

# Chapter One

## Introduction

The reader—nowadays a rare species, to be sure—who has not yet been infected by the "virus" of postmodernist theory would probably find the idea of intertextuality counterintuitive, although it denotes, categorizes, and interprets processes that have for some time accompanied texts' production and reception. It would be difficult to convince such a reader, hardbound book in hand, that the text is boundless and that other texts and discourses intrude amid the printed lines, much less bring him to Jacques Derrida's idea that nothing exists outside the text. The traditional value of the print medium precludes such speculations. A book functions as a clearly delimited whole and presence. After all, it is tangible and has volume—it is a "fixed" record. The impression of a single object set off from its context is, in the case of a book, reinforced by the authority with which an author's name acts on readers' perceptions and by the individuating influence of one other proper name institutionalized in the print medium, the title. However, the appearance of electronic media completely altered the nature of texts: "digital textuality" led to "the differentiation of text from physical object" (Landow 3), such as a book, and to the spread of "non-linear" structuring (Aarseth 51).

Today's digital era thus displaces intertextuality from a field in which the term refers only to theoretical speculations and transforms it into materially perceptible, everyday experience. A web surfer before her computer screen, which replaces the page of a book, catches and combines slices of heterogeneous texts (verbal, visual, and auditory) from distant, scattered sources. Intangible simulacra of segments belonging to one or more absent textual wholes change before her gaze. These fragments are not dependably connected to one another in advance; only the pulses of the surfer's desire arrange them into an aleatory (inter)textual syntax or narration. Thanks to interactive communication technologies, the viewer interjects herself actively into the appearance and structure of the text. As a result, the boundaries between author's and reader's roles are erased; hypertexts with multiple authors emerge, and at times no one can read them in their entirety because of their complexity (the so-called "readerless text," see Landow 13, 34). Linkages are especially characteristic of hy-

pertext: one can see how a textual element blossoms into another text, and so on in an endless regression. Pursuing personal interests, the user adds to, qualifies, expands, and comments on the information as revealed in ever more texts stemming from the original textual unit. These then can become starting points for paths of reception that lead to unforeseen targets and to digressions on digressions lacking a dominant story. Reading hypertexts is thus similar to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's conception of "nomad thought" (i.e., reading hypertext is a nonlinear, multidirectional, nonhierarchical activity), and digital textuality is like their "rhizome" (Landow 1). In view of all this, it is not surprising that theorists contend that electronic hypertext, the Internet, and e-books embody many poststructuralist concepts—among them Bakhtin's dialogism and polyphony and Julia Kristeva's intertextuality (Landow 1, 39; Allen 199-208). What is more, the term "hypertext," denoting the rising realities of world-wide, decentralized, and demotic knowledge exchange, was launched in the late 1960s, concurrently with the emergence of the theory of intertextuality (Orr 50). Through the experience of digital textuality, it thus appears that the theoretical concept of intertextuality—although it originally covers mostly printed texts, as Mary Orr reminds us—is "viable," since it successfully explains the world we live in (170). This might even lead one into the trap of naturalism, to the sense that intertextuality is inherent in observed phenomena themselves, in this case in the Internet hypertext (concerning differentiation between words, concepts, and things, which of course also affects intertextuality, see below). However, let us consider the following hypothesis: How would those who have not had anything to do with digital textuality (and such people are still in the majority)—not simply those who have not been influenced by the paradigm in which this category was formed—be convinced that intertextuality is a category that offers powerful explanations for the working of language in utterances and texts? Very simply. It is possible to offer ready demonstrations that individual linguistic signs (words) and their complexes (utterances, texts) are either incomprehensible or their information incomplete if their uses are not connected with many other prior linguistic uses. Individual textual elements and entire texts necessarily presuppose other texts, refer to them, repeat and transform them, and would lack the ability to convey meaning without doing so, or would convey far less.

Hölderlin's poem "To the Fates" ("An die Parzen"), for example, besides the title word also contains the name "Orkus" and the figurative paraphrase "Schattenwelt" ("shadow world"); these elements, like hypertextual links, hide a broader system of representation (i.e., the ancient imaginary of fate, death, the afterworld) that had been textually reworked innumerable times already in ancient mythology and in a two-thousand-year-old literary and cultural tradition that derived from it. The reader lacking access to that continuity will find the meaning of Hölderlin's poem unclear; he will also miss the aesthetic impact that derives from overlaying the poet's "unique" confession, important in modern subjective discourse, onto the transhistorical background of ancient mythology (Hölderlin 32-33). Shakespeare's Sonnet

130 ("My Mistress's Eyes are Nothing like the Sun") seems in comparison with Hölderlin's poem much more self-contained and comprehensible. However, how is one to grasp the foregrounded device of deconstructing similes of beauty? Only if we approach the sonnet not as an expression of the poet's conscious avoidance of spurious comparisons ("false compare") or genuine praise of the unidealized, real woman, but read intertextually, are we able to descry in it the poet's search for identity, which takes place through aesthetic polemics with epigonic erotic poetry full of worn metaphors. The description of the beloved in the sonnet persistently alludes to and simultaneously negates them. Umberto Eco adduces many examples, taken from his own postmodernist "quality best-sellers," to illustrate how enriching and surprisingly more ambitious "critical" reading on the intertextual level may be, even though the text also offers pleasure to a naïve "semantic reader" whose poorer encyclopedic knowledge does not allow her to recognize sophisticated citational items, such as Eliot's quotation of Baudelaire's final verse from "To the Reader" ("Au lecteur") in Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* (*On Literature*, 212-35). The educated reader's intertextual associations, however, quite often transgress the author's evocative intentions and strategies, following instead the *intentio intertextualitatis*: readers attempt to relate certain textual data with their specific knowledge, their textual encyclopedia. Thus, for example, several academics instigated by the novel's title were inclined to search for intertextual analogies between the fictional world of *Foucault's Pendulum* and the discursive theory of knowledge by Michel Foucault, although Eco himself, referring to the nineteenth-century physicist Léon Foucault, attempted to avoid such "superficial" parallels with the twentieth-century social theorist. Yet those unintended correspondences certainly added to the text's meaning, by configuring it on the background of a contemporary power-knowledge nexus (Eco, *On Literature*, 121, 231-32). In the end, it is not necessary to search out proofs for textual interactions in more or less erudite writings; they are to be met at every step, in each written or spoken sentence. It is not only a matter of the polyphony of semantic-pragmatic implications and presuppositions, about which Oswald Ducrot once wrote; utterances that a given utterance presupposes or implies are possibly just potential, not even having been produced. Nonetheless, any utterance is also based on many familiar and unfamiliar preceding texts, communications, and the universes of discourse. The sentence, "Umberto Eco wrote some important postmodern novels," is relevant only because the name cited in thousands of prior utterances and texts has become known as an example of a prominent public figure and an important author (and thus opinions of him are worthy of attention); the sentence about Eco would have no meaning if its addressees—from the large, unsurveyable mass of the already spoken and written—in the process of their linguistic-communicative socialization had not formed some broader or more specialized understandings. The model reader of this sentence should have an idea of what the expression "to write" means and be familiar with the meanings and references of "novel" and "postmodern."

Theories are supposed to be consistent, methodically developed answers to problems of cognition. It is sensible to introduce new concepts only if we can bet-

ter define, connect, and explain a given field of inquiry. Therefore, some ideas and categories of thought—as a rule, those in the humanities and social sciences—withstand the test of time, and during reinterpretation remain useful even in essentially different scholarly paradigms, while others soon disappear when the methodological field where they were produced and assigned functions ceases to hold sway. Seen from this point-of-view, intertextuality cannot compete with such longstanding notions as plot, metaphor, drama, trope, or literature, yet after a mere forty years it has shown itself not to be a theoretical fad and—as the examples I have given demonstrate—clearly is able to elucidate actual experiences with textuality.

The concept of intertextuality, after having been introduced in the late 1960s, manifested its productiveness during its stellar course of development in literary studies. As I will show further on, the concept in literary theory led to the formation of views of literature as a self-referential system that changes and guides itself by its own means, and at the same time remains ever integrated in the network of other discourses. Intertextuality fundamentally altered theories of the production, existence, structure, meaning, function, and reception of literary works. It turned out that texts cocreate the social construction of reality and that they do not represent the so-called extra-textual world directly (via mimesis), but only through an unobtrusive filter of clichés, of previous textualizations (semiosis). The category of intertextuality was tested with equal success in literary history: not only in scholarship that dealt with fashionable postmodernism and metafiction or the forms, genres, and styles with obvious intertextual connections (e.g., citations, allusions, parody, pastiche, baroque, avant-garde, and Acmeism), but in the reexamination of the recondite affiliations of literary works—belonging to different periods, cultural spaces, and genres—with their sociocultural, linguistic-ideological, and aesthetic contexts. In this way intertextuality could open fresh insights into the text's position in literary processes, traditions, canons, and mechanisms of intercultural and interliterary interaction. The concept's explanatory power has also been shown outside of literary studies: in text linguistics and discourse analysis, sociolinguistics (see White), historiography (see Valdés), and the study of folklore (see Golež Kaučič; Bauman); art, music, and film studies (see Karbusicky; Cancalon); and not least of all in the theory of electronic media (see, e.g., Sanz and Romero). Today, when the accelerated dynamic of social change has created, paradoxically, the impression of the "end of history," the term intertextuality seems outmoded and of little theoretical appeal. Although the idea of intertextuality has in fact been applied since at least the 1980s by academic *doxa* of varied, often eclectic methodological stripes (it was widely employed in literary interpretation and no less systematically included in histories of literary criticism), it should be recalled that the idea coalesced in the second half of the 1960s from a break, as one of the most apparent symptoms of a shift from structuralism to poststructuralism or from modernism to postmodernism. It arose from within cross-disciplinary theory, which viewed the text or writing as a transformative and subversive praxis targeting bourgeois capitalism, imperialism, establishment humanities, and traditional views of literary autonomy. The ontological points of departure of intertextuality were Bakhtin's dialogism and

Derrida's criticism of Western logocentrism, the deconstruction of Saussure's model of the sign and structure—that is, the postmetaphysical idea of an open chain of signifiers that suggests the relative character of identity, meaning, the subject, text, and sociohistorical reality. Such a context marked intertextuality as subversive and transgressive. Its philosophical and radical (in the cultural-political sense) potential has yet to be exhausted. Together with modifications and cross-disciplinary, derivative applications of the theory of the text, intertextuality, as conceived by Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, appeared in a series of critical approaches that stemmed from the same break and thematized it in various ways: from post-Marxism to gender studies and intercultural and postcolonial research (see Allen 138-67).

Intertextuality's critical power waned in the 1970s and 1980s and began to serve the apologetic purposes of commenting on postmodernism in literature, architecture, and the visual arts. It became predominantly atheoretical and descriptive, reduced to the aesthetic realm, where it functioned as a prominent feature of late capitalism's artistic practices. It was for all intents and purposes a slogan for product promotion. Typical artworks of the time had their ideological starting points in the concept of the end of history and the belatedness of high art. Self-reflexive recycling of its own tradition and hybrid play with mass culture's forms, themes, media, and channels was seemingly all that was left to the art of late capitalism. Since each period creates its predecessors, the blatantly intertextual bent of postmodernism turned literary scholars' attention to the study of similar intertextual phenomena in the past; this was most apparent in theories of parody (see Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*). The way in which the concept of intertextuality arose in scholarship, society, and aesthetics—about this, more below—in fact realizes many of the term's connotations, such as heterogeneity, ambivalence, transgressiveness, relativity, and dynamism. Almost all of the critics who have attempted to sketch the idea's history have pointed out the instability, elusiveness, and internal conflict of definitions of intertextuality (see, e.g., Lachmann, "Ebenen" 133; Arrivé 13-16; Mai, "Bypassing" 30-33; Holthuis, *Intertextualität* 1-3, 11; Schahadat 366; Allen 2-3; Samoyault 5-14). Marc Angenot, in his pioneering work, "L'Intertextualité. Enquête sur l'émergence et la diffusion d'un champ notionnel," denoted the intellectual ferment around this "conceptual aggregate" as a notional field (120-21). In contrast to a coherent theory in such a field—with common themes—irreconcilable positions coexist, disparate claims to and uses of terms, and diverse methodologies and disciplines, confront one another (131-32). Furthermore, theoretical approaches designated as intertextual were also found here and there in conceptual frameworks, in which the word "intertextuality" did not constitute the focus or was wholly absent. Alongside it, or in place of it, appeared other terms, for example dialogism, polyphony, heteroglossia, polylogue, paragram, transposition, semiosis, *différance*, trace, iterability of sign, writing, influence, revisionism, renovation, allusion, citationality, vertical context system, subtext, extratextual connections, text within a text, literary implication, literary reference, palimpsest, architextuality, transtextuality, intersemioticity, intermediality, interdiscursivity, or metacommunication.

In this terminological Babylon some saw anarchy, a sign of fondness for fashionable theories, and unnecessary renaming of known phenomena; others pointed out that intertextuality is a break (with its fresh, productive, dynamic and fluid conceptualization) and that it opens up a field connected with the main spiritual, scholarly, and aesthetic explorations of the twentieth century. In particular, it was supposed to be close to modern and postmodern ideas of heterogeneity and relativism, which critically undermined the traditional concepts of truth, the subject, structure, the sign, meaning, text, and literature (see Orr 1). Ryszard Nycz, in his book *Tekstowy świat: Poststrukturalizm a wiedza o literaturze* (*Textual World: Post-structuralism and Literary Criticism*), about poststructuralism and literary studies, concludes justly that intertextual research is a good example of postmodern theoretical discourse: today literary theory is decidedly displaced from the position of objective and universal knowledge to the relative periphery of historically contingent utterances, acknowledging the limitedness of its explanatory potential and perspective in the context of a pluralistic and conflicted sociocultural reality (29).

In my study, I attempt to grasp intertextuality in its heterogeneity, in its revolutionary, ontological, and critical breadth that redefines textuality, as well as in the stylistic applications through which it was transformed into a value-neutral category of poetics. In doing so I have tried, in comparison with similar theoretical and historical overviews of intertextuality, to take into account the experiences and accomplishments not only of individual theoretical metropolises (US, Canada, France, Great Britain, Germany), but at least in addition to the "centers" on the "periphery," that is, Central and Eastern Europe. Mary Orr, in her 2003 *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts*, was the first English-speaking theorist who set out to surpass the linguistically narrowed, Anglocentric perspective that had been characteristic of several historical surveys of the field; however, Orr went only halfway towards more extensive revision of the intertextual canon, since her book still "draws mainly on French, German, and Anglo-American theories of intertextuality" (11). My efforts to critically present contributions to intertextual theory not only of Western, but also of Russian, Austrian, Italian, Slovak, Polish, Croat, Slovene, and other scholars, are at least partially consistent with some of Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek's principles of comparative cultural studies (which actually renovate traditional comparativist cosmopolitanism), especially his aim "to implement the recognition and inclusion of the Other" by knowledge of several languages—including those of a lesser diffusion, I would add (see "From Comparative Literature" 261-62). Sharing Tötösy's conviction that a "specific and defined taxonomy" together with a "specialized terminology" is more operational than vague essayist jargons that abound in today's humanities (*Comparative Literature* 217), I have also attempted to create a kind of synoptic system or poetics of intertextuality—inspired mainly by Genette and Broich and Pfister—while keeping in mind all of the concept's intricacies, which have surfaced in my narrative about the idea's history. My explorations of intertextuality's conceptual genealogies take into account Tötösy's demand for "theory approximation," that is, "aspects of theory building such as the knowledge of and

reference to similar or analogue factors in other frameworks when building a new one" (*Comparative Literature* 216). In my exposition I proceed from the fundamental semiotic and epistemological consciousness of the Barthesian difference between "words and things": every theory is shaped by scholarly expressions (terms) and concepts or understandings that the expressions designate. Of course, fields of reference to which the concepts relate and concurrently constitute as a subject of knowing serve to do the same. In this regard intertextuality is a rather new term and can also be used according to the tenets of new comparative literature and comparative cultural studies as formulated by Tötösy (see, e.g., "From Comparative Literature"). As a matter of fact, my approach in this book is not systematically and explicitly systemic, even less is it empirical in the sense of testing hypotheses with experiments and numerical data (see Tötösy de Zepetnek, *Comparative Literature* 31-42). However, as in my other studies, my way of thinking is sympathetic towards some basic systemic principles, such as the constructedness of knowledge, meaning, and categories (e.g., my understanding of *intertextuality*, *literature*, *genre*, or *motif*); the observer/observed dichotomy (e.g., the difference between citation—as a phenomenon, naming, and concept—before and after the framework of intertextual theory has been introduced); dynamics or processuality of literary structures and functions, which is steered by interrelations of literary texts with other texts and discourses, media, and institutions, as well as with the activities of producers, distributors, receivers, and postprocessors (e.g., the shifting boundary between general intertextuality and citationality that depends on cultural memory and the literary competence of actors within different and interacting literary fields); and, not least, the principle of systemic self-regulation and autopoiesis (e.g., the notion of intertextual historical process as literature made of literature). The concept of intertextuality, as presented in this book, is in accordance with some other principles of Tötösy's proposal for comparative literature within comparative cultural studies (see *Comparative Literature* 13-17, 30-31): intertextuality is essentially a cross-cultural phenomenon linking together not only one national literature with other—including marginal, peripheral—literatures and cultures, but also, within a given semiosphere, mainstream literary production with its past, forgotten forms, and marginal, subaltern, or emergent subsystems; finally, intertextuality structures the text's affiliation and response to its cultural contexts—of other arts, social discourses (from politics to science), sociolects, ideologies, ways of living, and media.

On the one hand, as suggested above, the newly coined concept of intertextuality introduced a previously nonexistent conceptual framework and theoretical conceptualization; on the other hand, however, it was used reductively to designate ideas and understandings that, prior to the term's coining and afterwards, were otherwise named (e.g., imitation, allusion, transtextuality). Having quite the same motive as Orr, that is "to elucidate how much the term intertextuality differs and is similar to older forms of very much the same thing" (14) and to clarify manifold uses of this "catch-all term" (169), I have taken a different approach. Therefore, in this book I first address "ancestor" and similar ideas from antiquity until the present. I con-

sider terms designating phenomena for which theorists use the word intertextuality today (topos, citation, allusion, paraphrase, imitation, translation, parody, travesty, pastiche, and others). And I scrutinize theoretical concepts that in other scholarly paradigms applied to the semantic and structural interdependencies between texts (imitatio/aemulatio, memoria, influence, tradition, metacommunication, and others). There follows the history of explicit intertextuality theory as proposed by Kristeva and Barthes and taken by their followers along two channels. First, I review modifications of ideas of intertextuality treated as a common characteristic of all textuality; second, I treat the development of theories of so-called citationality understood as a stylistic and poetic feature foregrounded in certain literary works, genres, and trends. The book concludes with a brief descriptive poetics of literary intertextuality, which takes into account the historical and cultural matters sketched in chapters leading up to it. In these frameworks I will present the socially and historically moveable borders between general intertextuality and citationality, the main techniques of intertextual representation, its syntax, semantics and pragmatics, intertextual derivations and references, and the open repertoire of intertextual figures and genres, such as citations, topoi, borrowings, and parody or travesty.

Finally, I add a short historical, if not memoiristic, digression, in the hope that it will help clarify and historicize my perspective on the history and poetics of intertextuality. Writing about intertextuality in Slovenia may serve to demonstrate the acquisition and transformation of modernizing Western theoretical and artistic trends in the context of the "in-between peripheral" location of Central and Eastern European cultures (see Tötösy de Zepetnek, "Comparative Cultural Studies" 8-14). Slovene theorists engaged in a productive intellectual interchange with both strings of intertextuality (general and special) from the late 1960s, when the term was first mentioned in their country and the translations of Kristeva, Barthes, Sollers, Derrida, Lacan, and others appeared in the avant-garde publications, *Problemi* and *Tribuna*. The Socialist Republic of Slovenia was, from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, a unique chronotope for framing intellectual developments. It was situated on the edge of communist and nonaligned Yugoslavia, which was, after Josip Broz Tito's 1948 break with Stalin, supported by the West, because it was seen as a buffer zone. Thus, Slovenia was viewed as "proximate" to Western European states. To the extent that the Titoist regime's unpredictable and changing tolerance allowed, Slovenia was relatively open, not only to Western European consumerism and pop culture, but also to liberal and leftist influences. Yugoslav citizens could fairly freely travel abroad and some young intellectuals studied in France, the US, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and other countries. In these circumstances, a pioneering group of young scholars and critics such as Slavoj Žižek, Braco Rotar, Mladen Dolar, and Rastko Močnik in the 1970s formed their own school of materialist, Lacanian semiotics and used the journal *Problemi* as their main forum. In a perplexing intellectual atmosphere, they took notions from French left-wing radical theory, artistic neo-avant-garde, and radical student movements and tried to adapt them to Marxism in its version of official Yugoslav meta-ideology. It was Žižek who, as early as 1969



and 1972, in the course of his own transition from a post-Heideggerian phenomenologist to Tel-Quelian semiotician and theoretical psychoanalyst, commented first on intertextuality in Slovenia. Remarks and literary examples in his lengthy and difficult papers, "Questioning Certainty" ("Spraševanje gotovosti") and "The Dark Side of the Moon" ("Temna stran meseca")—published in 1969 and 1972 in *Problemi*—were indeed cursory and largely dependent on Kristeva and Tel Quel, but his usage of the notion nonetheless helped him to shape a highly original critical approach to the French theory of *écriture*. The concept of intertextuality in fact soon vanished from Žižek's vocabulary (as did his references to Kristeva), yet it might have continued to influence his own intellectual style. This can be seen clearly in the early 1990s, when he began switching from Slovene to English and his plurilingual voice was seized and empowered by the interest of scholars at US-American universities and publishing houses. Žižek appealed to them because he represented an "exotic" theoretical star from the margins of the globalized world. He was able to replace celebrities with whom the academic scene has become saturated. We thus have good reason to suppose that the "intertextual drive," as transferred from poststructuralist notions of the text, was crucial to the evolution of Žižek's by now world-famous, flamboyant postmodern mixture of pop philosophy, serious Hegelianism, in-depth Lacanianism, devoted post-Marxism, provocative political critique, striking journalism, and scholastic rigor in displaying all sorts of paradoxes. Soon after the late 1960s, the notion of intertextuality sank into oblivion in Slovenia, although Kristeva, Barthes, and Derrida's theories of textuality not only remained embedded firmly in neo-avant-garde critical discourse but was used by some critics—Taras Kermauner and Andrej Medved in particular—as a groundwork for an important trend in literature, as well as in the study of literature and culture, called "ludism." Ludism in fact already displayed many traits of what was later recognized as postmodernism, such as self-referentiality, a play of differences, intertextuality, metafiction, meta-parody, and transgressiveness (see Medved).

It might appear paradoxical that the concept of intertextuality had to be practically rediscovered and re-invented in Slovenia at the beginning of 1980s. This time it was not high theory dealing with fundamental questions of textuality, subjectivity, desire, and sociopolitical power. It contributed to extensive programmatic, apologetic, and—as odd as it might seem—even historiographic writing on literary postmodernism and the postmodern age. In her paper "The Chronicle of the Death Foretold: Postmodernism," Monica Spiridon pointed out that the discourse on postmodernism in formerly communist Central and Eastern Europe featured an Aesopian strategy: talking about the plurality and relativity of truths actually promoted otherwise prohibited ideas of political pluralism, democracy, and free consumerism; postmodernism as a trend in fact produced a very scarce corpus of works before it was proclaimed dead. In Slovenia, the situation somehow deviated from this general pattern. It is true that in the 1980s an important group of dissidents and critical intellectuals around the journal *Nova revija* extensively referred to global debates about the postmodern age in order to advocate intellectual pluralism, political democracy,

and Slovene independence. In so doing, they employed various strategies of clandestine ideological combat and tactical collaboration with the communist establishment, which, soon after Tito's death, began to break up into conflicting factions of nationalists, unitarians, hardliners, and so-called liberals. However, the *Nova revija* circle was opposed not only by communist politicians and intellectuals close to the party, but also by post-Marxist Lacanians of the *Problemi* group. The *Problemi* group stood against what they perceived as the rightist, corporate nationalism of the cultural intelligentsia. The position towards the regime taken by leftist radicals, such as Žižek and Močnik, was ambivalent: they of course rejected Stalinism, totalitarianism, and socialist statism but remained ambiguously devoted to the communist revolutionary project in the post-Tito 1980s. They thought that a liberating potential found in the revolutionary heritage could be renewed by people organizing according to their interests and lifestyles in a pluralist civil society. The leftists saw in civic activism allied with critical theory, punk, and radical artistic practices an alternative both to the decaying regime of communist Yugoslavia and to the multiparty system advocated by the *Nova revija* circle.

In this debate between the two most influential groups of nonofficial intellectuals, postmodernism as such—that is, as art and sensibility—lost its importance. Žižek and his colleagues despised it as a byproduct of late capitalism and conservatism. As a matter of fact, ever since *Problemi* of the 1970s, Slovenian Lacanians either criticized the idea of a national literature—an institution and ideologue of nationalism—or they wholly neglected Slovene literature. In this context, a generation of writers and critics born in the 1960s took an ostensibly apolitical position to the critical issues of the transition period, and engaged wholly in the aesthetic and theoretical discourse of postmodernism. Thus, they fashioned in the mid-eighties their own public identity, which was well expressed in the journal simply but emblematically entitled *Literatura*. Postmodernism was something this generation identified with—its ontological and ethical uncertainties were felt to be suited to our existential sensibility in a world going through great changes. The postmodernist imaginary of postindustrial and plural society was attractive as a desirable way of life; and dealing with literature for its own sake (not as an instrument or target of political projects) was a way toward the "normalization" of Slovene culture. Culture was for us nothing less and nothing more than one of modern society's functional systems. It is understandable that the aesthetic and semantic values of intertextuality in and beyond postmodernism came into vogue as a relevant topic of study: recycling past forms, styles, and themes was soon recognized as one of the most prominent features of postmodernism. Hereafter, the idea that literature of all times—and not only the postmodern—was made primarily of literature soon instigated enduring historical and theoretical efforts to verify the intertextual hypothesis against different intellectual backgrounds and to provide evidence taken both from Slovene and other texts. And this was the original context that gave rise to the research project presented here.