Pictures Worth a Thousand Words: Metaphorical Images of Textual Interdependence

Carmen Lara-Rallo, University of Málaga

Abstract
The forty-year history of the notion of intertextuality has witnessed the proliferation of an increasing number of divergent and even contradictory approaches to the unavoidably connective nature of texts. Many of such approaches, however, display a common tendency to portray textual interdependence in visual terms, resorting to metaphorical images in their conceptualisation of the intertextual phenomenon. This article aims at studying some of the most significant of those 'metaphorical images', or 'pictures' that, standing for theories of textual relationality, are in themselves 'worth a thousand words'. In the course of the study, special attention will be paid to two sets of images that relate to major trends in contemporary Anglo-American criticism: tropes of artistic creativity, and figures of presence-in-absence.

Kristeva's 1967 description of the text as 'a mosaic of quotations' stands not only as the foundational statement about the notion of intertextuality, but also as the earliest instance of a tendency to conceptualise the intertextual phenomenon through the use of a wide range of images. Mosaics, weavings, palimpsests, networks, or refractions, among others, have emerged at different points in the forty-year history of the concept in a sustained effort to provide a visual characterisation of the inescapably relational nature of texts. Whether long-standing like Genette's palimpsest, or more recent like Calinescu's invisible ink, such images figure prominently in the successive (and as yet failed) attempts to develop a unified and stable theory of intertextuality. They give metaphorical expression to the complexities of a theoretical domain in which the pivotal term is re-interpreted and given new meanings by almost every individual critic.

In the light of this, the aim of the present article is to trace the changing interpretations of the intertextual notion through the analysis of some of the most influential metaphorical pictures applied to the interdependence of texts. This exploration will pay special attention to the afterlives of two imagery fields that can be connected with prevailing trends in contemporary Anglo-American criticism. On the one hand, the

use of images of artistic creativity; on the other, the recurrence of images of presence-in-absence in the wake of the palimpsest.

The earliest use of the term 'intertextuality' goes back to the publication of "Word, Dialogue, and Novel", where Julia Kristeva began to introduce the writings and theories of the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin to a French audience. In this essay, published for the first time in *Critique* in 1967, Kristeva pays special attention to the novel, which Bakhtin considered the most dialogical system, full of opposing and divergent voices. Together with the novel, Kristeva also shows interest in poetic language, in relation to which she coined the concept of intertextuality: '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*' (Kristeva 1980 [1967]: 66).[1]

Following Bakhtin's ideas, Kristeva argues that every word is an intersection of textual surfaces, and so the concept of intertextuality is necessary because no text is self-sufficient, but depends on its relationships with other texts and discourses. Since each expression is pervaded by the traces of earlier uses, the text is not a finished or closed product, but a plural productivity in which multiple voices—textual, socio-historical and ideological—coexist and communicate. Significantly, Kristeva encapsulated her notion of textual interaction in the simile of the mosaic, an image of artistic creativity already used by Bakhtin himself in "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse". As he

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[1] Apart from the use of the image of the 'mosaic of quotations' to evoke the intersectional quality of texts, another aspect of this statement deserves to be highlighted. Kristeva's association of the notion of intertextuality with the dual nature of poetic language can be linked to the centrality of the concept of doubleness in different approaches to the intertextual phenomenon. For instance, while Roland Barthes referred to the 'second-order memory' of words in "Writing Degree Zero" (Barthes 1970 [1953]: 16), Gérard Genette devoted his most influential study on textual relationality, *Palimpsests*, to what he described as 'literature in the second degree'. As will be discussed later, this doubleness makes it possible to discover a connection between intertextuality and the critical discourse of spectrality through the image of the palimpsest.

discussed the uses of the quotation in the Middle Ages, Bakhtin argued that at that time,

> [t]he role of the other's word was enormous [. . .]: there were quotations that were openly and reverently emphasized as such, or that were half-hidden, completely hidden, half-conscious, unconscious, correct, intentionally distorted, unintentionally distorted, deliberately reinterpreted and so forth. The boundary lines between someone else's speech and one's own speech were flexible, ambiguous, often deliberately distorted and confused. Certain types of texts were constructed *like mosaics out of the texts of others*. (Bakhtin 69; my emphasis)

This image of the mosaic has recurred regularly in different theories of intertextuality. It has been employed by Matei Calinescu in his discussion of the complex transformative exercise underlying Joyce's *Ulysses* and Nabokov's *Pale Fire*. According to Calinescu, both works provide representative examples—in the modernist and postmodernist paradigm, respectively—of the intertextual process of transposition of a wide range of referents to a new literary context. As they transformatively transpose 'canonical texts' and 'minor classics', *Ulysses* and *Pale Fire* give expression to a revised version of Kristeva's 'mosaic of quotations', since they become '*mosaics of rewriting*' (Calinescu 247; my emphasis).

More recently, the currency of the metaphorical picture of the mosaic in approaches to intertextuality can be attested in the observations made by Eric Griffiths in his contribution to the *Times Literary Supplement*, "Dante, Primo Levi and the Intertextualists" (2008). In his review of *Dante and His Literary Precursors*, *Shakespeare's Cues and Prompts*, and *The Cambridge Companion to Primo Levi*, among other titles, Griffiths discusses the prevalence of the intertextual analytical framework, devoting a long passage to the metaphor of the mosaic:

> The simultaneously drab and lurid metaphor of 'mosaic' usually recurs in intertextual studies uninvigorated by such attention to how and why mosaics are various, [. . .]. For the mosaic-metaphor to have a point, it needs to be taken both less seriously than is usual among literary academics [. . .] and more seriously. Taking it more seriously requires admitting that mosaics are normally representations of something other than their tesserae. [. . .]
>   Mosaics, however, like all communicative processes, are asymmetrical. Those who look at a mosaic attentively spot its 'andamento', the expressive, technical term for how it moves, its 'gait', traditionally categorized as 'vermiculatum', 'masivum' and so on. Those categories generalize recurrences discerned in the body-language

of many mosaics, but any such category needs to be returned with interest to the particular settings whence it arose. (Griffiths 4-5)

The allusion here to the structural constituents of the mosaic, the *tesserae*, is particularly significant because their image mediates the inscription of the mosaic metaphor by another leading scholar in the field of textual intersections, Harold Bloom. Though properly speaking a theory of influence, his *Anxiety of Influence* is often mentioned in studies on the interrelations of texts, which Bloom portrays in terms of an Oedipal struggle between young and old poets. In his outline of the six strategies of revision whereby the young poet (*ephebe*) copes with the anxiety of influence, Bloom gives the name of *tessera* to the process of completing or filling the gaps in the precursor's work: 'In this sense of a completing link, the *tessera* represents any later poet's attempt to persuade himself (and us) that the precursor's Word would be worn out if not redeemed by a new fulfilled and enlarged Word of the ephebe' (Bloom 67).[2]

As he resorts to the image of the ceramic, stone, or glass pieces making up mosaics, technically known as *tesserae*, Bloom illustrates two major trends in the metaphorical conceptualisation of the intertextual practice. First, as already explained, this image belongs to the fertile area of artistic creativity, whose productivity in the theoretical and critical study of intertextuality has found a parallel in the current prevalence of painting and music as intertextual referents for British fiction. There is a 'recent fascination [. . .] with aesthetics that resist or complicate reading' which has led writers to turn to literature's sister arts (Wormald 227).

At the same time, the growing appeal of different arts for writers of fiction is being accompanied by the careful attention devoted to the artistic 'relational nexus' (Carvalho Homem and Lambert 13). The centrality of studies on word and image in the field of comparative literature, like the renewed interest in the theoretical investigation of the literature-music interface, is reflected in recent publications such as

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[2] Bloom illustrates his point with Wallace Stevens' poetical works, which he describes as a large *tessera* of Stevens' Romantic precursors. From this point of view, *The Owl in the Sarcophagus* represents an attempt to complete the imaginative universe of Walt Whitman's *The Sleepers*.

Writing and Seeing. Essays on Word and Image, or *Phrase and Subject. Studies in Literature and Music*—both of them published in 2006—where contemporary culture is described in terms of its interartistic and intermedial nature.

Secondly, Bloom's choice of the metaphor of the *tessera* stands as a clear example of the practice of characterising textual intersections through specialised terminology borrowed from other disciplines. In "The Bounded Text" and *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva discarded her most tangible image of the mosaic in favour of a description of the text and intertextuality, respectively, as 'a permutation of texts' (Kristeva 1980 [1968]: 36) and '[the] transposition of one sign system into another' (Kristeva 1984 [1974]: 59-60). If 'permutation' is a pivotal concept in the mathematical theories of combinatorial analysis and probability, 'transposition' originally comes from the discourse of algebra and logic, and from the vocabulary of cryptology.

Science and cryptology are precisely the fields invoked by Roland Barthes in his first depiction of phenomena of literary reminiscence. "Writing Degree Zero", anticipatory of Kristeva's formulation of intertextuality in more than ten years, states that '[a]ny written trace *precipitates*, as inside a *chemical* at first transparent, innocent and neutral, mere duration gradually reveals *in suspension* a whole past of increasing *density*, like a *cryptogram*' (Barthes 1970 [1953]: 17; my emphasis).[3] As he elaborated on an original and highly poetic model of textual connectivity, Barthes developed one of the most prolific and influential pictures of intertextuality: the textile metaphor.

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[3] In this essay, Barthes foreshadowed Kristeva's focus on the duality of poetic language—and of texts in general—, as he stated that 'writing still remains full of the recollection of previous usage, for language is never innocent: *words have a second-order memory which mysteriously persists in the midst of new meanings*' (Barthes 1970 [1953]: 16; my emphasis). Under the influence of this 'memory', the writer becomes a 'prisoner' of his own and someone else's words, and so he carries out his creative activity at an intertextual crossroads. Significantly, this 'second order memory'—which relates to Genette's 'literature in the second degree'—can be connected with my contention about the use of intertextuality to study the current prevalence of memory, history, and the past in contemporary fiction, as argued below.

In itself another trope of artistic creativity, the textile metaphor figures prominently in Barthes' essays, beginning with "The Death of the Author": 'The text is a *tissue* of quotations [. . .]. In the multiplicity of writing, everything is to be *disentangled*, [. . .]; the structure can be followed, "*run*" (like the *thread* of a *stocking*)' (Barthes 1988 [1968]: 170-71; my emphasis). Barthes expands this metaphor in other publications like *S/Z*, where the production of a text ('*fabric*' or '*braid*') is equated with the creation of Valenciennes lace (Barthes 1974 [1970]: 160; my emphasis). Similarly, the image of weaving recurs in "From Work to Text" and *The Pleasure of the Text*, which convey Barthes' intertextual view of the text as a criss-crossing of thread-like meanings, signifiers, references, and echoes. In doing so, both pieces—which share Kristeva's emphasis on the plural and open quality of texts—resort to etymology, equating 'text' with 'tissue', in order to evoke the multi-dimensional and progressive process of textual creation in the blending of a variety of previously existing writings:

> The Text is plural. [. . .] The plural of the Text depends [. . .] not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric) [. . .] the text [...] [is] woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages [. . .] antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. (Barthes 1977 [1971]: 159-60)

> *Text* means *tissue*; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, [. . .] we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue—this texture—the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web. Were we fond of neologisms, we might define the theory of the text as an *hyphology* (*hyphos* is the tissue and the spider's web). (Barthes 1991 [1973]: 64)

This last passage connects, notably, with Barthes' concept of the 'death of the author', in its allusion to the 'unmaking' of the 'subject himself'. According to Barthes, the intertextual nature of the text implies that the power of the author over his work, and the power of the author over the reader, are abolished, and the figure of the author disappears. By proposing a textual theory under the name of '*hyphology*', Barthes transposes this idea about the eradication of the author to the field of the textile metaphor of intertextuality. His coinage is noteworthy because it signals Barthes' partiality for the created object (the woven fabric or the

spider's web), over the creating subject (the weaver or the spider), a state of affairs that has been revisited in Nancy K. Miller's approach to intertextuality, which reformulates Barthes' textile metaphor.

Miller bases her feminist articulation of intertextuality on a reappraisal of Barthes' use of the image of weaving. By vindicating the existence of a female subject behind the appropriated activity of weaving or spinning, Miller coins *arachnology* for an intertextual theory focused on the text as a creation of a gendered agent, and not as a final product interspersed with references and allusions. Her ultimate goal is to displace Barthes' *hyphology*, in which 'the mode of production is privileged over the subject whose supervising identity is dissolved in the work of the web' (Miller 273).

While so doing, Miller also pays attention to female characters from classical mythology associated with weaving, spinning, and threads; one of those figures, Ariadne—whom Miller portrays as that which allows the male creator 'to penetrate the space of the great artist [. . .] without the risk of getting stuck there' (Miller 285)—recurs in one of the latest pictures of the intertextual exercise. In his essay "Having a Clue… About Ovid", Valentine Cunningham has offered his own version of the textile metaphor in terms of the 'labyrinthine textual past' (Cunningham 106), and the clue, or ball of thread. Interestingly, Cunningham's contention designs a rich tapestry of the most salient images of the text as a tissue:

> Intertextuality: a textuality, a *tissu*, a tapestry, a weave, a combination of warp and woof, a woven thing, not simply of itself, isolated, alone, but inter-, between. [. . .] Between sundry filaments new and old, threads old and new [. . .] joined up, joining, connected, meeting. Filiations, affiliations. A new weaving, somehow a new weaving, entangled in the skeins of a precedent one. A knitting together of old a new strands, a complex transitivity, a braiding, a sewing and suturing across time and space. (Cunningham 102)

In the context of this intertextual imagery of weaving, one trope that has acquired tremendous relevance in current approaches to intertextuality is the web, that 'ever-enlarging web of words' where 'the tasks of writer and reader, inextricably joined and mutually dependent' coexist (Bassnett 146). The phenomenon is closely linked to the prevailing view of our times as 'an age of interconnectedness' with its associated icons of DNA models and the World Wide Web (Bassnett 134). In literary studies, this interconnectedness has taken the form of an interdisciplinary drive that relates to the use of the imagery of artistic creativity in theories

of the intertext. Moreover, the holistic and cross-boundary line implied in the intermedial focus has been reinforced in the last years by the incorporation of science and other fields of knowledge as potential referents for literary creativity and criticism.

The mutually enriching relationship of literature and science is given voice in studies like Wilson and Brown, *Science and Literature: Bridging the Two Cultures* (2001),[4] Barfoot and Tinkler, *Restoring the Mystery of the Rainbow: Literature Reflections of Science*, or the March 2005 issue of the prestigious scientific journal *Nature*, which devoted a long section to the existing bond between these disciplines under the headings 'artists on science' and 'scientists on art'. As Patricia Waugh has contended (240), today there is 'an intertextual play where science appropriates the discourses and narrative strategies of the aesthetic, and postmodernism the vocabularies and concepts of contemporary science'.

The quotation from Waugh belongs to her contribution to a special number of *Symbolism. An International Annual of Critical Aesthetics* focused on intertextuality (2005). The volume, which includes the essay by Cunningham mentioned above, integrates a ground-breaking article by J. Hillis-Miller where he rejects the textile metaphor in favour of the auditory one. Hillis-Miller's preference for the concepts of 'resonance' and 'echoing' (126) is particularly remarkable because it points to a set of images of intertextuality that has proliferated of late. Some recent conceptualisations of the intertextual practice resort to metaphors connected to sensory perception, mainly to the sense of hearing—as in the case of Hillis-Miller's imagery, which can be traced back to Barthes' depiction of writing as an 'echo chamber' in *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (74)—, and the sense of sight.

Visual representations of intertextuality lie behind the metaphorical pictures of invisible ink and refraction. Calinescu has conjured up the

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[4] The editors of this volume, David Wilson and Zack Bowen, borrow an image from neuroscience as they argue against the traditional division between arts and science: 'The linkages between humanities and science are as real as the synaptic connections between brain neurons. There may be no insurmountable barrier between the social and natural sciences, and ultimately there may be no such barrier between science, on the one hand, and arts and humanities on the other' (Wilson and Bowen 206).

image of invisible ink to examine intricately intertextual and highly successful works like Eco's *The Name of the Rose* and Byatt's *Possession*; according to this critic, such demanding creations are so popular because their intertexts only become visible to the eyes of an expert audience, remaining unobtrusive to other kinds of readers (Calinescu 247). At the same time, the image of refraction enhances the reciprocal quality of the relationship of a text and its intertext, claiming that a text works as a mirror of its intertext, and 'each sheds light on the other, [. . .] obliterat[ing] any hierarchical or evaluative distinction between two related texts' (Gutleben and Onega 9).

Significantly, both the invisible ink and the refraction are images of presence-in-absence, and so they call forth the productive intertextual metaphor of the palimpsest. The palimpsest, or manuscript that reveals the layered traces of earlier texts, has emerged as one of the most fruitful and influential concepts in contemporary Anglo-American criticism, although its origins can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. As Sarah Dillon has argued in her recent study *The Palimpsest. Literature, Criticism, Theory* (2007), before that time the term 'palimpsest' was applied only to those parchments in which old texts are overlaid with more recent ones; 'palimpsests' were just 'palaeographic oddities of concern only to those researching and publishing ancient manuscripts' (Dillon 1). It was in 1845 that Thomas De Quincey published an essay in *Blackwood's Magazine* entitled "The Palimpsest", which inaugurated the history of the palimpsest as an abstract concept.

In the course of this history, the palimpsest has been repeatedly invoked in theoretical examinations of intertextuality, beginning with Edmund Wilson's description of the compositional technique of *Finnegans Wake* in his essay collection *Axel's Castle. A Study in the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930* (1931). According to Douwe Fokkema, Wilson was the first critic to apply the 'palimpsest metaphor' (46) to a multi-dimensional text, since his characterisation of James Joyce's novel suggested that '[t]he style [. . .] works on the principle of a palimpsest: one meaning, one set of images, is written over another. Now we can grasp a certain number of such suggestions simultaneously' (Wilson 187-88).

The visual image of the palimpsest vividly portrays the modern experiences of writing and reading. Such portrayals are usually rendered in the wake of Gérard Genette's seminal study *Palimpsests: Literature in*

the Second Degree (1982). Here, Genette associates the unavoidably intertextual quality of literature—what he calls 'literature in the second degree'—with the metaphor of the palimpsest.[5] As he charts the five categories of textual interconnectivity, or 'transtextuality'[6], Genette emphasises the doubleness of the literary text, associated with the retrieval of hidden writings in 'palimpsestuous' structures:

> That duplicity of the object, in the sphere of textual relations, can be represented by the old analogy of the *palimpsest*: on the same parchment, one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not conceal but allows to show through. The hypertext invites us to engage in a relational reading, the flavour of which [. . .] may well be condensed in [. . .] [the expression] *palimpsestuous* reading. To put it differently, [. . .] one who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two together. (Genette 398-99)

This passage points to some of the most salient features of the palimpsest as a critical concept. First, the idea that any reading activity is relational connects with the versatility of the palimpsest, which since the mid-nineteenth century has been applied to such diverse areas as architecture, geography, geology, palaeontology, glaciology, astrophysics, biochesmistry, genetics, neuroscience, neurobiology, neurocomputing and information technology, together with literary criticism (Dillon 1).

   This tendency to resort to the image of the palimpsest in different fields and domains has been reinforced in the last years because, in the context of the 'age of interconnectedness' referred to above, the palimpsest has become an apt analytical tool to describe all kinds of interdisciplinary processes and phenomena. In literary criticism, the

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[5] It is relevant that the trope of the palimpsest presides over the title of the work that has become Genette's most influential approach to textual interactions. *Palimpsests* is mentioned in almost every single study of intertextuality.

[6] In *Palimpsests*, Genette offers a detailed and systematic classification of transtextual relationships. He distinguishes five types of links between texts: 'intertextuality', 'paratextuality', 'metatextuality', 'hypertextuality', and 'architextuality'. They operate on different levels of abstraction, ranging from the effective presence of one text in another (as in quotation, allusion, and plagiarism), to the abstract connection of any text with the generic category to which it belongs.

current import of such a metaphor could be assessed in the light of the relational and intermedial nature of literature nowadays, since the palimpsest operates through and across disciplines, becoming a 'figure for interdisciplinarity':

> The palimpsest cannot be the province of any one discipline, since it admits all those terrains that write upon it to its body; nor, indeed, does the palimpsest have a province of its own, [. . .]. *Disciplines encounter each other in and on the palimpsest*, and their relationality becomes defined by its logic. In this way, the palimpsest becomes a figure for interdisciplinarity—for [. . .] the productive violence of the involvement, entanglement, interruption and inhabitation of disciplines in and on each other. (Dillon 2; my emphasis)

Secondly, another of the key words in Genette's discussion on 'the duplicity of the object in the sphere of textual relations' is 'superimposed': 'on the same parchment, one text can become superimposed upon another, which it does not conceal but allows to show through' (Genette 398-99) . The metaphorical picture of the palimpsest implies a process of layering—a new text is written over the script of an earlier one—, and what is significant is that this writing-over results in a phenomenon of superimposition: there is not an erasure of the original text, but both old and new writings coexist in the new textual surface. This process of 'superimposition' condenses two defining traits of the palimpsest which account for the prevalence of this image of intertextuality in contemporary writing and criticism.

On the one hand, the palimpsest superimposes past and present in its layering of texts from different periods. This encounter of past and present, distinctive of any intertextual practice, has become a vital factor in contemporary Anglo-American literature, which since the last decades of the twentieth century is paying renewed attention to history and memory.[7] As Frederick Holmes has argued in *The Historical*

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[7] The confluence of the palimpsest, intertextuality, and memory resonates in the passage where Douwe Fokkema traces the use of the palimpsestic image back to Edmund Wilson: 'Edmund Wilson was the first to use the metaphor 'palimpsest' as a characterization of a Postmodernist text, [...]. Since then the term has become popular, not only in relation to Postmodernism but also with reference

Imagination: Postmodernism and the Treatment of the Past in Contemporary British Fiction (1997), nowadays there is a 'return to history' (Holmes 12) that this critic associates with British novels such as Graham Swift's *Ever After* or Byatt's *Possession*. Interestingly, Byatt herself has analysed the new flowering of the historical novel in Britain:

> The renaissance of the historical novel has coincided with a complex self-consciousness about the writing of history itself. [. . .] It may be argued that we cannot understand the present if we do not understand the past [. . .] But there are other, less solid reasons, amongst them the aesthetic need [. . .] to keep past literatures alive and singing, connecting the pleasure of writing to the pleasure of reading. (Byatt 9-11)[8]

Likewise, Jay Prosser states that one of central themes of American fiction since the nineties is the narrativisation of history; as he asserts in his recent study significantly subtitled *Reflections of History and Culture* (2008), '[i]n spite of the imminence of the future and the end of history, a preoccupation with the past characterizes the period' (Prosser 6-7). This awareness of the current 'preoccupation with the past' pervades the essay collection *Memory, Trauma and World Politics: Reflections on the Relationship Between Past and Present* (2006), where Duncan Bell foregrounds the centrality of memory in the contemporary socio-political and cultural scene:

> Memory seems impossible to escape. During the closing decades of the twentieth century it emerged as 'a cultural obsession of monumental proportions across the globe' [. . .] Questions of historical memory [. . .] have been at the forefront of debates over transitional justice, post-conflict reconstruction, the legitimacy of political violence, the legacy of the Holocaust and a plethora of other processes and

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to *intertextuality in general and the workings of memory*' (Fokkema 46; my emphasis).

[8] As I have contended in "'Keeping the Past Alive'. The Dialogue with Medieval Literature in A.S. Byatt's Fiction" (Lara-Rallo 80), the dialogue with the past characteristic of recent British fiction is articulated as well in an intertextual dimension that gives new life to the literature of all times. Intertextuality emerges then as one of the most fruitful strategies for the treatment of history and memory in contemporary literature.

> practices. These social and political trends have been mirrored in academia where the study of memory has swept a number of disciplines. (Bell 1)

On the other hand, the palimpsest involves a superimposition of presences and absences, heard and unheard voices, the living and the dead, that opens the way to establishing a connection between intertextuality and the critical discourse of spectrality. This link, hinted at in the title of Hillis-Miller's article—'The *Ghost Effect. Intertextuality in Realist Fiction*' (my emphasis)—, should be underlined in the light of the critical pre-eminence of the trope of the ghost. Spectrality, or hauntology, is a useful theoretical tool regarded today as the future for psychoanalysis and deconstruction, 'supplant[ing] [. . .] ontology, replacing the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost as that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive' (Davis 9).

This existence of ghosts on the blurred borderline between absence and presence—they are absent presences, or present absences—emerges as one of the points in common between spectrality and the palimpsest; like ghosts, palimpsests have 'spectral power' as the 'uncanny harbingers to the present of the murdered texts of former ages' (Dillon 13). In the light of this, any writing, or palimpsestic creation, is haunted by earlier text(s) which it superimposes: the old and the new merge in the palimpsestuous structure, where temporal boundaries cease to demarcate past, present, and future:

> The 'present' of the palimpsest is only constituted in and by the 'presence' of texts from the 'past', as well as remaining open to further inscriptions by texts of the 'future'. The presence of texts from the past, present (and possibly the future) in the palimpsest does not elide temporality but evidences the spectrality of any 'present' moment which always already contains within it 'past', 'present' and 'future' moments. (Dillon 37)

In their partaking of past, present, and future, palimpsests are ghostly images. According to Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, editors of the pioneering volume on spectrality *Ghosts. Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (1999), the figure of the ghost hints at the impossibility of separating past and present, 'as any idea of the present is always constituted through the difference and deferral of the past, as well as anticipations of the future' (Buse and Stott 10-11). Therefore, the palimpsest fuses with the image of the *revenant*, the specter that returns

whose uncertain status in-between the living and the dead, the present and the absent, the now and the then, has been vividly evoked by Derrida in his *Specters of Marx* (6-7) as 'the tangible intangibility', the 'non-present present', 'this being-there of an absent or departed one. This allusion to Derrida's *Specters of Marx* becomes particularly apt here because it makes it possible to suggest a link between spectrality and intertextuality. In 2002, one of the leading scholars in the field of spectrality, Julian Wolfreys, published an article in the wake of *Specters of Marx*; interestingly, the topic of the article is not spectrality *per se*, but the intertextual strategy of citation—quotation, which Wolfreys characterises as 'spectral', partaking of 'the *spectral* condition of literary writing' (Wolfreys 25; my emphasis). Similarly, the enriching relationship between spectrality and intertextuality can be conjured up as well when reading Wolfgang G. Müller's influential analysis of 'interfigurality', or the intertextual device based on 'the interdependence of literary figures'. In the course of his study, Müller categorises those literary figures that are inserted into a new fictional context as 'literary *revenants*' (Müller 107; my emphasis).'

The encounter of the image of the palimpsest and the figure of the ghost becomes very relevant in terms of their sharing of other features which interestingly relate to intertextuality. First, both the palimpsest and the ghost are characterised by a certain sense of secondariness or belatedness. If the palimpsest encapsulates Genette's model of the 'literature in the second degree', in spectrality the notions of doubleness, repetition, and return are paramount. In their coming from the past, ghosts are necessarily belated, and so 'like writing, ghosts are associated with a certain *secondariness or belatedness*' (Buse and Stott 8; my emphasis).

In this context, it should be noted here that the process of return pertaining to the secondariness of palimpsestuous structures, and to the belatedness of the ghost's absent presence, was invoked by Bloom in his *Anxiety of Influence*, a work that has already been mentioned in the discussion of the intertextual image of the mosaic. As he analysed the revisionist strategies that allowed the young poet to overcome the anxiety of influence, Bloom described the sixth—and final—stage in the poet's vital detachment from his precursors as *apophrades* or 'the return of the dead'. Once he has become independent, the strong poet must face the reappearance of the precursor's voice in his greatest creations, meeting

the challenge to accept that no poetic composition can be autonomous, since 'the meaning of a poem can only be a poem, but *another poem—a poem not itself*' (Bloom 70).

Bloom's *apophrades* so condenses the phenomenon of spectral return, and the unavoidably intertextual nature of writing, to the point that his idea about how any poem is '*another poem—a poem not itself*' shares the same assumption as Genette's reflection on how 'one who really loves texts must wish from time to time to love (at least) two together' (Genette 399). The two statements acknowledge the secondary quality of literature—echoed in the intertextual principle that 'in one artistic text there coexist, more or less visibly, several other texts' (Mai 47)—, signalling at the same time the other trait displayed by the image of the palimpsest and the figure of the ghost: openness. The fact that the reading of the palimpsest, and the listening to the revenant, depend on the coexistence of other texts and voices, leads to their interpretation being constantly rewritten and revisited. Like the ghost, the palimpsest is open to multiple inscriptions along the temporal and spatial axes, therefore being immersed in a process of indefinite deferral of meaning:

> Like 'revision', the concept of the palimpsest balances the idea of absence with presence, erasure with revelation. Literally, a manuscript that has been erased and written over again, the palimpsest bears textual traces of its history as visible evidence of change. In poststructuralist criticism, the palimpsest is a marker of skepticism about the notion of origin and suggests the endless deferral of final and fixed meaning that lies at the heart of language. (Watkins 248)

In other words, the multi-layered disposition of palimpsestuous structures, superimposing texts from the past, the present, and the future, entails a resistance to closed or final meanings. This openness plays a crucial role in spectrality, too, because Derrida has emphasised the centrality of the ghost's 'structural openness', which he depicts in terms of an 'address directed towards the living by the voices of the past or the not-yet formulated possibilities of the future' (Davis 9). As a result of all this, the history of the palimpsest—like the history of intertextuality as a critical concept—is immersed in a process of perpetual rewriting and

reinscription,[9] in the same way as the notion of the spectre 'enables us to concentrate on reading history as a series of the iterations and recontextualizations, traces and returns that constitutes our experience of it' (Buse and Stott 15).

Ghostly traces of earlier critics of intertextuality can be discovered everywhere in this palimpsestuous article, itself a mosaic of images applied to the unavoidably connective nature of texts. Woven with theories of textual interaction, and refracting multiple descriptions of the intricacy of writing, the present exploration of intertextual imagery has intended to approach some of the major studies of this process through their figurative conceptualisations. Implicitly acknowledging that a picture, or a metaphorical image, is worth 'a thousand words', theorists of intertextuality have consistently resorted to tropes that offer an immediate and vivid depiction of the interdependence of texts.

With the goal of tracing the most salient of those 'pictures' or 'metaphorical images', this article has portrayed how, like a picture being 'worth a thousand words', every single text stands for a myriad of texts that constitute its intertextual (con)figuration. While doing so, special attention has been paid to two sets of figures of intertextuality that have been associated with main tendencies in contemporary Anglo-American criticism: images of artistic creativity (including the mosaic, and the textile metaphor), and of presence-in-absence (invisible ink, refraction, and above all, the palimpsest). In fact, as shown here, these imagery fields relate in different degrees to the renewed interest in

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[9] In the light of such a process, it is remarkable to consider that the palimpsest—and so my argument goes, intertextuality, too—has become a useful theoretical and critical tool for the exploration of practices of revision and reinterpretation of writing, history, and identity. The palimpsestic and intertextual notions can be applied to the study of the dialogue between past and present—historical and textual—,as well as to phenomena pertaining to hybridisation and cross-cultural interaction. Indeed, for postcolonial critics, the palimpsest provides 'a useful way of understanding the developing complexity of culture, as previous 'inscriptions' are erased and overwritten, yet remain as traces within present consciousness. This confirms the dynamic, contestatory and dialogic nature of linguistic, geographic, and cultural space as it emerges in post-colonial experience' (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 176).

history, memory, and the past; to the interdisciplinary drive towards the crossing of traditional boundaries between arts and disciplines, and to the discourse of spectrality.

In their connection with intertextuality, the prevalence of these critical trends attests to the currency of the intertextual notion more than forty years after Kristeva's assertion about 'any text' being constructed 'as a mosaic of quotations'. This period has witnessed the proliferation of a considerable number of changing and opposing perspectives on intertextuality, which have contributed to a situation of uncertainty where the only principle shared by theorists of intertextuality is that each artistic text subsumes several other texts. In 1974, in the course of a radio interview with the critic Maurice Nadeau—later published in *Sur la literature* (1980)—Roland Barthes suggested that rather than attempting a definition of 'text', the only effective way to examine the textual notion was metaphorically. Now that the concept of intertextuality is forty years old, when so many different and even contradictory definitions of intertextuality have flourished, the imagistic or metaphorical analysis of the intertextual notion, implemented in the present article, emerges as a feasible method to approach the richness and complexity of the interdependence of texts.

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