country that if we want our students to enjoy school we must water it down and fill up their time with touchy-feely "hands on" activities which don't get much deeper learning done. It has been my experience that the more I challenge my students academically and intellectually, the more they enjoy school, the more they enjoy reading, and the more they get the idea that deep learning is cool. I hear many teachers and administrators expound the notion that our students have no attention span so we must cater to that in our teaching. I disagree wholeheartedly. If we want our students to have longer attention spans, then we must teach them that skill. We can only teach them that by having them practice that. This unit will include lots of reading and lots of writing, and a lot of discussion and questioning. There will not be many activities that don't involve those elements. Again, if we teach students to read in a satisfying manner, then this becomes one of the most effective means of learning in the academic setting, and gives students one of the most precious tools they can have for making their own future lives more fulfilling. It worked for hundreds of years. It works in my classroom. The use of rich and meaningful content will aid in reaching more pragmatic goals and objectives such as basic and advanced analysis and writing skills.

It is also one of my major goals in this unit, as in all units taught, to expose students to elements of their own cultural canon, as well as to ideas, images, and literature from other cultural canons. Great literature becomes part of the canon by somehow striking a human chord. It reflects not only who we are as a culture, as a people, but also who we are as human beings. It helps us to understand our links to the past, and sometimes helps us make sense of the present. By reading great classic works from our own culture in this unit, and by reading and understanding elements of other cultures' canons, we hopefully will understand more deeply that we are all the same.

By referring to "our cultural canon," I am of course generalizing. "Our culture" refers to our modern American cultural, linguistically and culturally formed by British and European ideas and influences, these in turn being influenced by the Greco-Roman classics. Greco-Roman ideas were largely a product of multi-cultural input from Egypt, Asia Minor, and Indo-European influences. In almost any classroom there will always be students who are either from other cultures, or because of their identity with a subculture within our own do not feel that "our" canon represents them. I believe that living within our culture

makes it necessary for that same exposure so as to develop a greater understanding of the world in which they are now living, and , again, in helping them to see the connections between our canon, or values and ideas, and their own. Likewise, by understanding the vast multi-cultural influences which created the Western literary canon, they come to see the importance of their own sub-culture's influences on the evolution of the modern canon. The theme of the universality of archetypes in this unit will help all students to see more clearly what we have in common as human beings. It is my goal that they will come to these understandings, and also that they will find the universality of ideas fascinating and intriguing.

Any lengthy and well designed unit in the teaching of Language Arts and Literature will cover many state and district standards and benchmarks. This unit, through daily reading, reading analysis, discussion, note taking and categorizing, question and answer, and work with vocabulary will cover all of Strand I and Strand II within the Albuquerque Public Schools Language Arts Content Standards and Performance Standards for grades nine through twelve:

#### Strand I: Reading Process

Content Standard: The student employs appropriate reading strategies to read and interpret increasingly complex texts for a variety of purposes.

9-12 Benchmarks: The student develops and demonstrates proficiency with a variety of reading processes to analyze, interpret, and evaluate a wide variety of informational texts across content areas.

#### Strand II: Reading Analysis

Content Standard: The student responds to, examines, and critiques historically and culturally significant issues and events portrayed in literature that both illustrate and affect people, society, and individuals.

9-12 Benchmark: The student critiques and evaluates the literary and social merit of a variety of historically and culturally significant works.

This unit will also cover all of Strand III. This will be accomplished through the use of daily writing assignments of varying length, difficulty, and complexity, note taking and categorizing, tests and quizzes which require well structured and developed written answers, and the assignment of a final paper:

#### Strand III: Expressive Language: Writing

Content Standard: The student writes effectively for different audiences and purposes (e.g., to describe, narrate, express, persuade, and analyze) using appropriate writing strategies and conventions.

9-12 Benchmark: The student develops and demonstrates fluency and style in writing and a command of writing conventions across content areas to describe, narrate, express, persuade, and analyze for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Through discussion, debate, question and answer, oral sharing of written assignments, and an oral quiz this unit will cover portions of Strand IV:

#### Strand IV: Expressive Language: Speaking

Content Standard: The student speaks effectively for different audiences and purposes (e.g., to describe, narrate, express, explain, persuade, and analyze) using appropriate speaking strategies and conventions.

9-12 Benchmark: The student develops and demonstrates fluency and style in speaking and a command of speaking conventions to describe, narrate, express, explain, persuade, and analyze for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Grade 9: 1,2,3,6

Grade 10: 2,4

Grade 11: 1,2

Grade 12: 2,3

Through oral reading and discussion, presentation of written assignments, and viewing of films, we will cover all of Strand V except for Grade 12: 2,3:

#### Strand V: Receptive Language: Listening and Viewing

Content Standard: The student demonstrates, analyzes, evaluates, and reflects upon the skills and processes used to communicate by listening to and viewing a variety of auditory and visual works.

9-12 Benchmark: The student critically evaluates the effectiveness of a variety of auditory and visual works, including multi-media presentations.

My choice of content reflects certain goals and objectives. I believe that students need to read a great deal. I believe that by exposing students to lots of ideas, philosophies, styles, genres, and cultural beliefs that we help them to become bigger people. I believe that people innately want to learn. Students who do not seem to want to

learn have somehow been turned off to learning. Very often this takes place in the home if a child is raised in an environment where learning is not valued, or parents are very under educated. More often, however, I believe that this takes place in classrooms where children are not challenged. Students hate to feel as though you are wasting their time or giving them busy work. They know when they are learning, and they know when what they are learning is of value (don't you?). Students should be given materials to read which are at least one step above the level at which they are currently comfortable reading. Students should be given writing assignments which push them to do more (and do what they do more thoroughly) than they have in the past. Most importantly, students should be introduced to ideas which make them think. They should be made to think, to question (they should always ask "why do we have to do this?" and we should always have an answer), and to wonder. We have all seen a student "get it," and the joy it brings them to realize they are really bright after all and that ideas are cool. We should be seeing that "getting it" every day. Our choice of materials can make all the difference.

Far too many teachers seem to believe that using a mass produced Language Arts and Literature text book as their only source of materials is good enough. It isn't. In fact it should be used very rarely. Most text books are made up of excerpted, abridged, and condensed works. A great deal of meaning is stripped from a piece of literature by doing this, and school text books are notorious for doing just that. A teacher should use as many primary sources as is possible. This requires a great deal of time and research, but the difference in what our students learn is always worth the effort. It is my goal to expose students to many interesting and challenging ideas through the work done in this unit. My goals include:

- 1) To provide students the opportunity to read a large number of ideas from various cultures. To encourage students to be open minded about such works and to understand the universal connections of ideas within and between cultures.
- 2) To provide students the opportunity to read great works from the Western literary canon. To encourage students to understand the importance of such works, the effects these works have had on our culture, and what we can learn about our selves, our present, and our future through these works.
- 3) To provide students the opportunity to think through philosophies and ideas which may challenge their own philosophies and ideas. To encourage them to seek out new ideas through literature which will

help them to grow and think in new ways.

4) To provide students the opportunity to read various elements of world mythology. To encourage students to understand the power and importance of myth to humankind, the effects it has had on man and societies throughout time, the power it holds for man today, and the effects it has had on our literature and literary canon.

5) To provide students the opportunity to learn and understand the the power that symbolism has in our lives, our literature, our religions, our art, and our lives currently and throughout history.

6) To provide students the opportunity to learn and understand the elements and purposes classic archetypal figures and situations. To encourage students to understand how these relate to our own lives and our own internal personal experiences, and how they affect our views and perspectives, primarily of women.

7) To provide students with challenging and thoughtful writing assignments which will encourage their growth as writers and as thinkers, and which will challenge their current levels of skill. To provide students the opportunity to increase their level of skill in reading through the use of challenging, interesting, and meaningful works of literature. To provide students the opportunity to develop their public speaking skills.

### **Context and Background**

Every culture in the world, since the beginning of time, has had myth and story. Myth gives meaning to life, answers questions of the unknown, and helps us to understand who we are. There are many ways of interpreting myth and many perspectives from which to approach it. Myth can be explored historically, culturally, sociologically, psychologically, and religiously. There are two general interpretive strategies in the study of mythology: externalist and internalist.

Externalists view myth as a means of explaining our natural world. They also believe that myth serves the purpose of justifying our customs and institutions. Within the externalist view there is the theory of the nature myth. Within this theory myth exists in order to explain the phenomena of the natural world that directly affect human life: the cycles of day and night, the seasons, life and death, or the patterns of weather. Within many mythological systems elements of nature are personified. For example, in Greek mythology, Poseidon causes earthquakes and violent sea storms. Helios is the sun, and Selene is the moon. The family systems of the gods reflect the family

institutions of man. Likewise, in many American Indian traditions the gods show up as animals or in the form of plants.

Closely related to the theory of nature myth is the idea of myth and etiology. One element of the etiology theory views myth as primitive man's equivalent of science: myth explains the origin of things. How was the world created? Where did man come from? Every culture has an understanding of the creation of the world through their myths. Within the etiology theory also lie the answers to questions regarding theological or metaphysical elements of man's world. Why is man not immortal? Why are men and women so different from one another? Why is man plagued with a need to understand? Hesiod's poems, the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, in Greek mythology, answer many of these questions as does Genesis in the Judeo-Christian Old Testament. Hesiod tells us:

How the first gods and earth came to be, and rivers, and the boundless sea with its raging swell, and the gleaming stars, and the wide heaven above, and the gods who were born of them, givers of good things, and how they divided their wealth, and how they shared their honors amongst them, and also how at the first they took many-folded Olympus.

Two more theories of myth are myth and ritual and the charter theory. The theory of myth and ritual puts forth that myth is used to explain customs and social practices the origin of which have been forgotten. In the charter theory, similarly, myths are narratives which supply the rationale for existing institutions, beliefs, and practices. For example, in the *Theogony*, Hesiod gives justification for man's tradition of offering the gods the least desirable parts of animal sacrifices. In a dry and rugged land like Greece, with scarce resources, people could not afford to sacrifice edible meat to the gods. Therefore, they had to justify this practice within their myths. The theories of nature, ritual, charter, and etiology all focus primarily on man's interpretation of his external world.

The internalist views of myth interpretation focus on the connection between myth and man's psyche, or mental processes. The Austrian psychologist, Sigmund Freud, believed that the function of myths was closely related to the function of dreams. He believed that dreams condense and rearrange the events of our daily lives, and render them up in images which are symbolic and reveal subconscious desires. Likewise, he believed that myth serves the purpose of allowing us to violate taboos or explore dangerous psychological ground within the

safe embodiment of myth. Freud divided the human psyche into three basic parts: the ego, the id, and the superego. The ego is the self, or the conscious individual. The id is the instinct, drive, or subconscious primal self. The superego is the moralistic, or ethical, element of the psyche, ever struggling against the id in an attempt to keep the ego in balance. Many mythological systems can be interpreted as having elements which represent these parts of the psyche, thus representing man's never ending struggle to be whole.

Carl Jung, of Swiss origin and a rival of Freud's in the world of psycho-analysis, focused on the archetypal patterns within myth. An archetype is a pattern or image which is universally accepted as representing a common idea. For example, darkness is universally associated with the unknown, the underworld, or evil. Jung noticed the amazing similarities between elements of myths from Italy to Japan, Africa, and around the world. Jung also identified recurring mythic characters, situations, and events throughout world mythology as archetypal. The situations of the hero's journey, encounters with evil beings, and struggles with unidentified beings show up in many mythological systems. Jung believed that these images come from our "collective unconscious," a term he used to refer to the images, symbols, cognitive patterns, or innate assumptions that all of mankind, from advanced technological societies to hunter-gatherer tribes, have in common. From a Jungian perspective, a literal belief in one's myths is not necessary. Great meaning can be given to one's life by allowing the metaphors and images within the myths to serve as answers for life's big questions.

Jung believed that our human unconscious holds archetypal images of both female and male principles. The internal understanding of archetypal feminine attributes such as wisdom and creativity is called the anima. The male archetypal counterpart, which holds masculine qualities, is called the animus. The anima and animus function together as part of our psyches. Since the anima and animus are partly affected by our personal experiences, the internal images may include negative perceptions of femininity or masculinity. One may perceive women as dangerous, nagging and manipulative, or as a castrating force. Men may be perceived as tyrannical, selfish, or as potential rapists. Many myths from around the world deal with these negative perceptions, often giving these qualities, as well as more positive ones, to the goddesses and gods. These images are carried over into the writing of stories. Jung, as well as Freud, believed that this representation of human qualities within our gods and mythic stories, allows us to better understand the make-up of our own psyches. This unit will focus on the universal images and ideas within creation

myths, the archetypal images of female and male and their endless struggles with one another, archetypal symbols seen around the world, and the representation of women in the early works of the Western literary canon. Great emphasis will be placed on the understanding of how these early and universal archetypes have affected our literature and our way of thinking.

Where did the world come from? Good question. In the Judeo-Christian Old Testament, the book of Genesis, Chapter One, tells us,

In the beginning God created the heavens  
and the earth. Now the  
earth was formless and empty, darkness was  
over the surface of  
the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering  
over the waters...And God  
said, "Let there be an expanse between the  
waters to separate water  
from water" ...God called the expanse "sky."

The second chapter of Genesis explains how woman was created out of man, and of course all the trouble man and woman get into. This is the creation story with which most American high school students are familiar. The similarities it has to other creation stories from around the world may seem few, but if one looks at basic images and ideas there are many to discover.

Hesiod was a Greek writer who documented many of Greece's mythological beliefs. In his work, *The Theogony*, Hesiod tells us the story of creation: "Verily at first Chaos came to be, but next the wide-bosomed Earth...From Chaos came forth Erebus and black Night; but of Night were born Aether and Day." He goes on to tell us how the earth and sky came to be separated. Gaea is the earth, and Ouranos is the sky. Gaea wishes to be separated from Ouranos because he has denied their children. Gaea talks one of her sons into castrating Ouranos while he and Gaea are making love, thus permanently separating the earth and the heavens.

Hindu mythology holds many creation scenarios. In the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, the story begins:

In the beginning, this universe was Soul in the form of the Man. He looked around and saw nothing other than himself. Then, at first, he said, 'I am,' and thus the word 'I' was born. Therefore even now when one is

addressed he first says, 'It is I,' and then he speaks whatever other name he has...He caused himself to fall into two pieces, and from him a husband and a wife were born... He knew that he was creation for he created all of this. Thus creation arose.

This very small portion of the Hindu creation myth not only tells us how the world came to be, but serves the double purpose of explaining the custom of introducing oneself with "it is I." In The Bible's book of Exodus, Chapter Three, God says, "I am who I am." Norse mythology tells of "a huge and seeming emptiness" out of which life was created and of how man and woman "grew out of the ooze under [Ymir's] left armpit." It tells of the ash tree which connects all, its branches soaring over all, and its roots delving into the underworld (Crossley-Holland). The similarities between the images of these myths, Greek myths, and portions of Genesis are quite clear. These similarities demonstrate the strength behind the basic concepts and their effects on our own way of viewing the world.

The portrayal of woman in innumerable mythologies has a common, and disturbing, thread: woman is evil. At best, woman is a distraction for man. In Genesis Two, woman is seen as, through her curious nature, the force which brings about man's fall from grace. Hesiod's *Works and Days* tells of how the gods create Pandora as a punishment for man. She is beautiful and tempting, has within her "a shameless mind and a deceitful nature," and brings with her a jar full of woes. Pandora "caused sorrow and mischief to men." Joseph Campbell, in *The Power of Myth*, says that he does not see woman portrayed as "sinner" in mythologies other than Greece and Genesis, but certainly woman is portrayed as evil. Hinduism's *Mahabharata* states:

I will tell you, my son, how Brahma created  
wanton women, and  
for what purpose. For there is nothing more  
evil than women; a  
wanton woman is a blazing fire; she is the  
illusion born of Maya;  
she is the sharp edge of a razor; she is  
poison, a serpent, and death all in one.

In Norse myth, Odin cries, "A man should not trust a woman's word and he should never rely on her promises. The hearts of women were turned on a whirling wheel and imbued with caprice." (Crossley-Holland). I'm not sure what Joseph Campbell meant by "sinner," but surely these representations of women are archetypal

images which have affected people's views of women for eons.

There are also, however, many positive representations of women in ancient mythology. *The Homeric Hymns*, which most scholars believe to have been written by many anonymous poets and recorded by Homer, laud the positive qualities of certain goddesses and of Earth, "mother of all." Of Earth he says:

She feeds all creatures that are in the  
world, all that go upon the  
goodly land, and all that are in the  
paths of the seas, and all that  
fly: all these are fed of her store.  
Through you, O queen, men are  
blessed in their children and blessed in  
their harvests, and to you  
it belongs to give means of life to  
mortal men and to take it away.  
Happy is the man whom you delight  
to honour!

In the hymn to Athena, he speaks of "the glorious goddess, bright-eyed, inventive, unbending of heart, pure virgin, saviour of cities, courageous..." Of Demeter, whose daughter Persephone was stolen away by Hades, the god of the underworld, he admires her deep love and dedication as a mother: "Then for nine days queenly Deo wandered over the earth with flaming torches in her hands, so grieved that she never tasted ambrosia and the sweet draught of nectar, nor sprinkled her body with water." Aphrodite receives praise in that "she gives kindly gifts to men: smiles are ever on her lovely face, and lovely is the brightness that plays over it." The goddesses and gods of Greece hold human qualities, and while they possess negative aspects of jealousy, revenge, and the like, they also possess those best of human qualities (Evelyn-White).

Basic symbols hold a great deal of power. We react to symbols, often from a gut level. In Genesis Two the serpent is a symbol of evil. The serpent is the embodiment of Satan. Oddly, in almost all other world mythologies, the serpent is viewed as a symbol of fertility, rebirth, and of life. Because the serpent sheds its skin, it represents new life. In India the Cobra is a sacred animal. In Buddhism, the Snake King is revered. In Hopi tradition, the snake is a messenger between man and the hills. Joseph Campbell views the biblical interpretation of the serpent as an inherited view that natural impulses are corrupt and sinful, that man is by nature sinful. This raises interesting questions. Why did the desire for knowledge -natural and carnal- come to be

viewed as sinful? Is it a rejection of the symbolism of other religions?  
Of sexuality?

There are many symbols which seem to have universal meanings. The tree is a common representation of life. Genesis Two gives us two trees: the tree of knowledge and the tree of eternal life. Norse myth views the tree as that which connects all of life. Among many Plains tribes of North America, the tree represents balance and dualism. The concept of dualism can be seen in Taoism's symbol of the Tao, commonly known as the Ying Yang. The Ying contains a small bit of the Yang, and the Yang contains a small bit of the Ying. Likewise, the Father Sky and Mother Earth of the Navajo represent duality, and each contains a bit of the other. This bit of the other can also be seen in Greek mythology's personifications of many of the goddesses and gods. The swastika, a symbol which due to Nazism has taken on quite negative connotations, originated in several cultures around the world. The word derives from the Sanskrit for good fortune or well-being. In Hinduism, the swastika is symbol of fortune and good luck. It is associated with the god Ganesha, the pathfinder and remover of obstacles whose image is often found where two roads cross. American Indian tribes also used the swastika, and other four armed symbols, to represent positive ideas such as the four directions or the four races of man. Norse mythology speaks of the four rivers, as does Genesis Two. Symbols are very basic and simple, yet they carry immense significance in our perceptions of the world.

These common motifs, images, and archetypes of myth carry over into the writing of stories. The early Greek dramatists wrote plays which not only used the Greek goddesses and gods as characters, but which also portrayed humans, and gods, caught up in difficult situations. How the characters handled these situations reflects the values of the time in which they were written, as well as the philosophical questions which have plagued mankind throughout time. In myth and story, a situation becomes archetypal when it portrays universally understood emotions or dilemmas. The great Greek plays *Antigone*, by Sophocles, and *Medea*, by Euripides, each present us with characters caught up in situations which we are likely never to experience, but which teach us lessons about human emotion, belief, and behavior, and to which we can relate on very basic levels.

In Ancient Greece, the City Dionysia was an annual holiday at which three sets of three tragedies, written by three playwrights, were performed for as many as 15,000 viewers. The tradition is thought to have been established by the Athenian leader Pisistratus in about 535-533 B.C. The plays were in celebration of the god Dionysus, a god of unpredictable nature. Dionysus, who was born springing forth

from his father Zeus's thigh, presides over, among other things, wine, intoxication, and creative ecstasy. Initially, the worship of Dionysus gave birth to the dithyramb, the ecstatic choral song celebrating Dionysus. Eventually, individuals emerged from the chorus representing the gods, and thus the birth of drama. Tragedy, one genre of drama, deals with the concept of irreconcilable tensions, tensions which are revealed, but not solved. Much of the Western literary canon has been influenced by the early Greek tragedies.

The tragedy *Antigone* is believed to have been written by Sophocles in 441 B.C. , *Medea*, by Euripides in 431. Although Sophocles and Euripides were contemporaries, Euripides was viewed by most Athenians as somewhat controversial and unconventional. Even still, most viewers find themselves sympathetic with the character of Antigone and her philosophical predicament, while most audiences are left in conflict over *Medea*. Both of these literary works have greatly influenced the development of drama and tragedy, and serve as outstanding examples of our own literary roots.

*Antigone* is the classic story of civil disobedience. I have found that students always respond to the character of Antigone and passionately defend her actions. Perhaps this is because I teach at a school with many students who have become disillusioned with "the system" and its imposition of rules into our lives, but I think really it is because we all have an innate sense of justice and right. Background to the story is necessary for a full understanding of the complexity of Antigone's dilemma. Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus, the king who unknowingly killed his own father and slept with his own mother. At Oedipus' discovery of his "crimes," and the suicide of Iocasta, his mother/wife, Oedipus falls from power and blinds himself. His house is then cursed. Oedipus' two sons, Polyneices and Eteocles, inherit the rule of Thebes. Quarrel ensues and Eteocles banishes his brother. Polyneices then returns with an army to Thebes to confront his brother, bringing death to both brothers. Creon, brother of Iocasta, assumes rule of Thebes and buries Eteocles honorably. He then decrees that because of Polyneices' attack upon his brother and upon Thebes he is to be left unburied. In Greek belief this would have left him unable to pass on to the next world, a fate reserved for the worst of criminals. The play begins with Antigone disclosing to her sister Ismene her plans to defy Creon's law and to bury her brother, as it is the right thing to do under the god's law. Ismene is afraid to assist her sister and Antigone proceeds alone. She is arrested and placed in a cave to die. Creon, whose son Haemon is betrothed to Antigone, must wrestle with his need to remain strong and unbending against those who would defy him, and advice from

his son, his wife, and a prophet that Antigone should be set free. As tragedy would have it, Creon decides to free Antigone, but not until after, unbeknownst to him, she has already died. His son then commits suicide, as does his wife out of grief for her son. Creon is left with a doom greater than he can bear, wishing for his own death. This play posts many questions for readers: Was Creon justified? Was Antigone, in her insistence that Ismene tell of Antigone's actions, exhibiting excessive pride? Could this fate have been avoided? What are the tensions here, how do they relate to our own lives, and what can we learn from them? Whose concept of "right" is more "right?" Who defines "god's law" anyway? If we each have a different personal morality, how can we as a society function? etc...The reader is sure to notice that although this play was written over two thousand years ago, our concepts of what makes tragedy good are directly linked to our roots in Greek tragic drama.

*Medea* likewise provides us with many interesting questions, although somewhat more unsettling ones. The background to the play is also complex and has its roots in Greek mythology. Medea, a goddess who is the granddaughter of Helios the sun, has fled her native land to be with her love, Jason. Jason is the famous Greek sailor who sailed in the perilous journey of the Argo to obtain the golden fleece. Medea fell in love with Jason, helped him obtain the fleece through her knowledge of magic and sorcery, and even killed her brother in order to distract her father in his pursuit of Jason and the Argonauts. Medea thus left herself unable to ever return to her home land, and totally dependent on Jason's promise to marry her. Medea and Jason fled to Corinth where she bore him two sons. The play opens with Medea's nurse bewailing the fact that Medea has been betrayed by Jason. He has left her to marry the young princess, daughter of the king of Corinth. Medea is to be exiled, and her sons are to remain with Jason. Medea is beside herself with passionate emotional imbalance. Her hatred towards Jason is so extreme that the nurse fears she may commit some terrible act. Medea, as tragedy would dictate, kills the princess and, inadvertently, the king. Jason can only be rightly wronged, however, by total loss of meaning and goodness in his life. Medea kills her own children to punish Jason, because she says, "The children here are dead. That will sting you." Jason is left doomed to be alone and suffering, while Medea flees in a chariot of Helios', off to bury her children and then to flee unpunished. This play is a marvelous example of tensions revealed, but unsolved ("irreconcilable differences"). Euripides was obviously trying to leave his audience with many questions. Certainly, with similar crimes committed in our own society, we are forced to confront such human weaknesses as unbridled passion, revenge, and hate. *Medea's* influence on Western

literature is great, as is its effect on the reader.

The universal nature of myth, its recurring symbols, situations, and archetypes, and the meaning it gives to the human experience are fascinating and of great literary value. The effects that these myths have and have had on story writing and, consequently on the Western literary canon, are tremendous and quite obvious. The concepts of early Greek tragedy can be seen throughout literary history to the modern day. The King Arthur legends, from sixth-century Britain, bear many similarities to the quests and dilemmas of Greek characters. Modern literature, likewise, is loaded with characters and situations which fit our view of what tragedy should be, what questions it should pose, and what tensions it leaves unresolved. The Monster in *Frankenstein* was greatly affected by four works of literature: Volney's *Ruins of Empire*, von Goethe's *Sorrows of Werter*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and the documentation of great persons of Greek and Roman history, *Lives*, by Plutarch. Reading these works developed the human and compassionate side of the Monster. Likewise, we and our students are affected by what we put into our brains. Knowing the roots and histories of the materials we elect to read gives us a deeper understanding of the literature and of our own lives. Students with a background in mythology and the initial works of our canon will find that it adds greatly to their understanding of literature in general. A great deal of literature refers or alludes to basic elements of Greek mythology and literature. They will also discover that although our canon evolves as we evolve, its roots remain the same.

### **Implementation**

This unit has been designed to last six weeks because of our semester structure at Freedom High. The class it is designed for meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays for two hours each day. This is the equivalent of five forty-five or fifty minute classes in a regular school schedule. We meet for an hour, take a ten minute break, and then finish up with one hour more. To many teachers this sounds unbearable, but it works remarkably well, allowing for more in-depth work and continuity. Again, students come in with short attention spans, and they learn to stretch them out considerably.

These lessons are meant to serve as a basic framework, as I tend to teach in a rather "organic" fashion. I have no qualms about changing directions in the middle of a unit or a lesson. If something is a great hit, we'll run with it, sometimes adding lessons and material if there is a great deal of interest. If something bombs, likewise we can change course. I find it especially important to address this if and when it

happens (it happens to all of us at times). Students hate to feel that you are wasting their time, and I find they really want to be challenged. If a lesson is not working and engaging students, it is important to discuss with them why it isn't working. Is it too easy? Is it too vague, complicated, etc...? We're taught to hide our pedagogical strategies from our students, but I find that they become much more invested in their own learning if they feel they have recourse for feedback. These plans are outlines and can change with student or class dynamic needs.

Unless otherwise specified, **all reading is to be done out loud and together**. I have had tremendous success with this strategy and swear by it. Lower level readers benefit from listening to others use inflection, reading punctuation correctly, and gain confidence from reading in a classroom where all are encouraged to support one another. Analysis can then be done together with everyone contributing to and understanding interpretations and questions. Class discussions are generally handled through a Socratic method, prompting students to come up with questions and answers. Anytime a student will be required to share written assignments orally with the class or when another student will read their work, inform them ahead of time. This may affect what they wish to share. Lastly, **students always take notes** on any readings, class discussions, lectures, or presentations. Students learn note taking and organizational skills, retain information learned, and may use notes for writing papers and taking final exams.

### Weekly Lesson Plans

\*Students take notes on all materials read, lectures, discussions, and presentations.

Week One: Materials- Large white construction paper for each student, crayons, markers, colored pencils, magazines for collage, rubber cement, other pertinent art supplies.

-Joseph Campbell's *The Power of Myth*, pages 41-49.

-*Symbols of Native America*

Day One, First Hour-Explain the basic premise of the unit, how we will be looking at the roots of our cultural and literary canon, and that we will begin with some very basic notions of symbolism. Give each student a large white paper. Instruct students to make a mandala, or picture which symbolizes who they are. They may not use words or narrative drawings (no comic-book like "stories," just symbols). Encourage them to be thoughtful and serious, and to include as many symbols as they can in fully representing who they are. Let them know ahead of time that these will be shared with the class.

Second Hour- Each student will share their mandala with the class. Students will present their mandalas without explanation, while classmates will attempt to interpret the meanings behind the symbols. After class has interpreted, student will tell class the meanings of their symbols. Teacher will lead discussion of the universal nature of many symbols. How did we so easily identify the meanings behind each other's symbols? Presumably, many students will have used symbols wherein which others can clearly identify and interpret the meanings. Discussion will cover the concept of archetypes and how they become ingrained in a culture's language or understanding.

Day Two, First Hour- Read *The Power of Myth*. Briefly discuss the universality of myth.

Second Hour- Look at a few symbols and their descriptions in *Symbols of Native America* and discuss any other symbols that we know of which are similar from other cultures. Discuss the evolution of symbols as well, such as the serpent and swastika.

Students answer in paragraph format:

Summarize Campbell's statements on the universality of myth. Include symbolism (connect also to the Native American symbols), creation myths, and the representations of women. Use at least two direct quotes in your paragraph(s). Remember to have a well developed topic sentence and conclusion.

Week Two: Materials-*Hesiod, Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homeric*, pages 87-95, and 3-9

-*The Norse Myths*, pages 3-6, and 112-113

-*Hindu Myths*, pages 34-35, and 36-37

-Genesis, Chapters One, Two, and Three, New International Version preferred.

Day One: First Hour- Read the creation accounts in *The Theogony* by Hesiod pages 87-95, *The Norse Myths* pages 3-6, *Hindu Myths* pages 34-35, and Genesis One. Discuss similarities and differences. Explain to students that you are including Genesis, not because it is myth (although some students will see it that way, while others will view it as a literal account; this should be discussed as well), but because we are looking at the roots of our cultural views and literary canon. If students are believers, then explain to them that this is the story

format through which God chose to reveal his truth, but it's still a story reflective of the time and culture in which it was put down in writing, and it is subject then to literary analysis.

Second Hour- Briefly lecture to students about the different internalist and externalist views of myth, its etiological functions, and how it works to answer basic human questions about reality. Students may work with a partner or independently. Give each student a xeroxed copy of Genesis Two and Three. Instruct them to read the piece with their partner. As they read, they are to use a highlighter or colored pen to note any parts of the story which seem to be answering basic human questions; they are to explain either on their xerox or on another sheet of paper what that passage is answering. For example: Chapter Three, verse sixteen explains why women have pain in childbirth. When all are finished, go over as a class comparing passages found and their explanations. Explain how whether we believe Genesis to be literal or symbolic, it serves a cultural purpose.

Day Two: First Hour- Discuss students' interpretations of the representation of Eve in Genesis. Discuss our cultural views of women as they may relate to this representation. Read *Hesiod* pages 3-9 (Pandora), *Norse Myths* pages 112-113 (Billing's daughter), and *Hindu Myths* pages 36-37 (wanton women). Revisit student's notes on Joseph Campbell. He commented that he did not believe that women were represented as "sinners" outside of the Bible.

Second Hour- Students answer in paragraph format:

Discuss the representation of women in myth and in Genesis. How do you believe these representations have affected our cultural views of women? Support your opinion with examples, quotes, etc... If you do not believe these views have affected our own, explain and support thoroughly. Share with class and discuss.

Week Three: Materials- *Hesiod* pages 293, 435, 457  
-*Types of Drama, Antigone*, pages 77-97

Day One: First Hour- Read the Homeric Hymns to Demeter, Aphrodite, and Earth. Discuss the positive aspects of these representations of women. Explain that we are going to read a Greek play which portrays a woman in a very positive light by our modern perspective, a woman who commits an act of civil disobedience. Ask

students to write down their own definition of "civil disobedience." Have students share their definitions and come up with an accepted class definition. Ask students to write down any examples of civil disobedience with which they are familiar; a good example to get them all started is Rosa Parks' refusal to move to the back of the bus. Have students discuss their examples. Be sure to mention any they may have overlooked such as the Vietnam war protests, Henry David Thoreau, marches against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, etc... Encourage them to think about our democratic views of civil disobedience and how they might be similar to or different from those of the ancient Greeks. How might our punishments differ? How might we be viewed by others in our society? Have they themselves participated in any acts? What modern day dilemmas might put them in the position of contemplating civil disobedience? What about examples of civil disobedience which we might take offense to, such as shooting an abortion provider? Blowing up a federal building full of people? Certain religious parents who refuse to give their dying children medicine? These questions raise deeper questions which make students love reading *Antigone*. Who knows what "higher law" is? Is your conscience the same as mine? How does a society deal with the different moralities of its citizens? Is man made law the only law we can agree on? Do we even agree on that? Provide plenty of time for this discussion

Second Hour- Give students background information on the story of Antigone's family, Oedipus and the curse upon their house, and the incidents leading up to the need to bury Polyneices. Explain to students that the Greek audience would have already been familiar with the background information. Briefly discuss the role of the chorus, characters, and setting. Assign roles to students and read play.

Day Two: First Hour- Assign roles to different students (you may want to do this again half way through to get more kids to read). Finish play.

Second Hour- Instruct students to write a newspaper article regarding the events of the play. Review the basic elements of a news article (who, what, etc...), encourage them to illustrate their articles. Their articles may be a news report or an editorial.

Week Four:

Materials-Film: *Jason and the Argonauts*  
-*Classical Mythology, Medea, pages 748-777*

Day One- Watch *Jason and the Argonauts*. Fill students in on any more background information they need to understand the events which lead up to the happenings in *Medea*.

Day Two- Assign roles and read *Medea*.

Week Five: Materials- Albuquerque Journal articles: "Many Experts Turn...", "Texas Mom Charged...", and "Mom Reportedly Chased..."

- "When Grief is Gain: The Psychodynamics of Abandonment and Filicide in Euripides *Medea*," by Monica Cyrino

-Students' notes from unit.

Day One: First Hour- Briefly review *Medea*. Students check notes for pertinent information. Read Journal articles. These are very disturbing, as is the play and the ideas behind it. Have students discuss why they think women might commit the crime of killing their children. Begin Cyrino's article.

Second Hour- Finish reading Cyrino's article. Discuss as a class the ideas in Cyrino's article and their views of the behaviors of Jason, Medea, and the chorus. Hand out list of paper topic options. Students will pick one topic for their unit final paper. Students will use the rest of this day reviewing their notes, organizing, and formulating a rough outline.

Unit Final Paper: Standard five paragraph essay format: Introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph. You must have a well developed and articulated thesis in your introduction. Your body paragraphs will be three main categories of information or ideas which support your thesis, each broken down further into supporting material. You must use quotes in your paper from materials we have used in this unit, and include plenty of examples and thorough explanations. Your conclusion must restate the main idea of your thesis and leave the reader with something to think about.

Paper Topic Options:

- 1) The universality of myth and archetype.
- 2) The representations of women in myth and story.
- 3) Antigone and Medea: A comparison of character
- 4) Antigone and Medea: Did they have options? This will focus more on opinion.
- 5) Any good ideas of your own which thoughtfully address what we have covered in this unit. Clear ideas with teacher beforehand!

Day Two: Complete papers. Work will be done in the computer lab

and papers will be typed. Any uncompleted papers will be saved to disk, finished at home, and handed in by first day class meets the following week.

Week Six: Materials: Students' notes from unit.

Day One: First and Second Hours- Oral final exam. Students will each be given one question from the following list. Students will be given fifteen minutes to answer question on their paper in outline format. Students will use their notes and must include specific information from their notes in their answers. Students will then each be given three to five minutes in which to present their answer to the class. They will use their written outline as a guide for their presentation, but it must be well articulated, free flowing, and include more information than is on their paper. This list of questions could also be used as a hefty written final exam.

Unit Final Oral Exam Questions

- 1) Why do myths exist? What purposes do they serve? Give Examples.
- 2) Explain why there may be seemingly different versions of a myth within a culture, using an example.
- 3) Explain what each of the following usually represents in mythology: a)serpent b)tree c)a whole divided into quadrants.
- 4) Define archetype and give examples of an archetypal a)symbol b)situation c)character.
- 5) Describe the creation account in *The Theogony*.
- 6) Describe the creation account in Norse mythology.
- 7) Describe the creation account in Hindu mythology.
- 8) Describe the creation account in Genesis One, Two, and Three.
- 9) What etiological questions are answered in Genesis?
- 10)Describe the creation of Pandora.
- 11)Describe the representations of women in Norse and Hindu mythologies.
- 12)Describe the Homeric Hymns to Aphrodite, Demeter, and Earth.
- 13)Define civil disobedience and give several examples from history and/or literature.
- 14)Explain the background story leading up to the situation in *Antigone*
- 15)Explain the dilemma or tension in *Antigone*.
- 16)Explain Ismene's role in *Antigone*. What is her literary function? What does she contribute to the tension?
- 17)Describe the ending of *Antigone*. Who dies and why?
- 18)Briefly summarize *Jason and the Argonauts*.
- 19)Explain the background of the character Medea leading up to the story in the play.

- 20) Explain the dilemma or tension in *Medea*.
- 21) Summarize the plot of *Medea*. Who dies? How? Why?
- 22) Explain how modern day psychiatrists account for Medea's behavior.
- 23) Explain how early mythology has affected the Western literary canon.
- 24) Explain how Greek tragedy has affected the Western literary canon.
- 25) Give examples of literature from other time periods which contain similar elements to Greek tragedy.

Day Two: The last day of class in each six week grading period is dedicated to conferences between students and their advisors. It is also a time when they may discuss with teachers any concerns about their work and their progress.

This unit is designed to last six weeks. It could easily be extended by including a reading of several King Arthur legends, a viewing of a great Arthurian film like *Excalibur*, and academic work related to the elements of King Arthur which are clearly related to ancient Greek ideas, the representations of women, and a discussion of how the rise of Christianity in the fifth and sixth centuries played a part in the legends. Another great idea could be to examine the meaning of "tragedy." Readings of Shakespearean plays and modern works could easily be incorporated.

### Assessment

Assessment is a question of whether all state and district standards and benchmarks set out as goals and objectives for this unit were met in a satisfactory manner. Students at Freedom must receive a C or better on all written work, or it is returned to be improved. Any work not redone is not counted and students do not receive credit for that work. Students may receive a D or F for classroom participation and other non-written work. Those are then averaged into their final grades. Students receive at least one grade for each day of class, sometimes two or three. Grades are given for the following:

Reading Participation- Student reads when it is his turn, reads alertly and conscientiously, attempts to improve. Student is respectful and attentive when fellow students are reading.

Discussion Participation- Student contributes ideas and attention to any class discussion. Student is respectful of others'

opinions and turns at speaking. Student does not interrupt peers.

Note Taking- Student keeps notes on all materials covered in class. Often notes on materials read together will be taken together to assure all are understanding. Notes must be thorough and contain explanations to the note taker which will make them useful for recalling information.

Written Assignments- All written assignments are graded for content, articulation of ideas and clarity, format and structure, grammar and spelling. Final papers must support thesis clearly, and be typed and formatted correctly.

Oral Presentations- Sharing of daily papers is sometimes required. Student must speak clearly and loudly enough, and be willing to share work when called on. Final oral presentations must be presented in front of the class, student must speak clearly and loudly and at a pace which is comfortable, eye contact must be made, student must follow outline, but must also include more information. Question must be answered thoroughly and be supported.

## **Documentation**

\*Indicates works to be read by students.

\*\*Indicates works cited, but not necessary reading for this unit.

Babineck, Mark. "Texas Mom Charged in Her Five Kids' Death." *Albuquerque Journal* 21 June 2001, sec A:7.\*

This article and the Deardorff and Easton articles deal with a crime committed in June of 2001. A mother reportedly drowned all five of her children. This is very sad and gruesome, but important to discuss this type of crime in understanding *Medea*.

Barnet, Sylvan, Morton Berman and William Burto. *Types of Drama*. New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1993.\*

My source for *Antigone*. Provides a nice introduction and thoughtful questions following the play. However, any good translated version of the script will work just fine.

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal Littell, 1998.\*\*

One of the greatest novels available for teaching a student how to read analytically.

Campbell, Joseph, et al. *The Power of Myth*. New York: Bantam Doubleday, Dell Publishing, 1991.\*

A wonderful book about myth, the study of myth, the universality of myth, and its impact on us.

Crossley-Holland, Kevin. *The Norse Myths*. New York: The Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library, 1980.\*

Very easy to read and brief accounts of basic Norse mythology.

Cyrino, Monica Silveira. "When Grief is Gain: The Psychodynamics of Abandonment and Filicide in Euripides *Medea*." *Pacific Coast Philology*. Volume XXXI, Number 1, 1996.\*

An intriguing article based on the author's work with the University of New Mexico Medical School's Department of Psychiatry. The article discusses the realities of filicide, its psychological and sociological causes, how it is treated in *Medea* and in the myths of Malinche and La Llorona, and the archetype of the murdering mother. A challenging read for students, but well worth the strain.

Deardorff, Julie. "Many Experts Turn to Post Partum Psychosis." *Albuquerque Journal* 24 June 2001, sec A:11.\*

Easton, Pam. "Mom Reportedly Chased Seven Year Old Before Death." *Albuquerque Journal* 22 June 2001, sec A:12.\*

Edinger, Edward F. *Ego and Archetype*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1972.

A fascinating book. Explores Jung's view of the significance of archetype and symbolism in literature and in our lives. Explains how even if we don't have literal faith in our myths, the symbolism can give meaning to our lives. Interesting interpretation of the Biblical book of Job (important information if teaching *Fahrenheit*

451).

Evelyn-White, Hugh. *Hesiod, Homeric Hymns, Epic Cycle, Homeric*. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.\*

A simple and easy to read translation, side by side with Greek text.

Harris, Stephen L. and Gloria Platzner. *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998.\*

Read the whole book! Excellent source for background information on Greek mythology and literature. This will also provide background on *Antigone* and *Medea*. Wonderful illustrations and review questions.

Harris, Stephen L. and Gloria Platzner. *Instructor's Manual and Test Bank to Accompany Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001.

Intelligent and challenging material.

*The Holy Bible*. New International Version. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.\*

Any version of the Bible will work just fine. I prefer the New International for students when reading short passages, as it is very easy to read. For more thorough class work relating to the Bible, use a version with plenty of footnotes.

Orwell, George. *1984*. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal Littell, 1998.\*\*

Owusu, Heike. *Symbols of Native America*. New York: Sterling Publishing, 1997\*

Very simple and easy to read. Clear illustrations of common symbols and their meanings.

Plutarch. *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*. New York: Random House.\*\*

Radice, Betty, ed. *Hindu Myths*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1975.\*

Very thorough. Much more information than you need for this unit, but provides insight into the similarities of myths across cultures.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. New York: Bantam Books, 1981.\*

One of the best novels I've found for teaching allegory and analogy. A beautiful and heartbreaking story of man's search for meaning and his detachment from God.

Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels*. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1996.\*\*

von Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *The Sorrows of Young Werter*. New York: Signet Classics. 1962\*\*