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## Intertextuality: A Postmodern trend in English Literature

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### **Abstract:**

*The era of Post- World War-II made a great impact on the literature of new writers from the postmodern period. The period of postmodern has been at the forefront of literary and cultural studies. Many new writers coined new techniques and concepts in their writings. Intertextuality is a concept that has been experimented in literary and cultural studies in the postmodern period. It shows a relation of two different texts and their interaction with one another. Describing the way in which texts are interconnected, it forms a network of references that help to understand the meaning and importance of a given work. Intertextuality invites readers to draw connections between different works and provides many different forms, from direct allusions to other texts, to more subtle references.*

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**Keywords:** *use of direct references, citations, quotations, allusion, echo, the language, themes, motifs from another work to create interconnection between two.*

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### **Definition of Intertextuality:**

In literary theory Intertextuality is a key concept coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s. In her book “*Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*” Julia Kristeva introduces Intertextuality as “the interconnectedness of all texts, reflecting the idea that no text exists in isolation”. It is the idea that every text is a product of a network of other text, and it is impossible to create a text that is completely original or independent of other text. The interconnectedness of texts, create a web of meaning-making process that is always beyond the individual text and encompasses a wide range of cultural

and literary references. The text is always embedded in a network of references.

### **Meaning of Intertextuality:**

Julia Kristeva informs that all texts are in a constant dialogue with other texts, and this intertextual network shapes the meaning and interpretation of any given text. Her theory encompasses the idea of “intertextual relations” which refers to the way in which various texts interact and influence each other. The authors can use allusions themes, characters or narrative structures from other text. They can also use cultural and historical context from the particular era or period as the material for

imparting Intertextuality in the specific text.

Further Kristeva explains that Intertextuality is the idea that, meaning is not fixed or stable but it is created through the interaction and intersection of various texts. Her theory put a challenge to the author's originality in their writing the text since they were writing with a traditional style. Her theory suggests that texts are constantly reinterpreted and recontextualized by other texts. For interpreting and constructing the meaning of the text, readers should have the knowledge of the intertextual references by their own experience and reading.

The present paper deals with the exploration of the concept of Intertextuality and its use in literary work. The reader understands the complex relationship between different works. Some authors operate Intertextuality through direct references to other texts. Here writer uses citations or allusions directly from another work. For example, T.S Eliot in his "The Waste Land", has used numerous references from other literary works, for example, he interlinks Shakespeare to Dante, in which the meaning of the poem has been enriched. It invites readers to consider how this different texts intersect and relate to one another. Intertextuality imparts different sources in the present text that lead to understand the multilayered textual universe that evoke connections between different works and the readers consider how such texts inform and enrich one another. Another example is J.M.Coetzee's

"Disgrace" in which the writer takes a historical reference of colonialism and race that was existed in South Africa. It brings new insights to the readers that enrich the meaning of the novel. After reading this novel, the readers can know how these two webs or strands of literature can create a complex web of intertextual connections between two texts that inform and shape the novel's meaning.

Intertextuality explores that, in the textual universe different texts establish constant conversation and influence one another. They transfer their language, themes and motifs in order to create new meanings and interpretations. It focuses the complex and dynamic relationship between works of literature. During the reading, a reader can understand the intertextual connections to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the text. Kristeva's theory of Intertextuality has become very famous and influential in the study of literature and culture, as it provides a framework not only to the readers but also the writers for the proper understanding of the complex and dynamic relationship between the texts. The readers can understand the cultural and historical references in which they are situated if they have previous knowledge of specific references. It focuses the multifaceted nature and complex ways of the textual meaning. The study of Intertextuality made possible the proper analysis of the intertextual aspects that are used by the authors directly or indirectly.

### **Impact of Intertextuality on the Postmodern writings:**

Intertextuality in postmodern era serves to challenge conventional paradigms of meaning, representation and interpretation. It shook the foundation of already established norms and categories of the style of writing by explaining the hybridity, complexity and interconnected nature of the text with its embedded references in historical and cultural background. In Metafiction and Self-Reflexivity, Postmodern authors use Intertextuality to create attention to the artifice of representation and to make the relationship between reality, representation, and the creative process. As postmodern texts always rework in already existing texts there is a question of purely original creation of the text. Postmodern authors emphasize on the collective nature of meaning-making. They try to destabilize the hierarchical structures in the production of the texts related to culture and history.

Intertextuality dismantles the traditional boundaries that are existed between different genres, styles and forms. Therefore the Postmodern writers reject the fixed categories and hierarchies. Embracing hybridity and fluidity in artistic expressions, they try to blend elements from different sources languages, cultural and historical contexts. Another important trend of writing in Postmodern literature is use of Fragmentation technique that leads the reader to find multiple meanings as the texts are interwoven within a web of references and allusions. It creates

multiple interpretations and layers of significance of the given texts. It reflects that the Postmodern authors distrusts the grand narratives for the celebration of multifaceted attributes regarding the texts.

Allusions, quotations, calque, Plagiarism, Translation, Pastiche and Parody are the seven devices that are used by the authors in their texts to impart Intertextuality. The Intertextuality can be obligatory, optional and accidental. For example, Tom Stoppard's text "*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*" is an example of obligatory Intertextuality. When readers create their own connection of reference to the text they read, which they already possess, it is called an accidental Intertextuality. Julia Kristeva opines that, a text can be analyzed in terms of two axes: a horizontal axis that connects the author and the reader of the text and another is a vertical axis that connects the text to other texts.

### **Use of Intertextuality by Daniel Handler in his "*A Series of Unfortunate Events*":**

Daniel Handler, a famous American children writer has possessed the postmodern techniques and styles of writing. In his "*A Series of Unfortunate Events*", Daniel Handler has implemented the trend of Intertextuality in his stories from the above series. In this story there are three Baudelaire children. They are named after the French poet Charles Baudelaire who is said to have very complicated and unfortunate life. Handler has used the intertextuality in this text very skillfully. The names of whole Baudelaire

family has been referenced from Charles Baudelaire's poem "La Beatrice" whose sad sorrowful narrative is similar to the family of Baudelaire that is created by Lemony Snicket in "The Series of Unfortunate Events" Violet Baudelaire is the name of the eldest sibling that is intertextualized from T.S. Eliot's famous poem "Westland" (III "The Fire Sermon"). Handler used the intertextuality in the form of metafiction. The character from the story Lemony Snicket serves both as a narrator and the writer within the story. Here Handler invites the readers to understand the nature of story telling and the role of the author. Another example of intertextuality is found in the use of cultural and historical references from Shakespearean Quotes and Greek Mythology. It provides readers with a deeper understanding of the world in which the story is set. Throughout the whole series Daniel Handler has used various classic literary works such as "Moby Dick", "Jane Eyre" and "Dracula". Handler's "The Series of Unfortunate Events" is heavily intertextualized. In the present paper some of examples have been shared as examples of intertextuality.

### Conclusion:

Intertextuality is a broader concept that has been developed by the theorists and highly accepted and used by many authors in the Postmodern literature. To create the sense of intertextuality within the hypertext, the text being read and the hypotext the text being referenced, the readers should have the previous knowledge.

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