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QUR'ANIC INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE RISALE-I NUR: A KRISTEVAN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Risale-i Nur by Said Nursi, examining Qur'anic intertextuality through a library research approach using Julia Kristeva's intertextual theory as the main analytical tool. The research addresses a gap in previous studies, which have predominantly explored theological, Sufi, or moral aspects of the text, but rarely investigated how its intertextual structure shapes meaning and engages readers dialogically. The novelty of this study lies in applying Kristeva's distinction between the symbolic and semiotic dimensions to analyze how Nursi transforms Qur'anic discourse, integrates direct quotations, conceptual paraphrases, and thematic reworkings, and adapts classical ideas to modern socio-spiritual challenges. The expected outcomes include a detailed mapping of intertextual patterns, insights into Nursi's methods of argumentation and Qur'anic diction, and an understanding of how Risale-i Nur bridges revealed scripture with contemporary intellectual and spiritual needs. By revealing the dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation, this study contributes to modern Qur'anic studies and enriches intertextual discourse within Islamic scholarship, offering a model for engaging Qur'anic texts in a way that resonates with today's Muslim society.

Keywords: Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, Kristevan Intertextuality, Qur'anic Intertextuality, Risale-i Nur.

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of intertextuality (Nyoman Kutha Ratna, 2015) has become a key approach in modern textual studies, especially when religious texts intersect with different forms of contemporary discourse. In Islamic studies, intertextuality provides an opportunity to understand how a work interprets, adapts, and reactivates the Qur'anic message amid social, political, and intellectual shifts (Zubaidi et al., 2024). One notable work that engages deeply with the Qur'an is the Risale-i Nur, a literary and spiritual tafsir collection written by Bediüzzaman Said Nursi in the early 20th century (Nursi, 2021). In response to crises of faith, intellectual colonialism, secular modernity, and the decline of Islamic scholarly traditions in Ottoman Anatolia and early Republican Turkey, the Risale-i Nur aims to renew Qur'anic awareness in a modern setting. This text not only offers interpretations of Qur'anic verses but also reorganizes Qur'anic meaning through philosophical arguments, persuasive rhetoric, and unique spiritual reflection.

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Analyzing the Risale-i Nur through Julia Kristeva's intertextual approach is important because her theory emphasizes that every text is a mosaic of quotations, transformations, and the absorption of elements from previous texts. (Askar & Aziz, 2024) Within this framework, the relationship between the Qur'an and the Risale-i Nur is not merely a traditional commentary, but a dialogical process involving transformations of meaning, shifts in subject positions, and the creation of new semantic spaces. Kristeva distinguishes the symbolic dimension, related to structure, grammar, and authority from the semiotic dimension, related to the intensity of meaning, spiritual experience, and the dynamics of subjectivity, which provides a powerful analytical tool to understand how the Risale-i Nur manages both the literal and spiritual aspects of Qur'anic discourse. The study of Qur'anic intertextuality is increasingly urgent amid global hermeneutic challenges, the flow of digital information, and the plurality of religious discourses, as the transformation of modern religious texts can either reinforce Qur'anic values or result in deviations from their original meaning.

In this context, the Risale-i Nur provides a unique example of how a Qur'anic text can be revitalized without compromising its theological integrity. Nursi offers an interpretation that is not only expository but also performative and dialogical, engaging the reader in experiencing the Qur'an's meaning through rational argumentation, metaphysical illustrations, and moral guidance. This approach serves as a vital model for revitalizing the Qur'anic message for modern generations facing new epistemological challenges. Using Kristeva's intertextual framework, this study demonstrates how the Risale-i Nur connects the revealed text with the intellectual and spiritual needs of contemporary society. The study also holds methodological significance, as previous research has mainly focused on theological, Sufi, or moral aspects, with little attention to how the Risale-i Nur's intertextual structure shapes meaning. Examining these patterns provides insight into Nursi's argumentation, Qur'anic diction, theological adaptations, and nuanced spiritual expressions, enriching modern Qur'anic studies and advancing intertextual discourse in Islamic studies to better respond to contemporary Muslim cultural dynamics.

Although the Risale-i Nur has been widely studied from theological, Sufi, and moral perspectives, research that specifically examines its intertextual structure remains very limited. Most studies focus on moral content or theological exposition without exploring how Nursi employs intertextual patterns to construct meaning, connect Qur'anic texts with contemporary socio-spiritual contexts, and create a dialogical experience for readers. Moreover, the Kristevan approach, which emphasizes the dynamic relationship between the symbolic and semiotic dimensions of a text, has rarely been applied to the Risale-i Nur, leaving a gap in understanding how Qur'anic quotations and meaning transformations shape modern readers' intellectual and spiritual experiences. This study fills that gap by systematically exploring Qur'anic intertextuality in the Risale-i Nur through Kristeva's lens, linking textual tradition with contemporary epistemological challenges and the spiritual needs of modern Muslim society.

Thus, analyzing Qur'anic intertextuality in the Risale-i Nur through Kristeva's perspective is not only academic but also has practical and spiritual relevance in understanding how the Qur'anic message can be creatively and meaningfully reinterpreted amidst the challenges of the modern era.

Based on the explanation above, the following problem formulation is formulated:

1. How can Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality be used as a theoretical framework to analyze the relationship between the Qur'an and the Risale-i Nur?
2. What forms of Qur'anic intertextuality are present in the Risale-i Nur?

Referring to the research questions above, this study aims to:

1. Describe how Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality can be employed as a theoretical framework for analyzing the relationship between the Qur'anic text and the Risale-i Nur.
2. Elucidate the various forms of Qur'anic intertextuality manifested within the Risale-i Nur.

2. METHODS

a) Research Methodology

This study is a library research project, (Jamaluddin et al., 2025) conducted by collecting data and information from relevant written sources such as books, journals, and other documents related to the research topic. The main objective of this method is to develop a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the subject through an in-depth review and analysis of existing literature.

b) Theoretical Framework

Julia Kristeva's Theory of Intertextuality

1) The concepts of "quotational mosaic" and "text absorption-transformation."

Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality emerged as a response to structuralism, (Okke K. S. Zaimar, 2008) which viewed texts as closed and autonomous entities. Kristeva rejected this perspective, emphasizing that every text is always situated within a network of relationships with prior texts, so meaning arises through the interactions, tensions, and transformations among various interconnected discourses. Reading a text therefore involves interpreting the echoes, shadows, and traces of other texts embedded within it. Kristeva introduced the metaphor of a "mosaic of quotations" (Nyoman Kutha Ratna, 2010) to highlight that a text is composed of fragments from earlier discourses, transformed through quotations, allusions, narrative patterns, style, vocabulary, or argument structures. She also explained the concept of "absorption–transformation," in which a text simultaneously absorbs elements from other texts and transforms them into new meanings, making intertextuality a creative process. Influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, (Minakshi, 2025) Kristeva views each text as a dialogical space where diverse voices, discourses, and ideas interact, influence, and shape one another. A text is not a unified structure but a meeting point for authorial intentions, cultural traditions, reader interpretations, and historical contexts, making meaning inherently plural and dynamic.

Thus, for Kristeva, intertextuality is not merely a stylistic device but a fundamental condition of textual existence. The concepts of the mosaic of quotations, absorption–transformation, and dialogical space demonstrate that meaning cannot be separated from relationships between texts, enriching literary and linguistic analysis as well as other humanities fields, including philosophy, religious studies, and cultural criticism.

2) Two dimensions of intertextuality: Horizontal (author–reader) and Vertical (text–other texts)

In Kristeva's intertextual theory (Julia Kristeva, 1986), the horizontal dimension focuses on the dynamic interaction between writer and reader, where meaning emerges as readers interpret the text through their own experiences and cultural backgrounds. The vertical dimension emphasizes a text's relationship with prior texts, depicting it as a "mosaic of quotations" that absorbs and transforms earlier discourses through citations, allusions, stylistic echoes, or argumentative patterns. Together, these dimensions illustrate that texts are neither entirely

original nor fixed in meaning but exist within an ongoing dialogue across readers and historical discourses.

c) The primary source of this research is the Risale-i Nur

The Risale-i Nur is a thematic-spiritual Qur'anic exegesis by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (Nursi, 2021), addressing faith, theology, and the meaning of creation through rational argumentation, Sufi reflection, and cosmological analogies. Written during the repressive early modern Turkish context, it spans treatises such as *Sözler*, *Mektubat*, *Lem'alar*, and *Şualar*, blending Qur'anic rhetoric, Sufi symbolism, dialogue, and parables to strengthen rational faith and engage with modern science. In this study, excerpts are selected for their relevance to Qur'anic intertextuality, focusing on direct quotations, conceptual paraphrases, and thematic reworkings across various literary forms. Units of analysis include explicit citations, reinterpretations, thematic transformations, and recurring narrative or stylistic patterns, examined through Kristeva's framework to explore both symbolic (structure, authority) and semiotic (spiritual resonance, moral intensity, subjective experience) dimensions of meaning.

d) Scope Limitation

This research is limited to textual materials and does not involve empirical methods such as interviews or surveys with readers. It focuses solely on the Risale-i Nur and does not analyze other works by Nursi or comparative Qur'anic commentaries. The study also concentrates on the theoretical framework of Kristevan intertextuality, which may not capture all interpretive or socio-historical dimensions of Nursi's work. Therefore, conclusions are primarily analytical and interpretive rather than empirical or quantitative.

e) Analysis Framework

In intertextual analysis, a systematic framework is required to examine how a text absorbs, echoes, or transforms other texts, beginning with identifying the forms of intertextuality, such as direct quotation, paraphrase, allusion, symbolism, and renarration, which reveal explicit or implicit patterns of textual absorption (Graham Allen, 2011). Once these forms are identified, the next step is analyzing their functions: (Julia Kristeva, 1986) theological functions that reinforce religious legitimacy or doctrinal continuity; rhetorical functions that enhance persuasion, emotional impact, or clarity; and ideological functions that reposition, reinterpret, or critique the source text within new socio-political contexts. Through this functional perspective, intertextuality is understood not merely as a literary technique, but as a deliberate discursive strategy that shapes meaning and guides the conceptual direction of a text.

f) Data Analysis Techniques

This study begins by collecting primary texts, namely Risale-i Nur by Said Nursi, alongside relevant Qur'anic verses, and secondary sources such as academic books and journal articles on Qur'anic intertextuality and Kristeva's theory. Textual excerpts are selected to represent Qur'anic quotations, conceptual paraphrases, thematic reworkings, and narrative patterns.

Data are organized by type of intertextuality and contextualized according to literary, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Using Kristeva's intertextual framework, the vertical dimension examines relationships with prior texts (Qur'an and classical literature), while the horizontal dimension explores dialogue between the text and contemporary readers. Analysis distinguishes symbolic elements (structure, grammar, Qur'anic authority) from semiotic elements (spiritual resonance, moral intensity, subjective experience).

Interpretation identifies intertextual patterns, showing how Nursi revitalizes classical Qur'anic discourse for modern readers. Results are presented thematically or by intertextual type, supported by tables and excerpts, highlighting the interplay between tradition (symbolic) and innovation (semiotic). The study concludes with implications for modern Qur'anic studies and intertextual scholarship in Islam.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Intertextuality of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur

Horizontal Intertextuality of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur

The horizontal intertextuality (Raj, 2015) of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur refers to the way Bediuzzaman Said Nursi reconciles the revealed text with the various social, cultural, and historical discourses prevailing in his time. Within Julia Kristeva's framework, horizontal relationships emphasize that each text never stands alone, but is always in dialogue with other texts circulating within the same discursive space. When Nursi wrote the Risale-i Nur, he lived in the context of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of secular nationalism, the radical reforms of the early Turkish Republic, and the spiritual crisis that gripped Muslim society. Therefore, the Qur'anic verses quoted or explained in Risale-i Nur are always projected into these social conditions, making this work an active dialogue between revelation and the dynamics of the modern era.

Within this horizontal framework, Nursi reads the Qur'an not merely as a theological text with a metaphysical dimension, but as a source of light that must be applied to address contemporary socio-political challenges. He connects the message of monotheism with the challenges of modernity such as positivism, materialism, moral crisis, and political oppression. For example, when he explains the verses about the oneness of God, he places them in direct conversation with dominant Western philosophical ideas of the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as naturalism and determinism:

> *This discussion explains the essence of the ideology of atheistic naturalists, the extent to which their ideology deviates from the scales of reason, and the extent of its evil and falsehood (khurafat).* (Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, 2012b)

Thus, the horizontal relationship between the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur is not merely a citation of verses, but an interaction between revelation and contemporary secular, scientific, philosophical, and ideological texts.

Furthermore, the Risale-i Nur demonstrates a form of horizontal intertextuality through the use of language, metaphors, and arguments that respond to the intellectual developments of his time. Nursi frequently uses modern scientific terminology, such as the laws of causality, atoms, motion, and natural order to explain Qur'anic verses. This shows that the reading of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur does not occur in a vacuum, but is influenced by modern scientific discourse, which is the intellectual language of its society. Therefore, the Risale-i Nur can be read as a meeting place between the text of revelation and modern social-scientific discourse, a dialogue that enriches the meaning of the Qur'an and makes the Qur'an relevant for its time. Thus, the horizontal intertextuality of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur emphasizes that the relationship between the message of revelation and social reality is not passive, but dialogical.

The concept of Horizontal Intertextuality in Said Nursi's Risale-i Nur illustrates how the text extends beyond a purely vertical interpretation of the Qur'an, engaging with the sacred text in parallel with the observable universe, human reason, and experiential life. In this framework, the Qur'an functions as the "Reader of the Book of the Universe," actively interpreting natural phenomena, moral patterns, and intellectual principles. Horizontal intertextuality allows Nursi to demonstrate the Qur'an's universality, showing that divine guidance is not confined to textual interpretation alone but also resonates within the laws of nature, logical reasoning, and the ethical and spiritual experiences of human beings.

Through this technique, Nursi bridges the sacred and the empirical, highlighting correspondences between Qur'anic concepts and natural, social, and cognitive realities. For instance, verses that speak of creation, order, and divine wisdom are not only cited textually but also reflected in the patterns of the cosmos, human intellect, and spiritual experience, thereby creating a multilayered dialogue between scripture and the world. This approach reinforces the idea that the Qur'an is both timeless and dynamic, capable of addressing contemporary moral, intellectual, and scientific questions without losing its spiritual authority. By employing horizontal intertextuality, Nursi enables readers to perceive the integration of divine knowledge with lived reality, cultivating an interpretive practice that is both contemplative and rational, and affirming the Qur'an's relevance for modern life.

Vertical Intertextuality of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur

Vertical intertextuality (Graham Allen, 2011) refers to the relationship between a text and a deeper system of signs, cultural codes, and discursive conventions, not simply a relationship to a specific text. In the context of the Risale-i Nur, Nursi not only interprets Qur'anic verses directly, but also interacts with the layers of meaning that have shaped the tradition of Qur'anic understanding over the centuries, from Qur'anic cosmology, Islamic metaphysical symbolism, the concept of tawhid in kalam, to the aesthetics of rhetoric (*balāghah*). Thus, the Risale-i Nur stands in a vertical relationship with the "language" of the Qur'an in its deepest sense: the value structures, spiritual conventions, and monotheistic mindset that shape Islamic epistemology. This vertical intertextuality allows Nursi to re-present the Qur'an not as a historical text, but as a cosmic system of meaning that underlies reality.

Furthermore, the vertical intertextuality in the Risale-i Nur is evident in how Nursi activates "Islamic cultural codes", such as the concepts of *nur, tawḥīd, rubūbiyyah, ḥikmah*, and *āyāt kauniyyah,* which constitute profound structures of meaning in the Qur'anic tradition. Nursi not only interprets verses, but also activates the entire Qur'anic sign system that shapes the Islamic worldview. Thus, the Risale-i Nur becomes a form of transformation of the Qur'anic language (language structure and system of meaning) into a new parole (the expressions, analogies, and symbols used by Nursi):

> *. . .and His potential contained in the verse above, whether found within humans (microcosm) or in the universe (macrocosm).* (Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, 2012d)

This vertical relationship is also evident in the way Nursi connects the Qur'anic verses to the universe as a second book (*kitāb al-kawn*), a discursive convention in the philosophical and Sufi traditions of interpretation.

Through vertical intertextuality, Risale-i Nur becomes more than a mere commentary that refers to the Qur'an; it revitalizes the profound semantic layers of the Qur'anic cosmos, translating them into a language that resonates with modern readers while preserving the depth and authority of the original revelation. Unlike horizontal intertextuality, which situates the Qur'an alongside the observable universe, human reason, and scientific phenomena, vertical intertextuality emphasizes a hierarchical and transcendent relationship between the text and its ultimate sources of authority: divine command, prophetic guidance, and the eternal spiritual truths embedded in the Qur'anic message. In this sense, Nursi's use of vertical intertextuality allows the Qur'an to function as a living, authoritative interlocutor, shaping moral, spiritual, and intellectual understanding in a way that bridges classical Islamic teachings with contemporary existential concerns. By foregrounding the sacred origins of the text, vertical intertextuality also ensures that modern interpretations remain anchored in theological authenticity, demonstrating that engagement with the Qur'an can be both intellectually rigorous and spiritually transformative.

Transposition of Signs of the Qur'an in Risale-i Nur

According to Julia Kristeva, the concept of transposition (Guadu, 2023) is central to her theory of intertextuality. She emphasizes that every text results from a "transfer and transformation" of signs rather than mere repetition. Within this framework, Risale-i Nur transposes Qur'anic signs from the realm of revelation into modern pedagogical, spiritual, and rational discourse, preserving their meaning while adapting their function and context to address the existential and theological concerns of 20th-century Turkish society. The transposition in Risale-i Nur is evident in the way Said Nursi transfers the symbols, rhetorical structures, and metaphysical imagery of the Qur'an into a new sign system more accessible to modern readers. For example, verses on contemplating nature are transposed into cosmological arguments that serve to address the challenges of materialism and positivism that dominated scientific discourse at the time:

> *O you who are deceived and lost in the darkness of materialism! O you who are heedless and trapped in the darkness of illusion and strangled by the ropes of doubt! Awake!* (Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, 2012d)

Qur'anic signs such as *nur* (light), *kauniyah* verses, and divine tanzir are transferred into the language of the philosophy of light that characterizes the Risale-i Nur, thus creating a new field of meaning that remains in line with the structure of revelation, but moves within the horizon of contemporary understanding.

Furthermore, transposition also occurs through the rearrangement of the narrative structure of the Qur'an into the form of a "*risalah*" or moral epistle. Qur'anic rhetorical forms such as parables (*amtsāl*), eschatological remembrances, and monotheistic arguments are transposed into an expository and dialogical style aimed at resolving doubts in faith. Here, the Qur'anic signs are not simply quoted, but given a new function: from a text of revelation to an instrument of psychological healing, character formation, and faith reconstruction in the socio-political crisis of modern Turkey. In Kristeva's understanding, this transposition demonstrates that the Risale-i Nur acts as a semiotic field that facilitates the encounter between two systems: the symbolic system of the Qur'an and the discursive system of modernity.

Thus, the transposition in the Risale-i Nur is not an attempt to change the content of the Qur'an, but to move its signs into a new context so that they remain spiritually alive, relevant, and effective. This is in line with Kristeva's principle that text is always a "process" and not a static

object, a dynamic network that flows signs from one space of meaning to another. Thus, the concept of Transposition of Signs in Risale-i Nur relates to how Said Nursi transforms our understanding of "signs" (verses) from mere written text into observable phenomena in the universe, and vice versa. Simply put, Nursi performs a "shift" (transposition) of meaning: what the Qur'an expresses textually, he demonstrates visually in the universe as signs, or *Ayat Kauniyah*.

The Mosaic of Quotations of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur

Julia Kristeva's concept of a mosaic of quotations (Raj, 2015) asserts that every text is essentially a composition of fragments from previous texts, whether in the form of direct quotations, hints, allusions, or inherited meaning structures. Using this perspective, the Risale-i Nur can be read as a Qur'anic mosaic, as much of its argumentative structure, symbols, theological narrative, and rhetorical devices are derived from Qur'anic themes and style. Nursi not only includes verses as explicit quotations but also integrates Qur'anic idiom, metaphorical structures, and dialogical patterns inherent in the discourse of revelation. These fragments were then combined into a new structure, resulting in a text that is distinctly "Qur'anic" yet still stands as an independent work within the context of Turkish modernity.

The mosaic of Qur'anic quotations in Risale-i Nur is evident in the way Nursi takes up key Qur'anic themes, such as monotheism, resurrection, destiny, and God's signs in nature (*ayat al-kawniyah*) and then processes them into philosophical reflections and rational proofs that are in line with the intellectual challenges of his time. For example, the discussion of the oneness of God in The Words not only starts from verse quotations but also adopts a Qur'anic argumentative pattern that combines cosmic signs and inner reflection; this pattern is then reworked through modern analogies such as the relationship between a lamp and its light source, or between the sun and its reflection. This can be seen when Nursi explains the following verse: (Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, 2012b)

فَانْظُرْ اِلٰى اٰثٰرِ رَحْمَتِ اللّٰهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَاۗ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰىۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

On the other hand, to demonstrate the extent of the rationality of some Islamic principles and their conformity and harmony. The essence of these stories is the essence presented in the form of a kinayah.

These rhetorical and metaphorical Qur'anic fragments form the "pieces" that form the basis of the Risale-i Nur's reasoning structure, so that the text functions as a living mosaic of the legacy of revealed discourse.

Furthermore, the mosaic of quotations is also evident through the use of Qur'anic symbols that Nursi internalized into the narrative and contemplative structure. Qur'anic figures such as the prophets, eschatological images, and metaphysical concepts such as *nur, sirath, mîzân*, or *arsh*, are presented not only as textual references, but as semiotic elements that build the spiritual and epistemological atmosphere in the Risale-i Nur. In this case, Nursi carried out a process of transformation: Qur'anic elements were taken as fragments, then given new functions in the context of intellectual resistance to secularism and positivism in modern Turkey. This can be seen when Nursi explains the following verse: (Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, 2021a)

اِقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ

Up to here, this Addendum has aimed to establish the truth and to silence those enemies who deny it.

As a result, Risale-i Nur becomes a fully dialogical text, formed from a mosaic of Qur'anic verses reassembled to address contemporary issues. The application of the concept of a mosaic of quotations demonstrates that Risale-i Nur not only interacts with the Qur'an through quotations, but also constructs its discursive identity as a "text shaped by the text of revelation." The transformation of these Qur'anic fragments affirms Risale-i Nur*'s* position as a creative hermeneutic work, revitalizing the Qur'anic message within the social, philosophical, and cultural contexts of the 20th century.

Thus, The concept of "The Mosaic of Quotations" in Risale-i Nur exemplifies Said Nursi's sophisticated method of intertextual composition, in which he strategically integrates multiple Qur'anic verses, fragments, and key terms into a cohesive narrative framework. Rather than citing verses in isolation, Nursi deliberately arranges them as interconnected pieces, akin to a mosaic, where each fragment contributes to a larger theological and moral argument. This technique not only preserves the integrity of the original texts but also generates new layers of meaning, allowing classical Qur'anic teachings to engage with contemporary intellectual, spiritual, and social challenges. By doing so, Nursi transforms the act of quotation into a creative interpretive practice, demonstrating that intertextuality can serve both as a method of textual continuity and as a tool for addressing the evolving concerns of modern readers.

Qur'anic Dialogism in the Risale-i Nur

The concept of dialogism, as developed by Mikhail Bakhtin and later integrated by Julia Kristeva into the theory of intertextuality (Waghmare et al., 2011), asserts that every text exists as a meeting ground for multiple voices (polyphony).16 In the context of the Risale-i Nur, dialogism is evident in the way Said Nursi presents the Qur'an as the "primary voice" that serves as the center of meaning orientation, then positions the social, philosophical, and spiritual voices of his time as "secondary voices" that respond to it. This dialogical relationship is not simply a relationship between the text and its quotations, but rather an active interaction between revelation and the historical conditions of the people, between the divine message and the problems of modernity facing Turkish society in the early 20th century. Therefore, the Risale-i Nur does not read the Qur'an monologically, but allows its verses to speak back to a social space fraught with ideological challenges, secularization, and the rise of modern science.

This dialogism is also evident in the way Nursi constructs his argument. He not only conveys the message of the Qur'an, but places it in "conversation" with modern science, materialist philosophy, the narrative of atheism, and the spiritual crisis of society. Thus, the Risale-i Nur positions the Qur'an as a participant in contemporary intellectual discussions, rather than as a static text. Within a dialogical framework, Nursi combines the voice of revelation with the voice of reason, personal experience, and socio-political circumstances. The result is a form of dialogical hermeneutics that allows the Qur'an to remain alive in modern reality, while simultaneously explaining itself through arguments relevant to the language and horizons of contemporary readers.

Furthermore, the Qur'anic dialogism in the Risale-i Nur creates a relationship that is not only affirmative but also corrective. Nursi frequently uses Qur'anic verses to negotiate or critique ideas that he believes threaten faith, such as positivism, naturalism, and radical secularism: (Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, 2012a)

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنٰتِكَ وَنِسَاۤءِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّۗ . . .

This means that present-day civilization's unveiling women is contrary to their natures, while the Qur'an's command to veil themselves is both inconformity with women's natures,

This is where dialogism operates in the form of creative opposition: Risale-i Nur not only echoes the Qur'an, but also puts it into "dialogue" with modern discourses with different paradigms. This dialogue demonstrates how the Qur'an can offer an alternative epistemological model that brings both spiritual enlightenment and rational answers to the problems of modern philosophy. In other words, Risale-i Nur transforms Qur'anic intertextuality into a dialogical process that continues to live and evolve according to the dynamics of the times.

Therefore, Qur'anic Dialogism in Risale-i Nur represents a deliberate technique by which Said Nursi constructs a dynamic "conversation" between the Qur'anic text and multiple entities, including human reason, the questioning or doubting soul, the natural world, and even philosophical frameworks such as materialism. In this approach, the Qur'an is portrayed not as a static or passive repository of knowledge, but as an active, responsive interlocutor that engages with contemporary intellectual and spiritual challenges. Through this dialogical method, Nursi enables readers to witness how Qur'anic principles can interact with rational inquiry, moral uncertainty, and empirical observation, creating a bridge between eternal divine guidance and the pressing concerns of modern life. This technique underscores Nursi's broader epistemological vision: knowledge and faith are not separated, but engage in a continuous, reflective exchange that cultivates both spiritual insight and intellectual rigor. By framing the Qur'an as a living participant in dialogue, Nursi transforms textual interpretation into an interactive and context-sensitive process, demonstrating that revelation can actively converse with evolving human understanding.

Explicit Intertextuality of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur

Explicit intertextuality (Graham Allen, 2011) refers to a form of textual relationship that directly and clearly refers to Qur'anic verses, the names of Qur'anic figures, prophetic events, or Islamic holy books. In Risale-i Nur, explicit intertextuality is a key feature, as Nursi presents his work as an "explanation of faith" grounded in divine revelation. Qur'anic citations provide theological legitimacy and serve as the primary source for constructing the epistemological and spiritual framework, making the Qur'an the authoritative center of meaning that shapes and guides the entire structure of Nursi's thought.

Explicit Qur'anic quotations in the Risale-i Nur take various forms: full Arabic verses, direct translations, and detailed explanations of their literal and metaphysical meanings. For example, in The Flashes, Nursi begins many sections with citations of verses as a gateway to explaining themes such as monotheism, the underlying wisdom within prophetic narratives and the conceptual framework of the Sunnah. Each verse is not simply explained within the framework of traditional interpretation, but is transformed through rational approaches, cosmological analogies, and existential arguments aimed at addressing doubts about faith in the modern era: (Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, 2021b)

الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ

And spend [in God's way] out of what We have bestowed on them as sustenance

The parts of this sentence point out five of the conditions that make almsgiving acceptable.

This demonstrates that explicit intertextuality in the Risale-i Nur is not merely a textual reference, but a hermeneutical mechanism for projecting the meaning of the Qur'an into the social, scientific, and philosophical realities of the 20th century.

Besides verse quotations, explicit intertextuality is also evident through the reference to Qur'anic figures such as the Prophets Adam, Abraham, Moses, and Muhammad (peace be upon them), whom Nursi uses as cosmic models to affirm the structure of faith and morality. This mention is not merely a historical narrative, but rather part of a metaphysical argument that charts humanity's spiritual journey. Nursi also regularly refers to other sacred texts, such as the Torah and the Gospel, to affirm the continuity of revelation and the unity of the divine message, an approach that enriches the intertextual relationship between the Qur'an and global religious traditions. In this context, explicit intertextuality demonstrates how the Risale-i Nur presents the Qur'an as the pivot of dialogue between various discourses of faith and prophetic history.

Nursi not only borrows verses but structures his entire framework as a reflection of Qur'anic discourse. By utilizing direct quotations, narrative references, and references to Qur'anic figures, the Risale-i Nur positions itself as a text living within the orbit of revelation where meaning develops through a direct and ongoing relationship with the Qur'an. This approach not only aligns with Kristeva's theory of intertextuality but also demonstrates how religious texts can transform into networks of argumentation and meaning relevant to modern society.

Explicit Intertextuality in Risale-i Nur represents Said Nursi's deliberate strategy of embedding Qur'anic verses directly and visibly within his text. Rather than merely alluding to the meanings of the Qur'an, Nursi presents the original verses themselves as the foundational centerpiece or the "head" of each discussion. This technique serves multiple purposes: it grounds his commentary in authoritative scripture, ensures that interpretations remain closely tied to the divine source, and provides readers with an immediate textual reference for reflection. By foregrounding the Qur'anic text, Nursi transforms his work into a dialogical space where the sacred word speaks directly, guiding both intellectual understanding and spiritual contemplation. Moreover, this explicit intertextuality reinforces the structural integrity of Risale-i Nur, allowing Nursi to systematically build arguments that interweave divine authority, moral reasoning, and theological insight, thereby bridging classical Qur'anic teachings with the pressing concerns of modern readers.

Implicit Intertextuality of the Qur'an in the Risale-i Nur

Implicit intertextuality (Minakshi, 2025) refers to the presence of Qur'anic meanings, structures, or patterns within a text without direct reference to specific verses or terms. In Risale-i Nur, this intertextuality appears through subtle allusions, thematic adaptations, paraphrases, and repetitions of Qur'anic patterns. Nursi rarely breaks the explicit link to the Qur'an; instead, the Qur'anic message permeates his language, metaphors, argumentation, and spiritual cosmology, reflecting Kristeva's idea that texts absorb and transform prior signs even without explicit citation.

One form of implicit intertextuality in the Risale-i Nur is thematic allusion, where Qur'anic ideas are re-presented in a contemplative or argumentative narrative that does not explicitly cite verses. For example, Nursi's discussion of the radical dependence of creatures on God reflects the

concepts of *faqr, ubūdiyyah,* and *tawakkul* in the Qur'an, but expressed in the form of analogies of light, mirror, and shadow. This pattern demonstrates the transposition of meaning from the format of revelation (with its Arabic language structure, verse rhythm, and prophetic context) to a more philosophical and rational format of modern argumentation. Within Kristeva's intertextual framework, this is a form of sign transformation signs transformed through new contexts of meaning.

Implicit intertextuality is also evident in the narrative style of the Risale-i Nur. Nursi frequently employs inner dialogue, spiritual monologue, and narratives of intellectual journeys methods that echo Qur'anic narrative patterns, particularly the stories of the prophets and cosmic reflections. Although he does not cite Qur'anic stories directly, the structure of the narrative repeats the "vision–reflection–affirmation of faith" pattern so characteristic of the Qur'an: (Nursi, 2021)

> *Why should this world be a world of progress for everyone, and a world of humiliation for only us? Is that so? Then I will not speak to you. I am turning elsewhere, speaking to someone who is in the future.*

This form of pattern similarity constitutes latent intertextuality in Kristeva's category, namely the replication of discursive structures without verbal duplication.

Implicit Intertextuality in Risale-i Nur manifests when Said Nursi conveys the "spirit," "essence," or "logic" of the Qur'an without directly citing its Arabic text. Unlike explicit intertextuality, which foregrounds the Qur'anic words themselves, this technique allows Nursi to embed the Qur'an's meaning, structure, and thematic flow within his own narrative and reasoning. Readers familiar with the Qur'an can intuitively sense the divine presence through the use of carefully chosen terms, metaphors, rhetorical patterns, and conceptual frameworks. This subtle method creates a dialogical resonance between the sacred text and Nursi's commentary, engaging readers in reflective and interpretive activity while maintaining fidelity to the original revelation. By employing implicit intertextuality, Nursi not only bridges textual and spiritual understanding but also demonstrates that the Qur'an's guidance can permeate thought and experience even when its literal words are not quoted, reinforcing its enduring relevance for contemporary moral and intellectual challenges.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality provides a robust theoretical framework for analyzing the intricate relationship between the Qur'an and Risale-i Nur. By applying Kristeva's ideas of intertextual dialogue, mosaic of quotations, and the processes of absorption and transformation, the research has identified multiple forms of Qur'anic intertextuality within Said Nursi's work, including explicit quotations, implicit thematic echoes, vertical intertextuality linking the text to divine authority, and horizontal intertextuality connecting it with the universe and contemporary reasoning. These findings highlight Nursi's innovative approach to embedding Qur'anic discourse into a modern interpretive context, revealing how classical revelation can actively engage contemporary moral, spiritual, and intellectual challenges.

The novelty of this research lies in its application of a Kristevan lens to Risale-i Nur, which has not been extensively explored in prior studies. By framing the Qur'an as a living, dialogical participant within Nursi's text, this study demonstrates the dynamic interplay between tradition and creative reinterpretation, offering new insights into how sacred texts can be mobilized to address evolving social and intellectual contexts. A concrete takeaway for readers is the recognition that intertextuality is not merely a stylistic or academic concept but a practical method for understanding how religious texts can dialogue with human experience across time and space.

However, this study has certain limitations. First, the analysis is primarily textual and interpretive, which may overlook the experiential or pedagogical dimensions of Nursi's writing. Second, the focus is limited to selected themes and excerpts, potentially leaving other forms of intertextuality unexplored. Therefore, future research could expand the scope by incorporating comparative analyses with other Islamic texts, empirical studies of reader reception, or computational approaches to intertextual patterns, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of Qur'anic intertextuality in contemporary Islamic thought.

In conclusion, this study not only underscores the theoretical and analytical value of Kristeva's intertextuality in religious studies but also offers practical insight for scholars, educators, and students, illustrating how Risale-i Nur functions as a dialogical bridge between the Qur'an and modern readers, enriching both textual interpretation and spiritual reflection.

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