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Hamma Lakhdar University of El-Oued

Faculty of Arts and Languages

Department of Arts and English Language



**Allusion in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath***

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Master's Degree in Literature and Civilization**

**Submitted by:**

TALHA Ilham  
ZEGHDI Salha

**Supervised by:**

Dr. KOUIDER Yousef

**Board of Examiners:**

**Dr. kaouther NASBA**

**President**

University of El-Oued

**Dr. Kouider YOUCEF**

**Supervisor**

University of El-Oued

**Dr. Mouna HAZEBRI**

**Examiner**

University of El-Oued

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## **Dedication**

This research paper is lovingly dedicated to our beloved parents. Who are the sources of our inspiration. They have given us the drive and discipline to overcome any obstacle with determination and enthusiasm .

To our family who have encouraged and supported us to not surrender or give up learning.

To our friends who have helped us to finish this project.

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## Abstract

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) draws on rich intertextual reference to discuss social injustice and in some way to humanize the plight of devotees of the Dust Bowl. This research examines how allusions to the Bible, history, and myth are used as narrative and ideological devices that augment the themes of oppression, struggle and cooperation in the novel. This research employs a qualitative textual analysis approach that uses Leppihalme's (1997) classification as guidance and close reading as an illusive strategy for identification and interpretation of allusion . This study discovered that biblical allusions elevates Joads' journey to spiritual trial, whereas historical allusions firmly embed the Joads' suffering within the socioeconomic context of the Great Depression, while the use of mythological motifs universally reflects their plight as archetypes of resistance. In addition, Steinbeck purposefully used allusion to heighten emotional impact of the novel, and sharpen the critique of capitalism by reframing faith from endurance to plea for solidarity. The potential limitations of this analysis are the subjective nature of identifying potentially ambiguous allusion, and the varied contextual knowledge of the readers' cultural references. This investigation emphasizes the lasting significance of *The Grapes of Wrath*, and demonstrates how literature uses intertextuality and intertextual lens to create links between historical and contemporary struggles for justice.

**Keywords:** *The Grapes of Wrath*, allusion, John Steinbeck, Great Depression

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# Introduction

## 1. Background of the Study

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) continues to be one of the most influential pieces of literature in America, and pessimistically catalogues social and economic displacement of that time. Steinbeck chronicles the mass displacement of the Joad family in their move from Oklahoma to California. Through their story, Steinbeck depicts the plight of Dust Bowl migrants during an unsettling time in a new region of America. Steinbeck's use of subtle references to religious, historical, and literary traditions are a purposeful literary strategy towards universalizing the experiences of the Joads similar to other universal stories of oppression and suffering and the struggle to resist (Steinbeck, 1939). This study will illustrate that the allusion to socio-political power found in the biblical, historical, and literary allusions are Steinbeck's literary strategy to restrict systemic abuse while imagining new conditions of collective identity, making the work an historical text, and philosophical treatise. The Joads journey is referenced by scholars as being similar to the Israelites journey to the Promised Land, where Route 66 exemplifies a modern broken pilgrimage. Together, these evaluations establish that the historical and eschatological reference introduced through biblical, historical, and literary allusions to convey themes of socio-political power.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Previous studies on the biblical, historical, and literary allusions present in *The Grapes of Wrath* have treated these allusions in isolation, exploring mostly the presence and

significance of the references alone, rather than together as a system of rhetorical implications. This lack of contextualizing these allusions with respect to their combined implications is a missed opportunity to comprehend how Steinbeck's intertextual strategy creates meaning and achieves social recourse. This study will analyze how the allusions of the novel coalesce in a conflation which stands against oppression and representing broken but persistent collective resistance. This will highlight how Steinbeck's narrative creates new meaning, and link this meaning to Steinbeck's continuing significance to the development of critical dialogue around inequity and injustice.

### **3. Research Questions**

1. What types of allusions Steinbeck's use in his novel ?
2. How do these allusions deepen Steinbeck's protest against oppression?
3. How does Steinbeck's use of multiple allusions promote the theme of collective action over individualism?

### **4. literature Review**

Existing scholarships have extensively analyzed Steinbeck's biblical allusions, especially the novel's titular reference to the corpus affecting the migrants' suffering as a divine judgment against exploitation (Lombardi, 2025). Researchers such as Lombardi (2025) and Edubirdie (2021) highlight parallels between Jews 'Exodus and Israelites' journey to the promised country, with route 66 symbolizing a broken modern pilgrimage. Jim Casy's transformation from a preacher to work organizer, who reflects the victim of Christ, emphasizes Steinbeck's undermining religious dogma to advocate for secular humanism (Edubirdie, 2021). These

analyses reveal how biblical motifs anchor the novel's moral framework, although there are still holes in understanding how such hints are crossed with broader sociopolitical criticism.

Historical and literary hints in the novel have also received critical attention. Sobel (2013) notes Steinbeck's invocation of the French Revolution and work movements of the 1930s to contextualize Joads' struggle in cyclical patterns of class conflict. References to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* universalize their journey further as a moral odyssey, while allusions to characters such as the Pretty Boy Floyd Critique Societal Hypocrisy (Sobel, 2013). However, scholars have not yet fully studied how these intertextual layers collect capitalist ideologies. Early critics dismissed the novel as polemic, but contemporary studies, such as those of Sobel (2013), emphasizes the nuanced use of allusion to bridge the bridge between individual and collective trauma.

## **5. Aims of the Study**

This study aims to analyze how John Steinbeck's strategic use of biblical, historical, and literary allusion in *The Grapes of Wrath* functions together systematically to reinforce the novel's political critique and thematic complexity. Existing studies typically consider the use of these references in isolation, while the present research will demonstrate that Steinbeck's intertextual layering contributes to an integrated narrative structure that critiques and interrogates systemic oppression, celebrates human perseverance, and reconstitutes collective identity. While the study will use close textual analysis as evidence, supported by scholarly criticism, the objective is capture the complex interconnections between such allusions and their cumulative function. Ultimately, this study will provide new insights into Steinbeck's narrative form while situating

the work to contemporary discussions of inequality and social change, contributing new entry points for Steinbeck study.

## **6. Significance of the Study**

This study is meaningful because it helps to understand how Steinbeck's allusions function together-not only as references that stand apart to reinforce the novel's strong indictment of social and economic injustice-but to explore ways in which the biblical, historical, and literary references connect with one another, revealing Steinbeck's ability to include multiple layers of meaning in *The Grapes of Wrath*. The study will be useful to scholars studying Steinbeck's narrative devices, and will also be of interest to readers who are concerned about how literature addresses struggle in the real world. This study ultimately argues for the still allegedly relevant nature of the discussion in *The Grapes of Wrath* in terms of inequality, resilience, and collective action.

## **7. Research Methodology**

This study takes a qualitative textual analysis of the role and function of allusions in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. The methodology is systematic in that it identifies, categorizes, and interprets the allusions in the text through close reading and intertextual analysis. Allusions are first identified, and categorized, using a framework created by Leppihalme (1997), which separates proper-name allusions from key-phrase allusions. The allusions are then categorized again based on type (biblical, historical, literary, and mythological) in order to decry the impact of allusion both individually and collectively. With the findings of allusion identification, categorization, type, and interpretation, I will then analyze how the allusions work together to reinforce Steinbeck's themes, i.e., social injustice and human

persevering, but that is dependent on the rhetoric of the allusions. Lastly, we contextualize the interpretation of the allusions based on the sociohistorical context of the novel, using schema theory (Gibbs, 1994) and relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) to explore the effectiveness of allusions based on readerly understanding and cultural knowledge. The study analyzes primary data from Steinbeck's text and secondary data from scholarly literature on allusion, intertextuality, and the historical context of Steinbeck's novel. Limitations exist in this study, mainly that the subjective nature of identifying allusions could be interpreted differently by readers, but limits were adhered to, including classification formality and creating a relationship with literary criticism that is established. This methodology provides

## **8. Structure of the Study**

This dissertation takes the form of a three-chapter study. The first chapter gives the theoretical context and shows what allusion and intertextuality are and how they operate in a literary context. The second chapter considers the particulars of allusions, examining its types and their contributions to the thematic significance in literature. The third chapter is the practical part, where we use these theories to perform a close textual reading of several key passages to illustrate how Steinbeck's allusions can be read to offer a more multi-layered social critique of American society and culture.

**CHAPTER ONE:**

**Allusion in Literary Studies**

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## **Introduction**

The literary criticism arena witnesses great and deep changes since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It moves from the concentration on the author and the context to the interaction between the text and the reader. Allusion and intertextuality considered as fundamental pillars in understanding the mechanism of meaning making in the literary creation, focusing on the reader's role in exploring the intertextuality and the allusion detection because the meaning is no longer exclusively the author intention and the context but it becomes a result of the reader's interaction with the symbolic and cultural structure of the text

This chapter comes to highlight these two concepts speaking about their theoretical foundation, definition and their role in enriching the literary texts. to expand the scope of reading and interpretation. Also we try to discover the relation the author makes between this text and the referent and all subjects that affect and shape allusion.

### **1.1 Allusion and Intertextuality**

Allusion and intertextuality are some of the devices authors use to convince or gain the acceptance and enjoyment of their readers. Writers also use both these tools to enrich their work, engage the reader, and tie their work to the larger cultural conversation. They condense complex ideas in a few words without lengthy explanations. More than showing influence or inspiration, the writer is standing on the shoulders of giants, adding layers of meaning or interpretations, and sometimes even critiquing or making a comment on other texts. However, the more empowering version is that of mirrors reflecting real-life just such as we learn from stories, culture, or history, texts often reflect the changes that occur in thought as time progresses. A quick reference can carry powerful emotions or meanings to give depth and resonance to the work(Barthes, 1981).

### **1.1.1 Allusion**

Allusions have been one such literary device in the speaking, though not before artistic. Allusions are references to one person, place, event, or even a literary work that the audience is expected to appreciate. Historically, it is intended to mean a reference to some existing text, person, or cultural artifact, involving both authorial intent and reader recognition (Ben-Porot, 1976).

From the Latin *alludere*, meaning 'to play with', 'to refer to', comes the term allusion. Allusion is considered to add depth and complexity to works of literature, film, music, and art, because it functions as an indirect or implied, or passing, reference to a person, event, text, myth, or cultural artifact that exists outside the immediate text (Harmon & Holman, 2005). Unlike a direct quotation or citation, allusion does not give explicit acknowledgment of its source. This subtlety is highly characteristic of allusion: it is hinted at rather than stated outright.

Allusion entails intertextuality as well as cognitive involvement, as the reader must recognize and interpret the reference. It differs from other literary devices such as quotation, parody, pastiche, and echo. Allusions may be divided into three varieties: Overt Allusion, obviously marked; Covert Allusion, which demands considerable cultural or literary erudition; Lost Allusion, which few readers would recognize at all (Frye, 1957).

These types vary according to the degree of explicitness intended by the author. Allusion, thus, is more than a verb to decorate; it also speaks to how writers interact with tradition and how the readers then authenticate the co-construction of meaning.

### 1.1.2 Intertextuality

Intertextuality investigates how texts allude to, echo and transform other texts while presenting literature as an active, dynamic web of interconnected meanings, so little may be said about texts as isolated entities or fixed structures. Although the idea was strengthened with Julia Kristeva, who postulated that: "all texts are considered to be a mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva, 1966.p.37); hence, all texts incorporate previous discourses, either implicitly or explicitly through allusion, parody, pastiche, or direct citation.

The term intertextuality denotes the intrusion and shape occupation by one text from or in other texts; this phenomenon may be variously part of references, inspirations, revamps, or all kinds of connections. It takes myriad forms, such as, quoting, parodying, pastiching, adapting, or alluding to. Every text-including books, movies, or songs-derives somehow from or relates to other texts (Kristeva, 1980).

Another important theorist has been Roland Barthes, who put the emphasis on the collaborative aspect of meaning making by the reader rather than the one associated with authorial dominance. In his *The Death of the Author* (1977), he states that the meaning is to be read differently, not only regarding the writer's authority but rather on the reader who invests himself in a socially constructed bond.

Forms of intertextuality include explicit allusion, which is direct reference to reference works; Structural borrowing, adopting narrative frameworks; Parody and pastiche, which indicate imitation or critique-most prevalent in postmodern literature (Hutcheon, 1985).

Contemporary scholars, such as Bella Adams , Jessica Pressman , Lina Hutcheon also use intertextuality in the analysis of digital literature, adaptation, and transnational narratives. As

Henry Jenkins noted, "this framework is instrumental in the study of fan fiction, remixes, and other derivative works in digital media" (Jenkins, 2006). There it is: intertextuality, the last remaining tool in literary studies. It denies that any text stands on its own; then it digs deeper and exposes all those cultural, historical, and ideological connections within literature.

## **1.2 Identification of Allusions**

It is challenging for the researcher since visual comprehension requires an extensive reading of the text and a very good understanding of its cultural, historical, and literary contexts. Allusions are intentional references to previous texts, mythological accounts, historical events, or cultural artifacts such as statements or pieces; they serve to enrich the work's meaning. Thus, comparative analysis, lexical markers, contextual indicators-all-three approaches are applied. Allusion identification also involves a great deal of scholarly heft and interpretive sensitivity, for such allusions tend to be all the more subtle and require careful analyzation.(Ben.Porot, 1976)

There are several challenges in detection of allusion:

- Ambiguity – Some references could be deliberately obscure or vague.
- Cultural Specificity – Readers may fail to recognize references unless they share certain cultural or literary traditions.
- Authorial Intent vs. Reader Perception – As Barthes (1967) suggested, meaning is often imposed by the reader rather than intended by the author.
- Risk of Over-Interpretation – Eco warns that readers may construct allusions never intended by the author.

On the other hand, there are many suggest alternate approaches to decode allusions:. Comparative textual analysis involves identifying intertextual connections through parallel

wording, thematic echoes, and structural similarities. Such as, T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land* echoing Dante's *Inferno* in both language and desolate imagery .The second is the lexical and stylistic markers, such as symbolic names or repeated phrases signal borrowing while contextual clues such as epigraphs or authorial commentary provide explicit evidence of influence.

Reader competence plays a crucial role, as recognizing allusions depends on familiarity with canonical works and genre convention. Theoretical frameworks deepen this analysis: Gérard Genette's *hypertextuality* (1982) explains how later texts transform earlier ones, while Harold Bloom's (1973) *anxiety of influence* suggests writers creatively misread predecessors to assert originality. Lina Hutcheon's theory of parody further explores how allusion can simultaneously honor and critique their source, as seen in postmodern reworkings of classic myths. Together, these approaches reveal the layered dialogues between texts, whether through direct imitation, subversion, or unconscious resonance, demonstrating literature's on going conversation across time and tradition, such as Kristeva, J.(1980).*Desire in language A Semiotic Approach to literature and Art*.

In addition, computational techniques and digital tools such as corpus linguistics and AI-based text matching (Moretti, 2013) are adopted in contemporary literary studies to identify and assess allusions even more. In conclusion, detecting allusion embodies a complex but rewarding art that integrates traditional close readings with interpretive insight and, also increasingly, with digital technical approaches.

### **1.2.1 Resemblance to an external Referent**

Allusion; therefore, may be called a complex literary device. It produces its effects between the author and the reader, as argued by Hutcheon (2006). Contact with the reader comes

about when there is a resemblance to an external referent that is acknowledged; hence, allusion depends on reception and cognition abilities to detect such resemblances by the reader. To this effect, Perri (1978) makes a distinction between the competences and the incompetent readers, for it is the recognition by the reader that matters. When the referent is known by a reader, the allusion can be deciphered, while that by a reader who is not familiar with it goes unnoticed.

Forms of resemblance in allusion may be:

- Lexical or verbal - the author appropriates direct phrases, idioms, or stylistic structures (Barthes ,1997) and (Genette's ,1997)
- Structural mimicry-in the case of narrative frameworks( Propp's 1968)
- Thematic-where under shared ideas, symbols, or moral questions; it is hereby seen with the hermitian understanding of this word- to resemble( Kristeva's 1980).

Resemblance as the man can serve multiple functions indicating, sometimes, differing intentions-reflecting on the meaning of the original source or critiquing or distorting it. These effects would depend upon the writer's intention while planting the reference or, indeed, in the reader's interpretation-even when the resemblance may be unintentional.

Perri (1978) suggests that authors must strike a balance to avoid any risk of being derivative or baffling the readers with vague associations: "Resemblance should not be overmuch in an allusion, nor too little." Cultural critiques, such as Edward Said's concept of cultural erasure, further note the dangers of using non-Western referents without acknowledging power imbalances. Such allusions can unintentionally perpetuate appropriation if not handled with awareness and respect.

### 1.2.2 The Availability of the referent

Presence of referent is obviously the significant area dealing with the study of any allusion. This is due to the fact that allusion detection relies on the competence of the reader to recognize and interpret references to prior texts, historical events, myths, or cultural artifacts. Thus, much of the impact of the allusion rests on how easily the reader is able to identify the source to which the allusion is made (Smith , 2020) .

Some referents may be found in the category of the common and well-known, such as when biblical or mythological allusions are presented. The latter may be obscured to the extent that it makes huge demands on readers. And when the referent is too difficult to recognize, the allusive gesture fails. According to Ben-Porat (1976), "The effectiveness of an allusion depends on the reader's ability to retrieve the referential context" (p. 107). Hutcheon (2013) amplifies this point, identifying the various types of allusions:

- Overt allusions: there are direct references; everybody can recognize them.
- Covert allusions: are subtle and not apparent unless the reader has some prior knowledge" (p. 45).

Perri (1978) takes up this notion and elaborates on what he termed 'semantic loss,' whereby the intended meaning of a referent becomes obscured, which may affect the interpretation of the text. Likewise, hermeneutic hurdles come into play when a reader is turned into a sort of detective in the process of discovering some reference, enriching the exercise of literary analysis (Hollander, 1981). Cultural erosion enters here because when allusions rely on fading cultural knowledge, the literary function of these references may decline as time goes on. However, the accessibility of referents may depend on a number of influences:

- Cultural and historical background: A common key to culture will enhance the availability of the referent. The classical allusions made in Renaissance literature assume an acquaintance with Greco-Roman mythology (Pasco, 1994). Yet, contact with the referents may eventually fade away as the years pass, allowing for culturally deprived readers.
- Nature of the text: Canonical texts, intertextual ones—such as the Bible or Hamlet—are more likely to be acknowledged. As Riffaterre (1980) has it, "The literary canon acts as a repository of stable referents" (p. 132).
- Author's intention versus reader's appropriative act: Leaving interpretative space for the reader; being tacit. Eco (1990) states that "the reader's encyclopedia determines actualization" (p.78) so that the background of the individual has a say in the interpretation of allusions.

The end of the conversation may delve into the extent to which it is possible to pinpoint the referent, thus suggesting both richness and complexity with respect to allusion. Added challenges come with determining whether references are truly recognizable under given cultural conditions or if those references have become somewhat obscured over time due to cultural deviation.

### **1.3 The Stylistic Features of Allusions**

As intertextual devices, allusions are critical stylistic instruments in enriching literary works—allusions-to cross-cultural, historical, or literary grounds. Their efficiency then lies in the reader's ability to detect and interpret the alluded material, thus rendering a richer meaning that transcends the instance text (Abrams & Harpham, 2014). The stylistic features of allusions include typological diversity, rhetorical functions, and their contribution to the validity of textual

analysis. Allusions are not only stylish means but substantive components that increase meaning and authenticate interpretative claims.

Allusions can be classified according to their form, function, or referential scope, as well as their use as stylistic devices. According to Ben-Porot (1976), these include direct allusions, which name, phrase, or event directly (e.g., Achilles' heel used to signify vulnerability), and indirect touchstones, which rely on other more subtle traces such as structural mimicry or thematic parallelism (e.g., echoing the rhythm of a biblical psalm without explicit attribution). In addition, Leech and Short (2007) develop this typology by dividing it into cultural allusion (for instance, references to mythology), historical allusion (as in wars or political movements), and literary allusion (i.e., quoted Shakespearean soliloquies). For an example of this, James Joyce in *Ulysses* uses allusions to the *Odyssey* written by Homer to represent ancient heroism entangled with modern triviality while depending on his readers' knowledge of the epic to unravel its irony (Hutcheon, 1988). All this creates a typological flexibility through which authors can fine-tune their effects, an economy of allusion being one of its cornerstones.

Through their meaning-concentration and intellectual provocation, allusions exercise considerable power. According to Perri (1978), an allusion is a "semantic shortcut" that enables authors to express big ideas without lengthy exposition. By bringing about allusion to Dante's *Inferno* in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, we are likely to construe this within the realm of some centuries of literary discussion into a single image, representing spiritual decay. Nearer examples of irony are typical cases of allusions destabilizing traditional histories into new contexts. Thus postmodern texts like *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie use mythic commonplace to parody colonial historiography, what Hutcheon (1988) describes as "historiographic metafiction." Such maneuvers of style invite interrogations on the relationship between the text and its

sources, thus compelling active participation in meaning-making (Miall & Kuiken, 1994). In this manner, allusions are dynamic rhetorical instruments that convey thematic and feeling traces linking past with present.

Allusions render literary readings more valid by enhancing subjective interpretations with concrete intertextual evidence for verification. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) championed, in fact, the so-called "intentional fallacy" whereby a valid interpretation should be grounded nowhere but in the text, a concept upheld by that of the allusion. An example of this would be tracing biblical allusions in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* where the protagonist's name "Sethe" calls to mind the biblical Seth, providing intertextual grounding for the understanding of the overarching themes of redemption and legacy (Royle, 2003). Some empirical evidence available further licenses the stylistic significance of allusion: Miall and Kuiken (1994) demonstrated that allusions cause a defamiliarization effect in readers and thus invite greater cognitive and emotional engagement on their part. By placing allusions on the map, the scholars attempt to divert arbitrary use from their interpretations, almost joining the practice of stylistic analysis with schools of high academic standards.

The typological variety, rhetorical flexibility, and ability to ground interpretation constitute the main stylistic features from allusion's angle; these combine to make allusion a matter of importance in literary discourse. As vehicles of cultural memory and intertextual conversation, allusions surpass mere ornamentation to interact actively in the construction of texts themselves and guide hermeneutic inquiry.

### 1.3.1 The Internal Marking

Internal indication actually signifies that authors signal using text cues deliberately to imply allusion while not citing overtly a source. These markers would guide readers to search for nested meanings within the narrative language, structure, or symbolism thus creating a dialogue between the text and original source. Internal marking would intertextuate from tenacious example of co-construction among texts thus playfully dynamically curving meanings.

The internal markers associated with literary allusion are those linguistic and thematic repeats that ring a bell with other literary or culturally crucial sources. By "signals" internal to a text-such as borrowed phrases, imitation of style, or motifs-symbols Ben-Porot (1976) says they indicate allusion and reader recall of well-known texts. T.S. Eliot's phenomenal *The Waste Land* (1922) incorporates most brilliant references to myth, the Arthurian legend, and biblical sources. A vital motif in the poem is the cyclical theme of drought and rebirth, conjuring up a mythical cycle of death and rebirth. Example-esque, the phrase "Shantih shantihshantih" marks Hindu Upanishads, and this represents how language markers form an intertextual resonance. These markers make it imperative for readers to note the allusion to engage with the poem's thematic preoccupations regarding spiritual desolation and renewal (Frye, 1957). Such indicators are accentuated rather than arbitrary; they bind the subject themes of the given text within the external cultural or historical heft of the referenced material.

Shared themes are therefore also internal signs; thus, Father of all would evoke a common mythology or story. Literature operates in a 'mythical framework' and sees in Northrop Frye (1957) the recurrent motif of, for example, the journey of the hero or the paradise lost as symbols of trials in the life of the protagonist in his loss of innocence. Such allusions to ancient myths tie individual pieces closer to broader cultural traditions. Thus Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818)

also invokes the Greek myth of Prometheus in its indulgence of knowledge forbidden and divine retribution, as shown in Victor Frankenstein's example of hubris seeking to create life. Shelley uses the mythic connection to entice readers to read the novel as a critique of scientific ambition in the Enlightenment (Bloom, 1973). For such a reading, internal marking would be required at the symbolic level, making apparent that readers have to recognize the common ethos between the tragedy of Frankenstein and punishment of Prometheus in order to understand fully the moral aspects of the text.

Again, internal marking works for structural or tonal mimicry. As Genette (1997) would classify, transtextuality gives certain processes wherein form or manner of a text evokes another work to establish a sort of tacit dialogue. To take an example, James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) traces the episodic structure of the Homeric *Odyssey*, thus transforming the very dull journey of Leopold Bloom through Dublin into a modernist reworking of epic heroism. Joyce has another structural marker in employing stream-of-consciousness narration and mythic parallels, through which the reader cannot help but compare Bloom's experiences with those of Odysseus (Kenner, 1987). Similarly, Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus" (1965) imitates rhythm and imagery from biblical resurrection stories. My red hair is an invocation of the miracle of Lazarus and a reversal of it in a feminine act of defiance (Axelrod, 1990). In both examples, the internal markers realize the intertextual interpretation as the text's rhetorical and tonal choices.

Such internal marking becomes muted for readers who cannot decipher these signs, and the process may itself be complicated by cultural or historical distance. Lacking familiarity with the source that is being alluded to, the allusion becomes opaque (Irwin, 2001). *The Divine Comedy* by Dante (1320) contains so many references to medieval theology and classical literature that these references just might escape the comprehension of the modern reader who lacks both

insight and annotation scholarly. An overabundance of explicit markers, whether they be footnotes or direct citations, may disturb the aesthetic unity of a text. Hence, it is crucial to devise markers that are neither wholly opaque nor conspicuously didactic in order to safeguard the interpretive richness involved. According to Hollander (1981), the authors should walk a tightrope between opacity and instruction, ensuring that the allusion is sufficiently meaningful to prevent the dissolution of the unity and readerly interest of the text.

This is how authors encode a cultural-historical-artistic dialogue in works of art; internal marking makes up an advanced mechanism of intertextuality by marking literary allusion within a work. Readers are facilitated to locate meanings above the text's immediate narrative through vernacular echoes, thematic parallels, and structural mimicry with these markers. With Genette (1997)'s assertion, such practices render literature a "palimpsest," wherein every text is inscribed using the ghosts of its predecessors. Internal markers thus decode into the participation of a reader by constructing an ongoing process of literary meaning creation in an allusion-resounding presence posing to the power of the past to link to the present.

Internal marking within literary allusion occurs through echoic resonance-determined by language and theme-with sources that are culturally or literarily significant. Ben-Porot (1976) claims that the "signals" of allusions can all be found within the text-prototypes of borrowed phrases, stylistic mimicry, or symbolic motifs-which prompt readers to remember something of precursor texts. For example, that of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) fragments under Arthurian legend and Biblical tales via the slightest symptoms-of recurring drought and rebirth, suggesting the mythic cycle of death and regeneration. Phrases such as "Shantih shantihshantih" (also reference to Hindu Upanishads) show how markers lift the poem to the intertextual level, requiring readers to identify the allusion before they can grasp its lay interest in spiritual

desolation and renewal (Frye, 1957). They are not random, as they serve to situate the cultural or historical heft of the referred texts.

Thematic parallels also serve as internal signs by which two or more writers may invoke shared archetypes or narratives. Northrop Frye (1957) suggests that literature is always contained “within a mythical framework,” as the hero's journey or fallen paradise connects individual works to a larger cultural or tradition-recurrent themes. For example, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), subtitled *The Modern Prometheus*, invokes the Greek myth around Prometheus through a narrative of forbidden knowledge and divine punishment. This thematic association established by Shelley with the myth, derived by virtue of Victor Frankenstein's hubristic endeavor in creation, invites readers to perceive the novel not as an exaltation of scientific ambition within the Enlightenment but rather as a criticism of it (Bloom, 1973). Internal marking now works symbolically because readers have to identify within the tragedy of *Frankenstein* and the punishment of Prometheus the breakdown between their shared ethos before they fully understand the moral implications of the text.

Structural and tonal mimetics are further examples of internal markings. Genette (1997) places these processes under the heading of “transtextuality,” in which the text form/style from one work somehow evokes another, tacitly establishing dialogue. The late modernist *Ulysses* (1922) re-enacted the episodic structure of the Homeric *Odyssey* by engaging in the re-imagination of a contemporary mundane adventure, marking epic heroism in a modernist light. Consciously using stream-of-conscious narration and mythological parallels as structural markers, Joyce drew upon the reader's reliving the experience of Bloom with the experience of *Odysseus'* trials (Kenner, 1987). One could contend that Plath's 1965 poem “*Lady Lazarus*” has cadences and images from biblical resurrection stories; in particular, the line “I rise with my red

hair" exploits the icon of the Lazarus miracle while undermining it through a lens of feminist defiance (Axelrod, 1990). These two would yield texts whose formal and tonal markings serve as internal agents guiding intertextual interpretation.

However, internal marking's value relies on a reader's ability to decode these markers, a feat rather difficult if set against a cultural or historical distance. Irwin (2001) mentions that an allusion may become elusive when readers share no familiarity with the alluded source. For instance, Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1320), deeply rooted in medieval theology and classical literature references, is such that many of the references remain lost to modern audiences without scholarly annotations. On the other hand, excessive reliance on overt markers, including footnotes or direct citation, can fracture the aesthetic unity of this text and highlight the precarious balance authors should strive to maintain between subtlety and clarity (Hollander, 1981). The issue is designating markers that are neither too opaque nor too pedagogical while allowing for interpretive richness and narrative coherence.

In sum, the whole art of internal marking in literary allusion powers depleting intertextuality and invites readers into a common cultural and literary dialogue. When done well, it enhances the reader's experience by interconnecting the present text with an intertextual past, a past that holds layers of arguably insistent meaning far beyond the immediate narrative.

In brief, literary allusion's internal marking is a sophisticated intertextuality mechanism enabling authors to interweave their texts with cultural, historical, and artistic conversations. Through linguistic echoes, thematic parallels, and structural mimicry, those markers compel readers to shuffle back and forth across text boundaries, finding layers of meaning that exceed that of the immediate narrative. In Genette's words (1997), such operations place literature as a kind of "palimpsest," whereby every new writing is inscribed with the ghosts of its predecessors.

By deciphering these internal markers, the reader participates in the ever-ongoing construction of literary meaning and further affirms the timeless power accorded to allusion to act as a bridge to the past.

The internal marking of literary allusion rests upon linguistic and thematic echoes that resonate with recognized culturally or literately essential sources. Ben-Porot (1976) maintains that allusions are internally marked by “signals” in the text—borrowed phrases, stylistic mimicry, or symbolic motifs—that bring to mind precursor texts. For example, Eliot's *\*The Waste Land\** (1922) references Arthurian legend and biblical stories in fragmented ways, and recurrently evokes drought and rebirth, which bring to mind the mythic cycle death and regeneration. Eliot used linguistic markers such as “Shantih shantihshantih” (referring to Hindu Upanishads), creating intertextual resonance in a way that presses readers to acknowledge the oddity of the corresponding allusion fundamental for an understanding of the poem's thematic concerns: spiritual desolation and revitalization (Frye, 1957). Such markers serve their purpose to connect the themes of the text with the cultural or historical gravity of the referenced material, not by random chance.

Internal marking can also be articulated through the thematic parallels the author draws upon: archetypes or narratives shared among diverse texts. For Northrop Frye (1957), this mythical framework is inextricably linked and is where recurring motifs such as the hero's journey or fallen paradise link individual works to broader cultural traditions. Mary Shelley's *\*Frankenstein\** (1818), subtitled *\*The Modern Prometheus\**, can reference the Greek myth of Prometheus through its discourse on forbidden knowledge and divine retribution. The thematic alignment of Shelley with the myth of Prometheus, most clearly through the hubristic act of creation by Victor Frankenstein, invites its readers to see the novel as somewhat of a critique of

the scientific ambitions of the Enlightenment (Bloom, 1973). Here, the internal marking sets up a situation whereby readers must recognize the shared ethical spirit between the tragedy of Prometheus and that of Frankenstein in order to ascertain the moral meanings of the text.

Another facet of internal marking is mimicking structures and tones. To Genette (1997), such behaviors are part of "transtextuality" within which an external text is embodied into that of another through its form or style in order to establish a tacit dialogue. An instance of this is James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) which has adapted the episodic structure of Homer into a modernized reinterpretation of epic heroism, replicating "in the everydayness of Leopold Bloom's circling around Dublin as an odyssey-like modern-day hero." Joyce's use of the stream of consciousness narrative combined with mythological parallels operates as a marker of structure demanding juxtaposition between Bloom's experiences and the moves made by Odysseus (Kenner, 1987). Similarly, Sylvia Plath's poem "Lady Lazarus" (1965) echoes the rhythm and imaginations of biblical resurrection accounts, as its lines, "I rise with my red hair," establish a connection with the Lazarus miracle but viewed through a feminist defiance lens (Axelrod, 1990). In both, formal and tonal choices serve as internal markers whose function is to provoke the readers in a readerly intertextual interpretation.

But the effectiveness of internal marks relies on readers' interpretations of such hints, a task complicated by culture or historical distance. Irwin (2001) notes that "these kinds of allusions become lost when readers don't have any contact" with the source material. For example, Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1320) rapidly becomes inextricably tangled in references to medieval theology and classical littera; most members of today's audiences would not be equipped to disentangle those without scholarly annotation. The other side of the coin is overuse of overt markers, such as footnotes or quotations; both of which disturb the aesthetic unity of that which is to be read,

indicating to that delicate balance an author must strike between the subtle and overt (Hollander, 1981). The problem is finding that happy place between markers that are neither excessively opaque nor didactic-in-debate with the implied richness of interpretation while making markers coherent within the narrative itself.

External marking has, therefore, enriched the reading experience of internal allusion while increasing its interpretive depth. It is by that that an author would use language, theme, and structural markers to create dialogue within the intertextual past audience readers to the possibility of deeper readings while navigating the complex tradition of literature.

### **1.3.2 External Marking**

External marks are allusive references that help the readers to uncover the allusions through their prior cultural, historical, knowledge, neglecting the primary text. Hirsh argues that effective communication requires shared cultural knowledge (1987). In addition, Stanley Fish demonstrates that readers decode external markers based on communal knowledge.

The readers can recognize the external markers in the literary text through a historical allusion through using a real world such as events, figures as a references. Also intertextual echoes help identify the external markers it is indirect symbolizing to other literary works. Furthermore religious philosophical frameworks which assumed facility with belief system is a signal makes readers recognize the external marks of allusion. For example: Oxidus's Ox biblical themes without quotes.

The external marks have a playful role in allusion. Firstly it enrich thematic depth it can make readers deeply understand the theme.. Next the external marks encourage active readership by engaging readers in co-creating meaning.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, allusion as a powerful literary device contributes in enriching the literary works and deepen their meaning. The embedding capacity in evoking implicit meanings and cultural dimensions is as building bridges between the reader and the text which make literary an effective may for communication with the different cultures and generations. The relation between author and reference, and the relation between the text and the reader in using or detecting the allusion raises the value of the work and the writer.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **Classification and Interpretation of Allusion**

## Chapter Two: Classification and Interpretation of Allusion

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## **Introduction**

Allusion-the strong literary device that this study intends to discuss-is certainly one of the key rhetorical and artistic devices employed by writers to enrich their artistic works. It secures semantic and aesthetic ambience by bringing forth texts, meanings, and references from an outside source whether religious, cultural, or literary-to inspire the readers and tap into their prior knowledge. Allusions create intertextual connections that expand the interpretive repertoire of readers and thus deepen their engagement with the text. In recalling the historical or cultural facets of an allusion, it is an interactive process where readers may favor more than one interpretation. The chapter begins by defining, classifying, and describing the challenges of interpretation for allusions and the ways through which literary texts employ them in forming meanings and guiding interpretations.

### **2.1 Classification of Allusion**

This chapter studied, allusion-the most potent figure of speech to be analyzed-is one of mankind's most integral rhetorical and artistic instruments put to use by the writer or poet to embellish his use of language. By drawing upon texts, meanings, and references from outside sources that may be religious, cultural, or literary, allusions engage the readers by appealing to their pre-existing knowledge. This technique establishes intertextual linking, thereby widening the interpretative framework of the readers and enriching the readers' interaction with the text. The realization of an allusion's historical or cultural background creates a dynamic and mutable interpretive process that facilitates multiple interpretations.

This chapter studied allusion classification, the different types, their definition, and purpose, interpretive complexity, and their role in the creation of literary texts and in steering the

meanings of these texts. For reasons of analysis, the study applied Leppihalme's (1997) formal classification system of allusions.

The referential markers and external sources that motivate the allusion are the basis for various classifications. These external elements-mythology, history, religion, or popular culture-take the form of implied references that add to the texts without having to be spelled out for us. Researchers organize allusions in a variety of ways based on multiple criteria: source, level of explicitness, and targeted intent. Leppihalme (1997) lists the main types of allusions according to source: mythological, biblical, literary, historical, and popular culture allusions. Researchers also identify other types according to their degree of explicitness (direct or indirect allusions), or according to functional uses, where they serve an objective such as thematic emphasis, textual extension, character development, ironic effect, or parodic intent.

Thus, the systematic classification of allusion as a sophisticated literary device will make its function in literature clearer. Once one is familiar with its origins and degrees of explicitness, as well as operational purposes, it facilitates between intertextual relationships.

### **2.1.1 Religious Allusion**

The Bible, the Quran, Hindu epics, and Greek mythology supply a fertile ground for religious allusions-defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.) as an indirect reference to persons, places, events, or artistic works that require to be familiar with by the audience to obtain full import. The sacred allusions serve to reference sacred figures, narratives, or themes for particular purposes: they might amplify thematic significance, establish cultural ties, or set up a moral framework to work within. They allow writers to draw upon a shared spiritual heritage while encouraging

readers to navigate through a number of axes in which ancient wisdom intersects with the contemporary setting:

- Enhancing symbolism: the religious references presented by connecting a text with moral or spiritual meanings.
- Establishing ethical frameworks: writers are always inspired by religious stories and connected their narratives with virtues and moral lessons.
- Creating intertextuality: the well-known religious stories allow writers to create meanings that resonate with readers who are familiar with the resource.
- Evoking emotional responses: writers can evoke emotions; illustrate themes by drawing parallels to religious references. Religious allusions in literature .Frye,N.(2000).

Biblical allusion, armed with literary might, creates reference to legendary biblical events, figures, or texts with the intent to increase a work's meaning and appeal to the cultural understanding of the rights given to the readers. This technique is still very much alive today. For instance, *the road (2006)* with its apocalyptic imagery of Revelation, frames survival and fatherly love as instances of divine grace. Writers use biblical allusions to point out contradictions between societal norms and scripture and add depth to their interpretations, all dependent on common religious literacy. Such references enable writers to tap into grand themes economically and simultaneously push their readers to consider modern-day values from the perspective of ancient wisdom-an endeavor whose efficacy depends on audience familiarity with the biblical sources. The power of this device truly lies in its ability to express deep philosophies and human experiences that transcend time.

### 2.1.2 Literary Allusions

The literary allusion, as a specific kind of allusion, has a certain set of functions and complexities that play a vital role in the development of the literary tradition. It takes place when an author refers to a particular literary work, author, or tradition. Unlike other allusions that lead to intertextual dialogues, these literary allusions depend on the reader's knowledge of canonical or obscure texts to derive double meanings (Irwin, 2001; Pasco, 1994).

In the same vein Kristeva (1980) adds: "Unlike historical or mythological allusions, literary allusions are always metatextual—they place a text in a network of literary conversation."

Literary allusions clearly broaden textual richness by deepening meaning through links to earlier works. Such intertextual communication envisions Victorian literatures to critique colonial and gendered oppressions (Spivak, 1985). These references actively engage readers, as Eco (1979) claims: turning passive receivers into active agents searching within two narrative worlds.

Additionally, literary allusions function to align particular works with the best known canons, so the works could henceforth claim some recognition of their own. This is essentially the authority-building function of allusions, as demonstrated in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). On the contrary, postmodern writers like Salman Rushdie use canonical allusions against themselves in a strategy to denigrate those hierarchies within European literary culture (Bhabha, 1994).

Literary allusions increase thematic resonance and irony through juxtaposition or reinforcement. For instance, Hamlet finds heavy allusion in works treating themes of existential paralysis. Then again, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* ironically alludes to Jonathan Swift's *A*

Modest Proposal-as a statement on the patriarchal seizure of women's bodily autonomy (Hutcheon, 1985).

The interpretive obstacles that any allusion imposes go into matters of culture and education, among others. Since they usually privilege readers versed in Western canons, they may excommunicate potential readers within any non-Western or non-academic tradition. Such exclusivity adds to the marginalization of world literary traditions (Spivak, 1988), together with risks of willfully ambiguous allusions and of overinterpretation.

Nevertheless, the literary allusion as an instrument remains a highly mutable one, constructive across texts, times, and cultures. It leads to a richer narrative very much dependent on intertextuality and canon-building but creates a textual interface that invites the reader into a much larger literary discussion.

### **2.1.3 Mythological Allusions**

Mythological allusion refers to the purposeful inclusion of characters, stories, or symbols from ancient myths into literature and relies on the reader's knowledge of mythological archetypes to infer their meanings (Irwin, 2001). Unlike biblical and historical allusions, mythological references usually come from pantheistic traditions including Greek, Roman, Norse, or non-Western world mythologies. These references trigger common culture archetypal forms that allow the writers to impart layered meanings to their works with universal appeal (Frye, 1957; Ben-Porat, 1976). Like all other types of allusions, mythological allusions do perform certain functions that pose interpretative problems at the same time.

Mythological allusion has one prime function: to universalize a theme. In this sense, linking individual stories to eternal human experiences should enrich works with greater

significance. T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) invoked the myth of the Fisher King to comment on spiritual emptiness after the war, thereby trashing the modern disillusionment through myth (North, 2001). Mythological allusion has another major function, which is to underpin cultural resonance and cultural identity. Such allusions ground texts in a shared heritage. For example, in *Song of Solomon* (1977), Toni Morrison revitalizes and reclaims the cultural narratives in danger of being marginalized through African and African-American mythology, including the flying African folktale (Henderson, 2005).

Mythological allusions are also used by modern authors for irony and subversion. The *Penelopiad* (2005) by Margaret Atwood gave voice to Penelope, wife of Odysseus from Homer's epic, thus challenging patriarchal interpretations of myth (Hutcheon, 1985). This subversion is a way in which contemporary writers use classical myths to critique systems of power in the past.

Mythological allusions provide many interpretive problems. Distance in space and time has traveled a shadow over meaning. For instance, Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) presumes knowledge of Christian theology and Greco-Roman mythology and may be somewhat alienating to present-day readers (Lewalski, 2007). Secondly, from a postcolonial point of view, an overabundance of Greek and Roman myths in Western literature has hitherto marginalized minor traditions such as Native American or Hindu cosmologies (Spivak, 1988). Such imbalances reveal the larger political and canonical discriminations in literary studies.

And yet, the mythological allusion still stands a powerful literary tool when the readers have enough of the cultural insight to grasp it. It continues to build deep intertextual connections with universal themes between the ancient and modern narratives.

#### 2.1.4 Historical Allusion

History acts as a literary force that enables authors to refer to past events, persons, or ideas to enrich texts by evoking an operative collective cultural or political memory. Writers employ historical allusions to anchor their stories in a temporal framework, commenting upon contemporary society and thereby placing universal themes in a position to stand parallel with past and present experiences within wider cultural continuums. As an instance, Julius Caesar by Shakespeare alludes to political turbulence in ancient Rome to make a statement on Elizabethan age concerns about governance and power (Greenblatt, 2018). This way, isolated narratives are transformed into commentaries of universal concern.

In fact, the very ambiguity inherent in historical allusions complicates their interpretations and mirrors their evolutions across time and culture, drawing scholarly attention to this matter at hand. Yet, these allusions are also interpreted from certain epistemic standpoints. As Quillen (2001) stated, allusions depend on "shared cultural literacy" (p. 117), losing their power when the context is not known to the receiver and sometimes leading to the allusion's sake being overlooked.

This shifting interpretation phenomenon is yet another challenge. For instance, whereas earlier readings viewed Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) as a critique of the American Dream, contemporary interpretations tend to focus more on references to racial and class tensions (Brucoli, 2000). This change of meaning, whereby the transition from intention to perception, has given rise to a possible divergence between writer purpose and reader interpretation.

Just like other references, historical allusions are most effective only when they are recognized by their audiences. Because subtle historical allusions allow writers and speakers to

deepen meaning, trigger requisite emotion, and strengthen an argument, historical allusions remind us that history cannot be seen merely as the record of things past but is rather a force evolving beyond and shaping our conceptualization of the present world.

## **2.2 Formal Classification of Allusions**

The power of allusions to serve the higher ends of literary creation is immense. Scholars debate their nature, purpose, and taxonomy. Formally speaking, an allusion is classified by its structure and linguistic features within a text, excluding an external context that might have some thematic relevance. Researchers such as Leppihalme (1997) advocated for a procedural classification. On the other hand, Ben-Porat (1976) furnished a precise analytical framework for the study of allusion.

According to Ben-Porat (1976), the formal classification begins by observing the visible marks within the text that constitute an allusion. She defined two main types: first, explicit allusions, which make it easier to interpret because they refer directly to proper names or well-known quotations—they are seemingly vibrant in meaning. Second, implicit ones need to be understood through the use of literary knowledge on the reader's part to comprehend the writer's intention.

Leppihalme (1997) focused on linguistic form as the basis for dividing types of allusions. She proposed that there exist two classes of allusions: proper name allusions and key-phrase allusions, the latter referring to well-known expressions that either awaken in readers the recall of the original text or shared cultural knowledge. Thus, whatever the linguistic form of the allusions, that form is a key for its successful interpretation.

Moreover, Nünning (2009) argued in favour of an even more rigorous distinction. He distinguished allusions that are marked in such a way as to assist the reader in identifying them through textual markers such as quotation marks or italics. An unmarked allusion is much more demanding; it is smoothly integrated into the text without discrimination from surrounding components.

Formal classification is pivotal because it governs the two functional roles of allusion: one guiding readers in its identification; and the other clarifying the intention behind the use of allusion. The basis of classification is not to facilitate the mere recognition of allusions but to comprehend the literary function of the allusion (Allen, 2011). In addition, formal classification provides an emphasis on the ability of an allusion to forge cultural memory.

In short, a formal classification provides an effective means of looking at how texts create intertextual reference by focusing on degrees of explicitness, presence or absence of linguistic markers, and textual integration. This helps scholars to understand the intricate intermediation between prior knowledge and narrative on the part of the author.

### **2.2.1 Main Factors in the Interpretation of Allusion**

Allusion serves as a sophisticated literary device through which authors indirectly reference other texts, persons, events, or cultural elements. This rhetorical strategy enhances textual meaning by creating intertextual connections that enrich reader interpretation (Ben-Porat, 1976). However, successful comprehension of allusions depends on several critical factors that mediate between authorial intention and reader understanding.

### 2.2.2 The Author's Intentions

When talking about authorial intent, one invariably ends up talking about the goals of the author through his or her work. This is an age-old and still very vital discussion in literary and critical theories around which everything revolves; the meaning of a text in relation to its authors' so-called aims. The discourse here really rehearses the central question: i.e., whether the meaning of text may be linked to authors' conscious intentions or arises independently during the interaction of readers and sociocultural context. Rooted in debates about interpretive authority, this discourse raises the question of whether the meaning of a text is strictly based on the author's intent or whether it is shaped through a dynamic interplay between the reader and external contexts

Traditional hermeneutic approaches such as those advanced by E.D. Hirsch (1967) determine that the true meaning of a text is what the author intends. Hirsch claimed that the authors' intention is the ultimate source of a text's meaning and warned that textual interpretation, without anchoring it to the author's conscious aims, would end up in relativism where - "a text means what its reader thinks it means". For him, reconstructing the psychological or historical context of the author is imperative for a valid interpretation. This intentionist view lifts up archival research or paratextual materials (e.g., letters, drafts) to unearth the author's objectives (Van Peer, 2016).

However, the New Critical movement has opposed this. For instance, Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) in their seminal essay, *The Intentional Fallacy* contend that the meaning of a text is entirely independent of the author, and thus the work's meaning would reside solely in the "public" linguistic and structural dimensions of the text. The author himself would be irrelevant and possibly even inaccessible regarding any private intentions. In this sense, therefore, the text

is divorced from its creator and becomes an object for analysis through close reading. This stance against intentions has heavily influenced literary studies especially within the formalist and structuralist traditions (Culler, 1975).

Poststructuralist theories, too, serve to unsettle the concept of authorial intent. They reconceptualised the "author" as not an individual agent but a discursive function determined by power and institutional practices (Foucault, 1969/1977). Barthes (1977) while emphasizing the "*death of the author*" interpreted the texts as multi vocal constructs activated by readers rather than being controlled by their creators. This perspective, which is central for reader-response and postmodern theories, stresses multiple meanings and playful intertextuality role in shaping interpretation (Iser, 1978).

"Contemporary scholarship is often blended with representative theoretical and pragmatic approaches, such as those of Umberto Eco.:He balances between authorial design and readerly freedom by recognizing the author's 'intentionooperis' (intended meaning of the work) as a guiding parameter and boundary for credible interpretations while permitting readers to also have significant agency over meaning-making. This reconciling model fits into the theoretical framework of this dissertation, which posits interpretation as a dialectic between text, context, and audience.

The research part of cognitive narratology, including the research of Van Peer and Hakemulder (2006), shows that- Even when authors do not state any particular aims, their readers have a specific understanding of the intentionality of writing. Such a finding incites the importance of purpose perception in the hermeneutic process. In short, the studies stress the need

for addressing really "authorly" intentions-as a historical construct, readerly projection, or discursive function; all of these must enter into a fuller textual analysis.

Thus, authorial intent proves to be a deeply epistemological problem, purposed to ease the interpretation of literary texts by recognizing the author without imbuing the author's voice with the voice of meaning That meaning becomes; at times, more, and at other times less, associated with authorial importance than with reader capacity and social context.

### **2.2.3 Shared Language and Cultural Tradition**

Shared language and culture form the basis for identity and effectiveness of allusions in literature. It is upon these platforms that the communication resonance function between authors and their audiences has been accomplished. An allusion actually presupposes the common understanding of certain words, scriptures, historical events, myths, or works of art, ingrained in the cultural conscience of all (Kristeva, 1980). As noted by Ben-Porot (1976), without this collective framework, allusions become too obscure and; hence, reduce the power of such references as constituents of literature. Thus, the allusion is dependent on the intersection of the cultural lexica of the author and the interpretive corpus of the reader. By this intersection's emphasis, common knowledge becomes essential for engaging meaningfully with intertextual references (Hutcheon, 2013).

Names of shared language, even recognizable phrases, idioms, or stylistic patterns, become the major vehicles for allusions. For instance, a line like "the undiscovered country," placed within a piece of modern writing, brings up Hamlet's soliloquy in the mind of a reader well-acquainted with Shakespeare (Shakespeare, 1603/2006, Act 3, Scene 1). This allows wider themes of uncertainties, both existential and moral, to be brought to one's mind. Or, "*the apple of*

*one's eye*" conveys Biblical connotations (for example, Deuteronomy 32:10, New International Version, 2011), which can allow authors to imply layers of meaning that can only be reached by those in the know about the source. These linguistic markers act as soft prompts in between text and its intertextual predecessors through community vocabulary (Riffaterre, 1978).

By myths, religious parables, or historical events, many authors enrich their creative imagination and provide much symbolic currency for allusion. Such examples include alluding to "ACHILLES' heel," which comes from Greek mythology and denotes a weak point or vulnerability (Hesiod, c. 700 BCE/1988). In case some common cultural canons have general or specific reference, whether classical, national, or religious, such touch would easily illuminate the way reader when interpreting references. For instance, the Exodus story may touch on issues either in a concept of liberation or struggle or any such aspect of meaning that a casual outsider may overlook, and so on. Ultimately, the powerfulness of an allusion does not lie in mere recognition; it is from shared emotional or ideological triggers that it sets off, honed through cultural immersion (Eliot, 1920).

Nevertheless, it is difficult to universalize traditions. The "shared" aspect of language and culture becomes fragmented in increasingly globalized and multicultural societies (Moretti, 2000). Reference to the Ramayana may hit hard in South Asia, but otherwise it requires explanation (Goldman, 1984) just as another idiom would puzzle a non-native speaker. Such disparities raise issues with respect to accessibility and the ever-changing nature of literary audiences (Damrosch, 2003). These differences are usually surmounted by embedding contextual clues or repurposing more widely disseminated sources, such as Greco-Roman mythologies or Shakespearean tropes, which have attained global attention through centuries of pedagogical emphasis (Bloom, 1994).

Johnson asserts cultural literacy and education as variables in interpretation. Readers' abilities to allude vary with background, education, and social influences. Modernist authors like T. S. Eliot alluded both to Dante's *Much-Ado* and to Buddhist texts, introducing Wagner's *Master Composition* with a well-educated readership in mind (Eliot, 1922; Southam, 1968). Evidence from contemporary popular culture-cinematic references to superhero films or viral memes on the internet-affirms this notion (Jenkins, 2006). It's almost beyond doubt that "shared" traditions move through time and space and across generations (Assmann, 1995).

To summarise, shared language and cultural tradition are dialogic but insular, being continuously recast by collective memory and forgetting (Nora, 1989). Each of the two, while offering rich layers for the interpretation of allusions, is not free from limitation, thus exposing the most usual exclusivity involved in intertextuality (Eco, 1984). Authors need to balance accessibility and depth in order to keep readers interested while simultaneously not alienating them. This construction then becomes part of the shaping of cultural continuity and invites readers to discover-perhaps even extend-the threads that connect texts despite temporal and spatial distances (Bakhtin, 1981).

### **2.3.1 The Reader's Cultural Familiarity**

Successful comprehension of allusions is necessarily dependent on a reader's background information and shared cultural references. Hirsch (1987) states that comprehending texts is based on previous experience with culturally specific allusions that constitute a "common stock of information" (p. 21). For instance, in Western literature, allusions to the Bible presume knowledge of Christian scripture (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). A reader without this cultural understanding may misinterpret or entirely overlook such references.

Schema theory further elucidates this process by demonstrating how readers employ culturally formed cognitive frameworks to decode implicit meanings (Gibbs, 1994). Iser (1978) cautions that without culturally attuned schemas, allusions risk becoming "empty signifiers," undermining their thematic significance (p. 63).

In cross-cultural contexts, allusions often present significant interpretive challenges. Readers from different cultural backgrounds frequently struggle with allusions rooted in foreign traditions, even in translated texts (Puurtinen, 1998). For example, Western readers unfamiliar with East Asian intellectual history may misinterpret classical Chinese allusions to Confucian philosophy, resulting in fragmented understanding (Puurtinen, 1998). Unfamiliar references may be dismissed as irrelevant, effectively functioning as cultural gatekeepers that determine which allusions remain accessible (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

Cultural familiarity develops through education rather than being innate. Educational systems play a pivotal role in disseminating the knowledge necessary for interpreting allusions (Hirsch, 1987). Western curricula that emphasize Greco-Roman mythology or Shakespearean works create readers adept at recognizing related allusions, while non-Western educational frameworks prioritize different canons (Miall&Kuiken, 1999). This disparity can lead to systematic exclusion from dominant cultural narratives, reflecting broader inequities in cultural capital distribution (Bourdieu, 1986).

Cultural familiarity serves as both an enabler and barrier to textual engagement through allusions. As globalization increases cross-cultural textual circulation, developing inclusive pedagogical strategies becomes essential-approaches that expand cultural literacy without perpetuating hegemonic narratives.

### 2.3.2 The Identification of the Referent

Allusion, as a rhetorical mode whose referent to persons, events, or things is not explicitly stated, engages readers in its referent discovery to interpret its intended meaning and contextual significance (Hirsch, 1987). Referent discovery thus provides the foundation for sound interpretation.

Gibbs (1994) theorizes referent identification as fundamentally cognitive, requiring readers to invoke previous knowledge and project textual cues onto stored literary or cultural schemas. Schema theory explains how existing mental structures enable readers to complete textual gaps (Cook, 1994). Where readers are unable to identify referents, allusions are left rhetorical impotence, becoming opaque markers (Iser, 1978). Recognizing the metaphorical sense of "Achilles' heel," for instance, necessitates previous knowledge of Homeric myth.

Relevance theory also anticipates readers constantly evaluate the effort-reward ratio in interpreting allusions. Complex or culturally unfamiliar references may demand too much mental effort relative to perceived interpretive rewards, leading readers to exclude such allusions (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

Contextual cues like direct quotation, imitative style, or thematic similarity facilitate referent identification (Ben-Porat, 1976). The assertion by T.S. Eliot that "April is the cruellest month" in *The Waste Land* gains meaning from its intertextual allusion to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* so that readers need to identify this allusion in order to make sense of Eliot's modernist satire.

However, interpretation fails when textual signs are indeterminate. Barthes' (1977) "death of the author" argues how subjective reader associations, and not determinate referents, establish

meaning. Similarly, Kristeva's (1980) intertextual theory demonstrates how interpretation is dependent on individual readers' personal text knowledge.

Common knowledge of canonical writing, mythology, and world history enables allusion decoding (Hirsch, 1987). Familiarity with Judeo-Christian narratives facilitates the understanding of such references as "David and Goliath," but non-Western references are subject to misrecognition by the external group (Bhabha, 1994). Formal education sustains these power relations by privileging certain works (e.g., Shakespeare, classical mythology), creating cultural capital hierarchies that preserve epistemic differences (Bourdieu, 1986). In Fish's (1980) view, readers from outside dominant canons are subject to limited membership in interpretation communities.

Hypertextual spaces today have become increasingly intertextual potential but complicated referent identification through shattered reading habits and saturation of information

Referent identification is an axiomatic but problematic operation in the interpretation of allusion, mediated through cognitive schemas (Gibbs, 1994), textural signals, and cultural hierarchies. Schema theory and relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995) account for its mechanics, yet poststructuralist (Barthes, 1977) and postcolonial (Bhabha, 1994) analysis unmask its subjective, politically charged features.

## **2.4 The Significance of Allusion**

Allusion, being a literary tool that refers indirectly to people, events, or concepts, is a basis for text meaning-construction. Allusion is a rhetorical tool through which authors establish connections between texts, cultures, and eras, enriching narratives with deepened signification

and affecting the engagement of readers. Its functions vary from rhetorical enrichment, cultural preservation, and mental stimulation.

Allusions are powerful concordancers of rhetoric, reducing engaged meaning through shared cultural knowledge. A good example of this device can be seen in T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, weaving allusions to Dante, Shakespeare, and Hindu scripture to provide a denunciation of modernity's spiritual decay (Frye, 1957). As Iser (1978) observes, such allusions direct passive reading into active interpretation, demanding the reader's participation to complete textual sense.

The technology provides unparalleled semantic economy, in which authors are able to "borrow" established meanings rather than produce elaborate expositions (Ben-Porat, 1976). A single word like "Scrooge" instantaneously conveys frugality from its Dickensian origin. This is in line with Sperber and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory, which posits that effective communication strikes a balance between cognitive investment and interpretive payoff.

Allusions serve as synapses of culture, maintaining and relaying myths, history, and canonical texts beyond spatial and temporal distance. Hirsch's (1987) cultural literacy notion highlights how allusions such as the biblical "forbidden fruit" rely on communal knowledge of societal canons to signal moral nuance. Such an intertextual network reinforces communal memory in addition to constructing literary continuity.

Schema theory explains the cognitive machinery of allusion interpretation and how readers instantiate mental structures to understand allusions (Gibbs, 1994). Identification of "Achilles' heel," for example, depends on familiarity with Greek mythology in order to infer weakness. Successful identification, however, encourages participation (Iser, 1978), and Fish's (1980)

reader-response theory warns us that meaning is finally derived from interpretive groups possessing cultural information.

The effectiveness of the device is lost if cultural or temporal distances block reference recognition. Allusions based in marginal cultures-like Yoruba mythology in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*-can be impenetrable to readers outside such cultural contexts, reenacting epistemic hierarchies (Bhabha, 1994). Even once-universal Shakespearean allusions now frequently require annotation for contemporary readers (Hirsch, 1987), demonstrating how historical allusions can fall into disuse as cultural literacy evolves. Barthes' (1977) model of textual polyvalence further complicates things, as allusions take their meaning from individual reader associations rather than fixed referents.

Allusion is both cultural conduit and readerly catalyst in dual roles. Success at interpretation depends on shared knowledge, baring the sociopolitical nature of cultural literacy. In a very globalized literary space, to develop inclusive models of interpretation of allusion—models that honor pluralistic cultural traditions while mediating epistemic divides—has become the hour of need for equitable textual engagement.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter , the classification of allusion has been examined through both traditional taxonomies and Lippihalm's model. The Lippihalm model , thes taxonomies are discussed in relation to Lippiham's framework to clarify how literary allusion function across both traditional and contemporary perspectives . The chapter also highlighted the main factors influencing the interpretation of allusion including the reader's cultural familiarity and the identification of the referent. These elements underscore the inherently intertextual and interpretive nature of

allusion, confirming that its comprehension depends not only on formal classification but also the reader's ability to recognize meaning .

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **Analysis of Allusions in *The Grapes of Wrath***

## **Chapter Three: Analysis of Allusions in *The Grapes of Wrath***

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## Introduction

In this chapter, light is shed on the use of allusions in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. It deals with the types of allusions in the novel, their role and significance to point out how Steinbeck's references function as both literary devices and ideological tools. The analysis of allusions in the novel demonstrates how Steinbeck's allusive techniques reinforce the novel's themes of solidarity and, thereby, challenging the readers to confront the inherent social injustices.

### 3.1 John Steinbeck's Biography

John Steinbeck was an American writer who, because of his novels about the hardships of rural life and social ills of his state, is remembered. Among his famous works are *The Grapes of Wrath*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about Dust Bowl workers displaced (1939), and *Of Mice and Men*, a heartrending account of a broken friendship and broken dreams (1937). Steinbeck mostly dealt with issues of injustice, human endurance, and the relationship of man to the land. In 1962, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for ingenious and genuinely realistic writing. Considered America's greatest writer, Steinbeck's works are read and appreciated by many up until now. Steinbeck died in New York City in late 1968.

John Steinbeck is known for his realistic and empathetic portrayals of working class life. His writing style has several characteristics. First, he used fiction to highlight social injustice as in *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *In Dubious Battle*. Second, Steinbeck avoided complex language; his style is simple and clear prose to be understood by a broad audience. Third, he is known for his heavy use of symbolism and allegory in many works such as *The Pearl*, *East of Eden*, and *The Red Pony*. Fourth, Steinbeck gave his readers a detailed description of landscape, making the environment almost a character itself. Fifth, the compassion for the

characters ,Steinbeck treats them with empathy . Even when they make poor choices , Steinbeck portraits them with dignity.

### **3.2 John Steinbeck's Stylistic Features**

John Steinbeck , one of the most celebrated authors known for his distinctive writing style. Steinbeck 's prose is characterized by simple yet vivid language , naturalistic depiction , and an emphasis on human struggle , making his writing both accessible and profound .

#### **3.2.1 Simple and Direct Language:**

Unlike the modernist writers who employed complex syntax , Steinbeck preferred straight diction , reflecting the speech of ordinary people , he uses clear, unadorned prose with his broad audience . As Benso (1990) notes , "Steinbeck is deceptively simple , masking deeper philosophical and moral inquiries beneath an accessible surface".

#### **3.2.2 Naturalism and Realism**

In *The Grapes of Wrath* , the Joad family 's suffering is depicted with unflinching realism , illustrating the harsh condition of the Dust bowl era ( Steinbek , 1939) confirming that Steinbeck ' s works influenced by naturalism , a literary movement that portrays human as subject to environmental and economic forces beyond their control .

#### **3.2.3 Symbolism and Allegory**

Steinbeck also employed symbolism to convey deeper meaning such as the turtle crossing the road in *The Grapes of Wrath* becomes an allegory for the migrants' perseverance (Steinbeck , 1939) . These symbols enrich his narratives.

### **3.2.4 Social Commentary and Empathy**

Steinbeck 's compassion for marginalized communities and empathetic approach make his novels enduring relevant because of his critique to social injustice , such as the exploitation of labourers in *In Dubious Battles* (1936) . As Parini argued "Steinbeck 's genius lies in his ability to humanize the oppressed without resorting to sentimentality.

To conclude , Steinbeck's stylistic features symbolism ,naturalism , simplicity and social consciousness distinguish him as a master of American literature by capturing the struggle of ordinary people with honesty and depth .

### **3.3 Brief Introduction to the Novel**

The novel stands among the tall works of American literature: it is a monumental epic with the unflinching reflection on Dust-Bowl migration, backed up by rich intertextuality. Using allusions as a major narrative technique, Steinbeck elevates the Joad families' tribulations from concrete history to a timeless story about pain, endurance, and communal hope. Called one of the greatest of the 20th century American novels, *The Grapes of Wrath* indirectly alludes to characters such as Moses, the Exodus, and the Psalms, as well as American transcendentalism and social protest literature. In this way, Steinbeck produces a modern parable out of the Joads' plight that indicts systemic injustice and vindicates human dignity.

Displaced during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the novel traces the trials of the Joads, poor tenant farmers from Oklahoma, stricken by drought and economic depression. They cross into California seeking work and a better life; yet, nothing but suffering is met out to them: misery, exploitation, and injustice. The narrative gives voice to themes of social injustice, dislocation, family ties, and the plight of the working class across generations.

### 3.4 The Multidimensional Characters of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*

Steinbeck criticized the capitalist exploitation of society by portraying the struggles of humanity during the great depression in the grapes of anger. In this novel, he describes the migration of the Jode family from Oklahoma to California, where they expect to find work, but meet with harsh obstacles instead. On the other hand, he advocates square solidarity through the characters that promote the unwavering subject of solidarity and disregard. Four central figures - Tom Jode, Ma Jode, Jy'sCaustion, and Rose of Sharon - Unbreakable Power, Leadership and Social Change with Tem.

For example, Tom Jode, "I first" transform into a more collective outlook from "first" attitude, showing the change in which the book reveals individualism. In the beginning, Tom focuses on self -determination, saying: "I am just one foot in front of the other" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 72). Their mind changes begins through interaction with the philosophy of Kasi's collective spirituality: "All men may find a part of a large soul" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 24). After killing the hands of a vigilance, Tom's world arts changes significantly because he declares, "wherever they are a fight, so hungry people can eat, I will be there" (Steinbeck, 1939, page 419). Many scholars argue that Tom's visit depicts a portrayal of the demand for steinbeck's labor unity, called a "bridge between personal suffering and communal resistance" (Gradefixer, 2024, Para 3).

Jim Casy is a philosopher of shared humanity novel, a former preacher -turned -labor organizer. He symbolizes the fusion of spirituality and socialism, re -connects religion as a call for social justice: "I would say, I just have 'trying to help a Feela" "I got no chance" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 387). A Christ -like figure sacrifices himself to marginalize for how marginalized. According to ivypanda (2019), Steinbeck uses how for critical exploitative capitalism; His death at the hands of landlords is a symbol of violent repression of labor rights. Tom's activism is

inspired by the teachings of how, confirming that "that all life is pure" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 105)- it is believed that the theology moves theology to the theology to advocate human dignity.

Ma Joad represents motherhood as the force of unity and rejection of individualism. She turns from a domestic acting to a family leader, which challenges the gender norms of the 1930s. As the difficulty of Joads intensifies, Ma announced his authority, "We are people - we go" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 206). Steinbeck reflects communal existence through its functions, such as sharing a little food with hungry children: "You can't keep it on hungry" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 291). Critics noted that the MA leads motherhood as "a radical function of resistance against systemic harassment" again (Edubardi, 2021, Para 5). The novel's rejection of individualism and its insistence on unity has surfaced: "We are not going to die. People are going to " (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 381).

The rose of Sharon's functions underlines the confidence of Steinbeck that existence depends on shared humanity rather than individualism. Finally, the characters of the novel serve as ships of social criticism. Through the journey of Joads, the Steinbeck condemns capitalist inhumanization. The change in collective action from individualism is symbolized by Tom and how, while MA and Rose of Sharon through redefine strength. Steinbeck stated that unity-self-attachment-selects humanity, releases a call for solidarity: "In the eyes of hunger, there is a growing anger" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 322).

### **3.5 Significance in American Literature**

*The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is a novel by American author John Steinbeck, set during the Great Depression. It follows the Joad family, Oklahoma tenant farmers who are displaced by the dust bowl and economic hardship. They migrate to California in search of work and better life.

The novel has great significance in American literature we may sum up them in the following points:

- Social protest and realism: the novel exposed the harsh realities of migrant workers, criticizing Corporate greed and the failures of capitalism. Steinbeck's vivid depiction of suffering, sparked national debate.
- The American dream: It challenges the myth of opportunity, showing how systemic forces crush the hopes of poor.
- Influence and legacy : won the Pulitzer (1940) and contributed to labor reforms. It remains a key text of proletarian literature.
- Literary Style: Steinbeck blends naturalism, biblical allegory, and intercalary chapters ( general narrative about migrant struggles) to create an epic emotional impact.

### **3.6 Types of Allusions in The Grapes of Wrath**

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck employs many types of allusions to deepen the novel's themes and connect the Joad family's struggles to broader cultural and historical context. Biblical allusions are the most prominent ones, with parallels to Exodus (the journey to the promised land). Moses (Jim Casy as a Christ-like martyr). Historical allusions anchor the story in the Dust Bowl and Great Depression. Finally, myth and literary allusions such as the Joads' journey. Together these allusions reinforce Steinbeck's message.

#### **3.6.1 Biblical Allusions**

Biblical allusion is a well-known stylistic feature of *The Grapes of Wrath* that is used by Steinbeck to create a powerful symbolic meaning that enhances the message. John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) has mastered that during the Great Depression, appointed the Bible

alliance to re -create religious narratives as an effective tool for criticizing systemic oppression during Great Depression. Steinbeck reproduces Christian imagination, transforms divine symbolism into a secular call for collective resistance. Through these Bible coalitions, Steinbeck also reveals the hypocrisy of capitalism and redefine spirituality as communal solidarity. The novel includes the coalition of the major Bible, like Jim Casy Christ -like martyrdom, inverted escape story and secular final feast. These alliances help display Steinbeck's how to destroy the traditional religious structure can advocate social justice.

Through the gym Jim Casy, Steinbeck tells Jesus Christ again. What a former preacher is, whose initial, "JC," Jesus's echo. In addition, Christian Messianism is re -interpreted through the death of the sacrifice of how. However, what kind of collective rejects institutional religion in favor of humanism: "Maybe all men have a large soul aor," (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 32) is a part of. Steinbeck criticized hypocrisy through his embrace of Kasi's organized religion and his embrace of communal solidarity. Death of his sacrifice - to protect the migrant workers - climbs on Masih's cross: "You don't know what you are doing" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 419), he declares, leuk on 23:34. The symbol of Kasi's martyrdom requires the need for collective action, moves individual redemption. His last word: "I will be anywhere - you look anywhere" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 537) Revival resurrection as activism, urging solidarity on religious dogma.

Another major coalition is the migration story. The migration of Jods from Oklahoma to California gives equality to the migration of Israelites from Egypt. Steinbeck uses the story of this Bible to highlight the failure of American dream, where California's "promised land" becomes a site of exploitation: "He said, you are going to a promised land. But it was a lie. California was not making any promise. It was a hunger land" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 258). Steinbeck invites readers to recreate dignity through unity, as in the form of landlords and

banks, compared to Pharaoh, Hoard Resources, while migrants are hungry: "Wine roots work ... must be destroyed to maintain the price" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 448).

Here, Steinbeck criticized the moral bankruptcy of capitalism, depicting migrants' suffering as a betrayal of divine justice. By reflecting systemic greed through exodus, the author urges readers to reject capitalism. Divine vengeance and proletarian rebellion have been symbolized through the title of the novel, which has been drawn from the war hymns and revelation of the Republic of Julia Ward Howe: 14: 19–20: "People's souls are filled with grapes of anger and growing heavy" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 349).

### **The Wilderness Pilgrimage: Exodus and Disenchantment in *The Grapes of Wrath***

The Joads' hard, long trek through the desert to California reenacts the Israelites' 40-year sojourn in the Sinai desert, a biblical echo that underlines thematics of travail and deferred hope. As the Israelites perished in search of Canaan, the Joads perish from dehydration, exhaustion, and death in search of a "Promised Land" which is illusory. Steinbeck (1939) describes the desert as barren, hostile terrain, describing how the "sun whipped the earth, and the cactus and sagebrush threw off heat waves" (p. 234), recalling the biblical "great and terrible wilderness" of Deuteronomy 8:15. Scholar \*\*Shockley (1956)\*\* argues that the parallel is there to "raise the migrants' suffering to the level of myth," placing their suffering as a mass trial of faith (p. 88). Steinbeck subverts the Exodus paradigm, however: the Joads do not receive divine manna or redemption in Canaan-California, unlike the Israelites. Instead, their journey parodies the fantasies of capitalism, positioning the desert not as a redemptive proving ground but as an allegory of structural abandonment. This twist converts the biblical theme to secular social critique.

*In The Grapes of Wrath*, Ma Joad is a symbol of resilience and maternal strength. 'We are the people that live. Can't nobody wipe us out' Steinbeck, (1939). This character is similar to the Virgin Mary. "Mary stood near the Cross of Jesus (John 19:25, NIV).

"In both the Bible and *The Grapes of Wrath* (Steinbeck, 1939), the river crossing is a symbol of spiritual cleansing and renewal after a long, painful journey. "They crossed the river, baptized by muddy water" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 142).

The title provokes the calamities of the Bible, removing the upheaval against oppression. Steinbeck has depicted anger not as the punishment of God but as the righteous anger of humanity: "Wherever they are fighting, so hungry people can eat, I will be there" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 537). By aligning divine justice along with social revolution, it turns the prediction of apocalypse into a call to the ground level resistance.

In chapter 17, Joads share food with strangers in a migrant camp, which look for the last dinner (Matthew 26: 26-28), where Christ breaks bread and wine as a symbol of his body and blood. Here, Steinbeck defines this ritual as a revolutionary function through food: "Hunger was filled ... and every man's heart was hot" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 209). This visual priority to solidarity on purity, because salvation comes not by prayer but from resource-sharing. Additionally, Tom Joad reflects a revolutionary revival. He at the end runs, swearing to become a "soul". Tom's promise is not of spiritual salvation but of material resistance: "Wherever there is a fight ... I will live there." This echoes the promise of Christ: "I am always with you" (Matthew 28:20).

In addition, *The Grapes of Wrath* has an aligned of a bible for a job, which loses their wealth, children and health - forced to lose their home and migrate by couples. Although their

pain is not part of the "plan of God", but the result of corporate greed: "Bank is not a human thing ... it is a monster" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 43). Steinbeck asks for resistance against man-made pain, the patient rejects endurance in front of systemic injustice.

In the climax of the novel, torrential rains flooding the migrant camp provoke the flood (Genesis 6–9), usually a symbol of divine punishment after a covenant. In the grapes of anger, however, the rain does not represent divine anger, but the systemic neglect of the poor is a sign of social destruction: "The rain washes the earth but not injustice" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 581). Finally, through the alliance of the Bible, Steinbeck confirms the subjects of injustice and flexibility and facilitates a deep interpretation of social criticism. He considers spiritual narratives as a tool to highlight systemic oppression and advocate collective resistance.

The nameless truck driver is a symbol of the Good Samaritan, who is ready to help a stranger without restriction. In the novel, the truck driver who gives Tom Joad a ride at the beginning of the work demonstrates small but significant kindness; thus, he symbolizes human compassion in an inhuman world. Officers Annas and Cal are also symbols of oppressive authority with landowners conspiring, just like priests and Romans conspiring against Christ.

Their deeds, therefore, indicate the cooperation of religious and political authority in structural injustice. Secondly, the anonymous landowners are the pharaohs of today oppressing the poor. The fact that they are anonymous shows that oppression is structural and not personal, just like the institutionalized oppression of the Israelites in Egypt. Thirdly, Rose of Sharon's miscarriage of her child is an echo of the Massacre of the Innocents, where innocent children are killed remorselessly. Consequently, the death of the baby is the loss of innocence in the context of exploitation, raising Rose of Sharon from mother to collective martyr icon. Likewise, the One-Eyed Man, similar to the blind whom Jesus cured, signifies spiritual insight. He perceives the

truth of systemic exploitation but has no power to change it, which signifies the uselessness of prophetic vision in a materialistic world. Besides, the turtle, in Chapter 3, attempts to cross the road, nearly flattened but still alive, with seeds that are the seeds of new life. It is a Christ figure bearing the cross, in pain to give birth to new life. The seeds, then, bring to mind salvation through sacrifice, as in the crucifixion of Jesus, which redeemed humankind. Moreover, Uncle John loads himself with the jar containing the remains of his stillbirth child, pained by what transpired to his wife.

This is similar to the scapegoat ceremony where a goat carries the sins of nations into the desert. Therefore, the jar symbolizes the moral burden that the poor are saddled with by an unethical social system that attributes the poor's suffering to themselves. Additionally, the government camp is a temporary shelter that ultimately fails to protect the Joads from institutionalized oppression. It is akin to the Cities of Refuge, which offered temporary refuge, and therefore condemns deceptions—both political and religious alike—as temporary solutions. Finally, the family truck is both their salvation and shackles—repaired, stolen, and smashed repeatedly. It represents the Golden Calf, the Israelites' false idol, and represents capitalist allusion to freedom, which actually.

In John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, names and character names have profound symbolic meaning that reflect the social and economic issues confronting America during the Great Depression. The title itself, taken from the poem "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," symbolizes the fury repressed by the people, which eventually leads to uprising against tyranny. While grapes traditionally suggest abundance, here they represent unfulfilled hope and the bitterness caused by exploitation. Similarly, in *The Grapes of Wrath*, the name "Rose of Sharon" comes from a line in the Hebrew Bible, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys"

(Song of Solomon 2:1). The biblical verse, associated with Christ, is here used to imply beauty, fecundity, and potential, particularly in Rose of Sharon's capacity to provide life through her breast milk even in the midst of difficulty

. Moreover, Noah Joad evokes the biblical Noah, yet instead of saving others, he abandons his family, symbolizing the failure of individual salvation in times of collective crisis. Tom Joad, whose name echoes Job, suffers deeply but grows into a figure of resistance. His migration from Oklahoma to California mirrors the Israelites' Exodus, which ends in a disillusioned arrival at a false Promised Land. Al Joad, possibly linked to Eliezer, the faithful servant in Genesis, represents practical hope and survival through his mechanical skills. Wilkie, whose name combines "will" and "life," recalls the endurance described in the Book of Job; as a government camp worker, he stands for quiet solidarity and the strength found in community action. Ezra Huston, echoing Ezra the Priest, tries to create a just community as camp manager, but his efforts are restrained by structural injustice, reflecting the limited power of religious institutions.

Through these symbolic names, Steinbeck universalizes the Joads' suffering, portraying it as a timeless conflict between good and evil. The narrative ultimately rejects false religious promises and promotes human solidarity as the true path to salvation.

### **3.6.2 Historical Allusion**

*The Grapes of anger* is a historical work of American literature written by John Steinbeck, which is famous for the poignant depiction of the struggle of the couple during dust bowls and the Great depression. Steinbeck criticizes the US socio-economic structure of the 1930s, while highlighting the flexibility of displaced communities through an interdated story rich in the

historic alliance. He employs Dust Bowl, Great Depression, migrant labor exploitation and references to labor movements to underline systemic failure and human endurance.

The initial chapters of the novel incite dust bowls contained in the environment and agrarian crises of the 1930s. Steinbeck has shown a land provoked by drought and dust storms, which shows the details of the dust bowl of historian Donald Waster as "the culmination of human ego", resulting in exploitative farming practices (Waster, 2004, P. The expulsion of Jods from their Oklahoma Farm gives the example of displacement of more than 300,000 families during this period (Gregory, 1989). The inhuman force of economic interest is efficiently symbolized in the tractor scene, where unnamed drivers have bulldozed the houses: "The bank is more than men ... men made it, but they cannot control it" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 33). Here, Steinbeck criticized capitalist institutions, which preferred profit on human welfare.

In addition, Steinbeck highlighted the rise of federation through labor exploitation and historical alliance. Jim Kaysi, a former preacher replaced the organizer of the Sangh, reflects the labor struggles of the era. The individual development of Kaysi shows the rise of labor movements, ending their announcement: "I am not going to preach more. I am just going to work for people" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 251).

During the strike, the martyrdom of Kaysi develops violent repression of labor protests such as 1933 cotton strikes. Steinbeck Casts the activity of CAS as a spiritual awakening, which merges Christian symbolism to the critical capitalist exploitation with socialist ideals. This duality emphasizes collective action as a path to justice - a theme with contemporary social movements (Shindo, 1997).

The large -scale migration of "okes" seeking to survive is described through the migration of Jods in California. Hoovervilles - Makeshift Camps have been named after President Herbert Hoover, whose policies have failed to reduce poverty - it suggests that the promise of prosperity of California was a myth. The description of the steinbeck of the Hoovervils as "fifty groups of tents and tin cars" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 243) aligns with the account of migrant living in factories in the area with Kerry McViliums. The partial successes of the new deal and systemic deficiencies have been described through the opposite of the Hoovervils and the government -run form security administration camps.

The Joads arrive at the peach-picking location and are met with a work strike. Tom is intrigued by the protest and sneaks out one night and encounters Casy, who has worked as an advocate for the workers. Casy goes on to tell the tale of another worker advocate who had been threatened by the workers, so that his actions would lead to hassle with the owners and with the law. While telling the story, Casy mentions a number of historical revolutions

Says, 'Git out. You're a danger on us.' Well, sir, it hurt his feelin's purty bad. But then he says, 'It ain't so bad if you know.' He says, 'French Revolution—all them fellas that figgered her out got their heads chopped off. Always that way,' he says. 'Jus' as natural as rain. You didn't do it for fun no way. Doin' it 'cause you have to. 'Cause it's you. Look at Washington,' he says. 'Fit the Revolution, an' after, them sons-a-bitches turned on him. An' Lincoln the same. Same folks yellin' to kill 'em

Finally, through the effective historical alliance, Steinback's *The Grapes of Anger* transcliedKalpana, which offers a magnificent prosecution of the US of the 1930s. The ecological disaster, economic collapse, and the plight of the pairs for labor conflict, fights against

the Steinbeck repressive systems and champions human rights and dignity-especially for workers. As he writes poignantly: "Wherever there is a fight, hungry people can eat, I will be there" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 537).

### 3.6.3 Classical and Mythological Allusions

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is not only a social novel, but also deeply underlying in classical and mythological traditions. By weaving an alliance for Greek epics, Bible Parables and American folklore, the Steinbeck adds to the family on a mythological scale, strengthens the subjects of conflict, luck and flexibility.

The most striking classical alliance in the *Grapes of Wrath* is parallel to the *Odyssey* of Homer. Like the Odysseus, the Joads go out on a dangerous journey towards an uncertain -promised land - California.

"The highway became his home and his expression medium movement" (Steinbeck, 1939, p.157). This line develops the epic wandering of the Greek heroes, but with a significant difference: the Joads are in luck not for glory but for exploitation, pain and sacrifice.

Steinbeck mixes Christian imagination with a classical tragedy, especially in the character of Jim Casy, a former preacher, whose martyrdom recalls both Socrates and Christ. "I will be all around in the dark ... wherever there is a fight, so hungry people can eat, I will be there" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 419). This announcement of Tom Joad echoes Prometheus of Aeschylus, who suffers to humanity. Like Prometheus, he sacrifices to awaken the collective consciousness itself.

In terms of American mythology, Steinbeck impressed the mythology of the frontier. Traveling to the west side of the Joads - traditionally symbolizes hope and opportunity, as in the poem of Walt Whitman - becomes an unsuccessful epic. "He said," They are good land at a little cost,

"but the cost was the soul of young children" (Steinbeck, 1939, p. 303). This line destroys the myth of manifest destiny, replacing it with a modern tragedy contained in disillusionment and economic injustice.

In his narrative of the many women who were forced to lead their families away from Oklahoma and other Western states because of the Dust Bowl, he makes allusions to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the St. Louis Fair

*The women sat among the doomed things, turning them over and looking past them and back. This book. My father had it. He liked a book. Pilgrim's Progress. Used to read it. Got his name in it. And his pipe-still smells rank. And this picture-an angel. I looked at that before the fust three come-didn't seem to do much good. Think we could get this china dog in? Aunt Sadie brought it from the St. Louis Fair. See? Wrote right on it*

John Steinbeck uses an allusion to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in *The Grapes of Wrath*, in the chapter detailing the Joads' leaving of Oklahoma. The allusion is used to highlight the Dust Bowl migrants' journey as a kind of spiritual journey, similar to that undertaken by *Pilgrim's Progress's* hero, Christian.

In chapter 9, there is a reminiscence by a woman about her father reading *Pilgrim's Progress* and the book still having the scent of his pipe. This is the key moment when Steinbeck equates the Joads' trip with a spiritual journey, an allegory like Bunyan's.

In effect, the allusion to *Pilgrim's Progress* in *The Grapes of Wrath* emphasizes everyone's common desire for a better life, the hardships along the way, and the promises of hope and redemption, just like in the allegorical journey in Bunyan's classic

After Grampa Joad's death by stroke during the journey to California by the Joad family, which Casy interprets as an expression of the love of Grampa Joad for Oklahoma soil, the family approaches Casy, an ex-minister, to speak a few words as a token of their own ad hoc funeral celebration. In his brief homily, Casy refers to a poem by 18th-century English poet William Blake

This here ol' man jus' lived a life an' jus' died out of it. I don' know whether he was good or bad, but that don't matter much. He was alive, an' that's what matters. An' now he's dead, an' that don't matter. Heard a fella tell a poem one time, an' he says 'All that lives is holy.' Got to thinkin', an' purty soon it means more than the words says. An' I wouldn' pray for a ol' fella that's dead. He's awright. He got a job to do, but it's all laid out for 'im an' there's on'y one way to do it

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Casy alludes to William Blake's work when he says, "All that lives is holy" upon Grampa Joad's death. While the line is not a real quotation from some specific Blake poem, it is an imitation of a line from Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. As a former preacher, Casy uses this thought to comfort the Joads and to proclaim his belief that life itself is holy

#### **3.6.4 Function of Allusion in the Novel**

John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) appointed a rich tapestry of the Bible, historical and literary allusion to deepen his themes of their grief. It faces the difficulties of the family during the Great Depression. A defined characteristic is its use. Steinbeck allusions serve as a story.

## **Biblical Allusions: Mythicizing the Migrants' Journey**

Steinbeck's most pervasive allusions are biblical , framing the Joads' exodus from Oklahoma to California as a modern-day old testament. For instance

- The novel's title itself is a biblical reference to divine judgment and suffering .
- Tom Joad's transformation mirrors Moses' leadership of the Israelites , while Jim Casy's).

These allusions elevate the migrants' suffering to spiritual struggle.

**Historical and literary allusions** : Anchoring the narrative in reality, these types of allusions reinforce Steinbeck's socialist critique , aligning the Joad's suffering with broader failures of capitalism and governance such as.

- The Dust Bowl and Great Depression , grounding the novel in historical trauma.
- Rhetorical function : Persuasion and Pathos

Steinbeck shared cultural touchstone to appeal to Pathos, making the struggle of migrants familiar to the Bible's story from the 1930s audiences. He also strengthens his opposition against the exploiting labor system, prepares these difficulties not only as economic issues but as a moral crisis. The Grapes of anger transforms the story of the coalition couples of the Steinbeck into a universal metaphor of displacement and flexibility.

## **Conclusion**

Steinbeck's use of allusion is a prime example of the skills he is masterful at, traversing from Biblical, historical, and ecological fields. Steinbeck raises the Joads' misfortunes beyond the borders of an American story and transforms it into a global fight against oppression by introducing symbols such as the Exodus and Christic sacrifice. Casy's martyrdom, especially his

last words: “I’ll be all around in the dark-whenever there’s a fight so hungry people can eat” (Steinbeck, 1939/2002, p. 462) are a powerful testament of his Christ-like characteristics and at the same time as a symbol of the mutual stand against the authorities. Critics such as Owens (1985) and Shillinglaw (2014) emphasized the sacrificial solidarity of the novel as its moral compass, while Hearle (2005) and other scholars placed Steinbeck's allusions in the context of the history of exploitation. Fundamentally, through these twisted ideas, the novel's political statement is underscored and the Joads' misery is established in the mind of a reader as general and eternal.

## Conclusion

This study focused on how John Steinbeck employs biblical, historical, and mythological allusions in *The Grapes of Wrath* as an effective tool to enhance the social and thematic message of the novel. The central objective was to analyze how these external references are not just artistic instruments but also played a crucial role in the novel's critique of systemic oppression during the Great Depression.

The methodology employed was qualitative textual analysis, combining close reading with theoretical frameworks from Leppihalme (1997) and intertextuality studies. Each allusion was identified, classified by type (biblical, historical, or mythological), and analyzed for its narrative function and ideological impact. This approach allowed for a systematic examination of how Steinbeck wove external references into the Joad family's story, creating layers of meaning that resonate beyond the immediate plot.

The findings provided clear answers to the research questions. First, biblical allusions—particularly the Exodus narrative and Christ-like figures—elevated the migrants' suffering into a spiritual trial, framing their journey as both physical and moral. Second, historical references grounded the novel in the realities of the Dust Bowl and labor movements, connecting fictional events to actual socioeconomic crises. Third, mythological motifs transformed the Joads into universal symbols of resilience, making their story timeless. Together, these allusions created a powerful indictment of capitalism while celebrating human solidarity.

Several key insights emerged from the analysis. Steinbeck's biblical references, for example, subverted traditional religious imagery to promote social justice rather than passive

piety. The character of Jim Casy, with his messianic sacrifice, became a symbol of activist spirituality. Historical allusions exposed how institutions like banks and corporations dehumanized workers, while mythological parallels gave the migrants' struggles an epic quality. Through these techniques, Steinbeck ensured his novel would be read as both a specific period piece and a commentary on enduring human struggles.

However, the study had certain limitations. The interpretation of some allusions remained subjective, depending on the reader's cultural and literary background. Additionally, the focus on three main types of allusions (biblical, historical, mythological) meant that other intertextual references might have been overlooked. The analysis also relied heavily on the researcher's close reading, which could introduce bias despite efforts to remain objective.

To build on these findings, several recommendations can be made. Future research could explore how contemporary readers, especially those unfamiliar with 1930s America or Christian symbolism, interpret Steinbeck's allusions today. Comparative studies might examine how other social protest novels use similar techniques, or how translations of *The Grapes of Wrath* handle its culturally specific references. Additionally, digital tools like text mining could help identify subtle or overlooked allusions, providing a more comprehensive view of Steinbeck's intertextual web.

In conclusion, the study confirmed that allusions have a playful role in the novel's power and purpose. Allusion's role in *Grips of Wrath* is far more than stylistic flourishing. Steinbeck crafted a work that is strenuously grounded in its time and transcendent in its themes, theory connecting the Jawad's story to biblical narratives. His elusive technique functioned in defending the novel's emotional impact and shaped its social critique, ensuring its relevance for

generations of readers confronting injustice. Ultimately, *The Grapes of Wrath* stands as a testament, reveals how literature can serve in harness the past to alternate the present and inspire for change.

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## الملخص

رواية "عَنْبُ الغَضَبِ" (1939) لجون ستاينبك تستند إلى مرجعية نصية ثرية لبحث الظلم الاجتماعي، وتسعى من وجهٍ ما إلى إضفاء الطابع الإنساني على محنة أتباع حقبة "الغبار". تبحث هذه الدراسة كيف تُستحضَرُ الإشاراتُ إلى الكتاب المقدس، والتاريخ، والأساطير كأدوات سردية وفكرية تُعزِّزُ موضوعات القهر، والنضال، والتعاون في الرواية. اعتمد هذا البحث منهج التحليل النصي النوعي مسترشداً بتصنيف "ليبيهايم" (1997)، حيث تم تحديد الاستراتيجيات التلميحية وتفسيرها عبر القراءة المتأنية. كشفت الدراسة أن التلميحات الكتابية ترفع رحلة عائلة "جود" إلى مستوى الامتحان الروحي، بينما تغرس التلميحات التاريخية معاناة العائلة بقوة في سياق الكساد العظيم الاجتماعي-الاقتصادي، في حين تعكس التيمات الأسطورية محتنتهم كأنماطٍ بدنيةٍ للمقاومة. فضلاً عن ذلك، وظَّفَ ستاينبك التلميح عمداً لتعزيز الأثر العاطفي للرواية، وشحذ نقده لرأسمالية عبر تحويل الإيمان من صبرٍ إلى نداءٍ للتضامن. من محدوديات البحث ذاتيةً تحديد التلميحات المحتملة الغموض، وتباين معرفة القارئ بالسياقات الثقافية المرجعية. تؤكد هذه الدراسة الأهمية الخالدة لـ "عَنْبِ الغضب"، وتكشف كيف يستخدم الأدب التناصُّ والعدسة النصية لربط النضالات التاريخية والمعاصرة من أجل العدالة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** عَنْبُ الغضب، التلميح، جون ستاينبك، الكساد العظيم