

The Essence of Intertextuality

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Abstract:

The term "intertextuality" illuminates a facet of novelty within the field of terminology and modern critical studies. This explains its prominence and the consequent divergence of opinions surrounding its theoretical underpinnings and practical applications.

Intertextuality raises a critical issue concerning the autonomy or dependence of the text. While modern Western criticism has focused on the text's dependence on psychological, historical, or social contexts, contemporary criticism, through the lens of intertextuality, asserts the non-autonomy and non-dependence of the text. Instead, the text maintains a relationship with preceding texts, as intertextuality operates at both the formal and content levels.

Regarding Arab critics, the early manifestations of intertextuality are evident in discussions related to it and its Arab conceptualization, including literary plagiarism, quotation, and (inclusion/incorporation). Consequently, intertextuality has acquired significant dimensions within modern literary critical studies, albeit while drawing upon these traditional roots in both their critical and rhetorical aspects.

Keywords: The Essence , Intertextuality

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Introduction:

Intertextuality is considered one of the most problematic and contested terms among both European and Arab critics. Indeed, any contemporary literary production is built upon the remnants of other texts. Given that intertextuality is a product and outgrowth of Western culture, its initial development stemmed from this context, followed by attempts in classical Arab critical theories to reconcile the two. To preserve our authenticity, renew our knowledge, and develop our criticism, the central question arises: Is intertextuality an act of creation, literary plagiarism, or a simulation of others' ideas integrated within theories using different techniques?

١. The Concept of Text and Intertextuality in Arab Critical Studies

١,١ The Linguistic Concept of Text and Intertextuality in the Arab Tradition:

a. The Text in Lexicographical Language:

Its root in Arabic signifies appearance, elevation, and accumulation. The renowned Arabic dictionary *Lisan al-Arab* clarifies that to narrate a *hadith* (saying or tradition of the Prophet Muhammad) to someone implies elevating it or making it apparent^١. The dictionary further illustrates the root's meaning through the action of arranging goods, where items are placed upon one another. In the fields of (principles o

f jurisprudence) and exegesis, a fundamental principle states the absence of independent reasoning when an explicit text is present. Consequently, the *text* is understood as definitive, possessing a singular meaning and interpretation, thereby precluding alternative readings.

b- The Concept of Text in the Perspective of Classical Criticism:

From the preceding analysis of Arabic lexicography, it is evident that the term for "text" signifies appearance, clarification, the ultimate point, and its extremity.

The derived verbal form for "intertextuality" in Arabic has a verbal noun that follows a pattern indicating reciprocity. This pattern inherently

suggests interaction, as seen in words denoting sharing, quarreling, and mutual attraction

٢. Thus, the linguistic understanding of "intertextuality" involves making apparent, elevating, accumulating, reaching an ultimate point, interacting with something, and exhibiting both participation and difference. A significant divergence exists between this traditional lexicographical understanding and its modern critical application as a term synonymous with the Western concept. Despite this, classical Arab critics were aware of this direct implication through their employment of the Arabic root (n-s-j) and related terms signifying imaging, ornamentation, embroidery, inlay, and similar concepts.

The esteemed scholar Al-Jahiz articulated that.

"Poetry is but a craft, a kind of weaving, and a type of imaging"

Similarly, Ibn Khaldun, in discussing the Arabic term for "weaving," described the meticulous formation and composition of correct Arabic phrases, comparing it to the precise arrangement of a builder in a mold or a weaver on a loom^٤. He further suggested that a thorough examination of the Arab intellectual heritage would readily yield relevant insights. Indeed, this heritage encompasses a substantial body of over fifteen hundred literary, rhetorical, and critical terms. Ibn Khaldun implied that those who emphasize the problem^٥.

٢. Intertextuality in Western Criticism:

The term "intertextuality" first emerged through the work of the scholar Julia Kristeva in several essays written between ١٩٦٦ and ١٩٦٧. These were published in the journals *Tel Quel* and *Critique* and later republished in her books *Sémiotikè* and *Le Roman du texte*, as well as in her introduction to Bakhtin's work on Dostoevsky.

For Kristeva, intertextuality is situated within the problematic of textual productivity, which takes shape as a textual operation. According to her, its definition necessitates the inclusion of another term: *idéologème*. This

represents a compositional process encompassing the system of the text, determining what other texts it includes or to which it alludes. Thus, intertextuality becomes the intersection within a text of expressions borrowed from other texts. It is a process of transferring prior or simultaneous expressions, functioning in some ways as a "cutting out" and a "transformation". All these phenomena belong to an aesthetic that Kristeva, drawing from Bakhtin, terms "dialogism" or "polyphony".

Julia Kristeva defines intertextuality as "the intersection within a text of expressions taken from other texts; it is the relationship between the discourse of the self and the discourse of the other."

It involves the retrieval of prior or simultaneous texts within a given text, engaging in dialogue, and expressing them in a distinct aesthetic manner. Texts are in dialogue with one another, operating under the principles of displacement and substitution.

Thus, intertextuality appears as a dialogue between the text and its author, encompassing the author's prior experiences. It is also a dialogue between the text and its recipient, involving the recipient's prior knowledge. This dialogic interaction is what Kristeva terms "intertextuality," stating: "Every text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; every text is the absorption and transformation of another text."

The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read at least as double." She further posits that intertextuality is "the encounter of textual surfaces, a dialogue of several writings: of one code with another." Therefore, the term "text" in Julia Kristeva's work is situated within textual productivity. It is also crucial to note that Mikhail Bakhtin was the first to elaborate the term intertextuality into a concept signifying the relationship between texts occurring in various ways. He is considered a key theorist in limiting the author's dominance, emphasizing the language of the text over the authorial figure. Within this language, dialogic relations occur, which Bakhtin termed "verbal communication that occurs between individuals in a social environment," and this utterance enters into a dialogue or dialogues that contribute to the production of discourse.

Todorov distinguished between Bakhtin's dialogism and Kristeva's intertextuality, advocating for a criticism based on research. He argued that the utterance defines its object and expresses its specificity concerning the speaker's intention regarding language. What belongs to the system of symbols pertains to the linguistic system, while what indicates a singular event belongs to the system of the utterance.

Todorov proposes the term "commentary" to designate the process of producing a text based on another text, aiming to facilitate understanding. This "commentary" relies on establishing a relationship between the text under analysis and the other elements that constitute its context. These elements include knowledge of the linguistic system of the element that can be subjected to lexical symbols and grammatical rules – what Schleiermacher, the founder of modern hermeneutics, termed "grammatical interpretation" – and, secondly, the inclusion of the analyzed page within the collection of writings to which it belongs.

This is what is termed "technical interpretation." Subsequently, Todorov replaced "grammatical interpretation" and "technical interpretation" with "structural analysis," which focuses on highlighting the relationships of textual interpenetration`.

Despite the widespread adoption and development of the term "intertextuality" as a critical theory within contemporary Western critical discourse, some researchers, alongside Todorov, employed it with precision, such as:

- **Roland Barthes:** A prominent semiotic critic, Barthes argued for the necessity of the author's disappearance. The author is no longer a creative, ingenious originator to whom the content of the text is attributed, because the text belongs to utterances emanating from a thousand focal points of culture.
- **Michael Riffaterre:** In his later stylistic works, Riffaterre adopted the concept of intertextuality and employed it as a level of interpretation. Alternatively, it can be said that he used this concept of "contradiction" as a referentiality for literary works and their nature, that is, specific referentiality. It reveals the

allusions inherent in the text, which initially appear to be references to real-world objects or entities but are merely allusions to other texts''.

- **Gérard Genette:** With Gérard Genette, intertextuality was integrated into the categories of transtextuality, the meaning of which encompasses everything that connects one text to other texts, directly or indirectly. According to this definition, it is specified by five types of transtextual relations:
 - ✓ **Intertextuality:** This carries the meaning of intertextuality as defined by Kristeva and, according to Genette, specifically involves the actual presence of one text within another through quotation, plagiarism, and similar forms.
 - ✓ **Paratextuality:** Genette limits this to elements such as titles, subtitles, prefaces, captions, and publisher's notes.
 - ✓ **Metatextuality:** This is the relationship of commentary that links one text to another that discusses it without necessarily mentioning it.
 - ✓ **Hypertextuality:** This pertains to the relationship that unites a subsequent text (hypertext) with a prior text (hypotext) through transformation or imitation.
 - ✓ **Architextuality:** This is the most abstract and encompassing type, representing a silent relationship''.

From this assessment, it is observed that Gérard Genette conflates intertextuality with quotation and plagiarism. Furthermore, he does not clearly distinguish the differences in defining metatextuality and hypertextuality. Genette views transtextuality as the connection of a text with other texts, directly or indirectly.

From this perspective, it can be argued that Western criticism, in its study of intertextuality, has focused on the meaning of the word, the method of text construction, and the mechanisms of text construction, as well as how a text derives its meaning.

Other types of relationships also fall under transtextuality, such as imitation and expression, in addition to parody and pastiche, which exhibit overlap and a lack of clear distinction. All of this can be included within the framework of textual analogy.

It should be noted here that transtextuality necessarily includes the relationship of interpenetration that links a text to the various types of discourse to which it belongs^{١٢}.

The term "intertextuality" has encountered a significant number of methodological disagreements due to the extensive body of critical writing on it in Western criticism.

١٢. Antecedents of Intertextuality Theory in Arab Criticism:

a. Concept and Motivations:

The flourishing of critical activity in Arab criticism and the growing efforts surrounding intertextuality had a positive impact on modern Arab criticism. It witnessed numerous critical studies that focused on modern methodologies, striving to achieve the poetics of the literary text, driven by a desire to enrich this term through translation and transfer from the languages in which it developed. Amidst this assiduous follow-up, theoretical and applied studies on various literary texts were produced, and specialized journals and magazines were dedicated to it. Given that intertextuality, in its modern form, is one of the most prominent starting points for modern critical study, Arab efforts have redoubled through participation and the expression of opinions alongside its pioneers in the modern era, in addition to another effort represented in its excavation within the Arab tradition. This tradition reveals that its ancient Arab critics had accorded great attention to the concept close to intertextuality, or textual interpenetration, not as a name derived from its textual meaning previously nor by its contemporary designation (intertextuality) as mentioned earlier in the critical terminology, but rather by other designations they employed in their poetic and critical studies. We find it in the rhetorical field: inclusion/implication, allusion, reference, and quotation (...).

In the critical domain: (polemics/contests), (literary thefts/appropriations), (counter-poems/refutations), (preference/comparison), (balancing/comparison), (mediation), and (good memorization/retention). This indicates that the topic is not an innovation or new to them; rather, upon examining our heritage, we can identify many pieces of evidence and examples indicative of the meaning of the term intertextuality or the interpenetration of texts as a phenomenon or a fundamental issue that generated much discussion at the time, especially when the topic concerned poetic discourse, where textual interpenetration abounds consciously or unconsciously. "Most books were authored as a result of the critical movements that arose against poets."^{٤٥} While we consider unconscious a natural occurrence, given that "language, through which humans express themselves, is a non-virgin language, not owned by anyone, consumed since time immemorial, and in its eternal circulation, it sheds what it sheds and adds what it adds to complete its cycle, and the artwork does not differ from this system as a product of a producer"^{٤٦}.

To further support this, Muhammad Mustafa Hadara concluded in the findings of his research that "literary thefts are ancient in the history of human thought and that no literature of human literatures has been devoid of them."^{٤٧} Material theft was prevalent in primitive societies; its significance evolved with the advancement and development of civilization. Thus, it began to address human ideas, and efforts were made to expose them, with the desire to eliminate them or reduce their intensity.

"Thus, intertextuality means that the literary text, 'the present text,' is understood through its relationship with other works, 'the absent text'; literature grows in a world filled with the words of others"^{٤٨}.

Consequently, we find that a text is a formation of previous or contemporary texts, reformulated in a new way.

b. Intertextuality Among Ancient Arabs:

"Our Arab literature has recognized what is known as literary (appropriations), whether in terms of wording or meaning. Perhaps this

is a form of textual interpenetration, because the poet or writer is not isolated but rather open to what has been said and is being said. They borrow from their predecessors, pilfer, and quote."

"The Arab poet was not immune to the interrelation of texts; they do not produce in isolation but rather through that creative energy latent within them. They can draw inspiration from what their peers have said, taking from their predecessors and emulating their examples. Thus, these texts merge within the creator's consciousness, and the originality belongs to the creator who has managed to assimilate this wealth of preceding material — (stripping/adaptation), (appropriation/theft), (raid/borrowing), (patchwork/compilation)."

Some critics considered these forms to be *appropriation* that diminishes and detracts from the originality of the work, while others deemed them a creative necessity. One of the first poets to condemn appropriation was Ṭarafa ibn al-'Abd, who stated:

I do not encroach upon poems, stealing them... I have sung beyond them, and the worst of people is the thief.¹⁴

Literary appropriation in poetry involves a poet taking from another's poem and attributing it to themselves. All literature is not devoid of these appropriations, which were more common in ancient times. For example, al-Farazdaq, if he admired something in the poetry of his time, would ask its owner to concede it to him. If they refused, he would threaten them with scathing satire, forcibly take it, and attribute it to himself.

"The appropriation is what is conveyed in meaning without its wording, except for the verse of Imru' al-Qais and Ṭarafa ibn al-'Abd, where they differed only in the rhyme." Imru' al-Qais says:

***Halt, my companions, their mounts beside her,
They say, "Do not perish in sorrow, and endure."***

And Ṭarafa ibn al-'Abd says:

***Halt, my companions, their mounts beside her,
They say, "Do not perish in sorrow, and be patient."***^{١٩}

In his theory of (arrangement/composition), 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani champions meaning, asserting that this meaning is what distinguishes the poet.

"Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani demonstrated how poets circulated the same meaning, with each having their method of concealing it on one hand and presenting it well on the other."

Critics further divide appropriation into five categories:

- ✓ (copying): taking the exact wording and meaning without any addition.
- ✓ (stripping/adaptation): taking a part of the meaning.
- ✓ (distortion/transformation): altering the meaning to something inferior.
- ✓ Taking the meaning with addition.
- ✓ Reversing the meaning to its opposite^{٢٠}.

Thus, there is an interpenetration between texts and an interaction between the old text and the new, which led Arab critics to believe that literary appropriations constitute the initial roots for the emergence of intertextuality in contemporary criticism.

Among the ancient Arab critical terms that closely or distantly approximated the significance and concept of intertextuality is the term inclusion, which is considered a form of textual interaction or the interpenetration of texts. Ibn Rashiq defines it in his book [The Support] as your intentional reference to a verse of poetry or a hemistich, bringing it at the end or in the middle of your poem."

The concept of *inclusion* becomes clearer in the verses of Mahmoud ibn al-Husein:

***O suitor of gray hair, while the days reveal it...
This is the youth of life, a divine creation.***

***Recall to yourself the saying of a wise and experienced man...
In a similar situation to yours, there is discipline and reprimand.***

***Indeed, the new, when added to creation...
People recognize that the garment has been raised.***

The intermediary phrase between the two couplets indicates that the poet is accused of appropriation or that the verse is not well-known. However, contrary to this, the verse is famous because the mention of the garment has excluded the second from the realm of the first, except in meaning. This *inclusion* is found among the skillful and is one of the best types of *inclusion*'.

"For *inclusion* is when a speech includes a poetic hemistich or a current saying. It is also the poet's borrowing of half-verses from the poetry of others and inserting them into the middle of the verses of their poem, which is called '*inclusion*.' Among its aspects is the criticism of the author of the included material for placing the words out of their proper context. There is also the included material and its transposition to a meaning other than its original."^{٢٢}

Among these is the saying of the poet:

***If rese guides him towards firmness, he does not say...
"Tomorrow, away from it," if obstacles do not hinder it.***

The phrase "Tomorrow, away from it, if obstacles do not hinder it" is from the poetry of another *included material* here.

However, with the explosion of the old poetic form and the transformation of poetry into free verse, poets attempted to enrich their poetic experience by diversifying the sources of rhythm. *Inclusion* was one of these means, widely used in free verse. The contemporary poet employs traditional or other elements in a way that aligns with the semantic significance of the poem.

Conclusion:

Thus, Arab critics have traced the phenomenon of textual interpenetration for a long period. The majority of Arabic critical and rhetorical works address this phenomenon with insightful analysis rooted in deep cultural understanding and extensive knowledge, indicating the continuous presence of the preceding text in their minds.

Arab critics, across different places and times, advocated for following the traditions of their predecessors. Deviation from them was considered innovation and heresy, with God being the sole creator, and the innovator being misguided^{٢٢}.

Nevertheless, they meticulously examined the works of poets and writers to expose their *appropriation*. This facilitated their ability to point out the manifestations of the preceding text in the subsequent text, whether at the level of words, structures, or meanings. Although most ancient Arab critics viewed the issue of literary *appropriation* from a purely ethical standpoint, we find instances of commendable *appropriation* that represent the initial nucleus for the contemporary theory of intertextuality.

^١ Ibn Manzur, *The Tongue of the Arabs*, Vol. ١٤, ٣rd ed., Dar Sader for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon: ٢٠٠٤.

^٢ Ahmad Qabsh Taha, *The Complete Book on Grammar, Morphology, and Syntax*, Dar al-Rashid: ١٤٠٦ AH - ١٩٨٦ CE, p. ٢٩٧.

^٣ Mustafa al-Saadani, *On Poetic Intertextuality*, n.d., Munsha'at al-Ma'arif, Alexandria: ٢٠٠٥, p. ٧٩.

^٤ Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *The Introduction*, Dar al-Qalam, Beirut, Lebanon, ٧th ed., ١٩٨٩, p. ٥٧١.

^٥ Ahmad Matlub, *Dictionary of Terms of Old Arab Criticism*, ١st ed., Maktabat Lubnan Nashirun, Beirut, ٢٠٠١, p. ٩.

^٦ Muhammad Abd al-Muttalib, *Issues of Modernity in the Thought of Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani*, Al-Sharika al-Alamiya lil-Nashr Longman, 1st ed., ١٩٩٥, pp. ١٤٧.

^٧ Todorov et al., *The Concept of Intertextuality in the New Critical Discourse*, trans. Ahmad al-Madini, Dar al-Shu'un lil-Tiba'a wa al-Nashr, n.d., n.p., p. ١٠٣.

^٨ Muhammad Azzam, *The Absent Text: Manifestations of Intertextuality in Arab Poetry*, Publications of the Arab Writers Union, Damascus, n.d., ٢٠٠١, pp. ٣٨-٣٩.

^٩ Todorov et al., *The Concept of Intertextuality in the New Critical Discourse*, p. ١٠٣.

^{١٠} Muhammad Azzam, *The Absent Text: Manifestations of Intertextuality in Arab Poetry*, Publications of the Arab Writers Union, Damascus, n.d., ٢٠٠١, pp. ٢٤-٢٥.

^{١١} The previous reference, p. ٢٦.

^{١٢} Said Yaqtin, *The Openness of the Novelistic Text: Text and Context*, ٣rd ed., The Arab Cultural Center, Casablanca, Morocco, ٢٠٠٦ CE, pp. ٩٦-٩٧.

^{١٣} Muhammad Abd al-Muttalib, *Issues of Modernity in the Thought of Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani*, p. ١٥٢.

^{١٤} Muhammad Mustafa Hadara, *The Problem of Plagiarism in Arab Criticism*, n.d., Matba'at Lijān al-Bayān al-'Arabī: ١٩٥٨, p. ٢٧٧.

^{١٥} Munir Sultan, *Description of the Epistle of Forgiveness to the Afterworld*, Mansha'at al-Ma'arif, Alexandria, p. ٧١.

^{١٦} Muhammad Mustafa Hadara, *The Problem of Plagiarism in Arab Criticism*, p. ٢٧٦.

^{١٧} Muhammad Azzam, *The Absent Text: Manifestations of Intertextuality in Arab Poetry*, Publications of the Arab Writers Union, Damascus, n.d., ٢٠٠١, p. ١١.

^{١٨} Master's Thesis, *Intertextuality in the Novel Al-Jaziyya and the Dervishes*, University of Akid El Hadj Lakhdar - Batna, Class of ٢٠٠٢-٢٠٠٣, pp. ٢-٣.

^{١٩} Ali Hasan Fallah, *Intertextuality: The Self's Intrusion into Another World*, *Al-Mawqif al-Adabi Magazine*, n.d., Damascus, Issue ٣٣٥, Year ٢٠٠١, p. ٠١.

^{٢٠} Ibn Rashiqa al-Qayrawani, *The Support in the Criticism and Examination of Poetry*, commentary by Afif Nayif Satum, 1st ed., Dar al-Ma'rifa, Beirut, ٢٠٠٣, p. ٥٣٢.

^{٢١} *Ibid.*, pp. ٣٧١.

^{٢٢} Al-Sayyid Nur al-Din, *Stylistics and Discourse Analysis: A Study in Modern Arab Criticism*, n.d., Dar Houma, Algeria, Vol. ٠٢, p. ١١٦.

^{٢٣} Mohammed Miftah, *Analyzing Poetic Discourse: The Strategy of Intertextuality*, p. ١٣٤.