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Text/Texts: Interrogating Julia Kristeva's Concept of Intertextuality

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Abstract

Julia Kristeva's contribution to the notion of intertextuality is immense. She not only coined the word intertextuality but substantially stressed the importance of the potential dynamics that lay within the text. Text is not a unilinear entity but a heterogeneous combination of texts. Any text is at once literary and social, creative and cultural. They are culturally and institutionally fashioned. Most of the ideas that Kristeva puts forward is a rework or revision of Bakhtinian notion of intertextualiy. Bakhtin also held the view point that the text cannot be detached from socio-cultural textuality which is the backdrop in which a text is created. This paper is an attempt to trace and interrogate the various notionsand ideas relating to intertextuality in Kristeva's thought.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Dialogism, Productivity, Ideologeme, Transposition.

Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian, arrived in the French intellectual scene at the point when a host of critique were being applied on Saussurean linguistics, the moment that saw the advent of poststructuralism. Her writings appeared in *Tel Quel*, the crucible of poststructuralist thinking. Barthes observed that Kristeva alters the scheme of things and demolishes the final prejudice, "the one you thought you could be reassured by, could take pride in; what she displaces is the *already said*, the *déjà-dit*, i.e., the instance of the signified, i.e., stupidity; what she subverts is authority, authority of the monologic scene, of filiation (168).

Julia Kristeva coined the term intertextuality. Intertextuality, though surfaced as a poststructralist concept, existed as a universal phenomenon that elucidates the communicative interconnections between a text and the other and text and context. However, as Zindziuviene observes it still "retains its mosaic, absorptive and transformative aspect" within poststructralist discourses. With the arrival of various theories, intertextuality has now acquired wider range of meanings than what Kristeva had expounded in her path breaking work "Word, Dialogue and Novel." Intertextuality maintains that a text "cannot exist as a hermetic or self-sufficient whole, and so does not function as a closed system" (Worton and Still 1). The author compiles the text by

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reading other texts and the text becomes available to the audience in a process of reading. Bhaktin finds in a Socratic dialogue an earliest form of novel, heteroglossia and dialogism, what Kristeva later names as intertextuality. Kirsteva assumes that a text is compiled as an assortment of quotations and is assimilation and a make over of another. Intertextuality reinstates intersubjectivity. In "The Bounded Text," Kristeva deals with the process of creating a text outside the already present discourse. The authors are not original and do not create anything from their texts from original minds but compile from the already existing texts. She explains text as "a permutation of texts, intertextuality in the given text," where "several utterances, taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva 36). Texts are not isolated personage but culturally fashioned discourses, ways of systemic/institutional 'speaking and saying.' Allen remarks that it is within this postulate one finds how "Bhaktinian notion of the dialogic has been rephrased within Kristeva's semiotic attention to text, textuality and their relation to ideological structures" (36). However Bakhtin's notion of dialogism is based on how human beings exercise language in specific social situations but Kristeva thinks more in terms of text and textuality. Both arrive at a point that texts cannot be detached from the social or cultural textuality which is the back drop in which a text is created. The social text and the literary text are inseparably knit together to fabricate a tapestry.

Text is a practice and productivity. Therefore its intertextual position symbolizes its configuration of words and utterances that already existed making a text "double voiced." The text is productivity in its association to language where it is "redistributive (destructive-constructive) and consequently it can be approached by means of logical categories other than purely linguistic ones; it is permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a text, many utterances taken from other texts intersect with one another and neutralize one another (qtd. in Orr 27). The text envelopes within it a reverbrative process which is also part of the disposition of language itself, of an on-going ideological struggles and tensions. The meaning that the text embodies is not constant and apparent because the text symbolizes the society's conflict over the meaning of words. Intertextuality deals with the materialization of a text from the social text and its perpetual existence within society and history. The text, on its own, have no unity or unified meaning' but part of the on-going socio-cultural processes. Kristeva views text or its components as ideologme. Ideologeme resolves the dynamics of a semiotics positioning a text within the text of society and history. The ideologeme of a text is the centre where the comprehending rationality grapples the alteration of utterances in which the text becomes a totality encompassing the historical and social text.

Kristeva elaborates the literary word in terms of a horizontal and vertical axis. In the horizontal dimension, the communication takes place between the author and the reader and in the vertical dimension, the text communicates with a frontal and synchronic literary corpus. Kristeva explains this idea by reinterpreting Bhaktin's theory of dialogic text: "Horizontal axis (subject-addressee) and vertical axis (text-context) coincide, bringing to light an important fact: each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read" (66). Kristeva also introduces the concept of subject of enunciation and subject of utterance to elucidate the role of the author. The important distinction between enunciation and utterance is that enunciation connotes to the origin of utterance and utterance is linked with the

verbal nature. Utterance is the production of words by a human subject and enunciation is a form of words that stay independent of a human subject. When the uttered word is conveyed to a listener, the subjective position of the speaker is maintained but when a reader reads the uttered words years later, the subjective position of the author is missed or no longer part of it. Moreover Kristeva attempts to view intertextuality as transposition, transposition of one sign scheme into another and "specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the ethic—of enunciative and denotative positionality" (59). Such a position allows fresh expressions positioning the sign system in a relational process. She argues that: "If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an inter-textuality), one then understands that its "place" of enunciation and its denoted "object" are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated. In this way polysemy [multiple levels or kinds of meaning] can also be seen as the result of a semiotic polyvalence—an adherence to different sign systems (Kristeva 59-60).

One of Kristeva's famous Bhakhtinian revisions is her use of the word ambivalence which arises of hybridity and heteroglossia which lead her to assume that within the inner space of the text and the space of the text poetic language is dual. Both Kristeva and Bhakhtin emphasize the doubleness or the dialogic feature of words which interrogates the fundamentals of Western logic, unity and the Aristotelian logic and its propositions on singularity. Kristeva's dialogism is inherently a conceptually relational process that attempts transcendence rather than synchronization involving "an idea of rupture (of opposition and analogy) as a modality of transformation" (89). She also dealt with the manner in which discourses were dynamically employed and appropriated in the novel. Text as intersection of textualities entail the author, different characters present in the novel and the manifold ways of speech positioned in a given period artistically to make it a narrative whole. A novelist, thus, performs two oppositional roles, the narrative role and the textual role. The two fold creative dynamics of an author can be understood as the working pattern or the structuration that defines textual meaning involving word and sign, elements that have liquidity relying on the interconnection with other functional elements within the text. Text also embody an "agency of signifying activity" through perfunctory metaphors as "translinguistic apparatus" only to reallocate a linguistic sign relating the anterior and synchronic articulations and making text as an open productivity (Kristeva 101).

Kristeva's intertexutality divests Bakhtin's dialogism as an interaction between human beings by opening up how dialogue with its sociolinguistic and ideological ruminations forms a cognitive and evaluative perspective. Moreover, the methodological regeneration presumes an interconnection between subject and discourse within a text from socio-cultural viewpoints. Kristeva also emphasises that text engenders meaning at a synchronic level that is identifiable with the relations between text and the corpus of already existing texts. Therefore meaning becomes flexible and intersubejctive within the text. If text as productivity assumes a subject that allows the generation of the text and meaning is debatable within Kristevian notion of intertextuality. She accentuates on linguistic arrangements that allows subject positions only through a configuration of texts taking its cue from cultural deposits of texts.

The text has its historical and social coordinates which is incorporated through the reference of semiotic practices at different structural levels of each text. Semiotic practices that encompass within the text are no more a fixed linguistic structure according to the codes that generates meaning. The function of intertextuality also involves the reconfiguration of the thetic (Juvan 102ff). Positioning of the subject within a discourse assumes significance through a process of transposition. The interconnection and movement of signs within a signifying system entail the fresh enunciation of the thetic where the intertextual generates meanings.

Kristeva views text as an interplay of texts not as a singular entity. The possible openness that the text subsumes within it unbolts the possibilities of viewing text from many different purviews. The claim that the author while compiling a text engages in a discourse with other texts point out to the dynamics of creativity that ventures beyond the creative subject. This conversation which the author enters into is a creative dialogue where meaning is arranged or composed rather than created. Therefore what we term as meaning of the text finds a wider and complex characterization beyond what is inscribed in a text. The 'text that is' is 'texts within' and the 'meaning that is' is 'meanings beyond.' This alters the hermeneutic of the text and takes the task of interpreting text as a skilful intervention into historical, cultural, social and institutional realms. Interpretation can no more be done within the postulates of academia but should take into account the relation between text to society and culture. Therefore, interpretation becomes a process similar to the process of compiling a text. There is no independent meaning, no independent text and no independent interpretation. Singularity is illusory. The text would become texts to open up the dynamics of intertextuality within and outside the text. Intertextuality assumes an examination of interconnections between texts that situates the making of meaning in and through a dialogic process that occurs between the text and audience. This process expands the purview of what a text is from being a written form to encompass culture and history. The autonomy of the text becomes questionable by making it permeable through a process of inter-coherence where text generates structural connections between itself and other texts.

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