

## *Hypertextual writings in Catalan Literature (1939–1983)*<sup>1</sup>

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Between 2018 and 2024, a team made up of professors from the University of Valencia and researchers from other Catalan and foreign universities have carried out two research projects on so-called secondary literature, that is to say, on the various forms of hypertextual relations in 20th century Catalan literature. The starting point for these research projects, dedicated specifically to the study of hypertextualities in contemporary Catalan literature, goes back to two previous projects that focused on the investigation of irony during the same period. The analysis of the plurality of forms that literary irony can take allowed us to distinguish between textual ironies, metafictional ironies and hypertextual ironies. The latter, according to the proposal of Gérard Genette (1982) that we adopted as a theoretical reference, function as a modality of transformation or imitation, of a playful regime, through which a text B or hypertext intentionally reworks a text A or hypotext. If the hypotext is a specific work, we are facing parody, in the specific and restricted sense that Genette gives it, and the relationship established with the hypertext is one of simple transformation; on the other hand, when the hypotext is a genre, the relationship is one of indirect transformation or imitation and is called pastiche.

### 1. The theoretical framework of hypertextuality

Hypertextuality is a universal aspect of literariness (Genette 1982: 16) because there is no literary work that, to a certain degree and according to interpretations, does not evoke another and, in this sense, all works can be understood as a form of rewriting or as hypertextual works. It is the literary memory of which T. Samoyault (2001: 21) speaks, which presents the authors' library vertically and

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<sup>1</sup> This work was supported by the Consolidated Research Group Grant CIAICO/2021/143 from the Direcció General de Ciència i Investigació, de la Generalitat Valenciana, for the Hypertextual Relations in Catalan Literature (1939–1983) project.

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shows its origin. On multiple occasions, the tracing and analysis of genealogy and the models and influences of literary texts have been carried out from this conviction, as broad as it is theoretically unapprehensible, leading to more or less defined findings usually described without a conceptual apparatus that presents the results unambiguously and in the most stable and unambiguous way possible. On the other hand, the fact of not establishing clear limits for the hypertextual phenomenon has contributed to diluting these relationships within the general field of literature, with the consequent loss of meaning and value.

The theoretical advances in the study of the relationships that literary works establish with the tradition in which they are part – relationships without which literary communication and the very existence of the works would be inconceivable – have made it possible to delimit, fix and analyse in an operational way the cases in which these relationships have a significant specific weight in the proposal, that is to say, those that maintain an unequivocal and essential debt to previous texts, genres, etc. In this sense, Genette's (1982) proposal suggests that hypertextuality is a type of derivative relationship through which a text (hypertext) derives from a previous text (hypotext) by simple transformation or by indirect transformation or imitation; moreover, he explicitly adds, that this derivation must be massive and, in some way, declared, so that the analysis of hypertextuality does not depend solely on the interpretative criterion of the reader. Another virtue of the model established by Genette (1982) is the division into six categories of cases of hypertextuality as a result of combining two types of relationship (transformation and imitation) and three types of regime or function (serious, satirical, ludic). In this way, categories that had a long critical history, such as parody and pastiche, are inscribed within a general framework of relationships that not only highlight their ludic or ironic character, but also their condition of transformations or imitations of previous texts, styles or genres. Genette's proposal develops the elements for the analysis of the main hypertextual relations, the transposition or serious transformation, but it also has the merit of updating the consideration and sense of parody, pastiche, disguise and imitation satirical or *charge*, very deteriorated by the use as labels applied to products of little literary value, which are often interpreted as simple caricatures.

Although Genette (1982) proposes to distinguish between hypertextual and intertextual relations, reserving, as we have already warned, the first term for relations that function by derivation, there are other lines of research that include these practices within the general field of intertextuality. In many cases, the contributions made by these authors are of great interest to nuance and complement Genette's proposal. For example, M. Riffaterre's (1984) distinction between "random intertextuality" and "determined intertextuality" or the

inclusion of the concept of the “interpretant” in a triangle made up of text and intertext (Riffaterre 1979: 146); the different conceptions of intertextuality, derived from H. F. Plett’s (1991) dominant cultural conventions (affirmative, negative, inverted and relativistic); the concept of “intertitularity” enunciated by W. Karrer (1991) or that of “interfigurality”, by W. G. Müller (1991); or the studies of W. Wolf (2002, 2011) or I. Rajewski (2005) in the field of intermediality, a specific theoretical framework from which to tackle the analysis of the relationships between literature and the plastic arts or music. In the field of hypertextuality or ironic intertextuality, the study of parody and pastiche has also produced an interesting line of analysis by Anglo-American authors, such as Linda Hutcheon, Margaret A. Rose and Michele Hannoosh. The theoretical framework adopted in our research projects allows us to catalogue and interpret secondary literature in a stricter and more functional way, based on coherent and shared analysis models, without resorting to terms, as imprecise as they are common, such as “influences” or “recreations”, with the advantage of ensuring the terminological and conceptual homologation of research results and establishing reliable criteria for comparison between works, authors, aesthetic movements or periods.

## 2. Investigate rewritings in contemporary Catalan literature

In *Escriure és reescriure. Anàlisi i testimonis en la literatura actual* (2023), by F. Ardolino, C. Gregori, G. López-Pampló and Pere Rosselló-Bover, we have analysed, based on the answers to a questionnaire answered by thirty writers, the habits and practices of rewriting of many current authors, divided into four phases: before starting to write, during the writing process, during the editing process and after the publication of the original work. The study and the questionnaire provide relevant information on aspects such as the genesis of the work, composition techniques, editorial work, revision of published books, self-translation or adaptations to other media and allow a panoramic view of the multiple derivations of rewriting or hypertextual writing.

The research on hypertextual relationships in contemporary Catalan literature has been structured along different lines. Firstly, the study of the recreation of myths and legends, which led to the publication of several articles and the volume collective, edited by C. Gregori and R. X. Rosselló, *L’empremta del mite en la literatura del primer terç del segle XX* (2018), with analysis of classic myths, biblical myths and popular myths.

Analysis of the rewritings of the texts by the author himself has formed a second field of study, to which we dedicated the monographic dossier of issue 32 of *Catalonia* (2023) “Versions d’autor, una reescriptura personal”. In the same

vein, in Valencia in December 2022 we organised in collaboration with the research group led by Marcel Ortín from the University of Pompeu Fabra, the *Jornada Traduccions, revisions, compilacions: les reescriptures d'autor*, with preferential attention to revisions by authors, including, in principle at first, formal transformations, such as translation and self-translation, a topic to which we have also devoted other works.

The hypertextual recreation of genres and singular works has probably been the privileged approach, due to the breadth of its scope and the considerable possibilities of analysis it offers and has generated a large number of studies.

Finally, through the study of intermediality we have opened up the hypertextual perspective, including as an object of study the relationships between literature and other arts or means of artistic expression, such as music, plastic arts and cinema. It is to that topic that we then dedicated the *Jornada Intermedialitat i transmodalització en la literatura contemporània* (University of Valencia, 2023), with a set of contributions published in the book *En altres paraules. La intermedialitat en la literatura contemporània* (Reichenberger, 2024), edited by Xavier Hernández i Gonçal López-Pampló.

At the University of Valencia in 2019 we held the *International Congress Reescriptures literàries: la hipertextualitat en les literatures occidentals (1900–1939)*, with papers and communications on the subject in French, English, Portuguese, Italian, Greek and Spanish that made it possible to place research on hypertextuality in Catalan literature in an international context and open up to new methodological contributions. The works presented at the congress were published in the volume *Reescriptures literàries. La hipertextualitat en les literatures occidentals (1900–1939)*, edited by Carme Gregori, Gonçal López-Pampló and Jordi Malé.

Other collective publications with hypertextuality as a dominant theme promoted by the group or with significant participation of its members are: *La mirada retornada. Estudis de literatura catalana contemporània en homenatge a Vicent Simbor* (Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2021); the monograph “Escriptures hipertextuals (1900–1939)” of the *Rivista Italiana di Studi Catalani* (2020); and the dossier of the review *Studia Romanica Posnaniensia*, “En la xarxa del temps: l'aspecte diacrònic en l'estudi de la llengua i la literatura catalanes” (2021). In October 2024, we closed the current project with the celebration of the *Censura i exili. Les reescriptures de la Dictadura franquista* symposium in Valencia.

The investigation of hypertextual relationships in contemporary Catalan literature has been revealed as a useful and productive perspective that allows analysis of a wide range of works in the light of their genealogy or their textual history. Hypertextuality, as one of the forms adopted by literary memory, allows

us to observe the authors' library and, at the same time, as a reading effect helps us interpret the works based on shared cultural backgrounds.

Investigating the diversity of forms of rewriting, with the help of the theoretical framework that has served us as a base and reference, has made it possible to move from basic concepts to specific practices, including nuances and singular cases, so we have been able to reflect on contemporary literature as a system of communication, as a system of signs, as an aesthetic, historical and social object.

We have paid attention to the hypertextualities that occur throughout the process of creation and existence of a work: from conception to revisions or transformations subsequent to the original edition and the vicissitudes of writing or editorial intervention. Among the formal rewritings, we have studied translations and self-translations, but also the author's versions, which can serve various purposes, either purely stylistic or semantic. The analysis of imitation relationships has served to help us understand the links between specific works and genres or types of text: with serious or ironic intent, the repetition of generic models or stereotypes guarantees literary communication, at the same time establishing lines of tension between what is known and the changes that renew the perception. Semantic transformations are, surely, the most extensive field and of greatest literary interest. If, as Ecclesiastes says, there is nothing new under the sun, the continued revisiting of tradition is the only way to create and renew the value and meaning of cultural history.

With the monograph *Hypertextual Writings in Catalan Literature (1939–1983)* we want to offer a representative sample of our line of research, with works on different genres such as poetry, narrative, theatre and essay; and about some of its modalities, for example the rewriting of classic and biblical myths, author's versions, connections between works, imitation of genres and intermediality. In this way, we want to contribute to making contemporary Catalan literature known, a literature from a demographically modest country that does not have the international visibility of cultures with their own states but which is perfectly comparable to other Western literatures due to its modernity and the quality of its authors and their works. We also want to share a theoretical framework, that of hypertextuality, and its applications because we think it provides a fruitful analysis perspective that makes the works dialogue with tradition, with textual history itself, with genre models and, in the case of intermediality, with other languages. We will not go into a description of the different articles because it would be redundant because of the summaries that head them, which are easily consulted by readers.

Finally, we would like to thank *Interlitteraria* for hosting this monograph. It is an honour for us, as authors, that the articles see the light of day in such a prestigious and recognised publication. And, from the perspective of Catalan

culture, we are particularly pleased to establish this connection with a journal from Estonia, a reference country for us in many ways.

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