THE FACES OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE LITERARY ANALYSIS: A REAPPRAISAL

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Intertextuality, the theory proposed in 1966 by the French philosopher and literary critic, Julia Kristeva, assumes that "within the interior space of the text as well as within the space of *texts*, poetic language is *double*" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language,* 69). The intertextual theory argues that the literary language is characterized by ambivalent meaning. Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's dialogic concept concerning the relation between the speaking voices in the text became an inspiration for Kristeva's theory. However,while Bakhtin's major interest relates to the novel as a literary genre, Kristeva remains emphatically concentrated on language itself. In my paper, I examine the notion of intertextuality as applied in literary analysis. Referring to Marko Juvan's *History and Poetics of Intertextuality*, I strive to reappraise the intertextual approach to the literary studies with a view to showing its benefits and limitations.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Julia Kristeva, M. M. Bakhtin, The literary analysis.

The Origins of Intertextuality

In his letter to Helen Keller, Mark Twain notes:

> Oh, dear me, how unspeakably funny (…) was that 'plagiarism' farce! As if there was much of anything in any human utterance, oral or written, except plagiarism! The kernel, the soul — let us go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of all human utterances — is plagiarism. For substantially all ideas are second-hand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources (…) (*Copyrights and Copywrongs*, 64).

Thus, Twain propels a common among the scholars thought that there are no new ideas and it is an illusion that one is capable of creating completely new-fangled literary pieces. In the Postmodern era, the issue of originalityhas been questioned. Postmodernism, with its strong reliance on diversity and the interplay of anterior ideas, impels one to reflect whether authors are capable of creating genuinely new works or, at least, the works that can be classified within a self-containeddomain representing the main theories and directions of the present era; (as it was possible, for instance, in Renaissance). Due to the overwhelming number of literary works appearing nowadays, it seems impossible to conceptualize and encapsulatein a homogenous document theliterary postulates of the present day. This phenomenon can be studied within the framework of intertextuality, a theory built on the claim that all the literary texts are

interrelated with the previously written literary works. In this light, echoing Twain's words, each emerging literary work comes into view as a potential and unavoidable form of plagiarism.Moreover, each work bears the characteristics of a previous text or texts, rendering it impossible to classify the originating work as belonging to a certain genre. While in my paper I concentrate exclusivelyon the intertextual problem contained within the literary field, intertextuality is often implemented in the arts and media context as well.

The origins ofintertextuality can be traced back to Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975), the Russian philosopher and literary critic. Bakhtin's interestslie in the specificmulti-layered character of language.Bakhtin's fundamental claim predicates that dialogue underpins each literary construct, while meaning cannot be "viewed as a finished product" (Haberer, 56).Thus, Bakhtin highlights the importance of dialogic tradition and traces it back to antiquity and to the Socratic dialogues in particular. In the essay entitled "Epic and Novel," he stresses the relevance of the Socratic dialogues, pointing out that they serve as critical documents for paving the way for the modern, perfected dialogic genre – the novel (*Dialogic Imagination*, 24).What fascinates Bakhtin in the Socratic dialogues is their responsivity and interaction with the real world, as well as their rejection of the*absolutepast* built on the tradition of monologism and rhetoric.Thus, Bakhtin unequivocally criticizes the high genres, such as the epic, accusing them of hindering dialogue and evading the reader's zone.The language of the high genres, he remarks, serves as a means of speaking about the dead (*Dialogic Imagination*, 20).Thus, the high genres offer a glimpse into the complete and conclusive literary past that cannot be accessed or verified by the potential reader. While dialogue embodies "the only true art of politics in pursuit of justice and the other virtues" (Zappen, 14), rhetoric discloses itself as the means of monologic persuasion. According to Bakhtin, the past, uncharted and absolute in its depiction, becomes abstract and thus hostile. The only way to explore the literary past is to enter with it into a dialogue. The novel, as Bakhtin believes, is the only genre capable of undertaking a dialogic task, as it offers an undogmatic plane filled with numerous and diverse voices of the characters,narrators and the author as well. Most importantly, in the novel, all of the introduced voices possess an equal status and lead interrelated discourses.

From the notion of the synchrony of equally privileged voices arises Bakhtin's paramount concept of *dialogism*, the term indicating "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything (…) is understood as a part of a greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings (…)" (*Dialogic Imagination*, 426). Graham Allen defines *heteroglossia* as "language's ability to contain within it many voices, one's own andother voices" (*Intertextuality*, 29). Similarly, he discusses the concept of *polyphony*, the term developed by Bakhtin in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984), characterizing it as "the simultaneous combination" of voices (22).Conclusively, what appears as the determinative feature of dialogism is the *addressivity of language*(Allen, 20) and the fact that each utterance gains the meaning only through the interaction between the speaking voices. As Wilfred L. Guerin's aptly argues,

> Bakhtin's definition of the modern polyphonic, dialogic novel made up of a plurality of voices that avoids reduction to a single perspective indicates a concern on his part about the dangers of knowledge, whether inside or outside a text. (…) [H]e points toward a parallel between issues of knowledge and power among the characters and those between the author and the reader. In both cases, knowledge is best thought of as dialogic rather than monologic, as open to the other rather than closed, as *addressing* rather than *defining* (*Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature,* 304).

Another vital concept proposed by Bakhtin and related to intertextuality embraces *carnivallaughter* – the laughter undermining social hierarchy and renegotiating social values. Bakhtin recalls here the folk tradition and the medieval concept of the festival. Perhaps the most vital remark underlying the notion of festivity and strictly connected with the study of the novelistic genre is that during the carnival all are "considered equal" (*Rabelais and His World*, 10). Thus, what carnival offers is a subverted, re-established

order resulting from the plurality of voices participating in the festivity. Endowed with the transitory character, the carnival proves indispensable for the negotiation of values imposed on one in the world dominated by the authoritarian discourse.

The multiplicity of interacting voices constitutes the common ground for combining the concept of the carnival with the novelistic genre. What results from this unity is "the modern, polyphonic, dialogic novel" (Guerin, 304). According to Bakhtin, the most prominent examples of such texts can be found among Dostoevsky's writings where the voices are allowed to speak interchangeably and no utterance exists in isolation. Importantly, such polyphony of voices upsets the concept of hierarchy. Moreover, the voices do not struggle for the individual victory as well, preserving the notion of equality and synchrony. They also donot provide the "ultimate truth". Whereas the high genres , such as the epic, operate in the circular dimension; (opening with the introduction and closing with the dénouement), "the novel is oriented to contemporary reality" (Guerin, 305-306). Accordingly, Bakhtin arrives at the conclusion that the perfection of the novel lies, paradoxically, in its incompleteness as a genre.

Julia Kristeva, the French literary critic and philosopher associated in the past with the *Tel Quel* journal and inspired by Bakhtin's work, addresses the notion of dialogism in her study of the literary structures. "Dialogism is not 'freedom to say everything'," she argues in "Word, Dialogue and Novel" published in 1969 (*Desire in Language*, 71). In this work, she also implements the notion of dialogue as formulated by the Russian thinker: "Bakhtin," she claims, "was one of the first to replace the static hewing out of texts with a model where literary structure does not simply *exist* but is generated in relation to *another* structure" (64-65). Kristeva perceives dialogism in terms of a political and subversive process. It is the process that liberates one from the possible dangers of the rhetorical discourse. In effect, Kristeva stresses the relevance of Bakhtin's engagement with the idea of human subjects located in the social and historical space that cannot be defined by means of ultimate, absolute meanings. Thereby, for Kristeva, each signifying structure carries a plurality of meanings while analyzed (each time) against a different background. In effect, Kristeva coins the term *intertextuality*, by which she understands "the transposition of one or more *systems*of signs into another (…)" (*Desire in Language*, 15). Allen presentsKristeva's notion of intertextuality in the following passage:

> Kristeva's attack on notions of stable signification centred on the transformation of Saussure's idea of semiology, or what was increasingly called semiotics. Semiotics in mid-1960s France argued for its own objectivity by employing Saussurean concepts such as *langue* (the system) to stabilize the 'signifieds' it studied. (…) Poststructuralist theory in general, and the key writers associated with the *Tel Quel* group in particular, view notions of a stable relationship between signifier and signified as the principal way in which dominant ideology maintains its power and represses revolutionary, or at least unorthodox, thought (32).

According to Kristeva, the"stabilization" of meaning results in a potential threat manifesting itself in the birth of ideology. The fear of ideologybridges together Bakhtin's philosophy and Kristeva's thought. However, Kristeva's concept ofintertextuality takes its root from other sources as well. In her theory, she introduces Ferdinand de Saussure's study of anagrams accounting for the ambivalence of the literary meaning, as well as Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and Karl Marx's notion of production (Allen, 34). Such diversity of sources allows Kristeva to expand her study beyond the boundaries of the literary text.

Kristeva's Intertextuality vs. Bakhtinian Thought

Nevertheless, this approach removes Kristeva from the genuine Bakhtinian thought. In consequence, she expands her field of interest, going beyond the exclusive study of the polyphonic novel. On the one hand, such move enables Kristeva to analyze the concept of the poetic language as a "double," that is

transgressing the limitations of the western logic. In 0-2 system propounded by Kristeva (as opposed to 0-1 Aristotelian system), the language always carries a double meaning.

Another emphatic step undertaken by Kristeva involves her departure from the term "literature," as it appears for her to be loaded with ideological weight and inevitable selection. In effect, Allen posits intertextuality as the source of a paradigm shift:

> If intertextuality stands for the ultimate term for the kind of poetic language Kristeva is attempting to describe, then we can see that from its beginning the concept of intertextuality is meant to designate a kind of language which, because of its embodiment of otherness, is against, beyond and resist to (mono)logic. Such language is socially disruptive, revolutionary even. Intertextuality encompasses that aspect of literary and other kinds of texts which struggles against and subverts reason, the belief in unity of meaning or of the human subject, and which is therefore subversive to all ideas of the logical and the unquestionable (46).

The broadening of the studybeyond the literary texts establishes a further gap between Kristeva's and Bakhtin's thinking. Consequently, Kristeva's notion of the *text* extends beyond the literary material, engaging in a typically linguistic discussion. It is no longer the literary genre that matters, but the language inscribed in the text. Thereupon, Kristeva substitutes the term "word" with the "textual unit," which she defines as characterized by a diversified spatial relations: the *horizontal dimension* (the relation between the subject and the addressee) and the *vertical* one (the text-context interplay) (Allen, 39). Similarly, the text turns into an *ideologeme* – a "container" in which social struggles and structures reside(Allen, 214). Apparently, Kristeva is more interested in what the text offers as the result of meaning production, than how it engages in the dialogic relations.Thus, she is not merely interested in the dialogue between the voices in the text. The vast discrepancy between Bakhtin's dialogism and its subsequent use by Kristeva is thus discernible at *prima facie*. Allen argues: "[i]ntertextuality, as a concept, has a history of different articulations which reflect distinct historical situations out of which it has emerged" (58-59). Likewise, as E. J. White states: "Bakhtin was particularly sensitised to the dangerous consequences of monologism as a result of his experiences in Stalinist Russia, lamenting the loss of freedom and remaining hostile to all that was finalised" (1).On the contrary, as stated by Haberer, Kristeva's theory found a solid ground in the "heyday of theorists, the years of transition from structuralism to poststructuralism (…).Meaning could no longer be viewed as a finished product, it was now caught in a process of production" (56).

The Faces of Intertextuality

Consequently, it appears that the intertextual theory is strictly dependent upon historical and temporal processes.It seemsthat historical changes and social transitions have a significant impact on the potential paradigm shift.As a result, intertextuality paved the way for Roland Barthes to spell the death of the author, as his use of "textual and intertextual theory destroys, therefore, the 'myth of filiation': the idea that meaning *comes from* and is, metaphorically at least, the *property of* the individual authorial consciousness" (Allen, 74). Similarly, it appears that intertextuality is the term that endows feminist critics with the desired voice (gynocriticism) (Allen, 144) and allows for the development of post-colonial discourse (Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*) (Allen, 165). The vast application of the intertextual theory attests to its considerable significance in the contemporary multi-layered discourse. On the other hand, while incorporating intertextuality into the broad theoretical spectrum, Julia Kristeva undoubtedly undermines the safe assumption that a literary work can be unquestionably attributed to a single, individual mind. Marko Juvan, in the work entitled *History and Poetics of Intertextuality*, remarks that the vision of the text unleashed from the temporal and spacial dimension may be threatening to those readers who are accustomed to the "traditional" perception of the reading process:

> It would be difficult to convince such a reader, hardbound book in hand, that the text is boundless and that other texts and discourses intrude amid the printed lines (…). A book functions as a clearly delimited whole and presence (1).

Not only is the text responsive to other texts, but also, as it has been already mentioned before, it serves as an*ideologeme*. Thus, a material book, the 'final' product offered to the reader, is but an illusion of the completed process. Similarly, Allen indicates that it is not enough to study the content of the book in order to fully explore its "boundaries":

> The text's appearance of unity and independent existence is, in fact, part of its momentary arrangement of words and utterances which have complex social significance "outside" the text in question. Kristeva's semiotic approach seeks to study the text as a textual arrangement of elements which possess a double meaning: a meaning in the text itself and a meaning in what she calls "the historical and social text" (37).

Juvan strives to define intertextuality "by its natural linguistic logic" as "relations between texts," "interweaving of texts," "weaving of one text into another," "connectedness and interdependence of at least two related texts," "the characteristic of a text of establishing a relation with (an)other text(s) or having another or multiple texts woven into it " or "inter-relatedness or interaction of texts" (13). Importantly, Juvan points to both the revitalizing power of intertextuality and to its limitations:

> On the one hand, it [intertextuality] has functioned as a law, a historical code, and a prisonhouse that controls cultural ideology, dictating semantic and structural dispositions to each new text; on the other, it has been a key to transgression, a means of undoing conventions (…) (14).

This crucial remark abolishes the foregoing assumptions concerning the liberating power of intertextual relations. While demonstrating the examples of double-facedness of the theory,Juvan refers to the folk tradition as to the phenomenon fundamental to the appearance of intertextuality. What constitutes for Bakhtin the roots of subversion and transformation, for Juvan signifies "the interweaving of the formal-stylistic or semantic-thematic elements and structures of older literary works into new texts" (14). In a sense, Juvan rejects the idea that folk tradition is capable of exposing the short-comings of the dominant discourse, as he proves that it relies on repetitive patterns and conventions as well. The implication behind Juvan's claim is thatone cannot escape ideology. This statement applies, among others, to Postmodern literature which, drawing from the previous sources, replicates the patterns projected by the structures of the previous literary works.

Similarly, Graham Allen recalls Derrida's claim concerning the "dominant ideology" which comes into existence when a stable relationship is set up between the signifier and the signified (32). Drawing on the example concerning the folk tradition, it seems that as it relies on repetitive patterns and structures, it has the potential to enter ideological discourse. While the patterns and structures are permanently repeated, the dominant "discourse" enters the stage. In this light, intertextuality – the notion seemingly liberating from the chains of the dominant discourse – appears in fact equally enslaved by it. As soon as intertextuality enters the scientific discourse, it undergoes numerous classifications and re-descriptions. In this process, it transforms into an ideology as well.

On the other hand, Juvan suggests that relying on conventions appears indispensable for the formation of any future potential concepts (15). Conventions appear to work as a threshold for undoing of what has been already incorporated into a historically sanctioned discourse. This suggestion echoes Bakhtin's remark pertaining to the parodying of the fashionable novels:

> Throughout its entire history there is a consistent parodying or travestying of dominant or fashionable novels that attempt to become models for the genre: parodies on the chivalric romance of adventure (*Dit d'adventures*, the first such parody, belongs to the thirteen century), on the Baroque novel, the pastoral novel (Sorel's *Le Berger extravagant*), the Sentimental novel (Fielding, and *The Second Grandison* of Musäus) and so forth. This ability of the novel to criticize itself is a remarkable feature of this ever-developing genre (*Dialogic Imagination*, 6).

Yet another view on the notion of intertextuality is represented in Heidi Hansson's work entitled *Romance Revived: Postmodern Romances and the Tradition*. Hansson perceives intertextuality as a "dialogue between texts, where the posterior work perhaps has the preferential right of interpretation – but maintains it only very precariously" (22). Importantly, as she asserts, the idea that intertextuality is a "dialogic relationship" undeniably implies that "it is also intrinsically unstable" (23). Moreover, Hansson stresses the intention of the reader in the act of assimilating the text: "(…) without the reader's desire for complete comprehension, intertextual play cannot exist" (22). Essentially, the potential reader is expected to be acquainted with the previous and subsequent text in order to form the anticipated associations between the two. What is more, Hansson claims that the working of intertextuality can entirely escape the reader's attention, particularly while it is not "physically locatable," but can also represent "cultural phenomena or genre-based criteria as well as actual texts" (24). This reflection prompts Hansson to discuss whether intertexts constitutea part of a given work or are merely nested in the reader's imagination. The question that arises is whether the same text, during each particular reading, carries a different number of intertexts for each different reader. Consequently, another question is whether it is possible to talk about the same, "stable" kind of text at all? Following the line of argumentation, it seems that the text is what originates in the space between the text and the reader's mind.

Conclusion

It can be assumed in conclusion thatintertextuality is a concept with numerous faces, receiving substantial attention in the modern days. While constantly transforming, intertextuality converges with various methodologies (for instance, with feminist criticism) and discourses (post-colonial discourse) in order to enter into a dialogue concerning the issues relevant in particular historical period. However, intertextuality falls into a trap of what it tries to avoid – the reliance on the previously sanctioned discourse. Nevertheless, this reliance contributes to the establishment of new discourses as well. After all, as pertinently stated by Adolphe Haberer, "[t]racing influences and filiations, finding allusions, references, quotations and borrowings had always been the pursuit of literary scholars, and *imitatio veterum* had been the basis of classical poetics" (59).

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