

Habash Fadi Butrus K.

University of Mosul,
1, ul. Al-Majmo'a, Mosul, Ninawa, 41002, Iraq
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1438-9921>
fadi_butrus@uomosul.edu.iq

Intertextuality in T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats": A post-structuralist approach

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Intertextuality is one of the literary phenomena that has preoccupied structuralists and post-structuralists critics since 1960s. It is the technique of multi-levelled texts that have rhetorical, significant, and textual facets. Previously critical studies of intertextuality in Eliot's poems focused on his master-pieces like "The Waste Land" and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", but they did not throw light on his "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats". This study is concerned with the aspects of the intertextuality in three selected poems of T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats". Its purpose is determining the semiotic meaning of such aspects as allusion, parody, quotations, and we try to appropriate and uncover their functions as well as to investigate their literary presuppositions in Eliot's selected poems. The study falls into three sections: a theoretical introduction of intertextuality, intertextuality in Eliot's three selected poems, and a conclusion. The three selected poems are entitled "The Naming of Cats", "Old Deuteronomy", and "Growltiger's Last Stand". The research employs the semiotic conceptions of intertextuality among Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Michael Riffaterre. It departs from the philosophical theory of the contemporary French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze, the theory of "ensemble". To sum up, intertextuality in T. S. Eliot's selected poems of Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats is featured by the employment of allusions, sayings and quotations. They convert the poetic text from its mimetic aspect to its semiotic one. Intertextuality in the three poems performs poetic and esthetic functions through its intertexts that are positioned in dialogical spaces. These intertexts accomplish the significance of the poetic texts on the heuristic and hermeneutic levels of reading through their sentences (matrices), ungrammaticalities, and literary utterances of rhetorical presuppositions.

Keywords: dialogical, intertextuality, hypogram, presupposition, ungrammaticality.

Introduction

Intertextuality is one of the main literary issues that has been investigated in structuralist and post-structuralist criticism. It has been technically employed in poetry, fiction and drama through various ways like characterization, mythical referentiality, historical referentiality, Biblical referentiality and others. Critical studies of intertextuality in Eliot's poems focused on his master-pieces; like *The Waste Land* and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; but they did not throw light on his "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats". Henceforth, the significance of this study lurks in its critical investigation of intertextual-

ity in his “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats” within the framework of this research. The present study is concerned with intertextuality in T. S. Eliot’s “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats”. The purpose of the study is determining the aspects of intertextuality such as allusion, parody, quotations, and appropriation and uncovering their functions in Eliot’s selected poems of his collection “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats”. It also attempts at delineating the presuppositions of intertextuality.

Various critical studies have investigated intertextuality in T. S. Eliot’s prominent poems. Hadi S. Sultan and Rai’a A. Abdul Aziz [Sultan, Rai’a 2007] tackled intertextuality in Eliot’s “*The Waste Land*” through analyzing its forms and mechanisms as they emerge and work in themes of death, sterility and aridity in Eliot’s poem. It has concluded that intertextuality does not reduce the poet’s originality and Eliot was fully aware of it. Manjola Nasi [Nasi 2012] investigated Eliot’s mythic method and its conceptual resemblance to intertextuality and related theories, as well as instances of the application of the former in his poems for portraying the role of this mechanism in the poet’s literary works. It inferred that the mythic method or intertextuality supplied a rich background for the literary text, adding to its temporal aspect and universal features in a manner that no isolated piece of literature can accomplish. Qasim Salman Sirhan [Sirhan 2017], another scholar gave attention to the role of tradition and cultural dialogue between literary texts and authors in Eliot’s selected poems: “The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, “Sweeny Among the Nightingales”, “The Waste Land, Gerontion”, “The Hallow Men”, “Marina”, and “The Four Quartets”. His study concluded that Eliot’s “re-use” of the past also helped to revive dead authors and enrich their texts by summing and reflection them in new contexts.

On the other hand, Prodig Kumar Adhikari [Adhikari 2018] focused on Eliot’s facile integration of segments from others’ texts or genres in “The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and “Gerontion”. It came to the result that the segments became not at all a mere cataloguing; rather they undertake a refreshing and renovating effect for all of readers. Mohamed Ayed Ayasrah and Mohd Nazri Latiff Azmi [Ayasrah, Azmi 2019] introduced a comparative study of intertextuality among T. S. Eliot and Al Sayyab’s Poetry; he studied the intertextual aspects of “allusion”, “symbols and myths”, “irony”, “the objective equivalent”, “conceptual metaphor” and “impersonality” between Eliot and Al Sayyab and the impact of Eliot’s themes, expressions and style on Al Sayyab’s. It detected that intertextuality assisted the poet to get advantage from others and being innovative of his unique style like Al Sayyab. Tafla Omar Al-sowail, Wiam Obaid Ghasan, and Rasha Saeed Badurais [Al-sowail et al. 2022] also presented a comparative study of intertextuality between Eliot’s “The Waste Land” and Mahmoud Darwish’s “The Land’s Poem”. It threw light on intertextual allusions in Eliot’s influence on Darwish like the cultural, religious, and the literary, observing the contextual differences. It concluded that this influence on Darwish professionally adopts Eliot’s meanings and references to correspond with the context of his cause, the Palestinian case.

The study is confined to three poems due to the shortage of space and time besides it covers great majority of ideas and themes: “The Naming of Cats”, “Old Deuteronomy”, and “Growltiger’s Last Stand” in Eliot’s collection: “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats”. It departs from Gilles Deleuze’s philosophical theory of the “ensemble”. It applies the post-structuralist approach to intertextuality in its investigation of Eliot’s poetry. This study employs the semiotic conception of intertextuality among Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Michael Riffaterre, The post-structuralist conceptions of intertextuality among the

other critics of literary genres are eliminated from the theoretical background as well as the applicatory side of the research due to their interrelations with other critical issues.

Intertextuality was conceived by various post-structuralist critics. It refers to the plurality of the text. The most eminent critics who allocated the concept of intertextuality in their critical assumptions of the literary text in the post-structuralist trend are Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Michael Riffaterre. It repudiates the subject matter of the text, uncovers, and delineates the impact or derivation of a certain literary text from another text in a process of intent or latent borrowing.

Intertextuality is a literary technique that has linguistic, significant, and textual facets. Roger Fowler and Peter Childs [Childs, Fowler 2006] conceive it “as a series of interconnections between signs” and they add that there “came the recognition of the importance of the relationships between those signs and the ways they interact to produce different meaning-formations” [Childs, Fowler 2006: 121]. It discloses the ways in which signs and their complex relations (texts) rely on each other for their meaning within the domain of structural levels and framework of discourse. Fowler and Childs resume that it denotes “the manner in which texts of all sorts (oral, visual, literary, virtual) contain references to other texts that have, in some way, contributed to their production and significance” [Childs, Fowler 2006: 121].

Gilles Deleuze in his philosophical treatise *Difference and Repetition* presents the theory of ensemble. For him, Difference parallels Being whereas Repetition stands for Time, therefore; the concept of difference secures no identity; and repetition indicates that there is nothing which stays or remains the same at all. Accordingly everything is in a continuous change and only there is difference which involves as something new [Fieser, Dowden 2023]. Deleuze departs from Henri Bergson's concepts of the nature and type of the relationship between past and future that are melted together in one time; the enduring present time [Al-Saji 2005: 203].

Henry Somers-Hall departs from Deleuzian formula “pluralism = monism” and the assertion of actuality is manifestation of the real and it is a transcendental illusion or mirror of the virtual actuality [Hall 2012]. This formula is extended to mean “univocity of Being = equivocity of difference”. It is a conflict among specific differences and individuating differences as problematicity which is represented by actual reality and virtual reality. The equivocity ontology is represented by the subordinate identity and negation [Bryden 2001: 179]. Gilles Deleuze postulates that:

As for the whole as immensity, this is no longer a totality of reuniting which subsumes the independent parts on the sole condition that they exist for each other, and which can always be enlarged if one adds parts to the conditioned set [ensemble], or if one relates two independent sets to the idea of an identical end. It is a totality which has become concrete or existing, in which the parts are produced by each other in their set and the set is reproduced in the parts, so that this reciprocal causality refers back to the whole as cause of the set and of its parts, according to an internal finality... Sometimes a dynamic and continuous set [ensemble] can form at a particular place, at a particular moment [Deleuze 1986: 37–38].

Roland Barthes, the French eminent critic conceives intertextuality on the basis of his semiological theory of the literary text. This conception emerges from his view of the literary text as a plurality of other texts (ensemble). He argues that intertextuality is text's destiny regardless of its form and gender. For Barthes, text refers to “tissue of quotations”

or “tissue of signs” and it consequently rises as multi-dimensional lines of words that are not concerned with single “theological” meaning of the “Author-God”. Hence, David R. Richter states that these multi-layered lines of words tend to overlap with various unoriginal writings; they tend to blend and clash. These “tissue of quotations” are borrowed from “innumerable centers of culture”. The author is introduced as an imitator. The reader turns a space to meet all the writing quotations without losing anyone of them to preserve the text’s unity in its origin [Richter 2007: 876–877]. According to Roland Barthes’ vision, meaning essentially refers to “a *citation*, the departure of a code, what permits us to postulate a code and what implies a code, even if this code is not or cannot be reconstituted” [Barthes 1988: 225–226].

In Roland Barthes’ theory, the intertextual codes are trickery, elusive and devoid of values or substance. They appear as *deja lu* (to use Barthes’ term) which resides in the readers to represent the state of general intertextuality. It is essentially important to purport the distinction between the two feelings of “*déjà-vu*” and “*déjà-lu*”. The first feeling, *déjà-vu* demonstrates the unusual feeling that something already has come to pass, whereas, the second feeling refers to the readers’ discomfoting feeling of something that he has already read. Barthes pinpoints that the “I” in the text itself is a plurality of other texts which has lost its origins or its codes. The conventions of significations are deprived of their origins through the process of history. This deprivation occurs when the discursive conventions are cut from their origins. Therefore, the intertextuality refers to the paradoxical nature of discursive systems which (discursive conventions) are generated in the discourse of langue in spite of their previous existence in parole. This process of the transformation from one code into another or encoded in prior code lets them stay existent and devoid of origin. It gives intertextuality double focus on the generated text since it concentrates on the significance and autonomy of prior texts as well as the intelligibility and meaning. Intertextuality emphasizes that prior texts are major contributor to code which assists in producing various effects of signification [Culler 2001: 113–114].

Julia Kristeva who coined the term of Intertextuality in 1966 repudiates the disconnectedness of the literary text from the other one; she places its functional status of absorption and transformation of a previous text. She states that the literary text is not an isolated phenomenon but an “absorption and transformation of another”. Her critical assumption of intertextuality is based on Freudian conception of the “transposition of one or several sign systems into another or others”. Kristeva assumes that these “discourses or sign systems are transposed into one another” in order to work together and reconstruct the meaning of one discourse being established over the meaning of another discourse in a process called “new articulation” [Cuddon 2013: 367].

In this sense, Kristeva envisions intertextuality as a system of relationships between a specific text and other texts, and this relationship can take the form of “anagram, *ALLUSION, adaptation, translation, *PARODY, *PASTICHE, imitation, and other kinds of transformation” [Baldick 2001: 128]. Therefore, the poststructuralists deny and oppose the assumption that the text is constructed on a single and autonomous entity and it is not created by a single author as well. In Edward Quinn’s “A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms”, Vincent Leitch defines Intertextuality as “a set of relations with other texts. Its system of language, its grammar, its lexicon drag along numerous bits and pieces — traces — of history; so the text resembles a cultural Salvation Army outlet” [Quinn 2006: 218–219].

Besides, Kristeva relies on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in which a text contains a variety of voices, and these voices are responsible for the formation of text's pluralist nature and they share its identity with other texts. Intertextuality is categorized into two types: citation and presupposition. They are discriminated by Quinn as follows, "Citation includes not only direct quotation and allusion, but also literary conventions, imitation, parody, and unconscious sources. Presupposition involves assumptions regarding the reader, the situation being referred to, and its context" [Quinn 2006: 219]. However, Kristeva realizes similarity among Bakhtin's view of language, Saussure's conception of anagram, and Sigmund Freud's conception of dream-work or the non-logical language of dreams. She delineates that "the minimal unit of poetic language is at least double, not in the sense of the signifier/signified dyad, but rather, in terms of one and other... The double would be the minimal sequence of a paragrammatic semiotics to be worked out starting from the work of Saussure... and Bakhtin" (quoted by: [Allen 2000: 44–45]).

On the other hand, Jonathan Culler, the American critic conceives presupposition from a rhetorical perspective, namely a textual one. This conception also adopts the rhetorical sense of presupposition to produce the poetic function in a discursive space and apprehensible conventions of the intertextual occupants' of the space. He categorized it into two major divisions. The first division is concerned with the presupposition in a state that either refers or does not refer to a given text to produce a pre-text and in this case intertextuality does not necessarily refer to the actual text. As for the second division, it tackles the rhetorical presupposition that produces the poetics as a discursive space and intelligible convention of the intertextual occupants' space [Culler 2001: 130].

In his critical treatise on intertextuality, **Graham Allen** (2000) posits that although the works of literature are based on systems, codes, and traditions, they are still dependent on the previous works of literature and lack independent meaning at the same time. According to him, it has two significant roles in understanding the meaning of the literary text; interpretive role and stylistic one. It presents discreet procedures for interpretation and foregrounding function to the relatedness, interconnection, and interdependence in the present cultural scene of life. Being a term, intertextuality is "generally understood and provides a stable set of critical procedures for interpretation" and it is classified as "useful term because it foregrounds notions of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence in modern cultural life" [Allen 2000: 1–5].

As for Michael Riffaterre (1978), he presents his theory of intertextuality in "Semiotics of Poetry" thoroughly. His point of departure lies in Plato's dialogue, "Phaedrus" in which this text refers to Socrates's statements and ideas to the reader and he should be conscious of the representation of these statements and ideas of Plato's thought on imitation in art, "mimeses" in Plato's philosophical treatise as much as that of his teacher, Socrates which have become part of the philosophical trend of Platonism. Riffaterre conceives reading as an experience of literariness and in order to perceive text as literary, transforming intertext as an ultimate word game is required by the reader [Riffaterre 1978: 42]. In this sense, reader's experience of the text turns into act of interpreting the text on two levels: lexical and textual. According to him, there are two types of interpretants: lexematic and textual. It is essential to discriminate between them; the textual interpretants are considered as mediating texts and are composed of quotations and allusions, and, therefore, they contain an equivalence or transferal code from one code to another, whereas, the lexematic interpretants imply mediating words or dual signs because they are able to generate two

types of texts within the poem, or presuppose two hypograms respectively. These mediating words / dual signs are similar to puns [Riffaterre 1978: 81–82].

The dual sign is the product of the process of intersection of two semantic or formal association words. It stays in one text amalgamated with preserving “natural” sequence of grammar and lexical collocation as well. This amalgamation produces two texts: the mimetic “text” and the semiotic one. The former reveals in the syntagmatic pole whereas the latter exists in the paradigmatic pole [Riffaterre 1978: 86–89]. Graham Allen delineates that in Riffaterre’s semiotic approach the literary texts are anti-referential (mimetic), and they acquire their meaning from the semiotic structures through combining their individual words, phrases, sentences, key images, themes and rhetorical devices [Allen 2000: 115].

Reading in Riffaterre’s semiotic theory of poetry is performed in two stages of interpretation. In the first stage, the search for meaning in poetry can be accomplished by two kinds of reading in two semiotic systems respectively: heuristic and hermeneutic. Heuristic reading is a way of reading poetry in the first semiotic system, language-based level, which is perceived from the normative system of language, whereas, the hermeneutic reading is a way of reading poetry in the second semiotic system, literary conventions level [Pradania, Rizalb 2020: 44; Riffaterre 197: 5–6].

In the second stage, there comes the second time of interpretation, the truly hermeneutic reading (retroactive reading). The reader reformulates the structural relationships among the statements of the text through reviewing, revision, and comparing them backward. The reader’s understanding the meaning of the text is determined by his decipherment (decoding) of its code. It discloses the nature of the text as variation or modulation of a certain structure through its themes, symbols and others. The ultimate effect of the reader’s retroactive reading performs a poetic function of generating significance of the poetic text at its end. As he proceeds reading through the text, the reader starts remembering what he has already read and modifies his understanding of it in the light of what he decodes. As he makes progress in reading the text to the end, he reviews, revises, and compares backwards. He performs a structural decipherment: Michael Riffaterre attributes the change of the perception of sign-functions to the multiplicity of the layers of text. He connects the transition of the correlation of the functions to the reader’s gradual disclosure of new coding rules through the course of returning the structures that generate the text. He writes:

Since the text is a multilevelled discourse, the perception of sign-functions (in Hjelmslev’s sense)... necessarily changes, the correlation of functions being transitory: it depends upon the reader’s gradual discovery of new coding rules, that is, upon his working his way back to the structures that generate the text (the reader is performing an abduction, in Peirce’s sense: Peirce 2.623) [Riffaterre 1978: 168].

As he passes through reading the text, he realizes successive and differing statements by comparison. These statements are first noticed as mere ungrammaticalities, which are in fact equivalent due to their appearance as variants of the same structural matrix. In view of this stage, the text is considered a variation or modulation of one structure by its thematic, symbolic features or whatever. This sustained connection to one structure generates significance of the text. The maximal effect of retroactive reading, its ultimate poetic

function as a generator of significance naturally comes at the end of the poem. Riffaterre underpins that

This poeticalness is consequently a function coextensive with the text, linked to a limited realization of discourse, bounded by clausula and beginning (which in retrospect we perceive as related). This is why, whereas units of meaning may be words or phrases or sentences, the unit of significance is the text [Riffaterre 1978: 5–6].

The retroactive reading results in decoding the dual sign for three respects. First, the sign stands for paradigm which affords a space for distinguishing the perception of certain constants. Second, the reader is constrained to go backward for a clue. Third, this proximate homologue correction creates ghostly or parallel text. In fact, the ghostly text is a temporary one because of the reader's will to arrange its pieces of a puzzle, and fill up the gaps as an outcome of the fragments on two levels, text-generating signs; and hypogram-generating signs respectively [Riffaterre 1978: 91].

However, it is necessary to shed light on Hypogram's meaning from four outstanding sources and figures. First, the Greek scholars conceived it as “subscription” or “something written below”; whereas Paul de Man viewed it as a “sub-text or, infra-text”. Ferdinand de Saussure interprets hypograms as “the result of subjective modes of reading, rather than intrinsic aspects of a text discoverable by an empirical method”. As for Riffaterre, he extended the conception of hypogram to delineate the way in which any poetic text is produced around an absent semantic nucleus. So Riffaterre sets up hypogram as a “unit of readable meaning susceptible of grammatical predication.” Hypogram undergoes concealment by the poem through the process of reading. It is replaced by the process of figurative elaboration for the sake of referential reading [Greene et al. 2012: 649]. The essential element of a successful interpretation of a poem demands discovery of an appropriate hypogram, which works as the necessary semiotic entry to lock the disparate textual elements and shift those distinct elements into a unified whole [Greene et al. 2012: 1289].

Further, the text-generating signs imply actualization of the sequence or alternate two competing meanings' narration. This sign needs to have a text to appear and this production of a text could take place before or after the dual sign [Riffaterre 1978: 91]. In spite of the similarities between the two terms of intertext and hypogram, hypogram stands for literary or poeticized signs, therefore, it relies on words or words groups that have poetic function in the sociolect. These words' groups are available within the sociolect in the form of semiotic significance while the “Hypogrammatic derivation” exists in the form of the verbal sequence patterns formulating word groups which are already pre-existed in language and are usually practiced, tried and examined in literature itself [Allen 2000: 122].

James E. Porter (1986) categorizes intertextuality from the stance of the reiteration of textual fragments in the text and the text's production of its assumption about its referent, its readers, and its context. In this sense the literary discourse consists of pieces of other texts that constitute its meaning and its textual assumption turns to portions of absent readable texts. He categorizes intertextuality into two types: referential and typological categories or iterability and presupposition. Referential categories or iterability are composed of fragments manipulation in texts while the typological categories or presuppositions include the utilized pattern and structure in typical texts. However, iterability indicates the “repeatability” of certain textual fragments which include the explicit allusions,

references and quotation as well as the unannounced and influences, sources, clichés, etc. It implies that the discourse is composed of “traces”, which are pieces of other texts in order to constitute its meaning. As for, presupposition, it presents the assumptions a text makes about its referent, its readers, and its context. This assumption is made to portions of text which are read in spite of their absence [Porter 1986: 35].

Intertextuality in T. S. Eliot’s *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*

T. S. Eliot’s “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats” (1939) is a collection of fifteen modernist poems written in narrative form. It is concerned with various themes like, monstrosity of war, impact of human greed, evil, deceit and other themes. It is reconstructed from Joel Chandler Harris’ “Tales from Uncle Remus” (1903) and “Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings” (1881). It displays its themes through the employment of intertextuality. This intertextuality is characterized by the use of allusion, sayings, quotations, pastiche, clichés, etc.

This collection poses difficulties of understanding to the reader due to the conversion of its text from the mimetic manner to the semiotic one. This process of conversion produces plurality of text, paragramms, and ungrammaticalities of the text. Intertextuality performs various functions. It alludes or refers to the paradoxical nature of discursive systems in the literary text. It reconstructs the signification of the text through its culturally semiotic transposition of one poetic sign into another. It helps to integrate the poetic signs from mimetic level to the signification one. The amalgamation of the integrated poetic signs performs an esthetic function on the signification level.

Critics and scholars have not presented a general opinion (consensus) on unified themes of the poems. They demonstrated diverse themes to them such as London, war, life, death, love, identity, childhood, etc. Besides, most of the poems’ images are characterized by oppositional relationships which show contradiction. These diverse themes and contradictory images create mimetic difficulties to the reader. The ungrammaticalities are implicitly recognized in the transformation of a minimal and literal sentence /the matrix (to use Riffaterre’s term) into a longer, complex and non-literal periphrasis. This minimal, literal sentence can be epitomized in one word [Culler 2001: 82].

The reader who has knowledge of artistic works can discriminate between the language of poetry and the common one. He perceives the poeticality of the text through the exploration of the way a poetic text expresses its literary meaning. The sign in the poetic text is perceived as a variant in a paradigm. Riffaterre states that “the perception of the sign follows from its ungrammaticality” [Riffaterre 1978: 3]. The references to the addressee through the personal pronouns give the text of the poem dramatic form. The addressee, who is a reader, produces the meaning of the text. His knowledge of the referents of the names mentioned in the poem helps to produce the text as a writerly (scriptable) one.

In Eliot’s “**The Naming of Cats**”, the dialogical feature of the text is explicitly perceptible. It is distinguished by the use of the plural “I”. This plural “I” demonstrates identity and personality in its referent, the “THREE DIFFERENT NAMES”. The faces and names demonstrate identity and personality. The referent of the “THREE DIFFERENT NAMES” has an analogy with a famous Japanese proverb. The proverb states that an individual has three different faces; the first face appears to the world, the second face to relatives, while the third face is a secret one [Burton 2019]. They altogether serve the plurality or ensemble

between the addresser and addressee (I and You) as singular at the beginning of the poem before shifting to the character of hatter, this character has an allusion to Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" to acquire plurality through names. The product of this process results in multiplicity and plurality of characters who are human beings. Eliot shifts the animals' imagery into human beings through this shifting or codification of the names of the cats.

The Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,
It isn't just one of your holiday games;
You may think at first I'm as mad as a hatter
When I tell you, a cat must have THREE DIFFERENT NAMES [Eliot 1939: 9].

According to Pythagoras' philosophical theory of numbers, number three has significance in itself. It has three philosophical referents: harmony, wisdom, and understanding [Encyclopedia Britannica 2023; Hopper 1938: 33–37]. "The Naming of Cats" is concerned with the topic of cats' having three various names for each one: the regular, the fancy, and one more. Eliot utilized an allusion from Lewis Carroll's fictional character Mad Hatter who appeared in Carroll's fantasy work "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (1865) and in "Through the Looking-Glass" (1871) respectively. This magician allusion is utilized in Eliot's "The Naming of Cats". Literally, "mad as a hatter" means being completely mad. Thus, bearing "THREE DIFFERENT NAMES" is entirely craziness. It was discovered that using mercury in the production of hats in 1835 by some hatters caused poisoning, and even bad mood and consequently madness. The author employs simile to compare himself to the hatter who paves the way to cats taking names of ancient Greek figures; philosophers and mythological names as well, such as Plato, Admetus, Electra, and Demeter.

The sentence (matrix) of this poem is about the process of the naming of cats. Yet, the poem has ungrammaticalities; it has multiple intertexts. Each intertext has its semi-otic meaning. Their sign systems are transposed into one another to reconstruct meaning over each other in the process of new articulation of meanings. They have their referents (significations). The matrix of the text is epitomized into separate words (names). These names have diverse referentialities: religious, philosophical, historical and mythical. Their diverse referential meanings signify plural meanings such as martyrdom, autocracy, sagacity, glory, ingratitude etc. This matrix comprises Eliot's classification of names; born names, nicknames, and name that nobody can guess. Therefore, the cats are personified and joined closely to be identified with human names [Pozas 2015: 3–4].

First of all, there's the name that the family use daily,
Such as Peter, Augustus, Alonzo or James,
Such as Victor or Jonathan, George or Bill Bailey —
All of them sensible everyday names [Eliot 1939: 9].

Peter's name is connected with number three of denial of Christ's acquaintance to prove Christ's prior prophecy that Peter will deny Him before the rooster's cock. In addition, it symbolizes sacrifice and the rock in which the church of Christ and Christianity are established on him. He stands for sacrifice and martyrdom [Encyclopedia Britannica 1911, vol. XXI: 295–297]. The "Three Different Names" which belong to the cats in the fourth line of Eliot's "The Naming of Cats" have esoteric referents in the poem. The name

of Peter refers to the two names of Simon and the Rock. Whereas, James' name refers to James the elderly, James the little, and Judas son of James. They symbolically refer to martyrdom, virtue and sincerity in the poem.

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³ When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴ Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶ Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. ¹⁷ He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸ who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, ¹⁹ and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all (Luke 6:12–19)¹.

The name Plato, which is the cat's name, has a referent to Plato, the famous Greek philosopher. Plato was known for his dialogues which present wisdom and ideas. These dialogues express human tendency to improvement and a solid belief in the power and intellectual primacy. His life was mainly contemplative in the atmosphere of 4th century B. C. which was featured by the rhetorical, theoretical and sophistical ones [Encyclopedia Britannica 1911, vol. XXI: 808–809]. Thus the cat's name, Plato has the symbolic meaning of sagacity, and moral ideals.

There are fancier names if you think they sound sweeter,
Some for the gentlemen, some for the dames:
Such as Plato, Admetus, Electra, Demeter —
But all of them sensible everyday names [Eliot 1939: 1030].

The opposition is placed between the cats' action in Eliot's collection "Old Possum's of Practical Cats" and the legendary story of Admetus. The cats made bad deeds; robbery, murder, destruction, anarchy, and corruption. Yet, they were not punished. As for Admetus crime, it was not forgiven, Admetus was punished. According to the Greek legend, Admetus is son of Pheres, king of Pherae in Thessaly, He was enslaved by Apollo as a punishment of slaying Cyclopes. He fell in love with Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias, king of Iolcus. Admetus was sustained by Apollo when he was seriously ill and was on the verge of death through convincing Moerae (Fates) to prolong Admetus' life by making anyone else pass away instead of him. While Admetus' parents refused the idea of the prolonged life, Alcestis was persuaded as she was saved from death by Heracles who arrived in time [Encyclopedia Britannica 1911, vol. I: 194].

Electra's name has multiple referents; mythical, and dramatic. In the Greek mythology, Electra means "the bright one". According to the Greek myth, Electra was the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. She saved her young brother by taking away him from her father's assassination scene. She assisted her brother to execute their mother along with her lover Aegisthus. Electra married Orestes' friend Pylades.

The mythological character of Electra has dramatic referents in various western dramatic texts. She is presented as one of the central mythological characters in Greek

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%206&version=NIV> (accessed: 10.10.2023).

tragedies. She is the major character in three Greek tragedies, Aeschylus' "Choephoroi", Sophocles' *Electra*, and Euripides' "Electra". She is also the major character in plays by Alfieri, Voltaire, Hofmannsthal, and Eugene O'Neill. She is also exposed as a vengeful soul in "The Libation Bearers", Aeschylus' second play "Oresteia" trilogy [Encyclopedia Britannica 1911, vol. IX: 176–177].

Electra's name was reiteratively attributed to the cats to present a different referent (different signification). It has the referent of the cats' vengeance from their community. The reader perceives the opposition between the mythical referent of Electra in Greek tragedy, Electra's name and its "fancier" referent in "The Naming of Cats". In Greek tragedy, Electra has the symbolic meaning of parental excessive attachment: the young daughter's attachment to her father, whereas, in Eliot's poem "The Naming of Cats", it refers to a dame, not a particular one.

As for the name Demeter, it has an allusion to Greek mythology and literary texts. According to the Greek mythology, it refers to the Olympian goddess of the harvest (grain) and agriculture. Demeter, the Greek mythical figure was the daughter of Cronus and Rhea. She was known for her reckless and careless character who caused a great famine. She is also referred to a worshipped goddess of the Underworld, health, birth, and marriage as well [Encyclopedia Britannica 1911, vol. VII: 980].

The name of Demeter has recurrent referents in divers' literary texts. It has references in Homer's "Odyssey", "The Myth of Er" in Plato's "The Republic", and William Shakespeare's "The Tempest". Demeter referent in Plato's "The Republic" is the man's fate. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the name has the referent of fertility, whereas, it signifies generosity in Shakespeare's "The Tempest". The reader can perceive the contradiction between the significations in the names of the aforementioned names of these characters in Greek mythology and the literary texts on one hand and their significations in the names of the cats. They have mythical referents in Greek mythical and literary texts and real referents in the poem. Besides, the reader perceives the contradiction between the names of the philosophical, historical, and mythical figures on one hand and those of the cats. The names of the first group are fancier and familial, whereas, the names of the second group (the cats' names) are particular, peculiar, and more dignified.

Eliot's "Old Deuteronomy" is featured by the multiplicity of the texts. They are borrowed from various cultural canons; religious, artistic and literary. The name of "Old Deuteronomy" denotes the biblical title "Book of Deuteronomy" and "The Deuteronomic Code". The name of "The Oldest Inhabitant" signifies Henry Whitehead's lecture entitled "The Clapham Society Local History Series 6: The Oldest Inhabitant" (April 15, 1859), Julian Alden Weir's painting of "Unidentified Woman" (September 10, 1875–1876), and Mark Twain's "The Oldest Inhabitant-The Weather of New England", from the book "Writing New England" (1876).

On the system of heuristic reading, the sentence (matrix) of Eliot's "Old Deuteronomy" is about Old Deuteronomy's powerful effect on the community's life. Yet, on the hermeneutic system of reading, the reader can perceive quotations in the "Old Deuteronomy" as a variant of hypogram. They implicate the ungrammaticality of the poetic sign. The reader's act of interpreting the text lies on the lexical level of the phrase "Old Deuteronomy", and "The Oldest Inhabitant", and the textual interpretation of The Oldest Inhabitant's quotation. "Old Deuteronomy" has the referents of wisdom, forgiveness and legalization. As for The Oldest Inhabitant, it has three referents: Henry Whitehead's lecture entitled

“The Clapham Society Local History Series 6: The Oldest Inhabitant” (April 15, 1859), Julian Alden Weir’s painting of “Unidentified Woman” (September 10, 1875–1876), and Mark Twain’s “The Oldest Inhabitant-The Weather of New England”, from the book “Writing New England” (1876). The first lexeme demonstrates a religious preach about morals. The second lexeme has a generic reference; it refers to an unidentified woman who is the original inhabitant. The third lexeme has a symbolic meaning of the contradictory feelings of love and hatred.

As for the textual level of the reader’s interpretation, “The Oldest Inhabitant”, has a code that has equivalent significations from one quotation into another in the poem. The first quotation signifies the speaker’s confession of his troubled mind. The second quotation refers to the speaker’s guess of attribution of his troubled mind to Old Deuteronomy. The third quotation refers to the speaker’s warning of the consequence of awakening of Old Deuteronomy. As for the fourth quotation, it denotes the speaker’s alertness to the Old Deuteronomy reaction.

The reader perceives the repetition of some parts of quotations. This repetition forms meaninglessness which contradicts the lexematic and textual levels that have significations and referents. As the reader proceeds in his reading of the quotations, he recognizes successive and differing statements through comparing the quotations. The difference occurs in the words “mind”, “sight”, and “legs” in the syntagmatic level of quotations respectively [Eliot 1939: 24–25]. They appear as variants of the same structural matrix of the poem by their thematic and symbolic meanings. Their combination to one structure generates the significance of the poetic text which is the ultimate poetic function of the process of reading the text.

The Oldest Inhabitant croaks: “Well, of all...
Things... Can it be... really!.. No!.. Yes!..
Ho! hi!
Oh, my eye!
My mind may be wandering, but I confess
I believe it is Old Deuteronomy!” <...>

“My sight’s unreliable, but I can guess
That the cause of the trouble is Old Deuteronomy!” <...>

“My legs may be tottery, I must go slow
And be careful of Old Deuteronomy!” [Eliot 1939: 24–25].

The title of the poem “**Growltiger’s Last Stand**” has an assemblage (ensemble) of texts. It has diverse referents; it has diverse hypogram; its first referent has a biographical referentiality, the second has a historical referentiality, and the third referent has a fictive referentiality. The title has a reference in a recorded debate between Queen Elizabeth I and Sir John Hawkins during interrogating him in the sixteenth century; Eva March Tappan in “In the Days of Queen Elizabeth” (1902) quotes Queen Elizabeth I’s reply to Sir John Simon question of “Growltiger’s Incident”; “He (John Hawkins. — *F. B. K. H.*) was no better than a Pirate” in replying [Tappan 1902: 108]. Queen Elizabeth I’s legitimization of an illegitimate act which is semantically implicated in the quotation is paradoxical. Queen Elizabeth I viewed John Hawkins’ piracy a legitimate act.

Besides, the title “Growltiger’s Last Stand” has an allusion to Custer’s Last Stand at the Battle of the Little Bighorn between Sioux tribe and the Whites in June 1876. The Red Indians (Sioux tribe) were perceived wild and bloodthirsty by the Whites in that battle [Encyclopedia Britannica 1911, vol. XXV: 150]. The Red Indian’s leader Custer and his men were killed in the battle. The Whites subverted the Red Indians through keeping them in reservations. In this sense, the title has a symbolic meaning of savagery, monstrosity and subdue.

As for the third referent, the name “Growltiger” has an implicit fictive reference to William Makepeace Thackeray’s fictive text “The Rose and The Ring” (1854). This fictive text (novel) tells a tragic fate of prince Giglio and his close friend Bulbo who were executed. Yet, the difference lies in GRUMBUSKIN’s fate; GRUMBUSKIN, who is Growltiger’s close friend; he survives. Besides, Grumbuskin’s character is parallel to Kutasoff Hedzoff’s character (Captain of the Guard) whose name denotes “cuts off heads off” in “Alice in Wonderland”. In addition, the latter name has a historical reference to a Russian General called Mikhail Illarionovich Kutuzov. His last name expresses a homophonic similarity with the word “Kutasoff”; it is a linguistic game. The dreadful Russian general is destined to have a natural death whereas Growltiger is destined to be assassinated. The opposition lurks in the manner of their death or fate [Hearn 1988: 49].

Kristeva confirms: “The theory of intertextuality insists that a text exist as a hermetic or a self-sufficient wholeness function as a closed system... what is produced at the moment of reading is due to the cross-fertilisation of the packaged textual material by all the texts which the reader brings to it” [Worton, Still 1990: 1–2]. According to Barthes’ theory, this text is a writerly one (scriptable) [Barthes 1988]. It has no determinate signified. It is a tissue of signifiers and fragments of codes.

The first stanza of the poem contains a diversity of references to subtexts. The words of “Oxford, aims and Thames” were mentioned in Mathew Arnold’s poem “The Scholar-Gipsy”. As for the title of “The Terror of the Thames”, it is reformulated from William Shakespeare’s “Henry VI” Pt. I I iv, of Talbot: “Here, said they, is the Terror of the French” and Alouette’s “Quantrell: The Terror of the West” (1866) [Ricks, McCue 2015: 97]. These words are epitomized to form the symbolic meaning (signification) of terror and anarchy caused by the cats.

Furthermore, the title “The Terror of the Thames” could have symbolic references to literary and non-literary texts. It symbolically refers to the non-literary text of Olaus Magnus, the Archbishop of Upsala (1555), and Pontoppidan, bishop of Bergen (1752): “A Description of the Northern Peoples” (1555, vol. I) and “Sea Monsters Unmasked” (1883). On the other hand, it has symbolic referents to the poetic texts of William Blake’s “London” and Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “The Kraken”. These referents reiterate the meaning of terror and anarchy caused by the cats.

In Eliot’s “**Growltiger’s Last Stand**”, the reader encounters “ungrammaticalities” in which the initial lines lead to contradictory meanings. The reader can sense the contradictory relationship between the description of the image of Growltiger on one hand and his feeling of joy in his title, “The Terror of Thames” on the other.

Growltiger was a Bravo Cat, who travelled on a barge:
In fact he was the roughest cat that ever roamed at large.
From Gravesend up to Oxford he pursued his evil aims,
Rejoicing in his title of ‘The Terror of the Thames’ [Eliot 1939: 15].

On the heuristic level of reading, the sentence (matrix) of the poem is concerned with the horrible impact of the title of the cat “GROWLTIGER” on the world. It is an explicit impact which is stated through the choosing of certain words that impart the sense of terror among the others such as; “Bravo”, “roughest”, “evil”, “shuddered”, and other words.

On the hermeneutic level, the name of “Growltiger” is a sign whose significations are transposed from one signifier (word) into another within a code. On this level of reading, the reader can recognize allusions in the “Growltiger’s Last Stand” as variants of hypogram. On the lexical layer within the same level, the reader’s act of interpreting the text lurks in the word “Growltiger”. This word has the symbolic meanings of savagery, blood-thirst, volatilities, and false valor.

Besides, the name of “Bravo Cat” has a symbolic reference to Francis Grose’s “A Calssical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue” (1788) in which Bravo Cat represents Cheshire cat in its facial features of grin and laughing by revealing its teeth and gums [Grose 2020]. There is a phrasal description in John Wolcott’s “A Pair of Lyric Epistles” (1792) which was written under the Pseudonym of Peter Pindar that highlights on “Lo, Like a Chershire cat court will grin” [Pindar 1792: 10]. Also Chershire Cat was mentioned in Lewis Carroll’s “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” (1865) as a fictional cat. William Makepeace Thackeray’s novel “The Newcomes” (1855) was an occasion to mention this cat as well “That woman grins like a Cheshire cat”. The shared significance of Grwoltiger and the ambiguous Chershire Cat lurk in their fast attacking and concealment as well as their huge size that make them more dreadful than tigers. They only leave behind them their deadly effect due to their facial features of grin.

Furthermore, the name of Growltiger cat has a rhetorical presupposition two referents. Its literary utterance has a reference to the female name, Griddlebone and another reference to the Princess Qajar. It has two hypogram. The name of Griddlebone symbolically refers to an imaginary female character who murders men. This name has a symbolic referent to a Persian Queen who is notorious for making her suitors commit suicide. It symbolizes evil that is covered by physical beauty and infatuation. The “Princess Qajar” whose story is recorded in the Persian history is known for physical ugliness which was a standard of beauty at that time. According to the Persian historical texts, suitors who were rejected by this Princess Qajar would commit suicide [Scheiwiller 2016: 69]. In this sense, the signification of the name Griddlebone is contradictively placed with the signification of the title of Princess Qajar.

On the layer of the textual interpretants, most of the poetic lines in the poem function as texts that mediate with other texts that are composed of biblical and historical allusions and literary and non-literary quotations. Symbolically, the biblical references to the warnings of God’s wrath represent the horrifying effect of Growltiger’s name over the weak animals like “canary”, “Pekinese”, “Bandicoot”, “any Cat” [Eliot 1939: 13].

Woe to the weak canary, that fluttered from its cage;
Woe to the pampered Pekinese, that faced Growltiger’s rage.
Woe to the bristly Bandicoot, that lurks on foreign ships,
And woe to any Cat with whom Growltiger came to grips! [Eliot 1939: 13].

Eliot also borrowed quotations from two different sources: *The Ballad of the House Carpenter*; an American ballad which is based on a Scottish original and a quotation from Bayard Taylor’s “The Story of Kennett” (1866) respectively [Ricks, McCue 2015: 100].

These lines combine contradictions in which in “The House Carpenter” revolves around a former lover (a disguised demon) who tempts wives to desert their husbands and children and elope with him, whereas, “The Story of Kennett” tackles an old Quaker’s daughter marriage to Alfred Barton in time she was in love with Gilbert:

Then Griddlebone she gave a screech, for she was badly skeered;
I am sorry to admit it, but she quickly disappeared.
She probably escaped with ease, I’m sure she was not drowned —
But a serried ring of flashing steel Growltiger did surround [Eliot 1939: 15].

The literally utterance “I’m sure she was not drowned” rhetorically presupposes that someone claimed or expected that Griddlebone was drowned. It opens a dialogical space in this poetic text through transforming the utterance in its original texts, “The Ballad of the House Carpenter” and “The Story of Kennett” from its mimetic manner in the two original texts into a semiotic one in Eliot’s poem. It is detached from its two original temporal contexts, “The Ballad of the House Carpenter” and “The Story of Kennett”. It is placed in the discursive order formed by the literary conventions of poetry: rhythm, meter and rhyme scheme.

Conclusion

To conclude, intertextuality in Eliot’s selected poems of “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats” is saliently featured by the employment of allusions, sayings and quotations. They pose difficulties of understanding to the reader for they convert the poetic text from its mimetic aspect to its semiotic one. This conversion of the text produces an assemblage or plurality of texts, paragrams and ungrammaticalities. The matrices of the three selected poems are epitomized into separate words (names). Their texts are positioned in dialogical spaces that form the texts’ pluralist nature and share their identity with the other texts. On the two levels of reading, the hermeneutic level in the poetic texts is more prominent than the heuristic one in the sense that their multiple intertexts communicate their semiotic meanings to the reader, their significations. The literary utterances of the poems’ intertexts rhetorically presuppose given texts to produce pre-texts. To sum up, intertextuality in the three poems performs poetic and esthetic functions through its intertexts that are positioned in dialogical spaces. These intertexts accomplish the significance of the poetic texts on the heuristic and hermeneutic levels of reading through their sentences (matrices), ungrammaticalities, and literary utterances of rhetorical presuppositions.

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Хабаш Фади Бутрус К.

Университет Мосула,
Ирак, 41002, Нинава, Мосул, ул. Аль-Маджмоа, 1
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1438-9921>
fadi_butrus@uomosul.edu.iq

Интертекстуальность в цикле стихотворений Т. Элиота «Популярная наука о кошках, написанная Старым опоссумом»: постструктуралистский подход

Для цитирования: Habash Fadi Butrus K. Intertextuality in T. S. Eliot's "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats": A Post-Structuralist approach. *Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Язык и литература*. 2024, 21 (3): 638–654. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu09.2024.307>

Интертекстуальность — один из литературных феноменов, который находится в центре внимания структуралистов и критиков-постструктуралистов с 1960-х гг. Это техника многоуровневых текстов, имеющих риторическую, значимую и текстовую грани. В данном исследовании рассматриваются аспекты интертекстуальности в трех избранных стихотворениях из цикла Т. С. Элиота «Практическая наука о кошках, написанная Старым опоссумом». Цель статьи — определение семиотического значения этих аспектов и исследование их литературных предпосылок. Исследование состоит из трех разделов: в первом дается теоретическое введение в теорию интертекстуальности, во втором разделе рассматривается, как феномен интертекстуальности проявляется в трех стихотворениях Элиота, и в заключении представлены выводы. Три выбранных стихотворения имеют названия «Именованние кошек», «Старое Второзаконие» и «Последний бой Гроултигера». Исследование опирается на семиотические концепции интертекстуальности Р. Барта, Ю. Кристевой и М. Риффатера, а также на философские построения современного французского философа Ж. Делёза, теорию «ансамбля». Подводя итог, можно сказать, что интертекстуальность в избранных стихах из книги Т. С. Элиота «Книга полезных кошек мудрого опоссума» характеризуется использованием аллюзий, высказываний и цитат. Они переводят поэтический текст из его миметического аспекта в семиотический. Интертекстуальность в трех стихотворениях выполняет поэтическую и эстетическую функции через свои интертексты, расположенные в диалогических пространствах. Эти интертексты реализуют значимость поэтических текстов на эвристическом и герменевтическом уровнях прочтения их предложений (матриц), грамматичностей и литературных высказываний риторических предпосылок.

Ключевые слова: диалогичность, интертекстуальность, гипограмма, пресуппозиция, грамматика.

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