

The Use of Allusion: A Study in Selected Poems and Poets of The Renaissance Age

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ABSTRACT

The Renaissance poets use allusion in their poetry. It is a central characteristic of the Renaissance Poetry. The poets' depth of knowledge and skill with language is evident in their literary works. The abundant use of classical allusions in their poetry add to the rich descriptions and images included in the poem. The paper tries to list and analyze the important classical allusions found in selected works of Sir Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. As they increase their understanding like. They help readers anticipate events by comparing events myths, historical, literary and religious with events in the poem to find similarities or differences.

Keywords: *Allusion; historical; mythological; literary; religious*

DEFINITION OF ALLUSION

In general, an allusion is a reference to place, event, person, thing, or a literary work which probably known or familiar to the reader. In other words, it is a statement that alludes to something without directly mentioning it and we expect the other person to understand what we are hinting to. Allusion Examples in Everyday Speech, his job is like pulling a sword out of a stone. (King Arthur Legend), can't seem to take his gaze away from himself (allusion to Narcissus) and she's a good swimmer, but she's no Ariel. (allusion to *The Little Mermaid*)

In literature, is a figure of speech, allusion is a reference within a work to something well-known outside of it, such as a well-known person, place, event, story, or piece of art, literature, music, pop culture, idea of historical, cultural, literary or political significance. In other words, allusion is when the poet or the author (producer) makes an indirect or implied reference to a person, figure, event, or thing or to a part of another text. The reader (recipient) supposed to know what the producer refers to. For example, T.S. Eliot's *The Hollow Men*. The title of the poem itself is a combination of with the title of a poem by Rudyard Kipling *The Broken Men* and William Morris's book *The Hollow Land*. Another theory is that the title was inspired by Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*:(Murphy, 2007)

There are no tricks in plain and simple faith, But
hollow men, like horses hot at hand, Make gallant
show and promise of their mettle, But when they
should endure the bloody spur, They fall their crests,
and like deceitful jades, Sink in the trial.(Act V, Sc. 3, line 55)

Anyway, the term "hollow man" refers to someone who is spiritually, morally and ethically empty. Their life is meaningless. "Lost violent souls" refers to lost souls that are hollow rather than malevolent.

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Allusions can be direct and the author directs the reader's attention to something very specific. For example, looking like Venus (alluding to the goddess of beauty). In other instances, an allusion may be indirect. The mention is so casual and so subtle that the reader may not even pick up on it. For example, if I'm not home by midnight, my car might turn into a pumpkin. (Cinderella).

THE MEANING OF ALLUSION

It came from the Latin noun *allusionem* "a playing with, a reference to," from *alludere* "to play, jest, make fun of," a compound of *ad* "to" + *ludere* "to play around". Most allusions come from Bible and the Greek mythology over time allusion developed and many types appeared.

THE TYPES OF ALLUSION

There are five types of allusion, historical, mythological, literary, religious (Biblical) and cultural (pop culture). Historical allusion is an allusion to a historical event, period, situations, people or things existed in the past. For example, "Susan met her Waterloo in Chess". Waterloo was a battle led by Napoleon. In the end, a coalition of European forces defeated his army. The term Waterloo refers to a decisive, crushing defeat of any sort. Mythological allusion is an allusion to a mythological figure or story. For example, He was a shrewd business man and investor, but his Achilles heel was gambling. In Greek mythology, Achilles was a strong warrior, as a baby his mother dipped him in the River Styx, his whole body was protected except his heel, the place he was held by when being dipped was left vulnerable, he died when Paris fired him with an arrow in his heel. An Achilles heel refers to a person's vulnerability or fatal flaw. Literary allusion is an allusion to a literary text or figure. For example, "Don't be such a Scrooge!" it alludes to Dickens' *A Christmas Story*. The character Scrooge hated Christmas and was miserable unpleasant man. He refused all offerings of Christmas cheer and celebration, he cares only about money. This kind of statement would describe someone who is not in the holiday spirit. Religious (Biblical allusion) is an allusion to a religious text, story, idea, event or figure. For example, "I hope it doesn't rain for 40 days and 40 nights." It's an allusion to Noah and the ship he constructed. In the Bible, God told him that it would rain for 40 days and 40 nights, causing the land to flood. Finally, Pop culture which means the artists alludes to a character, book, ideas, events, thing, place or to refer to something famous, famous literature, famous art, famous song, famous movie or famous moments in pop culture. For Example, Taylor Swift's song *Love Story*:

Romeo, save me. They're trying to tell me how to feel
This love is difficult but it's real
Don't be afraid. We'll make it out of this mess
It's a love story. Baby, just say 'Yes'.

Swift alludes to the play *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare one of the greatest love story to allude to the people in the song are really in love and to show that their love is forbidden just like in the play. Another example, BTS's song *Butter*: at the opening of the song Jungkook sings

Smooth like butter
Like a criminal undercover
Gon' pop like trouble
Breakin' into your heart like that (Ooh)

The song starts with an allusion to Michael Jackson, the king of pop. In 1987, he released his famous song *Smooth Criminal*, which BTS alludes to when he says he is "smooth like butter, like a criminal undercover." BTS refers to Jackson again when Jungkook, Jimin and V sing

Side step, right, left to my beat
High like the moon, rock with me, baby
Know that I got that heat
Let me show you 'cause talk is cheap
Side step, right, left to my beat
Get it, let it roll

This part of the song alludes to Jackson's moonwalk dance in his song *Rock With You* even there is a similarity between BTS's verse "Know that I got that heat" and Jackson's verse "when you feel that heat". Both use such words to express their feeling to a girl. In fact, there is an allusion to another singer Jimin sings "Don't need no Usher/To remind me you got it bad" Jimin stans the American singer Usher, there and he alludes to two of his songs *You remind me* and *You Got It Bad*. Usher's former song tells the story of a man who meets a woman who looks and acts like his ex-girlfriend. Therefore, the man did not go on with the relationship. The latter song shows how he helplessly falls in love with girl who did not love him back, but BTS's version is the opposite since they got the "superstar glow" and "smooth" they are able to win a special person's affection.

THE RENAISSANCE AGE

The Renaissance was a period in European history marking the transition from the Middle Ages (or Medieval Period lasted from the 5th to the late 15th) to modernity and covering the 15th and 16th centuries. The arts were the emphasis of Renaissance poetry, which flourished in Europe during the 14th and 17th centuries. Poetry was inspired by the ancient arts of Ancient Rome and Greece, as well as the people's beliefs. Almost all of the discussions focused on human development, education, and human emotions such as love, passion, and other romantic interests. Court poets were recruited by kings and queens to entertain the court with songs and poetry that told stories about their personal family history. As a result, politics and the human condition were discussed in poetry throughout this time period. In Italy, poetry was frequently set to music. Madrigals, or traveling musicians, were well-known in Italy, singing lyrical melodies as they travelled. The sonnet was a popular form of poetry at the time. Any short poem with only 14 lines and rhyming arrangements is referred to as a rhyming poem. The epic poem, which is a narrative poetry, is another type. It frequently describes pivotal moments in the poet's life. In languages like Greek, Latin, and Italian, sonnets portrayed deep feelings in the epic style of Renaissance poetry. The following are some well-known poets who flourished during this time: Sir Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, Henry Howard, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Donne and John Milton.

Most of renaissance poets use the literary device; allusion. Each poet has his reason to use allusion. Sir Thomas Wyatt was a poet and ambassador to King Henry VIII. He fell in love with Anne Boleyn, the King's mistress, he wrote many poems that contain allusion to convey a hidden message. For example, in *The Hind*, which is covered with metaphors to hide his identity and his beloved, otherwise both will be executed by the king,

The poem talks about a hind (beautiful lady) that is impossible to be captured. In the first section or octave, the poet refers to his mental state after following the hind before. It was a fruitless venture that he undertook. Neither he nor others can catch it. The poet became so exhausted that he says it was like catching air with a net. It soon becomes evident the deer is a woman and the speaker: one of her suitors. However, in the sestet, the poet provides the reason. Here, he says why the hind can't be caught. As it belongs to Caesar, a likely reference to Henry VIII and already his property. So, those who are trying to catch it, can't own the creature.

The poet uses both Biblical and Mythological allusion, by saying "*Noli me tangere, for Caesar's I am,*" this note is written on the collar of the hind "around her fair neck", as a Biblical allusion this Latin phrase "refers to a phrase spoken by Jesus to Mary Magdalene when he appeared to her after his resurrection, she tried to embrace him but he told her to "touch him not", but on that imparts power to the hind, she is essentially ordering the hunters not to touch her because she belongs to "Caesar", this is a Historical Allusion to the Roman emperor, The historical chronicles stated that the Caesar or the king was Henry VIII and the hind was Anne Boleyn. Also this is, in part, an allusion to the Roman author Solinus. According to Solinus, white stags found in the Roman Empire 300 years after Caesar's death had the words *Noli me tangere*, Caesars sum inscribed on their collars. The Latin words translate to, "Do not touch me, I am Caesar's." They express, in other words, that the emperor owns the stags—even long after his death. They cannot be hunted by anyone else because Caesar was, like Henry, a leader early in late teens, a handsome and strong young man and was significant in the political and aesthetic changes and developments of his realm. Both were literate, charismatic and influential.

My Galley, Charged with Forgetfulness, begins with the poet presenting himself as a shipwreck or a ship that has capsized and is missing.

My galley, chargèd with forgetfulness,
Thorough sharp seas in winter nights doth pass
'Tween rock and rock; and eke mine en'my, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelty;

Love is presented as a journey that must be completed or drowned in the waves of oblivion and denial of the beloved. Wyatt's sonnet begins with *"My galley, chargèd with forgetfulness"*. In this line, Wyatt both constructs the image of the ship in trouble but also connects it to himself because he claims "My Ship" as something that belongs to him, his life or his mind, is so "charged" with burdens that he is forgetting everything but his central issue.

He went on to further emphasize the disturbed and tortured state his mind felt as it traversed the seas. "sharp" and dangerous in the "winter nights", which are the longest and coldest nights a man can pass (that is, darkness). Danger increases on the third line when he speaks out about the obstacles that have stuck with him, when he declares "between rock and stone, and eke [also] my enemy", followed by a cry of despair. The enemy he mentioned is then identified in the next line *"That is my lord, steereth with cruelty"*. Since this sonnet shows the suffering that love can create, "my lord" can be thought of as the god who causes love, Cupid (in classical mythology, Cupid is the god of lust, love, attraction and affection), had a Renaissance interest in all things related to classical Greek and Roman practices, including their mythology. Wyatt says Cupid steers his ship "with cruelty", so he blames Cupid for heartlessly pushing him into such misery and confusion. This is a Mythological allusion, also "my lord" may refer to King Henry VIII, the obstacle and the foe that stands between him and his beloved. The complexity of the triangle of Wyatt, Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII would in itself provide a possible scenario for the jeopardy and despair of the tumultuous expedition.

However, the metaphor can also symbolize Wyatt's many perilous journeys across Europe as a diplomat and ambassador to the Tudor court. There could also be a more personal interpretation of the danger Wyatt felt as part of the Tudor court during Henry's reign. He was twice imprisoned, and witnessed the execution of Henry VIII's former lover and wife, Anne Boleyn. Tudor Court is a dangerous place, as challenging to navigate and survive as the unforgiving oceans. Wyatt uses another Mythological and Literary allusion to show the danger of Tudor Court. In *Stand Whoso List*, which is a translation of Seneca's *Thyestes*, Thyestes, In Greek mythology, was a king of Olympia, Atreus, the King of Argos was Thyestes's brother, and both conspired to murder their half-brother, Chrysippus, in their desire for the throne of Olympia, then Atreus slaughtered Thyestes' three sons, roasts their dismembered bodies, and offers them to their father as a feast. Delighted with the success of his plan, Atreus revealed to Thyestes that he had murdered his sons, and when Thyestes asked him to bury their bodies, Atreus told him that Thyestes had eaten them himself. Like some of Sir Thomas Wyatt's other political laments, *Who List His Wealth and Ease Retain* and *Mine own John Poynz*, they are a declaration that life at the centers of political power. Here Wyatt described the "court's estates" has "slipper top" which means far too uncertain, even its pleasures are "brackish" meaning that court life, at its best, offers pleasures that only partially mitigate the dangers. In fact, ingesting them can be toxic. Actually, the speaker says he wishes to live away from the court to live in peace and quiet, and die as an anonymous old man. It's much better than living in the "death gripeth" and meeting an unwelcome, unexpected and unforeseen end. The last line of the poem uses alliteration ("die", "silly", "horrible") to emphasize horrific imagery. The two death scenes show the most dramatic point in comparison. It's better to die happy and anonymous when you're old than to be an easy young target.

Through using allusions the poet can convey a clear message about the political life, in the past and in his age, politics, the court did not change it is all about the thirst for power, authority and the throne, it is about deception, rape, murder, betrayal, lies, incest and adultery. In fact, Atreus was angry at his brother Thyestes for many reasons, including sleeping with his wife and trying to steal his throne. Actually all of these can be occurred in Tudor Court, King Henry VIII committed adultery, he had a relationship with two sisters (Anne Boleyn and Mary Boleyn), Anne Boleyn has been accused of having a sexual affair with her own brother, and she was executed by the King.

As with many of Wyatt's poems, it is inevitable to read autobiographically. His career at the court of Henry VIII was fraught with pitfalls and conflicts, and which increase the danger is his affection and love toward Anne Boleyn. This poem is a piece with several of Wyatt's other poems that also express mistrust of the court and its values.

Anyways, The 16th-century sonnet cycle "Amoretti" was penned by Edmund Spenser. The cycle highlights his relationship with Elizabeth Boyle and their eventual wedding. In Sonnet I *Happy ye leaves when as those lilly*

hands, when he compared his beloved hands into “lilly” and considered her as the source of inspiration to write sonnets. In lines (9-10) the poets uses mythological allusion.

And happy rymes bath'd in the sacred brooke,
Of *Helicon* whence she derived is,

He alludes to a spring of water in the Helicon Mountain inhabited by the Muses, in Greek mythology Muses are the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, they are the inspirational goddesses of arts, science, and literature. He says that his “happy rymes” has been washed by this “scared brooke” his words are super magnificent because the one who inspires him was not an ordinary woman but the goddess Elizabeth Boyle. In his Sonnet LIV [54], which is also about unreciprocated love. The lines:

Of this worlds Theatre in which we stay,
My love like the Spectator idly sits
Beholding me that all the pageants play,
Disguising diversely my troubled wits.

The first quatrain this Sonnet the lyrical voice starts by saying: “Of this worlds theatre in which we stay”. This sets the scene of the sonnet, the theatre, and the central element of the metaphor used throughout the sonnet (the theatre works as a metaphor for life: “this worlds theatre in which we stay”). This first line can also be an allusion to a line in *As You Like it* (“All the world’s a stage”), a play by William Shakespeare. (Literary allusion) Then, the lyrical voice furthers on this theatrical metaphor by constructing a simile between his loved one and a theatre spectator (“My love like the spectator idly sits). The lyrical voice tries to be a desirable gentleman and gain the attention of his lover by doing several things and trying to impress her constantly (“Disguising diversely my troubled wits”). Notice the alliteration on the third and fourth line (“pageants play” and “Disguising diversely”) that emphasize the lyrical voices attempt to win his lover’s attention.

Sir Philp Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* is an English sonnet series of 108 sonnets and 11 songs probably composed in the 1580s. The name is derived from the Greek words "aster" and "phil" and the Latin word "stella" meaning star. So Astrophil is the lover of the stars and Stella is his star. *Sonnet [39] Come Sleep! O Sleep*, is one of his sonnets in his collection The sonnet tells the story of Astrophil (the lover of the stars) and his hopeless passion for Stella (the star)). The sonnet tells us about sleep and its effects on men. In the 1st stanza there is a (Literary allusion) when he wrote:

Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low.

It begins with the speaker inviting the sleep to come. Looks like sleep hasn't come yet so he seduce it with lots of flattery. He uses expensive nicknames such as “certain knot of peace”, “baiting-place of wit”, “balm of woe”, “poor man’s wealth”, “prisoner’s release”, and “indifferent judge” to flatter Sleep. Sleep seems to be the place directly related to peace. And also a place to incubate knowledge and wisdom. In the verses that follow, the poet paradoxically uses sleep as “poor man’s wealth” and “prisoner’s release”, because it frees them from reality. Sleep is a leveler, just as death is a leveler in James Shirley's poem *Death the Leveler*. Sleep benefits rich and poor alike because it balances everything. Wealthy people can afford a lot of sleeping comforts, but the sleep they get is mediocre. In the second stanza, the poet uses (Mythological allusion), he wrote:

With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.

The lover seems to be desperate for sleep. He calls upon sleep to protect him with its ‘shield of proof’ from the “fierce darts” being thrown at him. The “darts” the arrows may have come from Cupid (in classical mythology, the god of lust, love, attraction, and affection). Because Cupid is love that does not allow him to sleep. His love for Stella has sparked a civil war in his heart, and he hopes that sleep will bring the civil war to an end. This thin line shows how desperate he is for sleep. For he is even willing to bribe the sleep to come.

In Sonnet [90] *Stella, Think Not That I By Verse Seek Fame*, it is also from *Astrophil and Stella*, reflects on the act of writing poetry, telling that Astrophil is not only writing about Stella and her love but also for her; she is both audience and content. He addresses Stella, telling her do not imagine that my poems are written to get me a public recognition. All I'm looking for, all I want, all I love and all my life is you. Your eyes make me proud, your lips tell my story. Any praise from other sources is nothing more than a humiliation if you don't compliment me. He then talks about his ambition, which is not to frame "a nest" like birds to raise its chicks. One would think that the poet built his own nest amidst the laurels (in which the laureate's crown) of his own fame - Sidney denies it. He wrote:

Without my plumes from others' wings I take,
For nothing from my wit or will doth flow,
Since all my words thy beauty doth endite,
And love doth hold my hand, and makes me write.

In the first line the poet refers to (Literary Allusion). The poet alludes to *The Vain Crow*, is a fable by Aesop a Greek fabulist and storyteller. It about the crow that makes itself magnificent by picking up "the feathers that some peacocks had shed and stuck them among his own". The peacocks see through the disguise and "stripped him of this borrowed plumes", leaving the crow worse than it was before. Sidney does not say he steals from others, and indeed his original thinking is remarkable; he only says that without her, his poetry does not make the grade. But what prompted him to write was Cupid (Mythological allusion) "And love doth hold my hand, and makes me write." Cupid himself forces his fingers into writing in favor of the more romantic "Love inspires me to write." For his beloved.

Shakespeare uses many types of allusions in his sonnets, like Sonnet I, *From fairest creatures we desire increase*, when he introduced four of his most important themes — immortality, Time, procreation, and selfishness. In the second stanza, he wrote:

But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light'st flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.

This stanza shows that the young man rejects the idea of fathering a child, scolds the young man for this approach, for being too self-centered and self-absorbed. The poet admits that he is still "contracted" to the young's "bright eyes". Shakespeare then goes on to give the imagery of a candle consuming itself. "Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel" Addressed as "thou," the young seems to be only interested in themselves, instead of spreading their incredible beauty. A narcissistic and subversive approach is condemned by the poet, and the choice of words takes a negative turn. "Famine" and "cruel" are word choices used to describe the subject's approach, suggesting that young people's choices are inherently unhealthy. Overall, the poet suggests that this young man is his own worst enemy and has not yet understood the importance of passing on his beauty to the next generation. Here he alludes to the mythological figure Narcissus, is a figure from Greek mythology. He rejected all romantic advances. He was so handsome that he fell in love with his own image when he saw himself reflected in a pool of water. Became entranced by it, and killed himself because he could not have his object of desire and transformed into a daffodil (the Narcissus flower). So the poet asks the young to stop acting like Narcissus. Shakespeare suggests that if the fair youth does not have children, it would be selfish, as it would deprive the world of his beauty. Instead of hoarding his loveliness, the young man should share it with future generations.

In *Sonnet 55 Not marble, nor the gilded monuments*, there are plenty of allusion. Firstly, the Historical Allusion in the lines "Not marble nor the gilded monuments/Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme" by using "marble" "gilded monuments" are allusions to the lavish tombs of English royalty. The Tomb of Henry VII in Westminster, in particular, which contains a large black marble sarcophagus with gilded status of King Henry and his queen. The "princes" here don't not only mean the son of the current king. This is a more general term that refers to any kind of ruler, including queens, dukes and duchesses. Secondly, mythological allusion, he refers to the Roman God of War. Finally, a Biblical allusion in the lines "That wear this world out to the ending doom", "till the Judgement that yourself arise" which alludes to the Judgement Day.

Shakespeare uses his poetry his "powerful rhyme" to glorify a person (maybe a beloved, a friend or The Dark Lady). He claims that "these contents" would honor their names through mentioning them in this poem which "will outlast". Shakespeare says that "marble" and "gilded monument" which are exposed to decay, effect of time, ruin, violence of

wars nor even Mars who destroys everything with his sickle all of them will stand idle in front of his "powerful rhyme". The poet says that neither "death", nor "enmity" can delete "living record of your memory". In other words, his beloved, friend or The Dark Lady will remain immortal and will not be defeated even by death, and they will be praised by all the coming generations who will read this immortal poetry to the "ending doom" to the Day of Judgment. Shakespeare also claims that the deceased will rise again and find that s/he has been remembered until that point because of his poetical immortalization.

Ben Jonson's Song: To Celia, *Drink to me only with thine eyes*, is a short monologue in which a lover addresses his lady in an effort to encourage her to express her love for him. In lines: 5-8

The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

He says that his "thirst" isn't a bodily thirst, but rather a spiritual one (it is a thirst "from the soul"). His soul requires a "drink divine", he is not literally talking about a "divine drink", but rather a show of love from Celia. Even if he could drink "nectar" from Jove's cup ("might I of Jove's nectar sup") he wouldn't; he would rather have Celia's cup. The speaker is saying that he would not take Jove's nectar. Mythological allusion, refers to the god Jupiter, who drinks heavenly nectar. In exchange for that of his lady. He values his lady's kiss more than the nectar of the gods, he elevates her to, or higher than, the status of a goddess.

CONCLUSION

Literary analysis usually uses the terms allusion, quotation and paraphrase to distinguish different kinds of references to earlier works. The sixteenth-century composers, as well as writers, artists and poets often alluded and paraphrased. However, all types of allusion are presented in their poetry directly or indirectly. Literary allusions are characters, incidents, and places. They give the reader a better knowledge. It also helps readers draw pictures, recognize parallels with literary works and understand the ideas behind them. You get hints, so they are discussed more clearly outside the scope of current work. Mythological allusions are a rich body of stories belonging to the ancient Greeks or Romans in relation to their gods, goddesses and heroes, the nature of the world and their own origin and cult, worship practices and rituals. Religious/Biblical allusions help readers visualize and understand literary elements on a deeper level and makes students more sophisticated readers. Studying the Bible as the foundation of all literary studies gives us new insight into many literary works, allowing us to read what is written and between the lines. Anyway, when reading written works, it is important to consider the historical allusion. It can change or enhance the overall meaning of a subject, or reveal information or perspectives that might otherwise have been overlooked.

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