

Your name

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Course

Date

Intertextuality

The idea that everything has already been written was and still is a popular concept. If you write something, there is a chance that the same thoughts having been written by another person at some other point in time. The text cannot exist as an isolated entity. The term “intertextuality” was coined in 1966 by Julia Kristeva, a famous literary theorist. She believed that there is something that connects all written texts in various time periods into one single unity. In other words, every text has connections, whether implicit or explicit, with all the other texts ever written before (Wimmer).

Julia Kristeva developed this term in a response to the theory of Ferdinand de Saussure, who claimed that signs gain their structural meanings in text. Kristeva, on the other hand, believed that when reading new text, we are not only limited to the meanings contained in it, but we recollect the ideas and meanings we have grasped from previously read texts (Novak).

According to Joshua Wimmer, the following such relationships between texts exist:

- **Allusion:** A generally implied reference to characters, scenes, plot elements, etc. that appear in another work. For instance, Morpheus' promise to Neo in *The Matrix* to show him 'how deep the rabbit hole goes' is an allusion to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll.
- **Pastiche:** Related to the Italian word for 'paste,' this is a collage of words, phrases, or entire passages from one or more other authors that creates a new literary work. The more elaborate pastiche will usually incorporate elements of plot, theme, style, and even character development.

- **Parody:** Very similar in form to the pastiche, the parody reappropriates the work of others, but for the purpose of poking fun rather than praising. Many of 'Weird' Al Yankovic's songs are parodies of the work of other popular artists (Wimmer).

What function does intertextuality actually perform in a text when used deliberately in a text? Tracy Lemaster points out the following: **comparison, dialogue, and destabilization** (Lemaster). By comparison, it is meant that by referencing another text, the author gives us an opportunity to think about how the referenced text changes the way we perceive the primary text. Another way that two texts may interact is through dialogue, or we can call it the reciprocal changes in the meanings and ideas of each. By putting two different texts side by side, we create a dialogue between them. And the last one is destabilization, which means that referenced text is used to alter the way the primary text is perceived; in other words, its main aim is to destroy the stereotyped patterns of perception to give way for new viewpoints and ideas.

The effects of using intertextuality as a literary device can also be different, according to Lemaster. Either the primary text may change its meaning, or the referenced text is transformed and readers understand it differently. Very often, using intertextuality changes both primary and secondary texts and also reveals similarities and differences between each of them.

Works Cited

Lemaster, Tracy. What Is “Intertextuality”? 2012. Web

Novak, Sophie. Intertextuality as a Literary Device. *The Write Practice*. 2013. Web

Wimmer, Joshua. Intertextuality in Literature: Definition & Examples. *Study.com*. 2015. Web