# Reader response in the classroom

John Yandell
*Institute of Education, UCL, London, UK*

**Abstract**: Reader response has tended to be presented as one among a range of different literary theories – and often as part of the theoretical turn in the 1960s and 1970s. What is meant by reader response theory, however, is so hugely variable as to call into question its usefulness as a category, while its roots can be traced back to the origins of literary study as a modern discipline. And yet there is a sense in which reader response presents the most fundamental challenge to common-sense assumptions about the reading process, in that it directs our attention not to the text as the repository of (more or less stable) meaning but rather to the activity and agency of readers. Because of this, reader response has had, from the start, a pedagogic orientation: transcending the merely literary, it offers teachers the possibility of a theoretically-informed praxis and raises vital questions about the assessment of reading.

## The category of reader response

It is now over half a century since Roland Barthes (1968/1977) announced the death of the author and, as its necessary and desirable concomitant, the birth of the reader. And it is possible to see all the significant developments in literary theory over the past fifty years – feminist and postcolonialist as well as reader response itself – as reflecting and enacting this shift in attention away from the author and the circumstances of the production towards the readers and the conditions of reception of the text. Thus Terry Eagleton (1996) proposed that the history of modern literary theory could be divided into three periods, each with a different focus: from the author (in the nineteenth century) to the text (New Criticism in 1940s and 1950s) to the reader (from the 1960s onwards). Though this might be a useful representation of dominant currents in literary theory, it is perhaps less pertinent to the ways in which literary study is experienced within the school system – or to the ways in which the literary figures in wider society.

One of the problems with the term 'reader response' is that it is so broad a category as to encompass almost all the developments in literary theory since the 1960s. Any approach

that treats the text not so much as a stable repository of meaning and more as a set of meaning-potentials, as one necessary constituent part of the reading process, can be labelled as reader response. Within this capacious category, there are very different approaches to reading in general and literary practice in particular. Even the breach with New Criticism and its insistence on an unwavering focus on the text itself (Wimsatt 1954/1970) is not always as absolute as might be assumed. The emphasis in affective stylistics (Fish 1970), for example, or in Rosenblatt's (1938/1995; 1978) notion of the reading process as a transaction between text and reader, promotes forms of close reading that are not always easily distinguishable from New Critical perspectives. Here, the emphasis is on the process of reading, the complex ways in which meaning develops over time.

## Affective stylistics, or attentiveness to the reading process

Take the opening four lines of Shakespeare's *Richard III*:

> Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by this son of York,
> And all the clouds that loured upon our house
> In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.

The first word presents us with an immediate puzzle, a contradiction and an invitation. What exactly does 'now' mean here? It is a word spoken by an actor in a play written in the last decade of the sixteenth century playing a character in a history play. And the word is spoken in a soliloquy, when the actor is addressing the audience (us?) directly. So is it the now of the moment of performance, or the now of the moment after the battle of Tewkesbury? Or some other moment? Or all of these moments simultaneously? There are particular difficulties in interpreting the force of 'now' here, in this speech; but in any text that we approach as literature, the word might be construed as doing more complex and uncertain work than it tends to do in everyday parlance. (If I announce, to someone with whom I live, "I'm going to the shops now', there is, to be sure, interpretive work to be done – is this an invitation to join me, or to suggest things that might need to be bought, or something else entirely – but the force of 'now' is relatively straightforward. If I were to be found fifteen minutes later, slumped in front of the television, it is likely that my interlocutor might say something along the lines of 'I thought you said you were going to

the shops'.) Richard's 'Now', on the other hand, might be construed as a different kind of invitation – an encouragement to the audience to join him in the world of the play. And it is a word that is given more weight by the fact that it fronts the sentence, and the speech, and that the stress that is placed on it disrupts the regular flow of the iambic pentameter.

Richard's next three words appear, on first reading or hearing, to fill out the meaning of 'now': it's winter. Not quite a weather forecast, perhaps, but an indication of season. We might think we know a bit more about when things are happening. As the line moves on, though, we may decide that we need to revise this reading: 'the winter of our discontent' suggests that what is being described is not a season but a frame of mind, or, given the use of the first person plural possessive adjective, a wider malaise. Language, oral or written, has a linear aspect: one word follows another. But how we read is seldom so unidirectional. Here, when we have the full line, we are liable to interpret 'winter' as metaphorical. We are learning about states of mind, not climate. To perform this work of meaning-making, we have to be attentive to the words that are there, on the page or in the air. But, even in this first line, how we construe what is being said also depends on what we bring with us to the text. 'The winter of our discontent' works as a metaphor only if we are at least aware of what wintertime is like in places like England and of how the season tends to be experienced and represented. We are bringing, in other words, knowledge that is sociocultural as well as climatological

Richard's first line ('Now is the winter of our discontent'), often quoted in isolation, appears to be complete in itself (and the fact that it is a complete line might encourage us to construe it thus). When we reach the end of the first line, we tend, therefore, to interpret it as meaning that we are joining Richard in winter. Because of this, the grammar of the second line can at first be a little tricky to parse: 'made summer by …' makes us return to the first line and reinterpret it, with 'made as the second element in a verb phrase, the first part of which is 'is'. And this means that it isn't winter, after all, not even metaphorically: it was, but now it's summer. And what has effected this change? 'this son of York'. We might, in passing, appreciate the pun on son/sun, apt in the context of the seasonal metaphor while also, in this way of designating Edward, reminding us that we are entering a feudal society, where whose son you are, or are assumed to be, matters (and this is reinforced by the mention of 'our house' in the following line – a way of designating structures of

affiliation that would not be lost on any follower of *Game of Thrones* [Benioff & Weiss 2011-19]).

By the time we reach the end of the second line, then, we have had to reject our initial construal of the first line.  More than this, though: in making sense of these two lines, we have, experienced what happened before the now of the present moment: we have moved from winter to summer.  We now know where we are, and where we've been.

Except we don't. Because somewhere before the end of the soliloquy, we are likely to realise that Richard seldom says what he means or means what he says. More specifically, we might decide that our initial construal of the first line – associating the speaker with wintry discontent, as it were – was correct after all: that the speaker revealed a truth about how he felt before concealing it (and misleading us) with a development of the sentence that was as tricksy as the grammar in and through which it was expressed. And once we've realised this, we might be tempted to conclude that the clouds that loured are not quite as safely buried in the ocean as Richard claims. There may, in other words, be trouble ahead.

What the affective stylistics version of reader response offers is a version of literary theory that is attentive to the reading process.  For this reason, it is a theory that has both implications and attractions for teachers of literature, in particular. When we read, we are all the time constructing hypotheses, making predictions about how the text is going to unfold. As these hypotheses are confirmed, we develop them further; as they are challenged, we modify them. To enable us to do this, we draw on our knowledge, of other texts and of the world. This knowledge feeds our predictions; as these predictions are modified as we continue to read, so, too, our knowledge (textual and extratextual) is also, simultaneously, subject to modification. Our prior knowledge and experience of winter, both as a feature of our lives and as a sign that we have encountered in other texts, is crucial to our meaning-making as we read (or listen to) Richard's opening soliloquy. The sign 'winter' is further inflected by our reading of the soliloquy, more closely associated with 'discontent', say.

Most of the time, however, these processes remain tacit. We are, at best, hardly aware of the hypotheses we form, the connections we make, the knowledge on which we draw. It is

only when a texts presents us with particular challenges or when we are paying unusually close attention to it (as we might do in a literature classroom) that we become more aware of what is going on. But there are huge pedagogic gains in making these processes more available to scrutiny. We can do this in the classroom by slowing the reading down, and by introducing opportunities to make explicit the predictions we make so routinely. This is where DARTS (directed activities related to text) come in: prediction and sequencing and gap-filling activities, narrowing the focus to small parts of the text in the first instance, creating spaces in which readers can talk with each other about the sense they are making of what they have been given and speculating about the bigger picture of the whole text (Moy and Raleigh 1984; cf. Lunzer & Gardner 1979). For all readers, this can be highly beneficial. For those who struggle, the gains are even greater, since they often labour under the misapprehension that the text is transparent, that meanings are to be made instantly and effortlessly, and that the process of meaning-making is a neatly linear one.

## Aesthetic reading and literary texts

This much is true for all kinds of reading. For texts that we categorise as literary, there are additional reasons for wanting to slow down the reading and to explore, explicitly and collaboratively, the processes whereby meanings are made, contested, qualified and developed. To justify this, it might be helpful to introduce a distinction, made by Louise Rosenblatt (1938/1995), between two kinds of reading, based on the reader's purposes. When one reads for information – in effect, to get things done in the world – such reading can be categorised as efferent: we are interested in taking away from the text something of use to us. So, efferent purposes are likely to be foremost when we read a recipe or a roadmap, the more so if we are about to cook something or go somewhere. If on the other hand, we are reading something for the sake of reading it, for the pleasure that the act of reading might provide, our purposes might be described as aesthetic. It is important to note that the kind of text that we read does not necessarily determine our purposes in reading: it is perfectly possible to read a recipe book in ways that are more closely aligned with aesthetic purposes, while a reading of *Richard III* that was primarily oriented towards exploring what it revealed of early modern conceptions of the feudal system might be construed as largely efferent. It is also worth emphasising that these two purposes are not mutually exclusive (Rosenblatt 1938/1995; cf. Connell 2008; Fox 2007). When we read

aesthetically, we tend to be interested in – and to attend more to – the formal properties of a text: to how its meaning-potentials are organised, not just to what it might mean. Slowing down the reading, encouraging an attentiveness to structure, to poetic form, to grammatical organisation and to the tensions and complexities in the ways that different formal aspects operate together, can enhance and enrich the aesthetic dimension of the experience of reading.

It has another pedagogical implication, to do with the teaching of context. If there are such distinct advantages to the text being approached as a puzzle, and a puzzle that invites careful, attentive, always flexible, always-to-be-modified readings, this means that one might want to be wary of front-loading information about text and the context of production. If we consider the opening soliloquy of *Richard III*, students don't need to be told about what has just happened, or who Richard is, or who his brother is, because that is precisely what the soliloquy is for. More than this: Richard introduces himself to us by what he says *and* how he says it. This isn't like the Prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* – a more or less objective account of what we're about to see for ourselves. Here, we find out about the moment in English politics to which the play returns us while at the same time being introduced to Richard by Richard.  From the very first, he plays with us, leads us up garden paths, takes us into his confidence, or appears to – and doesn't really. We think we know where we are with him, and then we discover we don't. All this happens, for the first time, at the level of sentence grammar in the opening lines. It is then repeated on a larger scale: he tells us that he's a soldier, not made for 'sportive tricks'. And the next moment he's seducing Anne, in the presence of the corpse of her nearest and dearest, killed by Richard.

The difficulty of the soliloquy, I am suggesting, is not separable from the point of it: it's not some surface layer of archaic language to be sorted out before we can get at the meaning. It doesn't help to be provided with a gloss on unfamiliar lexis. I've already suggested that the hardest word in the opening four lines might well be 'Now' – and here, quite plainly, the difficulty does not lie in lexis at all. And if you take a word like 'loured' – almost certainly unfamiliar to most students encountering the play for the first time – what is it that enables the reader to make sense of it? Its meaning is fairly obvious from the context: what do clouds do?  What do clouds represent? And where do clouds fit into the winter/summer/sun[son] lexical and semantic field?

To the extent that reader response theory provides us with a way of thinking about the process of meaning-making, it gives us resources for working on a text with our students. In this sense, as Ben Nelms (1988: 16) observes, 'teachers have to be reader-response critics.'

What I have attempted to outline above as an approach to reading in general and the reading of literature in particular has seemed almost like plain common sense, by which I mean that it accords with what we understand about the reading process and with what we have observed to be highly effective methods for enabling students to make meaning out of complex, challenging literary texts. In recent years, however, what might be described as a reader response pedagogy for the literature classroom has come under sustained attack, largely from those who seek to implement both a different kind of pedagogy and a different version of what English, and knowledge in English, might look like. Across the whole school curriculum, there has been a tendency to counterpose the teaching of knowledge to the teaching of skills and to regard the transmission of certain forms of knowledge as central to the purposes of schooling (cf. Hirsch 2006; Young 2008; Gibb 2015; Quigley 2018). Within the domain of English, and particularly in relation to literary study, this approach is problematic, simply because it is not at all clear that propositional knowledge figures in the same way in English as it might do in Physics, for example. To make school English fit into such a curricular frame, it has had to be reconfigured, in ways that have strong echoes of much earlier versions of the subject (Atherton 2005). In this reconfiguration, forms of knowledge that might have been seen as, at best, somewhat peripheral to literary study have assumed much greater importance. Salience is attached to a particular form of lexical knowledge (the acquisition of certain registers of language) and to a rather thin version of historical knowledge (including, for example, biographical information about the writers whose works are being studied). Louise Rosenblatt's *Literature as Exploration* was written to counter precisely such notions – hence, too, her insistence that 'the paraphrase is not the poem' (1938/1995: 105).

An adequate critique of these developments lies beyond the scope of the present chapter. They are, however, directly relevant to a consideration of the place of reader response theory in literature classrooms because this alternative conception of knowledge is predicated on a quite different theory of what is entailed in the act of reading and a quite different attitude towards the agency of readers. (For most recent graduates entering

teaching, this also involves acts of forgetting: what they have learnt of literary theory in their university courses has no place in this version of school English.) A key question here is: what attitude do we take to the observable fact of difference in reading? Or, to put that another way, is difference in reading reducible to better and worse readings?

## Knowledge, value and the agency of readers

Some versions of reader response are predicated on the notion of an ideal or imagined reader (Iser 1978). In this paradigm, what matters most is how well equipped the readers are to cope with – make the right sense of – the text that confronts them. What do they need to know already? What experiences must they have had, what else should they have read, what skills and aptitudes might they be required to bring to the text? If all reading is (necessarily) intertextual, just as all writing is, since both reading and writing are accomplished within (and arise out of) culture and history, no reading can be entirely innocent, as it were (cf. Jauss 1982). Mightn't it help, then, in reading Joyce's *Ulysses,* already to know something of Homer's *Odyssey*? Will a reading of *The Wide Sargasso Sea* be a better one if the reader already knows *Jane Eyre*? And – at a more local level – should students' first encounter with the opening of *Richard III* be preceded by some pre-teaching of vocabulary, or of late mediaeval English history, or of the form of the soliloquy in English Renaissance drama?

The underlying assumption of this approach is that literary study should be chronologically organised: that we should start at the very beginning. It is a model that privileges some forms of intertextuality above others: lines of influence above more fortuitous, or immediate, or more accessible, cross-readings. More than this, though, it casts the student as a deficit, focusing on what they don't already know or haven't already read, and not on the funds of knowledge, of the world and of other texts, that they bring to the reading of a new text. Intertextual reading here becomes something conducted entirely on the teacher's (or the curriculum's) terms. More than this, what is specified is not merely what the reader needs to know but what the text means (since what it means is shaped by what is specified as the necessary knowledge). In this model of reading, meaning is not made but received, passed on.

As long ago as the Newbolt Report (Board of Education 1921), this approach was rejected, with the recognition that the individual reading histories of children and young people tend to travel in the opposite direction to time's arrow: students approach *Hamlet* by way of *The Lion King*, and *The Simpsons*; only much later on in their development as readers might it be helpful for them to consider the ways in which Shakespeare was riffing off *The Spanish Tragedy* (Kyd 1592/1898; cf. Smith 2019). Indeed, Rosenblatt's argument for an understanding of reading as a transaction between reader and text is centrally about the value of *the experience of the literary* – rather than, say, knowledge about literature. It is an argument about aesthetic value, in opposition to literary studies (with its focus on the author's life and works, cf. Atherton 2005), every bit as much as it stands in opposition to New Criticism and an exclusive focus on the text as object of study.

The versions of reader response that have been considered thus far do little to disrupt notions of the literary or of literary value: Rosenblatt, in particular, operates from the premise that there is a fairly simple divide between mass media texts and literature, and the development of literary sensibility is to be found only in communing with the latter category of text.[1] Within this version of reader response, too, there resides an overarching assumption that some readings are better than others, and that what development looks like involves discarding the less good readings in favour of better ones. To some extent running counter to this is Iser's (1978) notion of gaps in the text, discontinuities that provide the conditions for the production of readers' different interpretations. No text tells or reveals all: its silences and omissions function as spaces to be populated with different meanings. When L. C. Knights (1933) asked how many children Lady Macbeth had, his point was that the question was illegitimate: in seeking to go beyond the information provided by the text, the question violates its poetic integrity. In Iser's terms, though, the question is, in some sense, not only permissible but necessary. When the actor playing Lady Macbeth says 'I have given suck, and know/How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me', is she recalling a single child, or several? We aren't told, so we can speculate. (And this speculation is more than an idle question about the number of children: it's about the past that is gestured at here, and how this past might relate to the present, to the speaker's determination to persuade Macbeth to kill the king.[2])

Roland Barthes' (1973/1990) proposal that there are two types of text, the readerly and the writerly, involves a radical extension of Iser's model. While the readerly text delivers an already-determined meaning to the reader, the writerly text is one that is remade with each new reading, which is always and everywhere a rewriting. There are not, in my view, two such categories of text; what Barthes describes, however, is two opposed paradigms of reading.

I accept, without reservation, that sometimes one reading is better than another. We can see that this is the case when a reader (or a class full of readers) discards one (mis-)reading in the light of additional information (for an instance of this, see Yandell 2014: 92-93). More fundamentally, as my exploration of the opening soliloquy of *Richard III* was intended to indicate, this process of discarding and refining readings is what happens all the time as we read. In many instances, however, different readings are not reducible to binaries of right and wrong, or even of better and worse. In the classroom, as in the world, these differences are the product of the different reading positions occupied by different readers: they are the product of different cultures and histories. In Edward Said's (1993) reading of *Mansfield Park*, the attention paid to the ways in which the economics of empire are implicated in the Bertram family's position can plausibly be related to Said's own history, his experience of exile and thus of how geopolitical forces leave their imprint on individual lives.

It could be argued that reading literature always entails some sort of encounter with alterity – with other lives, other worlds, other experiences and ways of representing experience. At the same time, reading often produces moments of identification and empathy, moments that enable the reader both to bring their own life experiences to bear on the world of the text and to use the text to think about their own lifeworld. This is what happened when I was reading *The Merchant of Venice* with a class of 14- and 15-year-olds in a school in East London: a young woman of Vietnamese heritage, Hong Hai, explored the character of Jessica, Shylock's daughter, drawing on her own quite complicated relationship with Vietnamese culture and identity to understand how Jessica might feel about the Jewish father from whose household she has escaped in the company of a Christian (Yandell 1997). It is also what happened when, at a school in Palestine, a young woman, Meriam, inhabited the role of Curley's Wife from Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men.* As Monica Brady suggests, the

work that Meriam performs in role is influenced by her knowledge of Steinbeck's novella and of other texts read in class (including *A Doll's House*), but also:

> by her own sense of herself as a young Palestinian woman and by the possibilities offered by playing a role, speaking in English, being free to use language like 'hell' and 'damn'. Inhabiting the role offers Meriam an opportunity to stand outside her dual oppression as a woman and a Palestinian and explore her feminist ideas in a context far removed from her own (Brady 2014: 33).

These two examples stand for many. They gesture at the scope provided by activities that encourage students to work in role, in speech or in writing – scope to think more about the text and about their own lives. It is worth noting, too, that such opportunities do not depend on some kind of matching exercise that might be regarded as the *reductio ad absurdam* of identity politics: neither Hong Hai nor Meriam saw their mirror images in the texts they were reading. The processes of recognition (that is, both the awareness of likeness and the rethinking that is entailed by such exercises of empathetic understanding) are much more complicated – and unpredictable – than such models of representation allow for.

Often, indeed, the very distance of history and culture that divide readers from the text can function as a facilitating condition of the reading process. Thomas Zabka (2016: 231) has suggested that any encounter with a literary text involves the twin processes of 'modernising' and 'historicising', of bringing the text into a relation with the present while also acknowledging 'the mystery of the past'. He argues that the content of a text functions as:

> the effective bridge between 'making present' and acknowledging a work's historical character. We ask questions like: To which challenges of its own time did the text react? How do these challenges compare with the ones with which we are faced in our own society today? Are there any similarities between these challenges, and does the text therefore have special relevance to our time? (Zabka 2016: 232).

When Monica Brady's Palestinian students study *Romeo and Juliet*, the play's representation of the family, particularly as it is figured in the relationship between Capulet and his daughter, becomes a central focus of inquiry. They want to know more about the

patriarchal character of Renaissance London (or Verona), and they bring what they know of Palestinian family structures to bear on this question. For them, Capulet's decision to marry off Juliet to Paris is an entirely rational response to the effect that Tybalt's death has had in weakening the family's position. At the same time, the space to explore the play is also a space to examine the operation of patriarchal structures and assumptions within the society of Ramallah (Brady 2015; Yandell & Brady 2016). In this approach, neither the context of a text's production nor that of its reception can be regarded as a given: the prism of the literary text allows both to become problematised objects of renewed scrutiny.

Similar effects can be seen in a class's shared reading of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (Shah 2013), where students from a range of different cultures and heritages negotiate – and contest – the meanings of the social norms represented in the text, in relation to both the world of Puritan New England and their own circumstances, attitudes and values. And, in a different English lesson, an image of the Lady of Shalott (Meteyard 1913), which had been presented to the class merely as a way into the Tennyson poem, became a rather more significant focus of attention and debate, because of the interpretation of it offered by one of the students:

> He interpreted a picture of the Lady of Shalott in her tower weaving as that of an Arab Moslem woman in purdah. He identified as evidence the curtain and the sewing that he said was a common occupation of women in purdah. What Mutib did was to offer an interpretation based on his knowledge of the world. His reading of the image opened up a powerful interpretation of the poem - a woman who breaks the social/cultural/religious code by leaving behind the curtained room to pursue a life that is more than shadows. (Turvey et al. 2006: 59).

If we are to take seriously the proposal that literary texts are writerly texts, we have to be ready for more resistant and even antagonistic readings. I have written elsewhere about a GCSE lesson on *A View from the Bridge* where one of the students responded angrily to Alfieri, to his lofty detachment from the working class lives of the other characters – and to his right to speak on their behalf, to explain their actions or their values:

> **Teacher:** … so Alfieri talks about it all as if it is in the present tense, he appears, narrates something that's happened, he was involved because he bailed out Marco and Rodolpho, he was involved

> because he was there at the end, he was involved because Eddie came to see him
> **Darren:** way you was talking like he was there in the house
> **Teacher**: he was, wasn't he, {so what does that mean?
> **Darren:** {he weren't, weren't in the house, so this this title don't make sense then if your view, you're viewing from the bridge, you ain't seeing no detail are you?
> **Teacher**: sorry Darren
> **Darren**: said, like, if they're saying it as a view from the bridge, if you're viewing from a bridge, it's not much detail is it? (Yandell 2014: 99)

Darren's critique deserves our attention. He raises centrally important questions of representation – of who is entitled to speak on behalf of whom – that apply not merely to the choric role of Alfieri but also to Miller's authorial authority. Darren's words resonate with E.P. Thompson's desire to rescue working-class figures 'from the enormous condescension of posterity' (Thompson 1963/1968: 12). They might be seen as a reading against the grain (Benjamin 1955/1970). And they, like many of the other readings mentioned above, pose a particular problem in relation to the assessment of reading (cf. Bracken 2018).

## Meaning and the assessment of reading

If meaning is located in the text, it can be considered relatively stable. It then becomes possible to determine how successfully, or fully, or accurately, a student has derived the meaning from the text. And if literary value is also inherent in the text, it also becomes possible (if slightly trickier) to determine how well a student of literature has arrived at a proper appreciation of its aesthetic worth. But if meaning is unstable, contingent, transactional, and if texts are writerly, and hence always and everywhere rewritten, remade on each reading, both the premises and the procedures of assessing literary knowledge, or literary response, become less certain.

A necessary corollary of this way of understanding reading is an approach to assessment that provides a place for what Andrew McCallum (2012) has termed 're-creative' responses to texts – opportunities for students to respond on their own (writerly) terms. The current context of high-stakes testing and – particularly in England – the constraints of closed-book, terminal examinations does not provide a congenial environment for such approaches.

Some scope, nonetheless, still exists (see Kober 2014; Turvey & Lloyd 2014; Yandell 2013). Our task is to make the most of it, while continuing to argue for forms of assessment that are congruent with what we know of reading as a process of meaning-making, and that are properly respectful of the diversity of readers and readings.

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[1] Rosenblatt thus builds on I. A. Richards (1929), from which she quotes extensively: both are engaged in an *educational* project – the development of readers and of readerly sensibility.
[2] In suggesting this, I am not making the claim that Lady Macbeth is a consistent – naturalistic – character (cf. Sinfield 1992), merely that the version of the character that is presented at this moment in the play, in this speech, invokes the first-hand experience of motherhood.