

**THEORY IN INTERTEXTUALITY AND THREE SEAMLESS INTERTEXTS:  
M.BUTTERFLY BY DAVID H. HWANG, AS IS BY WILLIAM M.  
HOFFMAN, AND EXECUTION OF JUSTICE BY EMILY MANN**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In the article it is synthesized existing theory in intertextuality and is defined and described several types of intrinsic intertexts: re-contextualized works, allusions, cultural discourse, and found discourse. In addition. It is examined three seamless intertexts: M.Butterfly by David H. Hwang, As Is by William M. Hoffman, and Execution of Justice by Emily Mann.*

**Keywords:** *Intertextuality, literary theory, the concept, utterance/text, discourse, interpretation, intrinsic intertexts.*

**ТЕОРИЯ ИНТЕРТЕКСТУАЛЬНОСТИ И ТРИ НЕПРЕРЫВНЫХ  
ИНТЕРТЕКСТА: М.ВУТТЕРФЛЮ ДЭВИДА Х. ХВАНГА, КАК ЕСТЬ  
УИЛЬЯМА М. ХОФФМАНА, И ВЕРШЕНИЕ СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ  
ЭМИЛИ МАНН**

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**АННОТАЦИЯ**

*В статье синтезируется существующая теория интертекстуальности, определяются и описываются несколько типов внутренних интертекстов: реконтекстуализированные произведения, аллюзии, культурный дискурс и найденный дискурс. Кроме того, рассматриваются три бесшовных интертекста: M.Butterfly Дэвида Х. Хванга, As Is Уильяма М. Хоффмана и Execution of Justice Эмили Манн.*

**Ключевые слова:** *Интертекстуальность, теория литературы, концепт, высказывание/текст, дискурс, интерпретация, внутренние интертексты.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Intertextuality refers to the textual space where texts intersect and new (hyper)texts emerge. It is the shaping of a text's meaning by other (inter)texts present in it. As a literary device taking forms like allusion, quotation, pastiche, translation, etc., it depends on the presupposition of the presence of intertexts (or hypotexts) in

(hyper)texts and on the reader's recognition of such presence. For the recognition of intertexts, authors usually rely on shared cultural knowledge with the reader. The presence of intertexts in a text can either open it to interpretations or direct the reader towards a one in particular. If such recognition can possibly be missed intraculturally, the possibility is doubled when the reading is intercultural, as in translation. To minimize the loss of the intertextual context of the source text (ST), translators adopt certain translation strategies (such as analogous intertexts, paratextual devices, and exegetical translation) that ensure such context is relayed into the target text (TT) and recognized by the target reader. While the semantic equivalence can neutralize the linguistic difference, relaying the intertextual relations in the ST remains the daunting problem encountered by the translator.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY**

The article examines three seamless intertexts: *M. Butterfly* by David H. Hwang, *As Is* by William M. Hoffman, and *Execution of Justice* by Emily Mann. The choice of these three dramatic texts is appropriate to the study because they feature the basic characteristics of a seamless intertext. First, they have been written for public performance, their primary form being print. Second, parts of these scripts are stitched together from a number of identifiable sources, forming a stratification of discourses. Third, the parts are not featured: in fact, they may not be discernable without close analysis.

**The analysis of three play scripts: *As Is* by William M. Hoffman, *Execution of Justice* by Emily Mann, and *M. Butterfly* by David H. Hwang.** The choice of these three dramatic texts feature the basic characteristics of seamless intertexts as described above, but also because they vary in the degree to which they combine various literary sources and other forms of discourse. Such variations force me to come to terms with information that may test my preconceived framework for analysis. Additionally, these three contemporary playwrights and their works have received a moderate amount of attention from New York critics, resulting in a manageable body of writing that consists of dramatic criticism and feature articles from which I will draw additional information. *As Is* William M. Hoffman's play *As Is* is the story of one man's battle with AIDS. Included in his story are the additional stories of other victims: patients, doctors, hospice workers, family, friends, employers, lovers, etc. The play's protagonists are Rich, a writer in good physical condition who contracts AIDS; his former lover Saul; and their friends and family. While the play

centers on the conflicts within this rather close group, other AIDS patients tell their stories as well.<sup>1</sup>

Hoffman's play is an interesting mix of both presentational and representational styles of theatre. By representational, I mean the creation of a realistic world onstage through the use of literal props and stage action. In *As Is* representational staging is used for most of the scenes between Saul and Rich. In other words, these scenes preserve the convention of the fourth wall, with the actors speaking directly to each other. Presentational style, on the other hand, uses symbolic images and stage action to evoke an imaginative response from the audience.<sup>2</sup>

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

When the chorus members speak in *As Is*, they often address the audience directly, sometimes speaking to the audience as if the audience were their imagined listener. At these times the audience must "imagine" themselves as the listener and place themselves in the appropriate setting or context, usually in an AIDS clinic. While Hoffman's stage directions suggest a representational or realistic style of performance for telling the story of Rich and Saul, he often incorporates presentational techniques of staging in order to keep the stage action fluid and uninterrupted. In addition, the dialogue of the play vacillates between a straightforward harmonious dialogue and a fragmented dissonant arrangement of voices. Hoffman's inclusion of intertexts, the use of direct address to the audience, the presence and use of a chorus, and the orchestration of voices make this text an interesting choice for analysis.

Execution of Justice Execution of Justice, by Emily Mann, is based on the trial of Dan White.<sup>3</sup> In November 27, 1979. Dan White, a former policeman and member of the Board of Supervisors for the city of San Francisco, assassinated Mayor George Moscone and City Supervisor Harvey Milk, a liberal and self-proclaimed homosexual. White was tried and convicted of voluntary manslaughter and given a relatively light sentence. After his release from prison. White committed suicide. Mann uses the court transcript of the trial as the spine of the play. To these transcripts she adds the

<sup>1</sup> "William M Hoffman's *As Is* to run at Trafalgar Studios | News | The Stage". *The Stage*. 2015-06-09. Retrieved 2018-05-30.

<sup>2</sup> *Theatres for literature: A practical aesthetics for group interpretation* Kleinau, Marion L. Published by Alfred Pub. Co, 1980 ISBN 10: 0882840967 ISBN 13: 9780882840963, pp. 5-8.

<sup>3</sup> Emily Mann, *Execution of Justice* (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1983). Commissioned by San Francisco's Eureka Theatre in 1982. First produced in March 1984 by The Actors Theatre of Louisville. New York production directed by Emily Mann, Virginia Theatre, Fifty-Second Street, March 1988

accounts of community members who were never a part of the actual trial itself.<sup>4</sup> Witnesses, both those who were called at the actual trial and those who were created from an amalgamation of the people Mann interviewed in the community, are called upon to give testimony to the audience. This testimony is often juxtaposed with actual slides, news footage, and segments from the documentary film *The Times of Harvey Milk*. The form of the play avoids direct dialogue and conventional division of scenes. Mann writes the entire script in direct address to the audience, frequently having characters address the audience as "jury members"; she also uses a chorus of uncalled witnesses who present testimony not included in the trial itself. The subject of homophobia is never explicitly discussed in the script (in keeping with the actual trial notes) but is, nevertheless, a force in the chorus of voices. The juxtaposition of various discourses and the use of a variety of texts makes this script an excellent choice for examination.

*M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang, describes the 20-year affair of a French diplomat with a Chinese actress who, as the protagonist and audience later learn, was a spy for the Chinese government and a man disguised as a woman. Hwang attributes the self-delusion of the French diplomat to the ancient Western stereotyping of Asian women as shy, demure, and subservient creatures. Although the play is based on a true story, Hwang insists he purposefully refrained from further research of the incident, for he did not want to write a "docudrama" but preferred to explore his own speculations of how and why the diplomat was so easily deceived.<sup>5</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In the play Hwang compares the true story to that of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.<sup>6</sup> Although he had never seen or heard the opera, Hwang wanted his play to be what he called a "deconstructivist" version of the opera. Hwang hoped his deconstruction would explain the attraction the diplomat found in his fantasy of the blushing, demure, and loyal Oriental lover, a product of the same East-West racial and sexist stereotyping that Hwang found in the lyrics of Puccini's opera. The opera itself is used in the play by the character Rene Gallimard to explain his attraction to and involvement with a Chinese opera star named Song Li ling, who was a male spy

<sup>4</sup> Kathleen Betsko and Rachel Koenig, *Interviews With Contemporary Woman Playwrights* (New York: Beech Tree Books, 1987), p. 277.

<sup>5</sup> David Henry Hwang, "Afterword," *M. Butterfly* (New York: New American Library, 1986), pp. 94-100. Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reprod

<sup>6</sup> David Henry Hwang, "Afterword," *M. Butterfly* (New York: New American Library, 1986), p. 95.

for the Red Chinese.<sup>7</sup> Gallimard, telling his story from his Paris prison cell in 1988, recalls the twenty-year affair. He tells his story of seduction using the opera as his metaphor. In contrast to the Western opera, his lover's music is that of the Peking Opera. This music is used as a metaphor for the historical and political realities surrounding the Gallimard/Liling love story. Several aspects of this dramatic text make it an interesting choice for exploration. The competing hierarchy of discourses evident in the two versions of events as told by Gallimard and Liling, the intersecting intertexts of the operas, the presence of various discourses, and the presentational elements of dance and stylized movement are all scripting choices that make this script relevant to a study of seamless intertexts.

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<sup>7</sup>David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly*, dir. John Dexter, with John Lithgow and B. D. Wong, Eugene O'Neill Theatre, New York, 20 March, 1988.



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