

# The Anxiety of Indebtedness in Intertextuality

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## Abstract

The present literary age is replete with imitation. Inspiration, a divine afflatus in literature, sparsely meets the creative progress nowadays. On the contrary, influence, a foil to inspiration, plays a destructive role in literature. The research paper focuses on two things; Julia Kristeva's Intertextuality and Harold Bloom's the Anxiety of Influence. Intertextuality is a comparative reading of many texts in order to find out the similarities among them. It consists of anagram, allusion, adaptation, translation, parody, pastiche, and imitation. The influence of the past plays a crucial role in the creative process and acts as the driving force for the present writers to create new classics.

**Key words:** anagram, allusion, adaptation, translation, and parody.

"We think our father gods, so wise we grow / our wise sons, no doubt, will think us so" (145, Abrams). The word reverence usually refers to the unseen divine force. Most of the people use this word within the context of religion. They always pay respect to God in the form of indebtedness. They are thankful for the head of the mortals for nourishing their meaningful life in the planet. This large-scale gratitude is never eroded even though the worst adversary hits the people given by the almighty to test their will power. They always love God and never inveigh against Him. This unassailable anxiety is a vicarious pleasure evinced by sheer reverence which has a potent impact on human beings and help the homo sapiens pull through the rough patches. But, in a creative process, this reverence reveres its impact and makes creators intellectually crippled.

Creators hailing from different cultures love and admire William Shakespeare who blazes a trail in a plethora of untrodden paths and embraces all emotions irrespective of cultures and customs. His characters are naturally connected with every culture across the world. He knows the palate of the people and based on their taste he gives a wholesome treat to his gentle folks. His works are devolved from many generations and they are given a new flavour at every transmission. No poet can escape from the emporium of Shakespeare's acute wit and wild fancy. This surfeit admiration paves the way for anxiety that stumbles the upcoming authors who are under the spell of the Bard of Avon. This bardolatry flourished from adulation is the first infirmity of the noble brains. While doing this, the weak writers will have become the parrot of Shakespeare's ideology.

A deep sense of gratitude of an author will mar the perception of creation and make the fledgling writers vulnerable to overlook the faults of the poetic fathers whose influence is incorrigible to remove from the minds of the poetic sons. They must lay aside the baneful influence lest it will tempt the soul to follow the

path that has been already created. If it happens, it is like carrying coals to Newcastle. So, creativity should not come from someone rather come through someone. If it is inspiration, it is termed as placebo and on the other hand if it is influence, it is nocebo.

The whole society suffers from a disease called facticity. This unavailability of the poetic fathers who wield their influence over the world is prevalent in every tradition. The poetic fathers live immortally in the leaves of their pages. Consciously or unconsciously the poetic sons keep in touch with their immediate poetic fathers. The freedom of imagination is muzzled here in the name of poetic condition and in the name of antiquity. The poetic sons are conditioned by literary traditions where creation is treated a cycle. The poetic sons, despite the fact that they are well-trained intellectuals, are not in a position to surpass their fathers. Though the desire for imitation in the same vein of their fathers, the sons try to change the context of the text to appeal the sense of the people. Whatever they try, they cannot touch the flavour of their fathers whose creations have become the synecdoche and set the milestone for the years to come.

A text is a well-wrought fabric of interpretations. The stories discussed in the text usually thrive from archetypal codes, symbols, words, expressions, and myths that are created by the previous writers out of divine afflatus. The images are permanently expressed by different writers in different generations and the same have been handed down from the past to the present. In the wake of this continual progress, repetition may occur. A writer can use symbols, words, patterns, phrases, and myths that were used by previous writers. Hence, it is an acceptable fact that no work of art has an independent meaning and the same is endowed with multiple associations. To find out the veiled traces among texts, there should be a desperate need for a rigorous reading which facilitates a web of textual interpretation to exhume the buried relationship among texts.

No two real genius are the same in terms of their talents. Their difference dwells largely in how they approach a text with their accumulated experience over a period of time with the help of extensive reading. It is like two physicians approaching a patient who is down with a serious disease. The disease and the patient are the same but the modus operandi of the physicians are unique. Though the medicines prescribed by the doctors are not identical in nature, they can cure the patient. Here, the patient is nothing but the text and the doctors are categorised as senior and junior. Though are chronologically imbalanced, they are capable of recuperating the patient with utmost care.

“Whatever we may read or come to know we always return” (654, Arnold). He takes inferences from a honey bee known for its great industry. It collects nectar from an infinite variety of flowers tirelessly. Though the labour is ticklish, the bee works really hard to meet the sweetness and ecstasy. Like the bee, a creator of any work of art gleans inputs from his predecessors and creates his own ideas out of pre-owned ideas. The sources that he has come across are not important in the path of creation but what really matters is how he justifies his own ideas that are entirely different from the previous writers. He must create individual style to sway attention from the well-wrought critics.

Imitation is a sort of diabolic instinct. It is a fallacious correction and an antithetical response to an original creation conceived by a genuine creator who has reaped many laurels already. An innocent child can naturally adopt the environment through its undivided observation. It sees, watches, looks, touches, feels, and examines an object casually and it echoes the idea attributed by its parents by means of copying. The desire of copying falls into disuse when the child grows up. It gives up the distaste of imitation on the pretext of creating new ideas. In this process, it develops anxiety out of repressed desire buried in subconscious mind. It wants to destroy the familiar idea conditioned by the parental care and infantile curiosity.

“Influence was the inevitable problem” (04, Bloom). Poetic influence is a kind of flail bliss towards the idolization of the dead predecessors who have the power over the present creators. The force will either sway the course of thinking or inhibit the way of writing. Thus, the force it is termed as influence. Traditionally, influence is a natural power yoked upon man from the stars. Poetically, it is an inexorable anxiety and becomes a blight that cripples impulsions. It is believed that influence is given by God and inspiration is evoked by creators. The mighty poets of all ages fall prey to the spell of this anxiety for it is irredeemable and irresistible and it is like the painted ship upon a pained ocean. It is an inevitable impediment that nibs the creative impulsion in the bud.

The joy of reading will build an unbreakable tie between readers and writers. The joy derived from reading will create a complex problem when a reader becomes a writer who fulsomely idolizes out of veneration tempered by belated indebtedness. His mind is replete with infinite riches of ideas culled from intensive as well as extensive reading. For instance, an avid reader of literature would enjoy the textual bliss reaped from the bard of Avon. He may dedicate his entire life to study Shakespeare out of veneration and love. The ideas, words, phrases, and philosophies used by Shakespeare will deeply be rooted in the subconscious mind and they are kept dormant. With the passage of time, the Shakespearized reader may turn a writer. The great difficulty of this writer is to shed Shakespearean ideas that are buried deep in his creative repository. He must work hard to prove his individual idea because the indebtedness will mar the individual talent of the particular writer who is on the horn of anxiety.

The Romantic poets have a deep influence of John Milton. They never shake off the implicit as well as the explicit references derived from Milton. So, he is the poetic father of the Romantics i.e. precursor. The poetic father can't be eroded from the memory of ephebe i.e. the poetic son who ought to pay off the old debts in sheer veneration. The creative drive ignites the poetic son to imitate the precursors. The indebtedness works as a catalyst to create a balanced force between the past and the present. A great art is a belch from the precursor where the phantom reality is born and the same can be transcended from a generation to other generation. The best part of the literary stories is cultivated from the great grandfather of literature, Homer, who is the light-bearer of world literature. He is inescapable in the creative process and his influence is spread like the age-old oak tree. All creators have to touch him wittingly or unwittingly. This idea is echoed in the words of Northrop Frye, “the great literature emancipated us from anxiety” (06, Frye).

“Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different” (Eliot, 127). T. S. Eliot, the prophet of Modernism, talks about the bond between the past and the present in his essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent”. He observes that the present poets glorify the past out of adulations and veneration. He strongly believes the fact that without the past the present cannot sustain; without the present the past cannot survive. According to him, the past is like an oak tree spreading its inspired wings to the present and the wide branches of the tree are the present and the deep root is past; an inch wide but a mile deep. Though the root is implicit, it remains impervious to any drastic changes of the world.

The strong poet doesn't yield to impulsive temptations and shakes off the incorrigible influence-ghost hung around the neck. The strong will combat with poetical anxiety and the weaker, on the other hand, willingly embraces it. The infected poets do little to swerve from their beloved precursors but they strive either to complement the works done already or pay compliments to them. The weak poets are under the shadow of the dead poets whose voice haunts the silence of the living poets. The dead cannot come back but their voice will come alive in the form of creative resurrection. The possession leads to a complete

surrender of a poet who desperately in need of self-reliance. The strong poet depends upon himself and the weak depends heavily upon the dead. Influence is vertical and inspiration is horizontal. Don't yield your soul to the prison house of influence. Influence is debilitation; inspiration is revitalization.

Imagination and invention can be eroded by the impact created by a precursor on promising young writers. Owing to influence by a precursor, an infected present author does not think anything anew. His mind is conditioned by the past writers and disturbed by preconceived ideas. Novelty may not enter into the mind of a new poet. He may beat around the bush or spin his wheels. His temporary ideas do not stand him in good stead. He is unable to do anything productively so that his work will abound in repetitions. He simply copies what his precursors promulgated in their works. Only successful authors will save their good name against heavy odds.

The world is created from chaos and not from void. Everything must have a beginning but the beginning should be reconciled with something that has been created already like a child whose countenance will resemble the father's father who died many decades ago. Repetition is the resurrection of images. To prove an individual talent, it is indispensable for a young poet to suspend the poetic tradition that has been continuing for many decades. A deliberate detachment from the existing tradition should be followed in this regard. Though two metaphorical roads deviate in a dense forest, one must choose the untrodden and rejected path because in rejected path one can find profoundest thoughts.

Misreading creates a new horizon of meanings. The understanding of a text may be a chaos, void or meaningful. There is no point in perfectness in a text and the new reading sometimes fills the meaning that has been missed out by the previous text or the previous writer. Counter sublime is the panacea for this kind of poetic influence. According to Harold Bloom, misinterpreting a work of art done by the new poets will create a plethora of new interpretations. Creating new classics out of misreading are only way to abate the poetic influence. Shakespeare, in his sonnet 87, says, "farewell! Thou art too dear for possessing" (134, Shakespeare). He advises the future generation to assert the individual quality and integrity is the hallmark of belatedness. All good things come to a conclusion likewise the strong creators who want to be in the limelight must create a space for themselves and their influence must dwell between poems and not the poets who created the art many years ago.

The present writer has a personal inclination of the past writer certainly. This personal inclination captures the mind of the present writer, and makes a costly influence on him. The influence of the past or dead poet facilitates as elixir or oxygen while making a text. When an influenced author constitutes a work of art, influence of the past heavily impacts on his work as a result the new work has some interconnection in terms of characters, ideas, notions, dialogues, theme and subject matter. An inevitable repetition takes place in the new text.

The poetic influence paves the way for attaining an interconnection between texts. In the absence of poetic influence there should not be interconnection between texts. The poetic influence persuades intertextuality and ignites the present writers to make a similar work. The present writers pattern the model on the past and make them as intertextual text. They maintain a cogent order between the past and the present. A coherent order is being pragmatically maintained by them in order to ensure the intertextuality. Put in a capsule form, intertextuality and influence are colligated together in the presence of the continual poetic tradition.

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