

# An Analysis of Repeated Allusions in Selected Shakespeare's Tragedies

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**Abstract:** Allusion as a prominent literary device is commonly utilized by playwrights to further clarify the scenes and strengthen the meaning of the targeted situation. Explicating the allusions by drama teachers makes it easier to the students to comprehend the dramatist's purpose behind using the right allusion in the right spot of time. William Shakespeare has made use of many types of allusion in his plays, including mythological, literary, cultural, biblical...etc. Hence, this study focuses on the repeated allusions in some of Shakespeare's tragedies; it analyses how the same allusions have been demonstrated in different plays for signifying different ideas.

**Keywords:** Mythological Allusion, Hercules, Cupid, Diana, Hecate, Neptune, Caesar

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## 1. Introduction

One of the literary devices through which playwrights beautify their plays is allusion. They further demonstrate their artistic skills via using various types of allusion. Depending on the cultural, historical, literary, religious, political and mythological knowledge, a tentative audience has to figure out why the dramatist utilizes a specific allusion in a specific situation within a scene. In other words, it is up to the audience to grasp the significance of any allusion inserted by the playwrights, and, furthermore, to comprehend the purpose behind selecting the allusion by the playwright in that specific place.

Elizabethan age, undoubtedly, is considered to be golden era of English drama; the age presented many intelligent playwrights whose works remain influential even nowadays. The brightest one among them was William Shakespeare whose plays have been performed in many countries all around the world, and they have been translated for lots of languages worldwide. Henry Miller believes that "people simply do not read Shakespeare anymore, nor the Bible either. They read about Shakespeare. The critical literature that has built up about his name and works is vastly more fruitful and stimulating than Shakespeare himself" (qtd. in Epstein 3). Therefore, it is utmost pleasure to study his magnificent works even in twenty-first century.

The refocusing on classical literature in the Renaissance

period makes it not surprising to find many classical references in Shakespeare's works. In his plays, he endeavored to touch every aspect of human life by shedding light on miscellaneous themes. To decorate the thematic facets and intensify on-stage feelings, he masterfully made use of various allusions. Regardless to the type of the allusion, several references are repeated in his plays. Below is an analysis of some of the repeated allusions in some of Shakespeare's tragedies.

## 2. Heracles (Hercules)

One of the names that are heard, learned and easily memorized early in childhood is Hercules. Heracles (whom the Romans [as well as Shakespeare in his tragedies] called Hercules) was without doubt the most famous and popular ancient Greco-Roman hero (Nardo 216). He was the son of the god Zeus and of a mortal, Alcmene, who was the wife of Amphitryon of Thebes. Heracles' mother, Alcmene, was married to Amphitryon, also a descendant of Perseus. While Amphitryon was at war, Zeus visited Alcmene disguised as her husband. He wished to father a son that would be a champion of both human and gods. This son was Heracles (Kathleen 62). His outstanding bravery and limitless courage and power have been depicted in many literary works from classical to the contemporary literature. Waith believes that "Hercules was for many Greeks and Romans and for many

men of the Renaissance the hero of heroes,....The number of striking allusions shows that the English playwrights I discuss were aware of resemblances between their heroes and Hercules, though there is no indication that any one depiction of him served as a model" (13). Yet, the origin of the legend still remains ambiguous. According to *Encyclopedia of Greek and Roman Mythology*:

Some stories of Heracles were Greek and Roman in origin, but others were adaptations of legends from the wider ancient world. It is likely that intermingling and overlapping traditions of local heroes from different regions have been amalgamated into the figure of Heracles. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the image that emerges of the hero is complex and at times contradictory, and that a chronological narrative of his adventures is difficult. (Roman and Roman 208)

Despite of the unclearness of the legend, Shakespeare vigorously used Heracles on occasions in different plays, for instance in *Hamlet*, he alluded to the Greco-roman hero directly. In the first soliloquy of the protagonist, Hamlet laments the marriage of his widowed mother to a man 'My father's brother, but no more like my father / Than I to Hercules' (1. 2. 152-3). The Prince contrasts himself with Hercules because he is in melancholy and annihilation he expresses earlier on in the speech, when he wishes that his flesh would melt or that he were permitted by the Almighty to kill himself (Rutter 114). Hamlet, here, through comparing himself with Hercules, compares his father to his scheming uncle. He displays that the dissimilarity between his father and Claudius is just like the difference between himself and Hercules. This comparison demonstrates how Hamlet is bitter inside towards his mother's haste remarriage. Moreover, from the very beginning of the tragedy, even before knowing that his father was murdered, Hamlet perchance wants to introduce himself to the audiences as inactive, unlike Hercules who fulfilled seemingly impossible tasks.

The graveyard scene is another place where Hamlet refers to Hercules. While Hamlet, accompanied by Horatio, converses with the gravedigger, Ophelia's body is taken to the cemetery with the presence of the king, the queen, Laertes and other lords and attendants. Knowing that the corpse is Ophelia, Hamlet jumps into the grave and challenges Laertes. At the end of the scene Hamlet says:

Hear you, sir;

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I loved you ever: but it is no matter;

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew and dog will have his day. (5.1.255-59)

This time the comparison is made between Laertes and Hercules by Hamlet. Hamlet compares Laertes to Hercules. He seems to say that Laertes (Hercules) may do what he will, but the cat and dog-namely, namely Hamlet himself- will have their turn in the end (Bilts 350). It means Hamlet will have his own turn and win at the end regardless to Laertes's straightforward boasting and wish to revenge as how Hercules was known for boasting and carrying out difficult tasks (like his famous twelve labours). In other words, even

someone like Hercules (referred to Laertes) cannot prevent Hamlet from achieving what he wants. Although Hamlet procrastinates the revenge and eventually killed by Laertes's poisoned sword in the duel, he brings about his father's demand which is taking revenge upon the usurper, Claudius.

Regardless to the characters and events that are historical allusions, Antony and Cleopatra is another tragedy in which many mythological allusions are utilized. It can be assumed that Antony, the protagonist, is compared to Hercules in two ways: Firstly, he is depicted to be as brave as Hercules for obtaining victory and ending up triumphant in the battles. His bravery is pictured as Herculean when Cleopatra tells Charmian "How this Herculean Roman does Become/The carriage of his chafe."(1.3.105-106). She uses 'Herculean' to describe the resemblance between the great hero and Antony in bravery which is 'the carriage of his chafe'. Secondly, Antony, like Hercules, suffers from his lover, Cleopatra.

ANTONY. The shirt of Nessus is upon me: teach me, Alcides [i.e., Hercules], thou mine ancestor, thy rage; Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o' the moon; And with those hands, that grasp'd the heaviest club, Subdue my worthiest self. (4.12.43-47)

Here, Antony compares himself with Hercules in terms of suffering; both suffer from their lover. He claims that now he is wearing the shirt of Nessus. Shakespeare alluded to the final moments of Hercules's life. According to *The Greenhaven Encyclopaedia of Greek and Roman Mythology* "Nessus gave Heracles' wife, Deianira, some of his own blood before he died, instructing her to keep it and later, if she ever doubted her husband's love for her, to smear it on a tunic and give the garment to Heracles to wear" (Nardo 126). When Deianira heard about the beautiful maiden, she remembered the vial of blood that she had taken from Nessus. Innocently thinking that the potion would bring Heracles back to her, she soaked a shirt in a liquid made from the blood in the vial and sent it to her husband with his messenger, Lichas (Kalthen 70). The shirt caused Hercules's utmost agony, pain and death, accordingly. Antony believes that Cleopatra is behind the surrender of Egyptian fleet. Therefore, she will be the cause of his death as how Deianira caused her husband's death through the poisoned shirt of Nessus. Antony, considering himself as a descendant of the hero Hercules, requests from him to teach how to feel fury and anger. Being in utmost fury, and putting himself in Hercules's shoes, Antony finds himself in the same situation when Hercules was on his last legs. He promises to avenge Cleopatra who is accused of betrayal. But before this, specifically in the third scene of fourth act, due to his near downfall, Antony is pitied by the soldiers. One night Antony's soldiers hear music from underground; they take the music as Hercules's that is a signal for leaving him. One of the soldiers observes that Antony was loyal to Hercules, when he intuits that "the god Hercules, whom Antony loved, / Now leaves him" (4.3.21-22) ("The Mythological References in Antony and Cleopatra").

*Coriolanus* "the most perfectly shaped of Shakespeare's tragedies, and the one most nearly classical in its form"

(Deedari and Mansouri 241) is another tragedy that includes references to the hero Hercules. Caius Martius, later given the name 'Coriolanus', is powerful Roman general well-known for being honourable, fearsome and immensely brave in battle, but proud. His pride is considered as his tragic flaw in view of the fact that he does not agree to plead for plebeians to vote for him as new consul. From the beginning of the play, the conflict starts between Coriolanus and the plebeians. Brutus and Sicinius are the tribunes elected by the plebeians as their representative in the government. These two regard Coriolanus as a fatal jeopardy to the common people and Roman State in general. So, they continuously work to distance him from power.

After Hercules killed his wife and children, the Olympians commanded Heracles to perform a series of difficult tasks that would not only purify him of the killings, but would also win him immortality (Roman and Roman 210). Equally, in *Coriolanus*, the brave Roman general is compared to Hercules:

COMINIUS. (to the tribunes) He'll shake your Rome about your ears.

MENENIUS. As Hercules did shake down mellow fruit. (4.6.103-04)

Cominius is certain that Coriolanus is easily able to control Rome and retaliate from the multitude, while Menenius in a simile compares him to Hercules as how he, in eleventh labour, shook the garden of Hesperides and stole apples that were guarded by fatal dragon. Showerman believes that Shakespeare's Coriolanus is thus depicted as the hero who will "shake your Rome" like Hercules shook down the "mellow fruit," an allusion to the apples of the Hesperides, the hero's eleventh labour (Showerman 126). Nishi writes, "This simile alludes to the eleventh labour of Hercules, in which he stole the golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides guarded by "an ugly Dragon" called "Ladon," which had a "hundred heads, offspring of Typhon and Echidna," and which "spoke with many and divers sorts of voices" (13-14). Put it in other words, in Menenius's opinion, Coriolanus is decisive enough to eliminate the hurdle created by the plebeians; the Herculean Coriolanus will destroy the prominent antagonist that is the common people.

Then, Coriolanus's pride drives him to be exiled from Rome, a decision that makes the plebeians delighted. Once he decides to leave Rome, Coriolanus endeavors to soothe his mother's grief, Volumnia. He says "If you had been the wife of Hercules/ Six of his labours you'd have done, and saved/ Your husband so much sweat" (4.1.18-20). In his speech, Coriolanus views himself as Hercules's son. This draws the audiences' attention to an unusual relationship between Coriolanus and his mother who says "If my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love" (1.3.2-5). Nishi assumes that her lines are in the subjunctive mood, but it is significant that "Volumnia always imagines herself as the hero's wife, not mother" (21-22). In the above quote, apart from mentioning Hercules directly, there is another reference to Hercules's

story which is 'six of his labours'. The phrase intensifies the famous twelve labours of Hercules.

Finally, plebeians, whom Coriolanus describes them as "the many-headed multitude" like a "Hydra" (2.3.16-17; 3.1.96) led by Brutus and Sicinius, cost his life. Hydra is a reference to Hercules's second labour which was to go to Lerna and kill a nine-headed creature called Hydra. This was exceedingly hard to do, because one of the heads was immortal and the others almost as bad, inasmuch as when Hercules chopped off one, two grew up instead (Hamilton 232). Calling the multitude 'Hydra', a stressful Coriolanus orchestrates the danger of the plebeians; he foresees the incurable headache they will create to him.

### 3. Hecate

In Greek mythology Hecate was a goddess with highly varied associations, forms, and appearances. Her cult also varied greatly, depending on period and context (Roman and Roman 187). In her earliest form, Hecate was a goddess of goodwill who gave prosperity and victory to people. In her later forms, Hecate was a powerful goddess of magic and witches (Kathleen 64). She is most consistently associated with witchcraft, crossroads, the underworld, graves, the night, and barking dogs. Hecate is also linked with the number three: She is often described as triple-formed or triple-faced (Roman and Roman 187). Ford states that "Hecate is the goddess of the crossroads, from which one seeks self-initiation by the congress of her in the Succubi-Fetish spirit. It is through this communion that one enters the caverns of the night, the very Temple of Hecate. Revered as the goddess of the dead, she is the queen of ghosts, shades and phantoms of the night (65). It is right to say that Hecate in literary works is associated with witchcraft, darkness and dismal weather.

Hecate can be singled out in *Macbeth*, simply because Shakespeare has used her in two ways: Firstly, Hecate is a supernatural character; she is given a role and participates in the play directly through quotes like other characters. Secondly, reference is given to Hecate as a mythological allusion which this study aims to analyze. For this reason, Hecate is analyzed only as a reference to the Greek goddess, not as a supernatural character and master of the three witches in *Macbeth*.

In the scene of the dagger (act 2, scene1) Macbeth soliloquizes before he goes to murder Duncan. In his soliloquy, reluctance, psychological confusion, forthcoming fear and guilt are clear manifestation detected in Macbeth's face. He, stressfully, points to a floating dagger that can be seen by him but not clutched. Once the bell rings, Macbeth starts suffering from visual hallucination. To him, the untouchable dagger drives him to Duncan's chamber. The atmosphere is appropriate to murder the innocent Duncan because he describes it and says "Now o'er the one half-world/ Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse/ The curtained sleep" (2.1.50-52). It reinforces the time which is night and half of people are asleep abused by nightmares.

Night, universally, is associated with crime. Then, he says "Witchcraft celebrates/ Pale Hecate's offerings (2.1.52-53). To portray the time setting, he mixes Hecate to the gloomy situation, stating that witches are offering sacrifices to their goddess Hecate at night. This reference to Hecate underpins the fact that the atmosphere is murky and miserable. Macbeth's conscience works as he confesses his 'bloody business' which he is going to do, but his greed for power and intention for usurpation dominate his principles. Forthcoming fear and guilt are noticed in his speech to an extent that he requests from the ground not to hear his footsteps. Thus, Macbeth, through alluding to Hecate, illustrates the dark and gloomy time that is perfect to kill King Duncan.

In the same way, Hecate is used in *Hamlet* to designate negative impact, precisely in the second scene of third act. To test Claudius, Hamlet asks the travelling players to perform 'The Murder of Gonzago' which is to re-perform what his father's ghost told him about Claudius. This 'play within a play' functions as a trap to test Hamlet's uncle; that is why he names the play 'The Mouse Trap'.

The show begins. The king and queen speak with each other; the king foretells the unfaithfulness of the queen while the queen promises to keep her love forever. The king sleeps and the queen goes off. One actor, named Lucianus, comes in and before pouring a deadly poison into the sleeping king's ears, he says:

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing,  
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property  
On wholesome life usurp immediately. (3.2.240-45)

Equal to Macbeth's soliloquy regarding the floating dagger, Lucianus describes the atmosphere before murdering king in *Hamlet*. The thoughts are as black as the night color. Night, again, is coupled with crime and sin. Then, he comes to the poison which is made from weeds. To deteriorate the effectiveness of the poison, he states that Hecate herself enchanted it three times with some influencing spells. Hecate's spoken words to have magic power over the poison makes lucid to the audiences that the king player will be very soon dead. Hecate's spell makes the poison lethal and incurable, therefore, there is no way out for the sleeping king. Consequently in the tragedy, poison plays a vital role to drive the actions to conclusion as major characters, Hamlet, Laertes, Gertrude and Claudius, die due to poison. So, Hecate in *Hamlet* is used to blacken the atmosphere and make the poison untreatable.

#### 4. Cubic

Cupid is another Roman god in mythology that is mentioned in many literary works. He is Roman god of love, son of Venus and possibly of Vulcan, the fire god. Cupid is usually represented as a winged boy or fat baby, often blindfolded to denote his irresponsible nature, and carrying a

bow and arrows, used to shoot his victims (Kathleen 39). Cupid is usually associated with Eros. Eros (Erotic Love) Greek god of love and fertility, called Cupid by the Romans (Kathleen 52).

Reference is given to Cupid in some of Shakespeare's famous tragedies; however, Root claims two facts: (1) that mentions of Cupid are numerous in Shakespeare's plays written before 1601, but very rare in those after that date; (2) that in all but a few instances the references are of a playful character, and that Cupid is not seriously regarded as a divinity of love (qtd. in Storch 44). This study, for that reason, focuses on Romeo and Juliet and Othello in analyzing god of love.

As the soul of the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet is love, Cupid is present in some of the scenes; more precisely, in the first two acts of the tragedy Cupid is given reference to seven times, directly and indirectly. In the very beginning of the first act, image of Cupid commences although Romeo is in love with Rosaline, not with Juliet yet. Romeo announces that "Out of her favor where I am in love" (1.1.173). Benvolio, his friend, commends "Alas, that Love, so gentle in his view,/ Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof!" (1.1.174-75). This response may be interpreted as Benvolio considers Romeo as Cupid who looks gentle but actually rough. Later in the same scene, Romeo pictures Rosaline's hard-heartedness and her forthcoming tedious life; he says:

Well, in that hit you miss. She'll not be hit  
With Cupid's arrow. She hath Dian's wit.  
And, in strong proof of chastity well armed  
From love's weak childish bow, she lives uncharmed.  
She will not stay the siege of loving terms,  
Nor bide th' encounter of assailing eyes,  
Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold.  
Oh, she is rich in beauty, only poor  
That when she dies, with beauty dies her store. (1.1.216-24)

This quote includes two mythological references, Cupid and Diana. To Romeo, Rosaline is difficult to persuade because she cannot be hit by Cupid's arrows as she has Diana's wit (see Diana below). Her cleverness and chastity make her unaffected by childish (Cupid's) arrows and bow. She neither cares about loving words nor loving eyes, and she never accepts golden gifts of love. Romeo finalizes the quote by a paradox. Though Rosaline is rich in beauty, she is poor as well, because her beauty will be ruined once she passes away. So, Cupid is unable to convince Rosaline's heart; his arrow fails to hit the target due to Rosaline's purity and wit.

Then, Romeo, hoping to see Rosaline in a ball held by the Capulets, decides to attend although uninvited due to the Capulets are engaged in a feud with the Montagues. Meanwhile, Benvolio, hoping that Romeo will find another woman, also decides to go to there. Before Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio enter, they wear masks. For that reason, Benvolio says "We'll have no Cupid hoodwinked with a scarf,/ Bearing a Tartar's painted bow of lath,/ Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper" (1.4.4-6). What he means is that they are not going to announce their arrival and entrance

simply because they are not invited and they may frighten ladies with the masks. But, deeply analyzing the illustration of the mythological god of love, a cautious audience realizes that Benvolio metaphorically compares the masked guys, particularly Romeo, with Cupid; Romeo is carrying a toy bow to target a lady as how Cupid is carrying one. Additionally, the speech might be taken as foreshadowing because in the ball Romeo unexpectedly falls in love with Juliet, the daughter of the Capulet. That's why the image of Cupid is, later, proven right and serves the thematic unit in view of the fact that love is the central message of the tragedy.

Later, in the same scene, Romeo refuses the idea of dancing suggested by Benvolio. He says "Give me a torch, I am not for this ambling./ Being but heavy, I will bear the light (1.4.11-12). But Mercutio insists on Romeo's dancing; he comments "You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings/ And soar with them above a common bound" (1.4.17-18). Romeo, again, is requested not to hold a torch, but to act as god of love by having a loan of Cupid's wings and rise above all in dancing during the ball. The compatibility of Romeo with Cupid in more than one situation is marvelously illustrated by Shakespeare; this is because the protagonist needs to play the role of Cupid should he wants to win Juliet's heart.

In the first scene of the second act, when Romeo leaves, Benvolio and Mercutio speak. Mercutio seems to criticize Romeo when he comes to know that Romeo is not around. Knowing already that Romeo is heading to secretly meet Juliet, he calls Romeo to "Speak to my gossip Venus one fair word,/ One nickname for her purblind son and heir" (2.1.14-15). 'Purblind son of Venus' is irrefutably directed to Cupid as he adds "Young Abraham Cupid, he that shot so true/ When King Cophetua loved the beggar-maid!" (2.1.16-17). Romeo is asked to say even one word, one nickname for Cupid who made King Cophetua fall in love with a lower class maid. Here, ironically, Cupid played his part in making Romeo fall in love with an enemy's lady as how he made a king love a maid. The power of god of love is imminent on Romeo's fate miraculously. Ironically, Mercutio means that Romeo cannot hear his words because he is going to meet Juliet. If he could, he would have answered him. Cupid makes Romeo fall in a seemingly impossible love because he has gone to see Juliet.

Then, a challenge letter is sent to Romeo's family by violent Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, because he has seen Romeo in the Capulet ball. Benvolio is certain that Romeo will respond to the letter, that is, he is going to fight with Tybalt. Mercutio, unlike Benvolio, does not think so and sarcastically says:

Alas poor Romeo, he is already dead, stabbed with  
A white wench's black eye, shot through the ear with  
A love-song, the very pin of his heart cleft with  
The blind bow-boy's butt-shaft. And is he a man  
To encounter Tybalt? (2.4.14-18)

As Cupid is not directly mentioned here, a modern translation may be helpful to comprehend the above lines. Belmont Press's book translated the lines as follows: "Oh no! Poor Romeo! He is already dead, stabbed by a pale girl's black eye, shot through the ear with a love song, his heart cut

in two by Cupid's arrow. Now he is man enough to fight Tybalt?" (105). To Mercutio, love costs Romeo's life; he is already hit by Cupid's arrow. 'Bow-boy's butt-shaft' indicates Cupid's arrow. This quote may be taken as a foreshadowing because later in the play the audiences will witness the truth in Mercutio's speech: love, eventually, costs Romeo's life as how Mercutio anticipates. Thus, Romeo is not an appropriate man, Mercutio thinks, to stand against an aggressive Tybalt. In this situation, in Mercutio's opinion, Cupid plays the role of Romeo's killer by his arrow since he falls in love with Juliet.

Juliet is another character to use god of love when she is eagerly waiting for the Nurse. Ahead of the fifth scene of the second act, the Nurse is sent to find Romeo. Having three hours past instead of half an hour, Juliet is biting her nails off while waiting for the messenger to come back. The newly fallen in love couple savours life, though secretly. Juliet, out of enthusiasm, blames the Nurse for being late. She claims that love messengers must be "ten times faster glide than the sun's beams" (2.5.5) and "therefore hath the wind-swift Cupid wings" (2.5.8). The importance of the reference in this speech lies in the fact that love messengers, at least to Juliet, must have wings like Cupid, because the message should be delivered within a blink of an eye. Two points are noticeable in this allusion: First, Cupid is god of love, so love messengers must be like him when it comes to love. Second, love messengers should have wings, like Cupid, and be as quick as the wind so as to assist and pave the way to the process of love.

The only reference to Cupid in *Othello* is located in the third scene of the first act. Once Othello is designated to be sent to defend Cyprus from Turkish fleets, Desdemona asks her father, Brabantio, to be with Othello since she has recently declared her love to the Moor. Hence, Othello takes her side and wants her in Cyprus not to please his sexual appetite, but to fulfil her wish. To further display his war-oriented intention, Othello speaks:

No, when light-winged toys  
Of feathered Cupid seel with wanton dullness  
My speculative and officed instrument,  
That my disports corrupt and taint my business,  
Let housewives make a skillet of my helm  
And all indign and base adversities  
Make head against my estimation. (1.3.269-75)

As the most experienced general, Othello's speech reveals to the audiences that he only focuses on the Turkish attack, and he has dedicated himself to war, not to love or romance. Cupid is mentioned as representative of love and lust. Othello claims that if love (light-winged toys of feathered Cupid) blinds him in Cyprus by making him engaged with sexual relationship with Desdemona instead of conducting his official duties, then let a housewife bring his fighting helmet and use it as a frying pan as a punishment and insult for neglecting his duties. Othello, at that moment, brushes everything aside, including romantic love, he only devotes himself to the war. He prefers war rather than love guided by Cupid.

## 5. Diana (Artemis)

When it comes to hunting, the moon (brightening), chastity and childbirth, Diana is the perfect goddess to refer to. Diana was the daughter of Jupiter (Zeus) and Leto, and the twin sister of Apollo. The Greek equivalent of Diana is Artemis. Etymologically, Diana's name means 'bright' and comes from the Latin word for 'god'. With such a name, she was also considered the goddess of light, woodlands, women, and childbirth. Diana protected wild animals, for she was associated with hunting. Women worshiped her in groves and woods since she was goddess of childbirth and virginity. She was worshipped by slaves and members of the lower classes of Roman society. With her special attachment to wild areas, Diana was portrayed carrying a bow and arrows and in the company of hunting dogs (Kathleen 44).

Matter of chastity is controversial to Othello in the tragedy of *Othello*. Iago, planting the seeds of jealousy and suspicion in Othello's mind, is an amalgamation of duplicity and fake innocence; he makes some devious plans in order to revenge upon Othello who prefers Cassio over him for being second in command. Iago's plan, in short, will be like this: Cassio makes Cassio drunk in order to fight with Roderigo and one of the Cypriot leaders. This fight will infuriate Othello who sacks Cassio and announces Iago as his replacement. Later, Iago encourages Cassio to request from Desdemona to help him regain his position on one hand, and he poisons Othello's mind, on the other hand, by making him believe that Desdemona is unfaithful and has a clandestine relationship with Cassio.

Iago's satanic plan works as trickily pre-programmed; Othello starts to suspect Desdemona's behavior because of finding his handkerchief- which is lost by Desdemona, found by Emilia who gives it to Iago unknowingly, then put in Cassio's room by manipulating Iago. As his doubts escalate, Othello says:

By the world,  
I think my wife be honest and think she is not;  
I think that thou art just and think thou art not.  
I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh  
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black  
As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,  
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,  
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied! (3.3.383-90)

Reference to the mythological goddess Diana, the subject matter is not about hunting, it is about being pure. Othello comes to understand that Desdemona was chaste and faithful previously just like Diana. But his suspicion has overcome him due to Iago's deceit and double-face. To Othello, Desdemona was pure and chaste as Diana, but Iago's tactic proves, on the surface, that she is not. Diana's allusion, at this point, is immeasurably noteworthy because it bridges Desdemona's past with Diana's good characteristic which is chastity. Moreover, the audiences decipher the allusion in a sense that Othello's trust for Desdemona begins to deteriorate and decline although he considered her as Diana, but now her chastity has disappeared. Put it in a simple way, in Othello's

mind Desdemona, though innocent, changes from Diana to a whore.

Equally in *Romeo and Juliet*, Diana is used again to refer to chastity, not brightening. Romeo describes Rosaline as "With Cupid's arrow. She hath Dian's wit/ And, in strong proof of chastity well armed/ From love's weak childish bow" (1.1.217-19). In this quote, Diana has superiority over another mythological god, Cupid. Rosaline is so tough to persuade in such a way that she has Diana's wit; her chastity is just like a strong shield. No man can win her heart because she cares about her chastity. This feature makes Romeo, as well as the audiences, view Rosaline as a hard nut to crack. In this situation, the power between gods veered to Diana, not Cupid. Critically, Romeo, perchance, chooses Juliet later in the ball because he finds Rosaline too hard to convince.

On another hand, adequately in the balcony scene, Romeo alludes to Diana again. When Juliet appears at the window in the beginning of the scene, Romeo gets delighted and says:

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon  
Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she  
Be not her maid, since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off (2.2.2-9)

The purpose behind these lines can be divided into two points. Firstly, Juliet's marvellous beauty is valued by Romeo; she is more beautiful and brighter than the moon. Romeo, in a metaphor, takes account of Juliet as the sun that is superior to the moon in terms of brightness. Via her beauty, Juliet has to overshadow the envious moon. It may be uttered to mean Diana as goddess of the moon. Secondly, Romeo asks Juliet not to be the maid of the moon, that is, the maid of Diana because Juliet should not keep her virginity like Diana. At this point, Romeo is hoping that Juliet ends up different from Rosaline who kept her chastity and distanced herself from Romeo. Unlike Rosaline, Juliet does not have to be like Diana in terms of chastity. She'd better to enjoy life and share bed with Romeo. Consequently, Juliet should not be another Rosaline who had Diana's characteristics.

## 6. Julius Caesar

Before taking Julius Caesar as an example of classical allusion, it is necessary to say that one of Shakespeare's five classical tragedies in Greco-roman world is entitled *Julius Caesar* (other four are *Titus Andronicus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Timon of Athens*) (Kahn 204). Furthermore, it needs to be said that the tragedy of *Julius Caesar* is excluded in this study because Julius Caesar is only analyzed as an allusion in other Shakespeare's tragedies, not in the tragedy of *Julius Caesar*.

If Alexander The Great is the hero of the Greeks, and Hannibal is the hero of the Carthaginians, then certainly Julius Caesar is the hero of the Romans who was born just one hundred years before Christian era (Abbott). He was the

strong statesman and general who turned the Roman Republic into the powerful Roman Empire. Caesar was successful in management; he managed to expand Roman Empire in such a way "in 55 BC he had invaded Britain, and Roman troops occupied it for several centuries: legend had it that he had built the Tower of London. Indeed, the old Roman wall still defined the boundaries of the city of London, and Hadrian's wall in the north was a well-known landmark linking Britain's past to Rome's" (Kahn 205). On 14<sup>th</sup> of March, the Ides of March, Caesar was to get his wish – a sudden and unexpected death – at the hands of Cassius, Brutus and their co-conspirators. The conspirators who assassinated Caesar on that infamous Ides of March of 44 BCE, reputedly more than 60 in number, included many close associates of Caesar (Billows 236).

Due to his strength, greatness, fame and unexpected assassination, Julius Caesar has been referred to in some of Shakespeare's tragedies. For instance, in the very beginning of the tragedy of *Hamlet*, Horatio alluded to the time afore Caesar's assassination in Rome.

HORATIO. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.  
 In the most high and palmy state of Rome,  
 A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,  
 The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead  
 Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets  
 As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,  
 Disasters in the sun, and the moist star  
 Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands  
 Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.  
 And even the like precursor of feared events,  
 As harbingers preceding still the fates  
 And prologue to the omen coming on,  
 Have heaven and earth together demonstrated  
 Unto our climatures and countrymen. (1.1.125-38)

The appearance of the ghost reminds Hamlet's best friend, Horatio, the time before Caesar's assassination by conspirators. He makes a comparison between Rome and Denmark in terms of coming up abnormalities and disorders in nature. Before Julius Caesar's assassination, dead bodies were seen rising from the graves, strolling up and down in the streets of Rome gibbering. Dews contained blood, and the sun and the moon were sick and abnormal. These were all bad omens and signified something bad would happen to Rome. After the above-mentioned disarrays, Caesar was killed. The same may be applicable to Denmark, Horatio believes, because appearing the ghost is something confusing and worth-worrying. Denmark is going to witness misfortune like Rome went through that political conspiracy.

Another reference is made to Julius Caesar in the graveyard scene. When Hamlet holds the skull, he comes to understand the inevitability of death by saying:

Alexander died, Alexander was buried,  
 Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of  
 Earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he  
 Was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?  
 Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay,  
 Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:

O, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,  
 Should patch a wall to expel the winter flaw! (5.1.216-23)

Hamlet contemplates the certainty of death through bringing example of great men like Alexander The Great and Julius Caesar. The audiences witness a Hamlet that is very different from the Hamlet of 'to be or not to be'. He, previously, was uncertain about the worthiness of life and existence of afterlife, but here, for the first time in the play, he rationally overcomes his doubts and reasonably says that even great men like Alexander and Caesar once lived a luxurious life, but they died and returned to dust. Thus, the audiences understand why Hamlet mentions Caesar alongside Alexander, simply due to his greatness and fame in his time, yet he faced death.

*Macbeth* is another tragedy in which Caesar was alluded to. The usurper, Macbeth, is afraid of his friend Banquo because they were together when the three weird sisters told Macbeth three mind-freaking prophecies. After killing King Duncan and getting the throne of Denmark unfairly, Macbeth's mind is filled with killing and life-threatening greed. He, out of fear, plans to assassinate his friend, Banquo. Before hiring hit-men to kill him, Macbeth says "To be thus is nothing;/ But to be safely thus. Our fears in Banquo" (3.1.50-51). He believes that he is not safe as long as Banquo is alive. His fear resulted from some points. First, "his royalty of nature/ Reigns that which would be fear'd" (3.1.52-53), second, "He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour/ To act in safety." (3.1.56-57), third, "He chid the sisters/ When first they put the name of king upon me,/ And bade them speak to him;" (3.1.60-62). Fourth reason is the three witches' prediction about Banquo's future. "They hail'd him father to a line of kings" (3.1.63). Final reason is Macbeth's lacking of son. He says "No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,/ For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind;/ For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd" (3.1.67-69). Macbeth thinks that this equation drives him to confess that if Banquo remains alive, then Macbeth has killed the good-natured king for making Banquo's generation kings. All of these reasons convince Macbeth to take account of Banquo as the most dangerous living threat. As a result, he says "there is none but he/ Whose being I do fear; and under him/ My genius is rebuk'd, as it is said/ Mark Antony's was by Caesar (3.1.57-60). This is an indirect reference to Julius Caesar that can be interpreted as follows:

Macbeth refers to Mark Antony creating a three-man dictatorship with Marcus Lepidus, another general, and Octavian Caesar, Julius Caesar's adopted son. They formed the triumvirate after Julius Caesar's death. Lepidus was expelled in 36 BCE which left Mark Antony and Octavian Caesar in power. Because of the lust for full power, Octavian declared civil war against Antony and won, gaining the title Augustus, and reigning as the first Roman emperor. Macbeth compares his fear here to what Mark Antony probably felt once Lepidus was expelled and he was left alone with Caesar. (*Genius*)

Another interpretation is that "in Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony puts on a show to mourn over Caesar's

dead over to win sympathies from citizen of Rome. Macbeth (and Lady Macbeth too) put on a show over King Duncan's body" (MeanBeans). So, this allusion either refers to the time after Julius Caesar's assassination, in particular to his adopted son, Octavian Caesar, or it refers to Shakespeare's tragic play *Julius Caesar*.

## 7. Neptune (Poseidon)

This mythological god has been mentioned and referred to on occasions in Shakespeare's tragedies. Neptune is, originally, a Roman god of freshwater. He became associated with the Greek sea god Poseidon early in Roman history (Kathleen 99). The Greek name of Neptune, Poseidon, is the god of seas and of horses, and the cause of earthquakes "The Earth-shaker" [he supposedly caused earthquakes]. In ancient times, long before the appearance of Zeus, Poseidon was worshiped as a god of fertility and of herdsman" (Kathleen xi-xii). Indeed, the Romans conveniently borrowed Neptune's whole mythology from the Greeks. Because Poseidon was strongly associated with horses, Neptune was sometimes identified with the Roman god Consus, who also had an important connection with horses. Neptune's festival, the Neptunalia, was held on July 23. The Romans built a temple for him in Rome's Campus Martius (Nardo 107).

One of the references to Neptune is in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Seventh scene of second act takes place on a boat where Pompey joins the drinking triumvirs (Antony, Octavius and Lepidus) in a dinner party. Menas, an ambitious soldier, takes Pompey aside and suggests that it is the right time to murder the triumvirs. To Menas, killing them makes Pompey the sole leader in the area. But Pompey, as a matter of honor, rebuffs the idea, claiming that if Menas would have done it without revealing the plan, it would have been accepted by Pompey. But, now Pompey knows it and refuses it accordingly. Then, Menas, disappointed, says "These drums, these trumpets, flutes! What!/ Let Neptune hear we bid a loud farewell/ To these great fellows. Sound and be hanged, sound out!" (2.7.126-28). This speech may be interpreted as Menas's bidding farewell. After rejecting his scheming suggestion by Pompey, Menas decides to leave Pompey and no longer serve him because he believes that Pompey is not a man of opportunity. Ironically, Menas requests from Neptune to hear the music as well his intentional hidden 'loud farewell'. The setting of the scene goes parallel with mentioning Neptune. God of sea is nearby; therefore, Neptune is asked to hear the music while the characters are onboard. Hence, Neptune witnesses Menas's final appearance in the tragedy.

In addition, in fourteenth scene of fourth act, Antony is immensely overwhelmed by the news of Cleopatra's death. He explains the gap created by her death by saying:

Since Cleopatra died,  
I have lived in such dishonor, that the gods  
Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword  
Quartered the world, and o'er green Neptune's back  
With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack

The courage of a woman; less noble mind (4.14.67-72)

Antony, totally ruined by the news, devaluates himself compared to Cleopatra's greatness. His life is filled with bitterness, rage, agony and hopelessness. Since she died, the single minute's passing has been to him as years. He does not demand anything; he asks only to be carried to her that he may die in her arms (Barker 113). His power and courage can never be compared to hers; he invaded about quarter of the world via big-sized ships sailing over Neptune's back, yet his bravery and nobility cannot be compared to Cleopatra's. Neptune in this quote presents a vivid image of Antony's massive conquering and striking ability in navy. Through this mythological god, Antony shows his past military skills at sea, in such a way that he was sailing over Neptune's waters to invade far-reaching lands.

Similarly, *Hamlet* provides two examples of utilizing Neptune. The first one is in the very beginning of the tragedy. When Horatio sees the ghost for the very first time, as stated before, he refers to the time ahead of Julius Caesar's assassination. Here, Shakespeare is viewed not only as an irreplaceable playwright, but as an astronomer because Horatio's speech reveals the influence of the moon on oceans and seas. Horatio says "and the moist star/ Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands/ Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse" (1.1.117-19). Moreover, Horatio is well aware about Neptune as god of sea and where his kingdom is located.

Elsewhere, specifically in *Hamlet's* 'Murder of Gonzago', the player king refers to a group of mythological gods to denote the fact that thirty years have passed. He quotes "Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round/ Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orb'd ground" (3.2.142-44). It means Neptune's water has washed Tellus' ground thirty times. Many scholars see Tellus as an equivalent of the Greek Gaia, the Earth Mother (Kathleen 123). It signifies the fact that through the function of the god and goddess, the king player wants to indirectly say that thirty years have passed since he married the queen player. Via mythological allusions, the king player desires to express himself in an artistic way.

Likewise in *Macbeth*, having just murdered the innocent king Duncan, the newly corrupted Macbeth creates a beautiful image in the audiences' minds through Neptune. He confusingly asks an idealistic question; he utters "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand?" (2.2.59-60). This question strengthens the symbol of blood in the tragedy by bringing Neptune's water into action. It, furthermore, demonstrates the severity of the crime which is even out of the gods' hands to rectify. It can be explicated that Macbeth is quite sure that the deed is unforgivable; there is no going back as Duncan is a dead guest in his castle. He asks whether Neptune's water is capable of washing his bloody hands or not. 'All great Neptune's ocean' synonymises all water worldwide that cannot wash Duncan's blood covered Macbeth's hands. This hyperbolic image remains in the audiences' minds until the conclusion of the tragedy. So, in *Macbeth*, Neptune is brought in to show that



he is unable to fix Macbeth's fatal deed.

Last but not least, *Coriolanus* sheds light on Neptune's symbol which is 'the three-tined trident, a symbol for the thunderbolt' (Kathleen xi). Menenius points out Coriolanus's weak point; he speaks "His nature is too noble for the world/ He would not flatter Neptune for his trident/ Or Jove for's power to thunder" (3.1.255-57). His speech interweaves Coriolanus's tragic flaw with Neptune's (Poseidon's) symbol. According to him, Coriolanus's tragic flaw is his pride and inability to flatter the common people and ask them to vote for him, a characteristic which is too noble. Storch writes "he [Coriolanus] hurts himself more than anyone else by this uncontrolled anger. It is true that it is his hatred of flattery which is at basis the cause of his troubles and misunderstandings; but to all but those who know him intimately, he appears only insufferably proud (89)". Consequently, Coriolanus's lack of flattering poses a big problem for him. Not only to common people, he even does not flatter the god of water, Neptune, and the god of sky, Jove, despite of having trident in his hands and power for striking thunders respectively.

## 8. Conclusion

After taking six examples of allusions in selected Shakespeare's tragedies, it is concluded that the audiences have to possess a variety of knowledge in order to decode the allusions and realize the real purpose behind using them. To sum up, Shakespeare, as an exceptional playwright, not only uses different allusions, he uses same allusions in different situations to give different ideas.

Hercules is known for his bravery, yet he is used for referring to other purposes apart from courage. Despite of his bravery, Hercules cannot stop Hamlet from taking revenge in the graveyard scene, while Hamlet's father is compared to Hercules for being brave. *Antony and Cleopatra* unfolds another fact in Hercules's life which is, Antony, like Hercules, suffers from his lover; meanwhile there are some references to Hercules's famous twelve labours in *Coriolanus*.

In the same way, Cupid and Diana are used not only to represent god of love and goddess of hunting; they overlap each other in the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet*, particularly when Romeo fails to win Rosaline's love. He summarizes his failure as 'Cupid's arrow fails while Diana's wit wins'. In addition, Benvolio and Mercutio compare Romeo to Cupid once he falls in love with Juliet. Far from god of love, Cupid is used by Juliet to signify someone having wing and be quick. When she is waiting for the messenger, she says that the love messengers should have wings and be as quick as Cupid. Unlike *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* pays less attention to Cupid's capability; Cupid cannot make Othello neglect his military duties.

Diana is dominant over Cupid in the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet* when Rosaline keeps her chastity, but Desdemona in *Othello* is no longer Diana because Iago's plans cause Othello suspect Desdemona's faithfulness. Additionally, Juliet embodies Diana not for chastity, but for being bright

and shiny since Diana is the goddess of the moon as well. Juliet is as beautiful and bright as Diana, but she is not as chaste as Diana.

Although Hecate is a supernatural character in *Macbeth*, she is referred to as an allusion in the dagger scene when Macbeth uses Hecate to flavor the jeopardy of night. Likewise in *Hamlet*, Lucianus, an actor in the play with in a play, uses Hecate to show the strength of the poison he pours into the sleeping king's era. He says the poison is so deadly that Hecate enchanted magic words three times over it.

Julius Caesar is alluded to twice in *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* differently. Horatio refers to the time before Caesar's assassination, while Macbeth makes use of Caesar to refer to the time after Caesar's death. Moreover, Hamlet brings Julius Caesar as an example to the bitter truth that everyone, regardless to the rank, is mortal since Caesar died.

Neptune, god of sea and ocean, is another noticeable allusion in Shakespeare's tragedies that is stated for different reasons. Menas, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, asks Neptune to hear his farewell because he is disappointed and wants to leave Pompey. On the other hand, Antony exhibits his navy ability in the past through Neptune. He claims that he invaded many lands through Neptune's back, that is, by using fleets and ships. Additionally, *Hamlet* discloses Shakespeare's knowledge in astronomy. Horatio utters the influences of Neptune (the oceans) on the moon, while the king player announces that Neptune's water has washed Tellus's ground thirty times. Besides, *Macbeth* provides probably the most remarkable image in all Shakespeare's tragedy through Neptune. Macbeth, after coming back from murdering Duncan, asks whether all Neptune's oceans are able to wash the blood away from his hands or not. Meanwhile, *Coriolanus* supplies another example of Neptune, this time through the protagonist's tragic flaw. Coriolanus, according to Menenius, does not even flatter to Neptune and Jove though they are gods.

To sum up, it is inferred that drama teachers should widen their cultural and mythological knowledge so as to thoroughly cover the allusions. Teachers must, at some points, be familiar with multi-cultural aspects if they want to effectively teach drama, especially Shakespeare's plays. In order to apply the interactive method of teaching drama, instructors should involve the students to participate actively in the classes. In this regard, it is recommended that the origin and background of the allusions to be distributed over the students to explain in class. Visual approach would be useful when it comes to the mythological gods and goddesses.

Finally, and hopefully, further studies will be conducted to investigate more allusions in Shakespeare's plays since they are rich with literary devices and prolific for cultural, historical, religious, literary and mythological information. Identical allusions are recommended to be found and analyzed in Shakespeare's comedies, because to be familiar with the allusions, drama teachers as well as students require extra knowledge to understand them.

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