

An Investigation of Good Omens Television Series Through Content Analysis in the Context of Intertextuality

Good Omens Televizyon Dizisinin Metinlerarasılık Bağlamında İçerik Analizi Yoluyla İncelenmesi

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

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ÖZET

Metinlerarasılık, 1960'lı yıllarda Bakhtin, Kristeva, Barthes, Rifaterre ve Genette gibi postmodern edebiyat kuramcıları tarafından ortaya atılan, metinlerin birbirleriyle etkileşim içinde olduğu ve aralarında bir alışverişin bulunduğu fikrine dayanan bir kavramdır. Birden fazla metnin bir arada kullanılmasını ve hiçbir metnin tamamen bağımsız olmadığını ifade eden bu kavram, şiir, müzik ve hikâye gibi sanat dallarında olduğu kadar, günümüzde sinema ve televizyon yapımlarında da sıkça karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Amazon Prime adlı ücretli dijital platformda yayımlanan Good Omens dizisi, metinlerarasılık tekniğini yoğun şekilde kullanan yapımlardan biri olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu makalenin amacı, *Good Omens* dizisinde metinlerarası ilişkilerin nasıl uygulandığını somut örneklerle ortaya koymaktır. Bu doğrultuda, dizinin ilk sezonundaki altı bölüm, Genette'in ortak birliktelik ve türev ilişkisi bağlamında analiz edilmiştir. İnceleme sürecinde, öykünme, anıştırma, yansılama ve gülünç dönüştürüm gibi tekniklerin dizide nasıl kullanıldığı tespit edilmiş ve içerik analizi yöntemiyle detaylı şekilde açıklanmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Metinlerarasılık, *Good Omens*, Televizyon Dizisi, İçerik Analizi

ABSTRACT

Intertextuality is a concept introduced by postmodern literary theorists such as Bakhtin, Kristeva, Barthes, Rifaterre, and Genette in the 1960s. It is based on the idea that texts interact with one another and that there is a continual exchange between them. This concept, which highlights the use of multiple texts together and asserts that no text is entirely independent, is frequently encountered in contemporary cinema and television, as well as in other art forms such as poetry, music, and storytelling. The television series Good Omens, which is streamed on the subscription-based digital platform Amazon Prime, is considered one of the productions that extensively employs intertextuality. The aim of this article is to examine how intertextual relations are applied in *Good Omens* with concrete examples. In this context, six episodes from the first season of the series were analysed in terms of Genette's concepts of common unity and derivative relationships. During the analysis, techniques such as imitation, allusion, onomatopoeia, and comic transformation were identified and explained in detail using the content analysis method.

Keywords: Intertextuality, *Good Omens*, Television Drama, Content Analysis

1. Introduction

Today, it is an inevitable fact that every text refers to other texts and carries traces of them. Considering that intertextuality has been continuous since the beginning of human history, it can be said that past events have contributed to advances in science and literature, facilitating the understanding of this process (Karatay, 2010, p.159). The concept of intertextuality was first discussed by Julia Kristeva in her work *Semeiotike*, published in 1969. Kristeva developed a novel analysis method based on the Dialogical Language Theory and, in this regard, she is considered as the theorist who introduced the theory of intertextuality in the field of literary criticism (Erdoğan, 2011, p.239). In fact, the basis of intertextuality lies in Bakhtin's Dialogue Theory. In this theory, Bakhtin clearly states that every discourse is intertwined with other discourses and that a completely independent discourse is almost impossible (Sevindik, 2024, p.3).

In the context of intertextuality, *Good Omens* series was examined through content analysis. In this study, it was determined that many intertextuality methods were used in *Good Omens* series. The study is based on the concepts of quotation, reference, pastiche and comic transformation in Gérard Genette's theory of intertextuality. In the study conducted with the content analysis method, the intertextuality elements in the series were coded and categorized under four main headings. These are quotation, sarcastic transformation, reflection and pastiche. According to the findings of the research, *Good Omens* series makes extensive use of sacred and classical texts such as the *Bible* and the *Divine Comedy*, and cinema genres such as apocalypse, action and science fiction. However, these elements are not only reinterpreted as references; they are reinterpreted through irony, absurd humor and satire. Characters such as Aziraphale and Crowley represent moral gray areas that question the good-bad dichotomy. The series criticizes religious fatalism and rigid moral systems by depicting the apocalypse not as a tragic ending but as a series of comical human errors.

1. 1. Intertextuality

Intertextuality can be defined as an interdisciplinary concept in which two or more texts interact with each other, resulting in the creation of a polyphonic structure. According to Genette, intertextuality is defined as "the relation between two or more texts coexisting simultaneously," meaning "the actual presence of one text within another, either explicitly or in a typical form" (Genette, 1997, p. 2). Similarly, Kubilay Aktulum asserts that no literary work can be produced entirely independently of preceding texts; each text incorporates, either overtly or covertly, quotations and allusions to earlier works, implying that complete originality is unattainable (Aktulum, 1999, p. 18). In general, the defining feature of intertextuality is that every written work bears traces of previous texts and evokes them. One of the key figures who helped to shape and popularise this theory in literature is Julia Kristeva (Aktulum, 1999, p.19). Since the 1960s, in addition to Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva, theorists such as Roland Barthes, Michael Riffaterre, Harold Bloom, and Gérard Genette have contributed to the development of intertextual relations as a central concept in literary analysis (Sevindik, 2024, p.4). According to Kıran Z. and Kıran (2003, p.303), "every narrative is located within a culture and therefore

may refer not only to the non-linguistic realities of the lived world but also to previous written and spoken texts.” In this context, the texts used in television series are also presented to the audience through various methods, establishing connections between them.

Another theorist who addresses intertextuality, Roland Barthes, developed his own theory based on Kristeva's views. Barthes sees intertextuality as a phenomenon that minimises the impact of the author and argues that a text is related not only to the author and the reader but also to other texts. In this context, he suggests that intertextuality signifies "the death of the author" (as cited in Önal, 2007, p.107-108; Azap, 2014, p.33). Unlike Kristeva, Michael Riffaterre evaluates intertextuality largely through the connection between the reader and the text (Haberer, 2007, p.56). According to him, it is the reader who interprets the intertextual connections a work forms with prior or subsequent texts. Therefore, the continuation of intertextuality depends on the reader's awareness of these connections.

Gérard Genette, one of the leading figures in structural narratology, combined the views of different theorists by addressing intertextual relations within a systematic framework (Korkmaz, 2017, p.76). Unlike Kristeva, Genette approached intertextuality with a narrower perspective and argued that writing should be evaluated within a text network that is shaped in line with its own internal structure (Sevindik, 2024, p.4). Genette grouped the theory of intertextuality under five subheadings: intertextuality, anatextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, and interpretive textuality (as cited in Altay, 2015, p.20). In *Palimpsests*, Genette proposes that the focus of literary theory is not confined to the individual text itself, but rather to the transcendent elements or intertextual connections that each text invokes. This intertextual transcendence refers to the process by which a text is related to other texts, either explicitly or implicitly (Genette, 1997, p. 1).

Intertextuality is the revival of a text within another text. For example, while pastiche nostalgically glorifies old works, parody criticises them in a humorous way. Allusion makes an explicit or implicit reference to a specific work, while simulation is a process of imitation disconnected from the original reality. Representation imitates a certain reality. Therefore, no work of art can be evaluated in isolation; each text contains a combination of different intertextual elements (Shahariar, 2023, p.190).

1.2. Series on Digital Platforms and How to Watch Them

The rise of digital platforms in recent years has radically changed television viewing habits. These platforms, which offer viewers the freedom to consume content independent of time and space, are rapidly being adopted, especially by the younger generation (Akkuş, 2025). Computers, tablets, and smartphones are now among the most frequently used devices for watching films. In particular, they have become a medium preferred by young people because films released online can be watched quickly, their cost is lower than a cinema ticket, and they can be watched repeatedly at any time. This reduces the habit of going to the cinema and watching films on the big screen. The magic of the big screen, sound equipment, and the culture of watching films in crowded theatres are giving way to a habit of watching films on smaller

screens such as tablets and mobile phones, where sound and visuals are less prominent (Konukman, 2018, p.309).

One of the important factors that motivate individuals to subscribe to a digital platform is the fact that the content is consumed by their close circle (Başer & Söğütöler, 2023, p.14). In recent years, the number and range of screens used to watch audiovisual contents has risen, from the traditional television set to interactive Internet-enabled devices (Diego etc., 2016, p.25). Netflix is the largest digital platform globally with 238 million subscribers as of 2023 (Netflix, 2023). Disney+ has grown rapidly in the global market, especially with Marvel and Star Wars content, reaching 164 million subscribers in 2023 (Disney, 2023). Amazon Prime Video is widely used in the US and Europe and has more than 200 million subscribers worldwide (Amazon, 2023). HBO Max has a strong position in the US and European markets, particularly with its content targeting adult audiences (Lotz, 2022, p.35).

The digital broadcasting market in Türkiye gained momentum with Netflix's entry into the Turkish market in 2016, and local platforms have also made significant investments in this process (Demir, 2023, p.112). Digital platform usage is increasing in Türkiye. According to the 2023 report by TÜİK, the digital platform subscription rate in Türkiye has increased by 65% in the last five years (TÜİK, 2023, p.27). According to TÜİK (2023) data, in Türkiye, 58% of digital platform users consume content from mobile devices, 32% from smart televisions, and 10% from desktop or laptop computers (TÜİK, 2023, p.34). According to Deloitte's Global Media Consumption Report (2022), 78% of households in Türkiye have at least one digital platform subscription (Deloitte, 2022, p.59). Factors such as ad-free content, time- and location-independent viewing, and shorter series durations offered by digital platforms make them more attractive compared to traditional television (Çelik & Yılmaz, 2021, p.78). Additionally, the content recommendation algorithms of these platforms allow users to have a personalised viewing experience (Arslan, 2022, p.112). The viewing habits of digital platform users in Türkiye vary from platform to platform.

Series broadcast on digital platforms in Türkiye differ from traditional television series in terms of both content and production process (Arslan, 2022, p.64). Netflix began producing original content in Türkiye in 2018 with Hakan Muhafız and then became an important actor in the domestic TV series sector with productions such as *Atiye* (2019), *Bir Başkadır* (2020), and *Kulüp* (2021) (Demir, 2023, p.155). BluTV, one of the pioneers of the digital TV series sector in Türkiye, has produced popular productions such as *Masum* (2017), *Saygı* (2020), and *Bozkır* (2018) (Kaya, 2022, p.88). Exxen, which began broadcasting in 2021, has brought TV formats such as the *Leyla ile Mecnun* remake and *Survivor* to digital (Çelik & Yılmaz, 2021, p.95). The duration of digital TV series in Türkiye is shorter than traditional TV series. While traditional TV series usually last 120-150 minutes, digital platform series are between 30-60 minutes (Arslan, 2022,2, p.112). This time difference allows viewers to consume episodes more quickly.

The rise of digital platforms in Türkiye has deeply affected viewing habits. The younger generation, in particular, prefers content that is ad-free and accessible whenever they want, and the rate of viewing via mobile devices is increasing each year. Digital platform series offer shorter, higher-quality productions and a more liberal structure in terms of content diversity

compared to traditional television series. In the coming years, the number of digital platforms in Türkiye and their content production capacity are expected to increase. Competition between local and international platforms will enhance content production quality and offer viewers more options.

Television viewing practices in Türkiye have begun to change. Mass media are evolving technically with each passing day, and this development is completely rejecting a monotonous understanding by diversifying the concept of entertainment. Proficiency in digital technologies and the ability to use digital tools and equipment is one of the most important requirements for digital literacy. In this respect, it is entirely natural for technology-based social media tools to emerge and become intertwined with phenomena such as games, which continually change shape. Research on entertainment content is not new and will not be the last (Akgöl & Şakı Aydın, 2023, p.91).

2. An Investigation of *Good Omens* Television Series Through Content Analysis in the Context of Intertextuality

2.1. Purpose and Importance of the Research

Good Omens, based on Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett's 1990 novel of the same name, is a fantasy comedy series that lasted for two seasons. It is about the adventures of an angel (Aziraphale) and a demon (Crowley) that cooperate to save the world and prevent the approaching apocalypse. The series is full of religious, literary, and cultural references and offers a rich field of study in the context of intertextuality. In this research, *Good Omens* series was examined within the framework of Gérard Genette's common unity and derivative relations. The series employs intertextuality techniques such as quotation, allusion, imitation (pastiche), reflection, and comic transformation (irony), thus giving the plot greater depth. The content analysis of *Good Omens* series in terms of intertextuality and its detailed examination under the headings of common unity and derivative relations emphasises the importance of the study. In this context, evaluating the series according to these categories can contribute to similar analyses of other series and films.

2.2. Research Method

Good Omens series was systematically evaluated and explained in terms of common associations and derivative relationships using the content analysis method. Content analysis allows for a detailed and in-depth examination of data, helping the researcher obtain comprehensive and detailed answers. It also provides researchers with the opportunity to interpret data flexibly and make new discoveries (Şahin et al., 2023, p.927). This method enables researchers to conduct a systematic and impartial evaluation (Koçak & Arun, 2006, p.24). The fundamental problem that defines the boundaries of the research and the aim of solving this problem requires the adoption of the qualitative research method in the study. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling methods, which facilitate the detailed examination of phenomena containing rich information, are generally of interest (Baltacı, 2019, p.373). According to purposeful sampling, the series selected for this study was *Good Omens*. Within

the scope of content analysis, the intertextuality techniques used in the six episodes of the first season of *Good Omens* were identified, and the findings were discussed under the relevant headings. In the findings section, the identified intertextuality methods were explained in detail with various examples. Coding was used in the content analysis conducted for the research, and various codings were examined under category headings.

3. Findings and Comments of the Research

3.1. The Television Series, *Good Omens*, in Terms of Common Unity

In line with the concept of intertextuality, which Genette defines as a text formally containing other texts, two basic types of intertextual relations have been determined. Intertextuality includes quotation, plagiarism, and allusion. Genette divides intertextuality into three large categories: implicit or explicit; covert or overt; hidden or open (Mirenayat & Soofastaei, 2015, p.534). In the first season of *Good Omens*, there are many intertextual elements, especially based on the common unity relationship. In the storyline of the series, methods such as quotation, reference, and allusion are frequently used, and examples of these have been identified. In this study, the content of the series and the texts used have been analysed in detail based on Genette's common unity and derivative relationships.

3.1.1. Quotation and Reference

Intertextual relationship is a concept embodied by quotations and references. Quotation is the conscious and intentional inclusion of another text into a text (Kristeva, 1980, p.65). When quoting, the main purpose is to explain an idea or to present evidence about that idea. On the other hand, reference is a method used by referring to or evoking other texts, unlike quotation (Önal, 2007, p.109). Quotation is the transfer of a section of another author's work by an author as is, indicating the source (Gökalp, 2007, p.17). In *Good Omens* series, intertextual relationships are revealed through quotes and references that reflect the richness of the series' cultural, literary and religious background. The novel of the same name, written by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, interacts with different texts and these quotes and references allow the audience to understand intertextuality and produce a deeper meaning through these relationships.

For example, in *Good Omens* series references to religious texts are quite intense. The series addresses figures such as the apocalypse, angels and the devil by making references to belief systems such as Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism. The theme of apocalypse is the main idea of the series, and many quotes are made about the book of *Apocalypse* (Revelation) in the Bible. For example, while the series explains that the world should end when the day of judgment comes, expressions such as "In the time of judgment, all things will come to an end, and all beings will be destroyed" and "and the world will be destroyed by fire..." are taken from descriptions of the end times and the apocalypse in the Book of Revelation (Bible Revelation, 2024). Aziraphale and Crowley's discussions about the apocalypse address the main theme of this religious text. Such quotes are directly related to the references made about the apocalypse

and the last judgment, which are the main themes of the series. Terms in the series, such as "Seven Tribulations" and "Apocalypse Arc", are derived from biblical apocalyptic imagery.

In the series, expressions such as "The Last Judgement", "The Day of Judgment" and "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" from the Bible are constantly quoted in relation to the Day of Judgment and the coming of the Apocalypse. For example, lines such as "Everyone's sins will be revealed", "But the Lord reigns forever and ever; he has established his throne for judgment" are examples of these quotes (Bible Revelation, 2024). "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" are used here both as a quote and as a humorous transformation because the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" in mind are not 4 people riding motorcycles. In this respect, the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" are transformed into motorcycle-riding troublemakers by a humorous transformation.

Aziraphale's words from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, "All the world's a stage..." are a direct quote from Shakespeare (Antoloji, 2024). The series displays its absurd humor by quoting Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. For example, it uses lines like "The universe is so big and complicated. I don't understand it," which evoke the meaninglessness and chaos of the universe in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Adams, 2023). Themes of doom and the devil are also articulated through quotations from the horror film *The Omen* (1976), directed by Richard Donner. The main character of the movie, Damien, is placed in the series as a direct quote about the children of the devil and the fear of the apocalypse. Additionally, the phrase 'You know me, I wouldn't do that to you' constitutes a direct reference to *The Godfather* (Coppola, 1972).

Table 1: Quotations in Good Omens TV Series

TEXT NAME AND TYPE	THE SITUATION, OBJECT OR SIGN CITED	INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP TYPE
Apocalypse / Situation	Main text of the story	Quotation
The book of Apocalypse (Revelation) in the Bible /Story	Use of objects	Quotation
Angel and devil / Story	Use of object in religion	Quotation
Bible	Use of sentences	Quotation
Seven tribulations and apocalypse arc	Use of sign	Quotation
"The Last Judgement" & "The Day of Judgement"	Use of object	Quotation
The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse	Use of object	Quotation
William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet of sentences	Use of sentences	Quotation
Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy	Use of sentences	Quotation
The Omen	Use of character	Quotation

The Godfather	Use of sentences	Quotation
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3.1.2. Allusion

Allusion, which falls within the scope of intertextuality, requires the presentation of another text along with the text referred to and the use of a certain allusion to convey the situation (Zengin, 2016, p.300). Allusion can sometimes be confused with quotation. However, it is emphasized that allusion is not a direct reference to a specific word like quotation but rather is related to the emergence of a new connotation in the depths of meaning (Mirenayat & Soofastaei, 2015, p. 534). In allusion, the aim is to emphasize another text through a few recognized words.

Crowley's distinctive style draws inspiration from the Rolling Stones' *Sympathy for the Devil* (1968), a song that is frequently alluded to in the narrative. This song is a piece that is identified with cultural images of the devil and thus forms the basis of Crowley's relationship with the devil figure. Crowley's devil character contains both an inner rebellion and a story of fall, similar to the devil in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Crowley's expressions such as "At first an angel, then a devil" are a direct allusion to Milton's depiction of the devil as "the angel who forsook what was good and fell into hell" (Poets, 2024). The humorous dialogues between the characters in Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* are found as allusions in the dialogues between Crowley and Aziraphale (1884). In particular, Aziraphale's very serious but Crowley's more relaxed attitude parallels the playful tension between the characters in Twain's work. The constant playing of Queen (1970) songs in Crowley's car both increases the humorous elements of the series and reinforces the cultural unification of the music.

Allusions to popular television series such as *The X-Files* are also evident in *Good Omens*. *The X-Files* is an American science fiction series created by Chris Carter, which originally aired from 1993 to 2018. Especially in the scenes related to paranormal events, the approach of Crowley and Aziraphale is similar to that of *The X-Files*. It alludes to the opposing characters of Mulder and Scully. This represents a humorous and absurd approach to the supernatural. Also, the dialogues between Crowley and Aziraphale frequently contain linguistic games and allusions. For example, Crowley's statements such as "I'll leave it to you" or "It's so much fun to watch things go wrong" are references to cultural stereotypes.

The series features a narrator who constantly takes the viewer on an intertextual journey. By relating the series' events to other texts, the narrator invites the viewer to consider both the series and its wider cultural references. The narrator's metatextual comments, such as "The ones who figured this out might be a lot smarter" prompt the viewer to make connections to other works.

Table 2: Allusion in Good Omens TV Series

TEXT NAME AND TYPE	THE SITUATION, OBJECT OR SIGN CITED	INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP TYPE
The Rolling Stones' Sympathy for	Use of songs and stylist	Allusion
The Queen	Use of songs	Allusion
Twain's Huckleberry Finn	Use of books theme	Allusion
The X-Flies	Use of dramas theme	Allusion

3.2. The Television Series, *Good Omens*, in Terms of Derivative Relations

3.2.1. Reflection

Genette delineates the scope of hypertextual analysis by emphasizing instances where the connection between the primary text and the secondary (or derived) text is explicit and free from interpretative ambiguity (1997, p.2). Onomatopoeia can be defined as the explicit copying of the words or style of a text (Kılınçarslan, 2016, p.63). This situation occurs when the original structure of the text is disrupted and funny or sarcastic elements are added to it (as cited in Işıksalan, 2007, p.430-431). Intertextuality can be expressed in its most general definition as the reflection of a text in another text. As a result of this reflection, there is a transfer of meaning from the previous text to the new text, the new text receives support from the previous text, or the next text can divert the message of the previous text from its medium (Özsaray, 2021, p.81). It means onomatopoeia. The strongest onomatopoeia manifests itself in a form that makes the closest associations to the text even after changing the meaning, but differs in meaning from the original (Zengin, 2016, p.322). In this respect, this has been used frequently in the series.

In the series, God is a completely unseen figure. God's will becomes apparent in a plan that aims to bring about the end of the world, but God's actions remain indirect and distant. This parallels the depiction of God in religious texts as sometimes non-interfering and sometimes unseen. However, such a "passive" position of God in the series is a reflection of God's distant stance towards humans. The friendship between the angel Aziraphale and the devil Crowley is an example of reflection. Although both are classically "good" and "bad" figures, they are humanized in themselves. Although Aziraphale seems like a pure angel as a messenger of God, he enjoys life in the world and exhibits a human-like character. Crowley, as the devil, represents evil and destruction, but in fact he has a complex and deep character very similar to humanity. This friendship is a reflection on how blurred the boundaries between "good" and "evil" are, beyond the classic religious conflict.

The idea of the apocalypse is present in Christianity as the final judgment of God, but in the first episode of the series, the apocalypse breaks out as a result of a series of misunderstandings and confusions against God's will. The apocalypse is not portrayed as a "definite" and "divine" event that we are familiar with in religious narratives, but rather as a comical and disorderly process. This situation can be shown as an example of both reflection and imitation.

In certain scenes of the series, the frenzy of consumption in the world and the focus on the interests of consumer society can also be seen as a cultural reflection. For example, the lifestyle of watching television and rapidly consuming food and other products serves as a critique of these habits among modern people. Specifically, the irregular flow of time and people's uncertainty about the passage of time while awaiting the apocalypse reflect how quickly time appears to pass in the modern world. The significance of time becomes even more apparent as the apocalypse draws nearer.

Table 3: Reflection in *Good Omens* TV Series

TEXT NAME AND TYPE	THE SITUATION, OBJECT OR SIGN CITED	INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP TYPE
God	Use as invisible figure	Reflection
The friendship between the angel Aziraphale and the devil Crowley	Good and bad figures	Reflection
Aziraphale and Crowley	To live like humans lives	Reflection
Aziraphale and Crowley's characters	How blurred the boundaries between "good" and "evil"	Reflection
The idea of the apocalypse	As a comical and disorderly process	Reflection
Watching Tv & eating food & wasting time	How quickly time should pass in the modern world	Reflection
The approach of the apocalypse	The importance of time	Reflection

3.3.2.2. Pastiche

Pastiche refers to an artist creating a new work by drawing upon an existing one. In this process, the resulting work not only carries traces of the original but also acquires a new layer of meaning (Aktulum, 1999, p. 133). Unlike reflection, pastiche involves a more satirical transformation and often focuses on imitating the style of a previous text. In this context, the author produces a new text by mimicking an established style. However, imitation is not limited to style alone; original content may also be adapted as a part of intertextual practice (Moran, 1991, p.203).

Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* series, comprising 41 books, is well known for its unique blend of fantasy, absurdist humour, and social commentary. *Good Omens* adopts a similar tone, particularly through its character dynamics and comedic narrative. The friendship between Aziraphale and Crowley reflects the relationship between Twoflower and the Luggage in *Discworld*. Although both duos differ in form, their bonds are rooted in companionship, and neither character is confined strictly to the roles of "good" or "evil". This serves as a parody of moral dualism, much like in Pratchett's own work. The characters' mutual confusion and humorous attempts to understand one another further mirror Pratchett's narrative style. Just as *Discworld* reimagines fantasy tropes with satire, *Good Omens* treats the apocalyptic theme in

an absurd and comedic manner. Rather than depicting the end of the world with solemnity, it unfolds through a sequence of misunderstandings and farcical scenarios—an unmistakable tribute to Pratchett's comic vision.

The series contains strong elements of the film noir genre and classic Hollywood cinema. Crowley's portrayal as a rebellious, rock star-like figure mirrors the archetypal film noir character—cool, distant, and emotionally detached. His personality reflects the typical pessimism and detachment found in noir protagonists. The visual aesthetics of the series also borrow from film noir, with the use of low-key lighting and sharp contrasts in certain scenes. Furthermore, Crowley's elegant style, characterised by his frequent use of black clothing, reinforces the noir atmosphere and adds depth to his mysterious persona.

Classic apocalyptic films often feature the archetype of the “mad scientist.” In *Good Omens*, the group of individuals attempting to prepare for the Apocalypse and their comically confused behaviour serves as an imitation of this cliché. In particular, the difficulties faced by the character Anathema Device as she tries to decipher “fate's plan,” along with her frequent miscalculations that lack any real scientific basis, parody the tropes commonly found in apocalyptic cinema.

The outdated technological devices Anathema uses and their inevitable failures refer to the motif of malfunctioning technology often seen in science fiction. Specifically, the misuse of obsolete technologies in a modern setting is a direct imitation of classic science fiction conventions. For example, in a related study, a pastiche within the fictional cartoon featured in many episodes of *The Simpsons* is identified as a parody of *Tom and Jerry*, one of the most iconic duos in animation history. Created by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, *Tom and Jerry* has been beloved by children worldwide since 1940. *The Simpsons* frequently references this classic through the fictional cartoon *Itchy and Scratchy*, which parodies the original by mimicking its plot and narrative features with a darker, more violent twist. *Itchy and Scratchy*, often described as “the brutal Tom and Jerry,” critiques the overt violence in children's programmes that is often masked by an innocent presentation (Gürel & Alem, 2010, p.341).

Doctor Who is a British television series that has been airing since 1963, renowned for its themes of time travel and the exploration of parallel universes. Similarly, *Good Omens* presents a narrative structure in which time begins to behave irregularly, and characters from different historical periods interact with one another. The experience of time loss in *Good Omens* parallels the concept of time travel depicted in *Doctor Who*. The ever-shifting nature of time and the blending of past and future events in the series can be seen as an imitation of *Doctor Who*'s narrative style.

The series adopts a distinct style reminiscent of classic Hollywood action films. Numerous scenes reference the dramatic tropes of traditional action narratives, including rapid cuts and iconic slow-motion effects. The apocalyptic scenes, in particular, can be interpreted as a parody of the action genre, where otherwise ordinary events are portrayed as major threats. The heroic actions typically seen in classic action films are presented here in a humorous and

exaggerated manner. Crowley and Aziraphale's "rescue missions" are often chaotic and misguided, serving as a playful imitation of action film protagonists.

The series' fantasy elements are interwoven with references to classic fantasy literature and cinema, a genre often associated with epic heroes and imaginary worlds. The manipulation of time and the convergence of characters from various historical periods represent classic motifs of science fiction. In *Good Omens*, the apocalypse is caricatured within this framework. For instance, the interaction between characters from different eras exemplifies the show's imitation of science fiction conventions.

Furthermore, the characters themselves are caricatured versions of mythological figures and religious archetypes. Aziraphale, for example, occasionally acts with human emotions rather than strictly following divine commands. This portrayal is reminiscent of mythological gods or demigods who often display human characteristics. His fondness for wine and books, despite being an angel, illustrates this imitation.

The parodic elements in *Good Omens* span a broad cultural spectrum, blending fantasy, science fiction, and pop culture into an entertaining; yet thought-provoking narrative. Each parody not only mocks a particular genre or text but also deconstructs and reinterprets its cultural and social codes in a humorous way. The series' use of emulation includes satirical reworkings of both literary and cinematic traditions, as well as references to popular culture. This approach enhances the show's comedic tone while simultaneously offering viewers rich cultural and literary commentary.

Table 4: Pastiche in *Good Omens* TV Series

TEXT NAME AND TYPE	THE SITUATION, OBJECT OR SIGN CITED	INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP TYPE
The Discworld series	Character dynamics and humorous tone	Pastiche
Twoflower and Luggage	Aziraphale and Crowley's friendship like characters	Pastiche
Aziraphale and Crowley	Parody of the themes of good and evil	Pastiche
Good Omens	Like noir genre and old Hollywood films	Pastiche
Crowley	Imitation of classic film noir characters	Pastiche
Anathema Device	Refer to apocalyptic cinema clichés	Pastiche
Old technological devices used by Anathema and their failures	An imitation of classic science fiction texts	Pastiche

The Doctor Who	The loss of time in the Doctor Who parallels the theme of time travel	Pastiche
Good Omens of many scenes	Classic Hollywood action films	Pastiche
Crowley and Aziraphale's rescue missions	Imitation of action film characters	Pastiche
The shifting of time and the merging of characters from different time periods	The interaction of past and future characters	Pastiche
Aziraphale's acts	Like humans emotions	Pastiche

3.2.3. Sarcastic (Ridiculous) Transformation

Sarcastic transformation aims to render a serious work humorous without necessarily altering its core content. This method, which stems from intertextual techniques such as pastiche and onomatopoeia, maintains the original structure and themes of a serious text while reinterpreting it through a comedic lens (Korkmaz, 2017, p.85). The primary goal of this technique is to entertain the audience. By emphasising the simplistic, ordinary, or even absurd aspects of a serious narrative, sarcastic transformation often relies on narrative strategies such as incompatibility, disjunction, and contradiction (Üner, 2010, p.199).

In *Good Omens*, intertextuality is largely realised through techniques of comic transformation and pastiche. For instance, the Biblical account of the opening of the seven seals and the apocalyptic events that follow is reimagined in the series through the ironic story of an Antichrist child who ends up in the wrong family due to a mix-up. This narrative playfully questions how divine plans might be shaped—or derailed—by human error.

In the first season of *Good Omens*, the traditionally serious event of the apocalypse is handled with humour, drawing clear influence from Douglas Adams' use of black comedy and irony. The nonchalant and often baffled reactions of the characters to the looming apocalypse reflect a deliberate absurdity. The theme of the apocalypse is a recurring motif in both cinema and literature; however, *Good Omens* parodies and emulates the conventions of classic apocalyptic films, which typically portray the end of the world in a highly dramatic and solemn manner. In contrast, *Good Omens* treats the apocalypse as a farcical series of missteps—such as the Antichrist being mistakenly placed in the wrong household or plans being constantly revised—turning the narrative into a chaotic comedy.

Aziraphale, an angel representing order and goodness, and Crowley, a demon representing chaos and evil, are expected to be eternal enemies. However, both characters have grown too fond of the human world and are more interested in earthly pleasures than fulfilling their divine duties. Their unlikely friendship subverts traditional binary oppositions of good and evil, providing a rich source of humour, especially in scenes where they bicker over trivial matters such as food and fashion preferences.

In episode four of the first season, there is a humorous reference to Noah's Ark in which it is suggested that a unicorn escaped during the flood. As an absurd comedy, *Good Omens* frequently utilises comic transformation to reinterpret serious religious stories in a light-hearted manner.

Crowley, as a demon, is indeed required to carry out evil deeds; however, these actions are often trivial and lack genuine malevolence. For instance, his contribution to the design of a motorway intended to cause London's infamous traffic congestion is presented as an act of "evil." These so-called "minor evils" appear comical precisely because they subvert audience expectations of what constitutes true wickedness. References to Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1321) within *Good Omens* are frequently treated through comic transformation—that is, through ironic or humorous reinterpretation. The grave and hierarchical universe of Dante's epic is softened and reimagined through absurdity and wit. While Dante's *Inferno* depicts Hell with detailed, terrifying clarity, *Good Omens* portrays it as a gloomy, yet absurdly chaotic and inefficient bureaucracy. This approach offers a humorous critique of Dante's meticulously ordered and fearsome depiction. Furthermore, whereas Dante presents angels and demons as strictly divided by moral absolutism, *Good Omens* challenges this dichotomy. The enduring friendship between Aziraphale and Crowley, despite their supposed ideological opposition, exemplifies a comic transformation of the rigid moral framework found in *The Divine Comedy*. In the series, the apocalypse is not a solemn, epic reckoning but a chaotic, farcical sequence of human errors and misunderstandings—again subverting traditional epic themes.

The prioritisation of mundane pleasures by celestial beings such as Aziraphale and Crowley be it enjoying theatre or collecting rare cookbooks—serves as another example of comic transformation. This humanisation of divine and infernal characters injects humour into the narrative by juxtaposing their cosmic responsibilities with trivial, earthly interests. In the first episode of the series, Aziraphale resists the impending apocalypse not for any higher purpose, but it would deprive him of his favourite music and food. Traditionally, the conflict between good and evil is depicted through stark moral binaries. However, the series foregrounds the complexity of its characters, revealing their moral ambiguity. Aziraphale lies when necessary, while Crowley tries to prevent the apocalypse out of genuine affection for the Earth—parodying the trope of strictly defined good versus evil.

The success of *Good Omens* lies in its sustained use of comic transformation not only in plot development, but also in characterisation, visual aesthetics, and dialogue. Through this technique, the series delivers a fantastical yet intellectually rich narrative, blending satire with substance in a way that makes its themes more engaging and memorable.

Table 5: Sarcastic Transformation in *Good Omens* TV Series

TEXT NAME AND TYPE	THE SITUATION, OBJECT OR SIGN CITED	INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP TYPE
The opening of the seven seals in the Bible and end of the worlds story	How the divine plan is shaped by human errors	Sarcastic Transformation

The apocalypse	Absurd and chaotic situations	Sarcastic Transformation
Aziraphale and Crowley	Good and evil's friendship	Sarcastic Transformation
Aziraphale and Crowley's daily styles	Ordinary issues in the drama	Sarcastic Transformation
Noah's Flood	Transformation of the story	Sarcastic Transformation
Crowley's minnor evils	The audience's expectations of evil	Sarcastic Transformation
Dante's Divine Comedy	Transformed into a different narrative	Sarcastic Transformation
The fate of the Earth	Comic transformation	Sarcastic Transformation
In Good Omens humanization of the seriousness and responsibilitys	Absurdity	Sarcastic Transformation
Aziraphale's lies	Parodies clichés	Sarcastic Transformation

4. Discuss

The series has been examined through the lens of intertextuality and the rewriting method, which suggest that all works inevitably bear traces of others, and therefore, no work is completely independent. *Good Omens* was analysed based on Genette's concepts of commonality and derivative relations, with several examples provided in the article to demonstrate these ideas. The intertextual relationships present in the series are made through techniques such as quotation, reference, and allusion, which fall under the concept of commonality. These methods are clearly identified and explained within the article.

Content analysis revealed various coding categories, such as quotation, sarcastic transformation, reflection, and pastiche. These codes were systematically presented in tables, providing a clear framework for examining the intertextual strategies employed in the series. The analysis indicated that *Good Omens* incorporates intertextual elements from a variety of books, films, and television series, which serve to enrich the story. Comic transformation and pastiche further highlight character development, while religious motifs and narratives are employed to reinforce the story's central themes. These religious elements are both reinterpreted and preserved, serving as crucial reference points within the narrative.

The intertextual references, combined with the series' humorous tone and philosophical subtext, offer an experience that is both entertaining and thought-provoking. The satirical treatment of sacred texts coexists with popular culture references—such as the recurrent use of Queen's songs and modern portrayals of the apocalypse—making the work more relatable to the audience. Moreover, the questioning of good and evil, turning traditional moral dichotomies on their head, challenges conventional moral frameworks. Thus, *Good Omens* can be seen as a postmodern work that blurs the boundaries between high and popular culture. The intertextual

structure invites viewers to engage with the narrative in a more interactive manner, by deciphering its numerous references.

While this study highlights the rich intertextual fabric of *Good Omens* series, it also opens several pathways for future research. One promising direction would be to conduct more detailed character analyses, particularly focusing on the opposing structures of Aziraphale and Crowley. These studies could explore how their identities are constructed and negotiated within ethical, religious, and socio-cultural contexts. Furthermore, visual analysis methodologies could be employed to investigate how cinematographic elements—such as colour schemes, musical choices, and mise-en-scène—integrate with the series' intertextual narrative strategies.

Future research could explore contrasting characters like Aziraphale and Crowley in an intertextual context, providing further insight into how contrasts are employed in postmodern storytelling. In addition, future research could examine the socio-cultural implications of the series' religious references, particularly in relation to themes such as secularization, the rewriting of mythology, and the parody of sacred concepts. These investigations could provide insight into how such narratives contribute to transformations in societal perceptions and value systems. Comparative reception studies could also be conducted to explore how audiences in different geographical and cultural contexts interpret the intertextual references embedded in the series. Such studies would contribute significantly to both media studies and cultural studies by broadening our understanding of how global audiences engage with intertextual and postmodern storytelling.

5. Conclusion

Good Omens emerges as a compelling case study in the exploration of intertextuality within contemporary television narratives. Its adaptation for the screen not only preserves intertextual layers but expands upon them visually and narratively, creating a product that is intellectually stimulating as well as entertaining. The series employs a wide range of intertextual strategies, including parody, pastiche, quotation, and comic transformation, to establish interconnections with works such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Biblical scripture, classical mythology, and modern science fiction. However, rather than merely referencing these texts, *Good Omens* reinterprets them through irony and subversion, offering a fresh perspective that both critiques and pays homage to its sources. This method allows the series to deconstruct dominant narratives surrounding morality, divinity, and the apocalypse while embedding its critique within humor and satire.

The findings of this research demonstrate that *Good Omens* challenges the boundaries between high and low culture by fusing the sacred with the secular and the serious with the absurd. Characters like Aziraphale and Crowley exemplify this hybridity; they are portrayed as divine beings yet exhibit profoundly human traits and dilemmas, reflecting the moral ambiguities of the contemporary world. Their characterization, along with the series' broader narrative structure, invites viewers to question rigid binaries such as good and evil, divine and profane, or tradition and modernity

Importantly, the intertextual framework of *Good Omens* is not a superficial stylistic device but a fundamental narrative mechanism. It allows the series to engage viewers in a deeper conversation about the human condition, the fragility of belief systems, and the social constructions of morality and fate. In doing so, it situates itself firmly within the domain of postmodern storytelling—self-reflexive, layered, and critical.

Therefore, *Good Omens* should not be understood solely as a piece of popular entertainment. Rather, it constitutes a nuanced cultural artifact that interrogates contemporary philosophical and ethical dynamics through the lens of intertextuality. Its success lies in its ability to balance narrative complexity with accessibility, thereby establishing itself as a meaningful subject of scholarly inquiry in fields such as media studies, literature, religion, and cultural criticism. Future research could further explore how such hybrid narratives affect audience perceptions, engage with socio-political discourses, and contribute to the evolving landscape of transmedia storytelling.

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EXPANDED SUMMARY

This article offers a comprehensive analysis of the television series *Good Omens* through the lens of intertextuality and the concept of rewriting. Drawing on Gérard Genette's classifications, the study asserts that no literary or visual work exists in complete isolation, and that *Good Omens* is a prime example of a postmodern text that is deeply rooted in a web of literary, religious, cinematic, and pop-cultural references. Through methods such as quotation, parody, pastiche, and comic transformation, the series constructs a layered and humorous narrative that both entertains and challenges traditional storytelling conventions.

Based on the novel by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, the series expands upon the book's intertextual richness through visual and narrative techniques. It engages with sacred texts, classic literature, and genre conventions, particularly those of fantasy, science fiction, and apocalyptic cinema. By parodying these traditions, *Good Omens* creates an absurd yet reflective take on themes such as the apocalypse, good and evil, fate, and free will. For instance, the depiction of the apocalypse—traditionally shown as a grave, world-ending catastrophe—is transformed into a chaotic comedy of errors, where the Antichrist is accidentally misplaced and divine beings are more concerned with earthly pleasures than their cosmic duties.

One of the key intertextual strategies used in the series is comic transformation. Serious religious elements such as the opening of the seven seals or the arrival of the Antichrist are

reinterpreted through irony, emphasizing human flaws and bureaucratic miscommunication rather than divine order. Similarly, *Good Omens* satirizes Dante's *Divine Comedy* by portraying hell not as a horrifying place of eternal punishment, but as an inefficient and absurd bureaucracy. The strict moral divisions between good and evil in classical texts are replaced with complex, morally ambiguous characters like Aziraphale and Crowley, whose friendship defies the expected antagonism between angel and demon.

The series also engages in parody and pastiche of cinematic genres. Crowley's persona, for instance, resembles the anti-hero archetype from film noir, while various action scenes parody Hollywood conventions through exaggerated slow-motion sequences and dramatic effects. References to time travel, outdated technology, and the "mad scientist" figure reflect common tropes from science fiction, further broadening the intertextual scope of the series. The study identifies and categorizes these intertextual elements using content analysis, organizing them under headings such as quotation, parody, comic transformation, and pastiche. These categories are supported with numerous examples from the series, which illustrate how *Good Omens* draws upon and reinterprets a wide range of cultural and literary sources. The result is a multi-layered narrative that operates simultaneously as a work of entertainment and as a critical commentary on cultural and philosophical issues.

In addition to religious and literary intertexts, the series incorporates popular culture references—such as the frequent use of Queen songs or satirical depictions of modern society—which make the show more accessible while adding further layers of meaning. By humanizing divine characters and presenting serious themes with irony, the series questions traditional notions of morality and narrative structure. Ultimately, the article concludes that *Good Omens* should not be viewed merely as a piece of entertainment, but as a culturally and philosophically rich text. Its intertextual approach invites viewers to decode references, reflect on moral ambiguity, and appreciate the fusion of high and popular culture. Through its clever use of rewriting and comic reinterpretation, *Good Omens* becomes a unique example of postmodern storytelling—humorous, thought-provoking, and richly layered.