



Dovetailing and Prodigy in A Hundred Little Flames' Preeti Senoy

M. Ramya III BA (Eng) PSR Arts and Science College Sivakasi

M. Muthulakshmi III BA (Eng) PSR Arts and Science College Sivakasi

Abstract

Postmodern intertextuality abbreviates the relation between the texts that have related to incidents, quotes, allusions, translation, and so on. The aim of the study accolades on the postmodern tendency of intertextuality in Preeti Shenoy's selected texts, *Life is What You Make It*, *It Happens for a Reason*, and *A Hundred Little Flames*. Preeti Shenoy is a multifarious postmodern writer. The term intertextuality has been linked with other texts. The features of intertextuality are quotation, scenes, characters, narration, allusion, etc. The notable theorists of intertextuality are Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, and Mikhail Bakhtin, and the present study has adopted the intertextual concepts from the considered theorists. The methodology of the study splits into four intertextual concepts -- description of a word, different circumstances link, language, and dialogue. The first two concepts, proposed by Julia Kristeva, are descriptions of a word and different circumstances link. Roland Barthes has proposed the intertextual concepts of language and dialogue. Mikhail Bakhtin also has proposed the intertextual concept of language.

Keywords Intertextuality, description, circumstance, concept

In Indian writing in English literature, Preeti Shenoy is a famous and multifarious postmodern writer. Various ideas have been reflected in Shenoy's works, and intertextuality is one among those ideas. The intertextual elements are visible in the works of Shenoy; to some extent, the researcher can also explore the intertextuality among her works. The popular intertextuality theorist, Julia Kristeva, acquaints regarding words that "the word as a minimal textual unit thus turns out to occupy the status of mediator" Kristeva (Kristeva, 1986). This theory contributes to Shenoy's three novels: *Life is What You Make It* (2011), *It Happens for a Reason* (2014), and *A Hundred Little Flames* (2017). The choice of diction plays a vital role in her novels. Shenoy has mentioned in the novel, *Life is What You Make It*, "to me she was the epitome of a perfect woman. She looked gorgeous with perfectly chiseled aquiline features..." (Shenoy, 2019). Here, the words have contributed the most and pay close attention to the readers.

Then, the fiction *It Happens for a Reason* is about a girl who has achieved her life. Shenoy attributes that “when caffeine shows up, it attached itself to the receptors so that adenosine cannot.” (Shenoy, 2014). The novel *A Hundred Little Flames* deals with the relationship between the modern (Ayan) and older (grandfather, Gopal Shankar) generation. While writing this novel, Shenoy has played with words that, “His eyes were vacant. He kept looking at Ayan, befuddled. Gopal Shankar enunciated each word slowly. It seemed like he was grappling with his words” (Shenoy, 2017). Kristeva mentioned that words are only capable of covering the text and attracted by the readers. Likewise, using of words is highly attributed in Shenoy’s texts, and those are connected with Kristeva’s theory on intertextuality.

Literary critics love nothing more than making terms for things that don’t really need terms. Intertextuality is no exception. Go around the web and you’ll find more than a dozen “types of intertextuality.”

The truth is: most of them are the same. We’re going to keep it simple by sticking to three main types.

EXPLICIT INTERTEXTUALITY

Explicit intertextuality is when one text is explicitly replicated, either through a remake, reboot, or plagiarism.

Examples of explicit intertextuality:

- Disney fairy tales: *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*.
- Movie prequels and sequels, such as those from the *Star Wars* franchise.

There is a tendency to connect the phenomenon of intertextuality and translation studies connect “translation” and “intertextuality”. G.V. Denisova [9], in particular, states that “now translation is being understood not only as the interlinguistic phenomenon, but as the intertextual phenomenon” [9: 207]. I. Even-Zohar mentions the change of the emphasis, that has happened in the theory of translation and interpretation studies from the dichotomy “original text/ translated text” to “translation/ recipient culture”, and to the study of the role, which the translated text enacts by introducing of the formal and topical innovations into the recipient culture. Thus, taking into account the hypothesis of the connection of texts, it should be noted that majority of the literary texts, which had become precedent¹ are translations from the different languages (“*Iliad*” and “*The Odyssey*” by Homer, Bible etc.), and later, these very translations become prototexts² and influence the other texts of this language (metatexts³).

A Hundred Little Flames is an enthralling story on family relationship and friendship in the context of modern India. The story takes place in a village called *Poongavanam*, situated in Kerala where a young man *Ayan* unravels mysteries surrounding the life of his grandfather *Gopal Shanker*.

The story revolves around relationship between father and a son across two generations. Ayan loses his job in Pune and is sent to the village by his father *Jairaj Shanker* to look after his lonely grandfather. During his stay, *Ayan* finds out the sad truth about *Gopal Shanker's* past life and is determined to bring back the lost love.

The story has quite a few interesting characters but there are four main characters which constitute the main plot of the book. *Gopal Shanker*, an elderly person, is a retired bank employee who suffers from schizophrenia. He lives with *Velu*, who is the housekeeper of *Thekke Madom*. *Ayan* is a young man who is on the pursuit of finding himself. *Rohini* is passionate about conducting cultural camps around the country. She is also *Gopal's* friend when they were growing up together in *Poongavanam*. *Jairaj Shanker* is *Ayan's* father, whose sole purpose in life is wealth accumulation. He is quite adamant about selling the house *Thekke Madom* and admitting *Gopal Shanker* to a mental asylum.

The author described the places incredibly well. She brought the charming scenes of nature into her writing. The village reminded me of the time I had spent with my best friend in a village situated in Tadepalli, Telangana. Part of the story also takes places in Pondicherry describing about events which occurred in *Gopal's* life during his middle adulthood. I would love to visit the place some time in the future. There is also mention of Hyderabad which is my home city.

The story teaches handful of lessons about friendship and pure love. It reveals sad reality of many old people who are left to stay in old-age homes and mental asylums. This book is a great pick if you have not read many Indian authors. It would definitely encourage you to pay a visit to your ancestral homes and re-unite with old friends.

As the car sped towards *Thekke Madom*, *Ayan* found himself relaxing more and more. Kerala was beautiful. *Ayan* remembered the vacation that he had taken here once, when he was a child. His father had sent him to stay at *Thekke Madom*. His cousin *Nithya* too had been sent. They had created unforgettable memories, catching fish in the pond and putting them in glass jars; climbing mango trees and eating the raw mangoes with chilli powder and salt; borrowing *Velu's* cycle which was too big for them, and yet riding it expertly, standing up on the pedals, for if they sat on the seat, their legs wouldn't reach the pedals. *Ayan* remembered the fragrance of pepper and cardamom, and the sweet taste of the mulberries that they had plucked from the mulberry tree. He remembered the deep red jambu— fruits that they used to pluck and eat, and his mouth watered .

Roland Barthes is a well-known intertextuality theorist. His theory is used in many studies by various authors. For instance, the study of *Prabhakaran* and *Geetha* enlightens *Rushdie's* novel *Haroun and the Sea* through the concept of Barthes's intertextuality. The authors analyze *Rushdie's* text with Barthes's theory regarding the text and its meaning. The authors elucidate that there is no inventiveness in writing, and the writer may change some words. However, the ideas remain the same in all the texts, and the way of narration may differ

from all the texts (Geetha & Prabhakaran, 2018). The study of Ayo Kehinde abbreviates intertextuality in African novels. Kehinde assumes that Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is intertextual with Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* through the story, and Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* is intertextual with Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* through the protagonist Razumov. The author employs Barthes's intertextuality theory, and it depends on the reader as the systematized hub of interpretation (Kehinde, 2003)

The study of Hariharasudan and Thavabalan accolades on intertextuality that Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is intertextual with the movie "Chemmeen" because a few tragic incidents are linked (Hariharasudan, 2018). Likewise, Shenoy's *It Happens for a Reason* is intertextual with the film "Paa". Shenoy portrays the characters of Ankush and Vipasha. They fall in love with each other, and they have separated. At the end of the novel, their son reunites them. Likewise, the film, "Paa" also has the same incidents. Moreover, the film released in 2009, and Shenoy's *It Happens for a Reason* has published in 2014. The same beginning and ending have been projected by Shenoy in her work (Shenoy, 2014). This study is similar to Shenoy's work.

This study draws attention to postmodern intertextuality, and it is tough to find in literature, especially in Indian writing. Intertextuality plays a vital role in literature and difficult to elucidate intertextuality with other texts. In literature, intertextuality elements are explored through writing. The present study abbreviates Preeti Shenoy's postmodern novels *A Hundred Little Flames*.

References:

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