Intertextuality and Spirotextuality: Rethinking Textual Interconnections

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Abstract

Notwithstanding significant contributions by Julia Kristeva, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Ferdinand de Saussure to an understanding of textual interrelationships, many other scholars continue to explore this phenomenon and this has given rise to a number of claims about intertextuality that border on sophistry. By means of a critical methodology that takes a close look at what intertextuality is all about and certain sophist implications, this foundational essay exposes the shortcomings of intertextuality concerning textual interconnections and establishes spirotextuality as an alternative worldview that is more realistic, more comprehensive, more historically sensitive and more defensible.

Keywords: Intertextuality, metempsychosis, poststructuralism, sophism, spirotextuality

1. Introduction

Works of literature in many cases exhibit a high level of similarity in themes, style and objectives. While exercising their literary creativity, authors and critics may borrow ideas and structure from pre-existing or contemporaneous works. This capability accounts for the high level of similarities between different texts, a fact unaffected by differences in place and time of writing. The character of literature to echo or mirror other texts is generally called *intertextuality* although some scholars have different understandings of this concept, as highlighted in a work by D'Angelo (2010), while a few others prefer other terminologies, for instance, Norman Fairclough's *recontextualization*.

There are also what are considered types of intertextuality, which, depending on the intention of the author, is "obligatory" when the author intentionally borrows from or establishes links with other texts which the reader is expected to be familiar with too for a proper context of meaning; "optional" when the author does not use or establish textual links in ways that make familiarity with those texts necessary for a proper context of meaning; and "accidental" when it is the reader rather than the author that actually establishes textual links where the author did not make any and as a result of the reader's personal knowledge.

However, there is still something that mostly underlies all these variant conceptions of intertextuality, which, according to Patil (2011), is the view that,

> The greatness of the work of art will be measured by not only its local, to use Edward Said's concept, "worldliness" but by the quality and richness of its intertextuality and internationality. Consequently, the traditional formula that "style is the man" falls short in the analysis of the complex international and intercultural textuality. As style is constructed by innumerable elements outside that man; the formation of the stylistic identity of that man largely depends on both intrinsic as well as extrinsic ingredients. (p. 28)

Nevertheless, an affirmation that intertextuality exists between works of literature does not amount in itself to a claim that such works of literature do not also exhibit diverse levels of contrasts between them too.

In addition, Habib (2005) recounts that in the opinion of Irvine who prefers a broader historical sense of intertextuality,

> modern forms of textuality and critical discourse are part of a much longer grammatical history that is often forgotten or overlooked. In fact, as he argues, *grammatica* continues to shape our understanding of texts, writing, and the literary canon. We might extend his insight to suggest that our modern theories of reading, writing, and textuality are perhaps not so radical when placed in this longer perspective. For one thing, our modern notions of intertextuality are anticipated and already formulated; as Irvine points out, *grammatica* produced a culture that was *intertextual*: a written work was constituted as a text by being accorded a position in a larger library of texts; it was interpreted as part of a larger textual system (GLT, 15). (p. 178)

2. Understanding Intertextuality

The term *intertextuality*, which was preceded by the term *intersubjectivity* in philosophy and psychology, was provided by the poststructuralist, Julia Kristeva, in 1966. However, Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) had earlier developed the theory of *dialogism* or *dialogicity*, which means that a text exists in mutual communication or dialogue with other texts and a word is a nexus of textual networks and surfaces. In addition, it highlights the interrelationship between an author and the author's work, the work and its readers, and between these three factors and socio-historical factors.

Dialogism was explored in Bakhtin's work with colleagues (the "Bakhtin Circle") from 1918 onwards. When their insights were made available to the West in the 1970s and early 1980s through translations from Russian along with the works of Julia Kristeva (1980, 1986) especially *Desire in language* (1980), Bakhtin's views were found to dovetail with the nascent theory of intertextuality.

Furthermore, in her work, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," Kristeva (1986), building on Bakhtin's insights, goes on to posit that "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 read as at least *double*" (p. 37). Similar views are seen in her "The bounded text" (1966-67). Furthermore, it is also in this respect that Kristeva affirms the inner connection between historical circumstances and the evolution of literature by defining ambivalence as "the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history" (1986, p. 39).

Ambivalence is the affirmation that the evolution and state of affairs of both a society and its literature mutually influence each other. This viewpoint is also underscored in areas of discourse analysis that explore how discourse (written or oral) can effectively stimulate, promote, undermine, change or end certain behaviours and worldviews among a group of people. This perspective is explored by scholars such as M. Foucault (1972), N. Fairclough (1995), R. H. Jones (2012), and J. P. Gee (2005) and which in turn reinforces description of social events as texts too and which are capable of intertextual connections with other forms of literature.

While Kristeva's works motivated many scholars to adopt the term *intertextuality* to refer to the capability of literary works to influence each other in different ways, intertextuality also provides reinforcement to the concept of *heteroglossia* which refers to the capacity of a word or text to have multiple meanings rather than one. This phenomenon dovetails with Jacques Derrida's (1981) *deconstruction* which seeks to uncover different layers of meaning or multiple perspectives in texts.

One can argue that the uncovering of texts embedded dispersedly or focally within another text also equates as deconstruction since it turns up levels of meaning or multiplicity of perspectives within a unified framework. This viewpoint about strong connections between deconstruction and intertextuality can be inferred from Alfaro's (1996) position that,

> There are always other words in a word, other texts in a text. The concept of intertextuality requires, therefore, that we understand texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness, since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures. Rejecting the New Critical principle of textual autonomy, the theory of intertextuality insists that a text cannot exist as a self-sufficient whole, and so, that it does not function as a closed system. (p. 268)

Besides Bakhtin and Kristeva, Ferdinand de Saussure and the rise of poststructuralism in literary theory are also considered to have contributed significantly to the origin and popularity of the term *intertextuality*. Thereafter, the underlying maxim that every text is an intertext and every intertext is a text is found echoed in various forms by scholars such as E. Auerbach, M. Halliday, M. Booker, R. Bell, G. Allen, N. Fairclough, V. Leitch, H. Plett, and T. Eagleton. In addition, as Habib (2005) recounts,

> Barthes states an important feature of poststructuralist analysis when he says that the text "is plural." This plurality, he claims, is irreducible; in other words, it is not the plurality of mere coexistence of meanings that can answer to interpretation. Rather, it is a plurality issuing from "a disconnected, heterogenous variety of substances and perspectives," a plurality that marks the text as comprised by difference, by a "weave of signifiers" that brings together a variety of citations, echoes, and cultural codes. Every text is held in "intertextuality," in a network of signifiers of which no part can be arbitrarily separated as possessing unity. Barthes seems to suggest that such a conception of plurality is not conceived as the opposite of unity but as outside of the entire opposition of unity and plurality, as external to the opposition of identity and difference. (p. 647)

Martin (2011) notes that Kristeva's insights on intertextuality came at a time when scholars were witnessing a transition from structuralism to poststructuralism. However, poststructuralism does not in any way pretend to have totally eclipsed structuralism in making significant contributions to intertextuality since it provides some important insights too, for instance, that "All texts refer to other texts, which is another indication of intertextuality of meaning" (Taghizadeh 2013, p. 288). Furthermore, as Taghizadeh (2013) points out, structuralists

> often search for the common understructures of literary productions of a certain author or even a whole period. This indicates the "intertextuality" of meaning in structuralism, the space in which while reading a text, one would like to locate as many connections (references) as possible to as many other texts as possible. The outcome of intertextuality can be the creation of a universal text, or as we read in *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*, an "intertext (that is, the text within which other texts reside or echo their PRESENCE" (Hawthorn, 1992, p. 126). Intertextuality is a dimension of the text which comes into existence when individual texts enter the interior of other texts, an all-encompassing text of which every other text is only a sub-text. (p. 288)

Intertextuality is indeed a broad textual canvass on which a literary artist uses devices such as allusions, inclusions and echoes to paint one work within or over another. Intertextuality also highlights the diachronic and

synchronic aspects of the development of a work of literature in relation to others. One of the major achievements of intertextuality is the critique of author-centred criticism. Intertextuality underscores that a literary text can have multidimensional interpretations and that these interpretations can never be sufficiently circumscribed by the author's circumstances and opinions.

This falls in line with Barthes' argument in his landmark essay, *The death of the author*, first published in 1967 in the American journal, *Aspen* (no. 5-6), that a text cannot be reduced to or defined solely in terms of the subjective views or message of its writer (the author-God) because it is rather suffused with multiple meanings or messages drawn from pre-existent texts by means of intertextuality.

Barthes understands the writer not as an author in the sense of someone who uses his or her imagination to create a work which is totally or largely new but as a *scriptor* whose principal function is to combine a select variety of existing texts into newer textual formations. Barthes also argues that the more the presence of an author is deemphasized in a given text (the *death* of the author), the more a reader will appreciate the literary merits of that text (the *birth* of the reader).

However, it will be a very difficult position to defend to hold that the death of the author is the enthronement of the critic. In other words, even though in some circumstances an author might fail to convey insights in very clear terms which makes it possible for a critic to step in and clarify them for other readers, no critic or audience can claim to understand an author's viewpoint better than the author. Every word or expression an author employs has a personal history or perspective of life behind it which no critic or audience can pretend to exhaust. A poet might, for instance, sketch a first draft of a poem and discard it only to later retrieve it and borrow some lines from it for a new poem with a different theme. In this scenario, a critic will explore those lines of poetry in relation to the theme and context of the new poem not knowing those same lines of poetry had another function earlier.

About what an author means in a work, the author is the best judge; about what a work means to an audience, a critic is the best judge; about what a work implies in real life situations, an audience is the best judge. Intertextuality between these three points of view can provide a synthesis that will be supreme over all.

In principle, it is more resourceful then for a critic as well as an author to keep an open mind in appreciation of the fact that every word and every text lends itself to multiple interpretations and implications. Pawar's (2011) view makes a contribution in this regard when he says,

> There is such an indeterminacy in any fictional art work that neither consistency nor certainty is possible…. The meaning is indeterminate. The text is not a closed system but an open one into which we can have access through many different entrances none of which can be claimed as the main one. Each single text, again, is a network that recalls the many other texts and opens up the horizon of intertextuality. A text is no longer seen as a veil hiding a meaning, but a web without a centring spider; free play without closure. (p. 283)

Indeed, no critic or audience can rightly claim to know what an author supposedly ought to have said or had in mind but failed to express clearly. This point raises questions concerning some critics who, for instance, declare that John Milton inadvertently made Satan a hero rather than a villain in *Paradise lost*, as if Milton had erred in making his work seem that way! He could have intentionally made Satan look like a hero for reasons best known to him and which should not be considered a shortcoming.

A classic example of intertextuality is Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart* (1958) which, in both its title and orientation, borrows from W. B. Yeats' poem, "The second coming" (1920):

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned.
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity. (1-8)

Similarly, Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are not to blame* (1971) has strong intertextual connections with Sophocles' *Oedipus rex*. In line with how ideas and structures can be borrowed from foreign contexts in ways that make them relevant to local contexts, Patil (2011) points out that,

> The local elements of structures of feelings are more dominant in regional language writings. To the other extreme the Indian English literature exhibits more complex international intertextuality in its style. Salman Rushdie is known for "chutanifying" Western literary tradition and his famous phrase "writing back to the empire" has become a key concept in the postcolonial theories. Now the style is studied in terms of semiotics of culture and cultural hybridity. (pp. 28-29)

Intertextual relations between texts and between texts and society (social events are social *texts*) already characterize world literature beginning from oldest known works such as *Beowulf* through popular medieval

works such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400) to early and late modern works such as William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) and some potentially distinguished works still under construction. With regard to these intertextual relations, Hawkes (2003) points out that,

> pristine "literariness" is no longer available. We can never now use words as if literature had never existed. The claims some literature makes to originality [sic], to realism, to physical accuracy of description have ultimately to be seen in this depleting light. To the semiotician, most works of literature, in emitting messages that refer to themselves, also make constant reference to other works of literature. As Julia Kristeva has pointed out, no "text" can ever be completely "free" of other texts. It will be involved in what she has termed the intertextuality of all writing. This leads to one of the most important insights into the nature of literature that semiotics affords. (p. 119)

3. Sophism in Intertextuality

While intertextuality as a concept seems to be understood in different ways by some scholars, certain claims are nothing short of sophism. This sophism in intertextuality often comes in the general shape of the claim: no text is new. A classic example is provided by Alshammari (2017):

> Intertextuality maintains that texts are carriers of particular ideologies and cultures while at the same time speaking to and from each other. In Intertextuality, Graham Allen states that "authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts…in this sense, the text is not an individual, isolated subject, but rather, a compilation of cultural textuality" (p. 35). (p. 35)

Intertextual sophistry is operative in the postulate of textual cycle whereby a text is considered a part of a cycle of mutual allusions, inclusions and echoes between texts and every text derived from these intertextual relations in turn becomes a foundation for yet another intertextual cycle. This viewpoint dovetails with Roland Barthes' thesis that a writer is a *scriptor* concerned mainly with combining certain pre-existent texts into newer textual formations rather than someone who can creatively craft an original work on his or her own.

Sophist intertextualists insist that there exists within the world's literary heritage a cycle of allusions, inclusions and echoes that have become so repetitive that it precludes any creative originality. In this wise, this viewpoint is similar to the doctrine of metempsychosis (transmigration of the soul), which in turn connects with the doctrines of palingenesis (being born again) and reincarnation (rebirth or *refleshment*). The claim here is that there can be no new idea again but a repetition of existing ideas in different textual forms just as there can be no new soul again but a repetition of existing souls in different body forms.

This viewpoint can even lay claim to scientific proof: matter can neither be created nor destroyed but transformed from one form to another, which is also in line with Albert Einstein's equation for mutual conversion between matter and energy: $e = mc^2$, where e = energy, m = mass, and c = speed of light (300,000km/sec or 186,000mi/sec). In the eyes of sophist intertextuality then, new ideas can neither be created nor existing ones annihilated but only intertextualized. However, just like its counterpart in physics, this law does not explain why and how the first set of ideas (or matter) came into existence in the first place without that escapist explanation that it has always existed from eternity! Otherwise, there was when an idea was new. Furthermore, ideas come and ideas go, sometimes leaving no trace behind and this is not about a failed memory! There are ideas that existed in pre-Socratic times which no longer exist today and which no one today can claim to have just forgotten. They vanished from global human memory centuries ago.

Furthermore, the view that every text is an intertext, that is, a recycling of already existent ideas, is like the doctrine that every human being is a recycling of a soul successively inhabiting different animate bodies (human or animal) at different times. Doctrines of metempsychosis, palingenesis and reincarnation in philosophy, theology and ideology are found in various forms in some societies from ancient times to the present.

Metempsychosis holds that the soul is immortal and remains the same while the body which the soul adopts at each turn of the wheel is perishable and mutable. In like manner, sophist intertextuality holds that there already exists a set of original, eternal and same ideas thereafter recombined in variant forms at each stroke of a writer's (*scriptor*'s) pen to yield different literature. Thus, the intertextual cycle is literary metempsychosis.

Just as the metempsychotic cycle presupposes the existence of original souls that remain the same across bodily transformations, the literary metempsychotic cycle presupposes the existence of a fixed number of original ideas that remain the same across textual transformations. This fixed number of original ideas will here be called literary substratals.

Given that the first ever soul to come into existence had to be brand new before its metempsychotic cycle began, every literary substratal was originally brand new before its literary metempsychotic cycle could begin. Then comes the hard-hitting question: At what point and location in history did literary substratals reach their maximum number while the literary metempsychotic cycle commenced?

And yet more questions: did each literary substratal emerge before, alongside or after other literary substratals? Before a city's population can hit a limit or a fixed number, its constituent individuals must have been born

before, alongside or after others. Or would sophist intertextualists suddenly argue for innatism: that all possible ideas have always existed in the human mind from birth? In addition, if a literary substratal could precede others in existence, why wouldn't those later literary substratals be rather interpreted as variant recyclings of the first ever and singular literary substratal? Indeed, these are hard-hitting questions for sophist intertextualists.

Those hard-hitting questions keep coming: was the first ever literary substratal or substratals in crude form or already fully developed before the first literary metempsychotic cycle began? Did each literary substratal come to its full potential over time or already at full form from Day 1? Furthermore, sophist intertextuality does really imply a division of literary (and human) history into two broad categories, namely, a Pre-Literary Metempsychotic Era (when it was only literary substratals) and a Literary Metempsychotic Era (when the recyclings began)? Or would sophist intertextualists also argue that both eras occurred alongside each other – which would rather imply that new or original ideas still actually do come into existence? What could be the benchmark for this division into eras and will there be a Post-Literary Metempsychotic Era?

Yet, some more of those hard-hitting questions: does not literary metempsychosis amount to a claim of literary vicious circle (even if a back and forth movement in linear fashion), literary fatalism and intertextual determinism or predeterminism? How would literary metempsychosis account for works of literature that predict the future rather than reflect the past or the present, which is contrary to recycling the old and if it does not make room for what is new? Chinua Achebe's *A man of the people* (1966) for instance, predicted the first ever Nigerian military coup of 1966 which occurred while the novel was still being published by Heinemann in the United Kingdom. It was chiefly this feature of prediction that made military overlords seek his arrest on allegations of complicity in the coup.

Finally, by what recycling did the Nigerian coup of 1966 (a social *text*) become a recycling of an older state of affairs in Nigeria whereas it was the first ever coup? It is quite significant that in "Part IX" of his *Poetics* (c. 335 BC), Aristotle's description of literature as more philosophical and greater than history since history deals with particular events and recounts the past whereas literature deals with what can happen by necessity or probability underscores the prophetic powers of literature. A similar understanding can be derived from Bakhtin's (1986) view that texts and utterances are influenced by earlier texts to which they respond and by future ones which they anticipate (p. 89). It will, of course, be pushing it too far to claim that a text can have any intertextual relations with another text yet to exist.

These hard-hitting questions expose the sophistry of intertextuality which comes in the general shape of "no text is new." Specially gifted people are capable of doing something new.

It is interesting to note that given the strong correlation between literary metempsychosis and doctrinal metempsychosis (in philosophy, theology and ideology), those hard-hitting questions directed at literary metempsychosis also correlatively apply to doctrinal metempsychosis. For instance, at what point in human history and in what year and place did the first ever original set of souls reach the limit in number before the first ever cycle of transmigration began? Was the first ever soul or souls in a crude form and only came to their full potential over time or already at full form from Day 1? Did each original soul emerge before, alongside or after others? If an original soul preceded others, does not this make those others variant recyclings of the first? Furthermore, does not this viewpoint divide human history into two broad categories, namely, a Pre-Metempsychotic Era (when it was only original souls) and a Metempsychotic Era (when transmigration began)? Or was it that both eras occurred alongside each other? What could be the benchmark for this division into eras and will there be a Post-Metempsychotic Era?

Furthermore, how do metempsychosis, palingenesis and reincarnation account for brand new individuals from intertribal and interracial marriages? How do they explain the consistent increase (addition of new individuals to existing stock) in population from ancient times when it was not large through medieval times when it was about 370 million (due to the Great Famine of 1315-1317/1322 and the Black Death of the 14th century) to present times when it has hit over 7 billion? How do they explain population decline too? But of course, religion and metaphysics are not expected to answer every logical question.

In the same vein, if all that science does is recycle the primitive scientific views of ancient civilizations, what is the fanfare then about Copernicus, Galileo, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Steve Hawking and a lot more others? In what way is the development of the atomic bomb and its bloodcurdling use in World War II a recycling of the atomism of the Jain, Ajivika, and Carvaka schools of India (c. 6th century BC) and of Democritus and Leucippus in the West (c. 5th century BC)? In what ways are the timeless works of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Beethoven, and Handel mere recyclings of primitive artistic forms?

If all that literature does is recycle the old, then, literary civilization would have fallen into a state of bizarre atrophy probably after the Age of Chaucer (1340-1400 AD) or there would have even developed a crazy chasm between language, which would continue to grow, and literature, which would remain stunted maybe shortly after *Beowulf* (c. 975-1010 AD). This will be akin to someone who grows to be very old but with a mind stunted at a teenager's stage.

In conclusion, the past provides resources for the present and the future but do not in any way limit or enslave them to itself as if a vicious circle, fatalism, determinism or predeterminism? The new can and does emerge from the old as *new* rather than as a *recycling* of the old within a milieu of creative ingenuity in the arts or sciences. A gifted writer or inventor can pick up ideas and structures from existing works and create something neither indicated nor anticipated in those works. This is originality. It is not a recycling of the old any more than a plant hybridized from two stocks is a recycling of one or both.

4. Understanding Spirotextuality

Keeping in mind the too many indefensible and erroneous claims and implications of intertextuality as put forward by many scholars, a need arises to provide a more realistic, comprehensive, historically sensitive and defensible description of interconnections between texts and relationships between the old and the new.

This better description of mutual interactions between texts and the new in relation to the old is spirotextuality (spiral textuality). This is a theoretical framework borrowed from an emerging research in physics (cosmophysics) that sets out to develop that elusive theory of everything (TOE) and which has been called the spiral theory of everything (STOE). The relevant core insight here is that a front view look at a length of spring shows just one ring (circle/cycle) whereas a side view shows a progressive succession of interconnected rings (cycles), that is, a series of recyclings in linear progression over time.

In principle then, a spiral is a perfect manifestation of a drive to recycle and a drive for progressive advancement over time. It consists of a movement to recycle what already exists (or the old) at the same time as it undertakes linear progression over time by adding to that stock (generation and addition of the new to the old). If nothing new was capable of being generated and added, then, the recycling would never be capable of progressing over time but must remain fixated on just the first ring and it would not be a spring any more. In this wise, spirotextuality is a perfect concept explaining mutual interactions between texts over time and the position of the new in relation to the old.

A side view of this spring shows the old does connect with the new which, even with this, exists as something new rather than as the old since some more things have been and will continue to be generated and added. In other words, spirotextuality acknowledges that original works are still possible in today's world. A front view of the spring, on the contrary, gives the impression of just one ring (circle/cycle) irrespective of whether other rings behind it are a handful or infinite. This front view answers the needs of scholars who will still want to assert that all literature are the same and nothing new can ever come up again besides recycling the old. However, it is a limitless universe out there and we cannot bottle it up yet or fixate on aspects.

Spirotextuality as a theoretical framework provides the understanding that (gifted) writers in more ways than one repeat the old but in newer forms by using their creative ingenuity to bring in something new over time rather than fixate or stagnate on the old. History repeats itself, yes, but in newer forms and that newness is the domain of originality and novelty by means of creativity. History never repeats itself in the totality of its old self because for one thing, it is already occupying a different position on the spacetime continuum and for another, it is a limitless universe out there!

Possibilities that originality and novelty can still exist by means of individual creative ingenuities despite the immensity of world's current heritage of literature and knowledge are strongly adduced by a number of scholars, for instance, T. S. Eliot as seen in his "Tradition and individual talent." There is also another relevant essay, "The literary artist and literary landscape" that is being contributed to this discussion.

If literature can no more have room for originality and novelty but be inescapably sucked into a vortex of recyclings of the old, that would of course be the dearth and death of literary creativity. On the contrary, understanding textual interrelationships as spirotextuality provides room for and actually accounts for the fact that while texts do indeed reflect each other in various ways, originality and novelty do still come into the picture depending on the creative powers of the individual writer.

Evidence of how the new emerge from the old but still contain qualitative and quantitative differences that distinguish them from the old can be seen in a study by Bennett and Royle (2004) on three poetic works from different locations and times in history (5-6). These are Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury tales* (1387-1400) from England, T. S. Eliot's "The waste land" (1922) from the United States, and an undated Anglican burial service hymn from England with the title, "The order for the burial of the dead" from which T. S. Eliot derived the subtitle, "The burial of the dead," for his aforementioned poem.

Eliot's "The waste land" is an engaging discussion concerning the unbecoming state of the human condition and civilization in the modern world particularly since World War II (1939-1945). "The burial of the dead" says in its opening lines,

    April is the cruellest month, breeding
    Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
    Memory and desire, stirring
    Dull roots with spring rain. (1-4)

Spirotextual connections between Eliot's verse here and the old can be seen particularly with reference to Chaucer's *The Canterbury tales* (a collection of 24 stories centred around pilgrims) which is generations older and which says in its opening lines,

> Whan that April with his shoures sote
> The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
> Of which vertu engendred is the flour. (1-4)

Spirotextuality (rather than intertextuality), which is thus a more realistic, comprehensive, historically sensitive and defensible description of interconnections between texts and relationships between the old and the new, provides a better orientation to appreciate Eliot's point about the relationship between an artist and forebears in that tradition. As Bennett and Royle (2004) point out,

> Literary texts, that is to say, are always constructed by and within a context or tradition. In his well-known essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Eliot himself argues that "No poet, no artist of any art, has his [sic] complete meaning alone": rather, what is important is the poet's "relation to the dead poets and artists" (Eliot 1975, 38). A poem, novel or play that does not in some sense relate to previous texts is, in fact, literally unimaginable. The author of such a text would have to invent everything. It would be like inventing a new language from scratch, without any reliance on already existing languages. In this sense, intertextuality (the displacement of origins to other texts, which are in turn displacements of other texts and so on – in other words an undoing of the very idea of pure or straightforward origins) is fundamental to the institution of literature. No text makes sense without other texts. Every text is what Roland Barthes calls 'a new tissue of past citations' (Barthes 1981, 39). (pp. 5-6)

Eliot makes no such claim that a gifted artist is still not capable of contributing something new to existing traditions. He fully acknowledges individual creativity. His point is rather that an artist must connect with tradition for his or her work to make meaning or before it can amount to anything. Put simply, the old stimulates the new while the new confirms the old.

Spirotextuality also accounts for situations where two or more writers writing differently seem to express the same ideas, sometimes even using same or similar words in some lines. This is seen, for instance, between Fidelis U. Okoro's "Kwuredible eleshon don kwom" ("Credible election has come") (2012) and Chinedu Nwadike's "Growing old" (to be published).

> "Kwuredible Eleshon Don Kwom" says,
> Dem say we get demokwracy
> Wey dipperent prom militokwracy
> De thing we dey see na barawokwracy. (16-18)

This verse written in Nigerian Hausa-Fulani manner of English pronunciation, translates as: "They say we have democracy / Which is different from militocracy / What we see is kleptocracy." Here, *militocracy* refers to military rule which sometimes postures as a legitimate democratic dispensation while *barawokwracy* translates as *kleptocracy* which in turn is coined from kleptomania and democracy in reference to how the elite rule over as well as steal from the masses.

> "Growing old" says,
> We vote you to rule and you devote us to misrule,
> Generations impoverished in lifetime while your unborn feed fat before time.
> We go to sleep at night but those nightmares rouse us before light,
> Awaking in a dear nation feeling like strangers in a police station.
> National resources you divvy among the few in your privy,
> The media say it's democracy but all we see is kleptocracy. (49-54)

While Okoro's "Kwuredible eleshon don kwom" was published in his poetry collection, *Pimples and Dimples* which was published in 2012, "Growing old" was commenced on 9 April 2014 at 5:32 p.m. and finalized on 13 May 2014 at 3:01 p.m. with no knowledge of who Okoro was or his poems despite the fact that he was a lecturer in the same department of English and Literary Studies in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka during which time "Growing old" and a number of other poems were written during a postgraduate diploma programme there. Acquaintance was made only in the second semester of the programme during which time Okoro taught the course, "Special topics in poetry."

Spirotextuality as a theoretical framework also applies in other fields of study besides literature in affirmation and explanation of how the old connect with the new over time. Seeing as spirotextual contexts incorporate both variant recyclings of the old and progressive inclusions of the new, then, there is something old in the new and something new in the old.

Furthermore, spirotextuality provides the understanding that once born under the creative artistry of a writer, a work must be acknowledged as independent and deserving of respect and objective treatment as accorded a mature individual born from parents. Such an individual (human or text) cannot be rightly considered enslaved to pre-existing or existing factors (forebears) that gave rise to it. Even a book review is accepted and respected as independent in relation to its parent work notwithstanding that the review borrows heavily from the parent book.

A similar dynamics works out between Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* (1971) and Sophocles' *Oedipus rex* (429 BC) A reader who has never heard of Sophocles or *Oedipus rex* will still effectively and fully appreciate the literary merits of *The gods are not to blame*. For similar reasons, Leonardo da Vinci's *The last supper* (1495-1498) cannot be considered enslaved to that specific event in history some two thousand years ago of which it is a masterpiece depiction.

5. Conclusion

Unlike intertextuality, spirotextuality is a more fitting description and theoretical framework for understanding interconnections between texts and the relationship between the old and the new. Spirotextuality acknowledges continuity in tradition as well as originality and novelty which are critical to growth in global literature and progress in civilization.

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