

From Influence to Intertextuality in Comparative Literary Studies

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Critics dealing with intertextuality tend to warn that it is a controversial term like many other terms in literary theory and that different critics give it different senses and apply it in different ways. In this paper I will explain the major trends in defining and employing this term and the role it plays and could play in comparative literary studies as a replacement of the less favored term, influence, that is continuously losing grounds in such studies.

Graham Allen in his recently published book, *Intertextuality*, presents the major controversies surrounding the use of this term and the questions that need to be answered and clarified by critics hoping to employ it as a model for interpretation in literary studies in general. These questions, according to Allen (1981), "all bear upon a fundamental distinction between knowledge, including socio-historical knowledge, and the rejection of the very idea of stable knowledge" on the one hand and upon defining the frame of reference of intertextuality on the other hand. Allen concludes that the task of the critic dealing with this term "is to engage with it as a split, multiple concept, which poses questions and requires one to engage with them rather than forcing one to produce definite answers"(59-60). In other words, the different senses and uses of the term, intertextuality, correspond to the different critical approaches to literature and the relation of literature to society or to its context. Some approaches consider that texts are autonomous and arise from other texts

and refer only to themselves or to other texts, while others claim that texts could arise from an outside reality or refer to it. The frame of the intertextual field depends on the stand the critic takes towards such issues.

Another distinction not mentioned in Allen that the critic needs to bear in mind is between a type of intertextuality that takes the death of the author as a starting point and another that does not sacrifice or cancel the role of the author. The first type stands in opposition to traditional influence studies, while the second type does not exclude the influence of one author or another.

The distinction between intertextuality and traditional influence studies is that in traditional models of influence, relations between texts are considered to be straightforward and determinate. The assumptions on which such models are based include that language has the capacity to create stable meaning, and that the artist is in control of meaning. In intertextuality, on the other hand, it is assumed that language is not a transparent medium of thought or communication, and that in the absence of a "universal and transcendental reference, all texts refer to one another, translate one another in infinitely and utterly random ways." Explicit in some models of intertextuality is the dismantling of paternity. This is evident in the poststructuralist theories of Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. Barthes claims that "there is no father author" and Derrida argues that "writing is an orphan." These models substitute for patriarchal self-presence the feminizing "otherness" of intertextual lapses, (ibid: 620-621).

Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (1991) in their introduction to a book which they edited, *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary Studies*, provide an ideological explanation of why the term influence has lost its vogue to be replaced by the more inclusive term, *intertextuality*. They consider that influence is elitist and distinguishes between major works of art that radiate effects and those mere social products that are minor works. Intertextuality, on the other hand, is more egalitarian; it treats all works as social products (16-17), hence it is in harmony with modern democracy. In practice, intertextuality is either an enlargement of influence studies to encompass "unconscious, socially prompted types of text formation (for example, by archetype or popular culture); modes of conception (such as ideas "in the air"); styles (such as genres); and other prior constraints and opportunities for the writer," or an entirely new

concept to replace the outmoded notion of influence and the kind of issues it addresses “and in particular its central concern with the author and more or less conscious authorial intentions and skills” (Clayton and Rothstein 1991:3). In general, it can be said that influence “has to do with agency, whereas intertextuality has to do with a much more impersonal field of crossing texts”(ibid:4).

Poststructuralist Unbound Intertextuality

As to the first critic to employ the term, intertextuality, it is agreed that Julia Kristeva was the critic who introduced the term in the 1960s. However, I tend to consider that Eliot in both his critical works and in his poetry, especially *The Waste Land*, is a precursor of intertextuality. In his influential article “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot explains that when we praise a poet we tend to insist upon “those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else” and in which “we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of man... whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously”(27). *The Waste Land* embodies this principle. It is a collage of quotations from all kinds of literary and non-literary texts and hence exemplifies what Kristeva (1980) and others meant by the term intertextuality.

Julia Kristeva’s Model

To Kristeva a text is “a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (1980:36). Kristeva drew her insights concerning intertextuality from two major sources: Ferdinand de Saussure and M. Bakhtin. In fact Saussure’s linguistic theories stand behind most of the twentieth century developments in literary and cultural theory, including intertextuality. Saussure emphasizes the relational nature of language. He asserts that in language there are only differences without positive terms. Hence signs are not referential: they acquire their signification from different kinds of relationships with other signs, especially opposition. Bakhtin, on the other hand, emphasizes the social context within which words are exchanged. To him all utterances are

dialogic or polyphonic (double or multiple voiced) and this clearly anticipates intertextuality. Kristeva agrees with Bakhtin in considering that all texts contain within them society's ideological struggles and tensions. To her "texts do not present clear and stable meanings; they embody society's dialogic conflict over the meaning of words." Words like "God" or "justice" when used in literature carry "society's conflict over the meaning of these words" (Allen, 1981: 36).

Kristeva incorporates Bakhtin's dialogism (used by him in connection with the novel) into her new semiotics dealing with poetic language. She defines the dynamic literary word in terms of a horizontal dimension and a vertical dimension. Horizontally, "the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee" and vertically, "the word in the text is oriented toward an anterior or synchronic literary corpus" (1980: 66). Kristeva later conceives that the horizontal and vertical axes coincide within the work's textual space, and this leads her to the new term, intertextuality

The addressee, however, is included within a book's discursive universe only as discourse itself. He thus fuses with this other discourse, this other book, in relation to which the writer has written his own text. Hence horizontal axis (subject-addressee) and vertical axis (text-context) coincide, bringing to light an important fact: each work (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read...any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is at least double.(ibid: 66)

Poetic language in particular is double; it is both A and not A. It is therefore the only language that escapes the linguistic, psychic and social prohibition presented by the number 1 (God, Law, Definition) (ibid:70). Such language is disruptive and revolutionary.

Drawing upon Freud and Lacan, Kristeva adds a psychological dimension to her theory. She considers that intertextuality "encompasses that aspect of literary and other kinds of texts which struggle 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."

It has to do “with desire and with the psychological drives of the split subject,” split between “the conscious and the unconscious, reason and desire, the rational and the irrational, the social and the presocial, the communicable and the incommunicable” (Allen, 1981: 45,47). To her the semiotic, the language of the drives, erotic impulses, bodily rhythms and movements retained from the infant stage disrupts stable meaning, communication, notions of singularity, unity and order associated with the monologic symbolic field of the grown up subject. Modernist works, for Kristeva, are explicitly intertextual forms of literature (split texts); they are not original works written by unique authors of great genius, but are rather the products of split subjects. To highlight the split nature of texts, Kristeva introduces two terms: the phenotext and the genotext. The “phenotext” is that part of a text that appears to present the voice of a single unified subject, whereas the “genotext” is that part which emanates from the unconscious to disturb, rupture and undercut the phenotext (Kristeva, 1984:86,87). Intertextuality in this psychological frame, is considered a third operation within the semiotic process, the other two being condensation and displacement (Freud’s terms). It involves transposition which means that “texts do not just utilize previous textual units but they transform them and give them what Kristeva terms new thetic positions” (Allen, 1981: 53).

“Intertextuality, or transposition, becomes what foregrounds, celebrates and plays with the dissolution or abandonment of the single subject, a play which in the most radical texts reaches a stage or state styled by Kristeva and Barthes as *jouissance*,” and the resulting “plurality, of self as well as of meaning, is seen as the source of liberation and joy” (ibid: 56)

This psychological turn in Kristeva’s theory distances her from Bakhtin, whom she is accused of decontextualizing. Roland Barthes proceeds in this psychological direction that Kristeva took.

Roland Barthes’s model

Roland Barthes’s intertextuality is an extension of Kristeva’s; however, the emphasis with him shifts to the reader. His theory is built around several binary oppositions: work vs. text, readerly text vs. writerly text, text of pleasure vs. text of bliss and doxa vs. paradoxa.

To Barthes, “the origin of the text is not a unified authorial consciousness but a plurality of voices, of other words, other utterances and other texts.” There are “no emotions before the textual description of emotions, no thoughts before the textual representation of thoughts... we feel and think and act in codes, in the cultural space of the *deja*, the already spoken, written, read” (Allen, 1981: 76,77). The modern author or “scriptor” to Barthes does not release a single “theological” meaning (the “message” of the Author-God) but produces “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings—none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (*Image Music Text*: 146). The text’s intertexts, other works of literature, other kinds of texts, are themselves intertextual constructs and hence cannot act as the signified of the text’s signifiers because they themselves are signifiers. Meaning of a text is always ‘anterior’ and ‘deferred.’ “It is language that speaks, not the author” (*Image Music Text*: 143). Barthes offers the following definition of a text as an intertextual construct; a text is:

woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages, (what language is not?) antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the ‘sources’, the ‘influences’ of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas. (Barthes, *Image Music Text*: 160)

Parallel to Kristeva’s distinction between phenotext and genotext, Barthes distinguishes between a text and a work. The text is plural, paradoxical; it practices the infinite deferral of the signified.” It belongs to the intertextual. The work, on the other hand, stands for the idea of stable meaning, communication and authorial intention, the book as a physical object of consumption (Barthes, 1979). Barthes also makes a similar distinction between the scriptable (writerly) text—the text of bliss and the lisible (readerly) text—the text of pleasure. The text of bliss “imposes a state of loss,” “discomforts,” “unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values,

memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language” (Barthes, 1975: 14). The text of pleasure, on the other hand, “comes from culture and does not break with it” (ibid:14). It creates the illusion that it is produced by a singular voice and underplays the force of the intertextual. Readerly texts thus reinforce cultural myths and ideologies which Barthes calls doxa (current opinion, stereotypical meaning... constituted by established discourse, by the already written and the already read). Writerly texts, on the contrary, challenge any doxa with paradoxa; they “unleash the power of the text and the intertextual” and “turn their behind to the political Father,” (Barthes, 1975:53).

It is up to the reader to exploit the potentials of the writerly text and to disturb the complacency of the readerly text. In the hands of a timid reader, a text might be emasculated and turned into doxa. On the other hand an adventurous reader is able to explode an apparently readerly text, and that is what Roland Barthes achieved in dealing with Balzac's *Sarrasine* in his book, *S/Z*. He dissected the intersexual threads of *Sarrasin* without intending to present an example of how intertextuality might be applied and practiced.

Structuralist bound intertextuality

Structuralist critics, especially Genette and Riffaterre attempted to achieve what poststructuralist critics abstained from doing, namely to develop a rigorous theory of how intertextuality might be applied and practiced. Unlike poststructuralists, Structuralist "retain a belief in criticism's ability to locate, describe and thus stabilize a text's significance, even if that concerns an intertextual relation between a text and other texts (Allen, 1981: 97).

G. Genette's model

To begin with, Genette (1977) presents a coherent theory and a map of intertextuality. In his book, *Palimpsests*, he develops a poetics for dealing with the relationships (sometimes fluid, never unchanging) which link the text with the architextual network out of which it produces its meaning (83-84). The subject of poetics he explains “is not the text considered in its singularity... but rather... the architextuality of the text... the entire set

of general or transcendent categories_types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres-from which emerges each singular text”(1).

Transtextuality is the term Genette chooses to designate “all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (1). It has the following subdivisions:

-Intertextuality, defined as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts” and “the actual presence of one text within another” (1-2). It is related to issues of quotations and allusion in texts.

-Metatextuality, defined as a relation of ‘commentary’ between texts (4)

-Architextuality, defined as reader’s expectations and their reception of a work. These expectations could be generic, modal, thematic or figurative.

-Paratextuality, defined as the elements that lie on the threshold of the text and that help direct and control its reception by readers such as titles, prefaces etc. and epitexts such as interviews or reviews that deal with the text. The paratext, according to Derrida, paradoxically frames and at the same time constitutes the text for its readers (qtd. in Allen, 1981: 103).

-Hypertextuality defined as any relationship uniting a text B (a hypertext) to an earlier text A (hypotext) “upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (*Palimpsests* 5). A hypotext, Genette’s term for an intertext, is defined as a text which can be definitely located as a major source of significance for a text such as Homer’s *Odyssey* for James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. The meaning of a hypertext depends upon the reader’s knowledge of the hypotext which the hypertext either transforms or imitates. Transformation of texts is done for several purposes including moral considerations and adaptation to another art form (e.g. film adaptations of literary works). It is worth noting that certain hypertexts explicitly foreground their reliance on or transference of a hypotext, while others tend to hide their hypotext or depend upon a hypotext that is no longer available or known by modern readers. What would critics do in the latter case? Genette’s answer is that every hypertext “can be read for itself and in its relation to its hypotext.” For him, “every hypertext, even a pastiche, can be read for itself without becoming perceptibly ‘agrammatical’; it is invested with a meaning that is autonomous and thus in some manner sufficient. But sufficient does not mean exhaustive. In every hypertext there is an ambiguity that Riffaterre denies to intertextual reading” (*Palimpsests* 397).

Several critics have tried to deal with this ambiguity pointed out by Genettes. Their aim is to develop a theory of interpretation that deals with the clash between the textual and intertextual dimensions of a text, instead

of separating these dimensions as Genette did, Michael Riffaterre is one of these critics referred to in Genette's statement.

M. Riffaterre's model

Riffaterre's theory assumes that a stable and accurate account of textual meaning and intertextual relations is possible. To him literary texts are not referential (mimetic). They rather acquire their meaning because of the semiotic structures which link up their parts (words, phrases, images, themes, etc) and the relationships that they have with other texts or signs. "Words of the text signify not by referring to things, but by presupposing other texts" (qtd. in Allen, 1981: 115). Texts produce their significance out of the socially normative discourse which Riffaterre calls the 'sociolect' by means of "inversion, conversion, expansion or juxtaposition. The reader has to discover the poem's matrix, a word, a phrase or a sentence unit which does not necessarily exist in the text itself but which represents the Kernel upon which the text's semiotic system is based....The text's structural unity is created by the transformation of this matrix" (Allen, 1981: 119).

Riffaterre distinguishes between what he calls the intertext and intertextuality itself. He defines the latter as "the web of functions that constitutes and regulates the relationship between text and intertext." (qtd. in Allen, 1981: 120). The intertext he defines as follows:

a corpus of texts, textual fragments, or text-like segments of the sociolect that shares a lexicon and, to a lesser extent, a syntax with the text we are reading (directly or indirectly) in the form of synonyms, or even conversely, in the form of antonyms. In addition, each member of this corpus is a structural homologue of the text. (ibid: 121)

The intertext is not necessarily a text or group of texts which lie behind a text; it is rather an aspect of the sociolect that could be presupposed by the reader of the text. What counts is the homologous relationship that exists between the text and a specific intertext or a presupposed one. The presupposed intertext solves the problem of the missing intertext that puzzled Genette.

Riffaterre introduces another term, hypogram, which is a specific kind of intertext such as literary or poeticized signs that carry certain connotations known to readers. Jonathan Culler (1981) in *The Pursuit of Signs* explains this term as follows:

The hypogram is not located in the text itself but is the product of past semiotic and literary practice, and it is in perceiving a sign's reference to this preexisting phrase or complex that the reader identifies the sign as 'poetic.' The apparently unmimetic sign is seen as transformation of past poetic discourse. But 'for the poeticity to be activated in the text, the sign referring to a hypogram must also be a variant of that text's matrix.' In other words, poetic signs in a text are powerfully overdetermined: they both refer to a preexisting hypogram and are variants or transformations of a matrix.(83)

Unlike poststructuralist critics, Riffaterre emphasizes the overdetermination of the poetic sign which leads the reader to locate or presuppose intertexts and hypograms which in their turn clarify the structure of the text. Semiotic analysis with him moves backwards from unmimetic ungrammaticalities to semiotic (textual) unity, whereas with poststructuralists it moves outwards from the text to the general or social text and explodes the traditional idea of textual unity (Allen, 1981: 124-5).

The Rebirth of the Author: Harold Bloom

Susan Friedman suggests that the emphasis on the agency of the author represents a characteristically American redefinition of intertextuality. To her, "not all, but many American critics-from Bloom to Miller-have refused to let the author die as they forged various intertextual methodologies" (159).

Harold Bloom (1973) stands as the prominent American figure in this trend. He agrees with French poststructuralist critics that all texts are intertexts. "A single text has only part of a meaning; it is itself a synecdoche for a larger whole including other texts. A text is a relational event, and not a substance to be analyzed(qtd. in Allen, 1981: 136). In another context he also explains that "the meaning of a poem can only be a poem, but another poem - a poem not itself" (Bloom, 1973: 70) Bloom's theory is

concerned with poetry. He argues that poetry stems from two motivations: the desire to imitate the precursor's poetry and the desire to be original. "Poets employ the central figures of previous poetry but they transform, redirect, reinterpret those already written figures in new ways and hence generate the illusion that their poetry is not influenced by, and not therefore a misreading of, the precursor poem" (Allen, 1981: 134,135).

Benefitting from psychological theories, especially Freud's, Bloom develops a map of misreading and psychological defence mechanisms that poets resort to in disguising the influence of their precursors. Even critical readings of poetry, to him, are always forms of misreading.

An intertext for a poem can be located through hints in the poem or, when direct textual evidence is lacking, through deciding arbitrarily that a certain text is the significant inter-text even if that text is not directly linked stylistically or figuratively to the text in question (Allen 140). Bloom even claims that the works of certain great writers like Shakespeare could be the intertexts to writers who have not read them. He employs the term facticity to designate the unavoidable influence of certain writers within western culture (e.g T.S. Eliot is such a writer that influenced modern poets, even those who did not read him).

Bloom, we might conclude, agrees with poststructuralist critics in advocating an open intertextuality; however, he disagrees with them in excluding the social and cultural contexts from the open intertextual domain and in insisting on the role of the author.

The above discussed models of intertextuality are the most important. Some other trends need still to be mentioned. Michel Foucault, for example, has a distinct stand on intertextuality. He agrees with Bakhtin, Kristeva and Barthes in emphasizing the ideological dimension that shapes what can be known and, more radically, what we count as true. However, unlike Barthes and Kristeva who present a boundless version of intertextuality and account for the ways texts challenge the prevalent ideology, Foucault attends to the forces that restrict the text and attempt to situate it within existing networks of power (Clayton and Rothstein, 1991: 27)

Feminists also have their distinct stand concerning intertextuality. They are concerned, as Elaine Showalter explains, with intertextual relations between women writers, "a set of 'images, metaphors, themes and plots which connects women's writing across periods and national divisions'" (Allen, 1981: 145). Influence and/or intertextuality for a woman writer is "a matter of legitimation rather than of emasculating belatedness" (ibid: 146). Contrasting the situation of the female writer with that of the male writer, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979) object to Bloom's "anxiety of influence" based on "male" oedipal complex because it does not apply to female writers: "the son of many fathers, today's male writer feels hopelessly belated; the daughter of too few mothers, today's female writer feels that she is helping to create a viable tradition which is at last definitely emerging" (50). Feminists also object to the poststructuralist "death of the author" because it fails to account for the "distinct" experience of the female writer, especially that who does not belong in the mainstream culture (e.g a black American woman writer).

Kristeva and Barthes have emphasized the intertextual foregrounded nature of modernist texts. Other critics, like Jean Baudrillard, contend that postmodern culture is more so. Baudrillard employs the term simulacrum, a word taken from Plato that refers to a copy which does not have an origin, to describe such culture. What people see, read and hear through the mass media is a substitute for the real (Allen, 1981: 182-3). Other critics have noted the heterogeneous rootless culture that is replacing national cultures under the impact of transnational media in the wake of globalization. Postmodern art and literature is typically intertextual as well. It combines forms and styles from both high culture and popular culture. According to Linda Hutcheon (1988), parody is "a perfect postmodern form, in some sense, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies"(11). Umberto Eco explains that in writing a historically-oriented text the principal problem is intertextual: the 'already written' and 'already said' threaten to turn one's narrative and narrative voice into a mere repetition of previous utterances and previous texts" (Allen, 1981: 194). Hence such texts tend to display their intertextuality.

Finally hypertexts on the internet allow not only for a main text or set of texts to be linked to numerous other related texts, but also can be added to by the reader creating new pathways and new texts within the overall hypertext system (ibid: 201). Hence the reader becomes an author-reader

in dialogue with other readers of the same text. The "Net", in other words, embodies the idea of intertextuality.

Intertextuality and Comparative Literature

Comparative literature, like intertextuality, is a controversial concept and discipline. Even some scholars in this discipline have complained that they have not been able to describe or define their work (see Rosenmeyer, 1994: 49 and Greene, 1993: 144). After surveying the history of this term, Rene Wellek (1968), a well-known comparatist, explains that the use of the term "comparative literature has given rise to disputes as to its exact scope and methods which are not yet resolved." He concludes that "comparative literature can and will flourish only if it shakes off artificial limitations and becomes simply the study of literature"(13) from a wide perspective that takes into consideration both national and general literature, and employs the methods of both literary history and literary criticism (ibid: 22-3). Comparative literature, hence, has been closely associated with literary theory, especially since the late 1960s. It acquired the colors of different theories such as Structuralism, Poststructuralism, Deconstruction, Reader-oriented theories, Postmodernism, Postcolonialism, Marxist theories and Feminist theories. A satisfactory comparative approach, according to Thomas Greene (1993), is one that "crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries", "presupposes the mutual reinforcement of theory and interpretation, and "transgresses disciplinary barriers without sacrificing the autonomy of the poetic text" (148). This statement embodies the American trend in comparative literature summed up by Remak (1971): "it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression"(3). The traditional French school of comparative literature accepts only the first part of Remak's definition, the study of literature beyond national boundaries, and concentrates on questions of reception, intermediaries, foreign travel, attitudes to a given country in the literature of another country during a certain period. It also favors questions which can be solved on the basis of factual evidence and tends to exclude criticism from the domain of comparative literature (Remak, 1971: 3-4). The American school of comparative literature, on the other hand, approves of studies that compare authors, works, styles, tendencies and literatures in which no influence can or is intended to be shown" (ibid: 5)

and relates literature to other fields of human knowledge, especially artistic and ideological fields. The task of comparative literature, all comparatists agree, is "to give scholars, teachers, students and readers a better, more comprehensive understanding of literature as a whole" (ibid: 10).

Influence studies, literary indebtedness and literary relations have always been an important component of comparative literature. In their introduction to *The Comparative Perspective of Literature*, Clayton Koelb, and Susan Noakes explain "If there is one principle that comparative literature in all its forms has stood for over the years, it is the necessity to understand literary texts in relation to other texts, whether belonging to other languages and cultures, other disciplines, other races, or the other sex. That necessity continues to inform the comparative perspective today (17). Hence, intertextuality can be considered as an aspect of comparative studies, provided that the perspective adopted be broad crossing, as Greene (1993) explained, linguistic and cultural boundaries and transgressing disciplinary barriers. Claudio Guillen, in his book, *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*, has explained that intertextuality is "especially useful for comparatists. We believe that here we have at last a way to dissipate the many ambiguities and errors such as those brought along in the wake of the notion of influence"(244). However, Guillen disapproves of the models of intertextuality provided by Kristeva and Barthes because of the vagueness and limitlessness surrounding these models and poses the question: "how can the quantity of conventions, formulas, and commonplaces that make up the language of literature be limited, even in an era?" To him M. Riffaterre's model is a more balanced model that reconciles theory with criticism of poetry. He defines the intertext as "a poet's use of a device employed earlier, one that has become part of a repertoire of means available to modern writers"(254). He also suggests that scholars of intertextuality should one day outline its trajectory taking into account the history of genres and that of reading (257). Jonathan Culler (1981), another theorist and comparatist, also finds problems in applying intertextuality "because of the vast and undefined discursive space it designates"(109) and makes suggestion to render it applicable and manageable. He gives a useful definition of the term: "In saying that my discussion is intelligible only in terms of a prior body of discourse-other projects and thoughts which it implicitly or explicitly takes up, prolongs, cites, refutes, transforms_ I have posed the problem of intertextuality and asserted the intertextual

nature of any verbal construct”(101). Intertextuality, he adds, is less “a name for a work’s relation to particular prior texts than a designation of its participation in the discursive space of a culture.... The study of intertextuality is thus not the investigation of sources and influences as traditionally conceived; it casts its net wider to include anonymous discursive practices, codes whose origins are lost, that make possible the signifying practice of later texts”(103).

From the above discussion it becomes evident that intertextuality is a concept with multiple meanings and applications. It may be utilized in comparative studies provided that the critic maintains the broad comparative perspective and makes his choice as to the model that best suits his purpose, or he could be eclectic benefiting from several models. To give an example one could deal with myth in modern poetry, analyzing the relation of several poems to the intertext, myth, and showing how each poem transforms this myth through the utilization of other intertexts(e.g. Eliot’s allusions to all kinds of literary and non-literary texts in *The Waste Land* while taking the fertility myth as a framework for his poem). One may also take a poem like Eliot’s *The Waste Land* as an intertext for several poems written, let us say, by modern Arab poets, and analyze the transformations of Eliot’s themes and techniques in their poetry.

Another example is the stream of consciousness technique in the modern novel. The critic may analyze several novels that take the psychological theory of the stream of consciousness as their intertext to show how they variably transformed this theory into a narrative technique.

A third example is to take a novel like Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* and try to show how the intertextual threads in this novel render it a writerly disturbing text that resists simple clear-cut interpretations. Freud’s theories and the whole tradition of works dealing with the problematic relation between East and West would be some such threads. The critic may trace the intersection of the Freudian life-death(sexuality-aggression) dialectics with the East-West dialectics in this novel.

The critic may either deal with the architextuality of the text defined by Genette as the types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres

from which each singular text emerges or he may deal with transtextuality or all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts.

The metaphor of the web which intertextuality suggests does imply that one could be entangled in this web, if he lacks the proper training in literary theory and the ideological grounds from which it departs. The babel of literary theory might as well dazzle the critic if he does not maintain a clear vision.

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