



## Intertextual Elements in The Poem of American Xxi Century Female Poets Rita Dove “Parsley”

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### ABSTRACT

The article presents an attempt to identify the prospects of using such a concept of modern literary criticism as "intertextuality" in the context of contemporary poetry. The idea of intertextuality owes its appearance and development to the creativity of representatives of French post-structuralism (Y. Kristeva, R. Barth, J. Derrida). Intertextuality points to the fundamental interrelation of all texts created by mankind. The idea of intertextuality is rooted in the previous tradition of analyzing literary works. The poem “Parsley” of one of the famous script writers, story writers, activists, Former Poet Laureate and feminists Rita Dove was taken and analyzed.

### Keywords:

Intertextuality, symbolism, allusion, el General, Dominican Republic.

### I. Introduction

The theory of intertextuality, formed relatively recently, is currently attracting the attention of many researchers. Yuliya Kristeva, who is credited with introducing the term "intertextuality", defined it as the property of any text to enter into a dialogue with other texts.

In the course of the further development of the theory of intertextuality, new interpretations and definitions of the concept itself appeared in the works of various researchers; “Every text is an intertext” [1], and “any literary work is inevitably secondary” [2]. According to the second point of view, connected with the understanding of intertextuality in the narrow sense, the author “who quotes without quotation marks” deliberately refers to his predecessors, thereby enriching the content plan and counting on a discerning, active reader. Also, the concept of intertextuality is interpreted as “the presence in the text of elements that, due to the

purposeful author’s strategy or irrespective of his intentions, activate in the mind of the reader other texts read by him earlier” [3].

Guseva identified four categories of intertextual elements that are relevant for translation:

1. the category of the prominence of the prototext;
2. category of the dominant function of the intertextual element;
3. category of the level of functioning of the intertextual element;
4. category of the format of the intertextual element [1].

Singling out the category of the prominence of the proto text (in the source and receiving cultures), we consider two of its main aspects: synchronic (differences in the corpus of precedent texts in different cultures in the same historical period) and diachronic (changes in the volume of this corpus within one or several cultures over time).

In the category of the prominence of the proto text, the following categorical forms can be distinguished:

- the proto-text is well-known and easily recognizable by the reader of the translation (the proto-text is a universal, "nuclear" text for both cultures; for example, Shakespeare's plays or the text of the Bible (to a lesser extent);
- the proto text may not be recognized by readers belonging to a different linguistic and cultural community (i.e., it is "nuclear", but only for one culture; for example, actual allusions or quotes from authors who are not internationally known), or is not part of modern culture and will be incomprehensible to the modern reader, regardless of his cultural and linguistic affiliation;
- proto text is very narrowly known (practically to the circle of specialists) [1].

## II. Literary review

Intertextuality in the field of view of critics and literary scholars is for more than half a century, but still around this phenomenon, around understanding its nature is debated. In particular, some researchers (R. Barth, Y. Lotman, Y. Kristeva, M. Raffater, J. Derrida, N. Pieguet-Gro) in their own way proven that "every text is an intertext", and any literary the work is inevitably secondary [4]. This position is associated with "understanding for intertextuality in a broad sense". Other scientists (I.P. Smirnov, O.N. Kuzmina, N.A. Fateeva, V.E. Chernyavskaya) consider intertextuality the determining factor in the literature of postmodernism [5]. According to the second point of view related to the understanding of intertextuality in the narrow sense, "Quoting without quotation marks" the author deliberately refers to predecessors, thereby enriching the content plan and counting on a discerning, active reader [4]. It is assumed that such a reader is familiar with the literature of different eras, is able to understand the writer's hint, because he becomes his co-author at the same time. It is clear that the quotation itself must be recognizable without a context, by a "cicada",

otherwise the multidimensionality of the modernist work will remain only an intention. It assumed that the author's intention is the criterion separating classical reminiscence and postmodern intertextuality. "Literary connections" between the works have always existed, however, it is safe to say that only after the appearance of the correspond in term in literary studies; there was a conscious appeal to intertextuality - as a technique. Another thing is that the need for a kind of fulcrum, a formal and meaningful foundation, has always existed among the artists of the word. The history of literature is a series of borrowings, primarily of genius, because it is the highest giftedness that is able to create a non-repetitive text based on recurring themes, plots.

## III. Analysis

In this article, we consider examples of intertextual elements given in the poem "Parsley" by the famous American writer Rita Dove, which can be recognized by readers belonging to the same cultural community.

Rita Dove, an extraordinary poet, began her career after writing her first book, *The Yellow House on the Corner*, in 1980. Her fame is the result of her hard work and undeniable enthusiasm. Her passion for reading and books, in general, prompted her to write herself.

She was born in Akron, Ohio, in an African American family with two younger sisters and an older brother. Her parents have always tried to support her intellectually and give her the best education. The pictures that her poems paint in the mind of a person, and how close the lyrics that she wrote to readers' hearts made her a favorite of the public. Her confidence in herself and the power of her word grew after her father, the first African American chemist, overcame the racial barriers in the tire industry and achieved his goals with his knowledge. During one of the interviews, Rita Dove described her childhood with her famous quote: "My parents instilled in us the feeling that studying is the most exciting thing that can happen to us, and it never ends, how great it isn't" [6].

#### IV. Discussion

Written by Rita Dove in 1937, "Parsley" is perhaps one of the most political poems throughout the 20th century. Dove's main purpose was to describe the violence against the population of the Dominican Republic.

Parsley is based on the true story of the 1937 massacre in the Dominican Republic

In Parsley, readers are introduced to the theme of grief and violence. These two deep feelings, together with fear, make up the entire poem. These are partially cleared up in the second section when the poet focuses on the point of view of El General and his outrageous reaction to the death of his mother. He had learned long ago that the only thing that could ease his grief or general misfortune was the grief of others. He always took pleasure in hurting other people, and after his mother died, and he did not know what to do with the loss, he ordered the killing of thousands of people.

Even though Dove told this story, the basic principles remained the same. One of the most important parts of this poem is the allusion to real events. Without these allusions, the poem would lose much of its meaning and impact.

The very title of this poem 《Parsley》 was not chosen by chance. This is, of course, an allusion to the murders underlying this poem. According to history, the ancient Greeks did not use parsley in cooking; it was revered as a symbol of oblivion and death, and as a funeral herb. In the poem, the writer tried to use this word as an intertext, referring to this ancient Greek symbol, since the poem itself is one big allusion to the tragedy in the Dominican Republic. Rafael Trujillo referred to as "El General" in the text, was the country's military dictator. He ordered the execution of all who cannot pronounce the word "parsley" in Spanish "Perejil".

There is a parrot imitating spring  
in the palace, its feathers parsley green.  
Out of the swamp the cane appears

to haunt us, and we cut it down. El General  
searches for a word; he is all the world  
there is. Like a parrot imitating spring [6].

In the first stanza of Parsley, the speaker begins with rather peaceful, seemingly harmless images. She describes a parrot imitating spring. This is a reference to the bright green color of its feathers. It is located in a palace in a place of great wealth. The poem does not immediately say why there is a parrot, but most likely it is some kind of pet.

In the second stanza, the poet first mentions "El General," the name she uses for Rafael Trujillo, the military dictator of the Dominican Republic. The more the reader learns about the events that inspire the poem, the more meaning he will be able to read between the lines.

In the third line of this stanza, the poet mentions the "cane". This reference to sugarcane cultivation is also considered an intertext. Sugarcane depresses them in some way. It grows and is forced to be cut. It haunts them. This is a more complex allusion to the dictator of the Dominican Republic, who also oppressed them. He owned many acres of a sugar plantation, and the workers in these fields were likely in dire conditions. It also evokes images of violence through its association with beatings. The cane creates contrast or contrast between the palace and the work of the sugarcane workers.

we lie down screaming as rain punches  
through  
and we come up green. We cannot speak an  
R—  
out of the swamp, the cane appears

and then the mountain we call in whispers  
*Katalina.*

The children gnaw their teeth to arrowheads.

There is a parrot imitating spring [6].

In the fourth stanza, the Haitians, who "cannot pronounce the letter R," cry out in a whisper to Catalina, whose grief, identity and location were not disclosed. Catalina may refer to Isla Catalina, an island off the southeast coast of Hispaniola, or another local attraction. If the "l" in Catalina is replaced by the unspoken "r" —the linguistic trope that Dove uses later in the poem — the result is Mount Katarina, or Mount Catherine, the highest mountain in Egypt. The mountain is the resting

place of the martyr Saint Catherine, a figure whose piety and martyrdom may have meaning for Haitians, mostly Catholics. [7]

The writer also describes how the children's teeth are "gnawed down to the arrowheads," which probably hints at sugarcane chewing and introduces more images of violence.

The parrot, in the poem, symbolizes wealth (it's a pampered pet) and slavery (the cage of something independent that should be free).

The intertext of the rain "piercing" and the cry of the soul speaking of "rebirth" contrasts with the violence inflicted on the harvesters, with the growth of the sugar cane itself. The harvester itself is also a deliberate allusion of the author to show El General's torture of the Haitians.

## V. Conclusion

Thus, having analyzed the work of Dove "Parsley", we concluded that this poem is a vivid example of intertextuality in all its expressions. The author used elements of intertextuality that activated other texts he had read into the mind of the reader. Thanks to the elements of intertextuality, the author managed to enrich the very content of the poem. Such linguistic devices as symbolism, allusion, metaphor which was so accurately used by the author show us how crucial it is to be acknowledging with the cultural background and historical event while analyzing literary work of a writer.

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