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THE CONCEPT OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN GHEORGHE CRĂCIUN'S NOVELS

Alexandra UNGUREANU-ATĂNĂSOAIE [1]

Abstract: *The current paper investigates the concept of intertextuality as it is depicted in Gheorghe Crăciun's first four novels. With Gheorghe Crăciun, this concept goes beyond its definition from the theory of literature and, instead, it establishes itself more like a paradigm in which one can find subtypes of intertextuality. This paper aims at investigating these subtypes and at establishing the relationships Gheorghe Crăciun's first four novels hold with other texts, belonging either to the world literature (both old and new, or to Romanian literature (again, both old and contemporary).*

Key words: *intertextuality, internal intertextuality, external intertextuality.*

1. Introduction

The concept of intertextuality has had, up until now, a relatively short career in the field of literary theory. Approximately 50 years of age, this concept has come to occupy centre stage once postmodernism became an inevitable cultural and literary phenomenon. Nowadays, one can find instances of intertextuality everywhere, be it a contemporary postmodern novel or even a TV series. This does not mean, however, that this concept is the invention of postmodern writers. As it is well known, instances of intertextuality can be found in the works of some classical writers (Laurence Sterne with his famous *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* being a fine example), although with a much less solid theoretical framework than in the case of postmodernism.

A short history of the concept is, however, necessary, and this will be covered in the next sub-section of this paper, to the purpose of establishing its evolution, with the shifts in meaning or in perspective and in arriving to a functional definition of the term. The question that arises at this point is whether the established definition of the term is an operational one or whether there is a need for refinement, having in mind the way in which Gheorghe Crăciun puts this concept into action in his novels. Moreover, another point to aim for is to determine whether the use of intertextuality is a mere playful, postmodernist one or if there is a deeper reason behind it. The case with Gheorghe Crăciun could be that such a popular concept among postmodernist writers is not put into play, in his first four novels, just for the sake of using it. One has to always keep in mind that a profoundly theoretical conscience, just like Crăciun's was, could not help but strenghten his literary writings with a deep theoretical background. The easiest example that comes to mind is the case of the distinction Crăciun uses as a foundations

[1] PhD candidate, Faculty of Letters, *Transilvania* University of Braşov.

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for his work between writing and body, the letter and the body. Crăciun can be anything but a writer lacking a theoretical frame of work and there is always the need, when analysing his work, to see the unbroken relationship between theory and prose and the way in which he chooses, in his literary writings, to redefine certain concepts that he concerns himself about in his theoretical works.

2. Intertextuality: a brief history of the concept

Crăciun himself dwelled upon the evolution of the concept of intertextuality in one of his theoretical works, *Introduction in the theory of literature*, where, from a didactic point of view (one should not forget that the above mentioned work was used as a course for first year students), he insisted upon establishing *intertextuality* as a concept. This exploration does not neccesarily considering Gheorghe Crăciun's view as being fully explored It is not, which is however understandable if one takes into account the fact that after the moment the book had appeared, there were published a lot of new titles on the subject of intertextuality. Nevertheless, for a purely diachonic point of view, Crăciun's presentation of the term is useful for any further research.

Having said that, it should be noted that there is a certain disparity between the moment when the meaning of the concept was firstly used (in Mihail Bakhtin's 1929 book on the poetics of Dostoievski) and the one when it was oficially named as such, by Julia Kristeva in the 60s. Whereas Bakhtin defined *intertextuality* as a „relation of an utterance with another utterance", a characteristics of any literary discourse (apud Crăciun, 46), Kristeva [9] adds that a text not only establishes relations with its own parts but also with other texts. Graham Allen [1] insists on this particular moment in the evolution of the concept. Gerard Genette [8] marks yet another important moment because he puts forward a system in six points for *intertextuality,* which comes under the broader concept of *transtextuality*, which actually wasn't successful at all.

In the context of Romanian literature, Nicolae Manolescu [10] also coined a definition for the concept of intertextuality, regarding it as „the subordination of the text to the genre" In some points, his perspective overlaps with Gerard Genette's, but focuses more on the method of liaising of the second text (the one where intertext can be found) with the original one.

Coming back to Crăciun's view on intertextuality, there has to be said that he underlines the consensus among the specialists regarding the forms of intertextuality, mainly *internal intertextuality* (inside the literary text, consisting of the interrelations among the elements of a text), *intertextuality per se* (the relations among literary texts) and *external intertextuality* (the relation of the text with the *text of the world*).

3. Redefining intertextuality in Gheorghe Crăciun's novels

This tridimensional structure represented the foundation of the current perspective upon intertextuality in Crăciun's novels. It is in fact a dichotomy which required redefining in such a way that it would not force the text to fit a formula that is alien to it. It can be said that the texts themselves asked for its tools for analysis and thus the current perspective can be considered as being an individual instance. It could be an interesting endeavour to try and see other authors' work using the tools this exact model has to offer.

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The current proposal preserves the formal denomination for both *external intertextuality* and *internal intertextuality* but the meaning has been adapted in such a way that it fits in the context of the novels.

At this point, there is the need of a short discussion regarding the point of view selected: the first and foremost thing to note here is that there is an integrative perspective at play when analysing Crăciun's novels, the first four ones being regarded as a whole (even if *Pupa russa* could seem, at the first sight, somehow as an outsider). Nonetheless, this does not mean that the differences among novels are ignored, because the identity of each and every one of them is fully respected. Moreover, it is possible to establish linkes among novels (with the mention that, in this frame of work, *Acte originale/Copii legalizate* is considered something more than a collection of short stories, actually a novel in itself, with arguments provided by the current proposal).

3.1. Internal intertextuality

Thus, in the context of this study, *internal intertextuality* will be defined as *any relation among the author's first four novels*, keeping in mind the fact that the connections can also be established with diaries such as *Trupul ştie mai mult* or with other theoretical works. This necessary refinement puts in context the easily noticeable connections among the first three novels and the slightly less noticeable ones with *Pupa russa*. Moreover, this perspective also aims to prove that the four titles are just as many expressions of the same outlook on literature, life and writing but, at the same time, that there is room for evolution.

The connections can be noticed at multiple levels. First of all, there is intertextuality at the level of the text itself: there are migrations of parts of texts from one novel to another, or even within the same text, just like in the case of *Munte (proiect de imagine)*, inserted in *Fragmente dintr-un fals tratat de alpinologie*, both parts of *Acte originale/Copii legalizate*.

Another case is that of the characters, some of which seem to freely migrate from one novel to another, and the reader can see them at different ages, with more or less the same problems, obsessions and struggles (it is the case of masculine characters, such as Vlad Ştefan, Octavian Costin and the mysterious George) and others simply evolve or are presented as variants of the same archetype (Liana Şanta-Ioana Jighira-Leontina Guran). The same model variant-archetype can be noticed as well in *Compunere cu paralele inegale* where each and every couple is actually a more or less successful copy of the Dafnis and Chloe couple (in relation of external intertextuality with Longos's characters Dafnis and Chloe).

3.2. External intertextuality

External intertextuality, as will be defined as follows, comes more closely to the original meaning of *intertextuality*, but without confounding itself with it, demanding, yet again, a process of redefining to the purpose of a better adherence to Gheorghe Crăciun's novels. Thus, *external intertextuality* means, in the context of this paper, more than just „a relation of a text with another text, of any kind" but „the relationship established by Crăciun's text (in general) with other literary texts belonging to authors other than him, the authors ranging from Antiquity to contemporaneity and from world literature to the Romanian one". Obviously, this is a singular interpretation for the newly appointed sub-concept and, again, it would be very interesting to see if it can be applied to the works of other writers.

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The first thing to note here is the wide extension of references: Crăciun moves freely from Longos's *Dafnis and Cloe* to Mircea Nedelciu, for example. Another observation to make is that the first four novels are not consistent at all in what concerns the external intertextuality. In this respect, *Acte originale/Copii legalizate* and *Compunere cu paralele inegale* (this novel more than the previous) are the titles where one can find instances ranging from mere allusions to fully established quotations. *Frumoasa fără corp* and *Pupa russa* both mark a new interpretation of this concept, each of them establishing one main external intertext: the first with Eminescu's *Miron şi frumoasa fără corp* (the version in prose) and the latter with Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Both *Frumoasa fără corp* and *Pupa russa* can be considered, from this point of view, as ultimate moments of writing rafinement. What looks like a diminishment of the outflow with world's literature is actually a mature decision, the writer choosing well-established titles to audaciously reinterprete and it is not accidental at all that Crăciun selects one of Eminescu's and Flaubert's works to work upon.

There are multiple instances of external intertextuality in Crăciun's novels: in *Acte originale/Copii legalizate:* with Al. Brătescu Voineşti's *Puiul*, lines from Arghezi's poems, *Amintiri din copilărie*, in *Compunere cu paralele inegale*, with Groşan's *Insula*, Calderon de Barca's definition of life as a dream, Goga's archetypal female teacher, Radu Petrescu's *Matei Iliescu*, Geo Bogza's *O sută de minute,* Mircea Nedelciu's *Voiaj chimic,* the quotations at the beginning of each *Epură pentru Longos* and Longos's *Dafnis and Cloe.* The same pattern, that of using quotations, is also used in *Pupa russa*, in the invented newspaper articles. The intertext with Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* can be considered the finest demonstration of Crăciun's writing, this relationship being so visible in some points and so subtle in others that it could be analyzed on numerous pages.

The last of Crăciun's published novels*, Femei albastre* was not included in the present proposal, as the author willingly and publicly abandoned any type of references and instead wanted to focus more on events. Nonetheless, his real intentions must be further investigated, as the apparent lack of obvious references and the centrality of movie figures such as Nicole Kidman can actually disguise something more.

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