

Essay #1: Allusions in Modern Tragedy

Description: For Essay 2, your job is to identify a pattern of allusions and show how these allusions add to the meaning of the tragedy in the first season of the Netflix series, *Dark*. Choose one of the following:

1. **Musical Allusions:** *Dark* introduces a series of songs throughout the episodes. Explain how the lyrics and any other aspect of these songs fit into the theme of *Dark* and perhaps add to our feelings of pity for the suffering of the protagonists and of fear for the inescapability of our own fates.
2. **Biblical Allusions:** Throughout the series there are various Biblical allusions including verses from the Bible (e.g., Mark 13:33), character names (e.g., Noah), and other material (e.g., reference to the Apocalypse). Identify these and explain how they inform the themes of the show and the moments of reversal that the protagonists undergo.
3. **Pop Culture Allusions:** *Dark* makes allusions to movies (e.g., *The Breakfast Club* and *Back to the Future*), cartoons (e.g., *He-Man and the Master of the Universe*), music videos (e.g., a Falco video), and commercial products (e.g., Raider candy bars, Rubix Cube ...). Explain how these allusions work in relation to the themes of the show and how they inform moments of recognition (epiphanies) and reversals.
4. **Literary Allusions:** *Dark* makes literary allusions to German and other forms of literature (e.g., the Goethe novel *Elective Affinities*, H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* and the German folktale *Hansel and Gretel*). How do these literary and folklore allusions inform the tragic plot of *Dark*?
5. **Mythological and Folklore:** At the heart of the series there are allusions to the classical myth of Ariadne and the Minotaur. (Also Hansel and Gretel.) Explain how this myth works to shape the series.
6. **Historical and Scientific Allusions:** *Dark* alludes to the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl and the anti-Nuclear movement in the 1980s. It also alludes to Einstein and the science around black holes. Research how these scientific and historical aspects inform the plot of *Dark*.
7. **Your Own Combination:** Notice a type of allusion that I didn't put here? Have a set of related allusion that seem to cross these borders but that you believe work together? Run it by me.

General Guidelines: Your essay should follow the typical guidelines for academic essays, including being written in MLA format, having a thesis, topic sentences, etc.

Research Criteria: All allusions must be explained via outside research (even if you already knew about it beforehand). Whenever you bring in outside information, you must cite the source. Sources should be as legitimate as possible. You must have **at least 3 outside sources of research**.

Grading Criteria: Insight, clarity, logic, and attention to detail.

Length: Approximately 1500 to 2100 words. (3000 pts.)