

**Unraveling Intertextuality:  
A Postmodern Study of Heiner Mueller's  
“The Hamlet machine,” and Richard Curtis'  
“The Skinhead Hamlet” with Reference to  
Shakespeare's “Hamlet”**

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**Abstract:**

*This paper intends to explain the postmodern literary trope of intertextuality in the light of its theorization by Julia Kristeva. The paper also seeks to highlight its uses for the depiction of the postmodern realities in the plays “The Hamlet machine” and “The Skinhead Hamlet” by Heiner Mueller and Richard Curtis, respectively. It starts with its etymological and semantic derivatives, and then defines it in the light of theoretical perspectives of Bakhtin, Morson, Emerson, Kristeva, and reviews its evolution from the Aristotelian period to the present age. It also highlights its types such as quotations, revisions, translations, mosaics, calque, and baroques explained by Michele Marrapodi and Shaw and has been analyzed concerning the context of these plays to understand their semantic implications. The paper also shows that the titles, structures, and word plays, too, the manifest interplay of various tropes of intertextuality.*

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, Intertextuality of quotations, Intertextuality of allusions, Intertextuality of parody, Intertextuality of irony, Hypertext

*“The cultural environment of today is so much conclusively a new media environment, that a reassessment of the role of intertextuality is clearly required.”  
(Allen, 2000, p. 203)*

**I. Introduction**

Graham Allen's demand for the reassessment of the role played in the new literary texts by intertextuality seems to have emerged from a postmodern ontological conundrum that is unrepresentable through common literary techniques. In fact, postmodern ontology is too complicated to be represented merely through texts. Various

rhetorical devices and literary tropes are employed to draw meanings lurking behind the lines. Works after works have been churned out with overlapping of not only words but also of phrases and sentences, and sometimes of completely copied paragraphs with attribution to the original authors. Although Bakhtin, a formalist, too, has talked about the reuse of utterances as quoted by Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson (1990) that “Each of us encounters a world that is “already-spoken-about” (p. 137). This attributed and unattributed use of previous texts in postmodern literature has given rise to the use of intertextuality as named by Julia Kristeva, a French poststructuralist. Intertextuality, as is understood in its literal meanings, is to use one text in another text in a specific way to create new meanings. The plays *The Hamlet machine* by the German writer Heiner Mueller (1977) and *The Skinhead Hamlet* by Richard Curtis (2018), and American stage director and writer, too, are studded with the reuse of texts, forms, and styles. As the name suggests that both plays have been adapted from Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet*, they have been analyzed in the light of this hypotext in terms of intertextuality, and its different categories. It is because of the postmodern reality that cannot be depicted without borrowing from history, sociology, anthropology, archeology, etc. It also demands the skillful use of different texts. The study sets to analyze the use of intertextuality and its several types and categories to highlight the impacts they have upon the readers and the audience.

It is also that both plays have been written in different contexts. The play “*The Hamlet machine*” has been originally written in German and then translated into English. It presents the condition of communist East Germany through different characters adapted from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. On the other hand, the short play “*The Skinhead Hamlet*,” presents postmodern conditions in the United States. It has been staged over there around three years back. It depicts the present postmodern image where time is of critical significance. It has been presented within a brief duration with the same characters but with several types of intertextuality. The present study analyzes the use of intertextuality in these plays as based on the hypo-text of *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare and then compares both plays to see the impacts. Heiner Mueller and Richard Curtis have dexterously used different forms, types, and categories of intertextuality in their plays. *The Hamlet machine* and *The Skinhead Hamlet* to depict postmodern social ontology to make the readers feel the impacts. The use and subsequent impacts of intertextuality demonstrate the effectiveness of this literary device, making readers aware of the new ontological perspectives. However, it is necessary to trace the origin of intertextuality through etymological and literal transformations, literal meanings, historical evolution, and theoretical usage in different contexts to interpret and compare these plays. This review intends to present past and present theorization of this concept to draw a framework for the analysis of intertextuality, its working, types, and categories in the light of which the current analytical study of the plays is made to draw meanings of the reality depicted in them. The questions that need answers are how different types of intertextualities have changed the meanings of the play within in the given postmodern context, how these types have impacted the audience and how they are intended to be used. The question of the forcefulness of the impacts through comparative analysis of the plays regarding the use of intertextuality is also answered.

## II. Intertextuality, Its Background, Evolution, Categories, and Competing Terms

As far as literal meanings of intertextuality are concerned, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines it as a term that explains the use of a text in some other texts in a “complex interrelationship,” ranging from intermingling as well as weaving of texts to produce other texts (“Intertextuality,” n. d.). However, it has given two etymological derivations; one French and other Latin, both having the same meanings (“Intertextuality,” n. d.). This seems quite strange that both etymologies have the same semantic results. On the other hand, Chris Baldick (1996) in his work *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* has defined intertextuality with reference to Julia Kristeva to argue that this term depicts the relationship of a text with other texts (p. 128). Although Julia Kristeva (1986) is said to have coined this term in 1966 (Marrapodi, 2004, p. 36), Michael Worton and Judith Still (1991), in their phenomenal work on intertextuality and its theoretical practice, have shed detailed light saying that the practice has been underway since the time of Plato. They further state that it has been a “subliminal purveyor of ideology” (p. 04) which Martinize Alfaro María Jesús (1996) has also supported, arguing intertextuality has evolved from the plurality of voices Plato inserted it in his famous method of dialogues, or philosophical debates (p. 269). Michael Worton and Judith continue saying that intertextuality has been in vogue in the shape of dramatic creations from multiple “mass of texts,” “oral traditions of myths” and “stock characters” during Aristotelian times (p. 04). Its use continued with Longinus, they say, in the shape of “sublime...an imitation” (qtd. p. 05) until it reaches Bakhtin, who slightly mentions it in his concept of dialogism which Martinize has quoted as a combination of center, non-center, and a relationship between both (qtd. p. 270) but in terms of meanings.

This journey of this postmodern term through classical literature to the English classical period and the modern period is surprising. Martinize includes Saussure’s semiotics and theoretical framework of signified and signifier in this category of the use of intertextuality, which reaches Julia Kristeva, who is known to have used this term in her book *Word, Dialogue and Novel* for the first time (p. 36). Attributing to Bakhtin, she says that literary structure is “generated in relation to another structure” adding “What allows a dynamic dimension to structuralism is... [Bakhtin’s] conception of the ‘literary word’ as an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings; that of the writer, the addressee (or the character) and the contemporary or earlier cultural context” (p. 36). She further says that a text is “a mosaic of quotations,” the reason that poetic language is “read as at least double” (p. 37) or in other words having multiple meanings. She continues saying that this insertion of quotations leads to “permutation of texts” in which various utterances, borrowed from other texts, intermingle and “neutralize one another” (p. 38). By neutralizing, she means that one quotation may enhance the actual meanings that are countered by the use of another quotation from some other work, or works, and this process continues indefinitely with the evolution in history, culture, and ultimately cultural representations through different types of discourses.

Regarding the intersection of words, Kristeva has mentioned two important axes, horizontal of subject-addressees and, vertical of text-context, leading her to conclude “double[ness]” of the text (p. 37). However, she has not commented on its impacts on the semantic relationships of the quotes or words. Unraveling it further, Roland Barthes (1985) has differentiated work and text, adding a text has multiple

meanings after it is woven from various other texts subject to various interpretations of “language viewed intertextually” (p. 69-74). As the world has come closer together than before, he adds, a text is now a mixture of multiple texts borrowed from other cultures, putting the reader in the center to deduce meanings (p. 148). It could be that he means the death of the author, as he is attributed to have said, but it is clear that he means readers as the center of the meaning-making process. He is of the view that this mixture gives final unity to the text as its destination (p. 148). This may seem that he opines in favor of a multiplicity of meanings, or varied interpretations and it is, indeed, his purpose that he makes clear. This leads to types and categories of intertextuality manifesting varied interpretations.

As far as the categories, types, and classification of this term are concerned, they are as many as its meanings. Types of intertextuality and its categories have been discretely explained by Michele Marrapodi in his book, *Shakespeare, Italy and Intertextuality*. He includes revision, translation, direct quotations, sources, conventions, and configurations as well as genres and paralogues as several types (p. 14-16). He is of the view that in revision, a text is changed to suit some other historical period, while in translation the transfer of meanings occurs from one language to another language (p. 16). He goes on to say that even using sources to write something is a type of intertextuality while copying and imitating conventions and generic frames are some other types (p. 22). By paralogues, he means the supertexts are consulted and used in religious contexts (p. 24). In other words, when religious scholars, theologians, and religious figures quote and cite different sacred sources, it is a type of intertextuality derived from those supertexts, the Scriptures. However, in terms of occurrence, intertextuality could be obligatory in which a deliberate homage is paid to a certain ancient master through a direct attribution or indirect and implicit reference through their words, Martinize argues (p. 273). On the other hand, Philip Shaw (2014) has termed these types and categories optional and accidental, while commenting on Kristeva's concept with reference to Bakhtin and Fairclough, saying further that interdiscursivity and intergenericity are two other major examples of intertextuality (p. 136).

By interdiscursivity, he means to cite or quote a discourse within a discourse and by intergenericity; he means to amalgamate a genre within a genre. Although his field is somewhat different, the terms have been borrowed with reference to literature and linguistics which he explains later. Further, most of the relevant competing terms used in determining meanings have been explained by Marko Juvan (2009) in his book *History and Poetics of Intertextuality* in which he says that a concealed or obvious relationship of a text with other texts is transtextuality (p. 126). He refers to Gerard Genette (1997) to explain another term paratextuality, which he says, is a commentary on the text's position about titles and headings, while he names pre-text copying as metatextuality (p. 126). Explaining some other relevant terms, he argues that hypotext is the main text from which everything is borrowed, hypertext as having crossed boundaries, and inter-text or super-text as a religious text from which other texts borrow contents to cite for religious arguments (p. 126) such as the Koran and the Bible from which Muslim and Christian scholars borrow texts to support their religious arguments. William Irwin (2004), speaking about intertextuality with relation to literature, argues that the term intertextuality has engulfed the important literary device of allusion (p. 227), while Linda Hutcheon (1985) terms intertextuality as a way to provide insight to the reader (p. 11) to make him feel as having read the text. Still another postmodernist, Fredrick Jameson

(2003) calls this issue an imitation used for mocking or smiling at (p. 17-21), which is somewhat similar to Linda Hutcheon with a slight difference. On the other hand, another critic John Fiske (2002) claims that horizontal and vertical intertextuality regarding reference to other books and genres respectively enhance understating (p. 87) of the readers about the existing text they are engaging with, leading to the use of manifest or constitutive intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992, p.171-172). This is also somewhat explicit in meanings as well as in references. In other words, not only does intertextuality include structural but also linguistic, literary, and thematic elements which are often intended to reflect textual, literary as well as cultural underpinnings through its subtypes such as allusions, translation, revision, quotations, calque, plagiarism, or pastiche.

### **III. The Case of “The Hamlet Machine” and “The Skinhead Hamlet”**

Heiner Mueller and Richard Curtis have dexterously used different forms, types, and categories of intertextuality in *The Hamlet machine* and *The Skinhead Hamlet* to make desired impacts on the readers and the audiences. The uses and impacts of intertextuality demonstrate the effectiveness of this literary device in reflecting the postmodern ontology. Analysis of both the plays comprises elements of conventions and configurations including the use of quotations, revisions, translation, and plagiarism. As far as the play *The Hamlet machine* by Heiner Mueller is concerned, its title suggests that it has both obligatory as well as intentional uses of intertextuality (Martinize, p. 269). It shows that this title has been borrowed from its hypotext (Juvan, p. 126) *Hamlet*. It also is showing the use of intergenericity (Kristeva, p. 136). The characters are the same, having similar names, though different personas, and have been presented living in the world as the ordinary world of the postmodern age. Other than this, there is no use of other conventions of its hypotext.

As far as quotations, allusions, revisions, and translations are concerned, there are plenty of examples in the play used at various places. In terms of quotations, Heiner Mueller has either twisted the original Shakespearean words or paraphrased them to put into the mouth of his modern characters living in what Zak Risinger (2017), a reviewer, says “at the end of East German Communism, “for he is forced to call the play as having no “conventional plot” (Risinger). The characters of *The Hamlet machine*, however, have some resemblance with the original characters of the hypotext (p. 126) but they are ordinary people living under oppression and voicing their ordinary concerns. The twists and turns in quotations, if put verbatim, are not extraordinary. For example, the translator Dennis Redmond has put all the capital lines in the same way, showing they are in English in capital letters such as in the first capital-lettered text “WHO IS THE CORPSE...” (p. 01). This is given in the blank verse to demonstrate the grandeur of style, borrowed from its hypotext. Besides this, there are various other examples twisted to reflect the life of this ordinary Hamlet in these trying times. This is not like prince Hamlet. Given the circumstances of this play, the allusions are bound to occur at various places such as “Denmark” referred to as a “concentration camp” (p. 02). This is an allusion to Auschwitz where the Jews were gassed. It has been used to show that the incumbent circumstances are not different either – a rather crude analogy with the concentration camps to heighten the sense of human barbarity and cruelty. Another example is that of a direct quote from *Hamlet* as “He Was A Man Who Only Took All For All” (p. 01), which is in capital letters. It is the same as given in the hypotext except for the change of mechanics and last phrase “He was a man. Take him for all in all” (p. 195). Such changes in mechanics and phrases occur throughout *The Hamlet machine* to suit the

circumstances the characters are going through. This is an attempt by the writer to show that all characters are as important as Hamlet, and all experience the same predicament as Hamlet had centuries back. This is a satire on Hamlet's situation, or it could be an irony of circumstances of the present age. However, in Hutcheon's words, it is a parody (Hutcheon, p. 1-12).

The most important intertextuality in this play is in the form of quotations, which have been translated and changed in likely revision such as the case of Horatio to whom Hamlet holds to his heart in hypotext "Hamlet" saying "Sir, my good friend. I'll change that name with you" (p. 165), but in *The Hamlet machine*, Hamlet rather detests him saying "NO PLACE FOR YOU IN MY TRAGEDY-PLAY" (Mueller, p. 02). This type of intertextuality is a translation and parodic (Jameson, p. 21). It is because its objective is to laugh at how the characters try to achieve grandeur in ordinary settings, equating or belittling themselves and their foils with the grand characters of the past. This twisting and changing of quotation could also be called calque or borrowed translation, and then retranslation such as a similar quote "THIRD COCK'S CROW" (Mueller, p. 07) shows, which occurs in *Hamlet* where it is "cock crows" (p. 151). This also is a good example of "interdiscursivity" that Kristeva has mentioned with reference to Bakhtin (p. 136). However, it cannot be taken as a direct quotation as it has been neatly merged into an already given quotation to suit the situation for the character. Mueller has borrowed several other allusions from some other texts besides the hypotext of *Hamlet*.

The sources Mueller has used from other texts vary according to the nature of the times in which the play has been presented and staged. For example, he has borrowed "PEST IN BUDA" (p. 01) as a "plague" and twisted it to use it as a pun on the Budapest uprising of 1956 (p. 09). The impact of this allusion is that it is pointing to the modern times of the play, and the postmodern reality depicted in it. There are various other allusions to great figures in history such as "Dr. Zhivago" (p. 05), "MACBETH" (p. 06), "RASKOLNIKOV" (p. 06), "Marx Lenin Mao" (p. 07), references to other texts "Electra", "Heart of Darkness" and "Under the Sun of Torture" (p. 08), and historical figures such as "RICHARD THE THIRD" (p. 02). This is an attempt to connect the past with the present to show the continuity of history as well as historical evolution. It also seems that Mueller has applied horizontally as well as vertical intertextuality to enhance the meanings of the dialogues (Fiske, 2002, p. 87). This usage of different types of intertextuality within the given circumstances speaks volumes about Mueller's avant-garde approach but Susan Cook (2009) argues that "Mueller's play does not shatter canonical boundaries because too many elements of the original remain intact" (Cook). This rather seems strange seeing he has used every other category of intertextuality over which Susan Cook is forced to call Mueller's play as "the Anti-Hamlet, the counter-Shakespeare," which is contrary to her own claim (Cook). Due to being a "densely packed intertextual collage," Andreas Hofele (2016) calls the circumstances in the play a situation where "The zero point of tragedy is reached," adding it is "the death of tragedy as well" (p. 724). In other words, Andreas has argued that the postmodern circumstances have subverted the very idea of tragedy, and *The Hamlet machine* has exemplified this idea in the shape of intertextual references. Perhaps, that is the reason that Brian Walsh (2001) has called this play a "species of intertextual," which according to him has "a script that consciously puts itself at the juncture of preceding dramatic forms and traditions" (p. 25). This also means that the script, as well as the staging of the this play and its interlink with the previous plays, show that it has come to the point where the

differences in forms have become a norm. It should be different to reflect the postmodern reality or lose its charm. The same goes for intertextuality in *The Skinhead Hamlet*, which too, is very short but loaded with meanings on account of the use of intertextual elements.

In terms of intertextuality, *The Skinhead Hamlet* is not as rich as *The Hamlet* machine is due to its being a brief play with only a few dialogues in each scene of all acts. However, in terms of conventions and configurations (Marrapodi, p. 16), this play is a direct copy of its hypotext (Juvan, p. 126) due to its close resemblance with the nature of its genres such as acts and scenes. This is a case of “intergenericity” (Kristeva, p. 136) where the classical genre has been parodied to depict the modern complex ontology. *The Skinhead Hamlet* has total five acts like its hypotext (p. 126), *Hamlet* with each act having some scenes. However, in terms of dialogue, it has only a few dialogues in each scene (Curtis, p. 2-6). It also has followed the unity of place in that it opens in “Elsinore Castle” (p. 01). However, the rest of the places are a bit different despite having a close resemblance to the ancient battlements and palaces. The play clearly states in its epigraph written by Richard Curtis and other editors about their hope of making impacts on the audiences like “the New English Bible” (p. 01). These are expectations of the writer and the editors how its impacts would equal to that of its hypotext, and that it would become popular for the depiction of the modern abusive reality of informality. In terms of language and dialogue, the play comprises short but very crispy slangs of modern English spoken by rustic folks of African American origin. It also shows that it is a new adaptation. There is intertextuality of appearance too, as the ghost appears in the same way, but it has to face the innuendos of *Hamlet* (p. 3-4). Almost all the other characters, except the absence of some minor characters, are the same.

Where the questions of quotations, allusions, revision, and translation or plagiarism are concerned, it seems that the play heavily relies on its hypotext (p. 126) in terms of its conventions and configurations (Marrapodi, p. 16) but in terms of quotations, it is quite parsimonious. There is no direct quotation taken from *Hamlet* but some quotations have been modified to suit the modern situation. For example, *Hamlet* tells Ophelia to “Fuck off to a nunnery” (p. 03), which is a direct twist to *Hamlet*’s original dialogue “Get thee to a nunnery” in the hypotext *Hamlet* (p. 131). Semantically, this is highly disparaging not only for the character of *Hamlet* but also for the audiences in this postmodern situation. This is ironic too. There are clear allusions in some of the revisions and translations such as the allusion of poison in the single utterance that the Ghost has spoken in Scene-IV “He poured fucking poison in my fucking ear!” (Curtis, p. 02). This is not a twist but only a reference to the original revelation that father *Hamlet*’s ghost made in *Hamlet*.

Whereas soliloquies are concerned, the play has followed the tradition, but it is a single line that copies “to be or not to be” (p. 64). It is also an invective “To fuck or be fucked” (Curtis, p. 03). It, too, has disparaging impacts on the audience about the characters and the play. Similarly, there are two major allusions in the play: one of a nunnery in Act II and the second of Phoebus in Act III (p. 03). However, both have the same function that is irony and parody (Hutcheon, p. 17). There is another revision of a dialogue that *Hamlet* speaks about silence in *Hamlet* given as “the rest is silence” (p. 395). Here it is given as “The rest is fucking silence” (p. 06). It is slang and highly ironic. Despite all these invectives and innuendoes, it seems this is obligatory intertextuality,

rather than accidental (Martinize, p. 269) and that it is metatextuality (Juvan, p. 28) in which even the title has been borrowed and twisted to *The Skinhead Hamlet*.

#### **IV. Comparison and Contrast of the Impacts of Intertextuality in “The Hamlet Machine” and “The Skinhead Hamlet”**

As far as the impacts of intertextuality are concerned, the objectives of Heiner Mueller and Richard Curtis are almost the same. Whereas Mueller is highly detailed and pedantic, Curtis is quite simple, easy, and sarcastic. The objective of both is to show postmodern reality using intertextuality.

In *The Hamlet machine*, the title is highly ironic and echoes the words of Fredrick Jameson about copying and borrowing from other texts with the intention to make fun of them (p. 21). The rest of the play, too, demonstrates the fact that it has been written for very confused, paranoid, schizoid, and psychologically destroyed characters. The play has no linearity, no unity of time, space, or place. Even the dialogues and utterances have been distorted. Although it demonstrates the play as a postmodern play, the most important fact about its post modernity is the use of the “language game” (Biletzki, 2009) as Lyotard (1993) has used to present his concept of metafiction (71). There is a clear use of parody of the situation of the super-text (Juvan, p. 126) in *The Hamlet machine* which makes the confusion of Hamlet similar to that of every other character in the play where Ophelia, Gertrude, and all other women and men are paranoid, living in somewhat uncertain times on the edge of fear. This situation is completely contrary to the original super-text (p. 126). That is why dialogues of each of these characters are echoing intertextuality either through illusions to the original dialogues or with certain twists and turns of wording. This leads to irony but, at times, it becomes too much serious as Linda Hutcheon has stated about parody that it is not only ironic or mimicry but “another formulation, repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity” (p. 06). For example, the parody of the character of Hamlet through the same character is not an ironic parody when he says that “I am not Hamlet” (Mueller, P. 05). Rather it seems it is a truth, and he is unemployed. This becomes parodic as well as ironic and in another sense a difference through repetition instead of similarity (Hutcheon, P. 06).

The impact of this critical distancing from the original Hamlet in Hutcheon’s terms seems a terrifying specter of the postmodern age and the political confusion prevalent at the time *The Hamlet machine* has been written to manifest. Yet, when it comes to direct quotes, the impact is not only ironic but also confusion, and that there is only hope for the characters and no order which old Hamlet has vowed to set right in the original text saying, “I was ever born to set it right” (p. 188). The twist in the original text of “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark” (p. 04) in words “the state of Denmark” is replaced with “AGE OF HOPE” (p. 06). This intertextuality is specifying the ironic meanings of this revised quotation in this postmodern age where it seems to the characters that there is dillydallying in their own reflection about the age and the situation of hopelessness. This intertextuality of revision and allusion solidifies this concept of the play that it is depicting postmodern confusion and not classical or Shakespearean order.

Similarly, the language of invectives and innuendos in *The Skinhead Hamlet* has surpassed all the limits of decency but it is quite interesting that they, too, show the same vein of the intertextuality of revision and allusions with slight changes of wording to suit the situation and the characters. There is nothing else except slangs used in everyday language which is a depiction of taking the play to maximum limits of linguistic or language games (Lyotard, p. 71). This type of intertextuality not only creates a burst of laughter on the face of the audience but also creates sarcasm against the democratization of literature with common idioms – a hallmark of marginalized class. However, there is also a sort of wry smile that such language games (p. 71) cause to the audience, for by the end Fortinbras copies the words of real Fortinbras of Hamlet and says, “Let’s piss off” (p. 06) which is copying of “Let four captains / Bear Hamlet” (p. 440). This impact of intertextuality makes the play ironic, but it is the real representation of postmodern ontology. As this is a very short play, its impact is not as forceful in terms of the impacts of intertextuality as is of *The Hamlet machine*, which is rich with allusions, quotations, revisions, translation, and even conventions and configurations. The depiction of postmodern reality in *The Hamlet machine*, therefore, is more forceful, more impactful, more complex, and more representative of the times as well as the reality.

## V. Conclusion

This brief analysis of these two plays *The Hamlet machine* and *The Skinhead Hamlet* demonstrates the skillful use of intertextuality and different elements of conventions and configurations. The use of intertextuality in both plays is intended to convey different ironic, parodic, and conflictual meanings of dialogues, circumstances, and postmodern ontology. Where *The Skinhead Hamlet* is rich with conventional and configurational intertextuality which have rather enhanced its conflictual meanings of the circumstances in which it was staged, the play *The Hamlet machine* is richer than it due to the use of direct quotations, imitations of the super-text of Hamlet, copying, revision, and allusions. The comparison and contrast of the play show that the impact of the use of intertextuality has been tremendous on the texts as well as on the audiences and the readers. Though most of the impact is ironic and sarcastic, it also is serious and somber at places, demonstrating complex realities of the postmodern world, which sometimes get too complex to be unraveled without the invocation to classical imitation. Therefore, Heiner Mueller has also used pastiche and historiographic metafiction to enrich his thematic representation of the postmodern reality to back up intertextuality. In the attempts made by Mueller and Curtis intertextuality and its categories have played a critical role to help the authors reach their target audiences and convey their intended meanings of the reality they have presented. *The Hamlet machine*, however, excels *The Skinhead Hamlet* on account of dexterity and skillful use of intertextuality which needs further research.

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