Authors, 'Deconstruction', and the Disappearing Wordsworth of Marjorie Levinson

Warwick Orr

Previous generations have bequeathed to us the interlocking problems of which texts to read and of how to read them. These debates in turn intersect with those about the nature of history, notably the rise of social history ... and the related skepticism about the nature of historical 'events' and 'facts'. The main tendency in new historicism has bravely swept over most of these debates without explicitly addressing the nature of the historicism ... that it is seeking to restore to the reading of texts. But it seems safe to say that the new historicists do view their project as revitalizing the increasingly formalist project of deconstruction.

> Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, 'Literary Criticism and the Politics of the New Historicism', in H. Aram Veeser, ed., *The New Historicism*, New York & London, 1989, p.215.

In recent decades readers of literature and criticism have become accustomed, or perhaps merely inured, to hearing the article of faith which proclaims that language is entirely self-referential, and that the author of a poem or novel is not present in his work. This doctrine would appear to be moored to the reasoning that because we perceive the world by means of representations or signs, among which words count and are the currency of thought, *what* we perceive is therefore the representation of an object, rather than being the object itself.[1] Hence our apprehension of a work of literature can include no sense of its author's presence; for the signs which traditionally might have conveyed a writer's meaning are now held to evince to readers only the system of representation wherein an originating authorial intention must instantly be dissolved.

The grounds exist, however, for arguing that the extreme anti-subjectivity of this creed expresses at bottom an irritable dependence upon an opposite and related series of assumptions which would envisage works of art as an objectification of their authors' biographies: as entities whose meanings may be determined by a critical unearthing of events and influences, actions and intentions, in the temporal existence of the real man or woman. One thinks here of Sir Edmund Gosse's biography of John Donne, and his reading of the *Songs and*

Sonets very much in these terms;[2] and the fact that such an approach to poetry has not been discarded, even in these times in which Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes are held by some to have discovered that the world is round, is suggested in the following piece of criticism:

> Just as Donne's first, most joyful letter to Ann [More] is complicated by wariness and uncertainty, his most exalted and exuberant poems are constrained by secrecy and disturbed by 'true and false feares' ... In *The Sunne Rising*, *The Good Morrow*, and *The Canonization*, Donne proclaims the uniqueness of the lovers who are confined to 'one little roome', but he also shows the limitations and worries of lovers who cannot appear together in drawing-rooms. Because their all-encompassing, unprecedented love is clandestine, it is always subject to the death-blow of discovery and condemnation.[3]

The assumptions which prompt these speculations centre very plainly upon a sense of the creative act which equates that act with a species of bridge to the transliteration, in a work of art, of experience. Implicit therein is the notion of creativity as a function of the conscious and notional will, and the corresponding concept of a poem or novel as making immanent, rather than as transforming or recreating, both will and experience. But from this critic's sense of an experientially-determined and basically *external* authorship recoverable in a poem as a form of intentional immanence, a blue-print of Donne's volition as it were, there is only a short road to the project to distil that sense into a conscious and elaborated piece of theorizing wherefrom to launch the opposite error—that of supposing that because ripples which succeed upon the passage of a stone into still water are not identical with the stone, nor the stone with them, there consequently exists no basis upon which to affirm that the ripples *both* represent the presence of the missile and have a signifying and evocative life of their own. In the world summoned into being in the theories of 'deconstruction', this assumption is exhibited, insistently and as a hallmark of ideological purity, in the assertion of the absence of any species of lived experience in literature, and in the dogma of the completely illusory nature of authorial presence. Thus, the failure properly to conceive the relation between a writer and his work is in fact a precondition for speaking of them, as in the case of Ilona Bell, as identical, or, as in other cases, as utterly dissociated. Roland Barthes's well-known theory as to the death of authors seems to me to depend entirely for its point upon the barren dialectic between these simultaneously antagonistic and interdependent notions, themselves a reflection of that sterile complicity and animus between reaction and

revolution so basic to the production of the modern world.[4] At a level considerably more significant than that attained by Barthes, Jacques Derrida is a philosophical Jack Sprat who will have no fat where the estranged critical wives at table with him would seem to want no lean: for in his view, there is nothing beyond the text, or beyond language;[5] and since agents are demonstrably not present in an absolute and determining manner in speech or writing, as it were as 'transcendental signifieds'[6] ensconcing themselves in discourse to impregnate it with intention, they are therefore not present at all.[7]

In a literary world too given to complacencies as to the efficacy of a knowledge of 'conventions' to explain away works of art, and too prone within itself to feeble belle-lettrism and an inert reliance upon the touchstone of an author's supposed intentions, the 'deconstructive' recognition, or post-Leavisian reaffirmation, of the multiplicity of meaning, was not only appropriate, but also necessary. That recognition, however, which was to have 'opened'[8] the reading of literature, has issued instead, as if impelled from the Tennis Court to the Jacobin Club, in the mere dread of closure; the consignment of Authors to the tumbrels; and the elucidation of the doctrine, analogous to that of perpetual revolution, of *infinite interpretability*; which last has resulted in that doctrine's infinite (or at least interminable) reiteration, and in a self-satisfied punctilio among critics who imagine that actually to engage with a work of art or its interpretation would be to reveal their fingernails as somehow less than scrupulously cleaned and pared.[9]

There are signs about, however, that the 'deconstructive' enterprise is well on the way towards the defunction to which its mentors and their scholarly initiates had hoped to consign subjects and authors.[10] To all but its adepts, 'deconstruction's' inability to dissolve or to suffocate the essential distinction between seeking to free oneself from a thing and showing that thing to be non-existent, must reveal as frivolously vatic, and thereby disqualify outright, its pivotal claim as to the insubstantiality of subjects; because the claim, though insistently proffered, has never been made good, and cannot be. It hangs, like a stuffed unicorn from a sky-hook, upon a concept of subjectivity as *absolute*, as Barthes makes clear in his *pronunciamiento* that

> ... a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space ... [11]

This is approximately as illuminating, in the world of letters, as an agriculturalist informing an assembly of farmers that an onion is not

a pear, but rather a juicy orb of acrid skins. The idea that texts have 'single' meanings has never been entertained by anybody other than 'deconstructionists' themselves. Theory proposes, and then disposes; and those who inhabit the flying island of Laputa are able to feel that a light has come into the world. Perhaps it is time we should recognise that onions and tomatoes really are not pears; and that the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel categorically does not portray The Amorous History of Noddy and Big Ears. Likewise, no-one has ever reputably equated authors with God, or their works with Divine Law—not even in the comparatively absolutist tradition of French literature, as Stendhal himself reveals:

> Un roman est comme un archet, la caisse du violon *qui rend les sons*, c'est l'âme du lecteur.[12]

Stendhal's 'âme du lecteur' supposes, as much in France as in England, a communion of like and unlike minds shaping over time the perception of works of art; so that the extravagance of the Barthesian claim is a function of its dissociation from everything but theory; and its acceptance is commensurate with its never being put to the test. It is therefore necessary to say that the author or subject has not been disposed of, for 'deconstruction' has simply never grappled with him.

A sense of inadequacies such as these is bound to issue in a redressal, or a reaction; as is the discernment of 'deconstruction's' tendency to seek a merely aestheticizing disengagement from experience—a tendency and impulse characterized by a recent commentator as a

> ... mystificatory detachment ... a textualization of reality, a textualization of the text, a free play of language [whereby] *all* texts are escape routes, bridges thrown across the flowing currents of history—substitutive satisfactions ... [through whose indulgence] the complex changing conditions of reality and its dialogic interplay ... the struggle and clash and collision of ideas and arguments, the difficult logic that demands a dialectic of response, are ignored, subsumed and absorbed into the 'universalizing' forms of the writer's 'literary consciousness' ... [13]

One might well have objections to this Marxist critic's unduly doctrinaire sense of the determinative bearings of 'reality' on literature; but the recollection of those bearings, in an atmosphere in which the indulgence of a theoretical appetite as an end in itself has become too much a part of modern intellectual life, is salutary. Thus, the tendency of some literary thinkers toward a 'new historicism' which would seek to restore to the notion of 'text' the implied one of 'context' is,

I think, desirable in principle; and certainly the reputation which has accrued to such names as Barrell and Greenblatt arises, it seems to me fair to say, not only from those writers' merits but also from the fact that those merits are evinced in response to an hiatus in the understanding of literature.[14] The importance which 'new historicist' criticism has attained in recent years, and something of the nature of its undertaking, are suggested in the following observations by a writer of that persuasion, Marjorie Levinson, to whose view of Wordsworth's poetry most of the remainder of this essay will be devoted:

> A new word is abroad these days in ... scholarship—'historicist'—and the adjective carries distinctly heterodox overtones. What is thereby refused is an idealizing interpretive model associated with [deconstruction] ... At the same time, historicist critique distinguishes its interests and method from *historical* scholarship, or from ... a number of works [which] ... position themselves as demystifications of Romanticist readings as well as of Romantic poems. They use history, or sociopolitical reconstruction, to resist the old control of Yale. However, insofar as they repudiate the empiricist, positivist concept of historical fact ... these works are deeply of the devil's party.[15]

To be able to sail from between the Scylla of 'deconstruction' and the Charybdis of what Marjorie Levinson calls 'historical scholarship', into the waters of a new and truly 'heterodox' sense of what constitutes the creative undertaking, would be no small feat. The initial misgivings aroused by the author's rather too freely triumphant invocation of the heterodoxy of the 'new historicism' are, however, prompted into something like active suspicion when her repudiation of orthodox assumptions is seen to hang not only upon a reinvention of 'the empiricist ... concept of historical fact' so inimical to the Wordsworthian understanding of consciousness, but also upon a characterization, or demonization, of the non-empiricist outlook as belonging to 'the devil's party'. Specifically, one begins to suspect that Scylla and Charybdis may in fact be the underwriters of the Levinsonian vessel, and that, in its helmsman's fear of shores on which imaginative devilry grins at empiricist orthodoxies, its course may be headed very steadily toward certain narrow and overly-frequented harbours. And I use this metaphor, with its implicit appeal to the wholeness of the Homeric geography of consciousness, with the intention of saying that what is needful to modern intellectual life, and indeed to modern life *tout court*, is a pact with that 'devil's party' and its supposedly Satanic instigator. The old conformity, the

orthodox notion of consciousness, whose prayer-beads run from the Alpha of an all-sufficient and exalted Reason to the Omega of an expulsion into the abyss of all that does not square with Reason alone, is of course the thing which sets its blind face against that necessary pact. Thus is produced a 'deconstruction' whose pursuit of imaginative freedom hangs upon nothing less than a dialectic with a simultaneously deified and demonized absolute rational will. When, however, in response to the shortcomings of that movement, the 'new historicism' offers redress through an allegiance to an empiricism which it touts as a standard precisely of heterodoxy, the suspicion becomes a near-certainly that what is imminent is yet another rehearsal for the final guillotining of the subject, and that, in the present tenor of consciousness of our civilization, little more can be expected than the reiteration, even among the most confidently 'new' of its intellectuals, of old half-truths which represent, but cannot address, the nature of our bedevilment.

Marjorie Levinson's investigation of *Tintern Abbey*, in which one might have hoped to see the poet's understanding brought fruitfully into relation with the objects of his understanding, indicates almost from its outset that, in its author's need to assimilate the 'deconstructive' outlook upon literature, the rediscovery of the *hors-texte* will be analogous to that of a rediscovery of Nature in the form of Indians in circus-cages, to be gazed upon, forced to perform, and never released. Thus, as is frequently the case with reactions, a great deal of what is basic to the system (and 'deconstruction' is precisely that) whose defects have become patent, is brought forward and merely reformulated in the new dispensation. In respect of this process, there is in the essay in question not only an evident debt, through the employment of terms like 'textual space', 'textual maneuver' [sic], and 'representational strategies',[16] to the conceptual apparatus of 'deconstruction', but also, and more importantly, the appearance in an inverted or etiolated form of several of the basic tenets of that philosophy.

Thus, the author suggests very early on that

> ... the poem's developmental psychology serves a primarily extrinsic remedial intention: the de- and reconstruction of the scene of writing[17]

and the question is then raised as to whether the poet's failure to portray in this work the ruined abbey represents

> ... a determined refusal to let fact supplant fancy, to let the picture of the place usurp the picture of the mind?[18]

The answer to that enquiry, which has arisen from the abbey's having been a dwelling-place of the poor and a silent witness to the evils of an incipient industrialization of the region, would seem to be given in some sort in this critic's hazarding that she

> ... would not say that Tintern Abbey looked very different in 1798 than it had in 1793; it just looked different to Wordsworth in the different political context of 1798.[19]

It is not my intention to discuss here either Wordsworth or his verse, tempting though it be to delve into the poetic expression and conditions of what is plainly being sketched here as a classic 'deconstructive' *aporia*. For my focus must remain on the relation between an author and a work of art. Marjorie Levinson's attempt to return 'history' to our sense of the genesis of a poem and the workings of a writer's imagination, pursued as the project is through a rigorous and often very subtle argumentation, nonetheless rests in the end upon conceptual bases of both the crudest and most brittle kind, in which the assumptions of rationalism appear time and again alongside the author's allegiance to empiricism. She refers at one stage to the poet's 'Cartesian problematic';[20] but to my mind, the victim of that affliction is not Wordsworth, but his critic. To speak, as she does, of 'the difference between an object and an object of knowledge'[21] is to betray in the clearest of terms her debt to the sire of rationalism, a debt continuous with her distinction between the 'fact' which Wordsworth *refused* and the 'fancy' in which we are to suppose he sheltered. For what precisely is or was or could be 'the picture of the place' entirely dissociated from 'the picture of the mind'? Since pictures are inevitably pictures *of* something, just as histories are accounts *of* events, and therefore proceed in both instances from a beholder, what representation of a place or a person or a time has ever issued from a perceiving intelligence without being in some sort a simultaneous representation of that intelligence, and thus a 'picture of the mind'? The 'fact', or as it is expressed elsewhere, 'the concrete social relations',[22] the miseries of dispossession and vagrancy, whose existence this critic tells us it is the undertaking of the poem to efface, are therefore assumed to be something to which the human mind has unmediated access—a supposition which even the etymology of the word 'fact' invalidates, since a 'fact' is a thing done or made, and thus itself an 'object of knowledge', an entity bearing the imprint of a doer or a perceiver.[23] The notion that creative intelligence could ever register and reproduce without taint a thing as it is in itself and to itself (which condition is

inherently unknowable, anyway, and hence unverifiable) rests upon two impossible postulates: the first, that this consciousness would be entirely passive, and so unable to generate through its *activity* any heat that should transform the object impinging upon it; and secondly, that it would be wholly transparent and even substanceless, and thus be capable through its *vacuity* of attaining with its object an identity so complete as to be filled with it to entirety. In such a case, the mind in question could never come to awareness of what had possessed it; since to reflect upon it, as the literal meaning of that infinitive indicates and the subsequent preposition specifies, that consciousness would have to contain energic matter (as it were) which should cast light upon its occupant and in some sense transfigure it. The entirely receptive intelligence, having before been all diaphanous, and now become unrelievedly dark, would simply cease to exist.

The perception of a 'fact in itself' by a mind entirely subsumed into its own rational motions is, then, an impossibility. This is not to suggest, however, that the recognizably Enlightenment suppositions which produce the ideation of Marjorie Levinson's essay are not of significance both in terms of what T. S. Eliot calls a 'dissociation of sensibility' in modern consciousness,[24] and as a mainspring in the manufacture of that species of art which under the denomination of *social realism*, defines for our time the essentials of machine-like purposefulness, of stiltedness and banality. To kill wolves is also to slay the angels; or, to put the matter otherwise, to adduce as mere 'fact' a reality which the mind itself has in part created, implies a concept of mind as a deified mechanism, and therefore of all that is unassimilable to that mind as 'deeply of the devil's party'—a notion which leaves poetry, as the very least, in a quandary. And thus this critic, intent on the *ignus fatuus* of a Tintern Abbey that did not look different in itself or as a fact, but only seemed different to a poet because of changed political circumstances, reaches, inexorably one feels, the conclusion that

> ... Wordsworth learns to sever his interests from history ... and to align them instead with poetry, a safer investment.[25]

What precisely is meant by that dichotomy the author goes on to make explicit. For having *reconstructed*

> ... the fact of Tintern Abbey—its evidence of poverty and pollution and above all its memorial to an extinct form of social existence yearned for by the poet,[26]

she is able to elaborate upon and pursue her argument that

> ... the narrator [of the poem] achieves his penetrating vision through the exercise of a selective blindness ... [Wordsworth] ... excludes from his field certain conflictual sights and meanings—roughly, the *life* of things;[27]

which proposition is reiterated throughout the essay, as in the statement of our being bound

> ... to see that Wordsworth's pastoral prospect is a fragile affair, artfully assembled by acts of exclusion.[28]

The darker powers, traditionally, are artful; and thus does the 'poetry' dissociated from 'history' recommend itself to us as the outcome of a species of sublime funk—as a 'safer investment' significant of an artistic consciousness working through the means of 'exclusion' for the attainment of what is referred to elsewhere as 'the charm of thought'.[29] Nowhere in this essay does its author indicate even the beginnings of a recognition that a poem which achieves a 'penetrating vision' cannot do so as the reward, as it were, of that reprehensible shirking of ugly experience, that abdication of creative responsibility implicit in the idea of 'thought' as something *charming*—an abdication unintentionally expressed by the critic herself as

> ... the transformation of reflective into reflexive thought ... The idea is to install psychically a mechanism such that incoming data are ... purged of conflictual (unconsecrated) particulars.[30]

Here, then, is the machine; and the clumsy purposefulness of the *installation* envisaged is entirely consistent with the metamorphosis of Marjorie Levinson's immutable Facts into the mere fodder of a species of computer. That substance, having once undergone its hæmatidrosis, may then be made to figure as a 'penetrating vision' that begins increasingly to look like the modesty of a very prepossessing trollop. For this essay is impotent throughout to suggest what it is that positively constitutes the poem it fails to discuss; so that what the invoked 'penetrating vision' and 'charm of thought' actually do *as poetry* is a matter not condescended to, the author preferring instead consistently to imply that the poem, in its eschewing of Fact for a 'safer investment', distinguishes itself through its expression of Transcendence. This manifestation of the Eliotic dichotomy between thought and feeling, attributed by the critic to Wordsworth but pertaining rather to her own Benthamite assumptions, is an interesting case of the easy cohabitation of ideological and scholarly rigour with mere sentimentality—for it is to the satisfactions of sentimentality that the critic's statement of her methodological undertaking and her objectives seems decidedly to aspire. She writes that one

> ... wants to find a use for [Romantic transcendence]. I believe that the way we do this today ... is to refuse the transcendence until such a time as we can trace its source and explain its character. Then we too are liberated; we share in the poets' ecstasies ... [31]

The impulse behind Romantic poetry, it would now appear, is to become 'liberated'; though of course the sublime prospect which that condition affords to bards and critics alike will be refrained from by the more scrupulous latter until science and exegesis shall discover its origins outside the poem—the origins which subsist in the 'facts' of history and biography, and which, once seized, will yield to the investigator not only those temporarily forfeited 'ecstasies' but also the key to the work's mythology. In this instance, however, the critic has built so heavily on the existence and immanence of what she herself calls 'the tyranny of fact',[32] as well as on an implicit concept of perception as an immaculate and unimplicated medium, that if it can once be shown that such premises are unsustainable, her thesis must collapse. I believe that I have already demonstrated this; but some further observations are now in order.

For even were human intelligence able to apprehend things as they are in and to themselves, and could do so in autonomy from the linguistic means which make them, one might say, of the body of individuals and cultures, one could still never *speak* of them without instantly venturing onto the terrain of the problem as to the observed and the observer—without becoming, in other words, a subject and a beholder, and thereby a participant in the evolution of the purchase of cultures on reality. The sequestration in this essay of fact from fiction, as it were of clockwork from chaos, apparatus from infernal regions, itself represents an excursion into the fictitious. The 'fact' which is an action, a deed, and the 'fiction' which, at least in its root sense, is a more specific shaping or moulding,[33] represent not a dichotomy but rather, like Apollo, Athena and the Furies, distinct aspects of a continuum; for since the term 'fact', like any other term, does not draw upon itself the tangible properties of objects or the lineaments of deeds, as it were to substantiate itself in the attributes of nature, it cannot be held *directly* or *essentially* to signify those attributes—as the word 'attribute' itself makes plain. 'Fact' is attributive: it bestows factuality on the perceived, and expresses the recognition (the knowing again, the shaping anew) of objects by subjects. It therefore represents a type of human creativity; and the distinction which we maintain between it and 'fiction' is an act of human perception in which the knowledge of their relatedness remains implicit—a relatedness which

evinces itself in our recognition that nature attains in fiction a greater, but never an absolute, autonomy.[34]

The burden of Marjorie Levinson's thesis is that what is most essential and even most real in the poem it examines is precisely what that poem excludes from utterance or contrives within itself to efface. In her own words, 'what [it] depicts is less interesting than the subject thereby overwritten'.[35] The work is thus a kind of engaging address to an inherently more significant reality undergoing burial, an elaborate and prolonged instance of what 'deconstruction' calls an *aporia*; but her indebtedness to this concept and its implied aesthetic is coupled with another to a philosophy superficially incompatible with that of Derrida and his followers. For her essay's sense of 'fact' is straightforwardly deterministic: Wordsworth ought, the implication surfaces again and again, to have written about the poor; about pollution; and about the human consequences of the Industrial Revolution and the enclosure of the common lands; because these things are Social Realities. His poem, in eschewing all these and presuming to contemplate a more intimate series of problems, is thus a 'safer investment'—one which achieves the feat of being at once a 'massive imagination'[36] and something 'less interesting' than Reality: which Gordian knot of improbability, it is clear, stands as no impediment to the critic in her scrupulous pursuit of 'ecstasies'. Since the poet's flight from *the thing he dreaded* was indubitably (this scholastic Mrs Merdle having no nonsense about her in such matters) a flight from Fact, it follows that the substance of his contemplation of that spot on the Wye must be the representation of a *false consciousness.* The alternative, to which, however, both the poem and reason persuade us, is to suppose that it is the critic's own enterprise that is misconceived.

Whether or not Marjorie Levinson's assumptions and their dissociative and reductive manifestations are attributable to an unresolved Marxist hankering, or to 'deconstruction', or, as seems likely, to both, the significant issue, in terms of this enquiry, is that her essay, even when it would appear to be most at odds with the explicit dogmas of that latter philosophy, shares their reliance on the existence of absolute entities. It is therefore compatible with the psychology—one might call it totalizing—which this dependence symptomatizes. One might say that Derrida's notion of there being nothing outside the text is one half of an eggshell, and that her idea that the fundamental meaning, as it were the soul, of a poem, lies not within itself but in a 'history' which it both excludes and sublimates,

is the other half; and that between them they make an empty whole. Precisely in a text written under the almost-palpable influence of 'deconstruction', 'deconstruction's' much-anathematize *transcendental signified* returns in the most uncompromising form, in the shape of Jeremy Bentham, who again comes bearing in one hand imagination or the 'reflexive consciousness', and in the other, his and this critic's treasure of the heart, the 'social consciousness'.[37] It was perhaps inevitable that the intended overthrow of the Author and the *opening* of literature should have resulted, as revolutions invariably result, in the formulation of an absolutism more comprehensive than the one previously abhorred—an absolutism, in the first instance, concocted from shreds and mere implications by Derrida and Barthes and then hoisted up for execution in the vestments of 'a single 'theological' meaning'; from which regal scarecrow the stuffing has been dragged to all quarters and absorbed into the arcane world of literary theory. Thus artifice has created nature; and the paper innards of a despot who never reigned in poems or novels have assumed, if not life, then automation, in the writings of those who subscribe to the notion of art for theory's sake. What in Ilona Bell's essay on Donne was a simple underlying assumption which might have been grist to the 'deconstructive' mill for the manufacture and shredding of omnipotent father-figures, has become in this later and intellectually much more sophisticated piece on Wordsworth, which imagines itself to be building on the unpeopled landscape of 'deconstruction', a series of explicit and absolutizing enunciations. But the life of works of literature, like the lives of human subjects, derives from their being a mid-term, at once a reflection and an oracle, both the hidden and the revealed; and nature, seen as stripped of the duality that enlivens her, must be rendered to the mind either as pure autonomy, 'deconstruction's' self-entire textuality, or as absolute exteriority, this critic's self-confessed sense of a determinative 'immutable fact'.[38] Since, however, it has been demonstrated that the notion of such an objectivity cannot bear examination, there should be no surprise at its being dragooned into what amounts on her part to an almost insolent *sub*jectiveness, as though the empirical world should have inverted itself into rationalistic world-building pure and simple:

> ... the green lawns, that figure in the poem as an image of psychic and material well being, are the miserable product of an economic fact and its charged history, as are the attractively, 'sportively' sprinkled lines of hedges, another emblem of enclosure. We can assume, I think, that the meaning of those hedgerows was available to Wordsworth.[39]

What we can assume, it seems to me, is that this critic believes that meaning as it is deduced by her to exist is quite simply meaning in itself; and that not only Wordsworth but also the contemporary reader ought to be docile to the fact. The 'meaning' which she imagines she has grasped like a safely landed fish, struggling perhaps, but indubitably *there* from the waters of history, is nonetheless a phantasm, the ghost of a machine. It expresses not nature or human events but merely her own doctrinaire thesis that the poem she examines is about everything and anything other than what in it its author seeks to evoke and explore—from which it follows that not only the Facts but also the Meaning of *Tintern Abbey* are constituted in the exegesis of the commentator herself. Thus the poet is both 'dead' in the Barthesian sense, and an absolute negative presence, a demon of sorts, which creates, as it were, the work from refusals, or from what she terms the 'sublimation of oversight to insight'.[40] With these postulates to hand, the critic is able to burn the candle at both ends, and simultaneously to lumber onto the poem in the author's absence the material she avows as its true content, whilst summoning him from the shades to impute to him the blame for excluding that 'history' for whose exhumation she would claim the credit. Nonetheless, her undertaking represents not so much boldness as confusion. For just as it is impossible to apprise oneself of the world of objects in its objectivity, or to attain to a 'massive imagination' and 'penetrating vision' on the basis of nostalgia and a 'safer investment', so, too, does it involve a certain sleight of hand to suppose that poetry can be *both* a blue-print of authorial consciousness, a 'biography' saturated with intentions either positive or negative, *and* so utterly a tissue of subterfuges as to invite critical intervention for the reconstructing of its truth. In Marjorie Levinson's view of things, the negative but still personal and 'available' will of the poet, and the operational evasiveness of *Tintern Abbey*, are of course susceptible of interpretation into a formula-version of reality superior to the poem itself in point of truthfulness, and almost, it would seem, of virtue; but this stance is not without its problems. To adduce as the substantiation of Wordsworth's avoidance of an 'impossible reality'[41] the biographico-historical luggage which in the essay in question all but obliterates the poem, is to reveal the critic's faith in an assumption which involves her in some uneasy shifting between concepts of the conscious and the unconscious mind. This assumption, expressed in the whole tenor of her enterprise, is that not only is the integrity of the work of art a mere *mystification*,[40] but that the negatively blue-printing mind, the consciousness of the poet, is

something distinct from the poem and able to be deduced from an exterior (postulated) reality. Hence, in the absence of

> ... a conscious act of reconstruction—of the place and the person more—one must take Wordsworth's impression at face value;[43]

or, as she puts it, one must 'swallow the poem whole'.[44]

Such are the possibilities available to those readers unsophisticated enough to begin to doubt the wisdom of the critical practice of Marjorie Levinson. The absolutizing impulse capable of envisaging 'immutable fact' likewise descries only two mutually exclusive responses to the poem: that of total control ('in the day ye eat thereof ... ye shall be as gods'),[45] or a total absence of enquiry; that of Wordsworth's interrogator herself, or of a buffoon. The confidence, however, is misplaced. It supposes, firstly, that the 'conscious act of reconstruction' will give 'the place and the person' as Fact, (which impossibility has already been dealt with); and secondly, that this 'conscious act' is capable of translating into its own terms a mind whose only objective existence for the contemporary reader is in the poems which proceeded from it and represent it now. The representation, however, is not a copy, but a thing also in its own right: 'the person', the mind, conscious and unconscious, which created it, are gone. This critic, however, is debarred by her lights from recognizing that 'the material' which the poem 'so consummately sublimes' is the poem itself; and anything else, biography, history, or even 'immutable fact', a participant in those actions of the imagination which she flatters herself to have overleapt.[46] Thus, for the prosecution of her enterprise, she invokes the 'apparatus' (supposedly recommended in the poem) whereby the author's perceptions are 'preconsciously processed', with the effect that

> ... the unthinkable, ideology-refusing suggestiveness of the world is expunged unconsciously, leaving the individual's confidence in the disinterested holism of his knowledge intact;[47]

so that it then becomes the critic's business to know and to make known this exterior and non-poetically immanent unconscious mind.

Let us not pursue here the fact that the project of making the unconscious an item of intellectual awareness is foredoomed in that through it the seizure of what one covets entails that very object's escape: rather as Midas could touch neither food nor drink nor his daughter, without their becoming the stuff of his ego's craving, so one can attain not the unconscious in its integrity, but only more and more consciousness, more and more notional formulations, from that entity

which in itself cannot be rendered as statement, knowledge, and light. That is a more general point, though pertinent here. Specifically, however, my objection to this critic's sense of the mind and of poetry is twofold.

In the first place, Marjorie Levinson conceives of the unconscious as a biographical and even a biological entity. For her, that unconscious is not manifest in the poem except as an absence; and the hallmark of her investigation of *Tintern Abbey* is the viewing of that work as a sublime conglomerate of symptoms of 'the material', the mind and history, presumably more real than the verse, which lie beyond it and precede it. This approach places her in the bind of relying absolutely for the vindication of her sense of consciousness and of the poem upon an objective reality which, in the terms whereunder she contemplates it, can never be shown to exist. Thus, like a dog biting its own tail, are empiricism and rationalism confounded together: an unconscious which is deduced as an hypothesis from the poem, is unable to be established and recovered from *outside* the poem; for its origins *as poetry* determine that it can exist and be apprehended either within and as the verse, or not at all. Otherwise, it would have to constitute itself as a physical entity. Hence, near the end of her essay, the critic, as if this difficulty did not exist, speaks of the poet's 'response'[48] to 'reality'; thereby showing that she is at least consistent in her preconceptions; but also demonstrating in a succinct form the deterministic and utilitarian allegiances that her essay proclaims from its outset. The real is *there*, absolute, monolithic, and formulable: it is the thing to which poets *respond*; their art thus evincing itself as a perhaps especially intriguing and even 'beautiful' instance of the ungainsayably decorative and secondary. This, one is bound to reply, is Philistinism—Philistinism elaborated and become fastidious in exegetical subtleties, but Philistinism all the same: one which, in the typical manner of that compulsion, seeks to disguise its contempt for the nature of art beneath the garments of that most gapingly stupid of idols, the social consciousness. To view poetry as an object without an integrity of its own, a formula to be decoded and thus 'understood', is to enact a complicity, and a succumbing, in the project of blank oblivion whereby our civilisation would cut itself adrift from the needful rediscovery of Lawrence's 'man in his wholeness wholly attending',[49] the neglect of which is the constant reproach of our ambition for uninhibited progress. Marjorie Levinson's allegiance, when all is said and done, is to the Enlightenment; and one might say that it is in response to his own

sense of the Enlightenment and its unhappy effects on human life and knowledge that Wordsworth asks

> ... For was it meant
> That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
> Forever dimly pore on things minute,
> On solitary objects, still beheld
> In disconnection, dead and spiritless,
> And still dividing, and dividing still,
> Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
> With our unnatural toil, while littleness
> May yet become more little, waging thus
> An impious warfare with the very life
> Of our own souls? Or was it ever meant
> That this majestic imagery, the clouds,
> The ocean, and the firmament of heaven,
> Should be a barren picture on the mind?[50]

To Marjorie Levinson, 'the picture of the mind' proffered in verse, in not being at once and identically 'the picture of the place', must, according to what she holds most sacred, inevitably be this same Lockean 'barren picture on the mind'. For now, *il n'y a* que *le hors-texte.* However, *Tintern Abbey,* I would propose, invites us to a different view.

There is also a second objection to this critic's outlook on poetry and on consciousness; and it is closely related to the first. Her analysis has brought us not an inch closer to Wordsworth, but merely to the possible, and perverse, applications of 'literary theory'. One is led to conclude that in fact she does not believe in the unconscious she postulates; that it is a mere means to an end, being introduced as a kind of recruit to a production-team for the furtherance of her project of conceptual engineering. The unconscious mind can only be symbolized in an image, its workings evoked in a metaphor: it cannot be enunciated in a formula; but in Marjorie Levinson's account of the representation of that mind's by-products in a poem, metaphorical thought is actually pressed into the service of such an attempted enunciation. Thus, the thing from which *Tintern Abbey* is fabricated is a 'mechanism' or an 'apparatus' that cleanses 'incoming data' of 'conflictual particulars': the subjection of the imagination to the ratiocinative ego's projection of itself as machine and as process could hardly attain a more explicit characterization. The unconscious which Wordsworth's investigator claims to acknowledge thus sits very uneasily with the terms in which she habitually thinks; and one's

reservations as to its authenticity are confirmed in the realization that any deep sense in her of its operations would bring her naturally to envisage the poem as the embodiment of that unconscious, rather than as the effect of an exterior unconscious posited from the *conscious* mind of the critic herself. It is not a simple case, here, of her using the poem to confirm the reality of an unconscious already believed in: instead, her commitment both to such an unconscious and to poetry is token inasmuch as she assumes that the two can be formulated in terms of their rationally-apprehended 'components'; and that such a formulation attains a closer union with 'history' and 'reality', and indeed with Wordsworth's mind, than the poet's own verse is capable of attaining. Her delineation of the unconscious, in the very terms in which she would clinch that entity, in fact imputes to Wordsworth a species of over-consciousness; or at least a pervasive *will* (and what is mechanical force and efficacy but an application of the conscious will?) to repress his own supposed mirror-like reception of the real, an *intention* not to imprint as poetry on a page the Facts imprinted on his mind: the unconscious is simply not there. This recognition is deepened when one recalls that after all it is scarcely possible, despite the critic's seeming belief to the contrary, *both* to apprehend in its fullness the 'available' or immanent 'meaning' of a circumstance, (as Wordsworth is alleged to have done in respect of those hedgerows), *and* unconsciously to efface that 'meaning' from apprehension: if the erasure is unconscious, it is so only because the impression caused by that availability and immanence was *not* such as fully to possess the mind of the observer—in which case the availability was never so 'available', never such a whore; and the immanence not nearly so irresistible. If on the other hand it is argued that the repression of this discomfittingly 'available' knowledge is *conscious*, one immediately embarks upon the absurdity of contemplating the mind's refusal to recognize what purportedly it cannot but admit to recognition: yet given the impossibility of Fact's being at once fully immanent to awareness and susceptible of unconscious erasure, this would seem, saving the abandonment of that all-powerful 'reality', to be the only course open to Marjorie Levinson. Her recourse to the unconscious in which she has no credence and which she is powerless to depict, is therefore, one understands, obligatory. Only through its invocation could she continue to predicate those meaning-enforcing Facts upon which her thesis depends; and only by means of its efficacy in *processing*, shredding as it were, 'incoming data', could Wordsworth's ability to disregard

what he regarded be contrived into feasibility. The critic's *installation* of the unconscious in her essay and in Wordsworth remains, therefore, an effect of Reason: her notion of its workings is determined in all senses by her real allegiance to the conscious and to conscious intentions. It is therefore unsurprising—though one wonders now what has become of the poet's 'apparatus' which unconsciously 'so consummately sublimes' the Real—to read that in her view

> ... the narrative project of 'Tintern Abbey' is to intentionalize matter, and matter of fact.[51]

This is quite of a piece with her earlier attribution to the poet of 'the exercise of a selective blindness', or with her idea of his 'pastoral prospect' being 'artfully assembled by acts of exclusion'—a compositional *modus operandi* which she describes as 'this production protocol'.[52] Wordsworth's overseer is, consequently, able to 'forgive' the author of *Tintern Abbey* his 'response' to history ('if such things need forgiving'),[53] precisely because her preconceptions as to factuality, consciousness and intention afford her the luxury of holding him responsible for it, and of doing so absolutely.

The developments in the practice of criticism which this essay has sought to trace would therefore suggest that the endeavour to eliminate from discourse the reality of the author is one whose logical outcome is the attempt to be rid also of the work—to colonise it, as it were, through the mandate of extrinsic suppositions, in order that commentators may seem to confer on themselves from the Tree of Knowledge what they are denied from the Tree of Life. In this scheme of things, criticism becomes not so much a means of influencing taste, defining value, and exploring the relations between a work of art and the life and mind of its time, as an implement for the vindication of one form or another of radical idealism. Thus an author may unfailingly be discovered to be in dereliction of a supposed duty to the imperatives in vogue, and his work will offer itself as an interesting, or even charming, but nonetheless damnable, instance of subservience to a 'dominant interest'; or endorsement of a 'hierarchy of values'; or failure to take the *de rigeur* stance as to that thing which currently goes under the appellation of 'gender relations'. In short, he has not produced the poem or novel desired, but unable to be imagined, by the critic. This is surely an intellectual and moral dead end—one to which the efflorescence of the critical function, and in particular the pursuit of the self-sufficiency of what is after all only exegesis, bear abundant and (one must add) unremitting witness.

The hiatus in literary sensibility—an hiatus which correspondingly evinces itself in all branches of humane thought—represented in the claims of 'deconstruction' as to meaning and subjectivity, has not, therefore, been overcome in the 'new historicism' as witnessed to by Marjorie Levinson. For what in many ways her essay reveals is the similitude of those two developments in the thinking of critics. The motto of both tendencies could well be: *A Poem is an Aporia: it is What It Is Not.* This likeness, in my view, is made only the more striking in the fact that what may seem a fundamental difference between them bespeaks the underlying sameness. Derrida offers us Chaos, but one suspended from a much-invoked transcendental signified; while Marjorie Levinson holds out Adamant, on whose underside, however, artful and socially insensitive devils are perceptibly thriving: 'deconstruction' presses on, allegedly without subject, meaning, or origin, into sheer nihilism; while the 'new historicism' enacts a regression to the pseudo-certainties afforded in scholarly externalities and biography. The link, however, is here: for in this latter tendency the author and the work become, as much as in the former, properly speaking meaningless. Whether one argues that a poem is without origin and of entirely indeterminate significance, or one avows that the same creation is a sublime falsification of a life and its history, the *stance* mutually taken toward the work's integrity is one that would endow the critic with an absolute (and hence dissolvent) purchase upon it; so that it loses, quite literally, its individuality, and is subsumed beneath a system of unmistakably totalitarian bent. The 'new historicist' critic claims to know the life of an author, and the poem is an effect of the life thus 'known': one's 'knowledge', as from the beginning of time, justifies all excesses. Furthermore, the *assumption* held in common is that by means of such a dismemberment and the exposure of a work's 'secret', one will arrive at its truth—or at the truth of its non-truth: at its negative but nonetheless deductible meaning; thereby allowing the critic both to 'forgive' the author, and to exult in the bagsful of cinders stolen from the gods' back door. This, surely, is yet another twist to the seemingly inescapable Enlightenment optimism which supposes that truth is to be got through an investigative dissection of selected parts which will yield a formulation as to the nature of the whole—the optimism whereby, paradoxically, we 'break down all grandeur' and wage from different trenches in the rationalistic landscape 'an impious warfare with the very life Of our own souls'.

The great divide in modern consciousness, surely, may be said to

open on the question of the subject. The Enlightenment assumes that it exists, and that it may be known in the terms of intellection; from which it follows, logically and as an actual historical development, that it possesses no radical integrity, and may be dispensed with—liquidated as it were, into *infinite interpretability*, or flung into the abyss of the demonic non-empirical. On the other hand, what for the sake of brevity I will call an older and still-persistent Catholic consciousness (I am not referring here to belief in the dogmas of the Church) conceives of subjectivity or selfhood in terms of a final unknowability, and thus contemplates the individual as in some degree inviolate. The Age of Reason posits that the subject sees the world through the activity of cognition; and it is the *cogito* thus formulated which affirms to the individual, circularly as it were, that the awareness of its own motions is what provides to him the evidence of his existence. The *cogito*, then, tends strongly towards absoluteness: the subject is defined in terms of his consciousness of himself as subject; which fragile condition, historically speaking, has served to lead Western man from one to another of those crises of dispersal and immobility, of Reason become radical un-reason, of which the first is the French Revolution. The tendency which with some licence I have called Catholic, while touched by this chafing dialectic, is nonetheless not bound to it; since what it discovers is that both individuality and the integrity of the self depend for their sustenance upon relational contingencies; and correspondingly, that the subject is at once a condition and a fruit of the imagination whereby he envisages the world. Thus, Shakespeare's Cleopatra on Antony:

> But if there be, or ever were, one such,
> It's past the size of dreaming: nature wants stuff
> To vie strange forms with fancy; yet, to imagine
> An Antony, were nature's piece 'gainst fancy,
> Condemning shadows quite.
>
> (*Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii)

Such might be called the belief of poets. That it is not merely a dramatist's portrayal of the overwrought mind of a grief-stricken woman is suggested in Thomas Hardy's notes on style of January 1881, in which he observes the value of

> ... the Wordsworthian dictum (the more perfectly the natural object is reproduced, the more truly poetic the picture.) This reproduction is achieved by seeing *into the heart of a thing* (as rain, wind, for instance) and is realism, in fact, though through being pursued by means of the imagination it is confounded with invention, which is pursued by the

> same means. It is, in short, reached by what M. Arnold calls 'the imaginative reason'.[54]

It is this same 'imaginative reason' which both casts into relief the respective inadequacies of 'deconstruction' and the 'new historicism', and proffers itself through its works as a truer representative of the true. I have already suggested how, in the case of Wordsworth, it is the poet's own thinking as to perception and integrity that propounds the most convincing answer to the sense of his work held by Marjorie Levinson: to those of her persuasion, however, those lines from the earlier version of *The Ruined Cottage* would signify merely another more or less subtle case of evasion or special pleading; to which objection there is perhaps no better answer than to observe that as one judges, so one shall be judged. Moreover, the 'imaginative reason' is a figure of the self in its entirety; and rational thought is not the closed demesne of the naked or the exotically inverted forms of rationalism. Therefore if, as one would want to accept, we perceive the world by means of representations or signs, the fact that a *means* is involved signifies both that the representation is something other than the object perceived—that the *means* in question is to a certain degree autonomous from the thing apprehended—and that this representation is also a representation of something that has an objective existence beyond the one it is given by means of that sign. Precisely because our perception of things is *not* of those things in their essence ('for now we see through a glass, darkly'),[55] but rather through the medium of signs (which are themselves both objects and representations), a doer is required: not only does the imagination mould or leaven or make fictional, so to speak, the world which it takes to itself, it actually cannot but do so. Johan Huizinga expresses the matter in this way:

> Every event (even the very simplest fact) conceived by the faculty of historical cognition presumes an arranging of the material of the past, a combining of a number of data out of the chaos of reality into a mental image.[56]

It may therefore be said that as subjects we see nothing, but rather recognize what we see, re-forming the objects of sight in the imagination. The signified is neither entirely different from the signifier, nor identical with it. In the strictest of senses, to say that we perceive is fictional; for instead, we apprehend or take things to us: we apperceive, and in the workings of imaginative representation, perception becomes truly apperception; which faculty belongs to author and to reader alike. For as Hardy has it, and as the ambiguous

syntax of his final clause here, which invokes both reader and writer, suggestively avers:

> ... [t]he appreciative, perspicacious reader will ... by affording full scope to his insight, catch the vision which the writer has in his eye, and is endeavouring to project upon the paper, even while it half eludes him.[57]

To 'catch the vision' of another consciousness by means of 'insight' is an undertaking as repugnant to the principles of rationalism as it is to the empiricist view of the world. Precisely in this, however, it is the beginning of that bargain or pact with 'the devil's party' without which the project of empiricisms both old and new to regard insight as the mere oversight of themselves must continue to collude with the hostility of rationalism to art.

Notes

1 For a detailed investigation of this problem, see 'Est-ce Qu'il y a de Hors-Texte?—on a Defence of Derrida', by Charles R. Pigden in *The Critical Review* 30 (1990): 40–62, and especially the discussion of perception and representation on p.54, to which these observations are indebted.

2 Edmund Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, 2 vols, London, 1899.

3 Ilona Bell, 'Donne's Love Letters to Ann More', in Claude L. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, eds, The *Eagle and the Dove: Reassessing John Donne*, Columbia, 1986, p.47.

4 Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image-Music-Text*, selected and trans. Stephen Heath, London, 1977, p.142ff.

5 See his *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak, Baltimore and London, 1976, p.158, for the formulation of this idea.

6 Derrida, p.158.

7 This notion is recurrent in Derrida's works in both implicit and explicit forms. For one of its clearer expositions, see his *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison, Evanston, 1973, p.147.

8 Derrida, p.158.

9 See J. Hillis Miller, 'The Critic as Host', in David Lodge, ed., *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, London, 1988, p.278ff, for an exemplification of how this doctrine may be employed to avoid engaging with an objection, and of how it is dialectically dependent on the opposite notion of a 'univocal reading'.

10 See David Parker, 'Evaluative Discourse and the Return of the Repressed', in *The Critical Review* 31 (1991): 3ff, for an ample resumé of the writings of contemporary moral philosophers and critics on matters arising from the 'deconstructive' critique of subjectivity, including the inconsistencies and self-refutations inherent in that critique.

11 Barthes, p.146.

12 'A novel is like the bow of a violin; and the body of the instrument, *that which renders the sounds*, is the soul of the reader' (my translation). Quoted from Stendhal's *La Vie de Henri Brulard*, in Martin Turnell, *The Novel in France*,

London, 1950, p.6, where it features in the author's discussion of art and sensibility.

13 Christopher Hampton, *The Ideology of the Text*, Milton Keynes and Philadelphia, 1990, p.26.

14 See Richard Freadman and Seamus Miller, *Re-thinking Theory: A Critique of Contemporary Literary Theory and an Alternative Account*, Cambridge, 1992, for a discussion of the relationship between the 'new historicism' and other movements in critical thinking, especially 'deconstruction'. Chapter 6 is particularly relevant; and in terms of the matters I intend to pursue here, the following is apposite:

> New Historicism's injunction to methodological self-consciousness, and its insistence upon the (power influenced) positionality of the critic does not in fact extend ... to *radical questioning of the critic's capacity to recover the contexts of literature's embeddedness*. (p.187, my italics).

15 Marjorie Levinson, 'Introduction' to her *Wordsworth's Great Poems: Four Essays*, Cambridge, 1986, p.1.

16 Levinson, 'Insight and Oversight: reading 'Tintern Abbey', *Wordsworth's Great Poems: Four Essays*, pp.14, 15, and 24. The author's debt to 'deconstruction' is not, of course, merely the outcome of something like an historical or psychological inevitability manifesting itself in her writing. She wishes very plainly to come to terms with that movement, both because, as she rightly observes, 'one cannot unknow Derrida' ('Introduction', p.11) and also because she aspires to turn 'deconstruction' to her own ends—to use, as she herself puts it, 'the devices of deconstruction to materialize a greatly idealized corpus; or, to locate the body in Wordsworth's poetry'. (Introduction', p.13) The question is, however, whether this body will be alive or dead.

17 Levinson, p.17.

18 Levinson, p.24.

19 Levinson, p.36.

20 Levinson, p.40.

21 Levinson, p.40.

22 Levinson, p.42.

23 From Latin, *facere*, 'to do', whose supine or neuter past participle *factum* also served as the noun for 'fact', and from which our 'fact' is obviously derived. The rather abstract sense of 'fact' is perhaps a consequence of its coming into English as a Latinism of scholars; whereas the more concrete 'feat', its older synonym, entered the language from Norman French, and originally meant simply a 'deed'. 'Feat' was the past participle of the Norman verb for 'to do' or 'to make'. Modern Romance languages continue to link 'to do' or 'to make' with 'fact' by employing the past participle of the verb also as a noun: thus Italian, *fare*, with *fatto* as 'done', 'made' and 'fact'; Catalan *fer* with *fet* in the same case; Spanish *hacer* with *hecho*; Occitan *faire* with *fach*; Galician *facer* with *feito*; Portuguese *fazer* with *feito*; French *faire* with *fait*; and Romanian *a face* constituting the only exception to the norm by using the older infinitive *facere* as a noun to mean a 'deed' and distinguishing the past participle *facut* from the noun for 'fact', *fapt*.

24 T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, London, 1951, p.288.

25 Levinson, p.36.

26 Levinson, p.39.

27 Levinson, pp.24–5.

28 Levinson, p.32.
29 Levinson, p.47.
30 Levinson, p.50.
31 Levinson, p.57.
32 Levinson, p.47.
33 From Latin, *fingere*, 'to mould' (and the later secondary meanings 'to form mentally or in speech', and 'to represent in thought'.) Our sense of 'fiction' plainly corresponds to the later sense of the verb, but it is not independent of the basic one.
34 Even Dada depends on the recognition of fact, which the mind, or more properly the will, of the artist then organizes into disorganization, thereby creating the illusion of a complete autonomy from the objective world.
35 Levinson, p.34.
36 Levinson, p.37.
37 Levinson, pp.56, 57.
38 Levinson, p.39.
39 Levinson, p.42.
40 Levinson, p.48.
41 Levinson, p.55.
42 See, for example, the last paragraph of p.17; the penultimate paragraph of p.45; and the second paragraph of p.56.
43 Levinson, p.56.
44 Levinson, p.56.
45 Genesis 3:5, Authorized Version
46 'Literature is collapsed into documentation'. This is a succinct statement of one of the main objections brought against the 'new historicism' in an essay whose concerns are somewhat distinct from those raised here: see Richard Freadman, 'Powers and Limitations: Stephen Greenblatt and the New Historicism' in *The Critical Review* 31 (1991): 92–102.
47 Levinson, p.50.
48 Levinson, p.55.
49 From D.H. Lawrence's poem 'Thought' in *The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence*, eds Vivian de Sola Pinto and Warren Roberts, 2 vols., New York, 19 64, p.673.
50 Wordsworth, from MS. B of 'The Ruined Cottage' (discarded conclusion); in *The Oxford Authors: William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill, Oxford,1989, p.679 (ll. 58–72).
51 Levinson, p.51.
52 Levinson, p.51.
53 Levinson, p.55.
54 Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. M. Millgate, London, 1984, p.151.
55 I Corinthians, 13; 12, Authorised Version.
56 Johan Huizinga, *Men and Ideas: History, The Middle Ages, The Renaissance*, London, 1960, p.58.
57 Thomas Hardy, 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction', in H. Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, London, 1967, p.117.