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**Author, Text, Reading, Ideology: Towards a Revisionist Literary History of the Renaissance**

Louis Althusser once suggested that our age would be looked back to as one in which the most fundamental human activities—speaking, writing, perceiving—were radically revalued. Even in the hermetic world of the literary academy and, to penetrate to the dark (and, to many of us, still warm and comforting) inner room of Renaissance scholarship, there have been glimmerings recently of a dazzling and disturbing light. What has been variously termed a new philosophical paradigm, a revolution in perception, or a subversion of the truths of Western humanism, has entered (or perhaps broken down) our doors. But let me abandon my metaphor before it abandons me and state what has become a commonplace—that probably not since the late eighteenth century have the role and status of reading, writing and their relation to history, been put so fiercely and fundamentally in question. Surveying this selection<sup>1</sup> of recent Renaissance scholarship, what impact, we must ask, are these disturbances having on our long-peaceful realm of Renaissance studies?

More particularly, considering Jonathon Goldberg's *Endlesse Worke*, methodologically the most important work in Renaissance studies since Stephen Booth's edition of Shakespeare's sonnets, we must ponder in detail the effects on Renaissance studies of Jacques Derrida and his French, English and American progeny. In the past decade, deconstruction has developed into such a powerful critique of traditional metaphysics' reification of the sign and the process of signification, and of such concepts as causality, identity, truth, subject, that, at the very least, as Gerald Graff notes, "whatever one's reservations about it, deconstructivist criticism has given professional literary studies . . . something to fight about."<sup>2</sup> It is clear—and, of course, not only from Goldberg's book—that whether we like it or not, deconstruction *works*, powerfully and disturbingly. Perhaps the basic challenge for literary studies, especially literary history, today is to fight

through its powerful challenge. Whether we see it as a detour or a freeway all serious readers of literature are being directed through the deconstructive route. Goldberg's book, by far the most important under consideration, raises directly the question of how deconstruction (or more broadly, post-structuralism) is applicable to our readings of Renaissance literature. When we read more traditional Renaissance scholarship, like the books by Kenneth Muir or George Hibbard, what residual resistances to the deconstructive questions do we find we have inherited? A particular question that Goldberg's study brings out is: to what extent can we see the Renaissance fascination with language—with both its apparent plenitude and its frustrating emptiness—as raising the questions that, Derrida insists, always already lie within textuality? Can we ignore what Terry Eagleton has called deconstruction's "hair-raising radicalism—the nerve and daring with which it knocks the stuffing out of every smug concept," or its urge to think the unthinkable (at least for Renaissance scholars) that we must, in Vincent Leitch's words, "subvert without pity the obvious and stubborn referentiality" of the text.<sup>3</sup> Of Shakespeare's sonnets, the subject of Kenneth Muir's straightforward little introduction, we ask? Of *The Tempest*, which is the focus of Gary Schmidgall's ambitious study of the Jacobean court aesthetic? Of the Shakespeare of the 1590s, the subject of George Hibbard's careful study? Of our other Renaissance favourites—of Sidney? of Spenser? These are undoubtedly disturbing questions for all of us who read and write about Renaissance literature.

A further important challenge to the traditional categories of criticism has come from feminism, here represented by *The Women's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*. The editors of a recent anthology of French feminist thought have wryly remarked that "feminist discourse has always picked up the terms of anti-feminist discourse and been determined by it," and *The Women's Part* is no exception. Except for a fine essay by Madelon Gohlke, most of the essays remain within the assumptions of New Criticism and Historicism, and so hypostasize text, author, and reading in ways that an increasing number of feminist theorists like Julia Kristeva or Luce Irigaray are suggesting have long excluded women from cultural history.<sup>4</sup> It is Goldberg's deconstruction, then, that poses the more radical challenge to us.

Let me try to construct, therefore, without too much polemic, a way into assessing the challenge that poststructuralist methodology poses for writing on Renaissance literature. As Hibbard's and Muir's books show, most Renaissance scholarship remains stubbornly unaffected by its tremors. Michael McCanles notes that while in many areas of literary history, "the old debate" between New Criticism and Old

Historicism has been transformed or blurred, even the best Renaissance scholarship remains "generally blind to the theoretical and methodological problems raised by its canonized approaches to its own material."<sup>5</sup> Even the discriminating editors of *The Women's Part* proudly note their reliance on New Criticism to approach Shakespeare, while at a recent conference on Sidney, even so mildly revisionist a study as Richard McCoy's fine book was greeted by puzzlement or by otherwise sensitive and thorough historicist commentators. Before the appearance of Goldberg's study—Stephen Greenblatt's work on Renaissance self-fashioning and some of the recent *Studies in the Literary Imagination*<sup>6</sup> come to mind—Renaissance scholarship has remained overwhelmingly suspended in its traditional 'natural' assumptions about 'meaning,' 'text,' 'source,' 'author,' 'reading'—all concepts that have been subject to more than two decades of intense questioning in many other areas of literary theory and practice. Perhaps because of the overwhelming presence of Shakespeare, criticism of Renaissance literature remains author-centered to the point of hagiography (my own editing of the *Sidney Newsletter* is another case in point; in order to gain an audience, it is necessary to locate oneself in the residual structures). The Anglo-American understanding of literary history remains ingenuously reflectionist and tied to the assertion that there are "objective," historically verifiable readings and to what Geoffrey Hartman a decade ago termed "bizarre attempts at pseudo-causality."<sup>7</sup> The reading of Renaissance texts is still primarily seen as an investigative procedure to locate their origins in the particular events or documents of their writer's lives, or to recover fixed or "authentic" Renaissance meanings—as indeed, Schmidgall does, when he takes what he terms "the Renaissance ethical system" entirely for granted and applies its terms—prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance—to *The Tempest*, Caliban, Sebastian, and Antonio representing "the forces of evil, duality, and intemperance," Prospero the model of temperance (pp. 89-90). As Goldberg remarks, such readings are "theological," assuming that "a Renaissance text in some way gains stability and order from replicating verbally the assumed harmonic structure" of a model of the universe that is now merely of intellectual curiosity (p. 75). Such an approach shows little awareness that our most basic conceptions of literary history and criticism have been challenged—and certainly not only Goldberg's brand of deconstruction—so radically that some fundamental adjustments are required unless we are simply content to take refuge in a nostalgic antiquarianism. As Goldberg remarks on the *Faerie Queene*, it "becomes a poor thing . . . if it is taken to be, however learnedly, the reflection" of commonplace and outmoded ideas (p. 76).

If Goldberg's methodology represents a potent challenge to traditional Renaissance scholarship, to fill out its details and assess this challenge we must surely start with Jacques Derrida. As Tilottama Rajan summarizes him (never an easy task with Derrida), he characteristically uses the term "deconstruction" to initiate a "procedure of textual analysis by which the critic dismantles or takes apart the paraphrasable meaning of a text, in order to disclose within that text the gaps in logic which reveal the author's subconscious awareness of a commitment to a system of assumptions opposite to the one he explicitly endorses."<sup>8</sup> It calls into question the unequivocal authority of any particular mode of signifying, any privileged reading, that seems to be produced by the text. As Derrida's American followers have tirelessly repeated, the critic—in thus revealing the latent metaphysical structure of the text—does not dismantle the text so much as demonstrate that it is already dismantled: it "performs on itself the act of deconstruction without any help from the critic."<sup>9</sup>

Accustomed, as we are, to looking to what we still habitually call "texts" for coherent and consistent meanings, what Ralph Berry in an unfortunate phrase in an otherwise insightful book piously calls "permanent truths" (p. 2), it seems uncomfortable to be made to focus on the "warring forces of signification" and to recognize, by means of what is termed a "breakthrough," the "text"'s inherent vulnerability.<sup>10</sup> Is its apparent desire for truth inevitably hollow and self-defeating? The deconstructive critic seizes on what he perceives as the lines of breakage or fissure, dismantling, or "reaping," in Hartman's metaphor, the text to show those points where it contradicts itself.<sup>11</sup> In Goldberg's words, "I do not aim at interpretation or fulfillment, but, rather, at describing the narrative principles that induce frustration, that deny closure, but that also produce the disturbed and disturbing narrative procedures of" the text (p. xii). Thus the critic moves around inside the text, probing incompatibilities between grammar and rhetoric, pitting figure against concept and argument, subverting confident statement and arguing that only by ignoring such contradictions can we sustain the illusion of representation, since all texts undo any system of meaning to which they seem to adhere. Texts exist in a continual state of play (in both the festive and mechanical senses of 'play'). Within any apparently replete discourse there are always other discourses that contradict it.

Nor, in most versions of deconstruction, can the reader take refuge in any fixed extra-textual point of authority—in author, world vision, history, or any concept of the real. A text, writes Roland Barthes, is no longer conceived of as "a line of words realising a single 'theological' message (the 'message' of the Author-God) — but a multi-dimensional

space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash." The representational claim that saying and meaning coincide is thus shattered: what a text presents us with is, Derrida asserts, the unstable result of an effaced and continual struggle, one which did not cease when the text was encoded but which remains "active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible drawing covered over in the palimpsest."<sup>13</sup>

At this point we might (especially if, as with the present writer, there lurks a resistant core of historicism in our responses to Derrida) indulge in some preliminary deconstruction of our own. First, given our culture's residual assumptions about language as a medium of intention, we should note deconstruction's challenge to the dominant post-Renaissance assumption (Derrida would date it at least from the Greek initiation of Western logocentrism) that language is a medium transparent to 'things' and 'concepts.' We can thus relate deconstruction to such developments as the Saussurian revolution in linguistics, or the Husserlian-Heideggerian concern with hermeneutics (developed subsequently in different ways by Ricoeur, say, or Gadamer). Deconstruction sees language as functioning only as differentiated signs, at once pointing to and yet radically subverting the possibility of transcendent meaning. Every sign is interpretable only by others. What Derrida terms "dissemination" is inherent in writing: a text is a play of presence and absence, pointing only to the undecidability of meaning, or in Goldberg's neat appropriation of a Spenserian phrase, the text's "endlesse worke."

But while part of the distinctiveness of deconstruction is explicable by the force of post-Saussurian linguistics, its increasingly visible power in the academy, especially in America, is perhaps understood only in relation to broader cultural forces. The Derridean abyss has been plunged eagerly into by a number of influential, and at times brilliantly suggestive, critics often known (albeit inaccurately) as the "Yale critics." Derrida cannot be held responsible for any of his disciples' plunderings and appropriations and it is fascinating to watch how American deconstruction has focussed on those aspects of the Derridean problematic which lend themselves to uncannily easy assimilation into the hegemonic American literary theory and pedagogy since the 1930s, New Criticism.

The tissue of quotations I have been assembling to introduce deconstruction's potential intervention in the discourse which still dominates Renaissance scholarship has until now not raised the question of the inevitable discontinuities and disagreements amongst deconstructive critics themselves, and in particular the distinctive direction deconstruction has acquired in America. We may appreciate the force

of Jonathan Culler's assertion that "when deconstruction comes to America a shift takes place," when we consider that the history of innovations in American criticism in the past fifty years has been predominantly one of partial and largely unsuccessful reactions to New Criticism.<sup>14</sup> Especially when we read disarming claims like Hillis Miller's that deconstruction is neither nihilism nor metaphysics but simply "interpretation as such . . . [an] untangling by way of the close reading of texts,"<sup>15</sup> deconstruction looks suspiciously like American formalism's last stand. On the surface, of course, there are formidable differences: for New Criticism the text is a complex but organic harmony; for deconstruction, a text is a plurality, "a broken text" in Goldberg's phrase (p. 1), its contradictions and polysemy disrupting any pretence at organic unity. Yet deconstruction can be construed as burrowing more deeply into text than the repertoire of New Criticism allowed. In what can be perceived as a ferocious extension of close reading, the deconstructive critic attends closely to the interstices and repressed shadows of the text's words. As Harold Bloom suggests, it seems at times that Brooks or Abrams and Miller or de Man are only arguing about *degrees* of irony: "deconstructive praxis," as he puts it, "in reading a poem, looks more and more like a refinement upon, but not a break with, the well-wrought Cleanth Brooks."<sup>16</sup>

Further deconstructing deconstruction's claim to radically break with formalism, we may note other similarities. Like New Criticism, deconstruction holds strong views on the so-called representational claims of literature. The rejection of extra-linguistic presence, the suspicion of any reading that makes a text derive from a pre-literary event of which it is always a deferred shadow, and assertions that inherent in literary language is an impossibility that sign and meaning can ever coincide are all (as Goldberg on Spenser's Book IV shows) strangely akin to New Criticism's insistence on the self-contained nature of the literary artefact. Goldberg sounds strangely like a New Critic when he refuses to take from his text meanings which are "referred to some other system of supposedly stable and finally reductive sets of meanings" (p. 75). Derrida's "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte"<sup>17</sup> is thus being read as an insistence that we can never escape from the text rather than that text, or textuality, is everywhere: there is nothing other than text. In American deconstruction, the Derridean questioning of margins and boundaries is subtly neutralised into a convenient, and familiar, pedagogy, that there is nothing beyond the text and its interstices, gaps and indeterminacies. In short, while—as I will go on to concede—deconstruction should certainly make us reflect on the very foundations of our discipline, we must also recognise its historical place—that in America at least it has become all too easily assimilated

by our residual New Criticism and that, perhaps, it is apocalyptic criticism in a peculiarly paranoid stage of our culture, or even, as Terry Eagleton cruelly taunts, the last place left for the liberal conscience to play.<sup>18</sup>

To place deconstruction within the cultural dynamics of our time is not, however, to dismantle it, least of all for Renaissance scholars. Indeed, it is not a little depressing to note the sighs of relief from some traditional historical scholars who wish to avoid the Derridean questioning when they perceive the cultural process by which deconstruction has been unmasked and neutralised—as that Old Enemy, New Criticism, in a trendy disguise. Hostile indignation can then be succeeded by calm assimilation. But the power of deconstruction cannot, I believe, be dealt with as easily as many of its advocates or its opponents, in their different ways, would like. So far as Renaissance scholarship is concerned, we simply cannot return to the security-blankets of either the Old Historicism or New Criticism. There are ways in which the deconstructivist questions—especially as Berry's book on Shakespeare's plays, shows, where they overlap with or reinforce other post-structuralist concerns—do fundamentally challenge traditional Renaissance scholarship. In particular I want to focus on four loci where the challenge seems especially important—the concepts of “author,” “text,” “history,” and “reading.”

First then, to the author, what Roland Barthes terms “that somewhat decrepit deity of the old criticism,”<sup>19</sup> which, in an archaically hagiographic manner, still dominates much Renaissance criticism. “Behind Pistol,” writes George Hibbard, “stands his creator; and the character has thus peculiar interest that, to an extent unparalleled, perhaps among Shakespeare's characters, he allows us and even invites us to look into the mind and also, possibly some of the activities of the playwright who gave him life” (p. 5). Part of the deconstructive challenge is a questioning of the place of both authorial identity and authority within the inworming that Derrida finds at the heart of every text. But as my mention of Barthes (not to mention New Criticism itself) makes clear, the questioning of the place and power of the author over the text and the further questioning of the Cartesian transcendental subject, are issues that have surfaced in a wide range of Western thought, from Nietzsche onwards. In Foucault's words, “man” is “only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old,” the valorization of individualism a metaphor whereby post-Renaissance man has protected himself from insignificance as if, as Shakespeare's Coriolanus (on whom Hibbard has written so well elsewhere) puts it, “a man were author of himself.”<sup>20</sup>

On the role and authority of the author, it is interesting to note how the American version of deconstruction, at least, is relatively crude and superficial. Again, perhaps because of residual New Critical proscription of the Intentional Fallacy, the irrelevance of the author's power on his text has been able to be easily assimilated. But if we turn back to deconstruction's primary sources as well as to more recent developments in French post-structuralism, then something more profound and useful emerges. Even Barthes' perceptive remark that the author can, of course, " 'come back' into the Text," but "only as a 'guest', so to speak,"<sup>21</sup> seems flippant and question-begging alongside the work of Derrida, Althusser, Lacan, or Kristeva on the structured nature of the subject within textuality. Here Renaissance scholars need to learn both deeply and quickly how completely the post-structuralist emphasis on the "individual" as always already a subject of any discourse into which he finds himself thrown (if I can adapt and pervert a Heideggerian commonplace) has radically undermined the bland humanist idealisation of the author's 'mind.' Subjects are themselves constructed by languages: the 'personality' itself is a text traversed and constituted by further discursive practices and requiring continual translation and rereading. Lacan's formulations on the structuring of the unconscious, for example, give real bite to the deconstructive insistence that on the level of the literary text, any utterance contains constitutive gaps whereby, because of the misalignment of signifier and signified, it communicates more, or less, or something other, than what it intends. Without embracing whole-heartedly a Lacanian or Kristevan description of the symbolic and semiotic structuring of the unconscious, we can nonetheless see how in American deconstructionist criticism like Hillis Miller's (or Hibbard's), because such matters are avoided, his praxis is rendered more superficial and self-containing than it might otherwise be.<sup>22</sup>

An author's relationship to the languages that traverse him are, we have learnt, more complex than allowed for by, on the one hand, traditional humanist scholarship, and, on the other, most American versions of deconstruction. In Renaissance scholarship, it is especially crucial to face this issue, since it is by the late sixteenth century that the valorization of the "individual" has taken a recognizable philosophical shape. Derrida's famous formulation is a convenient starting-place to correct Hibbard's or Muir's views:

the writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system. And the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands



and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses.<sup>23</sup>

Or as Edward Said asks pertinently, "to what extent is a text so discontinuous a series of pre-texts or subtexts as to beggar the idea of the author as a simple producer?" The writing of Shakespeare, or Spenser, or Sidney, or Milton is not "free," not created by a uniquely creative sovereign power, the "genius" reified by humanist hagiography, but by language—the text belongs, finally, to language, which speaks through him.<sup>24</sup>

Now, obviously—or at least it ought to be obvious—to undermine the autonomy of the author as the final producer of and authority over the text is not to doubt either the existence of an author or the power of his writing. Goldberg still speaks of "Spenser," even though he speaks of the "authority" of "the Other" (p. 148). To situate the subject within discourse is certainly to adopt a polemical stance in the struggle against the vestiges of the residual and still powerful philosophical idealism that dominates Muir's or Hibbard's work on Shakespeare, who of all our writers most encourages bardolatry. But it is more than polemic: it is to focus more precisely on the ways we all, as writers or readers, write ourselves into the world, the authority we create by participating in discursive structures, and (especially relevant to Renaissance studies) on how the notion of the author became and remains a powerful functional principle within Western culture since the sixteenth century.<sup>25</sup> The Petrarchan sonnet sequence, which Muir surveys in a regretably superficial way, is a case in point where the author is very clearly the articulator of a rhetoric rather than its originator and where although there is often an identifiable individual scriptor, it normally seems to be the voice of a collectivity with which the poem's individual voice wrestles. As Muir does point out, Renaissance sonnets remain notorious for trapping enthusiastic readers into biographical effusion—especially when the matter of the Bard's apparent sexual preference is concerned—and we can learn much from Foucault's insistence on the author simply as the name we give to the locus of discursive forces, a temporarily "privileged moment of individuation." His point that the reification of such a locus has come to "impede the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of textuality" is amply evident in modern Renaissance scholarship and it is to Muir's credit that like Stephen Booth, he is politely dismissive of the biographical fallacy in reading the Sonnets.

Let us now turn to something that, in very different ways, both Goldberg and Muir bring up—"text." The "text" is now variously described as a process, not a fixed object; as subsumed beneath inter-

textual relations; as infinitely shifting and deceptive assemblages of traces, inhabited by discourses that contradict or undermine its seeming solidity. So insistent are the attacks that it is difficult to avoid concluding that our age is seeing a major reevaluation of what we are starting to see as a curiously long-lasting mystification of our cultural history. Muir will have nothing to do with such matters. In a surprisingly naive phrase that takes us right back to the 1930s controversy between 'scholars' and 'critics,' he asserts that "we cannot explain . . . away" something in a text "by searching for elusive ironies and dubious sub-textual meanings" (p. 111). Even Empson and Richards were more open to latent rather than 'obvious' tissues of meaning in a text. What would he say about J. Hillis Miller who argues that we must "be alert to those invisible quotation marks, even within a work, to the margins of texts, to the play of revelation and concealment in language, to the latticework of a text, its contradictions, interweaving and deceptions?"<sup>26</sup> Madelon Gohlke writes well of "a matriarchal substratum or subtext within the patriarchal text" of Shakespeare (p. 161), and when Goldberg likewise speaks of the text as provisional, as fundamentally irrecoverable, we seem to be in a different world. Muir focusses on what, he says, is undeniably "there"; Gohlke and Goldberg, seemingly, on what is *not* "there." Yet, there is a sense in which American deconstruction has focussed on the "thereness" of the text as emphatically as did New Criticism. To insist that a text is always already deconstructed, that our teasing and reaping of its tissues is "not something we have added to the text"<sup>27</sup> but something which constituted it before it was read, is different only in emphasis from Brooks or Warren or Winters. We have become accustomed to recognizing the autonomy and the inherent ambiguity of a poem; and if Goldberg's book is an indication, we may become equally accustomed to, and adept at, recognizing that a text can be considered as, to use the current jargon, a figural system closed off from transcendent signification by a grammatological code which gives the text its existence. Post-Saussurian linguistics, reinforced by Freud, has insisted on the text as palimpsest, "always already inhabited by the track of something that is not itself."<sup>28</sup> Reading reveals textuality as bottomless, its order illusory, its hierarchies arbitrary and repressive. Instead of searching for coherence, we have as our target the *aporias*, the places or *topoi* which lead nowhere but further into textuality, revealing not monadic totality but a perpetual play of hidden relations and fragmentariness. Now, for a commonsensical reader like Muir, it would seem New Critical readings of the Sonnets were bad enough, as they revealed the multiplicity of verbal meaning (ambiguous or complex) in a poem; deconstruction enormously extends their critique by insisting

on the infinite polysemy of language and on a ruthless search for the text's heterogeneity.<sup>29</sup>

But once again, the American domestication of deconstruction is an emasculation of some of post-structuralism's powerful and exciting challenges to our received notions of "text," and it is here that the potential power of deconstruction for Renaissance scholars can be best realised by posing a series of questions. How can the traditional thematic orientation of Renaissance scholarship deal with the Derridean emphasis, beautifully and elegantly expressed by Hillis Miller on Wordsworth or Hardy, on *difference*, on the infinite deferral of meaning? What do deconstruction's radical views on the real emptiness of language have to say about what we assume to be the vitality and plenitude of language in Renaissance texts? In a scholarly area where 'order,' 'unity,' and 'decorum' have become shibboleths, what relevance has the deconstructive emphasis on the disruptiveness of textuality? Where apparent relations between great originals like Petrarch or Ariosto or Boccaccio have valorized terms like "the Petrarchan tradition," what does the deconstructive emphasis on intertextuality and historical dislocation say? Above all, perhaps, where positivist historical scholarship like Muir's or Hibbard's still insists on our need to submit to, say, the Elizabethan World Picture or to become "Shakespeare's contemporary," how can we even start to comprehend the Derridean insistence on the infinitude of reading? In short, when most of the assumptions dominating Renaissance scholarship are still so powerful, how can we find a language by which we can talk meaningfully about Renaissance texts and still face the severity of the deconstructive questions? To ask such questions and to attempt to locate such a language is, I believe, a central task in the revival of Renaissance scholarship and, perhaps, literary history generally. At this point, needless to say, my own suggestions are merely playing with the semantic building blocks.

On the surface, the now common post-structuralist concentration on dislocation and disruption conflicts directly with the notions of "unity," "order," and "hierarchy," not only, seemingly, part of the philosophical 'world-vision' of the Renaissance, but inextricably connected to the very nature of the period's writings. Where New Criticism, say, locates the text's coherence in its self-contained wholeness, as Schmidgall's reconstruction of the Jacobean "courtly aesthetic" makes clear the dominant readings of Renaissance scholarship have seemingly reinforced such unity by locating it in the philosophical absolutes of the age. I say 'seemingly' because I believe that even within a strictly historicist scheme it is amply possible to construct other models of Renaissance structures of feeling from that presented in his

book. Where he takes the Jacobean court's propaganda, what Sir Henry Wotton termed "ART" become "a piece of *State*," for granted and sees the "political" as the "courtly" (pp. 8, 107), it is possible to construct a cultural model for the period 1590-1615 as one of as, for instance, surprising upsurges, intellectual dislocations, increasingly anxious political repression, and *formal* disruption and silences. It needs not, Hamlet might have said, deconstruction come from France to tell us this; but deconstruction may in fact become an ally in the attempt to create a revisionist reading of Renaissance cultural history. On the surface it seems to run directly contrary to our residual methods of reading Renaissance texts. But the radical heterogeneity of reading—the insistence that textual practices operate in contradiction to their own intended existence—could, perhaps, be an exciting way into Renaissance texts, even more than it is (as Michael Sprinker has shown) into Hopkins, say.<sup>30</sup> In a period where there seems to have been an enormous pressure upon language to grapple with new experiences, new feelings, new social patterns, language itself seems to be invaded, to overflow and to struggle with its failures and frustrations. When we read Renaissance texts and sense what Sidney terms their *energeia* we sense how the production of those texts is only apparently silent, and though a text may attempt to efface the struggle that has produced it, that struggle leaves its invisible but indelible marks. Many of Shakespeare's sonnets, even (perhaps especially) the most serene, like CXVI, of which Muir gives a rather tired and obvious paraphrase, derive their energy from providing such a field of struggle. The task of criticism, then, becomes that of bringing to life what has been blotted out, teasing out the discourses that fight within the text, which remain, in Derrida's words, again, "active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible drawing covered over in the palimpsest."<sup>31</sup> We can watch, as Goldberg brilliantly shows with the *Faerie Queene*, how the text maintains an uneasy and shifting relationship with its apparent 'philosophical' content, especially through tracing the movements by which it falls short or exceeds what it wants to say (its *vouloir-dire*), and by which it is sidetracked, turned back on, or repeats itself.<sup>32</sup> We can, most especially, mark the eloquent silences and half-silences, posing the question (the discursive structures of Renaissance women poets are excellent examples here) of what is a necessary absence, silent or suppressed, in the texts of a period where, after all, writers were more self-conscious about the possibilities and frustrations of language than in any subsequent time before our own.

Interestingly, as Jacqueline Miller has suggested, some Renaissance theorists, notably Sidney, seem to have wrestled with such issues (I confess in passing that just as converted New Critics seem happiest

when discussing "text," so nostalgic literary historians like myself are happiest when being able to locate precedents in "history," a subject to which I will return). We may perceive in Renaissance theory and practice two views of reading—one that sees textuality as communication, a desire to extract conceptual statements from words; the other, a desire to escape into the endless play and uses of language. In the contrast between Sidney and Greville, for instance, we can see a debate about the overflowing productivity of language, its playing off one mode of linguistic organization against another, as a debate about the desire to see tropes, meter and rhyme as play or as fundamental means for the presentation of ideas. Scholars have long recognized how Ramism, for instance, especially from the 1580s on, tries to force language into the role of a neutral, transparent instrument of an objectified thinking subject, and Greville's Calvinism may be seen as trying to repress what Greville sensed in Sidney's writing, a promiscuous and anarchic *jouissance* of language.

In the *Defence*, Sidney seems to play between both views of language. On the one hand he argues for the primacy and the "reality" of the "fore-conceit" of poetry, yet on the other asserts that the poet never "lieth" or "affirmeth," just as when he discusses the "naming" of characters in drama, he is uneasy about the absence and presence of what is apparently signified. What he is fumbling with is the source of authority for poetry. Is it part of rhetoric? Or part of society's aggressive desire to coerce language into meaning? Is a sign always a sign *off*? Or is it in the nature of language to always slip from confined and confirming structures of meaning? Does it reproduce a priority reality; does it reduce that reality to comprehensibility; or does it free language and with it reading from the coercion of history? In his discussion Sidney brings us within sight of Derrida's warning about the elementary confusion between the literary sign and the object it projects—and it is a confusion that Renaissance poetry articulates as a real anxiety.<sup>33</sup> Greville's battle with the lost origins of words, especially as he wrestles with Sidney's seemingly replete poetry before him, is a compelling example of Geoffrey Hartman's observation that we continually "wish to put ourselves in an unmediated relation to what 'really' is, to know something absolute."<sup>34</sup> Such a desire is a perpetual anxiety to the Protestant mind for which the thought that language has powers we cannot control is an invitation not merely to anarchy but to damnation. With enormous struggle, Greville restricts and represses words, overcoming what he clearly perceived as Sidney's promiscuous ebullience of language. Terence Cave's recent account of "writing" in the Renaissance, *The Cornucopian Text*, demonstrates such a struggle permeated Renaissance thought about poetry, arguing that language

was conceived as copious richness, conscious multiplication and proliferation on the one hand, and on the other, as an instrument in the growth of an authoritarian classicism which had as its aim the control of the multiplicity of language except as a reproducer of the given.<sup>35</sup> So there is Sidney's seeming eagerness to grant full meaning to words in *Astrophil and Stella* and then, by contrast his own constant surprise, or in Greville's case, suspicion and fear, at finding them determined, limited, or overwhelmed, by relations over which they have no control. In so many as yet unexplored ways Renaissance writings triumphantly exemplify how texts belong to language; they illustrate with penetrating clarity how they emerge and are re-immersed in an eternal battle between the imaginary fullness of the world that surrounds them and the real yet tantalising emptiness of language.

In discussing text and textuality, I have already introduced the next and—within the limits of these ruminations—most unmanageable term, and that is “history.” Most Renaissance scholarship remains committed to historicist methodology: to the investigation of diachrony in language, to investigations of cultural form, generic expectation. Even the feminist critics represented here, with the exception of Gohlke's insistence that we consider “the relation between cultural metaphors and the concept of a cultural unconscious” (p. 163), stay within the traditional boundaries. If we concede, even for the sake of argument, that we cannot simply accept the reduction of language to its apparent and obvious referent, that we cannot maintain that an actual state of the world underwrites the functioning of language, or further, as Gohlke argues well, that history itself is a text, a tissue of fictions and desires, in what sense can we speak of ‘historical’ scholarship? What is the place of history in the deconstructive model? Or are we—New Criticism is again instructive here—committed to radically ahistorical readings? Is there any final difference between Cleanth Brooks and Jonathan Goldberg?

Once again, I think that if we broaden our perspective on deconstruction itself we can get a more helpful bearing on the deconstructive challenge to literary history. Muir and Hibbard are, despite their clarity, care and liveliness, writing out of historicist assumptions long rendered archaic. In the past twenty or so years, we have learnt (most of us painfully and with puzzlement, especially if we were trained to read in ways we took for granted as ‘historical’) to read literature and write literary history in ways that have little in common with *The Elizabethan World Picture* or *From Donne to Marvell*. Our masters (or gods) have been various: Gramsci and Althusser, Benjamin and Brecht, Foucault, Derrida, Hayden White, Harold Bloom, Hans Georg Gadamer, Hans Robert Jauss, Raymond Williams. Their les-

sons have been various—puzzling, contradictory, disturbing. But perhaps central to them is what they share (even when they disagree on most everything else) with deconstruction—and that is a different focus on the confrontation between history and writing, between ideology and textuality than that afforded by positivist literary history. Even Schmidgall, who rightly claims that his work's method, that of "milieu studies" is "rather new in Shakespearean scholarship" (p. 5) writes about political power and (without using these terms) discourse as a subject of power without mentioning Foucault, except to note his "rather precious discussion" of *Las Meninas* in *Les Mots et les Choses!*

In the list I have just yoked together is once again the name that above all others seems to radically challenge the historicist approach, that of Jacques Derrida. In what is a most revealing misreading of his work, Derrida's own sense of the historicity of reading is almost invariably filtered out by his American disciples. Derrida can write of "the internal historicity of the work itself" and of "its relationship to a subjective origin that is not simply psychological or mental" and, more surprisingly (if we have learnt to read him through Miller or de Man) of what he terms the determinate force of the author, of intention, and of the productive matrix and historical conditions in the production of meaning. In short, what Derrida, always surprising, thrusts before us is something that the residual New Criticism of American deconstruction has largely filtered out—the double determination of language. Language is traversed by conflicting structures of discourse, but also by the formations and systems of representation that define a particular society's cultural and ideological life.<sup>36</sup>

Literary texts may, in short, be perceived, not as cultural 'objects,' somehow reflecting or 'containing' a conception of a world, but as cultural *practices*. "Literary history, finally, is an aspect of cultural history" attesting "to the constant refiguring of our relation to our specific location in time and space, to our own historicity," as Gohlke puts it (p. 165). We can circumvent the reductionism of an older historicism by the deconstructive insistence on textuality, but the Derridean question loses its power unless we see texts as produced and always in process, with history, in short as *work*. When deconstruction insists that a text never arrives unaccompanied, and that it is engaged in a perpetual struggle to perform the impossible, to represent the real, we can agree and yet still speak of the pressure upon the text of the 'real,' the always absent that is unattainable. The real escapes discourse and can never be made to coincide with language; it is always under erasure and yet is nonetheless implicated in the text's struggles. It is our deconstruction of those struggles as we scan the traces of their power of compulsion and repression that allows us access to the conditions of

the text's material existence. Texts are haunted by history: in their *aporias*, where they unravel themselves, we locate not the triumphant presence and plenitude of 'reality' but the signs of a real struggle which, however effaced, nevertheless pressures and scars them. This is what deconstruction points to and insists we cannot (just as the text itself may be afraid to) name—the struggles it has undergone in history before it emerges in its seemingly homogenous, unruptured, presence.<sup>37</sup> What *is* present, of course, are the infinite readings of a text, the history of critical readings which, as Muir usefully points out, are inevitably involved in our awareness of a continually fascinating text like Shakespeare's sonnets. The editors of *The Women's Part* also rightly point out that the literary historian is always implicated in her (or his) readings (p. 3)—an insight that Hans Robert Jauss and others have brilliantly brought to our attention in recent years.

We read, then, what is being said despite what is apparently said, yes; and reading is an endless process, yes: a text never quite says what it speaks of and there are times when not only does it not speak but when it cannot speak, as Macherey puts it.<sup>38</sup> Deconstruction has taught us that it is, indeed, the uncertainties and disruptions in a text, the "startling elisions" in Goldberg's term (p. 25), the textual practices that operate to contradict the text's own intentions, that may speak most powerfully. We insist on the invisible quotation marks within phrases and words; we attend to the shadowing fault-lines where the text deconstructs itself. But even though we cannot assert its presence, we can always note in the systematic absences of the text, at its edges, hidden but eloquent, the power of history and, specifically, the power of ideology. Goldberg, perhaps reluctant to move too easily from literary text to social text, puts it this way: a text is "responsive to such 'external' systems of meaning that it has already taken them into the text and subjected them to the very narrative structures that determine the action of the poem" (p. 75). But we can take this point: without, going 'beyond' or 'behind' the text or establishing ideology as a secret fulcrum, we can assert that each text is a *parole* of a vaster *langue* of ideological discourse. Each text, in Bakhtin's and Kristeva's term, belongs to a distinctive ideologeme.<sup>39</sup>

Now I have spelt out, laboriously and at the risk of articulating the obvious, how we can see beyond Schmidgall's "milieu" studies, and even beyond the suggestive and, it should be stated, brilliantly pioneering final chapters of Goldberg's book. I have introduced a term, 'ideology,' which is suspect from many quarters, one that within the Anglo-American academy can be easily neutralised by being related to a simplistic and crudely reductionist Marxism. But if we take ideology not as a static and even identifiable set of ideas which "determines"



(Goldberg's use of the word is unfortunate, unless we heed Raymond Williams' reminder that determination means pressures, limits, not determinism<sup>40</sup>, but see it as a set of changing and never fully identifiable practices inscribed *within* language, apparently referential but in fact the encodement of certain lived and therefore changing and volatile relations, then we have the basis for a new, revisionist history, one that can meet and use the full force of the Deconstructionist challenge. We can describe ideology as the absence that tantalises us into accepting presence, a force that structures experience without connoting it. It is not separate from textuality and so somehow 'reflected' in texts, but is distributed and inscribed in textuality itself "the power of the Other shaping the text," Goldberg puts it (p. 148). Its function is the sirenlike interpellation to a text's readers to imagine the self as a unified, central point in the complex and never-ending struggle between author, text, and readers. Ideology tries to bully the text into coherence, to conceal its struggles, to force language to seem to be the transparent and transcendent conveyor of meaning. By dispelling the contradictions that occur between language and its production, ideology attempts to coerce us into privileging and inscribing certain preferred, seemingly 'natural,' meanings over all the other infinite discursive pressures that traverse a text. The role of the critic is, as Goldberg demonstrates, to deconstruct, to show up the struggles and strategies, but also to reinscribe the text to show how it is a rewriting of prior texts all of which struggle to imprison it.

The final matter of concern to Renaissance scholars and which is dwelt on by all the books under consideration is that central concern of much contemporary critical theory and practice, reading. Traditional Renaissance scholarship has had a model of the reader as submitting himself, usually by detailed contextual studies, to the monumentality of a text. An impressive variety of revisionary accounts of reading has called into question the search for a single, homogenous or at least a limited set of meanings. Reception-aesthetics (Wolfgang Iser), Reader Response Criticism (Stanley Fish, Norman Holland), Reception Semiotics (Umberto Eco), among others, in conflicting but important ways, have constituted what is at the very least a new pedagogy that is fast becoming an orthodoxy in our Universities. Indeed, it is fascinating to see how that sternly reprovved enemy of New Criticism, the Affective Fallacy, has become triumphantly institutionalized. What deconstruction adds to this increasing orthodoxy of the open-ended nature of texts is both a philosophical scepticism and a rhetorical intensification. Derrida argues that "writing is inaugural"<sup>41</sup> and his remark applies both intratextually and to writing's overflowing beyond its apparent boundaries. His assertion that writing always

produces an emancipation of meaning is an insight of some of the most moving critical praxis of recent years. What, in deconstruction's view, enables a text to be read at all and what, by the nature of textuality, infinitely produces new or creative misreadings of text is what Derrida terms *differance*, the very condition of writing, at once the deferred promise of meaning and the means by which meaning is always deferred.<sup>42</sup> *Differance* is the condition of meaning and the simultaneous guarantee that meaning is impossible, that reading is an endless process, with no central core of meaning to assert the play of the text throughout history. *Differance* at once allows a text to be read and yet insists that it is unreadable or undecidable, allowing a host of (mis)readings. Finally, there are no texts, only readings of texts, as meaning disseminates through an endless and inescapable chain of supplementary signifiers: "every sign engenders an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable."<sup>43</sup>

At once the joy of language and the melancholy reminder of our own morality, the dissemination of textuality is a disturbing challenge to the philosophical presuppositions of traditional humanist scholarship. Yet it is here, at the absent heart as it were of deconstruction, that the most profound and exciting possibilities for a renewed historical criticism lie. For finally once again the characteristic American reading of Derrida's insights is ideological, invested with the melancholy paralysis of the late twentieth-century Western world. If we speak of there being, "finally, no texts, only an infinite textuality always on the move," or of texts as "no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces," then we are speaking of texts decentered, certainly, but we are also speaking of the lives of texts overflowing into history.<sup>44</sup>

Roland Barthes once pointed out, in one of his characteristic brilliant enunciations which once we have read we realise should have been obvious, that most of a work's history comes *after* it is written.<sup>45</sup> If we take Derrida seriously and question the repressive function of margins, boundaries, signatures, and the referential realm outside the work's frame, then we may see the continuity between text and the textuality that is the work's history—its reading, rereading, translation, which allows us to see the text as part of a network into which our lives and our history are incorporated. The work's life as supplementarity, as *differance*, allows us to see its history as textuality and to see the deconstruction as allowing us to extend the text into the world, its decentered nature letting it loose into history.

As Ralph Berry's lively book on "changing styles" in Shakespeare shows, we can illustrate this dissemination of textuality very clearly from the history of dramatic texts. A play, perhaps more obviously than any other art-work, is always already decentered when it is read, produced or viewed. "Every play," says Berry, "on the serious stage, is approached as though it were a new text . . . straight Shakespeare does not exist" (pp. 5, 9). There is no original: no original performance, no original 'text.' A play is a script, decomposing it as it is composed, and recomposed as it is performed. It never makes meaning until it is loosed into the world as performance—in short, until it enters the textuality of history. The work initiates performances of meaning, providing us with the signs to read. So, as Berry shows, we can see the history of Shakespearean criticism illustrating the changing ways the plays have been read and produced in what he terms the "metamorphoses" of *Twelfth Night*, *Coriolanus*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus*, *Hamlet*, and *Henry V*. Meaning inheres not in the monumental text, but in the necessary and joyfully endless task of interpretation. Meaning is a process of dissemination—it is split, spread, always potent. Berry's little book is a refreshing breakthrough in studies of Shakespeare.

Readers of Roland Barthes may recall, at this point in the argument, his distinction between "readerly" and "writerly" texts,<sup>46</sup> one which Goldberg uses in reading *The Faerie Queene*. It is a persuasive and, once again, seminal idea. Yet it requires some modification. Any text can be given a writerly reading. Renaissance lyrics such as Shakespeare's sonnets, are a case in point. The dynamics of lyric sequence are such that the originating author is unusually effaced: he offers his poems to a varied audience of sympathetic listeners as a mirror less of his own experiences as of theirs. He becomes one reader among others as he contemplates the experience, listening, reading, "writing," in Barthes' sense. Thus poems within the Petrarchan mode demand dialogue, argument, application. While the readers of Shakespeare's sonnets, then and now, share many common activities in producing meanings, what we produce will, inevitably and infinitely, be different. The roles for the readers mapped out by the text are not coercive: even within the "private friends" among which he wrote, the poems must have variously seduced, tempted, stimulated, pleased, annoyed, even bored. They demanded, and demand, performance not passivity. Their very life depends on our recognising that they are loosed, disseminated, in the world.<sup>47</sup>

For the Renaissance scholar, then, momentous things are happening. Goldberg's book—and in their own ways, Berry's and the feminist essays—remind us that even in this most conservative of scholarly

fields, strange new languages are starting to be heard. And Muir's and Hibbard's eminently readable (in both the traditional and Barthean senses) books remind us of the dedication and—it should be emphasized, given the glee with which post-structuralism has seized upon some of its new-won spoils—the humility that have gone into creating our sense of the presence of history in our lives. Together we are all starting to lay the groundwork for a long-needed revisionist reading of the literature of the Renaissance.

## NOTES

1. Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (London, 1970), pp. 15-16. The books under review in this article are as follows: Ralph Berry, *Changing Styles in Shakespeare* (Winchester, Mass.: Allen Unwin, Inc., 1981), \$15.95 U.S.; Jonathan Goldberg, *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), \$14.50; G. R. Hibbard, *The Making of Shakespeare's Dramatic Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), \$17.50 CN cloth, \$7.50 paper; Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely eds., *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), \$17.50 U.S.; Kenneth Muir ed., *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Winchester, Mass.: Allen and Unwin, Inc., 1980), \$19.50 cloth, \$8.95 paper. Quotations from these books are cited in the text of this article.
2. Gerald Graff, "Deconstruction as Dogma, or, 'Come Back to the Raft Ag'in Strether Honey!'" *Georgia Review*, 34 (1980), p. 408.
3. Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin or Towards Revolutionary Criticism* (London, 1981), p. 134; Vincent Leitch, "The Book of Deconstructive Criticism," *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 12 (1979), p. 19.
4. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, *New French Feminisms: An Anthology* (Amherst, 1980), p. 6; Julie Kristeva, "Woman Can Never Be Defined," in *New French Feminism*, p. 137.
5. Michael McCandles, "The Authentic Discourse of the Renaissance," *Diacritics* 10 (March, 1980), p. 77.
6. Richard C. McCoy, *Sir Phillip Sidney: Rebellion in Arcadia* (New Brunswick, 1980); Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, 1980); William A. Sessions ed., special Sidney number of *Studies in the Literary Imagination* (Spring, 1982).
7. Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Beyond Formalism* (New Haven, 1970), pp. 56-7.
8. Tilottama Rajan, *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism* (Ithaca, 1980), p. 16.
9. J. Hillis Miller, "Deconstructing the Deconstructors," *Diacritics*, 5 (Summer, 1975), p. 31.
10. Barbara Johnson, "The Critical Difference," *Diacritics*, 8 (1978), p. 3.
11. Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Saving the Text* (Baltimore, 1981), ch. 3.
12. See e.g. Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs* (London, 1981), p. 15; Harold Bloom, "Agon: Revisionism and Critical Personality," *Raritan* (1981), p. 50.
13. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London, 1977), p. 146; Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *NLH*, 6, (1974), p. 11.
14. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, p. 15; cf. Frank Lentricchia, *After the New Criticism* (Chicago, 1980), chapter 5.
15. J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host," *Deconstruction Criticism*, introd. Harold Bloom (New York, 1979), p. 230.
16. Bloom, "Agon," p. 32.
17. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivack (Baltimore, 1976), p. 158.
18. Eagleton, *Benjamin*, p. 132; cf. Michel Foucault, "My Body, This Paper, This Fire," translated in Michael Sprinker, "Textual Politics: Foucault and Derrida," *Boundary 2*, 8, iii (Spring, 1980), p. 77.

19. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York, 1974), p. 211.
20. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York, 1970), p. xxiii.
21. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in Josué V. Harari (ed.), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, 1979), p. 78.
22. See e.g. Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London, 1980) ch. 3; Paul Willemsen, "Notes on Subjectivity," *Screen Education*, 19 (1978), pp. 41-69; John Brenkman, "Deconstruction and the Social Text," *Social Text* 1 (1979), p. 186-8.
23. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158.
24. Edward Said, *Beginnings* (New York, 1975), p. 56.
25. See e.g. William Shullenberger, "Lacan and the Play of Desire in Poetry," *Massachusetts Studies in English*, 7 (1978), p. 33; Diana Adlam and Angie Salfield, "A Matter of Language," *Ideology and Consciousness*, 3 (1978), pp. 95-111.
26. Miller, *The Critic as Host*, p. 223.
27. Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven, 1979), p. 17.
28. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, 1978), p. 223; cf. Rajan, *Dark Interpreter*, p. 17; Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 143.
29. See e.g. Rajan, *Dark Interpreter*, p. 180; Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Monsieur Texte: On Jacques Derrida, His *Glas*," *Georgia Review*, 30 (1975), p. 761; Miller, "Deconstructing the Deconstructors," p. 30.
30. Michael Sprinker, *A Counterpoint of Dissonance* (Baltimore: 1980); J. Hillis Miller, "The Still Heart: Poetic Form in Wordsworth," *NLH*, 2 (1971), pp. 297-310.
31. Derrida, "White Mythology," p. 11.
32. Jacques Derrida, "Positions," *Diacritics*, 3 (Spring, 1973), p. 39.
33. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 144; see also Spivack's remarks in her introduction, pp. lxxiii-lxxv; see also Jacqueline Miller, "Authority and Authorship: Some Medieval and Renaissance Contexts," (unpub. doct. diss. Johns Hopkins, 1979).
34. Hartman, *Saving the Text*, p. 107.
35. Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text* (Cambridge, 1981).
36. Jacques Derrida, interview in *The Literary Review*, 14 (April-May, 1980) quoted by Terry Eagleton, "The Idealism of American Criticism," *New Left Review*, 127 (1981), p. 57.
37. Eagleton, *Benjamin*, pp. 32-3; cf. Brenkman, "Deconstruction and the Social Text," p. 187; Thomas Metscher, "Literature and Art as Ideological Form," *NLH* 11 (1979), p. 29.
38. Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London, 1978), pp. 85, 87; cf. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1978), p. 27.
39. P. N. Medvedev and M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, trans. Albert J. Wehrle (Baltimore, 1978), p. 3; Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, trans. Thomas Gora et al. (New York, 1980), p. 36; cf. Eagleton, "The Idealism of American Criticism," p. 61.
40. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 83-9.
41. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 11.
42. For a helpful discussion, see Chris Norris, "Jacques Derrida's Grammatology," *PN Review*, 6.2 (1979), p. 38.
43. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," *Glyph*, 1 (1977), p. 187; cf. Roland Barthes, "Theory of the Text," in *Untying the Text*, ed. Robert Young (Boston, 1981), p. 42.
44. Jacques Derrida, "Living On," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, pp. 83-4.
45. Barthes, "Theory of the Text," p. 37.
46. Barthes, *S/Z*, pp. 18, 19.
47. For an extension of this argument, see my "Acts of Reading: 'Astrophil and Stella' and the Production of Meaning," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 15 (1982).