Intertextuality reconsidered

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Intertextuality

• Describes the relationships between texts and other texts, and texts and the world.

• It’s unavoidable.

• It’s desirable.

• It’s changing
Tools and literacies

• We remake our tools, and our tools change us.

• Literacy is practiced in different ways when we have different tools.
The trope of the individual author and his typewriter

- We imagine authors as solitary, working alone in their garret (Brodkey in Prior, 1998, pp. 140-1).

- This mistaken trope fit well with the typewriter century, from about 1875 to the “word processor”, c. 1970 (Wershler-Henry, 2005).

- Referencing systems developed and are aligned with printed and typed texts (e.g., the development of the Harvard style in 1881, according to Chernin, 1988)
Old news

• Our referencing doesn’t fit our use of sources.

There is, however, a third, more alarming, way to interpret the Vix: investors are dangerously complacent about (geo) political risks. More specifically, one way to frame the situation is that markets have stealthily slipped into a “normalisation of deviance” pattern, to use the phrase coined by sociologist Diane Vaughan: so many political boundaries and precedents have been broken that investors have lost perspective on events, because the bizarre seems almost normal.
New ways with texts

• Texts are increasingly collaborative:

  — "This is, of course, the way of electronic discourse, which—because it is easier to do so than it was with print—encourages cutting and pasting, repurposings, reusing, evocations, allusions, and associations as well as self-reflection and self-plagiary...” (Joyce, 2006, p. 76).
New ways with texts (2)

Our daily texts are as much assembled—curated—as written.

• Students’ (and our) most frequent interaction with texts involves selecting and forwarding (share) them.
New ways with texts (3)

Curation continued:

• “In the digital cut-and-paste culture, it is much easier to reproduce content than it was in the analogical era... As Benjamin observes, in the reproduction process, the original message acquires a different meaning. It is objectified or indexed, becoming data or information.” (Soffer, 2016, p.3)
New ways with texts (4)

We are increasingly mediating our interactions with texts digitally.

- Bibliometric measures of academic research
- Automated essay scoring
- Plagiarism detection software
Reshaping

• Our tools are reshaping students and teachers.
  – Our texts are more collaborative.
  – We interact with our students texts through the medium of a PDS.
  – Intertextuality is reduced to character strings and percentages.
Ways forward?

We need to focus on argumentation, not plagiarism.

– “...knowledge is not just ‘copied’ the way genes make copies of themselves when they multiply. Instead, they are sent, received, and then interpreted (Sperber, 1996, pp. 101-6). What matters is persuasion, the decision by the receiver to choose to accept the cultural message and add it to his or her set of beliefs or preferences” (Mokyr, 2017, p. 46).
Ways forward?

- Understand that texts are more collaborative.
- Encourage students to understand real intertextuality, not character strings.
- Reduce our interaction with texts through digital systems.
- Contribute to the development of new ways formal referencing.