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The Intimacy of Influence. Narrative and Theoretical fictions in the works of George Eliot, Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson

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Table of Contents

First Encounters: An Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Intimacy of Influence	11
Introduction: Anxiety, Intimacy, and How to Make a Flexible Web	11
The Dynamic Loop of Traversal: Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through	24
Tussling and Pleasuring in <i>Middlemarch</i> , <i>Orlando</i> , and Paul de Man	33
Fantasy-Making and Theoretical Fictions	38
Political Makings: Let My Objects Free	45
Conclusion: No Figure, No Fiction, No Theory is Final	53
Chapter 2: Rapturing the Text: The “Magic” Writing Pads of <i>Middlemarch</i>, <i>Orlando</i>, <i>Sexing the Cherry</i>	62
Introduction: The Lover Who Mistook her Beloved for a Book	62
Road Movies: When Theresa Met Antigone	71
Costume Drama: Orlando Gets Laid	79
Moving Genies at an Exhibition: To Cross and to Cross Out	91
Conclusion: Between the Three of Us	101
Chapter 3: Last Exit From Thebes: The Maze-Makers of <i>Middlemarch</i>, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>, <i>The Passion</i>	110
Introduction: Mazes of the Interior	110
Back to Thebes	122
Webs, Hearts and Dirty Books	129
The World Turned Upside Down	144
Chance Exits	154
Conclusion: No Exit from Innovation	164

Chapter 4: In the Name of (no) Other:	174
The Key to the Symbolic “Within”	
<i>Daniel Deronda, The Waves, Gut Symmetries</i>	
Introduction: Changing Keys	174
“Which Things are Parables”	181
Just the Two of Us, Or Who Drowned Grandcourt?	188
Victorian Brat Meets Phantom	196
In the Name of (no)Other: Touchy Signifiers	202
The Lady Writing	208
The Lady’s Guardians	213
Back to the Fathers: Or Whose Daughter is She Anyway?	216
Conclusion: The Sacrifice of Other	227
Chapter 5: The Web That Binds:	237
Intimations of Mortality in <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> and <i>The Waves</i>; <i>Gut Symmetries</i> and <i>Daniel Deronda</i>	
Introduction: Rapture is the Only Way Through	237
Troubling Instincts and Survival Tactics	243
We Should Die Except for Death	251
There is an Embrace in Death	257
The Physics of Intimacy: From <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> to <i>The Waves</i>	262
Because I could not Stop for Death	267
Past Fictions of Present Theories	275
Conclusion: Rapturing the Trauma	285
Shakespeare’s Sisters Go Back to the Future:	293
Conclusion	
Bibliography	298
Summary in Dutch; Samenvatting in Nederlands	316
Roll on the Credits: Dedications	320
Indexes of Authors and Concepts	326

I am afraid that the anxiety of influence, from which we all suffer, whether we are poets or not, has to be located first in its origins, in the fateful morasses of what Freud, with grandly desperate wit, called the “family romance” (Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 1973: 56-57)

Indeed, the whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations (Sigmund Freud, “Family Romances” 1909; *SE IX*: 237).

But whatever effect discouragement and criticism had upon their writing - and I believe they had a very great effect - that was unimportant compared with the other difficulty which faced them ... when they came to set their thoughts on paper - *that is that they had no tradition behind them, or one so short and partial that it was of little help. For we think back through our mothers if we are women* (Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 1929; 1983: 72-73, emphasis added).

We are born with the dead;
See, they return, and bring us with them (T.S. Eliot, *The Four Quartets* 1944; 1986: 47).

