



## Allusion as a Cognitive Structure Representing Knowledge Structures

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the definition and the types of intertextuality classified by outstanding scholars in the sphere of linguistics and focuses on the role of allusion (the device expressing intertextuality) in triggering cognitive structures, and in turn, knowledge structures.

**Keywords:** intertextuality, the precedent text, the recipient text, the intertext, allusion, types of allusion, historical allusion, mythological allusion, literary allusion, religious allusion.

**Introduction.** Being independent branch of linguistics, text linguistics is relatively new sphere that came into existence in 60-70th of the last century and deals with a great variety of notions including text and its structure, its type and stylistic devices used, text production and text perception, and text analysis. Text linguistics gives a deep insight into the text and analyzes the given text from different angles: structural, semantic, pragmatic, cognitive and cultural. In other words, text is a complex multi-dimensional structure, the analysis of which depends on the aim of the investigation.

One of the most crucial notions in text linguistics is text categories. The notion of the category is defined as a common property of the text inherent in all its types. There are different approaches to the names and number of categories relevant to the text.

It is acknowledged that text categories could be of two types: obligatory text categories that should be observed in all types of text as a main constituent (cohesion, coherence, integrity, informativity, intentionality, situationality, modality and etc.) and non-obligatory or optional ones which are relevant to a certain text type, for instance, emotiveness, evaluation, imagery or intertextuality are considered to be optional because they characterize only one text type- mostly fictional text. In further paragraphs the stylistic features of allusion will be discussed.

### **Analysis of literature on the topic.**

Intertextuality is the interconnection between similar or related works of literature that reflect and influence readers' interpretation of the text. The studies of the category intertextuality can be found in the works of Beaugrande R.A., Dressler W., Galperin I.R., Arnold I.V., Bakhtin M.M., Chernyayevskaya V.E. and others. Beaugrande R.A., Dressler W. define intertextuality as follows: "*intertextuality concerns the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts.*"

The structure of intertextuality consists of three basic components:

- the precedent text- should be well-known: myths, legends, religious books, famous literary works;
- the recipient text – the text that intertextuality is being used in;
- the intertext – the part that is taken from the precedent text: quotations, citation, allusion, epigraph and etc;

The main device that expresses intertextuality is allusion. As it has been mentioned above, allusion is a stylistic device, in which the information from other sources is explicitly referred. Allusion requires

special knowledge of classic literature, mythology, geography, or even culture to thoroughly understand and interpret a literary work. Allusion is used to enhance the text, often by making it more relatable to the reader or by illustrating either an example or the text's overarching theme. For instance, it's particularly common for writers from the West to make allusions in their works to the Bible and Greek or Roman mythology. Allusions are commonly used metaphorically but can also be used ironically. Furthermore, because they can convey a ton of information in just one or a few words, they are particularly popular among poets.

**According to the source that being alluded, allusion can be of 4 types:**

1. **Historical** – An allusion to a historical event or period: “*Why, yesterday, I was introduced to **John W. Gates.**” (“The Duel”, O’Henry)*
2. **Mythological** – An allusion to a mythological figure or story: “*Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds, Towards Phoebus’ lodging.*” (“*Romeo and Juliet*”, W. Shakespeare)
3. **Literary** – An allusion to a literary text or figure: “*I think they were from Nebraska or possibly Missouri or Minnesota. Anyhow, they were out for success and scraps and scads, and they tackled the city like two **Lochinvars** with brass knucks and a pull at the City Hall.*” (“The Duel”, O’Henry)
4. **Religious** – An allusion to a religious text, story, or figure: “*...we heard a kind of war-whoop such as **David** might have emitted when he knocked out the champion **Goliath**”.* (“The Ransom of Red Chief”, O’Henry)

### Analysis and results

The cognitive sense of allusion is in the fact that it activates knowledge structures. Let us analyze allusion in the literary text. The short story “The Duel” by O’Henry is illustrative here. The story begins with the description of the “*unique among the cities of the world*” – New York. Two friends, William and Jack, come to the city: the former for business and the latter for Art. Both of them “*came to dig their fortunes out of*” New York. From their conversation at their long-awaited luncheon their attitudes towards their lives can be understood. William, who dresses up like other thousands of people, seems to be rather happy, while Jack still continues his battle against the beautiful city. However, when he receives a telegram from home calling him back he rejects it. The author lets readers decide themselves on “*which of the heroes wins the battle against the city*”. The main concept of this story is the concept of the city – New York. The author uses a lot of stylistic devices to create the image of the city: epithets (*Sabbath-slippered feet, dreary preamble, big city; humorous smile; little soap drummers; great, wonderful city; asterisk stop; the pure and open heart*), metaphors (*It woos you to its heart with a subtlety of a siren; It is a combination of Delilah, green Chartreuse, Beethoven, chloral and John L. in his best days; your opponent is the city; be a citizen and still prate of beans if Boston mothered you; the city has gobbled you up. It has taken you and cut you to its pattern and stamped you with its brand;*), oxymoron (*the poorest millionaires, the littlest great men, the lowest skyscrapers, the dolefullest pleasures*), simile (*like two Lochinvars with brass knucks; the businessmen blew in like March wind; far below and a round lay city like a ragged purple dream; the irregular houses were like the broken exteriors of cliffs*). One of the main stylistic devices found in the story is allusion. Although the story is very short, it is rich in allusions. The first example is in the following extract:

*“The battle is to decide whether you shall become a New Yorker or turn the rankest outlander and **Philistine**. You must be one or the other. You can’t remain neutral. You must be for or against – lover or enemy – bosom friend or outcast. And, oh, the city is general in the ring. Not only by blows does it seek to subdue you. It woos you to its heart with a subtlety of a siren. It is a combination of **Delilah**, green **Chartreuse**, **Beethoven**, chloral and **John L.** in his best days.”*

In this very short part of the story a reader may encounter a number of allusions. First of them is **Philistine**. The precedent text of this allusion is the Bible. The Philistines were ancient people who

lived from 12<sup>th</sup> century BC until 604 BC. They are mostly known for their conflict with the Israelites. The Philistines were main enemy of the Israelites and they tried to conquer Israelites, but could not achieve their goal. In this very abstract the allusion of *Philistine* is used to show the hostility of the city New York towards newcomers.

Another allusion used in this abstract is *Delilah*, a woman mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Judges. Being described as very attractive and enchanting, she was a lover of Samson, but was bribed by the lords of the Philistines to know the sources of his strength. Having made efforts to overpower Samson several times, at last, Delilah could know that all his power was in his hair and Philistines easily subdued Samson. Hence, in most cases, from both religious and historical viewpoints, Delilah was regarded as negative person. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, her name has “become synonymous with voluptuous, treacherous woman”.

One of the significant allusions used is *Chartreuse*, which is a French liqueur available in green and yellow versions that differ in taste and alcohol content. The liqueur has been made by the Carthusian Monks since 1737 according to the instructions set out in a manuscript written in 1605. It is composed of distilled alcohol aged with 130 herbs, plants and flowers.

One of the most outstanding and admired composers -*Ludwig van Beethoven* is also alluded in this abstract. His works rank among the most performed of the classical music repertoire. In spite of suffering from deafness, he kept composing incredibly marvelous music pieces.

Known as *John L.* among his admirers, John Lawrence Sullivan was an American boxer and a cultural icon of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century America. John L. was the first boxing superstar and one of the world’s highest-paid athletes of his era.

By writing “*It is a combination of Delilah, green Chartreuse, Beethoven, chloral and John L. in his best days*” the author tries to show the greatness of the city: New York is a combination of enchanting beauty(Delilah), nice liqueur ( green Chartreuse), irreplaceable music (Beethoven) and of course, invincible power (John L.). The city may offer anything a human being wants; one can find whatever he looks for.

Let us examine some more abstracts from the short story so as to have clearer image of the city:

Extract 2

*“But in New York you must be either a New Yorker or an invader of a modern Troy, concealed in the wooden horse of your conceited provincialism.”*

In this sentence the author used mythological allusion – *Troy*, that is well-known for Trojan War. Trojan War is one of the important events in Greek mythology and has been narrated through many works of Greek literature, most notably in Homer’s Iliad. In the abstract New York is compared to the city Troy that any settler has to conquer, otherwise, the city itself makes a visitor be a New Yorker.

Extract 3:

*“I think they were from Nebraska or possibly Missouri or Minnesota. Anyhow, they were out for success and scraps and scads, and they tackled the city like two Lochinvars with brass knucks and a pull at the City Hall.”*

The precedent text of the allusion *Lochinvar* (a romantic hero) is the ballad “Marmion” by Sir Walter Scott. Lochinvar is a brave knight who arrives at the bridal feast of Ellen, his beloved, and rides with her off after their dance at the wedding. This allusion is probably used to express the perseverance, determination, brevity and aspiration of the main heroes.

Extract 4:

*“Why, yesterday, I was introduced to **John W. Gates**. I took an auto ride with a wine agent’s sister. I saw two men run over by a street car, and I seen **Edna May** playing in the evening. Talk about the West, why, the other night I woke everybody up hollering.”*

The author used historical allusions – **John W. Gates and Edna May**. The former was an American Gilded Age industrialist, financier and gambler presenting wealth and authority of the city, while the latter, being popular postcard beauty, was an American actress and singer hinting at the popularity and culture of New York. With the help of these allusions a reader may realize that William, one of the leading characters, is happy to live such a great city, to know and see such wealthy and famous figures of the society like John W. Gates and Edna May.

Extract 5:

*“Abandoning the figure of the leech, it is a juggernaut, a **Moloch**, a monster to which the innocence, the genius and the beauty of the land pay tribute.”*

The religious that is equally important as others is **Moloch**. It is a name or term that appears several times in the Hebrew Bible. Moloch that has been portrayed as a bull-headed idol with outstretched hands over a fire is a Canaanite god that requires child sacrifice. In the short story one of the protagonists Jack compares New York with Moloch since both of them share the same feature of horrifying greatness and require sacrifice from dwellers.

All of these allusions show contrastive feature of the city New York: battle of the good and bad, kindness and evil, power and weakness, aspiration and sacrifice. So the analysis of this story proves that the city of New York is the central concept of the whole story, which is characterized with the help of many stylistic devices.

The following diagram illustrates both positive and negative conceptual features of the city (Diagram 1)

Diagram 1



## Conclusion

It can be obviously seen that allusions in literary texts trigger knowledge structures that readers have. Readers can't thoroughly comprehend the works without having specific knowledge about the people, places, events that are alluded in the literary text. Allusion, therefore, is being regarded as cognitive structure by linguists.

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