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Eluding Allusions

Sometimes grueling school assignments such as this one require the patience of Job to complete. Catch that Biblical reference? No? Well, as a practicing Catholic for all of my life, from church every weekend to youth group, vacation bible school and to everything in between, I have learned much about the Christian faith, but even I wouldn't have recognized that allusion. The Department of Education and their school districts, such as WCPSS, should approach creating curriculum and necessary units of study with caution so as to not alienate any one group of people from recognizing information within the lessons taught. Today, school systems and their schools, specifically Leesville, should require that the curriculum and teachers cover or provide any allusions or biblical topics that will be utilized or tested on in each unit of study, ensuring that students have all the materials, preparation, and prior information necessary to succeed.

In many of the literary works such as poems, excerpts, or plays that I have been assigned to read, I have encountered allusions ranging from Sodom, to Cain, David, and many more, all of which flew right over my head. As someone who is as religiously sound as can be, many would assume that at least I would have understood these innuendos from the Bible, and if not me then who? How could the atheist or the Muslim even have the slightest chance at recognizing the deeper meaning to these phrases? The answer is simple. On tests when asked to categorize statements as one rhetorical device or another, or to annotate passages to find the symbolic meaning I often find myself scrambling and guessing to try and pick the right answer. Even during homework assignments I tend to resemble a deer in headlights, dazed and lost as I typically turn to the web, quickly googling slogans only to find out that a simple olive branch actually symbolizes peace. While it is true that higher level or next-level thinking courses generally should be accompanied by more demanding material, it is also not probable to throw us in the water without a life preserver having not dipped our toes into the information, slightly immersing us first. It is not the fault of the teachers, nor even the principals in charge of the schools for allowing us to feel underprepared, but rather the

school systems, such as Wake County, as a whole, for failing to recognize that this aspect of their curriculum isn't applicable to a diverse range of students.

When creating lessons for school systems it is in fact very important to teach the history of our country and many of the religious traditions that our culture is based upon. The First Amendment declares the Freedom of Religion and ability to exercise it so, therefore it is no surprise that there is a plethora of diverse religions and backgrounds present in our student body. While Christianity remains the largest organized religion in the U.S., the minority is at a disadvantage due to the assumption that somehow a wide-range of peers will be familiar with events from the Bible. If the Christian religious sentiments applied in schools don't apply to one's particular situation, then if changed to use allusions from another form of religion, such as Buddhism, there will still always be people excluded from the generalization. This in turn creates the idea that there is no real way to ensure that utilizing these types of rhetorical devices does not ostracize any certain group of students. Because the strategy of incorporating this rhetorical device can not be fixed on a grand scale to encompass all religions, individual school systems and their schools should provide the means necessary to guarantee all religious groups understanding of this material.

The argument is not to say that we need to eliminate these Biblical incorporations altogether, but rather have discussions, notes, links, or powerpoints that can expose students to the allusions that they may later encounter to better enable them to be prepared for future assessments. With judgments as clouded as the conscience of Judas, The Department of Education fails to recognize the varying familiarity with the Bible present among students. Today, actions must be taken to combat the confusion that occurs in the classroom setting, stemming from those mistakes in reasoning. Instead of ridding this subject out of the syllabus completely, as it does enrich the minds of its informed readers, those who partake in the developing of objectives for classes should require that we be taught any precursors before being forced to apply that knowledge. It is not only up to the teachers, who are just a small sliver of the educational pie, but rather school systems as a whole, to take initiative and demand that all young adults have the comprehension and tools necessary to relate to and recognize these references even if they derive from varying faith traditions.