

INTRODUCTION

‘Intertextuality’, as a recognized term, is a relative newcomer on the critical scene and it remains a problematic and unwieldy tool in critical discourse, reflecting its ubiquitous employment as a way of formalizing a vast number of different techniques and effects. These range from direct, conscious citation by one author of another, to an assimilation of certain methodological approaches, to much more elusive uses relying on subtle allusions (intentionally interwoven by the author) and echoes (of which even the author may not be aware). My treatment of the term does not attempt to make of it something more precise, but rather to bring it to prominence in all its breadth, and thereby to confront the dynamics of intertextuality in modern prose narrative. My study does not stand as a record of sources to be found in these authors’ texts, nor do I intend it to be read as such. But I do hope to be able to argue that ‘intertextuality’, after the ‘death of the author’, after postmodernism and its suspicion of grand narratives, not only remains a highly useful resource for articulating social and political issues, but also offers us a way of approaching and coming to a better understanding of the textual processes of signification that accompany the reader’s journey through the text and that dictate his or her relationship with it. It is my contention that these textual processes are of primary importance in the communication of the fictional world, and in the formulation of a critical response to it. To this end, I offer readings of texts by three different authors, all of whom variously employ intertextual devices in the service of cultural critique.

‘Who is Speaking?’: Theories of Authorship

My approach assumes the reader to be an active force in the textual make-up, existing interdependently with the author in a reciprocal relationship. Both author and reader exercise an element of control over the text, the author in her/his choice of material and presentation, the reader in the manner in which s/he responds. Both, by the same token, are in receipt of the text and subject to its effects, in that it is always already charged by the presence of the other. My thesis, understanding the reader as constitutive in the text’s formation, an integral part of its narrative structure, thus depends fundamentally on relatively recent theoretical developments that have redressed the critical neglect of the reader’s role in the text. Until the latter half of the last century the reader was almost always placed in an entirely passive role in relation to the text and the author. The emergence of the reader as an active force has meant a huge shift in critical approaches to literature; in particular, it has meant that we can no longer look with confidence to the authority of the author, because the reader’s presence confounds the previously assumed association of the author with absolute knowledge of and legislation of her/his own work. Seán Burke, in

the introduction to his study *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*, gives a detailed historical account of the changing position of the author and of the various roles in which s/he has been cast over time.¹ According to Burke, the medieval view of the author placed him under the *auctoritas* of God, and his writings were cast as manifestations of an external inspirational force. He did not create an original work, but represented or acted out an essentially public discourse of tradition and religion. Until the emergence of (what we think of as) the 'traditional' author figure at the end of the eighteenth century, the author was only one figure in a collection of other skilled workers involved in the production of a book. Equally important were the printers, copiers, publishers, and so on. Only at the time of the Romantics did authority start to be transferred to the power of the individual consciousness. Whereas before, the author had been considered simply to mirror his world, now there was an increasing recognition of the role of the imagination in giving it representative form. Against the backdrop of Kant's emerging postulation of transcendental idealism, whereby the world is constructed through a reality imposed constitutively upon it by human consciousness, the poetic subordination of nature to author gained currency. The individual poetic mind, previously thought to mimic the divine, gradually came to supplant it, the author gaining status as some sort of Creator-God himself. Although the author proceeded in what was now primarily a subjective economy, he was also transcendent of his work, an impersonal, disinterested creator: just as God is omnipresent and transcendent, the author can now 'be identified with the entirety of a work whilst being nowhere visible within the work' (p. 22). Burke suggests that the dual impulse towards subjectivity and disinterestedness characteristic of this period can be explained as an attempt to guard against the 'destabilizing ramifications' (p. 23) of acknowledging human subjectivity as a replacement for the divine.

This view of the author was continued in the modernist tradition of impersonality, which attempted to extricate the author from the tendency developing in late nineteenth-century criticism to psychologize the figure of the author. The status of the subjective author was such that s/he was proclaimed as the last authority on the text under her/his name. Thus, reading had become a process of decoding the text with the intention of coming as close as possible to an understanding of what the author meant by a particular word or phrase and by the text as a whole. Particularly importantly, the author was credited with a thorough knowledge and understanding of her/his own text and characters, and was assumed to be reliable, even when not omnipotent. The modernists' reaction to this tendency can be seen in the attempt to reduce the significance of the author's personality, to reclaim the notion of the author liberated from her/his subjective emotions and recast her/him as a transcendent genius. Yet, as Burke points out, such pretensions to impersonality, which reach their conclusion in the dictum of the Death of the Author (which I shall discuss in more detail below), are always inevitably threatened by the unarguable fact of our individuality and situatedness, something which forms the cornerstone of Nietzsche's riposte to Kant's transcendental subjectivity. For Burke, 'the characteristic Nietzschean interrogation ("who is speaking? And why speaking thus?") [...] opens the space of a stringent ethical critique by retracing a text first to its author and thence to the ethical drives which motivated that text or system' (p. 25). Burke's emphasis on the

continuing theoretical importance of the figure of the author is essentially ethically based: it is, he suggests, precisely in the particularity of the author that we can mount a challenge to totalizing discourses and their privileged claim to truth, by re-conceiving of authorship as 'a situated activity present not so much to itself as to culture, ideology, language, difference, influence, biography' (p. 26).

Burke's historical analysis of the figure of the author and his insistence on the ongoing theoretical and practical relevance of a concept of authorship are grounded in a belief in the environmental context in which the author, together with his or her work, is situated. The possible relevance of where the author is writing from has long been a central issue in thinking about texts. The Anglo-American movement referred to as New Criticism, most influential during the 1950s, was not so much a school of thought as a collection of theorists loosely associated by a desire to find critical purchase from within, rather than outside, the text. For the New Critics, the text is autonomous, and treated in critical analysis as separate from the socio-cultural realm into which it is born. Their advocacy of practical criticism stemmed from a belief that meaning is internal, to be found in the poetic structure of the text itself. I. A. Richard's *Practical Criticism* (1929), a central text for the New Critics, is an account of an experiment in which students interpreted different poems 'blind': its findings, namely that different readers have radically different interpretative frameworks, to some extent reflects New Criticism's difficulty with its own methodology.² How is it possible to reconcile the notion of an autonomous text, freed from authorial intentionality, with the subjective role played by individual readers?

This is precisely the question that arises in response to Roland Barthes's work on the text, which has been influential in developing a theory of readership. Barthes coined the expression 'the Death of the Author' as part of an attempt to loosen the continuing 'sway of the Author' in and beyond the text.³ He is critical of the way in which previous interpretations of the text, being explained away through the author's characteristics, allow the text itself to disappear and become ultimately transparent. The proclamation of the Death of the Author is an exhortation to the reader, a bid to restore depth and opacity to the text. Barthes rejects the capitalist construction of the modern author, where 'the explanation of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* confiding in us' (p. 143). Condemning the tendencies in so-called ordinary culture to psychologize the author-person, Barthes insists that 'it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality (not at all to be confused with the castrating objectivity of the realist novelist), to reach that point where only language acts, "performs", and not "me"' (ibid.). To predicate the author as an individual pre-existing the text is to relegate the text to a secondary status, whereas understanding the author as a linguistic subject in the textual body alters the temporality of the relationship between author and text: traditionally thought of as one of father/child, the 'modern scriptor', as a performative formed in the act of enunciation itself, is 'born simultaneously with the text' (p. 145). And in dismantling the hierarchy of this relationship by challenging the assumption that the author knows and is in charge of her/his text, Barthes also frees the reader from that traditional pursuit of authorial meaning:

[A] text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. (p. 148)

Barthes's 'elimination' of the author figure is, on one level, revolutionary, as it heralds the end of the hegemonic reign of the author, and brings the neglected reader into theoretical focus. However, the reader, conceived of as a space of inscription, is fated to remain for Barthes a purely theoretical construct, just like the scriptor himself, who 'no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions' (p. 147). In practical terms, there is no reader who simply disentangles a text without also deciphering its 'meaning', no reader who does not have a field of reference which s/he brings to the text. And although, as I have emphasized, the reader figure as a theoretical device is useful as a way of illustrating the potential of moving away from the author figure and his control over the text, the formulation is problematic. Barthes does not address the question of how the reader comes to understand the 'total existence of writing', given that s/he is also a radically depersonalized subject 'without history, biography, psychology' (p. 148). How can the reader represent the 'single field' of the text's unity, if s/he is an open space, and like the author devoid of an identity and terms of reference? What is it that privileges the reader over the author, if neither is able to negotiate the text's myriad pathways in a differentiated manner?

Barthes's formulation of the author is both supported and challenged by Michel Foucault in his essay of the following year, 'What is an Author?', in which Foucault doubts the theoretical possibility of the author's disappearance from the text.⁴ He insists that there are a number of historically determined and culturally specific 'author-functions' still present in all textual approaches. Were the author to disappear, then so too would the locus of critique which depends on the name of the author for its articulation. Foucault sees the author as present in the text, but not as an individual; instead, reformulated as the author-function, s/he exists within discourse, and yet retains a regulating stance with regard to the text. S/he is still an author in the sense of having occupied a certain position of (culturally continuous) discourse at a certain moment, and more importantly, is only one of many who, having accepted the system of signs and symbols, could potentially occupy the same ground. Foucault shows himself unwilling to advance any distance along the path of the impersonalizing tradition, and his argument consequently avoids the theoretical impasse with which the New Critics, and to some extent Barthes, are confronted: namely, how to proceed theoretically in the absence of a thinking subject in discourse and how, practically, to come to terms with the presence of individual readers with a subjective, situated response.

These issues have found a particular focus in the field of feminist literary theory. Feminist theory in general has long debated the advantageousness of holding on to a concept of the (female) subject: something of a schism has opened up between those theorists who celebrate the possibilities suggested by a 'feminine' impetus towards multiplicity and plurality, and those who argue that the move towards a

fragmentation of the self brings with it the threat of relinquishing the — already fragile — autonomy of the female subject.⁵ Nancy K. Miller's work on female authorship reflects these debates in its concern to find a strategic balance between, on the one hand, a welcome liberation from the 'interpretive securities of Authorship' and, on the other hand, the continuing relevance of and need for 'the signature of a woman's writing'.⁶ For Miller, Barthes's post-structuralist account of textuality is of inestimable value to feminist criticism, in so far as it represents a destabilization of the institutionalized authority of the male writer. Yet at the same time, she argues, this emphasis on writing and textuality at the expense of the subject entails the erasure of a specifically female writing experience, something that she believes is essential to a feminine critical project:

The postmodernist decision that the Author is Dead and the subject along with him does not [...] necessarily hold for women, and prematurely forecloses the question of agency for them. Because women have not had the same historical relation of identity to origin, institution, production that men have had, they have not, I think, (collectively) felt burdened by *too much* Self, Ego, Cogito, etc. Because the female subject has juridically been excluded from the polis, hence decentered, 'disoriginated,' deinstitutionalized, etc., her relation to integrity and textuality, desire and authority, displays structurally important differences from that universal position. (p. 106)

Miller's concern not to lose sight of the (female) subject in writing is nevertheless articulated from a position that manages to avoid a return to an essentialist notion of the woman writer: her work, explicitly indebted to Barthesian theories of textuality, demonstrates how these theories can be productively recouped in the service of a situated, political account of authorship.

Reader Theory: Developments and Tendencies

From the 1970s onwards, critics began to formalize approaches that used the reader, in her/his various forms, as the primary point of departure for textual analysis. The branch of criticism known collectively as reader theory can, in many ways, be thought of as having its roots in a reaction to the New Critical reliance on the formal properties of the text. Reader theorists rejected the claim made by Beardsley and Wimsatt, the central tenet of New Criticism, that the reader's response to the text should (and could) be dismissed along with the author's intentions.⁷ In the aftermath of New Criticism, reader theory relocated the text in a cultural and political environment and revalidated the need for context in relation to interpretative practices. Because of the vast area that reader theory covers, I cannot offer more than an outline of its main characteristics and tendencies; this will though, I hope, allow me to introduce my own understanding of that indeterminate term 'the reader', and to anticipate those pitfalls that this project, like any other concerned with the vast conceptual field of the reader, will encounter.

Beyond a unifying move to assert the centrality of the reader's place in the literary arena, reader theory has taken wildly different forms, depending on the particular way in which each critic conceives of 'the reader' and the methodology s/he employs

to illustrate the implications of any one approach. For some critics, the reader is marshalled as a theoretical aid in explications of the text and its form; for others, s/he is a real individual among other literal readers, who collectively provide a way of assessing the impact of individual texts on individual people. The latter approach is often described as reader-response theory, and can be differentiated from the German school of reception theory, whose most prominent members are Hans Robert Jaus and Wolfgang Iser. However, a brief look at some of the critics associated with different areas of reader theory will suffice to show how necessarily broad the terms are.

Hans Robert Jaus's work in the field is primarily dedicated to historical issues in reception theory. In his essay, 'Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft', he argues that by seeing literature in a historical context, the way is paved for a more nuanced understanding of literature's role in shaping the consciousness of readers at any given historical period: an analysis of readers' differing responses to a text at different historical points might allow us better to comprehend how our understanding is historically determined.⁸ Wolfgang Iser, by contrast, develops a systematic structural account of the text, using examples from English literature to illustrate how meaning is produced in the act of reading.⁹ His theory is based on an understanding of the text as being made up of places of indeterminacy (he takes the term 'Unbestimmtheitsstellen' from Roman Ingarden), 'gaps' or 'blanks' in the text which the reader, drawing on her/his own knowledge and expectation of the world, automatically fills. Each time the reader fills a gap s/he modifies her/his idea of the text, and so is engaged in a constant process of readjustment to her/his horizon of expectation. Iser does not attempt to substantiate the figure of the reader, who is implied, rather than real: perhaps this has to do with Iser's understanding of experience as something so radically individuated that each person is faced with the absolute 'Unerfahrbarkeit' of his interlocutor, and can do no more than draw on what s/he supposes the other to be thinking. This phenomenon, for Iser, explains the need for interpretation itself, and the way that the reader is propelled through the text as a creative interrogator of its effects.

In Anglo-American reader theory, the reader is treated in very different ways. The most subjective approach is that taken by critics such as David Bleich, who uses a study of his students as a method of tracing the origins of individual interpretation.¹⁰ This approach has the advantage that, in taking real readers and their documented responses as the basis of a study, the critic avoids the accusation that s/he has extrapolated a supposedly objective critical opinion out of a theoretical notion of the 'reader' (and one that consequently admits to no subjective role in formulating that opinion). However, the limitations of this 'straw poll' approach are obvious: in Bleich's case, for example, we can assume the students to be a fairly homogeneous sample of the population, drawn from a highly specific cultural background, a fact that circumscribes the usefulness of the notionally 'subjective' methodology.

As a hypothetical entity, the figure of the reader is obviously much more difficult to pin down, and s/he appears under various mantles. S/he can be thought of as the 'narratee', formed in the narrator's direct address or appeal, and taking on the force of a fictional character in the text. This is the reader Gerald Prince identifies, for example, making an absolute distinction between the hypothetical narratee within the text and

the real reader outside.¹¹ The hypothetical reader, more subtly, may be one implied by the text, and invited to fill in its indeterminacies. It may also be the intended reader, that is the reader who comes into existence not so much in the text itself but retrospectively, in a study of the context of the text. Questions of reader competence are at issue here, because these sorts of studies tend to consider the interplay between a text and its 'best' hypothetical reader, that is the reader most equipped to understand the conventions of narrative techniques and most thoroughly to exploit the text's semantic and linguistic potential. Stanley Fish's 'informed reader', for example, is an abstract entity who has succeeded in accessing the whole 'meaning' of the text by way of his/her competence in hearing the full range of possible responses that the text evokes.¹² However, these positions are themselves often unclear within the work of individual critics. Peter Rabinowitz, in his excellent assessment of the field, points out that most reader critics, Iser and Fish among them, conceive of different readers throughout their work, but blur the distinction between these types, so creating a 'hybrid' that takes no account of the radically differing critical effect of these various readerly roles.¹³ Rabinowitz himself distinguishes between the actual audience, the 'flesh-and-blood [...] audience over which the author has no guaranteed control' (p. 20), the authorial audience, created out of the author's rhetorical projection of 'assumptions about the readers' beliefs, knowledge, and familiarity with conventions' (p. 21), and the narrative audience, as the 'role which the text forces the reader to take on' in order to accept the 'truth' of events portrayed in the novel (p. 95).

The theoretical basis that unifies these many critical approaches to the reader, namely the emphasis on contextualization for the production and explanation of meaning, has made reader theory an especially useful forum for critics working with concepts of gender and ethnicity. Janice Radway, for example, collates responses to popular literature from non-academic women, evaluating how factors of gender, class and ethnicity affect the reading process. Her approach offers a radical challenge to the notion that there is one correct (white, male, academic) interpretation of texts, and also confronts the hierarchical structures erected in the process of marginalizing those who have no access to the canon. For Radway, meaning is located not so much in the texts as in the ethnic environment in which they are read: each response is as valid as the next.¹⁴ Judith Fetterley's feminist reappraisal of American fictional writing from the canon raises issues about how response is constructed and manipulated.¹⁵ She argues that the compliant female reader, caught up in the perspective of the author, is subjected to and eventually comes to acquiesce in male ideologies that are otherwise naturally alien to her. Fetterley's re-readings of well-known texts and characters both identify those anti-female ideologies that she sees at work and show exactly how it is possible to occupy a readerly position deliberately at odds with that expected of the compliant reader. Her argument is persuasive precisely because it takes full account of the effects of authorial expectations on the reader: the tension generated when a female reader 'fails' to be competent provides the starting point for an articulate feminist counter-stance to a prevailing discourse. For Fetterley, herself writing 'against' the stream, reading is not so much a question of competence (a critical position which potentially comes close to a reassertion of the author's 'tyrannical' hold over the reader) as of being actively aware of processes of control and manipulation at work in the making of meaning.

This brief account of different approaches to the reader in and outside the text will have given a sense of the theoretical and practical difficulties with which critics working in this area have been faced. Constructing any theory of readership almost inevitably results in the omission or occlusion of those real readers in whose name the theory is erected, whilst methodologies that use individual readers as the basis for a study at least partially preclude more general qualifications of the subjective material. The complexity of the figure of the reader is, though, precisely what gives these critics the scope to debate with the text and its effects, and in this sense, it seems fair to say that the steps taken in this field have come about not so much through stabilizing the reader as through exploring the suggestiveness of her/his role. In this sense, we can understand 'the reader' as a constitutive part of a textual drama played out on numerous levels, and rightly resistant to our interrogations. My own use of the term 'reader' will depend very much on an understanding of the abstract dimension that s/he brings to the text: rather than inquire principally after the nature of the reader, I shall try to describe the place s/he occupies in the text, and the field of force of which s/he is a part and out of which a critical response to the text may be crafted. However, I do presuppose a more concrete, situated version of the reader, one which can be identified in terms of a particular social or political stance that is a prerequisite for apprehending a text's thematic concerns. In so doing, I attempt, albeit implicitly, to account for the fact that my own response to individual texts is also framed by a pre-existing set of expectations, expectations that demonstrably inform my critical analysis at every juncture.

The Intertextual Dialectic

In my discussion of the changing attitude towards author and reader, I have tried to emphasize that in introducing the reader more forcefully into the text, the author is not necessarily banished from the text, but rather can be productively recast as a figure who never did have the 'authority' which her/his name supposed. As I have shown, reader theories privilege the text as an open structure inviting response, and in so doing focus on actual processes of signification operative in the text. It is not my intention, in following this approach, to divest the author of agency: rather, I am interested in the way that the text functions as a site of exchange and interdependency between author and reader. It seems to me that both author and reader, in writing and reading, are engaged in projects of self-examination that inevitably recall the figure of the other. For the author, there are countless decisions to be made regarding the intention of the work, its aesthetic form, and so on. Which audience is being targeted, a specific or a general group (age, ethnicity, gender), a specialist or layperson, and what intellectual demands are being made on that audience? Central to those considerations is the question of the author's own position in the text that bears her/his name. Why is this subject of primary interest? Is the text autobiographically motivated? Does the author identify with the characters and their relations in the text, or does s/he desire to retain some God's-eye perspective? Is the author writing self-consciously in any particular identifiable tradition, or does s/he desire to break the mould and forge a path away from the expected? For example, if she 'writes like a woman', or

equally if she does not, is she making a political statement?¹⁶ These questions serve to anchor the author in her/his personal frame of reference, and provide the basis for a justification of authorship. At the same time they exacerbate the crisis of authorship by demanding that there exist legitimate reasons for these choices. Similar questions are raised regarding the manner in which the reader finds her-/himself positioned in relation to the text. Why has the reader picked upon that particular text? Does s/he expect to align her-/himself with the text, identify with the characters, trust the author? Is s/he approaching the text with a particular personal agenda already clearly established? Will s/he read it differently on another occasion? These many and ill-defined questions make up the reader's universe of self-legitimation in much the same way and as actively as the author's. Both are in thrall to the text in the sense that they accept that its context exerts some hold over them; both sense the transformative quality of their own participation in the text. The text, in other words, compels a degree of self-examination, whether or not it is deliberate or even acknowledged.

More interestingly still, the engagement between author and reader continues at every point in the text: every word contributes to that delicate fulcrum of signification on which their textual relationship rests, and which defines the text as inherently unstable. Author and reader are linked textually through anterior discourses, but the text is also the site at which their differing experiences become apparent. Their relationship is one of concurrence and divergence, and is formed both within and outside the text. The text is not a hermetic whole, presented to the reader as a fait accompli. It is, rather, a dynamic system, since every word in that text has wide-ranging associations that may or may not accord with the intentions of the author. Julia Kristeva's coining of the term 'intertextuality' in response to Bakhtin's conception of dialogic discourse is based on an understanding of the text as an infinite deferral of self-sufficient wholeness and integrity.¹⁷ The sense of closure and stability attributed to a text is illusory, because 'every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an inter-textuality) [...] its "place" of enunciation and its denoted "object" are never single, complete and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated'.¹⁸ Theories of influence based in explorations of lineages of authorial relations are thus, in many ways, at odds with Kristeva's original formulation of the concept, being more concerned with tracing and stabilizing sources than with any consideration of the effect of the transposition of texts (a term that Kristeva later preferred to employ).¹⁹ Harold Bloom's study of Romantic poetry, for example, depends on the possibility of locating an 'original' idea in a primary and stable context.²⁰ Bloom's analysis of male poets is rooted in Freud's psychosexual paradigm of the Oedipus complex: his readings re-enact what he sees as the drama of the power struggle that occurs in the midst of poetic revisionism. The strength of the poet is born in that moment when he usurps the father-poet and annihilates the past with the weight of the present. Bloom's formulation of the poetic intertext (although he does not use the term itself) proclaims a radical desire for discontinuity, for a break with what has gone before, and for a destruction of what has been of inspiration in it. His thesis is problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, his adherence to psychosexual familial relations suggests a more than metaphorical interpretation of literary relations, and his silence on the question

of female authorship leaves us wondering about the implications of his study for a feminist account of heritage and influence. If we follow the Freudian paradigm, are we to assume that the female author retains a more ambivalent relationship to her mother and will thus seek to affiliate herself with her literary precursors? This is certainly the approach taken by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, who adopt the Bloomian model of anxiety into an exploration of 'the unique bonds that link women in what we might call the secret sisterhood of their literary subculture'.²¹ Their feminist genealogy assumes an entirely non-competitive, mutually supportive female lineage, in which the author 'actively seek[s] a female precursor who, far from representing a threatening force to be denied or killed, proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal literary authority is possible' (p. 49). Such a celebratory approach to motherhood and relations between women in general is susceptible to biologically deterministic assumptions, as problematic in their literary as in their literal application.

Secondly, Bloom's thesis assumes a single, traceable poetic inspiration in the form of a shadowy father-figure passing over the struggling poet as he strives to find his original voice. As a model of intertextuality, this is hardly tenable. Barthes, in his essay 'From Work to Text', describes the text as being

woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?), antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the 'sources', the 'influences' of a work is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable and yet *already read*: they are quotations without inverted commas.²²

Similarly, Derrida's theory of 'iterability' in 'Signature Event Context' (1982) suggests that every text is infinitely open since it is embedded in an anterior discourse; consequently, citation is fundamental to the act of communication itself.²³

Thirdly, assuming that a father-figure can be identified at all in the new text, Bloom's model implies that a 'strong maker'²⁴ is formed in the act of destroying his inspiration, by way of overcoming and violating the literary past. This act of destruction, as Bloom sees it, does not take account of the delicate process of recontextualization with which the intertextual effect is attained in the new text. According to Herman Meyer, far from necessitating any destructive act, it is precisely in sustaining the mark of the previous location that the citation gains status in the new text:

Im allgemeinen dürfte gelten, dass der Reiz des Zitats in einer eigenartigen Spannung zwischen Assimilation und Dissimulation besteht: es verbindet sich eng mit seiner neuen Umgebung, aber zugleich hebt es sich von ihr ab und läßt so eine andere Welt in die eigene Welt des Romans hineinleuchten.²⁵

Meyer's understanding of 'traceable' intertextuality (although his work was carried out long before the term itself became part of critical currency) recognizes the quality of recontextualization, which ensures freedom from a so-called anxiety of influence that plagues the purely derivative text. The tension deriving from the introduction of an earlier work into a new text arises out the dialectical force of a difference-in-

similarity, without which the new text would be fated to disappear as a passive and aesthetically uninteresting imitation.

The delicate positioning of the intertext between the past and the present, the outside and the inside, is a critical factor in its effectiveness, and something that Bloom altogether neglects. It is the inherently dialectical quality of the intertext on which my own readings of texts will largely depend, and in which I see most clearly a different type of drama being acted out from that which Bloom envisions. The text is situated squarely between writer and reader, literally the 'text-between', and, as we have seen in the brief discussion of intertextuality above, in its openness and endlessly multiplying significations, is always placed in an intertextual relationship to previous discourses and always received intertextually by present and future readers. I conceive of the textual 'drama' as a complex combination of various dynamic elements, the nature of which I shall briefly sketch out below.

The intertextual aspect of the text, I suggest, focuses this interaction between author and reader particularly effectively. From the author's point of view, any intertextual dimension acts both as a corroboration of the sovereignty of her/his text (anterior material being reintroduced as a controlled repertoire of effects) and a proclamation of its subjugation to that anterior material. For the reader, the intertextual dialectic compounds the position that s/he inevitably occupies in relation to the text. On the one hand s/he is in receipt of the text and subject to its effects, on the other positioned to disempower the authorial hand by relocating the text in a new, readerly universe of signification. Certain intertexts receive assent by the text, whilst others are involuntary, attributable to a creative reception beyond the author's sphere of influence: hence, the intertextual element of a work represents at one level a more articulate display of dialectically complex relations of power operative in the text. In the texts that form the basis of my study, I want to argue, there is in each case a critical field of force at the site of the intertext, and it is my intention, over the course of this work, to make explicit the extent to which the intertextual dimension exercises this force, and to discuss the possibilities that it confers on the text and on us, the reader. Before turning to the texts with which I am principally concerned in this study, I would like to set out some quite general points that seem to me pertinent as a basis for an examination of the role of intertext.

Firstly, we should distinguish between intertext that is deliberately recollective, that is, identifiable as precisely traceable citation, and intertext that is identifiable, but less clearly defined, as anterior or exterior discourse that takes on 'quotational' force in the new text. The first, being located in a specific source, requires an author urgently to validate it as having currency in the work, and also comments on the reader's competence in recognizing it. The author places her-/himself in an oblique relationship to the text by introducing something identifiably external, and so knowingly thematizes the potential or actual fragility of authorship. At the same time, the reader is placed in a particular position, finding her-/himself required to recognize the passage as intertext and then to locate its origin, in short to display her/his own erudition against that of the author. In the second instance, where the intertext is qualified in a much looser manner as a set of discursive associations that call attention to themselves in some manner as 'other' in the new text, it comes

into play for the reader as a system of effects of which the author may or may not be aware. In either case, I would suggest that the intertext serves to articulate those processes of textual deliberation already at play in the text, because it is where the complex dialectic of power that marks the relationship between author and reader is most clearly operative.

Secondly, and following on from this, we might consider the part that the intertext plays in the formation of the terms of this relationship. How, and to what extent, does the intertext contribute to setting up or undermining a collaborative understanding between author and reader? If, as Peter Rabinowitz suggests (p. 30), we are to assume that the reader, at least initially, cannot avoid asking the basic question 'what is the author saying?', is the intertext instrumental in strengthening the desire to recognize and react 'correctly', and has the reader failed if s/he is unable to respond appropriately in these terms? Or, taking Judith Fetterley's argument further, does the intertext allow for, even encourage, more resistance to or within a text? To give an example, let us consider Elfriede Jelinek's *Krankheit oder moderne Frauen*, in which the referential methodology consists largely in subverting and ridiculing historico-cultural precedents.²⁶ Jelinek takes the patriarchal 'Cogito, ergo sum' and reformulates it into an ironic feminine aesthetic that calls attention to the culturally established conception of the weaker sex: '[i]ch bin krank, daher bin ich' (44) is the negative utopian vision of the nightmarish vampire women who dominate the play. The intertext, easy to locate in this case, relies for its effect on the audience's or reader's willingness to collaborate in the joke made at the expense of the gendered mind/body distinction culturally established in Western thought. The reader who recognizes and then, for whatever reason, resists the allusion might feel significantly more alienated from the author at this point: not only is the author setting out a critical ideological framework of her own, but in summoning and ridiculing a resonant tradition she is also coercing the reader into the political stance required to appreciate the joke (and by implication the point) that is being made. The intertext, then, can effect a heightened consciousness of the connection or disconnection between author and reader.

The third point that I would like to set out as being pertinent to a study concerned with the role of intertext has to do with the interruptive and disruptive quality of the intertextual element in the text. In so far as the intertext represents the focal point of dialectical structures of power in the text, because it emphasizes most dramatically the text's position within the disparate activities of writing and reading, it might function as some sort of rupture in the text, a point at which the reading map is constantly redrawn, and where the reader as well as the author reaffirms or realigns her/his position in the text. In particular the recognized specific intertext, because of its alien quality, demands justifications and explanations that correspond to the dialectic inherent in it, such that they extend beyond the usual interpretative framework within which the reader may work. The urgency with which a reader desires to understand or question the author's words is increased, since the deliberate inclusion of anterior material suggests a particularly transparent affirmation of intent on the part of the author. Identification of an author's sources entails a consideration of influence, but the reader is as much party as witness to this: her/his apprehension of the intertext and its effect on the text gives much away about the political and cultural influences

that dictate her/his own readerly stance. Far from the intertext simply presenting the reader with the opportunity of observing the push and pull of influence on the author, it focuses the partiality of her/his own reading.

Finally, the system of reading and writing relations that the intertext sets up in the text, as outlined above, is of course bound up, as I have discussed, in events outside the text, in terms of experiences and influences occurring for author and reader which already place them in certain positions relative to the text and to each other. However, the relations cannot be understood outside the text in any sense, because they are first constructed at the point where the writing and reading subject coincide. It is the text itself that provides the site on which the various agencies confirm their existence by means of one another. The theoretical landscape in which we now move has affected processes of writing to such an extent that authors themselves are now writing knowingly into theories of discursive practice: authorial presence in the text has lost the possibility of an unreflexive relationship to itself. This increased recognition of the difference between the author *of* and the author *in* the text leads both author and reader to an extreme textual awareness of self and other which has obvious implications both for writing and for critical practice. Just as the reader has changed from a passive recipient into a situated, inconstant and active event, so too has the author's role as undifferentiated authorial voice increasingly been placed in doubt. The intertext, being the most visible point at which these observations come into focus, is therefore not just a corollary to more overtly thematic power structures in the text, but can serve as the site at which these significations find their force. That is, the drama of the text might be acted out by, rather than simply reflected in, the structure of the text. This is a huge resource, not just for the author writing expressly about power and its effects. It is also an aspect of writing which requires skilful manipulation if this resource is to be tapped by the author seeking to engage his or her readership. The author who relies on an anterior text to lend authority to the new work risks alienating her/his reader if s/he does not work with the dialectical tension that the intertext summons into the new text.²⁷

It seems to me that the intertextual dimension of a text, whatever form it may take, represents a paradoxical force. Whilst it is rightly conceived in the same terms, and often in the same language, as a more general impetus towards multiplicity and heterogeneity that refutes all notions of a pre-existent authority, it is equally the case that questions of authority are always present, if implicitly, at the point where the intertext is manifested. It is a resonant space within which the reader can move: yet, at the same time, it cannot be unbound from the text and its effects *on* the reader. The texts I have selected as the basis of my study, however distinct in form and method, each seem to me to offer an insight into how a dynamic narrative space is created through intertextual devices that can be thought both to liberate and entrap the reader. I shall argue that in each, this space is where the texts' respective thematic concerns find their greatest force. The sexual pathology in the foreground of *Die Klavierspielerin* is expressed through the interplay of various currents of dominance and subservience between mother and daughter, teacher and pupil, male and female. The pornographic, psychoanalytic and musical intertexts form a discursive nexus of effects, an essentially ironic space where the reader is able to reflect critically on the

power structures that Jelinek seeks to portray. In *Ein weites Feld*, an old man comments on and polemicizes against the political and cultural struggle resulting from the reunification of the two Germanies. The invocation of Fontane and the apparently benign recollection of times past suggests a passionate and angry engagement with the present, whereby the text's impossibly broad historical and literary sweep brings the reader into confrontation with the tightly ordered political path to unity. Herta Müller's *Niederungen* explores the oppressive codes of village life, but is grafted in a prose that evokes nostalgia for that same culture, subverting its integrity. Finally, my reading of *Reisende auf einem Bein* focuses on Müller's use of a Calvino intertext: I analyse its role in the development of and response to a protagonist whose elusive quality reflects (on) thematic issues addressed by the text.

The texts, arising out of such politically and culturally diverse circumstances, require correspondingly differentiated approaches, and will serve only as examples of how one might productively engage with the theoretical issues that concern this study. Nevertheless, it is my hope that by attempting to respond to the following questions in respect of each text, my analysis might lead towards a more complete understanding of the interplay between text, intertext and reader. In what sense is the text considered 'intertextual'? How is the intertext manifested in the narrative, and what form does it take? In what relation does it stand to the text as a whole, and how does it reflect and/or comment on the text's subject? Finally, does it give the reader space for reflection, response or resistance, and if so, can we analyse the precise nature of this space, the process of its formation, and the critical direction or scope it provides the reader?

Notes to Introduction

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2. I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgement* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1929).
3. Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image–Music–Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), p. 143.
4. Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977).
5. The collection of essays in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. by Linda J. Nicholson (New York and London: Routledge, 1990) gives some idea of the range of the discussion. See also *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*, ed. by Michèle Barrett and Anne Phillips (Cambridge: Polity, 1992) and Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
6. Nancy K. Miller, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 16.
7. W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy' and 'The Affective Fallacy', in W. K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry; And Two Preliminary Essays Written in Collaboration with Monroe C. Beardsley* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), pp. 3–39.
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9. Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (Munich: Fink, 1976).
10. David Bleich, *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism* (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1975).

11. Gerald Prince, 'Introduction to the Study of the Narratee', in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. by Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 7–25.
12. Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1980).
13. Peter J. Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1987), pp. 97–98.
14. Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).
15. Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981).
16. See Peggy Kamuf's essay, 'Writing Like a Woman', in *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, ed. by Sally McConnell-Ginet and others (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp. 284–99. Kamuf's essay is a response to Patricia Meyer Spacks's assertion in *The Female Imagination* (New York: Knopf, 1975) that a woman 'can imitate men in her writing, or strive for an impersonality beyond sex, but finally she must write as a woman: what other way is there?' (p. 35). Kamuf makes the point that a feminist criticism of this nature becomes unproductive in its 'tautological' tendency towards the idea that 'women's writing is writing signed by women' (p. 285).
17. Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue, and Novel', in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. by Leon S. Roudiez, trans. by Thomas Gora and others (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).
18. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 60.
19. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein make this distinction clearly in their introduction to *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).
20. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
21. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 51.
22. Barthes, 'From Work to Text', in *Image-Music-Text*, p. 160.
23. Jacques Derrida, 'Signature Event Context', in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).
24. *The Anxiety of Influence*, p. 5.
25. Herman Meyer, *Das Zitat in der Erzählkunst: Zur Geschichte und Poetik des europäischen Romans* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1961), p. 12.
26. Elfriede Jelinek, *Krankheit oder moderne Frauen* (Cologne: Prometh, 1987).
27. See my article, 'Intertextual Connections: Structures of Feminine Identification in the Works of Karin Struck', *Women in German Yearbook*, 20 (2004), 145–62. In it, I argue that Struck's claims to be writing a type of recollective literature specific to women is problematic, not only because it assumes and articulates the notion of a creative textuality that stems from a (biological) female capacity for closeness. The text that forms the centre of my critique is her *Ingeborg B. Duell mit dem Spiegelbild* (Munich: Langen Müller, 1993), in which the figure of Bachmann is installed as the central device in a project to establish a feminine discourse of connectedness and identification. Struck relies on the reader to sympathize with a non-transformative referentiality that, I suggest, is fundamentally at odds with the intertextual principle as a whole. See also my MPhil dissertation '“Der Gang zu den Müttern”: Re-collection as a Process of Identification in the Novels of Karin Struck' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Cambridge, 1997).