interface

Textual Intervention

Critical and Creative Strategies for Literary Studies

ROB POPE

ROUTLEDGE

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Critical and Creative Strategies for Literary Studies

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Series editor's introduction to the Interface series

There have been many books published this century which have been devoted to the interface of language and literary studies. This is the first series of books devoted to this area commissioned by a major international publisher; it is the first time a group of writers have addressed themselves to issues at the interface of language and literature; and it is the first time an international professional association has worked closely with a publisher to establish such a venture. It is the purpose of this general introduction to the series to outline some of the main guiding principles underlying the books in the series.

The first principle adopted is one of not foreclosing on the many possibilities for the integration of language and literature studies. There are many ways in which the study of language and literature can be combined and many different theoretical, practical and curricular objects to be realized. Obviously, a close relationship with the aims and methods of descriptive linguistics will play a prominent part, so readers will encounter some detailed analysis of language in places. In keeping with a goal of much work in this field, writers will try to make their analysis sufficiently replicable for other analysts to see how they have arrived at the interpretative decisions they have reached and to allow others to reproduce their methods on the same or on other texts. But linguistic science does not have a monopoly in methodology and description any more than linguists can have sole possession of insights into language and its workings. Some contributors to the series adopt quite rigorous linguistic procedures; others proceed less rigorously but no less revealingly. All are, however, united by a belief that detailed scrutiny of the role of language in literary texts can be mutually enriching to language and literary studies.

Series of books are usually written to an overall formula or design. In the case of the Interface series this was considered to be not entirely appropriate. This is for the reasons given above, but also because, as the first series of its kind, it would be wrong to suggest that there are formulaic modes by which integration can be achieved. The fact that all the books address themselves to the integration of language and literature in any case imparts a natural and organic unity to the series. Thus, some of the books in this series will provide descriptive overviews, others will offer detailed case studies of a particular topic, others will involve single author studies, and some will be more pedagogically oriented.

This range of design and procedure means that a wide variety of audiences is envisaged for the series as a whole, though, of course, individual books are necessarily quite specifically targeted. The general level of exposition presumes quite advanced students of language and literature. Approximately, this level covers students of English language and

literature (though not exclusively English) at senior high-school/upper sixth-form level to university students in their first or second year of study. Many of the books in the series are designed to be used by students. Some may serve as course books – these will normally contain exercises and suggestions for further work as well as glossaries and graded bibliographies which point the student towards further reading. Some books are also designed to be used by teachers for their own reading and updating, and to supplement courses; in some cases, specific questions of pedagogic theory, teaching procedure and methodology at the interface of language and literature are addressed.

From a pedagogic point of view it is the case in many parts of the world that students focus on literary texts, especially in the mother tongue, before undertaking any formal study of the language. With this fact in mind, contributors to the series have attempted to gloss all new technical terms and to assume on the part of their readers little or no previous knowledge of linguistics or formal language studies. They see no merit in not being detailed and explicit about what they describe in the linguistic properties of texts; but they recognize that formal language study can seem forbidding if it is not properly introduced.

A further characteristic of the series is that the authors engage in a direct relationship with their readers. The overall style of writing is informal and there is above all an attempt to lighten the usual style of academic discourse. In some cases this extends to the way in which notes and guidance for further work are presented. In all cases, the style adopted by authors is judged to be that most appropriate to the mediation of their chosen subject matter.

We now come to two major points of principle which underlie the conceptual scheme for the series. One is that the term 'literature' cannot be defined in isolation from an expression of ideology. In fact, no academic study, and certainly no description of the language of texts, can be neutral and objective, for the sociocultural positioning of the analyst will mean that the description is unavoidably political. Contributors to the series recognize and, in so far as this accords with the aims of each book, attempt to explore the role of ideology at the interface of language and literature. Second, most writers also prefer the term 'literatures' to a singular notion of literature. Some replace 'literature' altogether with the neutral term 'text'. It is for this reason that readers will not find exclusive discussions of the literary language of canonical literary texts; instead the linguistic heterogeneity of literature and the permeation of many discourses with what is conventionally thought of as poetic or literary language will be a focus. This means that in places as much space can be devoted to examples of word play in jokes, newspaper editorials, advertisements, historical writing, or a popular thriller as to a sonnet by Shakespeare or a passage from Jane Austen. It is also important to stress how the term 'literature' itself is historically variable and how different social and cultural assumptions can condition what is regarded as literature. In this respect the role of linguistic and literary theory is vital. It is an aim of the series to be constantly alert to new developments in the description and theory of texts.

Finally, as series editor, I have to underline the partnership and cooperation of the whole enterprise of the Interface series and acknowledge the advice and assistance received at many stages from the PALA Committee and from Routledge. In turn, we are all fortunate to have the benefit of three associate editors with considerable collective depth of experience in this field in different parts of the world: Professor Roger Fowler, Professor Mary Louise Pratt, Professor Michael Halliday. In spite of their own individual orientations, I am sure

that all concerned with the series would want to endorse the statement by Roman Jakobson made over twenty-five years ago but which is no less relevant today:

A linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unconversant with linguistic methods, are equally flagrant anachronisms.

Textual Intervention by Rob Pope continues a line in this series of books which directly addresses practical concerns of teaching and learning at the interface of language and literary studies. It is a new kind of textbook requiring, as its title suggests, that teachers and students should intervene in the construction and re-construction of texts in order better to understand them. The central pedagogic strategy is engagement with the processes of the text by an act of re-writing, an act which serves to put readers on the inside of the text and which enables them to write their way into more effective reading. Rob Pope offers a rich range of different types of textual intervention for a rich range of canonical and non-canonical texts, illuminating in the process key issues such as point of view, the nature of literary language, the relationship between text and ideology and the different positions from which texts can be read and interpreted. In a world in which resources for teaching and learning are becoming ever more restricted, a textbook such as this intervenes itself in the trend towards ever more transmissive teaching to ever larger groups by offering the potential for process-based work in which students explore and engage in the kind of textual transformations which enable them to become, rather than passive and compliant, more active and resistant readers.

Acknowledgements

This book has been a long time in the making and many people have had a hand in it. The further reading sections and the bibliography signal my most obvious debts and influences in terms of published work. But perhaps even more important are the numerous instances of unpublished student work, traces of which can be picked up throughout. My most fundamental acknowledgement is therefore to the many hundreds – probably thousands – of students in England, Wales and Russia who have contributed with such energy, enthusiasm and skill (as well as healthy scepticism) to the methods and materials upon which 'textual intervention' draws. In particular, I should like to thank all those at Oxford Brookes University (formerly Oxford Polytechnic) who have made and re-made texts with me and one another on the following courses: Language, Literature, Discourse I: Texts, Problems and Approaches; Language in Advertising and Newsreporting; Chaucer and Women; Shakespeare, Power and Politics; and Modern Drama. I am also grateful to all those with whom I have had such 'serious fun' at conferences and workshops organised by the National Association for the Teaching of English, the 'Connect' scheme in London (especially Islington Sixth Form Centre) and, most recently, the Poetics and Linguistics Association. From amongst the many undergraduate and postgraduate students who have so readily lent support, ideas and materials, I should especially like to thank Belinda Beasley, Helen Coxall, Kathy Doncaster, Dorothy Macarthy, Pat Silver and Jenny Soutter.

All my colleagues in English Studies at Oxford Brookes (as well as many others both inside and outside the School of Humanities) have contributed generously with references, insights and criticism. I have been particularly fortunate in working closely for some years with Stewart Young on modern drama and with Archie Burnett on language and early literature. Moreover, we have all been fortunate in the unfailing support and guidance of a succession of exceptional external examiners in the persons of Douglas Gray, John Lucas, Lisa Jardine and Susan Bassnett. Meanwhile, in my own capacity as external examiner, I have learnt much from working with George Wotton and his colleagues at the University of Hertfordshire (formerly Hatfield Polytechnic).

Terry Hawkes gave the idea of the book an invaluable push at a crucial early stage. And, like so many others, I have benefited hugely from the encouragement and experience of the series editor, Ron Carter. Without his ever-ready patience, understanding and conviction, as first one deadline passed then another, the manuscript would have remained a wild and baggy monster with a lot of past but no future. Continuing to tame and shape the text with Marguerite Nesling was a joy – when it could so easily have been a pain; while Julia Hall, Emma Cotter and all involved in the editorial and production processes

at Routledge have overseen the project with great tact, friendliness and expertise. I should like to be able to pass off some of the book's remaining faults on the above people. But in all honesty I can't. The errors at least are 'all my own work'.

My final acknowledgement is to my partner, Tania, from whom I continue to learn far more than I could ever hope to teach.

What the book is about and how to use it

This book is intended for learners and teachers in a wide variety of literary, linguistic and cultural studies courses. It can also function as a textual studies course in its own right. Either way the emphasis is on *using* the book rather than simply reading it from cover to cover.

Basically this is a critical-creative handbook. It offers a range of interactive and interventive strategies in which readers are encouraged to engage in structured yet playful re-writing of any text they meet. Such 'textual interventions' include: 're-centring'; 're-genreing', the generation of various kinds of 'parallel', 'alternative' and 'counter-text' (writing with, across and against the grain of the initial text), as well as exercises in paraphrase, imitation, parody, adaptation, hybridisation and collage. All these strategies are devoted to the exploration of textual differences and preferences, and they are summarised in 'Types of textual intervention' at the close of the book (5.3). This final section is comprehensively cross-referenced and may therefore be used as an alternative 'map' for finding your way around. For the rest, the overall Contents pages identify the main kinds of material treated and methods and models used in the various sections.

The book both features and encourages a synthesis of analytical, critical and creative work. This may be done by people working in groups as well as on their own. Consequently, there is considerable freedom and flexibility as to precisely who does what, when and how. The following study patterns are therefore simply recommendations. Bend them to your own individual and collective designs.

'Preludes' (Chapter 1) are just that – a series of 'foreplays' – and they may be regarded as essential preliminary reading. They introduce the basic method and its underlying principles. The materials used are deliberately very various and differently demanding. The first prelude (1.1) intervenes in a magazine advert, but is framed in such a way as to establish a working model applicable to any text. The second prelude (1.2) reinforces and re-focuses the method by progressively de- and re-centring a literary classic (in this case Robert Browning's poem 'My Last Duchess'). The final prelude comprises a couple of 'work-outs with words'. These help establish a basic critical and linguistic vocabulary, while also exploring very different kinds of text creatively through systematic critique. The materials featured are instances of philosophical discourse and of government health warnings. Both sets of texts are challenged and changed, as well as analysed. And the overall aim is a sharpened sense of the distinctive differences and preferences of these 'base texts' in their various historical moments, as well as an increased awareness of our own

capacities and responsibilities when we set about generating counter- or alternative texts in our own moments.

All the terms and techniques practised in these preludes – and in the rest of the book – are summarised and cross-referenced in a **Stylistic checklist** (5.2) and in 5.3. Their theoretical underpinning is explored in a bibliographical essay in 5.1. Meanwhile, each section concludes with suggestions for 'Further re-writing and reading'.

The main body of the book is concentrated in three areas. Each overlaps with the others (so follow up the copious cross references whenever seems appropriate), and each includes an **extensive work-out** on a related cluster of texts. The three central sections are organised as follows.

'Subjects and agents; selves and others' (Chapter 2) explores the construction of subjectivity and agency in and around texts. It also introduces the notion that every text is constituted – and ceaselessly reconstituted – by the interplay of a range of **subject/agent positions**: **personal**, **interpersonal** and **depersonalised**. These positions are not only found 'within' the text, but also established by particular readers through active interrogation and negotiation. Whereas 'ideal readers' acquiesce in the text's dominant meanings (as subjects), 'actual readers' always to some extent resist, refuse or re-orient those meanings (as agents). All this is done through individual and group work, exploring both interpersonal and intertextual dynamics. Materials treated range from accounts of the bombing of Nagasaki (2.3); through personal adverts (2.4); to lyric poems (2.5). We conclude with an extended work-out, experimenting with reconstructions of the textual 'I' in poetry, pop, psychiatry and advertising (2.6). The aim here is to recognise and re-think the 'I-that-speaks' as in some measure a contextual and intertextual construct – and one which might be generated and 'genred' differently. Through experiment, we also see that this 'I' is just one position amongst many others that have been marginalised or repressed – or might have been expressed differently. Overall, then, there is an insistence on seeing a shifting configuration of 'selves' always defined by and braced against a shifting configuration of 'others'. The combination of individual and group work ensures that – in practice and not just in theory – we also experience and experiment with our 'selves' and/as 'others'.

'From narrative to narration and beyond' (Chapter 3) starts from the articulation of narrative at the 'micro-' level (e.g. the clause and sentence) and gradually proceeds to explore it at the 'macro-' level of larger stories and histories (ultimately whole mythologies and ideologies). On this basis we proceed in 3.2 to a sustained exploration of a short nonsense-verse narrative – which in the event is revealed to be potentially neither short nor nonsense, but an intriguing blend of poetic and narrative possibilities! This section also features some experiments with narrative in film. We conclude with an extended work-out which involves some very different constructions of Robinson Crusoe's island (3.3). These include versions by Tournier, Coetzee and Wyss – as well as our own. And there is a supplementary review of relevant 'pre-texts' and 'post-texts' ranging from Aphra Behn to the present.

The overall aim of this chapter, then, as its title suggests, is to recognise that narratives (as products) are always subject to successive moments of narration and re-narration (as processes). Consequently, just as every statement begs an infinite number of questions, so

every story begs an infinity of untold stories. Unless and until someone decides to tell them, that is. Us, for instance.

'Dialogue, discourse and dramatic intervention' (Chapter 4): this too starts at the 'micro-' level of single exchanges and gradually works up to the 'macro-' level of large-scale interactions in conversation and drama, as well as novels and poems. There is a dual emphasis: through **dramatic intervention** we experiment with alternative 'moves' that *might* have been made or 'turns' that *might* have been taken; and through **dialogic techniques** we explore the various 'voices' and 'discourses' in play within and around a work. The approach to drama is therefore 'Brechtian', in that it is concerned with the *re*-presentation and 'making strange' of interactions. Meanwhile, relatedly, the overall approach to dialogue is 'Bakhtinian', in that it is concerned with the ways in which a text allows us to speak to and through a variety of personal 'voices' and social 'discourses' in a number of historical moments. Once these underlying models have been explained (4.1), we proceed to the joint articulation of a kind of 'assertiveness' or dialectical 'non/cooperative' principle for conversation and drama (4.2). This is both observed and put into practice in the analysis and rescripting of a domestic daughter–father dialogue (4.3.1). On that basis we proceed to engage in structured re-writing of the endings of plays by Ibsen and Beckett (4.3.2).

'Cross-cultural dialogues with and within "Eng. Lit."' are explored in 4.4. The main emphasis is on colonial and post-colonial texts (featuring novels by Trollope, Austen, Charlotte Brontë and Rhys, alongside poems by Mnthali, Amryl Johnson and Merle Collins); and the method draws heavily on both Bakhtin's notions of 'dialogics' and 'heteroglossia' as well as Vygotsky on the interplay of 'inner' and 'outer' voices. Again, there is attention to the distinctive potential of a combination of individual and group work – analytically and in performance. The extended work-out in this section is devoted to different moments in the re-production of *Hamlet* over the past four hundred years: as scripts, editions, performances, films, criticisms, allusions, parodies, etc. We start with textual variants of the 'To be or not to be' speech, and finish up with a pack of cigars!

'Review of theories and practices' (Chapter 5): this is a general summary and reference section. You might in fact *start* here if that seems the best way into your particular course and context. We open with an overview of the main theories and practices which inform the present method (5.1). This is also a critical and bibliographical essay, and offers a blend of models and methods from literary and cultural studies, linguistic and discourse analysis, creative writing and performance arts. Their common concern is ultimately pedagogic: a commitment to learning and teaching as dialogue, and an exploration of 'subjects' which may be conceived as variously intertextual, interpersonal and interdisciplinary. A stylistic checklist is supplied in 5.2. And, finally, all the main modes of textual intervention and alternative writing strategy used in the book are summarised and cross-referenced in 5.3. For the rest, use the index to follow up individual terms and techniques, authors and genres.

As suggested at the outset, this is a book to *use* – not just to read. It is a *hand*book of critical and creative practices. So, if it looks well thumbed after a little while, it is probably working as it was intended. Or rather, to put the onus firmly back on you as an active user, you are probably making it work for you.

Three last words. Seriously, have fun!

Contents

1 Preludes

1.1 THE APPROACH – TEXTUAL INTERVENTION

The highest Criticism, then, is more creative . . . and the primary aim of the critic is to see the object as in itself it really is not.

(Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist* (1891))

Criticism begins with the recognition of textual power and ends in the attempt to exercise it. This attempt may take the form of an essay, but it may just as easily be textualised as parody or counter-text in the same mode as its critical object. As teachers we should encourage the full range of critical practices in our students.

(Robert Scholes, *Textual Power* (1985))

What aspect of the world do you want to disclose? What change do you want to bring into the world by this disclosure?

(J.-P. Sartre, *What is Literature?* (1948))

The approach proposed in this book is basically simple and practical. As the above quotations suggest, it involves criticism, creativity, the exercise of power and the activity of change. I shall describe it from two points of view, *textual* and *educational*. In fact, these are better seen as two intimately related processes: we always do things with particular texts in particular contexts – in our case educational contexts. I shall therefore insist on the necessary link between certain forms of textual theory and certain kinds of pedagogic practice by interleaving this introductory section both with worked examples and with examples for you to work on yourself.

1.1.1 Challenging and changing the text

The best way to understand how a text works, I argue, is to change it: to play around with it, to intervene in it in some way (large or small), and then to try to account for the exact effect of what you have done. In practice – not just in theory – we have the option of making changes at all levels, from the merest nuance of punctuation or intonation to total recasting in terms of genre, time, place, participants and medium. And our analytical tools for discussing all these changes will range from the 'micro-linguistic' (to do with localised choices and combinations of sounds, meanings and grammatical structures) through to the 'macro-linguistic' (to do with the larger-scale organisations of choice and combination we know as narrative, argument and exposition). The emphasis throughout is on exploring possible permutations and realisations of texts in and out of their original contexts.

The initial change may be apparently slight. Perhaps the substitution of a single word or syllable or sound: a 'Hi!' instead of a 'Hello!', 'pretty' instead of 'beautiful', 'freedom' instead of 'democracy' or – more radically – 'she' instead of 'he', 'black' instead of 'white' (or an unmarked space), '*g*od' instead of '*G*od', or 'matter' instead of both. It may be as minute – and yet potentially momentous – as the difference between one *style* or SIZE of type-face and another; the presence or absence of inverted commas 'highlighting', 'scare quotes' or 'genuine quotes' (you decide which is which). Or it may be the deceptive finality of the full stop. Which only temporarily invites you to do the same. Like that. As distinct from a string of suspension or continuation dots . . . which . . . again temporarily . . . invite you to do something rather different . . . like this . . . . . .

But the change may also be something more structural and slightly larger scale. Perhaps choosing a present active construction instead of a past passive one: 'Police shoot ten in Soweto' rather than 'Ten shot in Soweto'. Or deciding to report a text indirectly and with a marked slant rather than quoting it verbatim and relatively impersonally: 'You know, the bit where Marx and that other Commie go on about all the poor downtrodden working classes getting off their backsides and doing something for a change . . .' rather than 'Working men of all countries, unite!' (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, first English edition, 1850). Or substituting a nominalised structure (i.e. one which is noun-based and therefore suggests a more static and object-like phenomenon) for a structure which is more verbal (i.e. verb-based and therefore suggests a more dynamic and process-centred event). For instance, consider the difference between saying 'Inflation up again' and 'Prices and wages continue to chase one another', where the latter lays more stress on the (verbal) action and the former on the (nominal) state.

Still other, wider reaching and more fundamental transformations of text are available to us. These may be as general and pervasive as a complete shift in genre or medium: part of a play recast in the form of a novel, series of letters, legal testimony or psychiatric interview. Or they may involve the adaptation of a printed poem for oral delivery by three voices; or its re-working as part of a song, painting, poster, magazine advert or TV documentary. What's more, you can also – and in fact will constantly be encouraged to – develop the existing characters, scenes, events and arguments of the initial text. In so doing you will automatically need to decide how far you are prepared to write 'with', 'against' or 'across the grain' of what seem to be that text's dominant preoccupations and major strategies, thereby producing, respectively, **parallel**, **opposed**, and **alternative texts**. In some instances the process of re-writing and intervention will inevitably prompt you to develop characters, scenes and arguments of your own. Consequently and only apparently paradoxically, you will not in fact be led away from your 'original text' (or as I shall henceforth prefer to call it, the 'base text'). Rather, you will constantly and with every tool at your disposal – critical, analytical, theoretical and historical – be forced back into it. Every turning you take, every choice and combination you make will be gauged against one already taken and made in your base text. The latter is therefore, in every sense, the 'base' from which you must depart and to which you must return. But where you go in the meantime – and how and why – is largely up to you. In fact, helping you work out the 'where', 'how' and 'why' of your own critical and textual trajectories is one of the main aims of this book.

The sheer scale and prodigious variety of possible changes to a text should now be clear. As

I have already insisted, the point is that in theory *and in practice* virtually all these options are at your disposal, both as an imaginative reader and an active re-writer. You can opt to change a single word – or the way the 'same' word is delivered (orally or visually); or you can change the whole orientation and mediation of the text. Essentially, it is a practical, material matter – and you don't have to be a genius to do it. Nor do you need to be a genius to explore the consequences of what you have done. You simply need to be systematic, thoughtful and informed (in fact all the qualities needed to write good essays and commentaries). There is therefore no 'mystique' or 'secret' to the approach: it is one which may properly be called **artisanal**. That is, the approach is neither self-consciously 'artistic' or 'creative' (in the commonly elitist, merely subjective and ultimately mystifying senses of these terms); nor one which is self-effacingly 'scientific' (in the commonly clinical, specialist and supposedly impersonal and object-centred sense of that term). Approaching texts as an 'artisan', as a 'crafts/wo/man', means that you treat them with the respect – but also the no-nonsense directness and systematicness – that a skilled engineer or dressmaker approaches their materials and the immediate task in hand. Materials and tools are to be chosen and decisions about how, when and where to use them are to be made. Therefore, this book is indeed a 'hand-book' (a 'manual') in that it puts some tools into your hands – and maybe some handy ideas into your head. But it is finally you who must use them. Put more formally, the precise texts you work on may in part be prescribed and (in that dully resonant phrase) 'set'. But the decisions as to how exactly you might go about challenging and changing them (i.e. *really* criticising them) should largely be yours. So should the choice of critical rationale – to which we shall turn shortly. Other terms for the current project are 're-composition' and 'radical rhetoric'. Before looking at some examples of the approach in action, a couple of central terms need defining. Otherwise, they're likely to cause confusion.

By '**language**' I mean what most people understand by the term most of the time: **spoken, written, printed or otherwise recorded *words***. If I want to refer to some other sign- or communication system (visual, aural, tactile, photographic, cinematic, musical, gestural, architectural, etc.), I shall refer to it as such, by name. By **text** I mean **any more or less cohesive communicative act which involves a substantial verbal component and is in some way recorded (on paper, plastic, electronically, etc.)**. A live and *un*recorded – but of course recordable – use of language (i.e. live speech) I shall call an **utterance**. We shall analyse and play around with plenty of 'utterances' – but only once they have been put into recorded, repeatable and therefore more easily studiable form (i.e. as 'texts'). In fact, exploring and exploiting the differences between written texts and spoken utterances turns out to be one one of our simplest yet most powerful critical and creative tools. The acts of speaking the printed and printing the spoken result in revealingly different performances.

1.1.2 Making the first move: from 'What if?' to 'Why?'

> In a post-traditional social universe, an indefinite range of potential courses of action (with their attendant risks) is at any moment open to individuals and collectivities. Choosing among such alternatives is always an 'as if' matter, a question of selecting between 'possible worlds'.
>
> (Giddens, 1991: 29)

> all imaginative writing springs from one question and one executive recommendation. The question is 'What if?'. . .
>
> (Nash, 1992: 83)

This section offers a preliminary example of 'textual intervention' at work. The particular material to be worked on is a magazine advert; but the method has been framed in such a way as to be applicable to any text. Later preludes intervene in and analyse a wide range of other kinds of text and utterance: poetry, conversation, philosophical propositions and government health warnings. But the same basic method, as outlined here, is applied to all of them. Here, then, is the first 'move' and the first text. Only one other thing need perhaps be added at this stage, and it relates the nature of texts to the function of education. Both, it is insisted, are basically 'problem-centred'. That is, texts are considered in the first instance as 'problem-posing' and 'problem-solving' (or 'problem-displacing') devices. And so is education – though in so far as it 'displaces' problems it, of course, fails. The crucial thing, therefore, is to decide exactly how to expose the particular problem posed and resolved (or displaced) in a particular text – and how to relate this to the process of education. In either event, the strategy is simple and involves an initial act of critical intervention (*What if?*) followed through by a reasoned explanation (*Why?*). The educational problem is posed in so far as this must be an individual and a collective act. Here, then, is the first 'move' and the first text.

(**1**)

What if the text were different? **Intervene in the text in some way so as to 're-centre' it, thereby deflecting and re-directing its dominant 'ways of saying' and its preferred 'ways of seeing'. Aim to make two interventions: one subtle; the other outrageous. If possible do this through discussion in small groups.**

The text in question, which I must here ask you to visualise, is derived from a double-page car advert in a Sunday newspaper colour supplement. In this case it was a full-colour advert for a Peugeot 205 as reproduced from the *Observer* magazine (2 April1986). Similar ads are still plentiful. In the foreground is a red Peugeot with a young woman standing nearby wearing an elegant and identically red dress. Both are shot against a summer landscape of cut grass and rolling hills leading to a horizon of neatly pruned and silhouetted trees. The overall effect might be described as one of high sophistication combined with pastoral tranquillity: machine, nature and wo/man in perfect harmony. The main caption along the bottom reads

PEUGEOT 205: LOVE IT!

and to the left of that in smaller letters the corporate slogan appears:

PEUGEOT: the lion goes from strength to strength

Before seeing what other people, literally, 'made of' this ad working to the above brief, try it for yourself. Take a few minutes, preferably talking over the possibilities with others, weighing what two critical interventions ('one subtle; the other outrageous') *you* might make. Do this before reading on.

Here, then, by way of illustration, are some of the interventions in the above Peugeot ad previously made by other people working in sub-groups. Compare them with your own.