

Greek Influence

Assignment 11

- Read Bulfinch, Chapter 14 and 35. Be able to relate what you read in Chapter 35 to what you read to our discussion below on interpretation of myth.
- Read Ovid's version of the Niobe story from his *Metamorphosis* (online).
- Read Wordsworth's sonnet "The World is Too Much with Us" (posted). William Wordsworth was a rather orthodox Church of England Christian; his brother Christopher was a clergyman in the Church of England; and his nephew Christopher was a Christian hymn writer.



However, Wordsworth's interpretation of myth, is not so "orthodox." He suggests in his sonnet that the gods are products of the imaginative faculty, in contrast to the common Christian understanding for millennia that they are indeed *real* evil deities (as Milton presents in his *Paradise Lost*) which the heathen worshiped. Be able to respond to or discuss the following. 1) Many of the early Church writers saw paganism and its gods as demonic, and that Milton takes them literally, not figuratively. 2) The world itself is, as some of the early Church Fathers, such as Origen posit, an allegory and that everything in may be thought of as having spiritual or moral meaning, including pagan literature. 3) As the poets Wordsworth, Keats, and Cummings suggest in their poetry, the Greek gods are representations or products of man's imaginative faculty and are "real" only in the sense that everything we can imagine has a kind of reality to it. In other words, as human beings, it is impossible for us to relate to the world without constructing some kind of imaginative narrative framework which does not in fact represent the world as it really is.

- Write the five-paragraph Odyssey essay. Remember that it should include 1) an introduction concluding with your main idea 2) three (or more) body paragraphs supporting the main idea 3) a conclusion. We discussed the bow as the linchpin of the epic, but you can choose any of the topics which I posted in a previous assignment page. If you were to discuss the bow as the linchpin, you might discuss 1) it provides a satisfactory conclusion to the conflict in a climactic scene 2) it ties together the motifs and overarching theme of the epic, including "coming of age," the delineation of Odysseus as the hero, and justice/revenge.
- Make sure that you get a copy of **Diskin Clay's and Stephen Berg's translation of Oedipus by Sophocles**. *You must borrow or purchase this particular edition.*
- Listen to **Benjamin Britten's "Niobe,"** which is part of a larger six-part work on Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. Do you think that the oboe as an instrument is especially suited for expressing the tragedy of Niobe?
- After the break we will take a break from everything Greek and start the narrative essay. Please print out **the narrative essay for class** that has been posted online under "Materials Needed."