

RENAISSANCE MNEMONICS, POSTSTRUCTURALISM, AND
THE RHETORIC OF HYPERTEXT COMPOSITION

By

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In memory of my father, Gerald Smyth,
who was dying while I wrote this,
who died before I finished.

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This dissertation provides a prolegomenon for a rhetoric of hypertext composition derived from the Renaissance Art of Memory as well as the poststructural concept of the rhizome. Institutional inertia has prohibited the advent of a fully realized electronic rhetoric, and one can view the effects of this inertia in the "residual literacy" of recent computer interface designs and hypertext documents. The goal is to maximize the mnemonic efficiency of hypertext as a medium of information storage and retrieval. In order to do so, I establish an historical analogy bridging the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. Study of the sixteenth century as a period of transition in mnemonic practices can help to negotiate our current moment of transition from an apparatus of print literacy to an apparatus of electronic literacy. Adopting the theoretical position of grammatology, which recognizes the

dynamic interaction between technologies of communication and the institutional practices determining their use in specific circumstances, I point to the shift in mnemonics that occurs during the sixteenth century as being caused by changes in the primary technology of communication and in pedagogical practices, and I suggest that the advent of electronic media will usher in another change in mnemonics, or strategies of information storage and retrieval. Edmund Spenser is a case in point; his poems are shown to reveal his employment of both the ancient oral mnemonic of the memory palace and the emergent literate mnemonic of print. Prosopopoeia, I argue, is a trope which theoretically organizes the experience of print literacy and which provides an illusory sense of control over language. The ideology of depth that results displaces a surface-oriented understanding of language and meaning, which is returning with the renewed emphasis on allegory in literary theory. The historical study of Spenser and sixteenth century mnemonic practices, therefore, is motivated by a desire to learn from them a methodological groundwork for composing in hypertext, a three-dimensional medium which promises to revolutionize a reader's relationship to textuality as long as a uniquely electronic rhetoric, suited to the peculiar characteristics of the medium, governs writing with this new tool of communication.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the primary responsibility of English departments in higher education, in terms of general education (or "core") requirements, calls for the teaching of composition and rhetoric (i.e. of writing skills) to freshman students. Beyond this fundamental role, instructors are then charged with introducing to their students "literature," which at one time encompassed the canonical classics (or "works") of primarily English and American authors but which now has opened up to include noncanonical "texts," including post-colonial, pop cultural, and feminist writings. Students studying in these courses are usually required to write interpretive essays that demonstrate a high degree of literacy—that is, the ability to read carefully the text they interpret and then to write skillfully a clear and persuasive argument supporting their position. Some of these students choose to major in English, for various reasons: to be public school teachers, to be future law students, to be corporate wizards (given the well-rounded education a major in English provides), or, perhaps, to be English professors.

Such instruction, limited as it is to the precepts of literacy, was fine prior to the age of electronics, but it is not any longer. The advent of new media such as video and hypermedia poses problems for those working in the humanities, namely the problems of reading and writing with these media and of teaching students to do the same. The filmic and multi-media qualities of these electronic technologies offer multiple tracks for a denser,

richer information space. With talk of fusing the telephone, the television and the computer into a single communication medium which will someday be wired to a data superhighway, the necessity to embrace such compositional problematics becomes more apparent. Already, the new software MOSAIC, a tool for browsing the World-Wide Web which provides hypermedia links to visual and audio information as well as plain text, is encouraging a hypertextual form of composition within the Internet itself. My work focuses on the practical and theoretical problems involved in the invention of an electronic rhetoric suited to such a hypertextual method of writing.

The dominance of the entertainment industry's appropriation of electronic technologies, as witnessed in the hegemonic presence of television and video games, indicates the reluctance of the educational institution to appropriate these technologies for pedagogical purposes. Such appropriation is necessary because book reading has become less and less prevalent and will continue to diminish as the presence of consumer electronics becomes more pervasive. Haste is necessary, given the speed of the changes that are occurring and the degree to which English departments lag behind in responding to the challenge. By adapting to the present reality of this transitional shift, instructors concerned about preparing students to be critical readers and effective writers of the electronic texts they will most likely be encountering in their lives will help to bring about a pedagogy of electronic rhetoric.

Historians of rhetoric tell of how rhetoric [originally the "art of speaking," the curriculum which a future *rhetor* (Greek), or *orator* (Latin), or public speaker would undergo], so prominent at certain points in time, was subordinated to the emergent scientific paradigm of the seventeenth century, with its emphasis upon clarity and the transparent usage of language. As

Walter Ong writes, those residual oral practices present for millenia after the advent of alphabetic literacy eventually succumbed to full-blown literate practices in the centuries following the emergence of the printing press as "hearing dominance yields to sight-dominance":

Today, when curricula list rhetoric as a subject, it usually means simply the study of how to write effectively. But no one ever consciously launched a program to give this new direction to rhetoric: the "art" simply followed the drift of consciousness away from an oral to a writing economy. (*Orality and Literacy* 116-117)

This "drift" shows itself most prominently in contemporary rhetorician Chaim Perelman's Theory of Argumentation, which only considers the first three of the five parts of rhetoric, "because he believed they [*memoria* and *actio*] were not suited to a culture like ours, where discourses circulate all through the printed word" (Barilli 105).

Barilli's comments directly following this statement are telling, given my earlier description of the new technologies that will affect the twenty-first century English department:

But today this limitation [of rhetoric to the first three parts] is not at all necessary. When Perelman was trained in the 1940s and 1950s, he could not take into account the influence of new technologies such as the tape recorder and television—tools that made possible the rediscovery of the importance of pronunciation and gestures. . . . (105)

Barilli ends his contemporary history of rhetoric with a call for a new rhetoric, one that takes into consideration the responsibilities that the electronic technologies require of us: "In short, there are enough reasons to rewrite an *Institutio* for our time as comprehensive as Quintilian's, and one in which special care should be given to all the classical parts of rhetoric,

overlooking none of them" (129).¹ Recognizing the presence of technologies of communication that augment mere printed textuality, Barilli's call for an *Institutio* is directed to English departments, which have traditionally been responsible for instruction in rhetorical practices. Ong, too, writing earlier than Barilli, believes that the "'literate orality' of the secondary oral culture induced by radio and television awaits in-depth study" (*Orality and Literacy* 160). The goal of this dissertation will be to attempt to define where such a rhetoric might begin to seek its rules.

Taking Barilli's dictum into account, one point of departure would be the beginning itself—the Greek era—not in terms, however, of the history of rhetoric but in terms of the history of orality. Eric Havelock's *The Muse Learns to Write*, which offers a "special theory" of Greek orality, tells of the important "formula" that he derived from biologist Ernst Mayr's *Animal Species and Evolution*. Mayr spoke of cultural evolution as being equivalent to genetic evolution, which progressed by means of genetically stored information. Havelock focuses on the "key element in Mayr's account," determining this to be the "role played by the accumulation of information and its storage for re-use in human language" (55). This prompts Havelock to ask, "How can orality store its information for re-use? How can it preserve its

¹In "The Old Rhetoric: An Aide-Mémoire," Roland Barthes also calls for a new rhetoric: "At the source—or on the horizon—of this seminar, as always, there was the modern text, *i.e. the text which does not yet exist*. One way to approach this new text is to find out from what point of departure, and in opposition to what, it seeks to come into being, and in this way to confront the new semiotics of writing with the classical practice of literary language, which for centuries was known as Rhetoric. Whence the notion of a seminar on the old Rhetoric: *old* does not mean that there is a new Rhetoric today; rather *old Rhetoric* is set in opposition to that *new* which may not yet have come into being: the world is incredibly full of old Rhetoric" (11). While Barthes may not necessarily be referring to the new rhetoric as a specifically electronic rhetoric, his purpose in offering a seminar on "the old Rhetoric" is to prepare, as he terms it, a "point of departure" for the new Rhetoric which, according to Barilli, will be a rhetoric that incorporates electronic writing.

identity?" (56). Much of Havelock's and Ong's work sets out to answer these questions.

In digressing to consider Greek orality, we return to the notion of rhetoric in a narrower sense than normally considered but one which derives from Havelock's work on orality: namely, rhetoric as the storage of information for the purpose of subsequent retrieval. This sense is justified not only by the anachronistic conception of Homer as an "oral encyclopedia" (Havelock 57), but also by the notion of the *loci communes*, the commonplaces, in which arguments were *stored* and could be found (via *inventio*, which means "to come upon" in Latin) to develop a speech (Ong, *Orality and Literacy* 110; Barthes, "The Old Rhetoric" 64-71). Indeed, even Winifred Bryan Horner, a contemporary rhetorician and author of the composition textbook *Rhetoric in the Classical Tradition*, conceives of rhetoric as information storage and retrieval, taking into account contemporary forms of cultural *memoria*: "As the classical rhetoricians devised ways to store and retrieve information from the human memory, the modern rhetorician must also consider ways to retrieve information from books, libraries, and computers" (339). Horner acknowledges that the printed book—deriving ultimately from the alphabetic literacy of the Greeks—is a form of information storage. Part of our task as English instructors, as mentioned above, is to teach students how to retrieve information from its source in the books and the place where books are stored, libraries.

Computers now, as Horner also acknowledges, are quickly becoming tools for information storage and retrieval, but their effectiveness has been limited by literate "book" strategies of storage (with the use of the list, the index, the "table" of contents, the menu, the desktop). Such limitations impose unnecessary restrictions upon the storage potential of electronic

media. Applying a literate mode of consciousness to the use of computers, however, is to be expected in this period of transition from an alphabetic apparatus to an electronic apparatus. After all, Ong locates what he calls "residual orality" within Western civilization from Greek tragedy up to the Age of Romanticism, the time when he sees the transition to full-blown literate consciousness as being completed (*Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* 294-295). But the transition period from an alphabetic to an electronic apparatus within the educational institution need not take so long if we work from an analogy of our present moment to these past moments of technological breakthrough. Despite the newness of the electronic apparatus, traditions exist within classical rhetoric as well as Medieval and Early Modern textual production that will offer models for writing within the "writing spaces" of electronic media.

One such tradition can be found in the Art of Memory. The highly visual nature of the Art of Memory, in the various ways that it was practiced from the time of antiquity to the sixteenth century, is well-suited to the new technology of hypermedia, with its capacity for graphics, animation, and even quicktime video.² With the proliferation of video cameras and VCRs on the one hand and flat-bed scanners and quick-time desktop video on the other, the writing with images that teachers and scholars abandoned with the forsaken art of building memory palaces has returned with a vengeance. What was once considered science fiction in 1984 in the fiction of William Gibson is now being theorized by cyberspace architects.³ One scholar writes of the potential of drawing upon this earlier tradition of the Art of Memory:

² In his video entitled *Virtual Play: The Double-Direct Monkey Wrench in Black's Machinery* (1984), Steve Fagin acknowledges the potential of using the Art of Memory by directly alluding to the memory palace. For an interview with Fagin, see Wollen, *October* 41 (1987): 75-100.

³ See Benedikt for the "first steps" of such theorization.

The practitioners of mnemonics, especially Bruno and Leibnitz, had high hopes for a universal language based on spatial, visual systems. We may realize their hopes through the displays of our computers. . . . (Nickerson 390)

My purpose in this dissertation, in part, will be to explore these traditions in order to discover the kinds of strategies available for composition in hypermedia. The presence of technologies such as hypertext and virtual reality, after all, is a challenge to current scholars in the humanities to theorize compositional strategies for storing information in these new media.

Beyond the tradition of the memory palace, which, as I will show, provides a method of organization particularly well-suited to hypertext, there is need of a theory of composition that will maximize the potential of the hypertext medium. Its characteristic of speed, its three-dimensional writing space, and its capacity to connect information in a multi-linear network all point to the philosophy of Deleuze as a foundation for this theory. If the central question of this dissertation concerns the problem of how to write in hypertext—the problem, that is, of establishing the foundation for an electronic rhetoric—then, to use the language of classical rhetoric, the tradition of the memory palace within the Art of Memory will provide instruction for *dispositio* or arrangement within a hypertext program, while Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome will provide instruction for *elocutio* or writing.

But the steps of rhetoric will have to undergo revision to accommodate the ways that compositional practice changes in an electronic medium such as hypertext. The rhetorical procedure offered and justified in this dissertation is specific to one hypertext program, Storyspace, which has characteristics unique to itself; it may not be helpful for other kinds of hypertext programs such as Intermedia, Hypercard, or the html coding that creates hypertexts

within the World-Wide Web. Storyspace allows for the fast generation of textual nodes and links to and from those nodes. This speed allows one to write as quickly as one is meant to when practicing brainstorming or *inventio*, so that the act of writing itself in Storyspace—*elocutio*, the third step—collapses into *inventio* in the process of composing. I suggest that this characteristic of Storyspace should be foregrounded in compositional pedagogy within Storyspace, such that, as one brainstorms, one is also writing. Associational nodes that occur to writers as they write ought to be generated as they occur to them and pursued either at that moment or left to be picked up at some later point. In this way the "metonymic slide" of associational logic will be privileged, and a multi-linear network of various pathways will be generated. The primary thesis that starts a composition in hypertext may be completely abandoned by the time the writer finishes, a practice that should be encouraged in hypertext but that is discouraged in traditional compositional practices confined to the tenets of print literacy.

Following the initial compositional process, a composer might then begin to seek patterns that exist among the nodes already generated for the purposes of *dispositio* or arrangement. One interesting feature of the Storyspace program is that it provides the illusion of a three-dimensional writing space, which challenges one to seek three-dimensional structures as organizational models for this process of arrangement. I suggest that the memory palace tradition within classical rhetoric can offer guidance with such an endeavor, given its three-dimensional illusion of a space that one fills with images meant to trigger one's memory. Of course, one might start with *dispositio*, conceiving of a three-dimensional structure that will govern the arrangement of the Storyspace before writing begins, as long as the

metonymic style of writing described above is not hindered by such a procedure.

The confusion of terms, the blurring of definitions, and the possibility for variable ordering of these steps demonstrate the difficulties encountered when one begins to consider rhetorical instruction in a hypertext environment such as Storyspace. My project in this dissertation constitutes an initial attempt to rectify these difficulties by taking the medium's characteristics into account as I try to identify the steps of a rhetoric that are determined by the medium itself. My proposed procedures might be considered a mode or genre of hypertext writing, in the same way that traditional rhetoric, as many teach it today, identifies actions such as definition, classification, and narration as modes or genres of expository writing. I will call this new genre of electronic rhetoric that I am attempting to invent "rhizography" so as to invoke the rhizome as its governing principle.

To arrive at that destination, however, a seemingly circuitous pathway must be taken in order to demonstrate the connections between the sixteenth century and the twentieth century. The sixteenth century saw a period of transition similar to our own, with transformations in the technologies of communication, in institutional practices (specifically in the realm of pedagogy), and in subject formation. Like the printing press, twentieth-century electronic technologies promise to transform the way texts are read, written, disseminated, valued, and taught as well as the way we conceive of our bodies, our selves, and our interaction with others. Though these latter concerns are addressed by poststructural theorists who have worked to implement such transformations, our present methods of instruction and evaluation are still based in the values of print literacy, and, while they may be slowly evolving away from such values toward a pedagogy more

appropriate to the electronic age, our discipline has been slow to respond to the challenge posed by electronic media. This dissertation is an attempt to set a foundation for remedying this state of affairs.

The theoretical framework that justifies a look to the past can be found in *grammatology*, understood very simply as the history of reading and writing practices. The *grammatologist* believes that technologies of communication, considered within particular social contexts and taking into account the institutionalized modes of utilizing these technologies, have an effect upon communication itself. Achieving an understanding of the dynamics of these components as they interact in past configurations helps the *grammatologist* with his or her primary purpose—the invention of new institutional practices that will fully engage the present technologies of communication. By finding examples of individuals who have negotiated a period of transition, the *grammatologist* can discover in these dynamics *heuristic* inspiration for such invention. A large part of this dissertation, then, focuses primarily on the sixteenth century as a transitional moment similar to our own. I believe that we can learn about our own moment and how to negotiate the present transition by examining in detail that prior analogous moment.

With this goal in mind, I start in chapter 1 to set out *grammatology* as a particular application of poststructural theory which differs from strictly deconstructive applications to literature. My task here will be to discuss *grammatology* as a term, define it as a theoretical field of study, and then situate it within Renaissance studies alongside other poststructural approaches to the period. While the first section of chapter 1 will gesture toward a definition of *grammatology*, it will be through the second and third sections, in which I will discuss the deconstructive criticism of Jonathan

Goldberg and then the new historicist work of Louis Adrian Montrose and Stephen Greenblatt, that I will more clearly define it as a term, using these two poststructural approaches to clarify what a grammatological approach to the Renaissance will be. While deconstruction and new historicism are not the only established theoretical approaches to the Renaissance, these happen to be closely akin to the tenets of grammatology.

Having worked in chapter 1 to legitimate grammatology as a viable course of study and to demonstrate its relationship to other poststructural approaches, chapter 2 takes on the problem of studying history from a grammatological perspective. Its purpose is to identify institutional changes in pedagogical practices—specifically in strategies of mnemotechniques—with the intent of better understanding the possibilities for improving our current use of electronic media. In the first part I work to resolve the orality-literacy debate by positing grammatology as a theoretical solution to the problems that deterministic histories cause. Doing so clears the way for a grammatological history of the sixteenth century in the second part, one that looks at the changing pedagogical practices and how these result in the decline of the memory palace tradition as the primary art of memory. The transition was facilitated by the effects of the printing press in conjunction with the rise of Ramism as a new, literate mnemonic system more suitable to the print technology of the day. The third part introduces a treatment of Edmund Spenser that will be further developed in the third chapter; this third part serves to show Spenser's awareness of the efficacy of the memory palace and his use of the memory palace tradition in his epic poem *The Faerie Queene*. The conclusion of the dissertation will provide an example of how I employed this knowledge of Spenser's use of the memory palace as a way of organizing a Storyspace hypertext that I authored.

Chapter 3 then performs close readings of Spenser's minor poems in order to show his employment of the soon-to-be popular format of print, which monumentalizes the once ephemeral status of mnemonics in its permanence. These poems exhibit an understanding of prosopopoeia as the tropic form that mnemonics takes in the era of print literacy, and one can see Spenser persistently reminding his patrons of this as he pressures them for funding. This treatment of Spenser's minor poems will include a detour through the poststructural theory of prosopopoeia and will end with a reading of Spenser's *Prosopopoeia, or Mother Hubberds Tale*, as Spenser's poetic manifesto that affirms his poststructural sensibility toward language. The chapter will end with a recognition of the role that depth plays in demonstrating Spenser's ambivalence toward the mnemonics of print literacy, as the privileging of depth is a direct result of alphabetic (and especially print) literacy.

Spenser's ambivalence is a direct result of his anxiety during this transitional period of shifting mnemonic systems, an anxiety which is equivalent to that being experienced today as our culture moves from the familiar mnemonics of print literacy to the now emergent mnemonics of "computeracy."⁴ Moments of transition cause anxiety, as in the transition from a chirographic to a print culture that I will describe in chapter 3, or

⁴"Computeracy" is a term I will use throughout to denote the "electronic literacy" that Richard Lanham calls for in *Revising Prose*. See especially chapter five of *Revising Prose*, entitled "Electronic Literacy." For a source of the term, see R.A. Shoaf's use of "computeracy" in "Gonzo Scholarship: Policing Electronic Journals." This special issue of *Surfaces*, an electronic journal based at the University of Montréal, publishes the proceedings of a panel held at the 1993 MLA meeting. Shoaf's essay introduces the three contributors to the panel, whose essays concern the impact of the Internet upon the profession as well as upon publishing. The essay by James O'Donnell, in Shoaf's words, works to perform the same task as this dissertation: "It is the great merit of O'Donnell's contribution that he can analogize so clearly and helpfully between the transition from literacy to computeracy and the transition from manuscripts to print literacy five hundred years ago. The analogies are extraordinarily helpful in thinking through the implications of the changes confronting us" (7).

Michael Near's description of how *Beowulf* demonstrates an anxiety for early Anglo-Saxon culture over the transition from orality to literacy. Near closes his essay with a general statement that can be applied to any transitional moment during which a new technology of communication challenges established ideological practices: "[*Beowulf*] anticipates the advent of an intruding technology that promises to undercut the psychological foundations of an entire way of life" (329). One can see a similar kind of anxiety in current perceptions of virtual reality and its potential effects upon society. Brenda Laurel writes of her investigation of virtual reality's reception by the general public, an investigation which found people perceiving the new technologies as intrusive and as a potential threat to people's psychological well-being: "The callers were convinced that VR 'providers' are dealers of a new and powerful drug, luring their hapless victims into a shadowy world of un-life" ("A VR Field Report" 17). This anxiety is also indicated in the reluctance of humanities educators to embrace the new technologies as pedagogical and scholarly tools.

One perceived advantage of the permanence of print is that it also provides the illusion that language can be controlled, and prosopopeia becomes one means for achieving this illusory power, both in the controlled representation of the voices of the dead and in the dialogue with the book that allows for hermeneutic closure. I will argue in chapter 3 that the desire to control language—a desire characteristic of some twentieth-century critical movements which claim access to a poet's intention, to the historical context alluded to in a writer's work, or to some essential meaning that can be determined by proper reading practices—begins with the era of the printed book. This desire to control language is currently being challenged, however, by the advent of electronic technologies that render the illusory permanence

of print entirely defunct. The ultimate purpose of this chapter is the identification of the main features of print literacy as they are manifest both in Spenser's texts and in the characteristics of prosopopoeia as the trope which can provide within print a manner of controlling language. An understanding of the dynamics of print literacy will better help us to understand how computeracy can and should differ.

With chapter 4 comes the move to consideration of present-day technologies of communication. The first part considers the poststructural focus on language and how this has brought about a return of allegory and its privileging of the surface, in opposition to the reign of symbol during the centuries of print literacy and its privileging of depth. Allegory is shown to be a surface phenomenon and is thus affirmed to be amenable to the emerging electronic apparatus. Various poststructural philosophers speak of surface effects, the turn to which results from a desire to find an anti-Platonic philosophy that undermines logocentrism, and Deleuze is chosen from among them as the representative theorist of electronic rhetoric. Before providing that theory of electronic rhetoric in the fifth chapter, I first explore the writing space of the computer screen as it is employed in hypertext, first tracing the history of the organizing of information in space and then asserting that, given the three-dimensional nature of hypertext programs, the mnemonic practice of building memory palaces should be remotivated in our current context. In order to minimize the hindrance of "residual literacy," in order, that is, to fully engage the communicative potential within the new electronic media, we must address hypertext as a medium with its own characteristics that differ from those of print literacy. Chapter 4 amounts to a contextualization of hypertext within the history of information storage and

retrieval and a brief analysis of book metaphors in electronic interface design as an indication of our continued investment in the methods of print literacy.

Having chosen Deleuze as the spokesman of a philosophy of the surface and of a return to allegory, I then set out in chapter 5 to define "rhizography" as a method of writing in hypertext. This method is derived from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, which embodies the interconnected network that hypertext manifests in its presentation of a text. I argue that three characteristics of the rhizome—speed, nomadism, and density—should govern writing in Storyspace, a hypertext program that is extremely user-friendly and promises to make the act of brainstorming the primary aspect of writing, rather than just the first step, as in classical rhetorical training. In its similarity to the neural networks of connectionist theory, the rhizome can provide the bridge to a writing that more closely resembles the workings of the mind, as some currently theorize.

This goal of achieving a kind of writing that manifests the associational leaping of brain activity may seem to some a form of anti-rhetoric, since it does not require the imposition of organization upon the jumble of thoughts that is required for communicative efficacy. In such an approach, logos is privileged over pathos and ethos as the significant defining feature that makes of rhetoric a form of science akin to biology, geology, pathology, and so on in that logic and logical development of a persuasive argument are taken as the norm. This traditional sense of rhetoric emphasizes persuasion and logical development and is oriented toward a single thesis or a particular goal of moving an audience to action. Because hypertext allows for multiple theses and lines of argument that might reach opposing conclusions to coexist simultaneously in one document, this traditional criterion for the purpose of rhetoric must be adapted, I am arguing, to allow for the new capacity of

communication that hypertext provides. To conceive of it in terms of the three appeals, hypertext composition will privilege pathos as much as if not more than logos, in following with the recent assertions of cognitive science, which finds in the physiological workings of the brain a common denominator between logical thought and pathetical feeling.⁵ Hypertext promises to return to scholarly writing and compositional pedagogy in the humanities an aesthetic emphasis which will by no means eclipse the anaesthetic impulse of logical argument but which will supplement that impulse to make of reading and writing a richer experience.

⁵See Marvin Minsky, *The Society of Mind*, chapter 16.1: "In any case, our culture wrongly teaches us that thoughts and feelings lie in almost separate worlds. In fact, they're almost always intertwined. In the next few sections we'll propose to regard emotions not as separate from thoughts in general, but as varieties or types of thoughts, each based on a different brain-machine that specializes in some particular domain of thought" (163).

CHAPTER 1
GRAMMATOLOGY AND RENAISSANCE STUDIES

So long as literary studies are situated as they are now, the most one can hope for (at least with respect to aims that are realistic) is that your work will make a difference in the institutional setting that gives it a home.

—Stanley Fish

Towards a Definition of Grammatology

Thus Stanley Fish critiques the New Historicists' desire to enter the political sphere and their expressed concern over their inability to do so in an effective way. Their aims, he argues, are "unrealistic."

Fish's injunction to focus upon one's own institutional setting, to work to make changes within it rather than elsewhere, returns to literary critics a modicum of social power. However limited this power may be within a specific institution, an English professor, Fish suggests, can work to make changes within the institution of literary criticism. The ability to intervene, however, depends upon one's ability to determine where change might be fruitful.

To the extent that one might want to institute such change, this ability to determine where change is needed could come only from some awareness of the history of given institutional practices. All of our current behaviors, both as scholars and as pedagogues, have evolved over time. The extent to which these are thought to be natural is the extent to which they have

become part of our ideological make-up, which complicates our ability to recognize how they have emerged from a particular cultural and historical matrix. To some extent it is in the best interests of the institution for such historical considerations to be ignored, as Samuel Weber notes: "Indeed, the very notion of academic 'seriousness' came increasingly to exclude reflection upon the relation of one 'field' to another, and concomitantly, reflection upon the historical process by which individual disciplines established their boundaries" (32). Given this difficulty, it is no wonder that a phenomenon I will call "institutional inertia" occurs, one in which pedagogical and scholarly practices as pursued within the university setting are perpetuated in established customary procedures.

My use of "institution" here refers to only one of its elements, the sense of the word that René Lourau sees as the now dominant conception: "By emptying the concept of institution of one of its primordial components (that of instituting, in the sense of founding, creating, breaking with an old order and creating a new one), sociology has finally come to identify the institution with the status quo" (quoted in Weber xv). As such, it is meant to indicate the kinds of relationships a university fosters between scholars and their scholarship and between scholars and their students, relationships which are determined by the drive to maintain the status of "professional." Weber's comments about the professional are helpful here; he writes that "the professional sought to *isolate*, in order to control. . . . In short, the culture of professionalism drew much of its force, its 'social credit,' credibility, from the cultivation and exploitation of anxiety" (27-28). The invocation of anxiety here is related to Fish's critique of Montrose for being nervous over

his success¹; it suggests that there is a structure of insecurity in professionalism which demands continual justification: "Once the professional has succeeded in gaining admittance to the 'field,' he can hope to enjoy a measure of security unknown by other nonprofessional salaried persons: *provided, of course, that he continues to accept and to practice the game according to its rules*" (Weber 31, emphasis added).

Increased specialization within disciplinary pursuits—the desire to isolate certain elements of a discipline for specialized study, as Weber notes, in the pursuit of an idealized notion of professionalism—results in control wielded not only within the given field but also over students as well. Once a niche is filled in a particular environment of textual studies, the professional need not fear being challenged, for s/he is the expert, s/he is the one to consult when questions concerning this narrow bandwidth of information arise. Such a situation fosters a form of pedagogy that Paulo Freire has suggested manifests the "banking concept of education," that is, a conception of the student-teacher relationship which figures the student as a passive recipient of "deposits" of knowledge and the teacher as the One Who Knows.²

One force which tends to work against institutional inertia is that of technological change. At present, this change is coming so quickly that Alvin Toffler has called it "Future Shock." "Cyberspace," the "Internet," and "Hypermedia": each of these current technologies, getting press now even in

¹ "It is hard to know whether such anxieties are a sign of large ambitions that have been frustrated . . . or a sign of the familiar academic longing for failure—we must be doing something wrong because people are listening to us and offering us high salaries. But whatever the source of the malaise, I urge that it be abandoned and that New Historicists sit back and enjoy the fruits of their professional success, wishing neither for more nor for less." Stanley Fish, "Commentary: The New Historicism," *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veesser (New York: Routledge, 1989) 315.

² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970) 57-74.

such journals as *Time* and *Newsweek*, is putting pressure upon the educational institution to reconsider its definitions of scholarship, pedagogy, disciplinaryity, and even institutionality. In light of these changes, those professionals within the educational institution and within the discipline of textual studies itself must begin to ask the questions that such technologies are raising: What is the role of the teacher? How will disciplinary boundaries be reconfigured in the new electronic environment? What will scholarly research become, and how will it change?

Answering these questions can be easier if one investigates the evolution of reading and writing practices as exercised within the educational institution. Doing so would provide data about past transitional moments that might help in the negotiation of the present one. The Renaissance (or "Early Modern"³ period) is known as a particularly significant moment in terms of the history of technological and pedagogical change and would therefore warrant close investigation. The justification for such an investigation comes from the field of grammatology, a variant form of Cultural Studies which considers the traditional questions of subject formation and ideological positioning as understood in current theoretical treatments in light of the electronic transformation of language and representation.

Grammatology offers, therefore, a way of thinking about the present which can only be managed by recourse to a consideration of the institution's past. Most would associate it with deconstruction, and specifically with

³ There is currently a shift to renominalize "Renaissance Studies" as "Early Modern Studies" for various theoretical reasons. Jonathan Crewe believes that using the former is a conservative gesture whereas using the latter is a more progressive one; he asks, "what implied commitments remain unalterable as long as the category 'Renaissance' remains in force?" *Trials of Authorship: Anterior Forms and Poetic Reconstruction From Wyatt to Shakespeare* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 2. His goal is to achieve "representation [of the Renaissance] radically otherwise" and so sees the use of "Early Modern" as challenging the "tacit conservation of premises" that the term "Renaissance" carries with it.

Jacques Derrida's project in *Of Grammatology*. But even there it is a term that refers to the history of reading and writing, and to the ways that such histories have perpetuated certain ideologically motivated evaluations of presence, the origin, the *telos*. In the work of Gregory Ulmer, grammatology becomes a theoretical practice which works to institute institutional change by focusing upon past institutional practices and attempting to derive new practices for the use of the emergent electronic technologies. It draws its theoretical basis and inspiration not only from Derridean deconstruction but also from contemporary French poststructuralism and twentieth-century literary theory in general.⁴ As such, it is a theoretical practice that can be applied to any text in any era. It will be my intention to explore the Early Modern period as a grammatologist would, and in doing so demonstrate grammatology's efficacy as a particularly pragmatic form of literary studies.

To explore the Early Modern period in this way, for the reason of answering some of the questions posed above, I must first define grammatology as a version of literary theory different from other such versions. In the process of doing so, I will look at some of the contemporary applications of theory—specifically the deconstructive work of Jonathan Goldberg and the New Historicist works of Louis Montrose and Stephen Greenblatt—in order to glean the ways that grammatology is both similar to and different from current studies.⁵ This initial work is preliminary to the larger project both of

⁴ I do not intend to claim here that the term "poststructuralism" denotes a unified theoretical approach to literary and cultural studies. The grammatologist, however, does focus on those common denominators among the theorists, for instance the experimental writing projects of Luce Irigaray in *The Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, or of Jacques Derrida in *Glas*, all of which challenge institutionalized practices of book-literacy.

⁵ There is a tendency among literary critics to distinguish their own position in the process of deriding others, as in Greenblatt's "Towards a Poetics of Culture" [*The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veesser (New York: Routledge, 1989) 1-14] in which he critiques Jameson's and Lyotard's definitions of capitalism in order to suggest that his is more "complex": "If capitalism is

deriving compositional practices for hypertext from the sixteenth century and of attempting to learn from the sixteenth century how to negotiate the current transitional shift in technologies.

The term grammatology came to enjoy its recent theoretical status with the publication of Derrida's *Of Grammatology*. While Derrida did not invent the term, he remotivates it according to his deconstructive program. As he writes, "Through all the recent work in the area, one glimpses the future extension of a grammatology called upon to stop receiving its guiding concepts from other human sciences, or, what nearly always amounts to the same thing, from traditional metaphysics" (83). Following through with the implications of Derrida's deconstructive work as well as attempting to incorporate Derrida's more experimental approach to writing philosophy in the later works (*Glas*, *The Postcard*, *The Truth in Painting*) into a pedagogy of

invoked not as a unitary demonic principle [as it is in Jameson and Lyotard], but as a complex historical movement in a world without paradisaic origins or chiliastic expectations [as it is in Greenblatt's work], then an inquiry into the relation between art and society in capitalist cultures must address both the formation of the working distinction upon which Jameson remarks and the totalizing impulse upon which Lyotard remarks" (6). In another strategy employed to create a niche for themselves in the ecology of textual studies, some critics, like Derek Alwes in "'Who knows not Colin Clout? Spenser's Self-Advertisement in *The Faerie Queene*, Book 6," *Modern Philology* 88 (August 1990), 26-42, work to correct or emend a previous reading. Alwes corrects Louis Montrose, who believes that Spenser defined himself as being the Queen's adversary, contesting her authority through his poetry. Alwes believes, on the other hand, that "the poetic role Spenser defines for himself in his works is that of accomplice, not adversary"(29). Here, Alwes in effect employs Montrose's method to make a different assertion. Perhaps the form of argument itself requires such embattled rhetoric, for in each example the critic assumes he knows the truth and is working to reveal inadequacies in preceding commentary.

Revelation, then, becomes the primary mode of procedure, as implied by the following metaphor that Greenblatt employs at the end of "Towards a Poetics of Culture": "It is in response to this practice [of constructing an interpretive model that will more adequately account for the unsettling circulation of materials and discourses that is . . . the heart of modern aesthetic practice] that contemporary theory must situate itself: not outside interpretation, but in the *hidden places* of negotiation and exchange" (13, emphasis mine). Greenblatt works to reveal these "hidden places" to us in his essay. Rather than rely upon such metaphors of excavation, a theoretical grammatologist works to invent, working heuristically rather than hermeneutically. In this project, I will invent the institutional practices (or, more precisely, *an* institutional practice) for working with hypertext/ hypermedia in Early Modern studies.

Writing, Gregory Ulmer, in *Applied Grammatology*, further defines the term in characterizing his application of Derridean (and, beyond Derrida, of poststructural) theory to pedagogical concerns.⁶ My work in this dissertation will build upon Ulmer's, but first I must briefly present the "original" Derridean conception of the term.

Consistently, throughout part one of *Of Grammatology*, Derrida uses grammatology to refer to the history of writing, his purpose in doing so being to demonstrate what I will call the "cultural inertia" perpetuating philosophic concepts that began with Plato and Aristotle and continuing within the writings of Rousseau and Saussure.⁷ So pervasive is this historical sense of his work that he frequently uses the term "epoch" to denote the centuries that logocentrism—the privileging of speech over its writing—has permeated the foundations of Western philosophical thinking. At one point he states, "This logocentrism, this *epoch* of the full speech . . ." (43), and thereby demonstrates through apposition the historical breadth of logocentrism's reign.⁸ One gets a real sense that Derrida detects our time as a time of change, of paradigmatic

⁶ Ulmer writes in the preface of *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys*, "The applied phase of grammatology, which I introduce here, is meant to be the pedagogical equivalent of this scripting beyond the book, adequate to an era of interdisciplines, intermedia, electronic apparatus" (xiii). Ulmer indicates this special form of Derridean writing by capitalizing Writing.

⁷ See also "The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982) 69-108, in which Derrida writes, "The process of the sign has a history . . ." (71). His purpose in this essay, as he states, is to analyze the system of "the coordination of the theory of the sign and the light of parousia. . . {whose constraints} are exercised, in constitutive fashion, over the entire history of metaphysics" (72).

⁸ Of course, this use of history is qualified and itself put into historical perspective; that is, history itself is seen to be a product of the logocentric dominion: "This phoneticization has a history, no script is absolutely exempt from it, and the enigma of this evolution does not allow itself to be dominated by the concept of history. To be sure, the latter appears at a determined moment in the phoneticization of script and it presupposes phoneticization in an essential way" (*Of Grammatology* 88).

upheaval in which a shift is occurring between two epochs—between that of logocentrism and that which poststructuralism is heralding:

The end of linear writing is indeed the end of the book, even if, even today, it is within the form of a book that new writings—literary or theoretical—allow themselves to be, for better or for worse, encased. It is less a question of confiding new writings to the envelope of a book than of finally reading what wrote itself between the lines in the volumes. That is why, beginning to write without the line, one begins also to reread past writing according to a different organization of space. If today the problem of reading occupies the forefront of science, it is because of this *suspense between two ages of writing*. Because we are beginning to write, to write differently, we must reread differently. (emphasis mine, 86-87)

As we shall see, although writers like Derrida and others have pioneered, in book form, how such "new writings" will be fashioned, the new technologies now available to the humanities—in the form of hypertext and hypermedia programs—will generate the kind of "nonlinear writing" that Derrida calls for in *Of Grammatology*.⁹

The sense of grammatology, then, that Ulmer adopts from Derrida is this historical sense, the sense that grammatology refers to the history of reading and writing. He rereads Derrida's "*oeuvre* from a perspective that turns attention away from an exclusive concern with deconstruction." In doing so, Ulmer substitutes "grammatology" for "deconstruction," as he writes in his preface to *Applied Grammatology*, in order to privilege Writing, "in order to explore the relatively neglected 'affirmative' (Derrida's term) dimension of grammatology, the practical extension of deconstruction into decomposition" (x). Defining a sense of the "apparatus" as that which not only maps the

⁹ On the equivalence of "nonlinear dynamics" (as an aspect of what recent breakthroughs in physics are labelling "chaos theory") with deconstruction, see N. Katherine Hayles, *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990): "Deconstruction and nonlinear dynamics appear isomorphic, then, because the concepts with which they are concerned form an ecology of ideas" (185).

intersection between the various technologies of writing practices and the institutional incorporations of these practices but also considers the resultant subject formation that emerges from these intersections, Ulmer is able to expand the sense of grammatology to include reflection upon these broader concerns. His ultimate purpose in doing so is to glean pedagogically relevant institutional practices from the provinces of deconstruction, practices which he works to show are employed directly by Derrida himself.¹⁰

As such, Ulmer's position on grammatology enables one to consider the history of pedagogical practices as codified by educational institutions, specifically how technologies of writing inform and are informed by these practices. Sharon Crowley might also be called a grammatologist in the sense that she too takes the broad view of composition instruction and finds, in her *Methodical Memory: Invention in the Current-Traditional Rhetoric*, that current instruction has, as its "epistemological underpinnings," a logocentric epistemology which emerged in the eighteenth century. She writes, "One of my book's central points is that current-traditional rhetoric is a historical hangover. Its epistemology, and the pedagogy associated with it, need rethinking" (xii).¹¹ Both Crowley and Ulmer find it necessary to consult

¹⁰ As Ulmer writes, "The ultimate deconstruction of the logocentric suppression of writing is not to analyze the inconsistency of the offending theories, but to construct a fully operational mode of thought on the basis of the excluded elements (in the way that the non-Euclidean built consistent geometries that defied and contradicted the accepted axioms)" (*Applied Grammatology* xii). According to Ulmer, Derrida works to construct this mode of thought: he "systematically explores the nondiscursive levels—images and puns, or models and homophones—as an alternative mode of composition and thought applicable to academic work, or rather, play" (xi). See *Text Book* by Scholes, Comley, and Ulmer for an experimental "deconstructive" composition textbook for teaching writing about literature.

¹¹ In *A Teacher's Introduction to Deconstruction* (Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1989), an introduction to high school instructors explaining deconstruction and its implications for writing instruction, Crowley concludes that many instructors now contradict themselves by teaching traditional rhetorical strategies for writing based on the logocentric mode while at the same time espousing, in their reading practices and interpretive work, a more progressive poststructural epistemology.

history in their attempt to critique current pedagogical practices so that the discipline of English can move beyond, in whatever ways this is possible, the confines of a logocentric epistemology.¹²

What is at stake here is the state of educational practices in the late twentieth century, in the impending (or already present) "age of information," the age of data highways and cyberspatiality which is now upon us. As a dissertation on the ways in which academic scholarship in Early Modern studies may change when pursued in hypermedia, this "book," a manifestation of linear writing which Derrida views as being on the way out, will discuss a nonlinear form of writing in a linear manner, simply because the institutional inertia surrounding Ph.D. work will not allow me to submit a hypertext as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctoral degree. I could compose a hypertext, but it would have to be submitted *in addition to* a full-length manuscript of a dissertation. Such a state of affairs provides no motivation for a doctoral candidate to do the extra work of composing in a new and alien medium, thus perpetuating the institution's love-affair with/reliance upon the book. The institution will not yet accept electronic essays as a legitimate form of scholarship because it is still bound up within the practices of literacy. Stuart Moulthrop notes the absurdity of working during this transitional time, during which we read and write about hypermedia in printed books:

Why aren't you reading this document in a hypertext system?
How is it that those of us who analyze hypertext, even those of

¹² Of the two, Crowley is more pessimistic about the possibility of doing so than Ulmer is. In *A Teacher's Introduction to Deconstruction*, she writes, "The performance of this 'reading' of traditional pedagogy may be as far as deconstruction will take us. I am not sure that a deconstructive pedagogy can be realized—the term is itself an oxymoron" (45). Despite this disclaimer, she does go on to suggest ways that instructors implementing a deconstructive pedagogy would conduct themselves, many of which are similar to those proposed by Stanley Aronowitz and Henry A. Giroux in *Postmodern Education: Politics, Culture, and Social Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

us who promote and proselytize for it, carry on our communications primarily in print? What does this preference imply, both about the organizations interested in hypertext and about the systems they develop and study?¹³

One question that this dissertation intends to propose concerns the relationship of hypermedia to Early Modern studies: how will the forms of writing that Early Modern scholars engage in as well as the kinds of questions posed about Early Modern texts change when hypertext composition becomes the norm rather than the exception? Because a new technology of writing exists, one that radically changes the ways that writers compose, scholars publish, students and instructors interact, and, perhaps most importantly, the way that readers read, the question of how this new technology will be implemented and what such implementation will mean for how teaching and scholarship are conducted must be further explored.¹⁴

My look at the sixteenth century is motivated thus by the recognition that this period not only harbors potential practices for *dispositio* within hypertext compositions but also offers an historical analogy of a pedagogical crisis brought on by a new technology. One example of the degree of this crisis is Peter Ramus who, as a theorist of the page who invented a mnemonic method intended to exploit the communicative potential of the printed page, was murdered as a result of the upheavals he created in

¹³ Stuart Moulthrop, a pioneer in hypertext studies who has already begun to compose texts in such hypermedia systems as Macintosh's Hypercard and Eastgate System's Storyspace, here implies that the features of hypertext will reconstruct institutional relationships to such an extent that the institution will resist its adoption. The piece cited here appeared in an essay entitled "The Shadow of an Informant: A Rhetorical Experiment in Hypertext," *Perforations* 3: *After the Book*, spring/summer 1992, ed. Richard Gess.

¹⁴ Initial explorations have been made by George Landow in *Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1992) and also in a book edited by Landow and Paul Delaney entitled *Hypermedia and Literary Studies* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

education. A parallel has been drawn between Ramist's effect on the sixteenth century and Derrida's effect upon our own in terms of pedagogical upheaval.¹⁵ While Derrida does not specifically employ the new technologies nor has the ostensible purpose of influencing pedagogy in the ways that Ramus did, the implications of his work have begun to trickle down into composition textbooks and pedagogical treatises.¹⁶ Embracing the grammatological frame, then, with its consideration of the history of reading and writing and of how this history has determined current pedagogical practices, allows for a more self-conscious procedure to take place, one in the spirit of postmodernism and poststructuralism.

The adoption of such a self-conscious attitude toward the way we conduct ourselves as professionals will enable us to recognize the epistemological metaphors underlying our methodologies which unconsciously shape our (institutional) behaviors.¹⁷ Part of the value of a deconstructive approach is this very detection and exposure of foundational metaphors. The grammatological approach I am attempting to describe here goes beyond mere exposure, however: again, to repeat a previously cited passage from *Applied Grammatology*, it tries to develop the "relatively neglected 'affirmative' dimension of grammatology." What this means is that, after exposing a particular metaphor, an alternative one is offered in its place, one that provides a

¹⁵See Ulmer's recent publication, *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁶For one example beyond the already mentioned work of Crowley and Ulmer, see *Writing and Reading Differently: Deconstruction and the Teaching of Composition and Literature*. Eds. G. Douglas Atkins and Michael L. Johnson. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985. See also the special issue of *College Literature* entitled *Literary Theory in the Classroom* 18.2 (1991).

¹⁷ See Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor," *Critical Inquiry* 5: 1 (Autumn 1978), 13-30, in which he exposes how major Western philosophers, in trying to avoid the use of metaphor, cannot do so: "All philosophy is condemned, to the extent that it is dependent upon figuration, to be literary . . ." (28).

conceptual framework other than that which already exists, one that permits a transgression of boundaries previously held to be insurmountable or assumed to be natural.¹⁸

It is curious, to say the least, that the computer I am using at present has a "desktop," that information is stored in the form of "documents" within "files," when in reality the resemblance of the computer's desktop to my own is slight, and the computer always seems much faster at locating documents in files than I am.¹⁹ And the documents in my desk files are permanent items (barring a fire), whereas this document, at present stored as a series of ones and zeroes (a coding system that informs an electronic machine when to turn certain switches on and when to leave them off) is much more ephemeral. The point here is that we have entered the age of computers carrying the metaphoric baggage of alphabetic literacy, baggage which, while perhaps expedient for the moment, may weigh us down more than is necessary. The metaphor of "baggage" is appropriate since, as a grammatologist, I am concerned with the storage and retrieval of information, how this was done in the past, how it is done now, and how it might be done in the future.

¹⁸ This is precisely what Derrida does in his overall project, according to Ulmer: upon undermining the primary metaphors governing cognition—the senses of distance (sight and hearing)—Derrida provides an alternative, an alternative discovered in the neglected possibilities of the vehicle: the chemical senses of proximity (taste and smell). That is, in recognizing the complicity of visual metaphors of cognition (implicit in the Latin "videre" which means both "I see" and "I understand") in the hegemony of logocentrism, Derrida suggests that using the chemical senses as alternatives can provide a way to undermine logocentrism. See Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology*, 30-67: "The philosophemes are to be deconstructed by an examination of their metaphors—specifically, the vehicles, the senses or sensible aspect of the organs. The goal is the conceptualization of the chemical senses, excluded thus far from theory" (54).

¹⁹ The limitations of the "desktop" metaphor in computer interface design have been noted. See especially Alan Kay's article "User Interface: A Personal View" in *The Art of Human-Computer Interface Design*. ed. Brenda Laurel (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1990) 191-207.

So a grammarologist might approach the Early Modern period with the purpose in mind of finding metaphors that could serve as an alternative to current metaphors of information storage practices, metaphors that are perhaps more suitable to the potential capacities of the computer interface. The mnemotechnics of the sixteenth century, as I intend to suggest, may provide just the alternative to existing mnemographies—to methods of storing and retrieving information. But before entering such an investigation, which will begin in chapter 2 by recounting the history of the memory palace and continue in chapter 3 with a close look at Spenser's use of the memory palace in *The Faerie Queene*, I must further define grammarology and will do so by discussing two of the more systematic applications of contemporary French theory to Early Modern studies—that is, deconstruction and new historicism—in order to show, by contrast, how grammarology compares. This approach to the problem seeks not only to define grammarology as a consistent and focused theoretical approach but also to legitimate it as an application of theory that is particularly amenable to the sixteenth century. This chapter, then, works to define; the next chapter demonstrates an exemplary application of grammarology to the sixteenth century in general and to Edmund Spenser in particular.

Deconstruction in Early Modern Studies

Despite the apparent flowering of theoretical investigations of the Early Modern period, a conservative strain still lingers, a strain that is quite pervasive, as Jonathan Goldberg notes in a review essay on "The Politics of Renaissance Literature": "I cannot close without remarking the persistence of older modes of criticism, and the sad fact that these represent a historicism vitiated of the vitality and intelligence and moral seriousness of the work of

Douglas Bush or Helen Gardner and devoid too of the rigor of a Cleanth Brooks" (538).²⁰

Within this landscape of Early Modern studies, a landscape seemingly barren of theoretical work, one comes upon deconstruction, which some would consider an oasis of pure water and others would view as a deadly trap of quicksand. With critics as erudite as Kenneth Gross, Patricia Parker, David L. Miller and Jonathan Goldberg—all of whom adopt a deconstructive approach, some to a greater extent than others—able to invent²¹ the moments of deconstruction that they write about in texts of the Early Modern period, one might view this period as inherently receptive to such a critical and philosophical perspective.²² Given that historical moment, at which time no standardized English dictionaries or grammars of English existed,²³

²⁰ Despite the fact that this essay is now over a decade old, the condition Goldberg describes does not seem to have changed much, as Louis Montrose notes in his more recent essay entitled "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser (Routledge: New York, 1989) 15-36: "Until very recently—and perhaps even now—the dominant mode of interpretation in English Renaissance literary studies has been to combine formalist techniques of close rhetorical analysis with the elaboration of relatively self-contained histories of 'ideas,' or of literary genres and topoi—histories that have been abstracted from their social matrices" (17-18). Montrose goes on to describe "two other traditional practices of 'history' in Renaissance literary studies," practices which reflect what I have called the conservative strain, and then proceeds to point out what is "new" about the new historicism. Montrose is perhaps the most helpful in understanding the history of new historicism and its emergence on the critical "scene."

²¹ I use "invent" here to invoke both the sense of coming upon or finding (the classical rhetorical conception) as well as the more modern conception of fabricating or making. It is widely acknowledged, in the poststructural paradigm, that critics no longer uncover the Truth of any given text but that they take part in constructing the meanings that are generated from their reading.

²² Goldberg says that, "as Foucault shows, the very shape of knowledge in the Renaissance is deconstructive" (*Endlesse Worke* 11, note 5).

²³ William Caxton, the renowned printer, critic and translator best known for introducing the printing press into England in 1476, bemoaned this state of affairs in a prologue to his translation of the French poem *Eneydos* (1490) and called for standardization in spelling and punctuation so that printers like himself could do their job that much easier: "Loo what sholde a man in thysse dayes now wryte egges or eyren / certaynly it is harde to playse euery man / by cause of dyuersite & chaunge of langage." Quoted in W.F. Bolton, *A Living Language: The History and Structure of English* (New York: Random House, 1982).

one could argue that the state of the language itself was a breeding ground for linguistic behaviors that would later come to be recognized as deconstructive: fluidity, instability, indeterminacy.²⁴ If deconstruction could emerge during the twentieth century—the age of linguistic standardization *par excellence* with the OED and the Harbrace Handbook—to describe the supposedly inherent instability of language, then imagine what things were like at a time when one could sign one's name seven different ways.

Perhaps one of the best-known practitioners of deconstruction in the Early Modern period is Jonathan Goldberg, whose earlier writings include a full-length deconstructive study, entitled *Endlesse Worke*, of the fourth book of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* as well as an innovative book of essays entitled *Voice Terminal Echo*, which covers a range of Early Modern writers, essays attempting to go beyond the rational hermeneutics of some versions of deconstructive criticism.²⁵ While the former is more characteristic of the kind of work done when applying deconstruction to an author's text, the latter is a significant departure from standard textual studies, one which

²⁴ In fact, many of these critics seem to work with this as an underlying assumption, since they seem to present their discoveries of deconstructive characteristics within Spenser's texts as though Spenser himself were a Derridean. Of course, this is a common critique of any theoretical application, one which may even be unavoidable despite the gestures that even self-reflexive critics like Gross, Miller, Greenblatt, Montrose, and Goldberg make toward acknowledging their presence in the critical mediation of Spenser's texts.

²⁵ I choose Jonathan Goldberg as an exemplary representative of deconstructive criticism in the Early Modern period as a conscious act of reduction, since to cover the critics mentioned above alone would cost space I do not have. The trajectory of his career, too, is most interesting: going from *Endlesse Worke* to a book on *James I* and then on to the deconstructive essays in *Voice Terminal Echo*, he follows these with a historical study I will later argue is "grammatological," entitled *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*, and his most recent book, *Sodometries*, which is classified in the ascendant category of "gay studies." In his career, therefore, one sees a nomadic progression, one which is sensitive to the changing possibilities that poststructuralism has allowed and which has responded to these possibilities with works that continue to demand attention.

challenges the means and the ends of scholarship as it is practiced today within the academy.

In *Endlesse Worke: Spenser and the Structures of Discourse*, Goldberg offers a poststructural reading, as he assumes what most traditional critics fight to suppress—that Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is a broken text, a fractured text.²⁶ For this reason, he views the *Faerie Queene* as a text whose narrative, because broken, concerns the nature of narration.²⁷ So, rather than trying to account for the frustrating moments in the text, providing hermeneutic closure wherever such closure is lacking, Goldberg privileges frustration, asking, "What are the virtues of, the pleasures offered by, a broken text?" (1). His project, then, offers "a way of reading Spenser," one which describes the "narrative principles that induce frustration, that deny closure . . . [T]he generation of the text and its production is my subject" (xi-xii).

Goldberg's language reveals his essentializing gesture: he wants to find the "narrative principles," to clarify the "nature" of narrative progress. In doing so, he is naturalizing the features of the deconstructive analytic mode by suggesting that the denial of closure is a feature inherent in narrative

²⁶ Louis Montrose, in "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," adequately summarizes two "traditional practices of 'history' in Renaissance literary studies: one comprises those commentaries on political commonplaces in which the dominant ideology of Tudor-Stuart society—the unreliable machinery of socio-political legitimation—is misrecognized as a stable, coherent, and collective Elizabethan world picture, a picture discovered to be lucidly reproduced in the canonical literary works of the age; and the other, the erudite but sometimes eccentric scholarly detective work which, by treating texts as elaborate ciphers, seeks to fix the meaning of fictional characters and actions in their reference to specific historical persons and events" (18). For an example of both the former and the latter types of traditional practices that Montrose mentions, see William Nelson's *The Poetry of Edmund Spenser*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.

²⁷In describing the altered 1596 ending and introducing its deconstructive qualities, Goldberg writes, "It seems arguable, and I will want to maintain the point, that this revision clarifies the *nature* of narrative progress throughout the poem and suggests the peculiar pleasures this text offers" (2, emphasis added).

itself.²⁸ One could argue that, given the generic mode within which Goldberg works—the academic essay—he cannot avoid such a gesture. As a genre which privileges the explanatory, the academic essay reinforces the logocentric foundations of its formulation: in it, Goldberg claims and argues for a truth, the truth of narrative's nature, despite his investment in the tenets of deconstruction and poststructuralism.²⁹

Thus, Goldberg's talk of Spenser's text "clearly conveying" the fact that writing comes before representation reveals his investment in a conventional, rationalist, scientific manner of proceeding which, in the end, perpetuates the entire logocentric model and its institutional manifestations that the philosophy seeks to undermine.³⁰ By engaging the metaphor of sight in

²⁸Other critics make similar gestures. Patricia Parker, in *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1979), defines romance as being "characterized primarily as a form which simultaneously quests for and postpones a particular end, objective, or object . . ." (4). She isolates the key strategies of romance as being "deferral" and "delay," both falling under the notion of "dilation." Parker demonstrates how Spenser's texts perform such dilatory strategies: "by repetition and doubling, by the proliferation of the fragments of one episode into others . . ." (70). With her focus on "dilation," she, like Goldberg, provides a way of discussing Spenser's narrative in terms of Derridean "différance." Kenneth Gross, too, in *Spenserian Poetics: Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Magic* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985), carefully foregrounds his discussion in a reading of Hebraic, Kabbalistic, and New Testament texts so as to claim that Spenser had an attitude toward language very similar to recent deconstructive theories of language. Like Goldberg, Gross works to explain why Spenser would approach language as uncertain and duplicitous, why he would intentionally confuse beginnings and endings and mystify their origins.

²⁹N. Katherine Hayles, in *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science*, writes of how the deconstructionist can be more totalizing than those texts s/he deconstructs: "There is a growing inclination within literary circles to regard deconstruction in these terms, as a theory of local knowledge more totalizing than the totalizing theories it criticizes" (227). She goes on to praise Paul de Man for his brilliance in recognizing this fact in his essay "The Resistance to Theory": "When Paul de Man creates a global theory of local knowledge, he simultaneously repudiates and practices mastery in this sense, for he resists totalization by totalizing. . . . The ideology of local knowledge, pushed to the extreme, is thus inextricable from the totalitarian impulses it most opposes. The unflinching honesty with which de Man faces this paradox is admirable, for it implies a profound awareness that impulses toward mastery are still masterful even when they are directed against mastery" (232).

³⁰I will quote the passage in its entirety, a passage from a footnote: "The reversal here is extremely significant since a normative boundary is crossed. The opposition of speaking and writing is analogous to the opposition of nature and culture, of interiority and exteriority. As

"clearly," Goldberg relies upon the ultimate sense of objectification, sight—that which the entire metaphysics of the West relies upon, that which serves as the primary trope of understanding—to make his claim about the post-structural *nature* of Spenser's text. Such a metaphor elicits de Man's study in "The Epistemology of Metaphor" of the Early Modern philosophers Locke and Condillac, who sought to skirt the inherent metaphoricity of language to write a "plain" and "clear" style, one unhindered by the ornaments of language, one transparently conveying the meaning along reductively constructed two-dimensional vectors.³¹ By raising the standard of transparency, of clarity, Goldberg perpetuates the privileging of clarity as a metaphorical term laden with culturally attributed value.

While it is true that Derrida himself employs a rational and logical approach in his deconstructions of the major Western philosophers—after all, one cannot avoid participating in that which one deconstructs—we see Derrida gradually move away from such a straightforward approach toward more radical experimental texts like *The Post Card*, *The Truth in Painting*, and *Glas*. Ulmer is helpful here in distinguishing between the two approaches that Derrida takes:

The difference between Writing and deconstruction may be seen most clearly in the ways Derrida treats philosophical works (which he deconstructs) and literary or artistic texts (which he

Derrida argues in *Of Grammatology* (pp. 6 ff.), this opposition is weighted in terms of value and sequence, so that the terms nature-inside-speech are granted priority and value, spirituality. However, they can be reversed, and *Of Grammatology* is intent upon the reversal that allows writing-culture-exteriority to precede or replace the opposing terms. When we approach Spenser's writerly text, one thing we mean—and one thing that Spenser's text *clearly conveys*—is that writing comes before representation. Voice in the poem is an artifact, a cultural construct, an echo of other texts; nature is made by art" (15, note 7, emphasis added).

³¹"In all three instances, we started out from a relatively self-assured attempt to control tropes by merely acknowledging their existence and circumscribing their impact. . . . But, in each case, it turns out to be impossible to maintain a clear line of distinction between rhetoric, abstraction, symbol, and all other forms of language" ("The Epistemology of Metaphor," 26).

mimes). The methodologies in the two instances bear little resemblance to each other: the philosophical work is treated as an object of study, which is analytically articulated by locating and describing the gap or discontinuity separating what the work "says" (its conclusions and propositions) from what it "shows" or "dis-plays" (its examples, data, the materials with which it, in turn, is working). Literary or plastic texts (a "new new novel" by Sollers, or drawings by Adami, for example) are not analyzed but are adopted as models or tutors to be imitated, as generative forms for the production of another text. (*Applied Grammatology* x-xi)

Understood in these terms, *Endlesse Worke* privileges the mode of deconstruction rather than the mode of Writing. In doing so, it reinforces the explanatory mode of academic writing which works within the metaphoric structure of seeing as understanding.

Voice Terminal Echo comes closer to privileging the mode of Writing, demonstrating Goldberg's refusal to repeat mundanely the formulaic gesture of conventional deconstructive application. What makes *Voice Terminal Echo* different is the fact that Goldberg chooses to emulate Derrida's texts rather than merely to explicate them. One sees this immediately at the opening of the book, where Goldberg begins by playing with the various senses of "terminal," a word which now can refer to a computerized telephone as well as evoke the more common notion of something ending or "terminated": "Receiver and sender are at their terminals, voice terminated. The end of the voice and the beginning of the terminal: a technological image of the text, of this text, too, with its images of relays and circuits—of the short-circuiting of the voice" (1). This is verbal play characteristic of Derrida, unfolding the metaphors inherent in the word, using his titles to suggest something of the essay to come: do we read the title as "Voice: Terminal Echo," or "Voice:

Terminated Echo," or perhaps "Voice Terminated—Echo"?³² He also unveils his method, relieving me of the need to describe it; it is actually a part of his argument: "The project of these pages, to be brief: to show in the Renaissance text voice-as-text, and to show it through a practice of voice terminated" (1).

The crucial words here are "show" and "practice": Goldberg will "show" us rather than tell us; he will engage in a "practice," a word which bears within it a sense of performance, the act of *doing* something. Soon after this lively opening, Goldberg explicitly reveals the source of his method (or what some would call "madness"): "In another light, they are a set of readings of texts that are . . . demonstrations of techniques of reading consequent upon the work of writers like Maurice Blanchot or Jacques Derrida" (5). As such, "the voice on these pages is not singly determined to a procedure of logical demonstration. Multiple and fractured, it responds to texts and recounts them, pursuing and permitting disseminative practice" (4). Ultimately, by abandoning argument as his procedural strategy, Goldberg proposes here a radical departure from traditional critical practice: "What follows is not structured as an argument and resists such structures, eschewing (so far as possible) the critical impulse to totalize and the historical drive towards teleological closure" (4).

So *Voice Terminal Echo* avoids the strictly explanatory mode practiced in *Endlesse Worke* and in this sense is "radical," that is, starts at the root of what constitutes academic scholarship: the desire to clarify and explain in flawlessly logical argumentative writing. As such, it is a book that can be as frustrating to read as Goldberg claims that Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* is, perhaps because of its almost poetic quality: we are asked to read Goldberg's

³² See, for instance, the untranslatable titles and subtitles of "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982) 207-271, untranslatable because of the cluster of puns they radiate.

book of essays as poems which employ a style that is "allusive, disconnected, multiple, lyrical, fragmentary, dense, insubordinate—a challenge, in short, to logical discriminations" (VTE 8). This is Goldberg's description of Derrida's style(s), but it equally describes his own in *Voice Terminal Echo*—as it should, given his attempt to demonstrate Derrida's techniques of reading. Ultimately, for Goldberg's work to be effective in the academy, the goal of producing literary criticism must change from hermeneutic closure to heuristic (or, as Ulmer would call it, "heuretic") opening.³³

It would be useful at this point to begin seeking, through comparison with these Goldberg texts, something of how a grammatological approach will differ. I delineate above the difference between *Endlesse Worke* and *Voice Terminal Echo*: whereas the former seeks to *explain* how deconstructive concepts work within Spenser's text, the latter seeks to *employ* deconstructive concepts as a means to generate (critical) essays which show as well as tell. Like Goldberg in *Voice Terminal Echo*, the grammatologist desires to displace logical argument from its dominance within the hierarchy of academic genres of writing in order to institute a "metarational" discourse, which Derrida claims, at the end of his consideration of "Grammatology as a Positive Science," will be a result of his meditation on writing: "The metarationality or the meta-scientificity *which are thus announced within the meditation upon writing* can therefore be no more shut up within a science of man than conform to the traditional idea of science" (*Of Grammatology* 87, my emphasis).³⁴ Such a "meta-rational" discourse would avoid the

³³ In Ulmer's latest book, entitled *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*, Ulmer defines heuristics as "the branch of logic that treats the art of discovery or invention."

³⁴ I take "meta-rationality" to refer to the "logic" of the arational, to a desired goal which avoids the binaristic thinking of rational thought. The major philosophers of poststructuralism work to undermine the hegemony of reason within modern philosophy (and this is perhaps why their work is considered so alien and therefore shunned in many

violence of classification, a pejorative term which the sciences are known for among poststructuralist thinkers.³⁵

So grammatology is similar to Goldberg's work in *Voice Terminal Echo*, both arguing against the current mode of critical practice, offering an alternative in its stead. But while both seek guidance for how to proceed in the major texts of poststructural philosophers, the grammatologist does not seek to emulate their difficult and impenetrable style, as Goldberg ends up doing in his book of essays (a fact demonstrated by DeNeef's comments indicating their potential difficulty). While Goldberg's text engages a different and radical approach, it has the air of inaccessibility that many texts labelled "poststructural" have. A grammatological criticism, on the other hand, wants to prepare texts that are accessible to others, not only texts that can be read but also texts that generate the desire to write in the same transgressive manner that they embody.³⁶

quarters). Barthes, in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), looks forward to "the glorious end of logical thinking" (61); Deleuze and Guattari offer a "new logic of the AND" [*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1987) 25]—the rhizome—which is opposed to the binary logic of the tree; and Derrida speaks of the "logic of the abyme" as the "figurative ruination of logic" ("White Mythology" 262).

³⁵ Part One of *Of Grammatology* ends with a consideration of how difficult it is to comment upon the epoch of logocentric domination within this tradition itself, using the very conceptual paraphernalia Derrida is attempting to deconstruct, of how his revision of grammatology cannot be called a science: "What seems to announce itself now is, on the one hand, that grammatology must not be one of the *sciences of man* and, on the other hand, that it must not be just one *regional science* among others" (83). And elsewhere: "A science of the possibility of science? A science of science which would no longer have the form of *logic* but that of *grammatics*?" (27-28). See also "The Law of Genre," in which Derrida reads Blanchot's *La Folie du Jour* as a direct challenge to the violence of classificatory thinking, the "madness of law—and, therefore, of order, reason, sense and meaning, of day" (228). Barthes, too, writes, "I enable you to escape the death of classification" (*A Lover's Discourse* 221), and Reda Bensmaïa, in his forward to Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, writes, "Deleuze and Guattari give the modern reader a means by which to enter into Kafka's work without being weighted down by the old categories of genres, types, modes, and style. . . . These categories would imply that the reader's task is at bottom to *interpret* Kafka's writing" (xiv).

³⁶ Ulmer says as much in his chapter on Beuys in *Applied Grammatology*: ". . . a further pedagogy of creativity is also set in motion, intended not only to show people the principles of

An example of such an experimental text, one that is accessible even to freshman English students, can be seen in *Text Book*, a writing-about-literature text informed by poststructural principles. One of the optional tracks in chapter four of this text, co-authored by Robert Scholes, Nancy Comley, and Gregory Ulmer, prepares the students to write a "signature" essay, which is based on the theoretical writing of Derrida. The text that they model their assignment after, "A Jarrett in Your Text," was written by James Michael Jarrett, a former student of Ulmer's. In my experience of teaching this textbook, students can successfully emulate Jarrett's experiment,³⁷ using their own names. They therefore employ sophisticated philosophical concepts of language developed by a leading poststructural philosopher, some greatly enjoying themselves in the process. The fact that this is at all possible stands as a tribute to the goal of democratization which the grammatologist adopts.³⁸

creativity and how to put them into practice but also—and here is the particular power of the new pedagogy, beyond deconstruction—to stimulate the *desire* to create . . ." (264).

³⁷ See Ulmer's essays that conceptualize pedagogy in the humanities in terms of the pedagogy of the sciences, essays that propose assignments in which students are asked to replicate the great experiments of avant garde literature in the same manner that chemistry or physics students are asked in the sciences to replicate the great experiments of those disciplines: "Textshop for Post(e)pedagogy," *Writing and Reading Differently*, eds. G. Douglas Atkins and Michael L. Johnson (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985) 38-64; and "Textshop for an Experimental Humanities," *Reorientations*, eds. Bruce Henricksen and Thais E. Morgan (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990) 113-132. See also the "Discussion" that follows the reprint of "Grammatology (in the Stacks) of Hypermedia, a Simulation: or, When Does a Pile become a Heap?" *Literacy Online*, ed. Myron Tuman (Pittsburg: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992) 159-164.

³⁸ As Ulmer writes, "In the process [of expanding images of quotidian objects like a postcard, an unlaced shoe, etc. into models for writing], he [Derrida] reveals a simplicity, an economy, underlying the so-called esotericism of intellectual discourse which, if properly tapped, could eliminate the gap separating the general public from specialists in cultural studies" (*Applied Grammatology* xii). While such a goal of "democratization" may come across as a lofty one—and one perhaps fraught with ideological traps—the example of undergraduate success that I described seems to offer some hope for making a writing based upon poststructural principles accessible to the "non-expert."

Ultimately, Ulmer's goal is to make theory a potential hobby that anyone can adopt. One can see this in his work-in-progress entitled the "Theory Hobby Handbook," three of the lessons of which have appeared in print.³⁹ Craig Saper, guest editor of the special issue of *Visible Language* in which "Lesson Five" appears, writes about this aspect of Ulmer's grammatological approach:

Gregory Ulmer exposes the process of making knowledge specialized and unreceivable. In this way, he does not abide by traditional pedagogy's separation between the popular and the theoretical or the instant and the accumulated. This orientation of theory toward thought rather than information allows us to translate a specialized knowledge into a popular idiom. (390-91)

As Ulmer himself writes in "Lesson Ten," "Anyone can make a theory, when theory is approached as a craft rather than as a specialty for experts" (85).

While the stated goal is for "anyone" to make a theory, Ulmer's work occurs within the academy and so is directed specifically toward students. Here we see the pedagogical emphasis of the grammatological approach, and this becomes a key component differentiating Ulmer's use of poststructuralism from Goldberg's. Goldberg's work, at least in *Voice Terminal Echo*, "concerns matters of critical practice," thereby attempting to inaugurate change at the institutional level; Ulmer's work, on the other hand, while also gesturing toward institutional change at the level of academic and scholarly practice⁴⁰, wishes to revolutionize the scene of pedagogy as well. This

³⁹ "Lesson Five" appears in *Visible Language* 22 (1988) 399-422 (a special issue entitled "Instant Theory: Making Thinking Popular"), "Lesson Eight" appears in *Art and Text* (Fall 1990), and "Lesson Ten" appears in *Exposure* 28 (1991) 85-90.

⁴⁰ Ulmer's two major books, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys*, and *Teletheory: Grammatology in the Age of Video*, are concerned with, among other things, changing the way scholars in the humanities conduct their work. *Applied Grammatology* works to cull the twentieth century experimental arts for alternative pedagogic strategies: "The task of applied grammatology is to introduce this [picto-ideo-phonographic] Writing into the classroom (and eventually into research communication in the form of video tapes)" (242). Though *Applied Grammatology* primarily focuses on the pedagogic level of

dissertation follows Ulmer in this respect: it explores the possibilities not only of doing serious academic research in hypertext and hypermedia formats and how such writing can change what our discipline calls research but also of how students might write about the Early Modern period in hypertextual formats.

The "New Historicism" of Grammatology

Though I have discussed Jonathan Goldberg in the above section primarily as a deconstructive critic, he has done work that has been labeled in critical articles as "New Historicist." Perhaps this label comes from his review essay published in *English Literary History* entitled "The Politics of Renaissance Literature: A Review Essay," which Montrose writes is one of two "influential and generally sympathetic early surveys/critiques of New Historicist work."⁴¹ More likely, however, the title comes from his work in *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries*, the publication of which followed shortly after the review article.⁴² The confusion, if it could be called this, is appropriate in that the

applying grammatology, of introducing into the classroom the "picto-ideo-phonographic Writing" Ulmer sees Derrida using, *Teletheory* begins the discussion of introducing this Writing into academic research, ending with an experimental research project. Ulmer himself says in an interview that "When I finished *Teletheory* I was surprised by the extent to which it is a sequel to the first book [i.e. *Applied Grammatology*]" (9). "The Making of 'Derrida at the Little Bighorn': An Interview," *Strategies* #2 (1989), 9-23.

⁴¹ See "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture," 32, note 7. While Goldberg is certainly kinder to Montrose and Greenblatt than he is to Fredric Jameson and to those practicing "older modes of criticism" (538), he does comment upon various shortcomings of the method. See "The Politics of Renaissance Literature: A Review Essay," *ELH* 49 (1982), 514-542.

⁴² This title is grouped with the more "consistent" New Historicists (like Montrose and Greenblatt) in various disparaging assessments of the New Historicist method. Alan Liu, for instance, includes it in a list of "examples of such paradigmatic or 'anecdotal' openings, which since the time of Howard's essay have become a favorite stalking-horse for readers critical of the New Historicism" ["The Power of Formalism: The New Historicism," *ELH* 56 (1990), p.757 note 2]. Christopher Kendrick, too [in "Anachronisms of Renaissance Postmodernism: On the Textuality Hypothesis in Jonathan Goldberg's *Voice Terminal Echo*," *Boundary 2* 15

New Historicism is known to result from a poststructural approach to the historiographical study of Renaissance texts.⁴³ Montrose calls it a

(Spring/Fall 1988), 239-69], writes of "the *exemplary* quality of Goldberg's criticism, which has worked both sides—philosophical and culturalist—of the divide opened up by the textuality hypothesis, and participated in both the 'New Historicist' and deconstructive tendencies that characterize much recent Renaissance criticism" (240). And even as late as the Winter 1990 issue of *New Literary History*, we see Goldberg defending himself against the attack of Richard Levin's "Unthinkable Thoughts in the New Historicizing of English Renaissance Drama," in a special issue on "New Historicism, New Histories and Others" which produced quite a heated exchange among the participants.

⁴³ There is some debate—or disagreement—over the precise relationship between deconstruction and New Historicism. Joel Fineman, for instance, equates the two critical approaches in terms of their attention to the "textuality" of their texts (see his essay "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction" in *The New Historicism*, 65, note 6), while Howard Felperin distinguishes New Historicism as a contextual approach from deconstruction as a textual approach ["It is, rather, because post-structuralism, in both its contextualist (or neo-historicist) version and its textualist (or deconstructive) version, is not, philosophically speaking, a 'realism' at all but a 'conventionalism.'" "Making it 'neo': the new historicism and Renaissance literature," *Textual Practice* 1 (1987), 263.]. Liu, on the other hand, writes of New Historicism as in between these two categories: "Fearing total commitment to either contextual or textual understanding, it pauses nervously in between" (768, note 62). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak views conflict between the two and attributes this to a turf battle ["As I believe Derrida himself surmised at the conference, the conflict between New Historicism and deconstruction can now be narrowed down to a turf battle between Berkeley and Irvine, Berkeley and Los Angeles" ("The New Historicism: Political Commitment and the Postmodern Critic," *The New Historicism* 278)], and Stanley Fish views the dilemma of New Historicism, which on the one hand undermines the ability to know the past except through the filter of the present and on the other hand wants to assert a particular kind of knowledge about the past as being true, as "a tension between the frankly political agenda of much New Historicist work and the poststructuralist polemic which often introduces and frames that same work" ("Commentary: The Young and the Restless," 304). Finally, Stephen Greenblatt seems to want to distance his practice from poststructuralism as he situates himself "in relation to Marxism on the one hand, and poststructuralism on the other" ("Towards a Poetics of Culture" 1-2). He finds that in both (represented by Fredric Jameson in *The Political Unconscious* and Jean-Francois Lyotard in "Judiciousness in Dispute or, Kant after Marx") "History functions . . . as a convenient anecdotal ornament upon a theoretical structure, and capitalism appears not as a complex social and economic development in the West but as a malign philosophical principle" (5). Greenblatt's assumption here is that any single theory cannot fully describe something as complex as capitalism: "I propose that the general question addressed by Jameson and Lyotard—what is the historical relation between art and society or between one institutionally demarcated discursive practice and another?—does not lend itself to a single, theoretically satisfactory answer of the kind that Jameson and Lyotard are trying to provide" (5). This, then, justifies the theoretically eclectic approach of the New Historicism.

"poststructuralist orientation to history," the various modes of which "can be characterized by . . . a shift from History to histories."⁴⁴

It can be difficult to talk about the way that New Historicism manifests poststructural theory in its approach to the Renaissance simply because it does not have an established theoretical practice to which one can point. This deficiency is even admitted by its most celebrated practitioners and apologists. Greenblatt, for instance, quite frankly confesses to this in the inaugural essay of the anthology *The New Historicism* :

One of the peculiar characteristics of the 'new historicism' in literary studies is precisely how unresolved and in some ways disingenuous it has been—I have been—about the relation to literary theory. On the one hand it seems to me that an openness to the theoretical ferment of the last few years is precisely what distinguishes the new historicism from the positivist historical scholarship of the early twentieth century. . . . On the other hand the historicist critics have on the whole been unwilling to enroll themselves in one or the other of the dominant theoretical camps.⁴⁵

Montrose, too, makes the same kind of statement in the essay that follows Greenblatt's in the same anthology:

In the essay of mine to which I have already referred, I wrote merely of a new historical *orientation* in Renaissance literary studies, because it seemed to me that those identified with it by themselves or by others were actually quite heterogeneous in their critical practices and, for the most part, reluctant to theorize those practices. ("The Poetics and Politics of Culture" 18)

⁴⁴ "The Poetics and Politics of Culture," 20. If the New Historicism is a "poststructural" history, then Goldberg's later work in *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* might be called "New Historicist." But he takes great pains to establish and carry out a "deconstructive history" which avoids the "vulgar concept of time" which linearizes history, a problem he found with the kind of historicizing Greenblatt does in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*: "To label history in hindsight means to narrativize history in a certain way, to view its course as linear and teleological and to assume that one can read back" ("The Politics of Renaissance Literature" 534). Others have found this tendency in New Historicist work, as will be seen. So there appears to be a rift in the field of "poststructuralist history," thereby problematizing the use of that label.

⁴⁵ "Towards a Poetics of Culture," 1-14.

And in his survey of Renaissance New Historicist scholarship, which claims to be "an Apology or apologetics for the New Historicism complete with incorporated criticisms" (771 note 95) and ends with a call for a full-scale theory of New Historicism, Alan Liu writes, "in most works that follow a New Historicist approach it ["the diverse body of structural or quasi-structural thought" indicative of New Historicist study] is surprisingly underthought at the theoretical level" It is, he later says, a "wonder-cabinet of ill-sorted methods."⁴⁶

Much discussion of the actual methods and implications of New Historicism has occurred, so that there seems almost as much said *about* New Historicist practice as there is actual New Historicist practice, both by practitioners and commentators alike.⁴⁷ To the extent that those critical of New Historicism's practices homogenize the varied approaches, they are able to isolate themes or motives that recur.⁴⁸ Rather than recount what has

⁴⁶ See p. 743. In note 5 (758-59), Liu shows what the contents of this "wonder cabinet" are in an extensive documentation of the theoretical sources of New Historicist vocabulary: "In the main, the method bears the imprint of a massive borrowing from New Criticism . . . from deconstruction . . . from 'dialectic' and its components . . . and from complementary terminologies in Foucault, Geertz, and Althusser."

⁴⁷ Besides the essays already mentioned by Alan Liu, Howard Felperin, Louis Montrose, Stephen Greenblatt, Stanley Fish, Christopher Kendrick, Richard Levin, and Jonathan Goldberg, see also Louis Montrose, "Renaissance Literary Studies and the Subject of History," *ELR* 16 (Winter 1986), 5-12; Jean E. Howard, "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies," *ELR* 16 (Winter 1986), 13-43; and David Norbrook, "The Life and Death of Renaissance Man," *Raritan* 8 (1989), 89-110. Fish makes a similar comment concerning the essays anthologized in *The New Historicism*: "For the most part (and this is a distinction to which I shall return) these essays are not doing New Historicism but talking about doing New Historicism, about the claims made in its names and the problems those claims give rise to . . ." ("Commentary: The Young and the Restless" 303).

⁴⁸ As Montrose writes, "But neither has it become any clearer that 'The New Historicism' designates any agreed upon intellectual and institutional program" ("The Poetics and Politics of Culture" 18). He goes on to detail the conflicted terrain that "New Historicism" designates, concluding that "Inhabiting the discursive spaces traversed by the term 'New Historicism' are some of the most complex, persistent, and unsettling of the problems that professors of literature attempt variously to confront or to evade . . ." (19).

already been more than adequately documented, I will instead try briefly to describe the poststructural "sources" of the New Historicism and then go on to discuss some of the most notable comments made concerning its virtues and vices before proceeding to further delineate the grammatological program in which I am engaged.

One concise statement of the poststructural paradigm useful for the purpose of clarifying the poststructural sources of New Historicism can be found in Roland Barthes' essay "From Work to Text."⁴⁹ In this essay, which serves as an inaugural enunciation of the changes undergone (and, in some ways, still being undergone) in the "paradigm shift" from modernism to postmodernism, Barthes invokes the etymological sense of "text" in working to define "Text": it is a "weave of signifiers" (159) which is "woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages . . ." (160). The root of text, a metaphor latent in the original Latin "texere" which could mean both "to weave" as well as "to compose" (speech or writing), helps to define the new poststructural sense of the pervasiveness of language as a determinant feature structuring the way humans think. "The metaphor of the Text is that of the *network* " (161), Barthes writes, and it is within the network of signifiers that cultural agents are born and raised.⁵⁰ The Text, that is, does not refer to a single book or enunciation in the language (as the term "work" does) but to the entire field of language itself: "the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language" (157). As such, distinctions between

⁴⁹ In *Image Music Text*, tr. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977) 155-64.

⁵⁰ Lacan is best known for formulating the sense of how cultural agents are "separated" from their mothers by the "Name-of-the-Father," that is, how the in(tro)duction into language constitutes an entry into a cultural "field" of language governed by the "paternal signifier." His work with linguistics in the area of psychoanalysis exemplifies the general way that considerations of linguistics have infiltrated almost every field of study.

particular genres cannot be evaluatively hierarchized since they are all participants in the same textual field. As Barthes writes, "the Text does not stop at (good) Literature; it cannot be contained in a hierarchy, even in a simple division of genres. What constitutes the Text is, on the contrary (or precisely), its subversive force in respect of the old classifications" (157).

It is this sense of text that New Historicists embrace in their approach to the Renaissance. As critics like Howard Felperin and Alan Liu have noted, New Historicists treat various kinds of texts in the Renaissance as being part of a larger con-text which serves as a substrate of ideological axioms that find expression in particular articulations.⁵¹ This justifies, for instance, Greenblatt's celebrated glance in "Invisible Bullets" at Thomas Hariot's *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*—one of the various travelogues representing the "New World" inhabitants—as a way of talking about Shakespeare's history plays, or his exploration of the reiterations by the culture of the important elements of the Bower of Bliss episode in *The Faerie Queene*.⁵² Letters, travelogues, diaries—texts not considered "literary" in the more traditional sense of that term—become loci for the kind of cultural production that critics more typically look for in canonical authors like

⁵¹ Alan Liu, in fact, suggests at the end of his powerful critique of the New Historicist methodology (or lack thereof) that: "That which needs to be unthought, in other words, is the very concept of the 'text' itself" (756). His portrayal of the New Historicist as a postmodern intellectual so embarrassed by his social and political impotence that s/he finds vicarious reassurance in identifying with those Renaissance figures who subversively fight the oppressive forces of monarchical rule—an account no less dramatic than the New Historicists he critiques—ends with a call for a "New Historicist study of New Historicism" (752), "a full-scale theory of New Historicism" (754), "a renewed rhetoric" (755), and a prophecy of a "'new rhetorical historicism' now making its advent" (771, note 95)—i.e. an historicism that is active in a rhetorical sense rather than being the passive hermeneutic practice that it is under the present circumstances. I have John Murchek to thank for clarifying some of these issues for me.

⁵² For "Invisible Bullets," see *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 21-66. For the essay on Spenser's "Bower" episode, see *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980) 157-192.

Shakespeare or Spenser. So the New Historicist tries to trace the "serial movement of disconnections, overlappings, variations" that occurs within the "field of the text" (Barthes, "From Work to Text" 158), and this helps to explain the interdisciplinary, intertextual emphases that one embraces when engaged in the New Historicist project.

Accompanied by this poststructural sense of textuality is the postmodern penchant for the self-reflexive. No longer will work in the humanities attempt to mimic the (questionable and questioned) status of the objective, the claim to which the sciences used to boast; rather, it will foreground the subjective, the subject's effect upon the object of inquiry. The "observer's effect" is recognized and embraced whole-heartedly. Both Greenblatt and Montrose openly admit to this: Greenblatt writes that "methodological self-consciousness is one of the distinguishing marks of the new historicism in cultural studies as opposed to a historicism based upon faith in the transparency of signs and interpretive procedure" ("Towards a Poetics of Culture" 12). Montrose acknowledges as well the cultural specificity of the project, noting the inescapable nature of the observer effect: "The project of the new socio-historical criticism is, then, to analyze the interplay of culture-specific discursive practices—mindful that it, too, is such a practice and so participates in the interplay it seeks to analyze."⁵³ Methodological

⁵³ Montrose in fact closes by admitting to having a purpose which grows out of this perspective: "If, by the ways in which we choose to read Renaissance texts, we bring to our students and to ourselves a sense of our own historicity, an apprehension of our own positionings within ideology, then we are at the same time demonstrating the limited but nevertheless tangible possibility of contesting the regime of power and knowledge that at once sustains and constrains us" (31). While some have questioned the extent to which the New Historicism empowers its students, many have noted the phenomenon that the New Historicism communicates more about itself in the present, by means of using the past as a mirror, than it reveals about the Renaissance. See, for instance, Alan Liu: "... the New Historicist interpreter is thus a subject looking into the past for some other subject able to define what he himself, or she herself, is; but all the search shows in its uncanny historical mirror is the same subject he/she already knows: a simulacrum of the poststructuralist self insecure in its identity" (733); Howard Felperin: "For all the Renaissance erudition in Greenblatt's work, its command of historical

self-consciousness, however, is not equivalent to a theoretical foundation upon which such a method should be based, according to some critics.

Stanley Fish notes the peculiarly rhetorical quality of this notorious maneuver:

Some New Historicists outflank this accusation [of doing what they critique other "older historicists" for doing] by making it first, and then confessing to it with an unseemly eagerness. In this way they transform what would be embarrassing if it were pointed out by another into a sign of honesty and methodological self-consciousness. (*The New Historicism* 306)

Fish proceeds to suggest that such a maneuver is an unnecessary escape, a "false dilemma" that he attempts to reconcile in the writing of his essay. He separates the general question of historical practice or procedure from specific questions of historical inquiry to argue that the "observer effect" (to put it briefly) does not change the fact that *things happened*, only the *way we perceive* them to have happened. The New Historicism sometimes confuses the two, Fish argues. When the "paradigmatic parergon" (to fuse the concepts of Kuhn and Derrida) is challenged, "the result will not be an indeterminacy of fact, but a new shape of factual firmness underwritten by a newly, if temporarily, settled perspective" (308).⁵⁴

detail, richness of peculiar anecdote and attentiveness to contemporary texts, it is his own culture that he broods on and depicts. If we want to understand the historical nature of Greenblatt's achievement, we must look finally beyond the Renaissance context he so painstakingly constructs and into his own cultural and institutional context" (276); and David Norbrook: "In an era of escalating competitiveness for academic posts in an increasingly market-oriented career structure, academics are no longer allowed the luxury of an earlier generation's idealization of the disinterested quest for truth, and it is not surprising that their discourse should betray such pressures" (107-08). Liu even suggests that this feature should become foregrounded as a primary part of a fully delineated theory of New Historicism: "A concept with eminently academic overtones, 'acknowledgement' of the present's intervention in the past should blossom into disciplined study. We *should* see our own prejudices and concerns in such constructs as the 'Renaissance' . . ." (753).

⁵⁴ N. Katherine Hayles makes a similar argument in discussing gender encoding in the science of fluid mechanics. She attempts to account for the reason that complex flows in hydraulics were ignored (because unsolvable)—and their subsequently being gendered as feminine—by examining the initial assumptions of the differential mathematics used to solve such

The assumption that Fish makes, enabling him to draw such a conclusion, concerns the way that historical inquiry—or, for that matter, academic research in general—is conducted. For Fish, one will not answer a specific historic question differently if one believes that historical events are constructed as opposed to found, because the means of construction are similar: historical narrative is still linear and tries to define cause-effect relationships, drawing upon the epistemology of rationality and scientific inquiry.⁵⁵ Fish says as much soon after examining Jean Franco's anthologized essay on "The Nation as Imagined Community":

Not that I am faulting Franco for falling into the trap of being discursive and linear; she could not do otherwise and still have as an aim (in her terms an allegorical aim) the *understanding*—the bringing into discursive comprehension—of anything. In

equations. Before the advent of fractal geometry and chaos theory, complex flows were considered aberrations, but now, within the new mathematical framework, scientists are finding the complex and nonlinear to be the norm. Hayles' explanation is like Fish's in its explanation of how conclusions can still be valid (like scientific laws, for instance) yet be in conflict with other conclusions (for example, Newton's Laws of Gravity vs. Einstein's Laws of Relativity). She writes, "It is not that the 'laws' are untrue, but rather that they represent formulations which can be verified when one is standing at a certain position and looking at things in a certain way. Despite their names, conservation laws and continuity principles are not inevitable facts of nature but *constructions that foreground some experiences and marginalize others*" (31, my emphasis). See "Gender Encoding in Fluid Mechanics: Masculine Channels and Feminine Flows," *Differences* 4.2 (1992), 16-44.

⁵⁵To repeat a line already quoted in note 40 from Jonathan Goldberg: "To label history in hindsight means to narrativize history in a certain way, to view its course as linear and teleological and to assume that one can read back" ("The Politics of Renaissance Literature 534). Liu also comments upon the point of narrativizing as a New Historicist habit: "One way to approach the problem of New Historicist 'paradigms' might thus be to recognize that they are first and foremost highly sophisticated exercises in storytelling" (767, note 55). His astute comment holds significant intimations concerning the status of New Historicist practice as being anything really new when the implications of being labelled "narrative" are considered. As Jerome McGann (whom Liu refers to in the same footnote) writes, "In the discourses of criticism, and most typically in philosophy and literary discourse, narrativized forms are so common that their narrativity is often not even noticed" [*Social Values and Poetic Acts: The Historical Judgment of Literary Work*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988) 133]. McGann invokes Hayden White's question of what a non-narrative history would be and proceeds to provide two models—what he calls "criticism as array" and "criticism as dialectic"—that already exist and that can serve as alternatives to the ideological axiomatic inherent in narrative's emphasis on continuity.

the end you can't "defy categorization," you can only categorize in a different way. (312)

This is a critical point that must be highlighted, as it will serve as one major crux of my argument: understanding, as we understand understanding, as the paradigm that is currently being challenged understands understanding, depends upon linearity for its epistemological underpinnings.⁵⁶ Understanding as it is used here by Fish implies the kinds of comprehension that are figured in the metaphors of seeing as understanding, grasping or apprehending as comprehending, of *theoria* and "idea" as words etymologically rooted in the sense of sight. And he is right: within this framework, this paradigm, even New Historicists committed to engaging a poststructural practice cannot help but be "discursive and linear."⁵⁷

The grammatologist would agree with Fish's criticism but would work to put his understanding into a perspective informed by the history of communicative technologies and of the practices that institutions adopt in employing these particular technologies. Along with Derrida, as the primary exemplar of the historical grammatologist in his earlier, more traditional work (when compared to works such as *The Post Card* and *Glas*, for instance), the theoretical grammatologist views the discourse of rationality as

⁵⁶Disciplines that are currently challenging epistemological assumptions include poststructural philosophies, theories of chaos, fractal geometry, cognitive science and neural network research. Each of these emphasizes non- or multi-linearity as fundamental to its approach.

⁵⁷Hayles begins her essay on "Gender Encoding in Fluid Mechanics" by discussing the differences between Donna Haraway and Luce Irigaray in their approach to writing about the sciences. The fundamental difference is that Haraway's arguments "challenge scientific objectivity from *within the rules of the game* . . . Positioning oneself at the periphery [as Haraway does] is not the same, however, as leaving the game altogether. Leaving the game is the move Irigaray makes . . ." (18-19). She later characterizes Irigaray's discourse as being "fractured, elliptical, *nonlinear*" (19, my emphasis). This is, in part, the goal of the grammatologist as well: to escape the game, the game of narrative criticism that only adds more stories to the overstuffed shelves of libraries, a game which engages the ideology of continuity and linearity. But the new game is not supposed to be so intimidating (as is Irigaray's) that nobody will want to play.

being part of the "epoch of logocentrism," an epoch governed by the metaphysics of presence that Derrida sets out to undermine, and s/he wishes to contribute to the kind of "meta-rational" thinking that the poststructural philosophers are forecasting as an effect of their work. One might even be inclined to call grammatology a kind of "new historical" approach.

As such, it shares certain qualities with the New Historicism as delineated above. Like the Renaissance New Historicists, the grammatologist will work to establish a self-conscious relationship to the past and to past practices in the history of reading of writing, but its purpose of doing so is to seek potential alternatives to current rhetorical practices. Writing was not always entirely alphabetic, with pages and pages of straight text, but in fact incorporated imagery as mnemonic and/or decorative devices, as in the emblem books of the Renaissance or the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages. Derrida himself has sung the praises of the hieroglyph, a kind of writing that he claims can be multilinear in its signifying practice. The grammatologist will cull from these and other past writing practices strategies for writing in the multilinear formats of the electronic media. In the process of doing so, s/he will self-reflexively discuss, in the manner of Montrose and Greenblatt, the current institutional practices—with an emphasis more on how they have come to be and how they affect perceptions of subject positioning than on the relative power(lessness) of the academic with a "frankly political agenda" (as Fish says)—as well as the historical contexts of those past institutional practices being drawn upon analogically as s/he begins to invent rhetorical practices for the electronic era.

Grammatology in the age of the Early Modern period will differ from a strictly New Historicist practice, however, in that it has a theoretical position that one can locate, and part of the purpose of this dissertation will be to

delineate, exemplify, and enact this theoretical practice as it would be applied to the Early Modern period. While it is perhaps just as vague as the New Historicists' articulation of their theoretical grounding to say that grammatologists draw upon "twentieth century French literary theory/philosophy" as a theoretical basis, they desire not to engage in the debates over interpretations of these writers as much as they wish to look to them as models for how to "write" electronically. This may be taken as a polite sidestepping of significant issues, but they do not define grammatology in a way that requires critique and therefore see it as being outside of this realm, insofar as engaging in such debate can be taken up as a primary focus for academic work. For the grammatologist does not wish to fall into the same trap that Fish claims the New Historicists' did; that is, rather than continue in the realm of hermeneutics, of interpretation and description, the grammatologist seeks to cultivate an heuretic approach, one which does not necessarily entirely abandon the hermeneutic but which does not privilege it either, as s/he works to invent heuretically the new practices for an electronic age.⁵⁸

To cultivate such an approach will be to escape (to whatever degree it is possible) the linear, rational, narrativizing of most current critical practice in order to elaborate a more richly specified practice of the meta-rational. Grammatological practice will invent, that is, the practice of invention—

⁵⁸ Ulmer might not call his work newly historical but newly "mystorical," as he invents a new genre called the "mystory," the title of which intends to parody "history" and juxtapose against the obvious patriarchal pun a rubric for this particular heuretic work in *Teleteory*. He himself writes about the necessary suspension of the hermeneutic impulse in order to allow for the heuretic, inventive process to occur. As he notes, the interpretive process can come afterwards: "The mystory learns from the psychoanalytic interview the strategy of suspending critical analysis, temporarily, in order to bring into appearance, into representation, the pattern that inevitably arises when texts are juxtaposed. 'Derrida at the Little Bighorn' is classified as a 'fragment' in *Teleteory* because it remains to be interpreted. It was generated heuretically by juxtaposing the three discourses that constitute my 'life story.' In fact, the main purpose of this interview is to begin the interpretive process" ("The Making of 'Derrida at the Little Bighorn': An Interview" 13).

insofar as invention is a metarational process—and will work to institute a pedagogy that can teach this practice to those unacquainted with the difficult poststructural philosophies upon which it is grounded. Before beginning to do so, however, before beginning to derive ways of composing in the new medium of hypertext from the sixteenth century, I must provide more groundwork in the next chapter by situating grammatology in the recent orality versus literacy debates, looking especially at Jonathan Goldberg's negotiation of that debate in *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*, as well as point to what precisely in the Early Modern period can yield to a grammatological look by considering two histories of the period, *The Art of Memory* by Francis Yates and *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* by Walter Ong. Such a consideration will identify the sixteenth century as a site of educational transition caused in part by technological change, and will end with a preliminary consideration of Spenser as a writer in the midst of this transitional moment who was affected by the educational changes that took place.

CHAPTER 2 GRAMMATOLOGY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

This, I believe, is one of the earliest examples of the extreme fascination with deploying words in a kind of abstract space which was to be a characteristic of the Ramist age, and which is still so much a part of us that we can hardly realize it has an origin and a history.

—Walter Ong

We choose our past in the same way that we choose our future.

—Hayden White

One goal of historical exploration in a grammatological project is to understand the extent to which current institutional practices are cultural, to understand, that is, that they have been invented at some point in history. Such is the motivation behind Ong's work on Ramus, as he writes in the above quotation; as such, his work engages in a grammatological exploration which examines the effects of a particular technology of the word—the printing press—upon the contemporaneous practices of rhetorical oratory. If the outline—the "deployment of words in an abstract space"—was invented at a particular moment in history, then knowing of its status *as* invention gives us the option of continuing its usage or inventing new practices. Ong enjoins us, then, to become aware of the origins of our current practices so that we are not bound unconsciously to employ methods that may no longer be suitable to the new media now available. Grammatological deconstruction, it could be argued, works in a similar way: it identifies the metaphors underlying

certain "concepts we live by" so that we can consider alternatives, thereby empowering us in our use of language.¹

My primary purpose in this dissertation, then, involves the question of hypertext composition, of how this new electronic medium might be used within the educational institution by both scholars composing academic articles about poets like Edmund Spenser and English instructors training students to write about and with literature in a hypertext program like Storyspace. This chapter plays the role of examining the history of pedagogical practices as they existed during the transitional period spanning the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Knowledge of how pedagogical practices changed then can help current pedagogical reformers generate innovative instructional curricula by providing an understanding of both the dynamics involved in a period of transition and the defining characteristics of the print and electronic apparatuses. Such knowledge, I hope to show by the end of this dissertation, can be most fruitful in negotiating our current transitional shift. After providing a brief history of sixteenth-century pedagogical practices and demonstrating how the printing press was one of the central causes of the shifts in educational methods, I look at the work of Edmund Spenser as a representative example of one writer in the midst of these changes. The chapters following this preliminary groundwork will

¹I allude in this sentence to Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*, and intend by doing so to suggest that their work provides a model for the work of deconstruction. Early in the first chapter of the book, the authors present an example of one pervasive metaphor we live by—"argument is war"—and then proceed to suggest how difficult it would be to conceive of argument in terms of an alternative metaphor: "Try to imagine a culture where arguments are not viewed in terms of war. . . . Imagine a culture where an argument is viewed as a dance, the participants are seen as performers, and the goal is to perform in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing way" (4-5). Implicit in this suggestion is the potential that deconstruction has for empowering us—to the extent that we can be empowered—by providing alternatives and choices. Ultimately, though, the poststructuralist knows that one is confined to work within language, unlike those literary critics who believe that language is merely a transparent medium to a meaning that transcends the language itself.

then explore what I have learned about hypertext composition from the sixteenth century and apply this learning in solving the problem of how to compose in hypertext in a manner that exploits its full potential for communicative efficacy.

The task of writing a history, though, is not without its problems, since the discipline of history, as of late, has come under attack. It is no longer viewed as the unproblematized revelation of the past, but is now seen to be mediated by language and by language-users. The notion of the "observer effect," while originating in anthropological study or perhaps even in such scientific thought-experiments as Schrödinger's Cat, quantum mechanics or relativity, has colored the methodological strategies of the liberal arts and social sciences as well. The conclusions of Hayden White are now well-known, conclusions which clarify the extent to which histories are literary constructions, interpretations framing a set of facts. As he writes, "But in general there has been a reluctance to consider historical narratives as what they most manifestly are: verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented as found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences."²

While White's call for historiological sophistication is specific to the discipline of history, his call to action is similar to Ong's in that it requires

²In *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978, 82. Elsewhere, White writes of the "burden of history" as being the need to identify how history itself was invented at a particular point in history, how it was a cultural phenomenon: "Thus, historians of this generation must be prepared to face the possibility that the prestige which their profession enjoyed among nineteenth-century intellectuals was a consequence of determinable cultural forces. They must be prepared to entertain the notion that history, as currently conceived, is a kind of historical accident, a product of a specific historical situation, and that, with the passing of the misunderstandings that produced that situation, history itself may lose its status as an autonomous and self-authenticating mode of thought. It may well be that the most difficult task which the current generation of historians will be called upon to perform is to expose the historically conditioned character of the historical discipline . . ." (29).

historians of any discipline to consider the invented nature of the discipline itself. The implications of his claims extend, therefore, to historical exploration in any discipline, but especially to literary criticism, as so much of its endeavor involves history. Jerome J. McGann comments on the extent to which an "ideology of continuity" in narrativized literary histories governs the sphere of literary criticism: "If one is interested in *critical* knowledge, one has to be wary of this impulse to generate continuities. . . . In the discourses of criticism, narrativized forms are so common that their narrativity is often not even noticed."³ McGann calls attention, like Ong and White, to what is forgotten or overlooked in our current practices, and therefore his work, in that it looks to identify the origin of a specific cultural behavior within an invisible ideology, qualifies for the title of "cultural criticism" as well.

The work of scholars like Jack Goody, Walter Ong, and Eric Havelock, who could be called "grammatologists"—historians of reading and writing practices—has recently come to be scrutinized by cultural critics who find in it the tendency to generate continuities in the historical movement from orality to literacy. Before proceeding to explore the sixteenth century for the ways in which some institutional practices were abandoned and others were initiated, I must first discuss the debate over the history of orality and literacy in order to situate grammatology within this debate and to show how grammatology can resolve the problems that Goody, Ong, and Havelock pose for a grammatological representation of history. Insofar as this dissertation is a historical exploration of past reading and writing practices, of past strategies for

³*Social Values and Poetic Acts: The Historical Judgment of Literary Work*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988, 132-3. McGann proceeds to offer alternatives to narrativizing for historical representation.

"information storage and retrieval"⁴ as they have been carried out in oral and literate cultures, I am writing the next chapter in this history, the chapter concerning the move from literacy to "computeracy." The goal, ultimately, is to work toward deriving scholarly and pedagogical strategies for information storage and retrieval in electronic media based on past practices of building memory palaces that, as I intend to show, are more suitable for electronic *dispositio* than current literate or "book" strategies.

The Orality-Literacy Debate

The scholarship surrounding questions of oral cultures and how such cultures compare to literate cultures has become quite extensive in recent decades, so much so that Cambridge University Press has instituted a series of books entitled "Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture." Such scholarship explores a number of different aspects of the problem, from the points of view of various disciplines: anthropological studies of tribal African cultures, historical studies plotting various points along the line marking the transition from strictly oral practices to current literate practices, sociological studies describing the effects of writing upon interpersonal relationships.

⁴By offering this potentially reductive equation of reading and writing practices with the notion of "information storage and retrieval," I do not intend to overlook the ways that poststructuralism complicates and problematizes the whole notion of reading and writing as processes controllable by an author. In one sense, the phrase captures the implied logocentrism in the rhetorical tradition of the commonplaces, which identify topics of various subject matters as being located in certain places that can be plumbed for the purpose of making an argument. But information here must be understood as any form of textuality in the broadest sense of the term, such that the information that a writer stores in the form of narrative or epic poetry (or any other form, for that matter) may be unconscious representations of pervasive cultural norms that the writer unwittingly manifests in the writing. The mere act of storing information does not, of course, assure its accurate and immediate retrieval, even when it is within an individual's own esoteric mnemonic system. Given the characteristics of signs that deconstructionists recognize, a text of "stored information" might be retrieved differently by different readers; information perhaps unknown to the author might thus be released at a later point in time. A poststructuralist critique of the logocentric topology of the memory palace, taking into account these issues, is to come in chapter five.

While much data were gathered on these and other topics, only recently have the methodology and assumptions governing these studies come under question. The "debate," then, concerns the extent to which some of these scholars have succumbed to an ideological bias which enables them to conclude that literate culture is superior to or more advanced than "primitive" oral cultures.

The central question of the debate as I see it is as follows: does alphabetic literacy inherently change the capability or the capacity of the mind to think? Each of the three grammatological scholars mentioned, Ong, Havelock and Goody, have all been guilty of making this claim in their work, overtly suggesting in the process that this change makes the literate cognitively advanced or superior. Ong, for instance, defining writing as a "technology of the word," writes that "Technologies are not mere exterior aids but also interior transformations of consciousness. . . ."⁵ Writing, in his view, becomes indispensable to the kinds of progress that humankind has managed to make since its advent: "Nevertheless, without writing, human consciousness cannot achieve its fuller potentials, cannot produce other beautiful and powerful creations. In this sense, orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing" (14-15). Havelock, too, sees the potential of human rationality as being unlocked by writing. In his study of the effects of the Greek alphabet upon communicative efficiency, he claims that literacy literally changed our minds, allowing for logical thinking to emerge. Havelock therefore suggests that all logical thinking was a result of Greek alphabetic literacy.⁶ Goody as well, in his *Domestication of the Savage Mind*,

⁵*Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Routledge, 1982.

⁶ Havelock writes, in *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1986), "A more radical question would be to ask: May not all logical thinking as commonly understood be a product of Greek alphabetic

written in part as a corrective to Havelock's disregard of chirographic cultures existing prior to Greek civilization, makes the claim that writing practices such as the recipe, the list, and the table or chart helped in the "development of cognitive structures and processes" which emerged "subsequent to the advent of writing" (36-37).

Each of these writers views the technologies of writing as devices that enable users to realize the "fully human" potentials of rational thought which are characteristic of modern-day civilization. Assumed in this point of view is the belief that the technologies of literacy—first the invention of the vowel in Greek culture, the emergence of chirographic culture, and finally the invention of movable type—are implicitly progressive, leading in an inevitable "march of time" toward the development of individuality, democracy, freedom. Literacy, in and of itself, comes to be a civilizing force: the progressive technologizing of the word is an emancipatory development.⁷ In a sense, proponents of this view hold that this process of technologizing is *naturally* progressive, rather than seeing the assumption that literacy liberates as a *culturally* imposed valuation.⁸

literacy?" (39). Later, he comments on how thought patterns themselves were changed: "A special theory of Greek literacy involves the proposition that the way we use our senses and the way we think are connected, and that in the transition from Greek orality to Greek literacy the terms of this connection were altered also, and have remained altered, as compared with the mentality of oralism, ever since" (98).

⁷Michael Warner challenges the conclusion that print enabled democracy to occur in his book *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990). He begins by citing a text by John Quincy Adams, in which "Adams assumes that printing's purposes, uses, and meaning do not themselves undergo change. The press is a powerful instrument for enlightenment precisely because its nature is *not* contingent" (4). For the sake of his study, Warner believes that "we have to assume that the purposes, uses, and meaning of print do change" (4).

⁸One can see the notion that literacy is naturally progressive in the advertisements for PLUS ("Project Literacy U.S."). In opposition to such programs of literacy, Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" attempts to teach literacy in such a way that students become empowered to work politically, an approach that suggests the teaching of literacy can somehow be *opposed* to the goal of liberation.

This position has come under attack by such scholars as Brian Street and Mary Carruthers. In *Literacy in Theory and Practice*, Brian Street addresses the tendency described above as an ideological assumption; he sees a problem in a position which represents technology as a neutral agent. The appeal of this position, according to Street, is that it allows one to avoid the charge of "discrimination" in the politicized sense most commonly used today.

They can argue, whether implicitly or explicitly, that this new version of the "great divide"—the division between literate and non-literate—does not discriminate between cultures but simply between technologies. Since technologies are "neutral," then no aspersions are being cast on individual members of cultures which happen to lack a particular technology and are thus taken to lack certain intellectual advantages. . . . The suggestion is no longer that a culture is intellectually superior, as earlier racist theories had argued. Rather, it is claimed that a culture is intellectually superior because it has acquired that technology. (29)

Mary Carruthers has a similar problem with the haphazard use of the word "technology." In *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, in which she reveals medieval mnemonic practices to be a mixture of oral and literate practices, Carruthers calls for care in the use of the term technology, specifically care in the assumption that cognitive processes are improved:

[S]ome modern historians of technology seem to assume that there is a direct and simple correlation between the form something takes in writing and the way a person is able to think about it, in the same way that a washing-machine's design determines how clothes washed in it will be washed. The fashion for defining writing as a technological innovation of the same sort as television and the automobile, or the heavy plow and moveable type, seems to me fraught with difficulties.⁹ (96)

⁹Carruthers is critical, among other things, of the reductive nature of labeling practices by certain scholars involved in the orality-literacy debate. Ong, for instance, is guilty of suggesting that memory is obliterated by the advent of literacy, that somehow human memory

Street labels this position that views technology as a neutral agent the "autonomous model" of literacy, a position which privileges one particular form of literacy as a universal practice, as the sole form of literacy.¹⁰ He writes, "The model tends, I claim, to be based on the 'essay-text' form of literacy and to generalise broadly from what is in fact a narrow, culture-specific literacy practice" (1).¹¹

As an alternative to the reductive autonomous model, Street offers what he calls the "ideological model" of literacy, one which recognizes that practices of literacy fulfill different purposes in different social contexts and

atrophies with the storage of information in written form. Her research in medieval mnemonic practices, in which the act of writing involved an extensive process of *inventio* during which the composer "discovered" the commonplaces stored in his/her memory, suggests that the book in medieval culture helped to enhance individual memory but that it in no way obliterated memory: "I think it will become clear in my discussion [of how one making a text proceeded] that the terms 'oral' and 'written' are inadequate categories for describing what actually went on in traditional composition" (194).

¹⁰Street in fact suggests that this autonomous model is politically motivated in order to perpetuate the current schooling practices: "[E]ducation systems are to be justified on the grounds that they develop 'intellectual competence that would otherwise go largely undeveloped.' They conjecture that literacy plays a central part in this process. The qualities which they attribute to literacy thus take on the more general significance of justifying the vast expense on western educational systems. Seen in this perspective, the claims already have political and ideological significance . . ." (19).

¹¹Jonathan Goldberg, in *Writing Matter: From the Hand of the English Renaissance* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990), locates the origin of this narrow conception of literacy—what he calls at one point the "ideology of literacy" (205)—in sixteenth-century pedagogical practices. Like Street's assessment of the politically motivated nature of the autonomous model, Goldberg finds the aim of humanistic pedagogical programs, which focused on creating the notion of high literacy by means of training in handwriting, to be the securement of employment in courtly settings for intellectuals otherwise marginalized from such positions of power. Mulcaster's pedagogical treatise *The First Part of the Elementarie*, for instance, attempted to define the requirements for minimal literacy in such a way that the institution which he was inventing was the only means of acquiring high literacy, the idealized italic style of handwriting. Citing François Furet and Jacques Ozouf (*Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry*) in order to compare the situation in sixteenth-century England with their assessment of the situation in France, Goldberg concludes with an assertion that undermines the position of those upholding the autonomous model: "Hence, the spread of literacy always correlates with social and economic inequalities. Literacy, they conclude, 'represented the key to entry to the cultural model of the upper classes. Wherever we look, in every period, social stratification presides over the history of literacy' (303). . . . Extensions of literacy redefine, but do not abolish, structures of class" (48).

that it is necessary, therefore, to attend to the specific setting in which a particular form of literacy exists in order to identify how it works for that culture. Carruthers's example of the washing machine is helpful here: rather than viewing literacy as a "technology" that works in one way and one way only, as those upholding the autonomous model assume, the ideological model assumes that the way literacy "works" in a culture depends upon the culture in which it is working: "The model stresses the significance of the socialisation process in the construction of the meaning of literacy for participants and is therefore concerned with the general social institutions through which this process takes place and not just the explicit 'educational' ones" (Street 2).

The emphasis here on the institutional makes Street's argument similar to a grammatological one, which seeks, as part of its position, to recognize the place of institutional practices in the employment of technologies of communication. The notion of the "apparatus" does not reduce literacy to a neutral technology but considers technology in relation to the institutional practices governing its usage. The use of "technologies of the word," that is, must be learned in specific social settings, institutional settings, by individuals. Furthermore, the institutional training received by students as a means of employing these technologies within particular social settings results in an ideological formation that crystallizes into a particular form of subjectivity.¹² Havelock, for instance, writes of how a sense of selfhood emerged subsequent to the invention of the alphabet, a recognition

¹²See, for one example of this phenomenon in the sixteenth century, Goldberg's third chapter: "The individual produced by writing is not an individualized subject but one conforming to the characters inscribed—the words and the letters of the copytexts clad in royalty" (164). See also the fifth chapter: "Hence (as Cressy knows), statistics about literacy (including his own) that depend on counting signatures err; moreover, as was emphasized earlier, they reproduce the more modern notion of what constitutes literacy—the ability to sign the name and thereby to produce the individual" (242-3).

that Ulmer includes as part of his definition of grammatology: "Subject formation—subjectivation—is itself subject to invention."¹³ Subjectivity thus becomes part of what defines Ulmer's notion of "the interactive matrix" of the apparatus, which in his conception is constituted by technologies of communication, institutional practices as well as subject formation.¹⁴ Grammatology, therefore, provides the theoretical framework for an approach to the effects of language technologies which fits Street's "ideological model," supplying with its definition of the apparatus what Michael Warner, in *The Letters of the Republic*, believes has been lacking: "But to my mind the material studied in this book derives much of its interest from the *reciprocal* determination it shows between a medium and its politics. This is a historical relation of causation that remains relatively untheorized and resists the ways we usually narrate the past" (xii).¹⁵

¹³From Ulmer, *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*, 92.

¹⁴*Heuretics*, 17. Havelock locates the emergence of selfhood in early Greek culture; in this view, it has dominated in the apparatus of literacy for over 2500 years. While others locate the moment of invention at other points (for instance, after the invention of moveable type), the sense of the self as something invented is the common denominator. Contemporaneous with the emergence of the new electronic media has been the poststructuralist questioning of the unified self. See, as only one example of this, Foucault's conclusion that "As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end" (*The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, New York: Vintage Books, 1970, 387).

¹⁵Friedrich Kittler is said to have a conception of discourse which is similar to the grammatological definition of apparatus, as one can see in David E. Wellbery's foreword to *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans. Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990): "While Kittler accepts the Lacanian dictum that the unconscious is the discourse of the Other, he reads this formula from the standpoint of Foucault. That is to say, the term *discourse* no longer refers, as in Lacan's rendering, to the linguistic and therefore abstract notion of extended speech, but rather to positive modes of existence of language as shaped by institutions of pedagogy, technical means of reproduction, storage and transfer, available strategies of interpretation, and so on. Likewise the Lacanian Other is for Kittler not the general and sovereign instance of the one Law, but rather (and again, with Foucault) the network of forces and resistances, commands and addresses, that constitute historically specific configurations of domination" (xxi). The "discourse network" as presented here is comparable to Ulmer's notion of the "interactive matrix."

Given the debate as set forth above, however, it is clear that the notion of "technology" must be clearly and carefully defined. While other possibilities for defining this term have been opened up by such theorists as Theresa De Lauretis—with her "technologies of gender"—and Deleuze and Guattari—with their notion of the "abstract machine"—the grammatologist focuses on technology as a tool of communication. This would include not only specific technologies themselves (such as video, radio, typewriters, or printing presses) but also other implements not normally considered technologies, like a pencil, for instance, or a book. Conceiving of technology as a tool here avoids the limited view of technology exemplified in Carruthers' "washing machine" metaphor, which she employs to question the sense of a neutral machine that only works in one way. A tool can be used in a variety of ways for a variety of different reasons, though it may have one specified function, for example the use of a screwdriver as a chisel: it will work as a chisel in certain situations, but its intended function was to drive screws into wood. This definition of technology, then, would allow for context-specific employment, for which Street's ideological model calls.

Carruthers offers an alternative term etymologically related to technology: *technique*. She writes of these two almost interchangeably, as one can see in the following passage, in which she warns about reifying technique and refers to the abuse of this word in the same terms she uses when discussing the reductive use of technology by other scholars:

Similarly, neither the prevalence nor the form of written materials in a culture should, I think, be taken as any sure indication of those people's *ability* to think in rational categories, or of the structures those categories may take. I am not suggesting that technique and technology have no effect upon human culture; this study is concerned to identify and describe a number of distinctive features in medieval literary culture which are sometimes expressed in

particular techniques, such as page layout. But I try not to reify technique, and in particular I think it very important to recognize that the form in which information is presented to the mind does not necessarily constrain the way in which such information is encoded by the brain nor the ways in which it can be found and sorted. (32)

A third possible synonym for defining the technology of communication in a grammatological fashion is to view it as a mnemonic prosthesis. Grammatology might be considered as the study of the history of reading and writing, or more precisely the study of how information is "stored and retrieved" ("information" here not merely indicating neutral facts and figures but also referring to cultural axioms concerning gender relations, class distinctions, racial stereotypes, national mythologies, and any other ideological assumptions that are woven within its text), of how societies remember.¹⁶ Storage and retrieval can be seen as aspects of memory, and memory becomes the crux: "Learning is regarded as a process of discovering more effective, efficient, inclusive mnemonics—for memory, as Hugh of St. Victor says, is the basis of learning" (Carruthers 106). Technology, then, can be viewed as anything that improves the efficiency of memory, whether it be a tool like a pencil to write a grocery list or a technique like page lay-out that enhances recall of entire book pages.¹⁷ A library filled with books can be

¹⁶This latter phrase intentionally alludes to the title of Paul Connerton's sociological study entitled *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989). The notion of "information storage and retrieval" stems from Havelock's *The Muse Learns to Write*, in which he writes, "Once the necessity to preserve cultural identity through linguistic storage, on the one hand, and the oral character of early cultures on the other, are brought into conjunction and viewed together, the question arises: How then, can orality store its information for re-use? How can it preserve its identity?" (56).

¹⁷At the same time, caution still must be practiced in using the term efficiency to avoid ethnocentric views of technological determinism. Even the notion of "artificial memory" or mnemonic prosthesis must be carefully employed so as to avoid what Levi-Strauss warns about in *Tristes Tropiques*: "One might suppose that . . . [t]he possession of writing vastly increases man's ability to preserve knowledge. It can be thought of as an artificial memory, the development of which ought to lead to a clearer awareness of the past, and hence to a greater ability to organize both the present and the future. After eliminating all other criteria which

conceived of as a technology, when technology is defined as mnemonic prosthesis.¹⁸

With this sense of technology, then, I look in the next section at two grammatological histories, Frances Yates' *The Art of Memory* and Walter Ong's *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, with the intent of exploring how the sixteenth century was a transitional period for pedagogical practices, such that a different mnemonic system—the Ramist method of outlining—replaced the traditional mnemonic system of the memory palace. But the memory palace, as I will show in subsequent chapters, is more amenable to electronic media and will therefore provide a model for electronic *dispositio*. This will be one part of the prolegomenon for an electronic rhetoric, the second part consisting of specific strategies for writing within hypertext.

Sixteenth-Century Mnemonic Practices

Writing of the effect of Hayden White's conclusions concerning historiographical narrativization in the context of literary criticism, Jerome McGann says, "White explores a type of critical narrative which he calls the 'narrativized' text, where the writer builds into the discourse an illusion

have been put forward to distinguish between barbarism and civilization, it is tempting to retain this one at least: there are people with, or without, writing; the former are able to store up their past achievements and to move with ever-increasing rapidity towards the goal they have set for themselves, whereas the latter, being incapable of remembering the past beyond the narrow margin of individual memory, seem bound to remain imprisoned in a fluctuating history which will always lack both a beginning and any lasting awareness of an aim. Yet nothing we know about writing and the part it has played in man's evolution justifies this view" (298).

¹⁸In her textbook of rhetoric organized via the five parts of rhetoric, Winifred Bryan Horner, in *Rhetoric in the Classical Tradition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), writes of libraries as the repositories of cultural information: "Where classical rhetoric limited the study of memory to cultivating the natural memory, modern rhetoric must consider memory in terms of the resources available through books and databases . . ." (339).

which suggests that completion is inherent to the historical events rather than to the narrative of those events" (*Social Values and Poetic Acts* 140). Any past event or practice, then, is always open to recycling in a new (historical) narrative that reinterprets the past in terms of the present. Such is my purpose in this dissertation: to re-open the history of the memory palace, which came to an apparent end in the sixteenth century, and remotivate its mnemonics in the context of late twentieth-century technologies. My purpose in this section will be to review the institutional changes in pedagogical procedure which are said to have brought about the decline in the use of the memory palace as a popular mnemotechnique. This review will suggest that scholars and students responding to changes in communications technology at the present moment can bring about its return. Insofar as the changes in the sixteenth century were caused, in part, by the advent of a new technology—the printing press—I will suggest that the recent advent of new technologies, such as video, interactive multimedia, and virtual reality or "cyberspace," will impose the same pressure upon the educational institution to adapt to the changes with revised institutional practices. This dissertation, ultimately, will offer some possibilities for such practices.

First, I will review the history of the memory palace. The legendary origin of the mnemonic strategy of remembering images in particular places—the fundamental principle of the memory palace—occurred at a banquet given by Scopas. The poet Simonides, present at the banquet to entertain the guests, was called outside by two men, presumably the twin gods Castor and Pollux in praise of whom part of his songs were sung. During his absence the roof caved in, killing all of the dinner guests and mangling them beyond recognition. Simonides, however, was able to identify the guests, as he had remembered the places at the table at which each guest sat. From this

experience he extrapolated the fundamental principle of the memory palace, and so is said to have invented the art of memory.¹⁹

This story is often recounted in conjunction with discussion of the fourth part of rhetoric—*memoria*. The three Roman sources for rhetorical practice each include strategies for memorization based on Simonides' invention: Cicero's *De oratore*, Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. The purpose of this discussion of *memoria* was to present methods for memorizing speeches once written, for the most effective means of delivery. As such, the focus of these early treatises remained rhetorical, and its instruction remained confined to the improvement of one's oratorical abilities.

A shift in emphasis occurs in the Middle Ages, when in the highly Christianized context of the time, different goals were pursued by the institutions of education. Yates locates the shift in a particular reading of Cicero's *De inventione*:

That is to say, they [Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas] knew only the *Ad Herennium* on the artificial memory, and they saw it, through a tradition already well established in the earlier Middle Ages, in the context of the "First Rhetoric of Tullius," the *De inventione* with its definitions of the four cardinal virtues and their parts. Hence it comes about that the scholastic *ars memorativa* treatises—those by Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas—do not form part of a treatise on rhetoric, like the ancient sources. The artificial memory has moved over from rhetoric to ethics. (57)²⁰

¹⁹See Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966) 1-2 for a detailed account of this moment.

²⁰Yates qualifies this statement soon after by suggesting that the "ethical or prudential interpretation" of the Art of Memory already existed in the Middle Ages and that Albertus and Thomas were merely following suit. She then proceeds to trace the origin of this "momentous transference," as she puts it, by looking at Boncompagno da Signa's pre-scholastic treatise, the *Rhetorica Novissima*. See 57-60.

The same mnemonic strategies were applied to a different purpose: the memorization of virtues and vices so as to keep monks focused on the rewards of virtuous behavior and reminded of the punishments for bad behavior. In this vein, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is possibly a poem based on the Art of Memory.²¹

Another institutional force which maintained the need for memorization concerned the new mendicant orders, members of which would preach as they wandered as part of their service. Yates recounts Beryl Smalley's study of fourteenth-century friars who memorized allegorical personifications of the sins in order to facilitate recall of material for purposes of preaching. The strategies offered in the various texts have their origins, Yates suggests, in the practices of the classical Art of Memory.²² Furthermore, the dominant instructional mode until the sixteenth century was the oral disputation, in which degree candidates would have to engage to demonstrate their prowess in arguing. "As late as Ramus' own day, (as John Standonck's 1503 statutes for the College of Montaigu show), such disputations were the *sole* exercise of all students."²³ Those engaged in a disputation would not only need to memorize their own portion of the dialogue but also needed to "store" in memory the arguments of their opponents, so as to be able effectively to refute those points.

²¹"That Dante's *Inferno* could be regarded as a kind of memory system for memorising, Hell and its punishments with striking images on orders of places, will come as a great shock, and I must leave it as a shock. It would take a whole book to work out the implications of such an approach to Dante's poem" (Yates, *The Art of Memory* 95).

²²Yates suggests, too, that "The preference of these English friars for the fables of the poets as memory images, as allowed by Albertus Magnus, suggests that the artificial memory may be a hitherto unsuspected medium through which pagan imagery survived in the Middle Ages" (99).

²³Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1958) 154.

These disputations occurred very frequently in the setting of a medieval university. "Besides the types of disputation connected with the 'graduation' ceremonies of both bachelor and master, there were the frequent disputation conducted by the master in his own classes."²⁴ These would simply be questions posed by either the master or by a student, with the subsequent oral response. Another student, appointed as the "respondent," would then summarize both the answers to the question and the objections raised. In another, more common version of the disputation, known as "public and 'ordinary' disputations, the respondent and opponent were students or bachelors, while the one who summed up and gave the final solutions was the master, who thus 'determined' the question" (Daly 157). At Oxford, for instance, these were quite frequent: "in the medical faculty, the rules call for weekly disputations, and in the faculty of arts the new master was to dispute on every 'disputable day' for forty continuous days" (157). The disputation was, in fact, considered to be one of the duties of a master or doctor, besides the task of "professing."²⁵

²⁴Lowrie J. Daly, S.J. *The Medieval University*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 156.

²⁵While Daly provides useful general information about the university setting itself, Mary Carruthers provides specific details about how mnemonics were taught to the students, mnemonics specific to the memorization of written texts. For instance, in answering how medieval bestiaries were used, she writes, "What the Bestiary taught most usefully in the long term of a medieval education was not 'natural history' or moralized instruction (all instruction in the Middle Ages was moralized) but mental imaging, the systematic forming of 'pictures' that would stick in the memory and could be used, like rebuses, homophonies, *imagines rerum*, and other sorts of *notae*, to mark information *within* the grid" (127). Other strategies, which she recounts in detail, concern the use of "sets" of images students were assumed to have, such as the alphabet, numbers, and the zodiac. These were deployed within a numerical grid system imposed upon the book pages, a practice which was common: "There are a number of other sources and practices current throughout the Middle Ages which indicate that both the numerical grid system and mnemonic value of page layout were well known . . ." (95). These methods are consistent with the practices presented in the classical rhetorics, but they demonstrate practices taught to help students memorize written texts. As such, Carruthers delineates a mixed practice, one that fuses oral and literate strategies.

But a gradual decline in the use of the medieval mnemonics occurred, in particular the memory palace, for various reasons. For one, a complete text of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* was discovered in the early fifteenth century, so by the sixteenth century his version was available. This is an important development because Quintilian is the only one of the three Latin sources to criticize the efficacy of the memory palace, suggesting in its stead the strict rote memorization that we are more familiar with today. Furthermore, since Thomas Aquinas himself wrote of the Art of Memory, the memory palace became associated with scholasticism, which was attacked by humanist philosophers like Erasmus and Melanchthon.²⁶

The practice of building memory palaces—in which *loci* were made available for the placement of remarkable imagery that would stimulate one's memory—did not, however, become completely discontinued but became marginalized to the Neoplatonist movement, which adopted its mnemonics for the purpose of enhancing the Hermetic philosopher's magical grasp over nature. Much of Yates' work revolves around recounting the Hermetic and Cabalist traditions as they are incorporated into the memory palace tradition practiced by the Hermetic philosophers that she researches, especially Giordano Bruno.²⁷ While the Hermeto-Cabalist tradition may have been

²⁶As Yates writes, "The distinctly cool and Quintilianist attitude of Erasmus to the artificial memory develops in later leading humanist educators into a strong disapproval of it. Melanchthon forbids students to use any mnemotechnical devices and enjoins learning by heart in the normal way as the sole art of memory. . . . Erasmus did not like the Middle Ages, a dislike which developed into violent antagonism in the Reformation, and the art of memory was a mediaeval and a scholastic art" (127).

²⁷One area that Yates neglects is the use of the memory palace by the Jesuits in their militaristic response, as the "shock-troops of the Counter-Reformation," to the successes of the Protestant Reformation. We know that the memory palace was practiced among them from Jonathan D. Spence's history of *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984). Spence even provides an explanation for why the practices in this traditional art of memory were particularly well-suited for the Jesuits: "This vivid restructuring of memory was also a fundamental component of the edifice of discipline and religious training that the converted Spanish soldier Ignatius of Loyola developed for the members of the Society of Jesus,

strong in the sixteenth century, it eventually becomes discounted by the end of Bruno's life, resulting in his burning at the stake in 1600.²⁸ Yates recounts a debate which took place between a Brunian, Alexander Dicson, and a Ramist disciple, William Perkins, in 1584. While the debate was ostensibly about opposing arts of memory, it was, as Yates writes, "at bottom a religious controversy" (267), and this is part of the reason why the Hermetic version, perceived as subversive and pagan, failed to maintain any influence over future mnemonic practices.²⁹

At the same time that such religious and intellectual controversies were playing themselves out, pedagogical changes were occurring, changes

which he founded in 1540; he had been marshaling his arguments in writing the early drafts of the *Spiritual Exercises*" (15). The memory palace tradition was also useful, to be sure, in the extensive rhetorical training that the Jesuits received, training which enabled them to go forth and re-convert the Protestants to Catholicism in rhetorical street-fights. See Francesco C. Cesario, "The Collegium Germanicum and the Ignatian Vision of Education," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 24 (Winter 1993), 829-841 for an account of the Jesuit emphasis on winning back those lost to Protestantism.

²⁸In her book-length study of Bruno, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, Yates writes of how Bruno was burned as an "impenitent heretic" (349). She writes of how "Bruno takes a radical step, which puts him outside the pale of normal Christian Hermetism, by abandoning the Christian interpretation, and above all, by going wholeheartedly for the magic as the chief thing, the core of Hermetism" (230). The extent to which Hermetism did survive in that period depended on how veiled its truly pagan origins were, or how convincingly a proponent presented its interpretation as not being antithetical to a Christian vision, as in the case of Pico della Mirandola. Yates demonstrates, in *The Art of Memory*, how Hermetism managed to survive until the time of the scientific revolution, which she suggests was influenced in part by Hermetic principles: "And such a study might demonstrate that all that was most noble in the religious and philanthropic aspirations of seventeenth-century science was already present, on the Hermetic plane, in Giordano Bruno, transmitted by him in the secret of his arts of memory" (388).

²⁹Evelyn Fox Keller writes of how alchemy, the practice and goal of hermetism, lost on another front: that of science. She recounts the conflict between the Baconian and hermetic conceptions of how humankind should relate to nature, finding the sexual metaphors that each opposing side used to incorporate its attitude toward nature: "His [Bacon's] central metaphor—science as power, a force virile enough to penetrate and subdue nature—has provided an image that permeates the rhetoric of modern science. . . . If the root image for Bacon was a 'chaste and lawful marriage between Mind and Nature' that will 'bind [Nature]to [man's] service and maker her [his] slave' . . . the root image of the alchemists was coition, the conjunction of mind and matter, the merging of male and female. As Bacon's metaphoric ideal was the virile superman, the alchemist's ideal was the hermaphrodite." *Reflections on Gender and Science*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985) 48.

caused by both internal institutional pressures and external technological shifts. Within the institution, more and more emphasis was placed upon writing as the oral disputation declined in its status as the sole means of showing one's learning. The advent of a "curriculum" was part of the reason for this trend. The current sense of "curriculum" as meaning the set of pedagogical tasks to be completed within a given period of time seems to have had its origin in the late medieval/early modern university setting, and the underlying metaphor of the "road race" (*curriculum* in Latin means "a contest in running") was as much a problem then as it is now. Ong writes of how an element of discourse as simple as class discussion became abbreviated so that the road race of curriculum could be run: "Even partial dialogue with the class, in which the pupils volunteered questions or objections, was necessarily severely restricted, or one would never get through the material at all" (*Ramus* 155).

The move to a coverage model of education also encouraged standardization of education, such that teacher's guilds began to determine guidelines for course content. This trend also affected the degree of orality in the university setting, resulting in increased reliance upon writing. Again, Ong is helpful here:

The normal-school tradition itself [a disputation-based curriculum], however, had prepared the way for the humanist assault on the oral disputation. Insofar as knowledge was standardized by being put in the keeping of teachers' guilds, where it inevitably became more and more a commodity, it tended to retreat from the evanescent world of discourse (*verba volant*) to the more stable world of writing (*scripta manent*). (155)

The dreaded teacher's exam, which every new public school teacher must pass before becoming a bona fide certified teacher, had its origins in this process of standardization that the teachers' guilds enacted. This exam ensured a

degree of competence but at the same time shifted the conception of knowledge to that of a commodity:

[K]nowledge naturally tended to be viewed less as a wisdom transmissible only in a context of personal relationships than as a commodity. It could be measured—indeed, had to be—which meant that it could be manipulated in terms of quantitative analogies. We have not yet arrived, but we are well on the way to report cards. . . . (*Ramus* 152)

The problem of teaching complicated philosophy to young teenagers also contributed to the institutional reshaping that participated in the decline of discourse practiced within education. This in fact goes to the heart of Ong's treatment of Ramus's educational reforms. As part of the historical groundwork that Ong provides for demonstrating the conditions under which Ramus revises the constitution of rhetoric and dialectic, he relates the process of simplification that occurs for pedagogical purposes. This promoted the transmission of less than accurate material and initiated the pairing-down process that culminates in Ramus's revised logic.³⁰ In fact, Ramus justifies his "natural dialectic" by appealing to its practicality:

Ramus flaunts his reason for the superiority of this practical analysis with a disconcerting frankness: *it is the best possible method for enabling the schoolboy to memorize the twenty-eight lines of Ovid in question!* Ramus' preoccupation with dichotomization has its real origin largely in the pedagogical appeal of the tidy bracketed tables of dichotomies which he

³⁰Ong writes of Peter of Spain, "Why is it that our manualist, moving through all this maze, thrusts aside by a kind of sleight of hand all question of probability and regards the concern of dialectic or logic to be certainties alone? Basically, because he is a manualist, supplying the need for a handbook for the teen-age medieval student" (62). Later he writes of the same phenomenon: "Not satisfied with equating dialectic and teaching, Melanchthon also must solve problems external or peripheral to dialectic on a pedagogical basis. Thus, he defends the long-standing distinction between dialectic which controls 'plain' speech and rhetoric which controls 'ornamental' speech on the grounds that, while not necessarily accurate, the distinction must be held to because it is teachable. He is hewing here to the Agricolan line, for, when Agricola had dismissed a logic of predication in favor of a topical logic, he too had done so because the former is hard to teach and the latter easy" (*Ramus* 159).

studied in the printed commentaries and epitomes of Agricola's *Dialectical Invention*. (194, 199)

Ultimately, this appeal to practicality proved to be the crucial blow in the demise of the memory palace as a mnemonic strategy: because one had to work at discovering visual puns to situate in carefully created places, oftentimes generating elaborate and esoteric connections in the hope of stimulating the memory, the procedure seemed too complicated and unnecessary. The Ramist dichotomies were arguably more efficient and less complicated.³¹

As the framework of grammatology suggests, though, institutional changes were not the only factor involved. The new technology of the printing press also aided in this process, in that it participated in fostering the advent of the Ramist dichotomies. Ramus, of course, was not the first to fabricate elaborate charts mapping the mind and its workings. But charts made prior to the printing press were reproduced like all documents were before the printing press: by hand. Besides the inaccuracies that such a procedure promoted, oftentimes this process was tedious to say the least, as well as complicated. With the new "age of mechanical reproduction" that the printing press engendered, multiple copies of complicated charts like Ramus' dichotomies could be reproduced with minimal inaccuracy. As Ong writes, "The Agricolan and Ramist dialectic was to prove itself unexpectedly congenial to printing techniques" (97). The value of Ong's thesis lies in his

³¹Of this Frances Yates writes, "Amongst the complexities of which Ramus made a clean sweep were those of the old art of memory. Ramus abolished memory as a part of rhetoric, and with it he abolished the artificial memory. This was not because Ramus was not interested in memorising. On the contrary, one of the chief aims of the Ramist movement for the reform and simplification of education was to provide a new and better way of memorising all subjects" (232).

explanation of the power of the technology to initiate wide-reaching cultural change—given the proper institutional setting.³²

Insofar as the printing press was congenial to Ramism, it facilitated its expansion as a mnemonic system. The printed book, too, helped contribute to the decline of the memory palace, as the process begun in the Middle Ages—the storing of information in book form—became that much more easy.³³ Mass production was now possible; no more did one have to wait for a human hand to transcribe completely an entire tome. "The schematic layouts of manuscripts, designed for memorisation, the articulation of a summa into its ordered parts, all these are disappearing with the printed book which need not be memorised since copies are plentiful" (Yates 124). This plenitude was significant, as Carruthers indicates in speaking of why medieval scholars required a good memory: "Scholars have always recognized that memory necessarily played a crucial role in pre-modern Western civilization, for in a world of few books, and those mostly in communal libraries, one's education had to be remembered, for one could never depend on having continuing access to specific material" (8). The *need* for a good memory was no longer as urgent as it once was, and so the mnemonic practices that cultivated a phenomenal memory were less and less engaged.

³²The primary thesis Ong offers shows that the move away from oral discourse and toward the more visual medium of writing helped to bring about the emergence of science: "In its long-term effects, Ramism, with the topical logic which it exploits, is favorable to the emergence of modern science, experiment included, because of the way it loosens up the field of knowledge in encouraging visualist approaches to this field" (269).

³³In distinguishing between "books" and "texts," Carruthers comes to define a book as a mnemonic tool: "A book is not necessarily the same thing as a text. 'Texts' are the material out of which human beings make 'literature.' For us, texts only come in books, and so the distinction between the two is blurred and even lost. But, in a memorial culture, a 'book' is only one way among several to remember a 'text,' to provision and cue one's memory with 'dicta et facta memorabilia.' So a book is itself a mnemonic, among many other functions it can also have" (8).

The irony in Ramus' aim to create a better way of memorizing with his dichotomies becomes apparent: in promoting a written, visual form of memory which serves as a mnemonic prosthesis on paper, he superceded the more oral form of the memory palace, one in which human memory itself was more directly engaged. The Ramist method institutes an age of rhetoric or anti-rhetoric in which the latter two steps—*memoria* and *pronuntiatio*—drop out of consideration, and memory in itself becomes incorporated in writing. The resulting hybrid of memory and method—what Sharon Crowley calls "the methodical memory"—can only be expressed in writing:

A written outline, then, was a graphic representation of the categories contained in the memory. The discursive outline simply was a graphic representation of the processes of analysis and amplification. The workings of the methodical memory could now be put on display for all to see!³⁴

This state of affairs has developed over the centuries since the sixteenth century, and only now, with the relatively recent advent of electronic and mass media, is the hegemony of exposition being challenged. Barilli's diagnosis of contemporary rhetoric suggests the need to reconsider rhetoric in light of twentieth-century breakthroughs in communicative technology.

The current challenge, then, is to view the electronic media as mnemonic prostheses, as new tools for storing information, tools which have characteristics that differ from the book as a storage medium. I am claiming that our discipline has much to learn from the sixteenth century concerning the employment of a three-dimensional writing space such as the Storyspace hypertext medium, specifically from the storage strategies of the memory

³⁴*The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric*, 82. In Crowley's history of the discipline of rhetoric and composition, she finds the five-paragraph theme to be the last stage of an evolutionary trend that began with Ramus: "The five-paragraph theme was the most thoroughgoing scheme for spatializing discourse that had appeared in rhetorical theory since Peter Ramus' method of dichotomizing division rendered all the world divisible by halves" (135).

palace as well as from the individual authors who were negotiating a time of transition as fluid as ours is now. I will now consider from a grammatological perspective the sixteenth-century context of Edmund Spenser, one of the first "authors" to be paid as an author.

Spenser and the Memory Palace

Whether conscious or not, Spenser lived in a transitional period during which mnemonic practices, pedagogical practices, political power relationships, class relationships, and subjectivity were undergoing changes that oftentimes were contradictory in their implications: the "secret" self writing a variety of different signatures, the Protestant reformer employing an iconographic mnemonic system,³⁵ the impoverished sizar, with a homosexual mentor, whose course of study and, consequently, his poetry were affected, in part, by the advent of the printing press.³⁶ The previous

³⁵For an example of this phenomenon other than Spenser, see Catharine Randall Coats, "Reactivating Textual Traces: Martyrs, Memory, and the Self in Theodore Beza's *Icones* (1581)," *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, ed. W.Fred Graham (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies XXII) 19-28. Beza, Calvin's friend, successor, and biographer, wrote a text composed of many imaged representations of various confessors and martyrs he wished to have remembered. Coats explores the conflicted forces which informed the text's composition—some of them originating in the Protestant fear of the Art of Memory and its iconic mnemonic—and suggests that Beza's self-revelation was his motivation: "By incorporating images, Beza provoked an attack from the Jesuits, who accused him of succumbing to the very idolatry Calvinists claimed to abhor. Beza's motivations in choosing to include woodcuts must therefore be examined. I maintain that its effect was to produce a new form of emblematic text, in which word and image both compete and conjoin to construct a living portrait of the self: that of its author. . . . Through the selection, ordering, and exposition of his material, Beza reveals, primarily, himself" (20).

³⁶Goldberg tells of Spenser's relationship with Harvey and how it reflected a mentor-student relationship that goes back to classical Greece: "Within that spacing, which, for Elizabethans like Spenser and Harvey, takes the historically specific situation of the apparatuses of a homosocial pedagogy, the Spenserian career—in life, in letters—is launched" (*Sodometries* 80). Goldberg shows that the Renaissance approach to pedagogy is in this fashion traditional, in that it establishes the student as one who identifies with the teacher. At the same time, however, the kinds of changes that Ong reports in *Ramus*, and the political and religious conflicts that figure in Ramus's pedagogical reformation, are working to bring about institutional changes as well.

section of this chapter recounted the history of mnemotechnics as a set of institutional practices that changed as a result of the effects of the printing press, and, as the next section will show, Spenser's poetry reveals his participation in the outgoing practice of the memory palace. The chapter to follow will then explore how Spenser embraces the incoming practices of print literacy and what the implications of this embrace are for the subsequent development of the "mnemonics of literacy," as I shall call it.

It remains now to demonstrate how Spenser's allegorical impulse shared in the tradition of the memory palace. The goal of returning to Spenser as a grammatologist, at a time when allegory is on the rise again both as a topic and as a practice in literary theory, at a time when the "electronic word," to quote the title of Richard Lanham's recent book on "electronic literacy," is as visual as it is verbal, will be to learn from him strategies for composing in and conceiving of a medium like hypertext, a three-dimensional writing "space" that has been described as a dungeon and a castle. These strategies will be recounted in the final portions of this dissertation. Ultimately, I intend to reconfigure Spenser and the memory palace tradition in a heuritic equation with the present moment, to perceive a new constellation that includes Spenser, the memory palace, literary theory and the electronic storage and retrieval of information.³⁷ The pattern that emerges will take the form of a poetics of hypertext composition.

³⁷"Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical. It became historical posthumously, as it were, through events that may be separated from it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one." Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968) 263.

While there is no direct evidence that Spenser learned the art of remembering by building memory palaces or theaters in his mind, as a student of rhetoric, learning the fourth step of *memoria*, we can suppose he would have read the recommendations that Roman rhetoricians made about its efficacy. For a poet who wanted to be remembered, whose laureate ambitions are all but a commonplace among contemporary criticism,³⁸ these strategies may have seemed appealing, even indispensable. And the allegorical nature of the memory palace certainly would not have escaped Spenser. For these reasons, *The Faerie Queene*, as the major work of allegory in the English Renaissance, is a good place to look for evidence of Spenser's mnemonic strategies.

The most striking moment of Spenser's use of the memory palace comes in the proem to Book Two. Spenser begins by defending his choice of the romance as a vehicle for his matter in the rhetorical ploy of anthyphora, or response to anticipated objections.³⁹

Right well I wote most mighty Soueraine,
That all this famous antique history,
Of some th'aboundance of an idle braine
Will iudged be, and painted forgery,
Rather then matter of just memory,
Sith none, that breatheth liuing aire, does know,
Where is that happy land of Faery,
Which I so much do vaunt, yet no where show,
But vouch antiquities, which no body can know. (II.pr.1)

³⁸While critics agree that he was ambitious and that his ambitions are seen in the poetry, some recent discussion concerns the extent of his obsequiousness. Derek Alwes, for instance, takes issue with Louis Montrose and tries to argue that "the poetic role Spenser defines for himself in his works is that of accomplice, not adversary. He understands the ideology of the state as espoused by Elizabeth and those who speak in her name; he knows he can make a valuable contribution to it (hoping, of course, that the value of his contribution will be recognized and rewarded," "Who knows not Colin Clout? Spenser's Self-Advertisement in *The Faerie Queene*, Book 6," *Modern Philology* 88 (August 1990), 29.

³⁹I derive my definition from Richard Lanham's *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms: A Guide for Students of English Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

Here Spenser feels the need to justify the memory that he invokes by "vouching" antiquities. The emphasis on memory is significant, for Spenser must defend his use of legendary material as relevant subject matter in a poem meant to praise the queen, since this "famous antique history" might be judged, as he writes, as "th'aboundance of an idle braine" and "painted forgery" rather than "matter of just memory." And this is the book in which the Arthurian legends come to play their most significant role: later, in canto nine, Arthur and Guyon enter the chamber of Eumnestes ("good memory") in the House of Alma and find two important books stored there, one titled *Briton Moniments*, and the other titled *Antiquitie of Faerie*. Arthur reads the former, Guyon the latter, throughout canto ten. The writings in these memorial texts nourish the two heroes ("alma" in Latin means "nourishing") in that they are strengthened to go forth with their quest. Alma, therefore, as the source of a book learning that provides national identity, is the ultimate "alma mater."

Spenser answers this potential objection raised in the first stanza of the proem by invoking the startling discoveries that voyagers to the New World were making, finding places never thought to exist: "But let that man with better sence aduize,/That of the world least part to vs is red:/And dayly how through hardy enterprize,/Many great Regions are discouered,/Which to late age were neuer mentioned" (II.pr.2.1-5). The poet "logically" concludes that just because something has never been seen does not mean that it does not exist: "Why then should witlesse man so much misweene/That nothing is, but that which he hath seene?" (II.pr.3.4-5). The following stanza reveals where the "land of Faery" is:

Of Faerie lond yet if he more inquire,
By certaine signes here set in sundry place
He may it find; ne let him then admire,

But yield his sence to be too blunt and bace,
 That no'te without an hound fine footing trace.
 And thou, O fairest Princesse vnder sky,
 In this faire mirrhour maist behold thy face,
 And thine own realmes in lond of Faery,
 And in this antique Image thy great auncestry. (II.pr.4)

The inquirer can find Faerie lond *by certaine signes here set in sundry place*. These lines figure the entire poem, *The Faerie Queene* itself (the *here*), as the memory p(a)lace in which the poet, the architect of this palace, has placed "signs" of Fairy Land. In the epic poem, metaphorically represented here as a mirror, Elizabeth can see her face, and in the antique *image* she can find her ancestry.

Here Spenser is using the language of the Art of Memory: images or signs set in places in order to call forth the memory of what was stored by means of the memory image. Yates recounts the instructions for using the Art of Memory:

The first step was to imprint on the memory a series of *loci* or places. . . . The images by which the speech is to be remembered . . . are then placed in imagination on the places which have been memorised in the building. This done, as soon as the memory of the facts requires to be revived, all these places are visited in turn and the various deposits demanded of their custodians. (*The Art of Memory* 3)

Spenser, in other words, provides in *The Faerie Queene* a guided tour of Fairy Land, of the Queen herself—the virtues to be upheld, the vices to be avoided.

The final stanza of the proem specifically connects this language of the art of memory to the act of allegorizing, demonstrating Spenser's consciousness of the allegorical nature of the mnemotechnique. It continues directly from the fourth, apologizing for the use of allegory:

The which O pardon me thus to enfold
 In couert vele, and wrap in shadowes light,

That feeble eyes your glory may behold,
Which else could not endure those beames bright,
But would be dazed with exceeding light. (II.pr.5.1-5)

The "antique Image" in which Elizabeth will behold her ancestry must be veiled in allegory, for she is so stunningly beautiful that persons beholding her would go blind. This circuitous way of praising Elizabeth's glory is framed in the language of allegorizing: the covert veil, the wrapping in shadow's light, refers to the "speaking other" of *allos agoreuei*.⁴⁰ Spenser admits to this strategy also in his Letter to Raleigh, again invoking the "places" in which she appears in the poem:

In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceiue the most excellent and glorious person of our soueraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. (*Poetical Works* 407).

The structure of allegory itself suggests the mnemonic procedure inherent in placing images in places to trigger the memory. Craig Owens says that, in allegory, "the image is a hieroglyph; an allegory is a rebus—writing composed of concrete images" ("The Allegorical Impulse" 209), and one can view this dynamic in the following description of a "memory for things" image, in which a defense lawyer mnemonically inscribes the following in his memory place:

We shall imagine the man in question as lying ill in bed, if we know him personally. If we do not know him, we shall yet take some one to be our invalid, but not a man of the lowest class, so that he may come to mind at once. And we shall place the defendant at the bedside, holding in his right hand a cup, in his left, tablets, and on the fourth finger, a ram's testicles. In this way we can have in memory the man who was poisoned, the witnesses, and the inheritance. (Yates 11)

⁴⁰Spenser uses the same "shady" language in the Letter to Raleigh, in which he again is in the mode of apology: "To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather haue good discipline deliuered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegorical deuise" (*Poetical Works* 407).

The scene here visually represents all of the elements that the lawyer wishes to recall; most notable is the grotesque depiction of the ram's testicles, which is a visual pun on the Latin *testes*, meaning "witness." In her work on allegory, Maureen Quilligan points to the relationship between the pun and allegory as well when she calls attention to "the essential affinity of allegory to the pivotal phenomenon of the pun, which provides a basis for the narrative structure characteristic of the genre" (Quilligan 32).⁴¹

The vivid image of the ram's testicles also identifies the importance of violence or grotesquery in the fabrication of these images. It was believed that resorting to such methods facilitated image recall. Eugene Vance, following consideration of Yates' work, writes, "Violence may be seen not only as the 'subject' of oral epic narrative, but also as an *aide-mémoire* or as a generative force in the production of such narrative. In a commemorative culture, events of violence . . . are given great prominence so that the collective memory will be duly impressed with the *pathos* of 'history' as it is deployed: violence as semiosis."⁴² One can easily see this aspect of the Art of Memory in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, as David L. Miller points out in *The Poem's Two Bodies*: "The mnemonic value of such vividness is a standard topic of Renaissance rhetoric and poetics, and forms a basic strategy of Spenser's

⁴¹This is, in part, the grammarologist's interest in the memory palace tradition, as it calls for a kind of writing that embodies the picto-ideo-grammatical Writing that Derrida tries to encourage: "The images for a word or term were generated by techniques similar to those Derrida uses for his rebus or cartouche writing—*antonomasia*, puns, paragrams" (Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology* 73). The visual puns employed in the memory palace tradition provide the kind of rebus-writing for which grammatology strives.

⁴²Eugene Vance, *Mercelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986) 54. Vance's chapter on the *Song of Roland* is in itself a grammatological study of the poem as a manifestation of the effects of a shift from orality to literacy in relation to the purpose of memory: "Though it would be silly to insist that the *Song of Roland* is first and foremost a Song of Writing, we have every right to examine its implicit models of self-representation for indices of an epistemological crisis rooted in the competing cultural functions of speech and writing" (81).

gothic extravagance in *The Faerie Queene*. " (24). One need only think of the more "memorable" moments of the poem, for instance when in Book One the dragon Errour is described as an "vgly monster plaine,/Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,/But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine,/Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine" (I.i.14.6-9), who daily feeds "A thousand yong ones . . . /Sucking vpon her poisonous duges, eachone/Of sundry shapes, yet all ill fauored" (I.i.15.5-7), or at the end of Book One canto eight when Duessa is stripped naked, she is described in the following vivid terms:

Her dried duges, like bladders lacking wind,
Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld;
her wrizled skin as rough, as maple rind,
So scabby was, that would haue loathd all womankind.

Her neather parts, the shame of all her kind,
My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write;
But at her rompe she growing had behind
A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight:
And eke her feete most monstrous were insight;
For one of them was like an Eagles claw,
With griping talaunts armd to greedy fight,
The other like a Beares vneuen paw:
More vgly shape yet neuer liuing creature saw. (I.8.47.6 - I.8.48)

Despite the influence of his "chaster Muse," Spenser manages to follow through with this detailed description of Duessa's "neather parts" with the purpose, I am arguing, of providing a memorable image in the same way that one was trained to do in learning the Art of Memory.

There is also evidence in the tradition of the Art of Memory indicating that the personification that suffuses allegorical writing and representation was employed as part of the process of memorization. Yates again is helpful: here she tells of an illustrated memory-image of Lady Grammar found in Johannes Romberch's book, published in 1520: "Though devoid of aesthetic

charm, Romberch's Grammar is of importance to the student of artificial memory. She proves the point that personifications, such as the familiar figures of the liberal arts, when reflected in memory, become memory images" (120). The personifications in *The Faerie Queene* are so pervasive a part of Spenser's allegory that it would be tedious to catalogue them all. These personifications, combined with the number of memorable "places" in which they occur (for example, Error in her cave or Acrasia in the Bower of Bliss), fall within the tradition of the memory palace. The poem thus has an overall effect of being structured like a memory palace: each book has its hero who wanders from memory place to memory place, encountering personifications of vices and virtues that are meant to be easily remembered: Error's den, the House of Lucifera, Orgoglio's castle, the House of Holiness, the Castle of Medina, the Cave of Mammon, the House of Alma, the Bower of Bliss, etc.⁴³

Probably the most obvious example of a memory palace occurs in the latter part of Book Two, when Arthur and Guyon visit and defend the House of Alma. The knights tour the allegorical body of the castle, entering through the mouth and then traversing the digestive tract, the heart, and finally the head. In the head (the tower), they visit three compartments presided over by three guardians: Phantastes (representing foresight and fantasy), an unnamed steward that some give the name Judgment, who manages the other two faculties, and Eumnestes (representing memory). The description of these

⁴³Nico van den Boogaard, in his treatment of the *Roman de la Rose*, finds evidence that Guillaume de Lorris employed the "habit of mind" one finds in artificial memory practices, which involve locating striking images in particular *loci*. He finds in particular the passage enumerating the various species of birds inside the garden as employing this technique: "Je ne vois qu'un seule explication: l'auteur a donné cette description sous l'influence de certaines habitudes de pensée. Il imaginait des *loci* différents et il plaçait dans chaque lieu une espèce d'oiseau. Je ne crois pas qu'il ait trouvé cette disposition dans la tradition du *locus amœnus*" (89).

loci and the relationships of the custodians constitute an allegory of the mnemonic process one finds in the memory palace tradition.

The structure of the turret itself can be seen as a mnemonic of the three parts of the mind as conceived in medieval philosophy and personified by the above figures⁴⁴: they are described as rooms in which allegorical personages reside.

Therein were diuerse roomes and diuerse stages
But three the chiefest, and of greatest powre,
In which there dwelt three honorable sages,
The wisest men, I weene, that liued in their ages. (II.9.47.6-9)

The room, or "cell," was a typical part of a memory palace, a room in which some memorable image was stored. "*Cella*, the word used by Geoffrey of Vinsauf for the memory, also means 'storeroom,' as indeed its derivative form, *cellarium*, English 'cellar,' still indicates" (Carruthers 35). The descriptions of each of the chambers, too, invoke the memory palace tradition. Phantastes' chamber was "dispaigned all within,/With sundry colours, in the which were writ/Infinite shapes of things" (II.9.50.1-3). The walls of the second room, too, "Were painted faire with memorable gestes,/Of famous Wisards, and with picturals/Of Magistrates, of courts, of tribunals . . ." (II.9.53.3-5). And though Eumnestes' chamber is not described in terms of images,

His chamber all was hangd about with rolles,
And old records from auncient times deriu'd,
Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolles,
That were all worme-eaten, and full of canker holes. (II.9.57.6-9)

The books and scrolls, the "memorable gestes / Of famous Wizards," the "Infinite shapes of things" written on the walls all suggest the characteristics

⁴⁴See Mary Carruthers's *The Book of Memory*, chapter two on "Descriptions of the neuropsychology of memory" for an in-depth presentation of medieval conceptions of cognitive processes.

of mnemotechnics. These are memory places that store information in the form of visual and written material.

Another clue pointing to this tradition resides in Phantastes' chamber, which is filled with flies "Like many swarmes of Bees assembled round/After their hiues with honny do abound" (II.9.51.3-4). Carruthers speaks of the conflation of bees and memory:

The compartments made by bees for their honey are called *cellae* (still called "cells" in English). . . . Bees and birds are also linked by persistent associations with memory and ordered recollection. Indeed there is a long-standing chain or, perhaps the better word, a texture of metaphor that likens the placement of memory-images in a trained memory to the keeping of birds and to the honey-making of bees. Trained memory is also linked metaphorically to a library. And the chain is completed by a metaphoric connection of books in a library both to memories placed in orderly cells and to birds and bees in their coops and hives. (35-36)

The presence of bees in this passage, then, is consistent with traditional representations of the arts of memory, as is Eumnestes' library, full of rolls, scrolls, and books. But here in this library are two important books, books that the heroes of Book Two will read throughout the next canto. These books, one called *Antiquitie of Faerie lond*, the other *Briton Moniments*, serve a mnemonic function for Spenser's (re)presentation of British history. The contents of the books themselves, selected as they were by Spenser, become evidence of their import in terms of the allegorical function of the three guardians Phantastes, "Judgment," and Eumnestes.

According to David L. Miller, the most important of these figures is Judgment, as he is the only one among them, in stanza 54, said to "meditate" ("There sate a man of ripe and perfect age,/Who did them meditate all his life long"). Miller points out the parallel to Diet, who is similarly described in stanza 27 as being "rype of age,/And in demeanure sober, and in counsell

sage" (27.8-9), and he suggests that the numerological coincidence (27 doubled is 54) is no accident, and as such constitutes an allusion to Spenser (as Diet is a "dispenser"): "Certainly there is an analogy between the functions performed by Diet and Judgment: each within his own sphere chooses and directs, and so shadows the poet's responsibility for the allegorical dispensation of his narrative" (185). Miller calls this relationship among the three guardians a "radical allegory of Spenserian *poesis*" insofar as "the meditative function of the sage who operates [in the middle chamber] implicitly gathers memory [Eumnestes] and imagination [Phantastes] into itself" (188). Such is the stated purpose of *The Faerie Queene* as Spenser states in his "Letter to Raleigh": "a Poet thrusteth into the middest, euen where it most concerneth him, and there recouring to the thinges forepaste [the stated realm of Eumnestes], and diuining of things to come [the stated role of Phantastes], maketh a pleasing Analysis of all" (*Poetical Works* 408).

And this becomes the purpose of the apparently haphazard representation of the histories: "In his treatment of the history Spenser therefore implants certain patterns that invite the reader to exercise the synthetic faculty of the middle chamber . . ." (Miller 200). This reading of Spenser the dispenser of his allegory, implanting patterns for readers to discover, though invoking the intentional fallacy, serves my reading of Alma's castle as a memory palace. Part of the memory palace tradition involves choosing what to remember and storing it in a particular place in the palace with an image. This is the role of Spenser and Judgment: the selection and arrangement of imaginative elements allegorizing the memorial texts of British history, into which Spenser writes Queen Elizabeth as rightful heir and successor.⁴⁵

⁴⁵The irony of this arrangement can be seen in Spenser's description of the flies/bees swarming in Phantastes' chamber, a description which figures the anxiety Spenser feels about employing allegory for his purposes: "All those were idle thoughts and fantasies,/Deuices, dreames,

Spenser becomes the palace architect of the books (memory "palaces" in themselves), of Alma's Castle, of *The Faerie Queene* itself. As such, Spenser engages the tradition of the memory palace in his attempt to inscribe the Queen, as well as himself, in (literary) history.

Raleigh recognizes this project of inscription in his Commendatory Verse, posing a rhetorical question which serves as a warning to the poet:

If thou hast formed right true vertues face herein:
Vertue her selfe can best discerne, to whom they written bin.
If thou hast beautie praysd, let her sole lookes diuine
Iudge if ought therein be amis, and mend it by her eine.
If Chastitie want ought, or Temperance her dew,
Behold her Princely mind aright, and *write the Queene anew.*
(*Poetical Works* 409; emphasis added)

Raleigh warns Spenser to re-write his poem if it does not please the Queen, if he has not, that is, formed her *face* properly. He recognizes here the nature of Spenser's act as an act of prosopopoeia, of "face-making." Insofar as *The Faerie Queene* is an act of memorializing, of remembering the Queen before her death, this act of prosopopoeia takes on a mnemonic function. I will explore in the next chapter the extent to which prosopopoeia is a mnemonic device and the various ways that Spenser, as memorial poet, as architect of memory palaces, employs this device and what this means in terms of Spenser's position within the transitional period of the sixteenth century.

opinions vnsound,/Shewes, visions, sooth sayes, and prophesies;/ And all that fained is, as leasings, tales, and lies" (II.9.51.6-9). *The Faerie Queene* is filled with "leasings, tales, and lies." Much has been said about Spenser's anxiety concerning his allegorical project. See, for instance, Kenneth Gross: "This double valence of the imaginative work, its mingling of tyranny and freedom, is something that the poem confronts with a certain anxiety. . . . [T]he poet seems to work through such conflicts by the nearly obsessive repetition of scenes in which icons, statues, phantasms, illusions and so on are first elaborately described and then summarily transgressed, broken, dissolved" (16). See also Jacqueline Miller in *Poetic License*, in which she corrects the failure in other readers to locate the source of Spenser's anxiety within the fundamental basis of allegory. See page 100-101.

CHAPTER 3
SPENSER'S MNEMONICS OF LITERACY: THE MONUMENTALITY OF
PROSOPOPOEIA

Spenser, with his use of the memory palace tradition in his writing, comes at the end of a long tradition of rhetorical pedagogy. The memory palace was effective for centuries as a method of organizing information that one wished to access in one's mind. During the Middle Ages, however, this process began to be externalized somewhat upon the page, so that the grotesque images that one once generated as a means of recalling information come to be placed in the margins of medieval manuscripts to facilitate memorization of entire pages for the purpose of remembering entire books. The book becomes a mnemonic prosthesis at this point, a "technology of the word" as Ong might call it, a tool of information storage and retrieval. After the advent of the new technology of the printing press, further development of mnemotechniques occurred, when Ramus developed his mnemonic system based on outlining dichotomies, spatially arranging words only on the page. This resulted in a transformation of mnemonic practices which dropped the pre-print strategies of the memory palace for the new Ramist methods such that for centuries the memory palace tradition has been ignored as a viable means of information storage and retrieval.

With the advent of electronic technologies at the end of the twentieth century, however, a new technology of information storage and retrieval has come upon the scene of rhetorical pedagogy, one demanding a reconsideration of information storage strategies as they have been practiced with past

"technologies of the word" and how they might be practiced with new technologies such as hypertext, video, and virtual reality. Acknowledging this current state of transition, this dissertation addresses the problem of storing and retrieving information in the electronic medium of hypertext. Strategies for storing information within this medium will involve practices that will differ somewhat from storing information in print form. For this reason, alternative strategies must be sought to employ the maximum potential of the medium. One realm for such researching, I am suggesting, is the Early Modern period, a time similar to our own in that a new mnemonic system was coming into being—the print-driven Ramist system of outlining—which displaced the classical tradition of the memory palace. The sixteenth century saw the culmination of mnemonic practices that began with the Greeks and truly flourished in the centuries preceding it, during the Middle Ages, when the emphasis on visual stimuli for mnemonic recall found its expression in the monastic artistry of marginalia.¹ While the ancient mnemotechnique of establishing a fixed set of places in which one stored esoteric, often grotesque images meant to trigger the memory took the backseat to the Ramist method, the current technologies are such that these practices, abandoned as they were by the educational institution during the sixteenth century, may have something to offer in solving this current problem.

¹Mary Carruthers tells of a set of glossed books of Psalms made in the twelfth century that manifests this property of mnemonic marginalia: "One of their more original features is the use of painted figures to help fix the page as a mnemonically functional visual image. These figures usually inhabit the outermost margins of the page. . . . In addition to these figures, several of the psalms have emblematic pictures painted next to their opening words; unlike the citational figures, these can occur in the inner margin where the gloss itself is written, as well as in the outermost one, suggesting that they too were considered essential in the gloss, and acted as markers for these particular psalms" (216).

The difficulty of discussing these practices in terms of orality, literacy, and computeracy, especially when focusing on transitional periods like the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, is that the boundaries between these terms blur, making the process of labeling the practices difficult. Ong identifies this problem when discussing rhetoric in *Orality and Literacy*: "The 'art' of rhetoric, though concerned with oral speech, was, like the other 'arts,' the product of writing" (109). Such is the problem with the memory palace: while primarily a storage strategy for those without the benefit of writing, it employs the techniques of allegory (in its use of images to represent other words or concepts), techniques that only become possible with the advent of writing. One might identify this phenomenon as "residual orality" in reverse in that, rather than orality encroaching on literate practices as a residue, literacy falls back into oral practice. What one can be sure of is that the actual practices that emerge are hybrids of the general categories "orality" and "literacy."

A close study of Spenser's mnemonics will reveal the same hybrid effect. While he engages the tradition of the memory palace in various ways, as the previous chapter delineates, he also fully embraces the ultimate trope of print literacy—prosopopoeia. A reading of Spenser's poetry will reveal the ambivalent nature of his mnemonics, especially in his use of prosopopoeia. Though committed to prosopopoeia as that trope which will give voice to the dead in print, thereby winning the monumental status that both he and his patrons desired, Spenser also recognizes in *Prosopopoeia, or Mother Hubberds Tale* the uncontrollable quality of words, offering a vision of the duplicity of language in his personifications of prosopopoeia in the Fox and the Ape. This ambivalence can also be seen in Spenser's figuration of depth as the place of evil and mystery. As a writer in the midst of many volatile

transitions—including, among the religious and political upheavals of the time, the shift in mnemonics that I have worked to delineate—we can recognize in Spenser an anxiety parallel to our own concerning the embrace of new technologies of communication.

This chapter explores Spenser's relationship to print literacy as a new information storage technology that fosters an ideology of depth. Such an exploration will help us better understand our own relationship to print literacy and our reluctant embrace of computeracy. The era of the printed book, which begins in Spenser's century and ends in our own, is characterized by the trope of prosopopoeia, which allows for a writer to achieve the illusion of control over language in the drive both to deny the duplicitous quality of language and to assert the "natural" unity of signifier and signified, symbol and thing symbolized. Depth comes to be associated with the unifying drive of the symbol, whereas allegory comes to be viewed as superficial, an artificial form of symbolism that is too simplistic to communicate effectively. But with the advent of poststructural philosophy, theorists recognize the will to power over language as an effect of the ideology of depth, and the remainder of the dissertation will in part identify computeracy as manifesting the post-structural ideology of the surface, offering a theory of hypertext composition based on the surface-oriented concept of the rhizome and the new organizing trope of metalepsis.

Prosopopoeia and the Mnemonics of Literacy

We must return to the proem of Book Two to find the ultimate moment of prosopopoeia in the poem. Recall that in stanza four we encountered the presence of the memory palace in talk of "signes" set in

"sundry places." The narrator faces Elizabeth in order to *face* her, to make her face: "And thou, O fairest Princesse vnder sky,/In this faire mirrhour maist behold thy face" (ll. 6-7). "This mirrhour" is the poem, *The Faerie Queene*, in which Elizabeth will be able to see her self, her "face," "true vertues face," according to Raleigh. The entire poem, then, becomes Spenser's creative act of prosopopoeia, of making the face of the Queen so that she can see herself within the poem figured as a mirror. The implications of this become quite interesting when we consider what is involved in the trope of prosopopoeia.

One sees what is at stake in the act of prosopopoeia in the various ploys for patronage made in many of Spenser's minor poems. In these instances, Spenser uses the fear of being forgotten as a way of pressuring the aristocracy, including the Queen herself, to patronize his work. He positions himself as a maker of (literary) monuments which will commemorate them as well as him. In so doing, he presents himself as indispensable to their posterity. The nature of prosopopoeia as a figure of speech, recent literary theory tells us, bears this commemorative function, a function that can be effectively fulfilled only in printed texts.

One might expect a plea for patronage in dedicatory sonnets, but the intimidating tone of Spenser's Dedicatory Sonnets to *The Faerie Queene* threatens oblivion if the patrons do not comply. In the one written for the Earle of Oxenford, Spenser reminds the Earl that, because his ancestry is allegorized within the poem, he needs to defend the poem for the sake of his own memory: the "vnripe fruit" of the poem "by thy countenance doth craue to bee/Defended from foule Enuies poisnous bit . . . Sith th'antique glory of thine auncestry/Vnder a shady vele is therein writ,/And eke thine

owne long liuing memory" (*Poetical Works* 410). The sonnet to the Earle of Essex employs the same language:

But when my Muse, whose fethers nothing flitt
Doe yet but flagg, and lowly lerne to fly
With bolder wing shall dare alofte to sty
To the last praises of this Faery Queene,
Then shall it make more famous memory
Of thine Heroicke parts, such as they beene:
Till then vouchsafe thy noble countenance
To these first labours needed furtheraunce. (*Poetical Works* 411)

While "countenance" in these two instances suggests earlier senses of the word to mean "position" or "standing," the pun on countenance as "face" is unmistakable when prosopoeia is understood as a mnemonic act.

The extent to which "facing" is viewed as a kind of remembering becomes apparent when Spenser equates "defacing" with forgetting. In the sonnet to the Lord of Hunsdon, whom Spenser praises for his deeds in battle, Lord Hunsden is said to pacify the Northern rebels "And their disloiall powre defaced clene,/The record of enduring memory" (*Poetical Works* 412). He is praised for defacing from the record of enduring memory the memory of the Northern rebels, and for this act Spenser assures him, "Liue Lord for euer in this lasting verse,/That all posteritie thy honour may reherse." A similar moment occurs in *The Faerie Queene*, Book Three, in which Britomart, while receiving Merlin's prophecies concerning the future of her race, asks Merlin, "Will not long misery late mercy make,/But shall their name for euer be defast,/And quite from the earth their memory be rast?" (III.3.43.7-9). This equation between defacing and forgetting is not difficult to imagine when one recalls the purpose of Protestant iconoclasm, or defacing, of Catholic icons: the Protestant goal was to erase from the earth the memory of Catholicism's existence.

Spenser argues the importance of patronage to the memory of both the poet and the patron in *The Teares of the Muses*, in which the Muses are given voices to give voice to their despair over the state of poetry. The dedication to Lady Strange supplies an apt epithet to Spenser's message in the poem itself: "I devised this last slender meanes . . . that by honouring you they might know me, and by knowing me they might honour you. Vouchsafe noble Lady to accept this simple remembrance. . . ."² Throughout this poem the Muses bewail the current state of poetry by using the metaphor of defacing, which suggests that not just poetry but good poetry must be supported for the proper "facing" to occur.³ Polyhymnia, Muse of Rhetoric, speaks most specifically of this in the last speech of the poem, explaining how bad writing defaces the personification of Poetry: "Heapes of huge words uphoorded hideously . . ./Have mard the face of goodly Poësie,/And made a monster of their fantasie" (553, 557-58). This act of defacing is compared soon after to an act of iconoclasm:

But now nor Prince nor Priest doth her [Poetry] maintaine,
But suffer her prophaned for to be
Of the base vulgar, that with hands unclene
Dares to pollute her hidden mysterie.

²Edmund Spenser, *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*. Eds. William A. Oram, Einar Bjorvand, Ronald Bond, Thomas H. Cain, Alexander Dunlop, and Richard Schell (New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1989) 268. Hereafter cited as *Shorter Poems*.

³Defacing pervades the poem. All of nature, in fact, according to the narrator, feels the effects of the muses' tears in a pathetic fallacy of defacing: "all that els seemd faire and fresh in sight . . . Was turned now to dismall heavinesse,/Was turned now to dreadfull ugliness" (ll.39, 41-42). Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, cries of how "Fine Counterfesaunce and unhurtfull Sport,/Delight and Laughter deckt in seemly sort" are "wholly now defaced" (197-98, 202); Euterpe, Muse of Pastoral, speaks of how "monstrous error . . ./Hath mard the face of all that semed fayre," and Ignorance, "armd with blindnesse and with boldnes stout,/(For blind is bold) hath our fayre light defaced" (257-58, 265-66); Erato, Muse of Love poetry, apostrophizes to Venus: "For lo thy Kingdome is defaced quight,/Thy scepter rent, and power put to wrack" (399-400); Calliope, Muse of Epic poetry, speaks like Clio of the decline in heroes: "They all corrupted through the rust of time,/That doth all fairest things on earth deface . . . Ne do they care to have the auncestrie/Of th'old Heroës memorizde anew" (433-34, 439-40).

And treadeth under foote hir holie things,
Which was the care of Kesars and of Kings. (565-570)

But "One onelie lives . . . /That with rich bountie and deare cherishment,/
Supports the praise of noble Poësie" (571, 573-74). That one is Elizabeth, who is said here to support poetry, but as William Oram writes in the introduction, "This is of course a picture of Elizabeth as her poets and learned men would have liked her to be, not as she was, and it attempts by mirroring her ideal self to persuade her to live up to it" (*Shorter Poems* 266). Without poetry, without *Spenser's* poetry, the poem asserts, the proper kind of prosopopoeia cannot occur, only acts of defacing.

The mock-epic *Virgils Gnat* works in the same way. The poem tells of a gnat who, upon trying to save a sleeping shepherd from an approaching snake, gets swatted, goes to Hades, and returns as a ghost to complain to the shepherd. The poem becomes a catalogue (one might say memory palace) of epic heroes and mythology as the Gnat recounts all that he sees in Hades. After the complaint, the shepherd, feeling sufficiently guilty, decides to erect a monument in memory of the Gnat.⁴ Speaking of the similarity between this poem and *Teares of the Muses*, Ronald Bond comments, "Since, like *The Teares of the Muses*, *Virgils Gnat* deals with the interdependence between the lowly poet and the sponsors who authorize his writing, the erection of that monument suggests that the patron is capable of conferring fame on the author just as much as the author is capable of 'eternizing' the patron" (*Shorter Poems* 296). The symbiotic relationship between poet and patron

⁴The language of this moment again invokes the memory palace tradition: "By that same Riuer lurking vnder greene, /Eftsoones he gins to *fashion forth a place*, /And squaring it in compasse well beseene, /There plotteth out a tombe by measured space" (649-52, emphasis added). The tomb is an especially significant content for a memory place, as subsequent discussion will bear out.

creates a memorable monument for the patron and secures fame and fortune (i.e. patronage) for the poet.

The erected monument, the tomb, has special significance in terms of the dynamic of mourning central to prosopopoeia. There is consensus among twentieth-century theorists of prosopopoeia that mourning motivates the desire to "face" the dead so that the dead can speak. J. Hillis Miller, for example, in considering the tropology of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and in particular the story of Pygmalion, finds in the Pygmalion myth a prototype of prosopopoeia:

If most of the metamorphoses in the *Metamorphoses* go from human to inhuman, life to death, animate to inanimate, the coming alive of Galatea goes the other way. The name for the figure of speech of which this metamorphosis is the literalizing allegory is *prosopopoeia*. This trope ascribes a face, a name, or a voice to the absent, the inanimate, or the dead. (3-4)

In this giving voice to the dead, the dead are memorialized in a kind of resurrection that makes them undead but yet not alive. Ned Lukacher recognizes this dynamic in his treatment of prosopopoeia in *Primal Scenes*. He locates an origin for prosopopoeia in the masks of Greek tragedy and the intended effect these were meant to have as a form of "half-mourning":

The Greek *prosopon* and the Latin *persona* signify an inseparable connection between the theatrical and the chthonian. They signify the inseparable connection between taking on the voice of the other and mourning. In assuming the voice of the dead, the masked actor performs an act of half-mourning, reminding the audience not only that the voice that speaks is already dead but also that it lives on behind the mask. With each utterance the voice announces that it is neither properly dead nor alive but somewhere between the two. (90)

The places of the stage and the crypt, the living and the dead, collapse in the mask of prosopopoeia so that the dead cannot yet be finally dead.

This is precisely what we see in the figure of the dead gnat, albeit a humorous treatment of this feature of prosopopoeia. The gnat is given a voice to recount its experience to the unknowing shepherd so that the shepherd can properly mourn its passing. Its past heroism and present suffering require recognition. In response, the shepherd erects a monument in memory of the gnat, a memorial tomb so that it will not be forgotten.⁵ This moment is consistent with Paul de Man's formulation of prosopopoeia as "the fiction of the voice-from-beyond-the-grave" ("Autobiography as De-facement" 927).⁶

We see the same dynamic involved in Spenser's complaint entitled *The Ruines of Time*. The narrator of the poem chances upon the site of a former Roman city named Verulamium (called "Verlame" in the poem), which once stood on the shore of the Thames River, and discovers a

⁵This attitude of desiring commemoration did not always exist, as Philippe Ariès recounts in *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*. At one point after the emergence of Christianity, bodies were buried in collective graves with no attempt to identify any of the individuals. Starting in the middle ages, though, a return to inscribing monuments and including an effigy of the individual, at first for the illustrious, along with the increase in plaques affixed to church walls or pillars, point to the increased desire to remember the burial place of individuals and to perpetuate their memories. Ariès also suggest a connection between this phenomenon and the awareness of individuality. See pp. 46-52.

⁶This comes in an essay that treats Wordsworth's use of prosopopoeia in his *Essays upon Epitaphs*, one text of which, as de Man shows, "counsels against the use of its own main figure" i.e. prosopopoeia (928). De Man's deconstruction of Wordsworth's text points to the anxiety that the poet felt, the threat of using this trope: "'Doth make us marble,' in the *Essays upon Epitaphs*, cannot fail to evoke the latent threat that inhabits prosopopoeia, namely that by making the dead speak, the symmetrical structure of the trope implies, by the same token, that the living are struck dumb, frozen in their own death. The surmise of the "Pause, Traveller!" thus acquires a sinister connotation that is not only the prefiguration of one's own mortality but our actual entry into the frozen world of the dead" (928). This anxiety leads Wordsworth violently to denounce the use of figurative language, for figurative language "is not the thing itself but the representation, the picture of the thing and, as such, it is silent, mute as pictures are mute." Because we are bound to using language, our dependency upon writing renders us "silent as a picture, that is to say eternally deprived of voice and condemned to muteness." Prosopopoeia therefore both restores the voice to the dead but deprives the living of authentic experience: "Death is a displaced name for a linguistic predicament, and the restoration of mortality by autobiography (the prosopopoeia of the voice and the name) deprives and disfigures to the precise extent that it restores" (930).

personification or "Genius" of the city, weeping on that very spot. Much of what follows in the poem is the voice of Verlame lamenting the fall of Rome, the passing of power, the mutability of earthly existence. The role of this act of prosopopoeia in this complaint is highlighted in the opening lines, in the narrator's description of an absence:

It chanced me on day beside the shore
 Of silver streaming *Thamesis* to bee,
 Nigh where the goodly *Verlame* stood of yore,
 Of which there now remains no memorie,
 Nor anie little monument to see,
 By which the travailer, that fares that way,
 This once was she, may be warned to say. (*Shorter Poems* 232)

No monument exists, and therefore, in the language of these opening lines, no memory of the ruined city. Immediately after these lines appears the spirit of the city, its prosopopoeia, in the form of a female "Genius" who then provides with the "fiction of her voice-from-beyond-the-grave" a memorable monument to the city that once stood there.

It is within Spenser's poem, however, that this mnemonic monument is built so as to remember the city. It is also within this poem that Spenser remembers many dead members of Elizabeth's court, including the Earl of Leicester and Sir Philip Sidney, providing for them a literary monument of the kind for which Spenser wanted his patrons to patronize him. In this sense the poem serves as a reminder similar to those in the dedicatory sonnets examined above insofar as it reminds its readers of the anonymity of death, an anonymity that is inevitable outside of the commemorative parameters of the poem. Such reminding is the impetus behind the lines preceding these laments for Leicester and Sidney, lines which again point to the equation of defacement and forgetting:

But whie (unhappie wight) doo I thus crie,
 And grieve that my remembrance quite is raced

Out of the knowledge of posteritie,
 And all my antique monuments defaced?
 Sith I doo dailie see things highest placed,
 So soone as fates their vitall thred have shorne,
 Forgotten quite as they were never borne. (ll. 176-182)

Immediately after these lines, the lament for Leicester begins, making him and the other subjects of the lament those "daily things highest placed" who are forgotten soon after they have died, the fates cutting their vital thread. These lines reflect Verlame's acceptance of the permanence of forgetting: like the famous place for which she is the Genius, those placed high in Elizabeth's court too will become "antique monuments defaced." Again, Spenser ironically remembers them in a poem about their being forgotten.

While it certainly is an exaggeration to say that these prominent figures would be immediately forgotten, Spenser would have liked them to think otherwise: hence the eulogy on the "'eternizing' powers of poetry" in lines 344-490.⁷ Here again one finds a straightforward pitch to those who desire immortal fame, a pitch for financial support:

How manie great ones may remembred be,
 Which in their daies most famouslie did florish?
 Of whome no word we heare, nor signe now see,
 But as things wipt out with a sponge to perishe,
 Because they living, cared not to cherishe
 No gentle wits, through pride or covetize,
 Which might their names for ever memorize. (ll. 358-364)

The "gentle wits" are poets like Spenser who need to be "cherished" (i.e. taken care of within the patronage system) so that they can forever memor(ial)ize those who flourished famously. The word and the sign become timeless monuments in this equation, "For [the Muses] be daughters of Dame memorie" who can break the gates of hell and carry out their souls into immortality:

⁷See Richard Schell's introduction in *Shorter Poems* 225.

The seven fold yron gates of grislie Hell,
 And horrid house of sad *Proserpina*,
 They able are with power of mightie spell
 To breake, and thence the soules to bring awaie
 Out of dread darkenesse, to eternall day,
 And them immortall make, which else would die
 In foule forgetfulnesse, and nameles lie. (ll. 372-379)

Here, forgetfulness and namelessness are equated with death, but namelessness can be avoided if the person desiring remembrance enters into Spenser's linguistic economy. Without the aid of the "daughters of Dame memorie," one is doomed to "foule forgetfulnesse."

Spenser emphasizes that it is not just any monument that will do to commemorate a famous person; only literary monuments will do, for the monuments of gravestones and mausoleums are subject to time's ravaging hand. The following stanza indicates this in a catalogue of monumental structures destroyed in time:

Such one *Mausolus* made, the worlds great wonder,
 But now no remnant doth thereof remaine:
 Such one *Marcellus*, but was torne with thunder:
 Such one *Lisippus*, but is worne with raine:
 Such one King *Edmond*, but was rent for gaine.
 All such vaine moniments of earthlie masse,
 Devour'd of Time, in time to nought doo passe. (ll. 414-420)⁸

Only poetry can truly guarantee one's remembrance, as the stanza immediately following this one indicates:

But fame with golden wings aloft doth flie,
 Above the reach of ruinous decay,
 And with brave plumes doth beate the azure skie,
 Admir'd of base-borne men from farre away:

⁸These lines are similar to Spenser's sonnet translations in *Theatre for Worldings*, a few of which recount the process of large monumental structures, products of humankind's vanity, crumbling to the earth. Most significantly for my discussion, see, for instance, number three, which describes a tomb, a "sharped spire / Of diamant" upon which sat a golden pot, "And in this golden vessel couched were / The ashes of a mightie Emperour . . . A wortheie tombe for such a wortheie corps." At the end, though, "A sodaine tempest from the heaven, I saw, / With flushe stroke downe this noble monument" (*Shorter Poems* 472).

Then who so will with vertuous deeds assay
 To mount to heaven, on *Pegasus* must ride,
 And with sweete Poets verse be glorifide. (ll. 421-427)

As long as one is remembered in verse, one will never die, for Spenser's verse will live forever, and it is in the verse that the commemorated live on:

"Thy Lord shall never die, the whiles this verse / Shall live, and surely it shall live for ever: / For ever it shall live, and shall rehearse / His worthie praise. . . . Such grace the heavens doo to my verses give" (ll. 253-256, 259).⁹

Despite this distinction between the durability of stone monuments and that of printed texts, the permanence of print could make the act of prosopopoeia like that of erecting an engraved monument, insofar as the disembodied voice of the dead, the act of mourning that prosopopoeia

⁹Compare the following stanzas from *The Faerie Queene* Book 4, canto 2, in which Spenser offers his excuse for stealing Chaucer's unfinished "Squire's Tale":

But wicked Time that all good thoughts doth waste,
 And workes of noblest wits to nought out weare,
 That famous moniment hath quite defaste,
 And robd the world of threasure endlesse deare,
 The which mote haue enriched all vs heare.
 O cursed Eld the cankerworme of writs,
 How may these rimes, so rude as doth appeare,
 Hope to endure, sith workes of heauenly wits
 Are quite deuourd, and brought to nought by little bits?

Then pardon, O most sacred happie spirit,
 That I thy labours lost may thus reuiue,
 And steale from thee the meede of thy due merit,
 That none durst euer whilest thou wast aliuie,
 And being dead in vaine yet may striue:
 Ne dare I like, but through infusion sweete
 Of thine owne spirit, which doth in me suruiue,
 I follow here the footing of thy feete,
 That with thy meaning so I may the rather meete. (st. 33-34)

Here, Spenser fears his work falling victim to the same "cankerworm of writs," Time, which defaced the "monument" of Chaucer's tale. The topos of inadequacy is the vehicle: if this happens to such a heavenly work as Chaucer's, then it will certainly happen to these "rude rhymes." The contrast here suggests that Spenser realizes the fallibility of the statements he makes concerning poetry's immortalizing powers; as such, his eulogies to this power of poetry can be understood as a ploy for patronage.

represents, or the person being "faced" (like Queen Elizabeth, for instance) become fixed in print. While Spenser expressed his fear of his texts succumbing to the "cankerworms of writ," his age of print saw a new protection against the natural decay of books: "After the advent of print, however, the durability of writing material became less significant; preservation could be achieved by using abundant supplies of paper rather than scarce and costly skin. Quantity counted for more than quality" (Eisenstein 79). Vast numbers of relatively uniform texts become the equivalent of carving letters in stone: print in the sixteenth century begins to take on the status of the monumental.¹⁰

In fact, it is this monumental status of print which makes the sixteenth century differ from the medieval manuscript culture that preceded it. The manuscript was subject to any number of changes in its textual life, for various reasons, often because it was reproduced one copy at a time by scribal monks who sometimes incorporated errors. Chaucer bemoans this problem in a poem entitled "Chaucers wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn," in which the poet asks his scrivener to "wryte more trewe," warning him against "negligence and rape."

Chaucer's poem was necessary because scribes like Adam were forced by their jobs, wittingly or unwittingly, to become collaborators; their mistakes, as well as their intentional revisions, were immediately incorporated into the work and copied faithfully, or unfaithfully, by subsequent scribes. The invasion of a work

¹⁰Jay David Bolter draws attention to this phenomenon in his treatment of the history of writing in *Writing Space*. He writes of how "the conceptual space of a printed book is one in which writing is stable, monumental, and controlled exclusively by an author" (11); elsewhere he characterizes the page as "the monumental writing space of ink on paper" (68). In suggesting the potential effects that computer writing like hypertext will have upon our writing practices, Bolter notes that marginal technologies of writing will become central, whereas the familiar practices of print will become pushed to the margins: "What in turn becomes marginal is precisely that quality that has been central for the last 500 years: the fixed and monumental page of print, the book that exists in thousands of identical copies and heroically resists change" (60).

by censorship, commentary, additions, sequels, or simply by scribal inefficiency, was the rule rather than the exception. (Sturges 115-16)

Scholars sometimes forget this feature of medieval textuality, but the fact of its frequency allows the contrasting permanence of print to become clear.¹¹ This was a novelty in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, one that Spenser took advantage of by continuously pointing out the monumental status of printed verse in poems that frequently invoke the funereal emotion of mourning as somebody or another is commemorated.¹² In a real sense, Spenser continuously conceives of books over and over again as the "tombs of those who cannot die."¹³

Such a formulation would suggest that prosopopoeia, in its status as an act of mourning as well as its desire for monumentality, is a trope peculiarly suited to writing, and particularly to print. De Man says as much in his essay "Hypogram and Inscription" when he writes that "prosopopeia . . . is the very figure of the reader and of reading" (de Man 45). Elsewhere, he writes that "to read is to understand, to question, to know, to forget, to erase, to deface, to repeat—that is to say, the endless prosopopoeia by which the dead are made to have a face and a voice which tells the allegory of their demise and allows us

¹¹Eisenstein, too, makes a similar point: "Of all the new features introduced by the duplicative powers of print, preservation is probably the most important. To appreciate its importance, we need to recall the conditions that prevailed before texts could be set in type. No manuscript, however useful as a reference guide, could be preserved for long without undergoing corruption by copyists, and even this sort of 'preservation' rested precariously on the shifting demands of local elites and a fluctuating incidence of trained scribal labor" (78-79). Of course, since the degree of permanence that we attribute to printed texts today was only beginning to evolve back then, the sixteenth century becomes the transitional moment when this characteristic of print first became a possibility.

¹²Many of the minor poems, as previous discussion demonstrates, concern the mourning of various significant personages. Some of those not mentioned are *Daphnaida*, written for the death of Arthur Ganges' wife, and *Astrophel* and *The Doleful Lay of Clorinda* (whose attribution to Spenser is a point of contention), which were both written for Sidney.

¹³A quotation of the poet George Crabbe cited in Bolter 100.

to apostrophize them in our turn" (de Man, "Shelley Disfigured" 68). The only way the dead can be given a voice, a life, that is lasting and permanent is in letters. The difference between prosopopoeia in oral narrative and prosopopoeia in printed writing is the difference between "writing on the wind" and writing in stone: one can be lost whereas the other can be preserved.¹⁴

Each act of writing, which allows for acts of reading, then, is an act of prosopopoeia, a giving voice to a voiceless character, a bringing to life of something dead, inanimate, alive only in language. Hillis Miller recognizes this feature of prosopopoeia as well, calling it "the fundamental generative linguistic act making a given story possible" (Hillis Miller, *Versions of Pygmalion* 13). Narrative becomes, in this formulation, the extension of prosopopoeia, the putting into play of the resurrected voices. De Man makes similarly sweeping statements about the significance of prosopopoeia, calling it "the master trope of poetic discourse" ("Hypogram" 48). But the power of prosopopoeia, according to de Man, resides in its ability to call into question figuration itself. In its status as a form of catachresis,¹⁵ the arbitrariness of signification becomes apparent: "Prosopopeia undoes the distinction between reference and signification on which all semiotic systems, including Riffaterre's, depend" ("Hypogram" 50).

¹⁴I use here the title of a subchapter in Bolter's *Writing Space* entitled "Writing on the Wind," in which he discusses the history of oral poetry and compares this to electronic writing. See chapter four.

¹⁵"That a catachresis can be a prosopopoeia, in the etymological sense of 'giving face,' is clear from such ordinary instances as the *face* of a mountain or the *eye* of a hurricane. But is it possible that, instead of prosopopoeia being a subspecies of the generic type catachresis (or the reverse), the relationship between them is more disruptive than that between genus and species" (de Man, "Hypogram" 44).

Defining all semiotic systems as unstable, as deconstructionists like de Man are wont to do, reminds one that the tropes that allow us to communicate themselves hinder communication. So it is with prosopopoeia as the trope of reading. At the end of "Shelley Disfigured," de Man equates reading with monumentalization, the fixing of a meaning in stone, one might say, the denial of language's inherent fluidity or its freezing. Reading becomes, in this case, an act of disfiguration, of de-facement, something to avoid but something that is unavoidable.¹⁶ This is unavoidable because it is part of the tropic nature of language. Hillis Miller finds in Pygmalion the perfect personification or prosopopoeia of this process:

A prosopopoeia is a human creation, a product of the capacity within language for tropological substitution. We can, for example, shift the name of a part of the human body to a feature of the landscape and speak of the face of a mountain. This operation is concealed when the anthropomorphism then becomes part of ordinary language. We forget that we ourselves have artfully personified the mountain and are fooled into taking our own creation literally. . . . Pygmalion is so skillful an artist, skilled even in concealing his art from himself, that he is taken in by his own fabrication: it seems to him that Galatea must be a real girl. (8-9)

Figuring literalism as a statue and an act of literalistic reading as a turning to stone has been found in Dante and Chaucer as well as Ovid: "But in what sense exactly is Dorigen turned to stone? In Dante, Medusa is a figure of literalism, of the letter that kills, and correspondingly, of that kind of reading which insists on the letter and resists figuration . . ." (Shoaf, *Dante* 16). These

¹⁶"If it is true and unavoidable that any reading is a monumentalization of sorts, the way in which Rousseau is read and disfigured in *The Triumph of Life* puts Shelley among the few readers who 'guessed whose statue those fragments had composed.' Reading as disfiguration, to the very extent that it resists historicism, turns out to be historically more reliable than the products of historical archaeology. To monumentalize this observation into a *method* of reading would be to regress from the rigor exhibited by Shelley which is exemplary precisely because it refuses to be generalized into a system" (69).

same concerns appear in de Man and Hillis Miller, who locate prosopopoeia as incorporating fundamental aspects of language.

Spenser appears to exhibit such an awareness in his poem *Prosopopoeia, or Mother Hubberds Tale*, which typically goes by its subtitle but which I will refer to as *Prosopopoeia* to remind us, as I think Spenser wanted us to be reminded, that this is a poem about the powers of language, of figuration, of prosopopoeia itself.¹⁷ The poem recounts the narrator's recollection of a story told by Mother Hubberd, one of his visiting friends who is there to help him "deceive" his senses with stories as he lies bedridden. The story tells of the deceitful behavior of a Fox and an Ape as they swindle all whom they encounter for a profit. In the process, they assume different identities as they "fashion" themselves to the opportunities that become available in their travels: first they disguise themselves as a Soldier and his retainer, tricking a shepherd to allow them to watch his flock, which they subsequently devour; next, at the advice of a priest, they become a parish priest and his clerk and abuse their office by taking advantage of the parishioners; then they become courtiers, fitting right in to the *hypocrisis* of court life; finally they adopt the

¹⁷Most discussion of this poem reads it as an allegory of Spenser's disagreement concerning the Queen's proposed marriage to the French duke D'Alençon and as a critique of Lord Burghley allegorized as the Fox. See, for instance, S.K. Heninger's account in *Sidney and Spenser: The Poet as Maker* as well as William Nelson's *The Poetry of Edmund Spenser*. In his introduction, William Oram says that "The disagreement about the political allegory of the poem has distracted critical attention from the work itself" (*Shorter Poems* 329). The only critic in recent years to treat the issue of Spenser's use of prosopopoeia as a trope is Kent T. Van den Berg, who wants to argue that Spenser presents the Fox and the Ape as exemplars of deceit whose behavior is to be avoided: "As a comprehensive persona making, *Mother Hubberds Tale* sets the poet's power to personify against his disdain for the counterfeit self, and thereby exemplifies his struggle to maintain moral and aesthetic integrity in the face of a fragmented and deceptive world" (86). While I agree with Van den Berg that the poem explores "without evasion the affinity of the poet's highest aspirations to creative power with the lowest forms of greed and guile" (99), I do not agree that Spenser ultimately locates himself as separate from the world corrupted by the Fox and the Ape, as Van den Berg would like to conclude. The poem reads more, I would argue, as an acknowledgement of the inherently duplicitous quality of language itself, its inability to be controlled, its tendency, like the Fox and the Ape, to suddenly change identity and become something other than what it was.

identity of a king and his advisor, stealing a crown, mitre and skin from a sleeping lion and enjoying his wealth. In every case they don their "masks" in order to steal from those they fool.

It is precisely in their capacity as thieves that they come to represent the duplicitous nature of language. The Fox and the Ape, in their shape-shifting capacity, signify signification itself in their ability to attach to, detach from and re-attach to different referents at will. Their actions in the poem come to reflect the action of language and specifically of the trope prosopopoeia; as such, they personify prosopopoeia itself. If prosopopoeia means "face-making," then these two embody this principle in their continuously shifting identity, and as such become a prosopopoeia of prosopopoeia.¹⁸ And if the Fox and Ape are meant to be metaphors for prosopopoeia, and prosopopoeia is, as de Man writes, the "trope of tropes," then their representation as thieves translates to the thieving quality of tropes, the way that tropes allow for the theft of one word's meaning or sense for the benefit of another word's enhanced meaning.¹⁹

¹⁸The language of facing pervades the poem. The Mule, advising them before their advent at Court, says in answer to the question of how they could win favor there, "How els (said he) but with a good bold face, / And with big words . . ." (ll. 645-46). While there, Reynold the Fox "Supports his credite and his countenance" (l. 668) as the Ape "with sharp quips joy'd others to deface" (l.707). While there, the Ape fits in, and is able to entertain them "With mumming and with masking all around" (802), but ultimately he cannot "upholde / His countenance in those his garments olde" (927-28). At the end of the poem, in the notorious *deus ex machina* which defaces the genre of the poem itself (Thomas Greene remarks that Mercury's appearance in the poem is "an extraordinary breach of decorum" [quoted in Van den Berg, note 11]; Oram writes of "the extraordinary stylistic indecorum of the episode: Spenser inserts a topos from classical epic into a medieval beast-fable, punctuating the 'base' colloquial style of the surrounding poem with the more elaborate and complex syntax of the lines in which Jove looks down to earth" [*Shorter Poems* 332]), Mercury defaces himself, doffing "that faire face and that Ambrosiall hew, / Which wons to decke the Gods immortall crew" (1267-68) in order to disguise himself.

¹⁹De Man writes in "The Epistemology of Metaphor," "We have no way of defining, of policing, the boundaries that separate the name of one entity from the name of another; tropes are not just travellers, they tend to be smugglers and probably smugglers of stolen goods at that. What makes matters even worse is that there is no way of finding out whether they do so with criminal intent or not" (17).

Van den Berg believes that Spenser writes about this quality of language in order to overcome it, almost as though representing the evil will bring about a kind of cure:

The poem's value inheres less in the satiric warning Spenser may have wished to convey to his sovereign about abuses in her kingdom than in the exercise of imaginative power that recreates those abuses in the fictive form of Fox and Ape; as Yeats would say, "Only when we are gay over a thing, and can play with it, do we show ourselves its master, and have minds clear enough for strength." (97)

Van den Berg assumes that Spenser desires to master the kinds of abuses that the Fox and Ape represent, but I would argue that Spenser desires no such mastery, that if he can be said to have any purpose that purpose would be to demonstrate the duplicity of language. What better way to illustrate this than by ending the story with Mercury, messenger god of language, patron of thieves and literacy, arriving to bring the Fox and Ape to justice by doing just what they do:

Through power of that, his cunning theeveries
He wents to work, that none the same espies;
And through power of that, he putteth on,
What shape he list in apparition. (ll. 1287-1290)

Van den Berg rightly observes that "Spenser symbolizes in Mercury an ambivalent attitude toward the nature of the poet's power" (98), but he concludes that "The poet [like Mercury] has assumed the guise of Mother Hubberd, adopting her base style as a way of entering the world corrupted by Fox and Ape" (99). This latter statement implies that the poet does not participate in the corrupt world he is trying to correct, that his adoption of Mother Hubberd's base style is an innocent maneuver meant to correct the "amorality" of human art.

I would argue, however, that the poem shows us that no such mastery is possible, no moralistic transcendence occurs. The very tropes of language

themselves, which are figured as thieves smuggling meaning, as plunderers of the denotative meanings of words, make it impossible to escape participating in these "crimes of language." If the poet is like Mercury, as Van den Berg asserts, then he is like the ultimate defacer, one who works "cunning theeveries" in order to steal whatever identity he requires to get his message across. This, in fact, seems to be what the narrator has done in adopting Mother Hubbard's "bad tongue." He admits to defacing her tale at the end:

So *Mother Hubbard* her discourse did end:
Which pardon me, if I amisse have pend,
For weake was my remembrance it to hold,
And bad her tongue that it so bluntly tolde. (ll. 1385-1388)

The problem with Van den Berg's conclusion is the problem with the narrator, a problem which comes clear in the opening lines. The "righteous Maide" Virgo (or Astraea) has fled the corrupt world because she disdains the "sinfull worlds upbraide" (ll. 1-2), leaving behind "the hot *Syrian* dog" to corrupt "th'ayre with his noysome breath, / And powr'd on th'earth plague, pestilence, and death" (ll. 5, 7-8). Tradition has it that during the dog days of summer madness reigned over the earth, that the dog-star made people go mad. It is this madness that plagues the narrator and therefore makes him unreliable:

Eamongst the rest a wicked maladie
Raign'd emongst men, that manie did to die,
Depriv'd of sense and ordinarie reason;
That it to Leaches seemed strange and geason.
My fortune was mongst manie others moe,
To be partaker of their common woe (ll. 9-14)

Both Van den Berg and Oram argue that the narrator is not a con-man: "Of crucial importance in understanding the work is the narrator—a figure who, like Mercury, is an artist but who, unlike the Fox and the Ape, is not a

con-man" (*Shorter Poems* 333). I am suggesting that, because the narrator is an artist like Mercury, a poet, he cannot help but be a con-man.

The importance of *Prosopopoeia* lies in the perspective it provides on Spenser's ambivalence to the trope that is so central to his later work, that is an emblem of the new, monumental mnemonic system of print literacy that he was embracing. Though he "faces" Elizabeth in *The Faerie Queene*, he is very much aware that it is an act of forgery akin to the gimmicks of Archimago. The verbs "to face" and "to forge" occur side by side in two instances, as though synonyms, implicating prosopopoeia as a devious procedure. The first instance comes in the Priest's talk to the Fox and Ape, when his advice turns from the subject of how to obtain a benefice to how to succeed at Court:

But if these list unto the Court to throng,
 And there to hunt after the hoped pray,
 Then must thou thee dispose another way:
 For there thou needs must learne, to laughe, to lie,
 To face, to forge, to scoffe, to companie,
 To crouche, to please, to be a beetle stock
 Of thy great Masters will, to scorne or mock (ll. 502-508)

"To lie,/ To face, to forge": this does not paint a flattering portrait of what a courtier has to do in order to succeed, and it could be read as a bitter picture of Spenser's own experience. The other moment comes in Book Five of *The Faerie Queene*, in the description of the villain Malengin in canto nine:

Thereto both his owne wylie wit, (she sayd)
 And eke the fastnesse of his dwelling place,
 Both vnassaylable, gaue him great ayde:
 For he so crafty was to forge and face,
 So light of hand, and nymble of his pace,
 So smooth of tongue, and subtile in his tale,
 That could deceive one looking in his face;
 Therefore by name *Malengin* they him call,
 Well knownen by his feates, and famous ouer all. (st. 5)

Malengin is smooth of tongue because he is a rhetorician, as we see in stanza 12, when he tries to soothe the damsell Samient: "But when the villaine saw her so affrayd, / He gan with guilefull words her to perswade, / To banish feare" (ll. 4-6). As a rhetorician, he uses language like a net to capture the damsell: "To which whilest she lent her intentiue mind, / He suddenly his net vpon her threw, / That ouersprad her like a puffe of wind" (9.14.1-3).

This description echoes other passages in Spenser's poems that figure questionable rhetoricians and/or poets as spiders who weave nets (or "texts") of language.²⁰

So, despite Spenser's investment in prosopopoeia as the monumental trope of print, as that which will secure him and his wealthy and generous patrons' fame, he understands the deceitful quality of the language in which he writes and figures his anxiety concerning this in dangerous and disruptive characters like Archimago and Malengin. The ambivalence that Van den

²⁰One instance of this occurs in ll.1.8, in the description of Archimago:

Such whenas *Archimago* them did view,
 He weened well to worke some vncouth wile,
 Eftsoones vntwisting his deceitfull clew,
 He gan to weaue a web of wicked guile,
 And with faire countenance and flattring stile (ll. 1-5)

"Clew" literally means "ball of thread" and is said in Smith and de Selincourt's glossary to mean "plot," thereby connecting this allusion to the poet's task of creating a plot as being "deceitfull" to the act of weaving webs and stylistics. Weaving and spiderwebs were connected in the sixteenth century to the rhetoric of sophistry, and the language describing Archimago, Mammon, and Malengin embodies these Early Modern equations of spiderwebs or nets and rhetoric, spiders and rhetoricians. The etymology of text—from "texo" meaning "to weave"—certainly fostered this analogy, but the prevalence in encyclopedic texts as well as throughout Spenser's poetry indicates its status as a sixteenth-century commonplace. In the folio on insects of Aldrovandus's encyclopedia, for instance, he mentions the proverb that makes a connection ("collatio") between the woven webs of spiders (the "textentis telas") and the feigning lies of men ("comminiscentis mendacia"): "Proverbialis videluz, illa collatio, Aranei ex sese textentis telas, et hominis ex seipso comminiscentis mendacia" (629). Alexander Ross, too, in his sixteenth-century text entitled *Mystagogus Poeticus*, also speaks of spiders as sophists: "Subtil and trifling Sophisters, who with intricacies and querks entangle men, are no better than Spiders, whose captious fallacies are no less hateful to the Wise, than *Arachnes* web was to *Minerva* " (30).

Berg notes in Spenser's presentation of Mercury actually pervades his corpus, and can be attributed, as I have tried to suggest, to his involvement in a transitional period of shifting mnemonics. This grammatological sensitivity to Spenser's historical moment and the apparatus within which he worked has yielded a portrait of an inventor who has invented a hybrid mnemonic that includes both the ancient and marginalized tradition of the memory palace and the emergent monumentality of print. Further consideration of the poetry will demonstrate Spenser's ambivalence concerning the advantages of writing, which are only enhanced by print, as opposed to its apparent dangers. Ultimately, we see a poet who is aware, only unconsciously perhaps, that the new mnemonic of print is threatening an entire tradition but who is not quite committed to preventing its advent.

The Ideology of Depth and the Prosopopoeia of the Book

For earlier twentieth century thinkers, the ideology of alphabetic literacy—which engenders attendant notions of authority, individuality, and autonomy—had become habitual. The invention of new media such as radio, television, and computer technologies, especially the most recent breakthroughs in information sciences, however, has challenged the comfortable assumptions of the literate apparatus, such that the historical and linguistic origins of such assumptions are coming more and more to be exposed. Coincident to the emergence of the new media, too, is the advent of poststructural forms of analysis, which compel the philosopher to discover the metaphors underlying an ideological supposition in order to reveal their motivating force. This force is the force of the dead metaphor, which

constitutes the force of ideology as it is forged in habits of language use. So what are the dead metaphors governing language use in the print apparatus?

Lakoff and Johnson are quite good at reminding us of the dead metaphors that we rely upon, that we have forgotten with decades and even centuries of usage. In their book *Metaphors We Live By*, for instance, they expose the prevalence of depth at the heart of fundamental concepts of communication. As an example, they recognize depth as a common denominator underlying the three metaphorical concepts "argument is a container," "argument is a building," and "argument is a journey." Depth does not work the same way for each: "In the BUILDING and CONTAINER metaphors, what is deeper is more basic. The most basic parts of the argument are the deepest: the foundation and the core. However, in the JOURNEY metaphor, deep facts are those that are not obvious" (100-101). The journey metaphor suggests that an argument "covers ground," but it also requires that difficult points be covered to a certain degree of depth, as seen in the following example: "We have *come to a point* where we must *explore* the issues at a *deeper level* " (101).

The point I wish to make is that, in each of these metaphorical concepts, depth is a privileged metaphor. One is required to have a "foundation" and a "core" in an argument to be successful according to an ideology of depth, because depth represents the basic parts of an argument. In the journey metaphor, too, depth is privileged, as it represents difficulty, not insurmountable difficulty but difficulty that one overcomes by "going deeper." The privileged status of this metaphor becomes clear when one encounters its counterpart, the surface, as can be seen in the following example that Lakoff and Johnson employ to demonstrate another complex overlapping of the journey metaphor with the UNDERSTANDING IS

SEEING metaphor: "In an argument the superficial points (those on the surface) are obvious; they are easy to see, easy to understand. But the deeper points are not obvious. It requires effort—digging—to reveal them so that we can see them" (103). The surface is equated with superficiality, a trait which male chauvinists attribute to blond-haired women: they are *shallow* because they cannot think *deep thoughts*.

Depth did not always bear this exalted status. As previously mentioned, Michael Near's grammatological study of *Beowulf* claims that the poem manifests an anxiety toward writing that is caused by the poet's investment in the values of orality. This anxiety over literacy is figured in a sword hanging in the cave within Grendel's mere, which constitutes the only instance of writing in the entire poem. Because it is both submerged in the mere and tells a story of submergence, the status of writing is suspect:

This unambiguous association of writing with submersion and alienation—the suggestion that the technology of writing is part of a supernatural art practiced by those isolated from human company, by creatures such as Grendel—acknowledges the existence of literacy but simultaneously suggests that its practice is deeply suspect and that its practitioners are psychologically distant from the known community of voices into which writing has been brought as a remnant of a hidden and alien world. (324)

The monsters, as Near states, come from a deep place, and this deep place is associated with writing by means of the sword's presence—the writing on which tells of another instance of submersion and drowning in a deep place. Near recognizes in this reading of *Beowulf* that the poem was a product of a transitional period, a period when writing was first becoming available to the early Anglo-Saxons but when it had not yet been fully embraced. As a participant in an oral culture, the *Beowulf* poet recognized the threat

inherent within the emerging literate apparatus and subsequently embodied this threat within the two monsters of the mere.

Spenser's moment is likewise transitional, but this transition differs in the sense that it is more an extension of values already inherent in chirography than the emergence of a radically alternative epistemology, as in the example of the *Beowulf* poet above. Ong has noted the "residual orality" that still existed for the British in the sixteenth century and that would last until the Romantic period.²¹ Something of this residual orality can be viewed in Spenser's treatment of depth, which is frequently similar to the *Beowulf* poet's as Near represents it. But Spenser also presents some of the privileging of depth that is more familiar to our contemporary standards. In this way, then, the poet reveals an ambivalence toward depth, an ambivalence which further demonstrates its historical origin as well as its ideological effects.

Several occasions in the poetry present depth as acceptable, even desirable, connecting it to reading, writing, and learning. In *Prosopopoia*, for instance, the narrator describes an illiterate priest whom the Fox and Ape encounter on the road:

For read he could not evidence, nor will,
 Ne tell a written word, ne write a letter,
 Ne make one title worse, ne make one better:
 Of such deep learning little had he neede,
 Ne yet of Latine, ne of Greeke, that breede
 Doubts mongst Divines, and difference of texts,
 From whence arise diversitie of sects,
 And hatefull heresies, of God abhor'd:
 But this good Sir did follow the plaine word,
 Ne medled with their controversies vaine. . . . (382-391)

²¹ See Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* chapter two: "This chapter is concerned with oral phenomena in Tudor literature, but its main interest is in oral residue rather than in consciously cultivated oral effects" (25). Later he writes, "The romantic quest for originality, the novel, the new, reveals romanticism as a typographic phenomenon. . . . Insofar as romanticism persists today, as it does, we are still in a typographic world" (294-295).

If we accept the supposed naivete of Mother Hubbard as a narrator, this passage becomes an ironic comment on the medieval nature of this priest's theology. Mother Hubbard says that this "deep learning," which entails knowledge of Latin and Greek, causes the "hatefull heresies" that were a product of the Protestant Reformation. The priest, a suspect character to begin with, embraces a medieval Catholicism to which Spenser is of course opposed. "Deep learning" is thus valued in this instance, as it is that which enabled the Reformation to occur. More significantly, reading and writing are valued in terms of the access they provide to a depth.

Another instance of valorization occurs at the end of *The Teares of the Muses*, during Polyhymnia's final complaint about the state of poetry. After she says that bad poets deface Poesy, she recalls "ages past," when poetry was the province of the powerful:

Whilom in ages past none might professe
 But Princes and high Priests that secret skill,
 The sacred lawes therein they wont expresse,
 And with deepe Oracles their verses fill:
 Then was shee held in soveraigne dignitie,
 And made the noursling of Nobilitie. (559-64)

This was a time when Poetry was the "nursling of Nobility" and "held in sovereign dignity." The fact that their verses are filled with "deepe Oracles" demonstrates the positive connotation of depth, as it is depth that grants such dignified qualities to their verses.

Here Spenser names himself High-Priest of Elizabethan poetry, since it is his verse that will cleanse the current pollutions, if only the Queen and other wealthy patrons adequately finance his endeavors. There is, after all, something holy to the act of writing: God carves the ten commandments into stone in the same way that he writes his epistle in the hearts of Christians. With Christians, though, he writes "not on tablets of stone but on tablets of

human hearts" (2 Corinthians 3: 3). This is certainly the allusion within the passage in which Red Cross Knight speaks of the lesson learned after being freed from Orgoglio's dungeon:

This dayes ensample hath this lesson deare
 Deepe written in my heart with yron pen,
 That blisse may not abide in state of mortall men. (I.8.44.7-9)

The deep writing that occurs here literally incorporates the word of God; the level of depth achieved is a result of the impression made upon the penitent's heart.

The scene of writing, however, becomes the primary site of ambivalence for Spenser in his rendition of the problematic of depth, for the writers in *The Faerie Queene* are the ones who figure depth and the dangers inherent in depth.²² The first and most obvious occurrence of this tendency arises early in Book One, in the description of Archimago. After inviting the unsuspecting hero and his damsel to spend the night at his hermitage, he goes to his study and "seekes out mighty charmes":

²² Spenserian criticism has made discussion of Spenser and the question of writing a commonplace. The tenor of these arguments presents Spenser as a kind of reading teacher, a poet anxious about the meanings of his poem being misconstrued. DeNeef elevates this topic to the subject of an entire book, each brief chapter pointing out how Spenser "bodies forth" his concern for readers reading literally by incorporating within his texts examples of "wrong readers" and corrupt authors: "To understand the ways in which writing and reading become problematic for the Renaissance poet, we must be alert to the metaphors which define or articulate not the success but the abuse of the Word: the parodic false maker, like Satan or Archimago or Despair; the fault-finding misreader, like Redcross, like Adam . . ." (12). Quilligan reaches the same conclusion about Red Cross Knight in her distinguishing of allegory from allegoresis, claiming that the subject matter of the former must concern the problem of reading, as in FQ I, when we see Spenser teaching us how to read by showing how poor a reader the Red Cross Knight is: "With this first episode, Spenser teaches the reader how to read *The Faerie Queene*" (36). David Miller also sees Red Cross Knight as being in need of reading lessons: "At the House of Holiness Spenser represents the dynamics of this conversion as a set of reading skills opposed to the literalizing hermeneutics of despair" (88). Patricia Parker, too, in *Inescapable Romance*, believes that the main problem for Red Cross Knight is learning how to read as he travels in "a landscape of only potential significances and disjunctive signs" (65). And Jacqueline Miller identifies this concern in the latter half of *The Faerie Queene*: "Commentators have noted that in the last three books of *The Faerie Queene* there is a growing self-consciousness and disillusionment as the poet despairs about the efficacy of his poetry; the narrative begins to attend explicitly to its own composition and to the issue of writing itself" (99).

Then choosing out few wordes most horrible,
 (Let none them read) thereof did verses frame,
 With which and other spelles like terrible,
 He bad awake blacke *Plutoes* griesly Dame. (I.1.37.1-4)

Archimago is here one who "frames verses," similar to the poet himself, and his magic is associated with depth, as he calls forth "out of deepe darknesse dred / Legions of Sprights" (I.1.38.1-2), one of which he sends "through the world of waters wide and deepe / To *Morpheus* house" (I.1.39.2-3).

Archimago as writer is intimate with depth—with deep darkness, with the deep residence of *Morpheus*.

Merlin, too, is also figured as a writer whose practice of magic groups him with Archimago as a writer intimate with depth. It is his "deepe science, and hell-dreaded might" (III.2.18.7), associating the depth that the sciences he practices allows him to achieve with hell, that creates the mirror in which Britomart views Artegall. And when Britomart goes to visit him, she has to go "low vnderneath the ground, / In a deepe delue, farre from the vew of day" (III.3.7.6-7). Upon entering, Britomart finds Merlin "Deepe busied bout worke of wondrous end, / And writing strange characters in the ground, / With which the stubborn feends he to his seruice bound" (III.3.14.67-9). The concentration necessary to carry out the activity of writing here makes it a "deep business."

Another infamous Spenserian antagonist, not normally associated with writing, is also figured in this manner. Mammon, typically conceived as an emblem of Avarice, is obliquely described in terms of textuality:

His yron coate all ouergrowne with rust,
 Was vnderneath enueloped with gold,
 Whose glistring glosse darkned with filthy dust,
 Well yet appeared, to haue beene of old
 A worke of rich entayle, and curious mould,
 Wouen with antickes and wild Imagery. (II.7.4.1-6)

This coat is something "woven," something that has a "gloss," terms which can also be attributed to textuality. Its textual nature is verified a few stanzas later, when Guyon says to him, "I *read* thee rash" (II.7.7.8, emphasis added). Mammon is a rhetorician, one who weaves tenuous texts of sophistic persuasion as he tries to woo Guyon into sin. And like Archimago, he is familiar with deep dark places: to get to his place, Mammon leads Guyon down "A darkesome way, which no man could descry, / That deepe descended through the hollow ground, / And was with dread and horreur compassed around" (20.7-8). Furthermore, while Guyon tours the Cave of Mammon, he sees the Garden of Proserpina, through which "the riuier of *Cocytus* deepe" (56.8) flows, and he sees Tantalus, who "drenched lay full deepe" (57.9). "Deepe was he drenched to the vpmost chin" (58.1), the poet repeats, after which he recounts that Guyon "espyde / Another wretch, whose carkasse deepe was drent / Within the riuier" (61.1-3), who soon reveals himself to be Pilate. Here, depth represents not only the place of punishment—Hell—but also the extent of the punishments, thereby doubling the jeopardy that depth represents.

For a final rhetorical antagonist associated with depth we must return to a passage late in Book Five, which features Malengin. Malengin is a rhetorician *par excellence* who is also said to inhabit deep places:

And eke the rocke, in which he wonts to dwell,
Is wondrous strong, and hewen farre vnder ground
A dreadfull depth, how deepe no man can tell;
But some doe say, it goeth downe to hell. (V.9.6.2-5)

Like Malengin's cave, other places of depth are associated with Hell. For instance, when Duessa seeks the aid of the Goddess Night to save the wounded Sansjoy, she is said to carry the "heauie corse with easie pace / To yawning gulfe of deepe *Auernus* hole" (I.5.31.2-3). And in Arthur's

apostrophe to Night, spoken in frustration due to his failed search for Florimell early in Book Three, he wonders why God would call her "oft from *Stygian deepe*" (III.4.56.7).

The dungeons of evil characters are also always associated with depth. The House of Pride, presided over by Lucifera, has a dungeon where those enthralled to this sin have been cast. Red Cross Knight manages to escape this trap, for "his wary Dwarfe had spide, / Where in a dongeon deepe huge numbers lay / Of caytiue wretched thrals" (I.5.45.7-8). In the Orgoglio episode, however, after drinking from an enchanted well, the Knight is unable to fight Orgoglio, who "in a Dongeon deepe him threw without remorse" (I.7.15.9). The dungeon that Proteus puts Florimell in also is repeatedly said to be a deep dungeon: in Book Three, for instance, when he first captures her, "Downe in a Dongeon deepe he let her fall" (III.8.41.8), and when the narrative thread picks up again late in Book Four, the narrator reminds the reader that "Vnlouely *Proteus* . . . Her threw into a dongeon deepe and blind" (IV.11.2.2-4) and repeats, "Deepe in the bottome of an huge great rocke / The dongeon was, in which her bound he left" (IV.11.3.1-2).

So, though writing allows for a certain depth of understanding to be achieved, though it is the instrument of God in literally embodying his word in the flesh, the depth that it brings about is highly suspect in *The Faerie Queene*, as the above catalogue of references ought to establish. This makes sense, given Spenser's documented suspicion of allegorical writing, his fear of not being in control of the language. This at least is the pose that he takes in, for instance, the letter to Raleigh, which opens with the rationale for his writing such a letter:

Sir knowing how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed,
and this booke of mine, which I haue entituled the Faery
Queene, being a continued Allegory, or darke conceit, I have

thought good aswell for auoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof, (being so by you commanded,) to discouer unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I haue fashioned, without expressing any particular purposes or by-accidents therein occasioned. (*Poetical Works* 407)

The assumption here is that allegory, a "dark conceit," requires "discovery" in order to avoid misconstructions of meaning, and if recent critics are right in claiming that Spenser's allegory self-reflexively inscribes the scene of writing and all its attendant darkness—a darkness reminiscent of that encountered in deep dungeons—then we see here an awareness of the slippery quality of (allegorical) language itself. Such awareness comes to be more and more prevalent as the writing and study of literature develops as an institution, eventually resulting in the hegemony of the symbol and the disparagement of allegory.

This desire to control language can be viewed in the subsequent development of literature and in the emergence of literary criticism as an institution. Each of these derives its fundamental assumptions from the apparatus of print literacy, which comes into its own for English writers during the Romantic period. As Ong has observed, "After the development of print in the mid-1400's, it took several hundred years for the invention to have its full effect in deadening the original sound world where the word has its natural habitat. By the mid-1800's, the effect of typography was at its maximum" ("Comment: Voice, Print, and Culture" 80-81). Current critiques of traditional literary criticism as developed and practiced prior to twentieth-century theoretical developments offer evidence of such unconscious assumptions. The notion of the autonomous author, an author intending a particular meaning and incorporating it in the body of his or her text, derives

from the monumental status of the printed book.²³ Jerome McGann, like Ong, locates the origin of these concerns in the 1800's:

These ideas are grounded in a Romantic conception of literary production, and they have a number of practical consequences for the way scholars are urged to edit texts and critics are urged to interpret them. The ideas are also widespread in our literary culture, and since they continue to go largely unexamined in the fundamental ways that seem to me necessary, they continue to operate on the level of ideology. (*A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* 8).

This "ideology of final intentions," as McGann calls it, has implicated editors of pre-Romantic texts who have generalized an historically-specific mode of textuality that emerged in the 1800's to cover texts of the Medieval and Renaissance periods, whose writers had a different ethic of textual production.²⁴ These impositions are ideologically sanctioned and institutionally perpetuated, as de Man recognizes: "But from where then does the contextual unity, which the study of texts reconfirms over and over again and to which American criticism owes its effectiveness, stem? Is it not rather that this unity . . . resides not in the poetic text as such, but in the act of interpreting this text?" (*Blindness and Insight* 28-29). De Man here points out that the unity taken to reside within the poetic text actually resides in a community of readers who exist within the educational institution and who are ideologically motivated in perpetuating notions of final intentions and unified poetic texts.

²³I recognize that this very chapter indulges the notion of the autonomous author whose intended meanings concerning his uses of prosopopoeia are transparent. Part of this is due to participation in a kind of critical routine procedure, but part is also due to a desire to look beyond the hermeneutic problems inherent within critical readings in order to approach an author, text or period heuristically, as a grammatologist.

²⁴For this phenomenon as it occurs in Medieval textual scholarship, see Sturges, "Textual Scholarship: Ideologies of Literary Production." For an instance of how critics have imposed this contemporary view of textual production upon a historical consideration of the publication history of Spenser's *Complaints*, see Brink, "Who Fashioned Edmund Spenser?: The Textual History of *Complaints*."

This seeking after unity, this desire to find the core meaning of a text, I am suggesting, results from a desire to control literary language, to *grasp* it, to *apprehend* it, by imposing a unity upon it.²⁵ As a consequence of this desire for a controlled unity, allegory was subordinated to the symbol as the primary aesthetic figure with the emergence of Romanticism²⁶ in that allegory, which came to be known by some as an artificial form of figuration that imposes a connection between an abstraction and its allegorization, was opposed to the symbol, which was organically conceived as a natural part of the whole which it signifies, in the spirit of synecdoche. Gadamer is clearest in articulating this phenomenon: "[A]llegory does not assume an original metaphysical relationship, such as a symbol claims but, rather, a connection created by convention and dogmatic agreement, which enables one to use a presentation in images for something that is imageless" (67). This metaphysical relationship is grounded in the assumption of a unity between symbol and thing symbolized: "According to Solger the symbolic refers to an 'existence in which the idea is recognised in some way or another', ie [sic] the inward unity of ideal and appearance that is typical of the work of art. Whereas allegory creates this

²⁵ It is to this tendency to close off the polysemy of texts that deconstruction, in part, responds. As Geoffrey Hartman writes, in his articulate and effective apology for deconstruction in *Reading de Man Reading*, "Having found that words were not rendered less ambiguous by being organized in a literary way—that the ambiguity, or beyond it, the ambivalence, became more complex and discomfiting—a tendency arose [among New Critics] to distinguish the literary from the linguistic in terms that relapsed into humanistic cant. De Man . . . remains authoritative on this turn toward what he calls incarnational or salvational criticism. . . . The spirit of criticism embodied by de Man seems to threaten the institutionalization of criticism itself" (5, 11).

²⁶ De Man argues, in "The Rhetoric of Temporality," that, in actuality, allegory never was completely abandoned and only comes to be subordinated by the subsequent act of critics invested in the Romantic ideologies of textuality and authority that were in part a result of their own creations: "For the lucidity of the pre-romantic writers does not persist. It does not take long for a symbolic conception of metaphorical language to establish itself everywhere, despite the ambiguities that persist in aesthetic theory and poetic practice" (208).

meaningful unity only by pointing to something else" (Gadamer 66).²⁷ The denial of the arbitrary allows a writer to achieve a sense of control, in that the relationship between symbol and symbolized is said to exist in the symbol and not outside of the symbol, in some arbitrary act of poetic creativity. The poet, then, would have no need to fear if one were to misread the symbol, for then the responsibility would be in the hands of the reader, whereas an allegorist like Spenser, whose allegorizations are in his control ("a pure decision of the mind," as de Man formulates allegory), fears that they will be misread and therefore feels responsible for the reception of his allegory. Arbitrariness, therefore, implies powerlessness, the kind of powerlessness that Spenser felt in producing his allegories. This is the paradox of allegory: the more in control one is, the less control one has over its reception; on the other hand, removing the control over the symbol and its organic referent from the realm of the poet conversely represents an act of taking control over language, a form of control that poststructuralism tries to undermine.

The will to power over language is achieved in one way by resorting to prosopopoeia. Though the dead are figuratively risen in a written text and monumentalized in a printed text and, what is more important, given the power to speak, this voicing is very much in control of the writer: what the dead say and how they say it are choices that the author makes. In the same way, the writer can control the kind of dialogue s/he has with the personified being or resurrected entity. An early example of this phenomenon can be seen in Theodore Beza's *Icones*, which creates a memory palace of dead martyrs which he offers to the reader as a place in which to dialogue with them: "Beza purports to desire that his reader actually hear the resuscitated

²⁷ De Man amplifies Gadamer's observations in "The Rhetoric of Temporality, pp. 187-208, in which he writes that the relationship of the symbol is based "on the organic coherence of the synecdoche" whereas the relationship of allegory "is a pure decision of the mind" (192).

word of the confessors and be able to engage the textual figures in conversation . . ." (Coats 23). But "the dialogue into which the reader is called is in fact one with Beza. Beza's ability to dialogue directly with the dead . . . is in dramatic counter-distinction to the martyr's inaccessibility to the readers; through the verbal encounter he becomes one with the martyrs" (24). Coats' analysis of *Icones* suggests that it exemplifies a conscious "authorial assertion" that actively interprets the text he composes: "The effacement of the martyrs' bodies is necessary in order for Beza to write. It is the absence produced by their death that generates the text. . . . Their bodies can only be recuperated in the form of speech, through the textual medium" (26). In the space of their death, Beza replaces an act of prosopopoeia which literally embodies the voices of the dead, allowing him to write a dialogue that ultimately writes his self.²⁸

The will to power is also achieved by engaging in dialogue with a text. The practice of engaging in dialogue with a text was theorized in the Middle Ages, as Carruthers points out: "Medieval reading was highly active, what I have called a 'hermeneutical dialogue' between the mind of the reader and the absent voices which the written letters call forth, at times literally in the murmur of ruminative mediation" (186). The medieval phrase "voces paginarum," "the voices of the pages," evokes this notion of the prosopopoeia of the page (Carruthers 170). Instructors of the late Middle Ages in fact resorted to this form of dialogue as opposed to true dialogue with the class in order to save time so that the entire curriculum could be covered in the short time available to them. Ong writes of this occurrence:

Even where the abuse of dictation was avoided, a teacher who might want to maintain some show of dialogue in the process of relaying his subject matter, but who had to face a class in an

²⁸ The book itself, whenever possible, provides a woodcut of the martyr's face.

assigned subject at routine hours, would find it much more feasible to have a written text than a living person as interlocutor. As we know from class notes and from annotated textbooks, as well as from commonplace present-day experience, control was not easy despite the presence of a written text, and coverage of the whole matter called for was often not completed. Even partial dialogue with the class, in which the pupils volunteered questions or objections, was necessarily severely restricted, or one would never get through the material at all. Hence from the earliest times the commentary on a written text, an attenuated form of dialogue in which one interlocutor (the writer of the text) need not even be alive, competed vigorously with the more completely oral, more strictly dialectical disputation. (Ong, *Ramus* 155).

This description of late Medieval pedagogical practice as it adapted to the new curricular demands serves as another example of how the act of engaging in dialogue with a text—that is, the art of constructing a prosopopoeia of the book—generates a degree of control otherwise unattainable. The dialogue with a book maintains a level of control that is unattainable in a dialogue with a person, for one cannot predict the kinds of tangents a true conversation will take.

Such is the kind of dialogue that Gadamer promotes in his work, according to Steven Crowell, who tells of two primary metaphors that occur when one attempts in general to understand the meaning of language: the metaphor of the text and the metaphor of the dialogue. These allow for three variations of the interpretive moment as it is encountered in textual and dialogical encounters: the first views textual interpretation in terms of dialogue, the second views dialogue in terms of textuality, and the third suggests that "the two may be held apart according to their *essential* difference, reflecting what I will call the twofold 'ground' of intelligibility, the ethical and the ontological" (339). His ultimate purpose is to recuperate Gadamer's hermeneutics in terms of Levinas's ethical imperative, but it is his

initial critique of Gadamer that I am interested in here. Gadamer employs the metaphor of dialogue, viewing as he does the text as a voice. This maneuver is in the realm of *prosopopoeia* and is similar to the Medieval conception highlighted above in that it enables one "to construe the text as a 'partner' in that dialogue constituted on the other side by the interpreter's (reader's) interrogative activity. The text is not primarily an object for reconstruction; its individuality is to be preserved by hearing it as a 'voice' in the conversation of tradition" (343).

This conception of the hermeneutic moment allows Gadamer to participate in the same kind of control remarked above, for it emerges, "ultimately, from a concern with the interpretation of texts" (342), interpretation being one way of controlling a text's meaning. Gadamer can conceive of dialogue with texts because he is fully invested in the logocentric privileging of voice and the pursuit of a metaphysical truth, and because he engages in dialogue with a text conceived as a person and not a person itself, he is able to pursue a "unity of meaning":

[T]he very idea of the 'unity' and 'identity' of a discourse appears to derive from the fact that texts, of whatever length, come to an end. . . . Thus the guiding notions of Gadamer's hermeneutics . . . all reveal their origin in a fundamental tendency that has its motivation in the experience of reading, namely, a tendency toward 'wholeness' and plenitude. (348-349)

The printed book provides a closure that dialogue does not, which renders the latter less controllable and therefore less likely to yield to notions of finality and unity. *Prosopopoeia*, therefore, as a trope of literacy, evokes the specters of (phal)logocentrism which fully participates in, or as Luce Irigaray might say, "penetrates," the ideology of depth.

So it is no surprise that Spenser would find the prospects of print literacy a questionable blessing, since his perspective is situated in the

moment of transition, a moment for him of relative darkness. On the one hand, print offers both him and his patrons the kind of monumental fame that appealed to his ambition; on the other hand, the depth that print allows one to achieve is as frightening to him as the prospect of virtual reality and cyberspace technologies is to scholars, myself included, invested in the apparatus of print. His fear is reflected in ours.²⁹

On the literary plain of battle, the Red Cross Knight will yield to Don Quixote, the advent of the novel and of a realism which would usher in, soon after, the hegemony of the symbol and Romantic ideologies of authority and textuality. Allegory will come to be called "stupid and frivolous"³⁰ during the 500 year period of print literacy's reign, but with the return in the twentieth century of a concern for language and the pan-disciplinary consideration of linguistic questions that followed, allegory is making a comeback in literary theory and artistic practice. One reason for this is the very nature of the new technologies that include if not primarily foreground images in their "writing" and even recognize that letters themselves are images. Another reason derives from both the pressure that poststructural theorists have applied to language, examining as they do the centrality of

²⁹In a special issue of the electronic journal *Surfaces* focusing on the impact of the Internet upon scholarship, James J. O'Donnell writes, "We live in an age of media transition not unlike that which ushered in the print culture so familiar to us all. It is instructive to compare the objections raised in those days to print with those raised now to electronic media: the resemblances are eerie. Just last week, I had a Marxist literary scholar saying to me words that quite unconsciously and quite faithfully echoed the lament of a 15th century Benedictine abbot for the threatened decay of the medieval scriptorium. For the objections raised in both ages speak not so much to real drawbacks in the new medium as to the threat they pose to the existing social order" (5).

³⁰This phrase comes from Jorge Luis Borges's scathing indictment of allegory in his essay "From Allegories to Novels," in which he writes, "I know that at one time the allegorical art was considered quite charming (the labyrinthine *Roman de la Rose*, which survives in two hundred manuscripts, consists of twenty-four thousand verses) and is now intolerable. We feel that, besides being intolerable, it is stupid and frivolous" (155-56).

metaphor in determining cognitive behavior, and the Derridean emphasis on picto-ideo-phonographic writing that has resulted from such inquiry.

I will now turn to a consideration of the role poststructuralism has played in the return of allegory as a preface to theorizing hypertext composition based on Deleuzoguattarian concepts of the rhizome. Electronic rhetoric, I will suggest in the next chapter, is inherently allegorical, given the possibilities for juxtaposition, typographical irony, and iconographic representation, and this factor explains my consideration of the Art of Memory (and Spenser's use of it in *The Faerie Queene*) as an allegorical tradition of information storage practiced prior to the age of the printed book. The Art of Memory may provide a form of information storage that is fruitful in negotiating textual production in the new age of allegory in the emergent electronic era. In the same way that Spenser straddled two mnemonic systems in his writings, one being the memory palace tradition and the other being the emerging mnemonics of print literacy, writers of electronic documents straddle both the passing mnemonics of print and the emerging mnemonics of the electronic era. It will thus be necessary in the next chapter to consider how "residual literacy," to adapt Ong's popular phrase, occurs in human-computer interface design as well as the interface of certain hypertexts as a way of highlighting the effect of cultural inertia upon current design strategies. My purpose in doing so will be to suggest that Spenser's textuality, as a representative of the allegorical tradition and of the forgotten method of the memory palace, will be more appropriate to the "writing space" of electronic media than to that of print literacy. If Cervantes's *Don Quixote* dominated the field of print, it was only because Spenser's Red Cross Knight did not have as much to offer the apparatus of alphabetic literacy. But insofar as hypertext will be an electronic technology that will encourage picto-ideo-

phonographic writing, Spenser and the memory palace tradition, as participants in allegorical writing, will have something to offer the twenty-first century textual composer. The next chapter will take up the question of how such an offering might be accepted.

CHAPTER 4 THE AGE OF ELECTRONIC COMPOSITION

The Return of Allegory and the Privileging of the Surface

Jorge Luis Borges, writing about the decline of allegory in the age of print literacy, asks, after considering its past popularity in the Middle Ages and characterizing its present status as a "stupid and frivolous" genre, "How can I explain the difference in outlook without simply appealing to the principle of changing tastes?" (156). The discussion at the close of my third chapter, however, suggests that forces greater than mere taste were behind this decline in status that allegory experienced. But Borges' statement, as far as it is acceptable, implies the possibility of a reversal in taste, and this is what I will suggest has occurred in the aesthetic and theoretical sensibility of twentieth-century artists and philosophers. Evidence for this change in taste ranges from the presence of allegory in the graphic novels of popular culture¹ to the canvas texts of Rauschenberg and the resurrection of the baroque by Walter Benjamin and Gilles Deleuze.² This change in taste may also be a result of the emergence of electronic media which, as I will soon show,

¹See, for instance, the recent issues in the DC Vertigo line, such as *Mercy*, *The Enigma*, *Death: The High Cost of Living*, and *The Sandman*, each of which personify the title figures in typical allegorical fashion. The medieval genre of the mystery play itself has been evoked in a recent issue entitled *Mystery Play*, which incorporates the medieval form of allegory as a way of inaugurating the narrative.

²See Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* and Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. For commentary on Rauschenberg as an allegorist, see Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse."

contain the potential for student and scholarly composition of allegorical forms of textuality. I hope to encourage the recognition of this allegorical potential of the electronic technologies, and I suggest with this chapter that the overlap into current literary and aesthetic theory will guide institutional practices into a more overtly allegorical pedagogy, both in terms of its form and its content.³

Part of the reason for the return of allegory results from the recognition by literary theorists of symbol's role in the Romantic conception of aesthetic sensibility and their subsequent desire to undermine that role. Insofar as the symbol came to be considered as an organic, unified form of signification superior to allegory and its arbitrary form of signification, it displaced allegory as the dominant trope in the making of meaning. Opposed to the superficial relationship between allegorical signifier and its signified, a relationship said to be imposed upon the referent by the author, is the more profound connection that symbol implies, with its "natural" synecdochic reference "growing" out of itself. I consciously used the evaluative terms "superficial" and "profound" in the previous sentence to highlight the implied metaphors of surface and depth at the root of the connotative associations normally employed: superficial is used in the sense of "comprehending only what is apparent or obvious" but primarily means "of, affecting, or being on or near the surface"; profound is used in the sense of "thorough-going, far-reaching" and "penetrating beyond what is superficial or obvious" but primarily means

³See, for instance, Ulmer's *Applied Grammatology*, appropriately subtitled *Post(e)-Pedagogy from Joseph Beuys to Jacques Derrida*. Ulmer argues for a pedagogy based upon the experimental arts of the twentieth century, one that invokes the mnemonic possibilities of performance art and poststructural punning: "The task of applied grammatology is to introduce this [picto-ideo-phonographic] Writing into the classroom (and eventually into research communication in the form of video tapes)" (242). And elsewhere, he writes, "An AG [Applied Grammatological] lecture (seminar-performance) will include the equivalent of 'non-diegetic inserts,' that is, it will mount scientific information in its discourse which will have the status not of disciplinary content but of metaphor . . ." (287).

"situated at, extended to, or coming from a great depth." Benjamin recognizes this dynamic associating symbolism with depth and profundity in "Allegory and Trauerspiel," a dynamic which pervades the way art commentators discuss their subject:

This [notion of the symbol], which is the one used in the field of theology, could never have shed that sentimental twilight over the philosophy of beauty which has become more and more impenetrable since the end of early romanticism. But it is precisely this illegitimate talk of the symbolic which permits the examination of every artistic form "in depth", and has an immeasurably comforting effect on the practice of investigation into the arts. (159-160)

Benjamin views the hegemony of the symbol in terms of the "tyranny of a usurper who came to power in the chaos which followed in the wake of romanticism" (159), and he identifies the theological motivation (Derrida would call it "transcendental signification") residing in the association between symbolism and depth. As a way of undermining this hegemony, Benjamin returns to the baroque as a period in the history of art when artists indulged in allegorical representation.

To understand this resurrection of allegory, then, we must consider the return of the surface as a privileged metaphor. This return is in part attributable to the renewed emphasis on language that poststructural theory has fostered in literary criticism, an emphasis which directs us to attend to the surface of language. The playful aspect of the pun exemplifies this attention to the surface of the letter, and its reputation in popular consciousness as the "lowest form of humor" demonstrates its association with "superficiality." Derrida and Lacan are the best-known of the poststructural philosophers to use the pun in their writing, and their use elevates its status from the lowest form of humor to a rhetorical device recognized for its potential power as a

way of multiplying the polysemy of language.⁴ In her attempt to define allegory, Maureen Quilligan identifies this very aspect of language use as being fundamental to a genre "which consistently pays the most profound attention to the radical significance of that much-dismissed literal surface" (29). Elsewhere she writes, "Wordplay is an organic part of the genre . . ." (46), since "the effect of wordplay is to make readers self-conscious . . . of reading by indicating the primary importance of the verbal surface rather than the imagined action" (254).

It is the "much-dismissed literal surface" that Derrida refuses to forget in his conscious attempt to remember the forgotten meanings buried in words and to write with all of these meanings at once.⁵ Derrida writes elsewhere of the surface, in his discussion of the crypt in "Fors: The English Words of Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok." Hillis Miller's reading of Derrida's discussion in "Derrida's Topographies" asserts that wordplay is a necessary part of literary discourse in that it creates a crypt of secrets, a secretive language that never reveals its secrets. This explains from Miller's point of view the deconstructive desire to view all writing as literary, as harboring a signified that is problematized by the impenetrable surface-effects of tropological language.⁶ As Hillis Miller writes, "Derrida's current way of

⁴See Ulmer's discussion of the "puncte," which he derives from his consideration of Derrida, in his article "The Puncte in Grammatology."

⁵Such is the injunction of Ulmer's *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention*, in which he offers the following principle of the new form of writing he calls "chorography": "do not choose between the different meanings of key terms, but compose by using all the meanings . . ." (48). For an exercise in writing chorographically, see Scholes, Comley and Ulmer's *Text Book*, chapter four, which presents an assignment based upon Derrida's recognition of the signature effect in certain writers.

⁶Hillis Miller writes, "To turn whatever is written 'on' into literature, in the particular way in which Derrida associates literature with undecidability, inviolable secrecy, and the irresponsibility that is the most exigent responsibility, might even be said to be the deconstructive move par excellence. . . . Deconstruction, it can be said, if there is such a thing, is the exposure of the literary in every utterance, writing, or graphic mark" (20).

saying this is to argue that all literature harbors a secret. The secret is an essential feature of literature" (16). Wordplay is not playful so much as necessary—"its bizarre turns of phrase, its syntactical equivocations, its outward resemblances [*ses dehors ressemblants*]. By 'dehors ressemblants' I take it Derrida means the figurative or tropological surface of the language necessary to talk about the crypt—for example, his own language about cement and caulking" (15). Here, the tropological is viewed as an inherently superficial aspect of language, one that plays with and on the surface of language as it keeps the secret of an ultimate meaning that never will be revealed by the language without imposing a hermeneutic gesture of interpretation, which confines the polysemous play of the words themselves to a single, rational, revealed meaning.

So to preserve literature *as* literature, literary critics reading such literature in order to interpret it must allow the text to have these secrets without wanting to know what these secrets are, one reason being the practical one that they are impossible to dis-cover. The "meaning(s)" reside on the surface, in the language itself, on the level of the signifier, rather than in the depth of the signified:

Literature eternally keeps its secrets, and the secret is an essential feature of literature. If the secret tells us something essential about literature, literature on the other hand tells us something essential about the secret. It tells us that the true secret, if there is such a thing, is not hidden somewhere, in some place from which it might in principle be wrested, recovered, uncovered. A true secret is all on the surface. This superficiality cannot by any hermeneutic procedures, material or linguistic, be gone behind. A literary text (and any text may be taken as literary) says

what it says. It cannot be forced to say more than it says.⁷
 (Hillis Miller, "Derrida's Topographies" 17)

Those involved in a hermeneutic search for the transcendental signified behind or underlying the surface of language, those trying to "force" it "to say more than it says," conveniently forget the "much-dismissed" surface. With Derrida's challenge to the 2500 year hegemony of hermeneutics inaugurated by Plato, this forgotten surface of the letter, of the literal, returns—and some would say with a vengeance.

Craig Owens notes an equation between allegory and Writing (capitalized to indicate the kind of surface-oriented, picto-ideo-phonogrammatic writing that Derrida calls for) based on their similar suppression at the hand of Platonic essentializing.⁸ This essentializing, Owens asserts (following Benjamin), is a common denominator in both the privileging of the symbol over allegory and the privileging of voice over writing—what Derrida calls

⁷This description of the "true secret" being all on the surface is similar to Richard Rambuss's assessment of Spenser's secrets in *The Shepherdes Calender*. In "The Secretary's Study: The Secret Designs of *The Shepherdes Calender*," Richard Rambuss discusses *The Shepherdes Calender* as being the showcase of an "empty secret," which stores not an actual secret but only the fact that there is a secret. Such might be considered one ultimate goal of poststructural philosophy (if it can be said to have a unified goal) and the grammatological mobilization of this philosophy: the foregrounding of the secret within the unconscious, the mapping of a logic of the unconscious, the writing of a rhetoric of dream-work. As Ulmer writes in *Heuretics*, "The part of Kristeva's theory most important for chorography is her understanding of the chora function as a process or movement of invention, conducted as a transgression of rules (the burlesque principle) that undermine the plausibility and verisimilitude of classic mimesis, argumentation, judgment, realism. Choral writing is a kind of *Dream Work* (hence the usefulness of psychoanalysis for theorizing her poetics), drawing not only on condensation and displacement (metaphor and metonymy), but especially on a third process—the *passage from one sign system to another*" (176).

⁸I deliberately invoke the hand in this line to recall Goldberg's critique, in the last chapter of *Writing Matter*, of the "hand in theory," how an apparently poststructural philosopher like Barthes re-inscribes logocentrism by emphasizing the materiality of writing with the hand. The hand is the source of the metaphor of "grasping" which signifies comprehension. "[Barthes'] desire for the pen is a logocentric desire; writing by hand betrays its essentialism; it puts the hand in mind; it transforms the hand into the mind" (285). Later he writes, "Speech is a derivative effect of the labor of the hand, through which primitive community is founded . . ." (314).

"phonocentrism": "It is of course within the same philosophic tradition which subordinates writing to speech that allegory is subordinated to the symbol. It might be demonstrated, from another perspective, that the suppression of allegory is identical with the suppression of writing" (215). Writing of the kind that attends to the surface, then, manifests what Owens calls an "allegorical impulse" because in allegory, "the image is a hieroglyph, an allegory is a rebus—writing composed of concrete images" (209).⁹ One is reminded of Derrida's consideration of the hieroglyph in part one of *Of Grammatology* and its result for the advent of Writing:

By a hardly perceptible necessity, it seems as though the concept of writing—no longer indicating a particular, derivative, auxiliary form of language in general (whether understood as communication, relation, expression, signification, constitution of meaning or thought, etc.), no longer designating the exterior surface, the insubstantial double of a major signifier, *the signifier of the signifier* —is beginning to go beyond the extension of language. (6-7)

For Derrida, the return of the surface that occurs with a return of the allegorical impulse—a return of picto-ideo-phonographic Writing—paradoxically undermines the surface-depth distinction, as all that is left is a textual network of signifiers that do not point to signifieds but only to other signifiers: "There is not a single signified that escapes, even if recaptured, the play of signifying references that constitute language. The advent of writing is the advent of this play . . ." (7).¹⁰

⁹Benjamin attributes the sixteenth-century resurgence of allegory to the discovery of the mysterious Egyptian hieroglyphs, which resulted in the writing of books of iconology and emblem books. Here, Benjamin quotes Usener: "Under the leadership of the artist-scholar, Albertus, the humanists thus began to write with concrete images (*rebus*) instead of letters; the word "rebus" thus originated on the basis of the enigmatic hieroglyphs, and medallions, columns, triumphal arches, and all the conceivable artistic objects produced by the Renaissance, were covered with such enigmatic devices" (169).

¹⁰Derrida notes elsewhere this paradoxical effect of an orientation to language which denies the presence of the signified. See, for instance, his discussion of the Chora as quoted in Ulmer's *Heuretics*: "Everything inscribed in [the Chora] erases itself immediately, while remaining in

The insight Owens offers later in his essay that is most helpful to my project of trying to discover an electronic rhetoric parallels allegory with filmic writing. While film is not "electronic" *per se*, its strategies of montage and juxtaposition, its composition by means of fragments, make it similar to both video and hypertext composition. The capacity of hypertext, or better, hypermedia, to sustain sound, graphics, and now "quick-time video" (short portions of video that play on the computer screen) brings to hypermedia considerations once confined to the film-maker. But it is the presence of the image, the "pictogram," that for Owens defines film as allegorical:

[T]hat film should be the primary vehicle for modern allegory may be attributed not only to its unquestioned status as the most popular of contemporary art forms, but also to its mode of representation. Film composes narratives out of a succession of concrete images, which make it peculiarly suited to allegory's essential pictogrammatism. (230)

To draw a cause-effect relationship between the emergence of electronic technologies and the current challenge to Platonic logocentrism is unnecessary, as one can attribute both phenomenon to some kind of "epistemological shift" that is in the process of playing itself out not only in the humanities but also in the sciences.¹¹ Such a move does not make the mistake of citing one as the cause of the other but sees both as being caused by larger cultural forces. At any rate, there has been a general return to Greek

it. It is thus an impossible surface—it is not even a surface, because it has no depth" (65). Hillis Miller also notes this paradox in his discussion of "Derrida's Topographies": "To say literature is an ideal object is the same thing as to say it always hides an inviolable secret because it is always a matter of a surface without depth. The reader cannot go behind it, or beneath it, or before and after it. Literature keeps its secret, but on the surface" (18).

¹¹N. Katherine Hayles notes as much in the preface to her book *The Cosmic Web*: "We are living amid the most important conceptual revolution since Copernicus argued that the earth was not the center of the universe. . . . In this book I have singled out the 'field concept' as the theme that is at the heart of this revolution, and have examined its various manifestations in the models of physics and mathematics, the theories of the philosophy of science and linguistics, and the structure and strategies of literary texts" (9).

philosophy as a way of negotiating our current moment.¹² In terms of poststructural philosophy, this return has entailed a search for philosophical alternatives to the hegemony of the Platonic "epoch." Eric Charles White, for instance, in *Kaironomia: On the Will to Invent*, returns to Sophists such as Gorgias for the exposition of an "antimetaphysical metaphysic" which finds its resurrection in the texts of recent philosophers like Derrida, Barthes, and de Man. White introduces the idea of metonymy in a discussion of the poststructural perception of the fragmented self and its revision of Freud's idea of the "middle voice"; he characterizes kaironomic thought, a thought which is "invested in the present" and which implies a "rhetorical practice in which intention emerges in response to a particular situation," as metonymic, as oriented to the *surface* :

The disruptive agency of metonymy suggests an aesthetic of surfaces, of abrupt shifts and juxtapositions, a movement of thought in which desiring energy is invested in the present. Instead of the reflexive dream of purely habitual uninventive behavior, it implies a rhetorical practice in which the speaker's intention emerges in response to the particular situation. (56-57)

White here valorizes metonymy as a way of arguing for a sophistic rhetoric of invention. His relation of the Sophists' philosophy to that of contemporary French poststructuralism locates another reference to the return of the surface. The description of metonymy as an aesthetic of "abrupt shifts" and "juxtapositions" reinforces the filmic/electronic aspect of this poststructural orientation to the surface.

¹²One example of this can be seen in Lanham's recent book entitled *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts*. One book review of this is titled, "The Ancient Road to Hypertext: A scholar finds links between the Greek Sophists and today's information revolution." See Bernard Sharratt, "The Ancient Road to Hypertext," rev. of *The Electronic Word* by Richard Lanham, *The New York Times Book Review* 28 Nov. 1993: 2.

The surface also returns in a second example of the poststructural revival of a Greek philosophy other than Platonic, manifesting another instance of the contemporary desire to overcome Plato's pervasive influence in philosophic thought. Gilles Deleuze, in *The Logic of Sense*, calls for consideration of the Stoic philosophy because "[t]he Stoics discovered surface effects" (7). Deleuze also discovers the surface in the works of Lewis Carroll. Like the Stoics, Carroll is an inventor of paradoxes, which is significant in terms of the surface-depth distinction because "[p]aradox appears as a dismissal of depth, a display of events at the surface, and a deployment of language along this limit" (9).¹³ The progression that Deleuze notes in *Through the Looking Glass* parallels the displacement of depth as a privileged metaphor and the replacement of the surface that I have discussed above:

As one advances in the story, however, the digging and hiding gives way to a lateral sliding from right to left and left to right. The animals below ground become secondary, giving way to *card figures* which have no thickness. One could say that the old depth having been spread out became width. The becoming unlimited is maintained entirely within this inverted width. "Depth" is no longer a complement. Only animals are deep, and

¹³Ronald Bogue is helpful in understanding how Deleuze's philosophy of the "surface-effect" is relevant to the discussion above of poststructural notions of language: "Once unanchored, the Stoic system becomes a powerful tool for exploring the relationship between surfaces and depths, problems and bodies. But most important, the concept of the incorporeal affords Deleuze a point of entry into the investigation of language and meaning, for the Stoics regard both linguistics and logic as disciplines concerned exclusively with incorporeals. . . . For the Stoics, words are bodies, in that they are sonic entities that possess real being. A word as sonic body, however, is the same entity for those who understand it as for those who do not (such as foreigners). That which makes a word understandable to one individual and not to another is its meaning, an incorporeal attribute which is added to the word and which in no way affects the word's being as a body. Both words and things, then, are bodies upon whose surfaces incorporeal *lekta* 'insist' or 'subsist', the surface effects of words being 'meaning', and those of things, 'events'" (68-69).

they are not the noblest for that; the noblest are the flat animals.¹⁴ (9)

As an alternative to the Platonic philosophy of the heights and the Nietzschean philosophy of the depths, Deleuze offers a philosophy of the surface, which is no less than "a reorientation of all thought and of what it means to think: *there is no longer depth or height* " (130). The emblem of this new way of thinking will be Hercules, hero of Seneca's tragedies:

He always ascends or descends to the surface in every conceivable manner. He brings back the hell-hound and the celestial hound, the serpent of hell and the serpent of the heavens. It is no longer a question of Dionysus down below, or Apollo up above, but of Hercules of the surface, in his dual battle against both depth and height: reorientation of the entire thought and a new geography. (132)

Such a position might be criticized as perverse by one invested in the ideology of depth, an ideology whose metaphor is strengthened in the culture of print.

Deleuze has, in his more recent work, continued this focus on the surface, finding in Leibniz's baroque philosophy of the fold a figure of the kind of thinking and perceiving he is trying to enact. Deleuze views Leibniz as an anti-Cartesian philosopher trying to override his philosophy of the separability of parts, or what one scientist calls "the atomistic machine view of the world"¹⁵; in its stead, Leibniz offers a philosophy of the fluid, a vision

¹⁴Deleuze notes in an endnote that "The discovery of the surface and this critique of depth represent a constant in modern literature. They inspire the work of Robbe-Grillet. In another form, we find them again in Klossowski . . ." (336, note 7).

¹⁵"Descartes's error probably concerns what is to be found in different areas. He believed that the real distinction between parts entailed separability. What specifically defines an absolute fluid is the absence of coherence or cohesion; that is, the separability of parts, which in fact applies only to a passive and abstract matter" (*The Fold* 5). For an account of how this Cartesian perspective governed the birth of the paradoxical science of fluid "mechanics," see Hayles, "Gender Encoding in Fluid Mechanics." I derive the phrase in quotation marks from R.C. Lewontin: "We have become so used to the atomistic machine view of the world that originated with Descartes that we have forgotten that it is a metaphor. We no longer think, as Descartes did, that the world is *like* a clock. We think *it is* a clock. We cannot imagine an alternative view unless it be one that goes back to a prescientific era" (*Biology as Ideology* 14).

of a matter that is connected rather than merely a result of the juncture of parts: "a flexible or an elastic body still has cohering parts that form a fold, such that they are not separated into parts of parts but are rather divided to infinity in smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion" (*The Fold* 6). This is a vision of matter that would very much appeal to the Deleuze of *A Thousand Plateaus*, who takes comfort in concepts that try to realize the spaces in between, that recognize the continuities rather than the discontinuities between things, whether they be the special relationship that a wasp and orchid develop or the geologic mobility of strata in flux.¹⁶ The point most helpful to my argument here is that the concept of the fold attends to the surfaces of matter, viewing all of it as surface: "Unfolding sometimes means that I am developing—that I am undoing—infinite tiny folds that are forever agitating the background, with the goal of drawing a great fold on the side whence forms appear; it is the operation of a vigil: I project the world 'on the surface of a folding . . .'" (*The Fold* 93). The concept of the fold is a concept entailing an endless surface-effect.

The Fold is also helpful in that Deleuze recognizes the baroque philosophy of Leibniz as a manifestation of allegory; his return to Leibniz's philosophy therefore participates in this general poststructural return to allegory.¹⁷ He points to Benjamin's essay on "Allegory and Trauerspiel" as a key moment in the re-emergence of the baroque: "Walter Benjamin made a decisive step forward in our understanding of the Baroque when he showed

¹⁶For the clearest account of the wasp and the orchid, see Deleuze and Parnet 6-7. For Deleuze and Guattari's perceptions of stratification, see *A Thousand Plateaus* 40-74.

¹⁷"And if it is true that appertaining—belonging to—is the key to allegory, then Leibniz's philosophy must be conceived as the allegory of the world, the signature of the world, but no longer as the symbol of a cosmos in the former manner. In this respect the formula of the *Monadology*, that 'components symbolize with simple units,' far from marking a return to the symbol, indicates the transformation or translation of the symbol into allegory" (*The Fold* 127).

that allegory was not a failed symbol, or an abstract personification, but a power of figuration entirely different from that of the symbol . . ." (125). His stated goal of "stretching [the Baroque] outside of its historical limits" (34) presents a desire to recognize the importance both of the baroque in art and of Leibniz in philosophy; such a desire demonstrates what Owens would call an allegorical impulse insofar as "[c]ombinations of the visible and the legible make up 'emblems' or allegories dear to the Baroque sensibility" (Deleuze, *The Fold* 31). As such, Deleuze will be, I wish to propose, our mentor for the articulation of an electronic rhetoric.

Deleuze's role in this articulation will become clearer if we recall the grammatological analogy framing this exploration. The sixteenth century saw the birth of the print culture that we see dying today; likewise, we are witnessing the birth of electronic culture, or what Bolter calls "network culture" in opposition to the culture of ideational hierarchy which emerges from a print apparatus.¹⁸ As with any substantive change in a culture's mnemonic strategies for information storage and retrieval, the stress of transition causes some degree of anxiety among those participating in its unfolding. But such stress is the necessary pressure that forges new institutional practices. At the same time that Spenser was involved with the invention of our current notions of authorship and authority, Peter Ramus was transforming the use of the page as a mnemonic space, a transformation which would result, as I have already pointed out, in the institutionalization of the five-paragraph theme—a crystallization of the literate apparatus. But the five-paragraph theme did not leap from the head of Ramus like a Greek god; it developed over the centuries during which print literacy came to reign supreme.

¹⁸See *Writing Space* 231-236.

One goal of a grammatological project such as this dissertation is to recognize the historical nature of institutional practices in order better to recognize the changes being undergone during our present moment.¹⁹ Such recognition theoretically enables educators to intervene in a self-conscious way to invent new institutional practices that exploit the advantages of the current technologies of communication. In the same way that Ramus released the potential for mnemonic efficiency inherent in the printed page, I wish to release the potential inherent in the screen, specifically the screen of a multi-media (or hypermedia/hypertext) computer. Ultimately, I will suggest that Deleuze can provide a theory for the screen (computer and television) in the same way that Ramus provided a theory of the page in the sixteenth century with his new mnemonic system of the dichotomies, which exploited the spatial potential of the page for a purely verbal mnemotechniques.

Before proceeding, in the next chapter, to a general theory of hypertext composition derived from the philosophy of Deleuze, it will be necessary to explore the "writing space" of the computer screen and to determine the limitations of interface metaphors based on print literacy. While these are fine as provisional devices meant to help us negotiate the transition from print literacy to computeracy, they should at some point be discarded for interface metaphors more appropriate to the potentials of the computer as a medium that is ultimately different from the technology of the book. Combined with a recognition of the potential in pre-Ramist mnemonics for the imagistic media of the screen, Deleuzian theory will provide one site of such metaphors.

¹⁹For a detailed account of the philosophical and historical foundations of the five-paragraph theme, see Crowley, *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric*.

Hypertext and the Visual Representation of Information

One goal of grammatology is the invention of institutional practices that attempt to maximize the efficiency of information storage and retrieval by considering how technologies of communication and institutional practices inform the manner in which information is stored. Grammatology also considers the subject formation that results from this configuration and how this participates in a feedback loop which affects further developments and uses of the information technologies. Indeed, one axiom of poststructural philosophy posits the dissolution of the unified subject, and its reconfiguration in the electronic age is a popular topic among grammatologists of the current transitional shift in communications technologies. While I wish to acknowledge the necessity of considering the latter, my project more fully embraces the former goal, with specific application to hypertext as the newest writing space.

The strategy for achieving this goal entails an understanding of the evolution of our current practices and the history of past practices, such as the Art of Memory, which may avail themselves of reterritorialization in a different set of rhetorical circumstances. This dissertation participates in the grammatological project insofar as it is trying actively to intervene in the current trajectory of hypertext rhetorical practice so that users will exploit the full potential of the electronic apparatus. The purpose of this section is to trace the history of the way information is spatially presented in different material forms, with the goal of asserting that hypertext is a three-dimensional medium that needs to be recognized as such. When it is treated thus, hypertext writers (and their counterparts in cyberspace architecture) will

recognize the powerful potential of the memory palace as an information storage strategy available to them as an organizational tool.

A grammatological history considers the material form that texts take as manifestations of a particular communication technology and how this form affects meaning. Roger Chartier, known for his work in addressing the history of reading practices in France, leads us to such material considerations of how producers of texts used the "writing space" of the page and how such usage affected a text's legibility and, as a result, its reception. Aspects of the text that we perhaps take for granted today, such as punctuation, page numbers, margins, and the presence of space between words, were not always conventional practices but had to be invented over time. Chartier comments on the creation of a "new horizon of reception" when modifications to the physical form of the book created a product that was more manageable, more readable for those unlearned in paleography, thereby enabling the general public to access more readily the book's contents:

The same is true, on a greater scale, of the greatest change in the way texts were cast into print between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, "the definitive triumph of white over black"—that is, the introduction of breathing space on to the page by the use of more paragraphs to break up an uninterrupted continuous text and by paragraph indentations that make the order of discourse immediately visible. (11)

Bolter, too, notes this phenomenon, calling them changes to the "soft structures," which are "those visually determined units and relationships that are written on or in the hard structures."

Soft structures [more often] change without a change in materials. The medieval codex permitted remarkable changes in the visual presentation of text: through the creation of new scripts and through the gradual development of punctuation, marginalia, and marks of emphasis and organization. Today, the technology of print has a large repertoire of soft structures that have evolved over hundreds of years. (41)

While the most significant changes were put in place during the manuscript culture of the Middle Ages, as Bolter notes, the age of print fixed these conventions as well as others heretofore fluid, such as spelling, word meaning, and pronunciation.

Carruthers elaborates on the transformation of the page as a writing space in the Middle Ages. She tells of the various mnemonic strategies employed by Christian monks for the memorization of sacred texts, since this was one of their monastic tasks.²⁰ One method instructed monks to break up the space of the page into a grid upon which one could then place numbers. One would then break down the text to be memorized and associate each part with the concordant number. This numbering system could be applied at the macro- and micro-levels as well: "Under [psalm] number twenty-two, for example, one visualizes a subsidiary set of numbers, again beginning with 'one' and proceeding in consecutive numerical order; to these one attaches the rest of the text. . . . The crucial task for recollection is the construction of the orderly grid of numbers which one can see in the memory" (82). While every Christian was expected to have memorized the psalms, this method was applicable to other texts as well and was, by the time of the Middle Ages, a common technique: "There are a number of other sources and practices current throughout the Middle Ages which indicate that both the numerical grid system and mnemonic value of page layout were well known . . ." (95).

²⁰Francis Wormald describes the giving out of books to the brethren on Monday after the first Sunday after Lent: "Before the brethren go in to the chapter, the librarian should have all the books save those given out for reading the previous year collected on a carpet in the chapter-house; last year's books should be carried in by those who have had them. . . . the librarian shall then read out the list of the books which the brethren had in the previous year. When each hears his name read out he shall return the book which was given him to read, and anyone who has not read in full the book he received shall confess his fault prostrate and ask for pardon." Francis Wormald, *The Year 1200: A Background Survey, II* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1970), 170. Excerpted in *Journal of Typographic Research* 4 (1970), 336.

This attention to page layout, a form of two-dimensional representation of knowledge, became more common as the Middle Ages progressed, according to Carruthers. The use of columns drawn on the page served to separate the information into sections so that it could be arranged spatially in the memory: "the effect is to divide the page into a series of small rectangular 'bins,' none holding more than five items. Such a layout is clearly designed for mnemonic ease" (93). This practice recalls the Art of Memory as practiced from the time of antiquity: "places" on the page holding images, or, in this case, words. But the difference is that, rather than having an imagined (or remembered) three-dimensional space—such as one's garden or room, for instance—in which one locates a number of designated *loci* meant to serve as repositories of mnemonic *imagines*, one now has a flat, two-dimensional grid.²¹ Here, a transformation of the practice occurs on the material level of the page; practitioners of the Art of Memory adapted it to the written page as a technology of the manuscript culture's apparatus.

Members of manuscript culture transformed the Art of Memory in other ways, too, keeping the general dictum of using images in places but changing the focus again from the use of imaginary images (images conjured in the mind) to the use of actual visual images depicted in the margins of the page. These marginal images, then, ostensibly serving the purpose of page decoration, also have a mnemonic function (Carruthers 130). Their characteristics often share the grotesque or startling features of their classical

²¹"This changed understanding of the nature of the mnemonic 'locus'—from a three-dimensional room, in which perspective changes as one 'walks' through it mentally, to a two-dimensional cell within a grid on a flat surface—may account for some of the confusion medieval writers had in understanding Tully's rules about the making of backgrounds (these gave them more trouble than the ones about the making of images). 'Locus' for Cicero was a space with depth and variable perspective; for Hugh of St. Victor, 'locus' was a position on a page that could be 'viewed' only frontally" (Carruthers 129).

counterparts: the prevalence of scatological depictions of nuns worshipping defecating anuses or the use of feces as gifts or bowling balls suggests the extent of these images.²² The presence of fantastic animals in the margins also indicates that bestiaries fulfilled the mnemonic function of making the page memorable. As lexicons of allegorical lore surrounding birds and animals, lore which often figured the ethical values that infused the kinds of texts monks were memorizing, these bestiaries became a fund of loaded images for textual producers and consumers alike.²³ Descriptions of the beasts and the birds were therefore graphic enough to make them likely candidates for images to be placed in a person's *loci*, as Beryl Rowland writes in the following passage:

Indeed, the bestiary may have owed its popularity in part to the facility with which it might be remembered. For here were the *imagines agentes*, each one in its place and with its accented rubric that externalized the rhetorician's chambers of memory. (Rowland 20)

What one sees here in the above transformations of mnemonic practice is the use of the book as a mnemonic prosthesis: operations once carried out in the mind—the construction of images and the placement of these images in pre-established places *in memory*—are now carried out on the page itself. Carruthers is clear about this classification: quoting Isidore of Seville, she concludes that "Writing is a servant to memory, a book its

²²Michael Camille writes, "Of all aspects of medieval culture it is perhaps the currency of scatology, the constant playing with faeces in text and image, that is hardest for us to understand. The margins of manuscripts are literally full of it" (111). For illustrations of such marginalia, see *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art*, pp. 45, 50, 112, 113.

²³Carruthers views their usage in pedagogical contexts as being more mnemonic in scope than anything else: "What the Bestiary taught most usefully in the long term of a medieval education was not 'natural history' or moralized instruction . . . but mental imaging, the systematic forming of 'pictures' that would stick in the memory and could be used, like rebuses, homophonies, *imagines rerum*, and other sorts of *notae*, to mark information *within* the grid [of the page]" (127).

extension. . . . writing is an activity of remembering" (111). This begins a process of reifying the memory that ends with what Sharon Crowley calls "the methodical memory," that is, a method for assisting the memory to express itself clearly and distinctly. The five-paragraph theme, Crowley writes, becomes the culmination of method as a locating of what is inside the mind outside on the page (as one chapter title suggests: "How the Insides Get Outside Again: The Logic of the Methodical Memory"): "Such an arrangement would jog the memories of both rhetor and audience, since it would mirror the way ideas had been stored there in the first place" (*The Methodical Memory* 44).

Crowley recognizes the role that Peter Ramus plays in inaugurating the methodical memory, which makes his iconoclastic system of mnemonics the grandfather of the five-paragraph theme. I have already treated the effect of Protestant iconoclasm and the Ramist-Brunian debates upon the memory palace tradition in chapter 2. One point that needs to be emphasized again in this context concerns the stripping of images from the mnemonic process: whereas in the medieval manuscript practices we see the *imagines agentes*, once only fabricated in the mind, reified in the margins of the page, with the Ramist dichotomies we see only words spatially arranged on the page. Images are stripped from this process.²⁴ With Ramus, then, the two-dimensional surface of the page is used in a manner similar to the medieval manuscript writers, who employed page layout as a way of organizing information.²⁵ His

²⁴One notable exception to this phenomenon was the emblem-book tradition, which, as the previously cited Coates essay suggests, attracted even Protestants like Theodore Beza as a genre with a visual emphasis similar to the memory palace tradition which was under so much attack at that time.

²⁵Carruthers takes issue with Ong on this very point. She finds his claim that Ramus's dichotomies represent a "general, unconscious veering toward the visual and 'objective' which marks the Gutenberg and post-Gutenberg epoch" (*Ramus* 108) to be reductive, given the scope and results of her own study: "My study will make it clear that from the earliest times

diagrammatic strategy of arranging information in sets of dichotomies charted on the page ultimately evolves into the outline that precedes a final written essay, but even this evokes the Ramist ethic, with its paragraphs composed of *topics*.

The two-dimensional space of the page comes to be a space devoid of images in Ramism; the information stored on the mnemonic prosthetic of the page is solely verbal. One reason for this can be attributed to the exigencies of the printing press: the beautiful hand-made marginal art of medieval manuscripts requires individual care and attention to each production, which a manuscript culture cultivates. Print culture, on the other hand, in its infancy during the Age of Ramus and Spenser, encourages mechanical reproduction rather than hand-crafted marginal artistry. It has even been suggested that the book was the first assembly-line industry, pre-dating the industrial revolution by centuries.²⁶ This condition encourages the elimination of images, since pages were being mass-produced rather than individually made one at a time by an individual scribe. At the same time, Ramus produces a system of dichotomies that eliminates images and arranges words on the page in complicated hierarchical structures. The ability of the printing press to duplicate these complicated diagrams that Ramus devised

medieval educators had as visual and spatial an idea of *locus* as any Ramist had, which they inherited continuously from antiquity, and indeed that concern for the lay-out of memory governed much in medieval education designed to aid the mind in forming and maintaining heuristic formats that are both spatial and visualizable" (32). The point I wish to make here, however, is that there is a difference that has to do with the replacement of the pictorial image with the word in text that, while once ornamental and highly visual in itself, comes to be more and more uniform.

²⁶See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, the chapter entitled "The invention of typography confirmed and extended the new visual stress of applied knowledge, providing the first uniformly repeatable commodity, the first assembly-line, and the first mass-production" (153-155).

leads Ong to conclude that it was instrumental in promoting the spatializing feature of Ramist mnemonics.

Spatial constructs and models were becoming increasingly critical in intellectual development. The changing attitude manifested itself in the development of printing, in the new Copernican way of thinking about space which would lead to Newtonian physics, in the evolution of the painter's vision climaxed by Jan van Eyck's use of the picture frame as a diaphragm, and in the topical logics of Rudolph Agricola and Ramus, as well as in other phenomena. (83)

Ramus thus conceives the interface of the page in such a way that it enhances the potential for information storage and retrieval *within the apparatus of print*.

At the close of the twentieth century, however, there is a new apparatus, one that will require a new interface to maximize its efficiency as an information storage medium. This apparatus, whose technology is the multi-media capacity of the newest computers on the market, is in its infancy in respect to the promises of virtual reality (VR) apologists, though architects are beginning to design structures with the aid of VR goggles that enable one to experience the three-dimensionality of the building and the space that it will become. One story has it that designers avoided an expensive problem by viewing it first via VR goggles. At any rate, as this example suggests, the new technology, when fully implemented, promises a three-dimensional virtual space through which one will be able to move, manipulate "objects," and encounter other "entities." As in the tradition of the memory palace, three-dimensional structures will be built and images will be stored within them; unlike the memory palace, these structures will not be imaginary, residing only in the imagination, but will be "real" insofar as they will exist outside of the mind, perhaps even as public places which more than one person can inhabit at a time, and will be experienced directly by the user's senses.

If we give the name "virtual reality" or "cyberspace" to any computer-based information space that is three or more dimensions, then hypertext, I wish to argue, is a simple form of virtual reality or cyberspace in that it provides the illusion of a three-dimensional medium. Macintosh's "Hypercard" rubric, as one example of a hypertext program, invokes a three-dimensional interface metaphor as a way of conceiving of the program: one creates a stack of "cards" (they are even called Hypercard "stacks") that are electronically linked one to the other via "buttons" which, when pressed, take the user from one card to another.²⁷ A second common hypertext program, Eastgate Systems's Storyspace, also presents a three-dimensional interface, though this one is not as obvious. Its interface for authoring consists of the "writing space," which appears on the screen as a box with a title bar. Clicking on the title bar allows an author to write within the space, storing there whatever information is desired—text, graphic, quick-time video, and/or sound. Clicking within the writing space opens up the space to allow the author to store more boxes on the inside, potentially providing the effect of "Chinese boxes"—boxes within boxes within boxes.

For example, if one imagines a computer screen with a single box in the middle, box A, which appears to have two little boxes inside of it, boxes B and C, clicking inside writing space A makes boxes B and C within it suddenly appear to be the same size as A was. The effect, then, is that one has travelled "into" the computer screen, traversing a distance, a space between box A and boxes B and C which made B and C only appear to be smaller because they were placed beyond the plane of the computer screen. To put it another way,

²⁷ Alan Kay points out the limitations of the "hypercard" interface metaphor: "That wonderful system, Hypercard, in spite of its great ideas, has some 'metaphors' that set my teeth on edge. Four of them are 'stack,' 'card,' 'field,' and 'button.' In 'stack' we find grievously unnecessary limitations, not the least of which is the strange notion that only one stack can be in front of us at a time" (200).

if one views the computer screen as a plane, then box A would lie on the plane nearest the computer user, while boxes B and C would lie on the first plane just behind and parallel to the one with box A in it.

One early experiment in Storyspace did not employ this three-dimensional potential of its interface, instead ignoring the possibility of "going inside" the computer screen. Stuart Moulthrop's attempt to map the Borges story entitled "The Garden of Forking Paths" fails to nest the storyspace boxes within other boxes, leaving all of the boxes on one plane and thereby limiting the experience of the reader to a two-dimensional experience of the space.²⁸ One student reported the following after reading the text on the computer:

It seemed as though, with very few exceptions, "right" was the only choice one could make in terms of movement within the story. The "up" option always took you back to the beginning, which was frustrating. . . . It was an interesting experience, and if there were more travel options (other than just "right"), I would have enjoyed it more. (Moulthrop, "Reading" 128)

Had Moulthrop scripted the story using the third dimension beyond the surface plane, embedding boxes within boxes, the student would have had more travel options. The full potential of the medium as an information space would thus have been employed, thereby providing a richer, more enjoyable reading experience for the reader.

Such ambiguity does not exist with the other, more complicated manifestations of electronic technology. The difference between these is also a result of complexity. Allucquere Rosanne Stone offers a useful definition of virtual reality which identifies its relationship to cyberspace: "VR, one of a class of interactive spaces that are coming to be known by the general term *cyberspace*, is a three-dimensional consensual locus . . . in which data may be

²⁸The results of this experiment are recorded in Moulthrop's essay in *Hypermedia and Literary Studies*, eds. Paul Delaney and George P. Landow, 119-132. One can view the chart of his "storyspace map" on p. 127.

visualized, heard, and even felt" (84). As one can see, in this definition virtual reality is a subset of cyberspace, as cyberspace can represent multiple dimensions (or "n-dimensions") over the standard three or four which is the province of virtual reality. Cyberspace therefore has the capacity for increased complexity, for a more dense representation of information.²⁹

In fact, the conflict among architects who are theorizing the way that cyberspace should be structured concerns the degree to which cyberspace should emulate reality (as virtual reality does). Benedikt is the strongest proponent of the view that cyberspace should as closely resemble our experience of "real" space as possible so as to minimize the potential disorientation that free-floating passage through a computerized landscape of information can produce, and his proposals direct cyberspace architects to adopt such mimetic considerations in subsequent thinking about this issue. Any deviations from real experience must be justified, according to him.³⁰

²⁹Michael Benedikt most clearly writes of the multiple variables of information that cyberspace enables one to plot. A three-dimensional entity in cyberspace can, for example, have more dimensions hidden from view that can be displayed by means of viewing the object from a different perspective. As he writes, "we can deal with many of the problems of size and shape I have mentioned by zooming in, getting closer. The object, enlarged in our view, is isolated from the overall context. It might expand in inner detail, revealing complexity indefinitely. Here we see intrinsic dimensions expand to become the extrinsic dimensions of the object now extended enough to have space within it, to *be* a space" ("Cyberspace" 143). In this quote, a "dimension" refers to a variable of information plotted in relation to other variables. "Extrinsic" dimensions are the ones that are immediately visible; "intrinsic" dimensions are those that are hidden from view and that require "unfolding" to be seen: "When an object unfolds, its intrinsic dimensions open up, flower, to form a new coordinate system, a new space, from (a selection of) its (previously) intrinsic dimensions" (144). Marcus Novak is helpful in relating this phenomenon to hypertext: "Just as hypertext allows any word in a normal text to explode into volumes of other words, so a hypergraph allows any point in a graph to expand to include other graphs, nested and linked to any required depth" (230). One helpful way of visualizing the possibilities described here is to imagine that every point (normally thought of as having zero dimensions) in a three-dimensional space has the capacity of being a multi-dimensional object; every point, that is, can be considered a cube.

³⁰Even as we strive for higher dimensionalities or supernormal capabilities for the denizens of cyberspace, ordinary space and time must form the basis, the norm, *any departures from which* we must justify. Neither an advanced degree in math nor extraordinary powers of visualization ought to be necessary for a reasonably well-educated person to spend time productively in cyberspace" ("Cyberspace" 128).

Marcus Novak, on the other hand, wants to celebrate the possibilities inherent in this new technology, as one can sense from the following passage of exuberant prose:

Cyberspace is a habitat of the imagination, a habitat for the imagination. Cyberspace is the place where conscious dreaming meets subconscious dreaming, a landscape of rational magic, of mystical reason, the locus and triumph of poetry over poverty, of "it-can-be-so" over "it-should-be-so." (226)

Novak calls for the restoration of poetry and poetic thinking to science, indulging in the poetic as he does so: "Cyberspace is poetry inhabited, and to navigate through it is to become a leaf on the wind of a dream" (229). While one might consider Novak's ebullient prose to be the ranting of a technophilic utopian, his desire to take full advantage of the potentials within the new medium should not be ignored in order to exploit its differences rather than fight these differences as limitations to be overlooked.

While some disagree about the extent to which the "liquid" architectures in cyberspace should be fluid, the common denominator among these theorists is a vision of cyberspace as a space in which information is stored visually, a space which users will be able to traverse with the purpose of retrieving information stored there, in whatever fashion it comes to be stored. The title of Alan Wexelblat's essay in *Cyberspace: First Steps*, which is about "Giving Meaning to Places," indicates what is at stake in the building of cyberspace. One definition begins as follows: "Cyberspace is a completely spatialized visualization of all information in global information processing systems . . ." (Novak 225). Envisioning cyberspace as a three-dimensional visual information space evokes the art of building memory palaces as well as all that memory performs for an individual and a culture. David Tomas acknowledges the implications of this vision for the perpetuation of culture by directly pointing out the mnemonic status of cyberspace:

Although cyberspace has been popularized by Gibson's books, it is neither a pure "pop" phenomenon nor a simple technological artifact, but rather a powerful, collective, mnemonic technology that promises to have an important, if not revolutionary, impact on the future compositions of human identities and cultures. (31-32)

As an anthropologist, Tomas understands the significance of mnemonic technologies for the definition of self and culture. Cyberspace is a tool of memory, an electronic extension of our brains, and as such it becomes another storage medium for personal, familial, cultural, and disciplinary memory. In the memory storerooms of cyberspace, with its multi-dimensional *imagines*, "chambers bloom wherever data gathers and is stored" (Benedikt "Intro" 2).

The mention of chambers here reintroduces the metaphor of the storeroom, or *cella*, which occurs in discussions of the Art of Memory, and evokes a medieval aura of monk's cells and palatial meeting-rooms. This evocation is not accidental: Theorists of electronic rhetoric, whether it be hypertext or cyberspace architecture, are consciously employing romantic images of fortresses and castles to describe the experience of "reading" these electronic texts. For instance, Novak, in extended passages of italics meant to indicate transition into fantasized depictions of entering into and navigating cyberspace, speaks of "armor" and "palaces." I quote at length so as to provide enough of the necessary context to appreciate the allusions:

Using my deck, I enter the cyberspace. At first the world is dark, but not because of an absence of light, but because I have not requested an environment yet. I request my default environment, my personal database. From it I choose my homebase, or workbase, or playbase. I am in my personal cyberspace, and I am not yet in contact with others. *This is my palace, and it is fortified* (emphasis mine). . . . I sense the presence of others. I see the traces of passage, the flares of trajectories of other searches. Those who share my interests visit the spaces around me often enough for me to recognize the signature of their search sequences, the outlines of their icons. I open channels and request communication. They blossom into identities that flow

in liquid metamorphosis. *Layers of armor are dropped to reveal more intimate selves. . . .* (emphasis mine, 232-233)

Setting aside consideration of the curious poetry of this passage and its implications for subject formation in the electronic era, I am interested in the palace metaphor and how this coincides with the Art of Memory. The passage evokes allegorical commonplaces similar to those found in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*: the fortified palace and the layers of armor become allegorical images of the isolated and protected subject within a cyberspace, in which interaction with others can only occur when the layers of armor are shed to reveal the inner self. Here, cyberspace as an information space is literally figured as a memory palace, which one builds to one's own specifications.

More to my purpose is a similar allegorical evocation of medieval architectural structures that occurs in Jay David Bolter's writings about hypertext. One of the creators of Storyspace, Bolter has himself employed the term "cell" to describe the writing spaces (or "boxes" as I have crudely called them) of electronic writing.³¹ In doing so, whether consciously or not, Bolter recalls the traditions of the Art of Memory, in which the *cella* is a store-room for the memory images (Carruthers 35-36). His characterization of hypertext as a kind of "topography" or "place-writing" also recognizes this spatial aspect of Storyspace: "It is not the writing of a place, but rather a writing *with* places, spatially realized topics" (25). Implicit in this characterization is a literal return to the traditional rhetorical notion of having "topics" or

³¹Ong writes of how the Agricolan "place-logic" conceived of *loci* as boxes: "The annoyance is vanquished by the conviction that some sort of spatial imagery—*loci*, *topoi*, receptacles, boxes—can serve as a means of controlling the profusion of concepts and/or things" (*Ramus* 118). For the invocation of the "cell" in recent discussions about cyberspace, see Novak: "In a neural net simulation, information . . . is encoded implicitly, as weightings on connections between simple computational cells. Reality is an emergent property of the cell . . ." (237).

"commonplaces" (*loci communes*) to which one can "go" for information about a subject.³² This tradition was perpetuated during the Early Modern period through Agricola's "place-logic" and its revisioning in Ramus's dichotomies; tenuous remnants can even be seen today in rhetoric textbooks and their "strategies" for development (e.g. definition, classification, division, example, cause/effect analysis, comparison and contrast, etc.).³³ The advent of electronic writing—whether in hypertext or cyberspace—promises to return to rhetoric the consciousness of space inherent in the forgotten etymologies of these central terms.

So, participating in the tradition of the Art of Memory by using the word "cell" and by recognizing hypertext's topographic aspects, Bolter compares the Storyspace environment to that of exploring a dungeon or a magic castle:

Any book can be thought of as a dungeon, a receptacle of treasures and dangers. A printed book is a dungeon whose walls are solid. In an electronic book the walls of each cell may give way to the touch. Hidden passages may transport the reader across many levels of the structure. (*Writing Space* Storyspace document)

His description is significant, especially for a project such as mine, which is attempting to find in the memory palace tradition a model for storing information in a hypertext environment. The similarity of Bolter's description of the electronic dungeon to the following description of how to establish the *loci* of one's memory palace is striking:

³²See Carruthers, p. 34, for expanded discussion of "commonplaces." See also Ong, *Ramus*, pp. 104-112, 116-121.

³³For the sake of comparison, see an exemplary list of loci in Ong, *Ramus*: "definition, genus, species, property, whole, parts, conjugates, adjacents, act, subjects, efficient agent, end, consequences, intended effects, place, time, connections, contingents, name, pronunciation, compared things, like things, opposites, differences" (122).

Ricci suggested that there were three main options for such memory *locations*. First, they could be drawn from reality—that is, from buildings that one had been in or from objects that one had seen with one's own eyes and recalled in one's memory. Second, they could be totally fictive, products of the imagination conjured up in any shape or size. Or third, they could be half real and half fictive, as in the case of a building one knew well and through the back wall of which one broke an imaginary door as a shortcut to new spaces, or in the middle of which one created a mental staircase that would lead up to higher floors that had not existed before. (Spence 1-2)

Each suggests a magical aspect enabling one to pass through walls and build new structures. This magical aspect, here only a metaphor for the fluid nature of electronic space, parallels Novak's depiction of cyberspace as a "landscape of rational magic" in which one will experience what is only figured in Bolter's depiction of traversing the hypertext castle. But one thing is certain: hypertext, as an informational field, can find a home in the architectural metaphor of the memory palace. As such, it can mimic the more advanced developments of cyberspace architecture as they are presently being theorized by adopting the memory palace as a method of organizing information in what can be perceived as a three-dimensional electronic writing space.

It remains now to explore *why* hypertext architects (as we should now properly call them) have not adopted the obvious architectural metaphor for guiding composition in hypertext authoring that Bolter hints at with his dungeon metaphor. I will argue that this is due to the phenomenon of "residual literacy" and provide examples of how inertia from centuries of alphabetic literacy and print culture has carried forth book practices into electronic texts, some of which become allegories of book reading from an electronic screen. By examining the interfaces of various hypertexts by recent authors as well as the gateways to other electronic technologies, we can begin

to see such residual literacy as a limitation upon the storage potential of electronic media and begin to theorize the alternatives to such a model.

Residual Literacy in Electronic Interface Designs: Allegories of Book Reading

When Plato wrote his philosophical treatises, he represented them as dialogues, employing the oral form of conveying information that predominated before chirography as an interface for transmitting his philosophy. Though the kind of thinking that enabled the dialogues was, in part, facilitated by the apparatus of alphabetic literacy that had developed in the centuries prior to his writing, Plato valorized the face-to-face dialogue as fundamental to learning and to the discovery of Truth. One might say he ignored the very medium that gave body to his philosophy.³⁴ On the other hand, perhaps an inevitable looking backward occurs in the transitional process of adopting and implementing an emergent technology of communication. Ong speaks of the centuries that went by after the introduction of the alphabet before Plato and the Greeks "interiorized" writing (*Orality and Literacy* 24). Spenser's use of the memory palace as a way of thinking about the work that *The Faerie Queene* was engaged in is another example of this phenomenon as it occurred at a different transitional moment in the "technologizing of the word."

During our current moment of transitional shifting from one dominant technology to another, evidence of a similar dynamic can be found in some of the early interface designs. I will call this "residual literacy," a

³⁴In *Orality and Literacy*, Ong writes, "For Plato expresses serious reservations in the *Phaedrus* and his *Seventh Letter* about writing, as a mechanical, inhuman way of processing knowledge, unresponsive to questions and destructive of memory, although, as we now know, the philosophical thinking Plato fought for depended entirely on writing" (24).

phrase I derive from Ong's concept of "residual orality" that, as he writes, "can be calculated to a degree from the mnemonic load it leaves on the mind, that is, from the amount of memorization the culture's educational procedures require" (*Orality and Literacy* 41). In a parallel way, "residual literacy" can be detected in the reliance upon book and paper metaphors that we see in computer interface design. Each is symptomatic of a reluctance to embrace the full potential of the emergent technology. Each results from a form of cultural inertia that must be overcome before this full potential can be tapped. Each indulges a Janus-like stance, looking both forward and backward at the same time. While at first this process is for the most part an unconscious (one might say "natural") way of coping with the change, eventually the shock of the new wears off and the technology is "interiorized."

One example of such residual literacy occurs in LEXIS/NEXIS, a commercial online database service which provides legal documents from all states (LEXIS) as well as the texts of major newspapers and periodicals (NEXIS). The documents in NEXIS, for example, are grouped into "libraries" and "files" and include full text sources from newspapers, wire services, and full transcripts from news shows. The information organized in the "library" is said to be like a file cabinet drawer in which "files" of information reside. "Entering" one of the libraries is therefore like opening a drawer full of files. Files are subgroups of documents in a library; a typical file consists of all of the available articles in a single publication. The paper metaphor presides in this interface insofar as it provides an intuitive method for locating information in the LEXIS/NEXIS database: we are familiar with going to libraries to find information and with storing documents in files stored in filing cabinets.

The hypercard stack entitled *If Monks Had Macs*, by Brian Thomas, employs a similarly familiar interface with which the user interacts to navigate through the information. The opening screen positions the user as if s/he were sitting at a desk, looking out of the window of a monastery. Below one sees the courtyard, a fountain, and the walls of the facing buildings. Gurgling water pervades the background, with the occasional bird twitter interrupting this simulated fountain sound. Upon first opening the stack, the user also hears monks singing Gregorian chants. On the desk is an open book with an indiscernible image. Next to this is a pad with what appears to be a quill. On the right of the opening screen (or "card") is the lower left hand part of a picture which has been cut off. On the left side of the card one sees a bookend and two books, one with an arrow pointing to the left. Clicking on this arrow brings the user to the next card, which positions the user in front of a bookshelf full of books. Thirty-six books (they are numbered on the spine) rest on two shelves. One through nine are titled, naming the various stacks that make up *If Monks Had Macs*.³⁵ Clicking on any of these opens up the stack that bears its title.

The premise of the title suggests the task that awaits us during this process of transition: if monks had macs, they would have translated the sacred texts into hypertext documents. This is, in effect, what Brian Thomas has done with Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*, which is the most developed of the stacks that one can explore: he has served as a "scribe" (or, more accurately, a typist) who has transcribed this classic into the new

³⁵One interesting feature of *If Monks Had Macs* is its desire to function as a "mini-home stack" for other stacks that one might own. The blank books on the shelf (numbered 10 through 36), that is, can be given names and can be linked to other hypercard documents that a user has on his or her hard-drive. The library here becomes an organizing trope, a trope that organizes one's collection of hyper-card stacks.

medium.³⁶ Thomas's choice of the *Imitatio* was not random, however; he points out in his introduction how suitable it is for this medium:

Despite the inner unity of the *Imitation*, the reader is usually advised in the introductions to "open the book to any page at random where he will find much instruction and inspiration," or to read the book "slowly, reflectively, in brief portions at a time," or to repeatedly turn to it as a "source of devotional thoughts and aphorisms." Thus, these introductions to the *Imitation* advise readers that this is a book that need not be read sequentially. . . . Ted Nelson, originator of the term "hypertext," writes in *Literary Machines*, "By hypertext, I simply mean non-sequential writing. . . . Computers are not intrinsically involved with the hypertext concept." *The Imitation of Christ* started out as a medieval manuscript with some of the qualities we now associate with hypertext.

At one point the document even calls for "dedicated men and women" who will "copy and illuminate" the wisdom of antiquity and Christianity in the "hyperage."

Much of the material in *If Monks Had Macs* employs the book as an interface metaphor. If one clicks on the image of the open book that appears on the desk in front of the window, the program presents the user with a card that looks like an open book. To the right of the "book" are icons that represent the various options available to the user: a "contents" icon (the word "contents" on what appears to be a platter), a "find" icon (the word "find" in a circle and on top of an open book icon), an open book icon which appears to have the pages flipping back and forth (pressing this will randomly select one of the chapters for the user, as though s/he were flipping through a book), a

³⁶We must not forget that the materiality of the medium into which a text is translated ultimately affects the meaning and its reception. As Bolter writes, "A text always undergoes typographical changes as it moves from one writing space to another. The Greek classics, for example, have moved from the papyrus roll, to codex, and finally the printed book. When we read a paperback edition in English of Plato's dialogues or Greek tragedy, we are aware of the translation from ancient Greek to a modern language. But we should also remember that the original text was without book or scene divisions, paragraphing, indices, punctuation, or even word division. All these conventions of modern printing are significant organizational intrusions into the original work" (118).

"bookmark" icon (an image of an open book with a bookmark marking a page), a "library" icon (a bookshelf with books on it; pressing this will return the user to the library interface described above), and finally an "inkstand" icon (which opens up a stack allowing the user to "write" notes, comments, responses, etc.). The common experience that this interface relies upon is that of sitting in front of one's personal library, pulling a book off of its shelf, and doing with it whatever one can do with a book: consult the table of contents, flip through the pages, mark a certain passage with a bookmark, or take notes on one's pad.³⁷

A second stack within *If Monks Had Macs* that utilizes a book metaphor is entitled "Passing Notes," the premise of which is based on an anecdote that Thomas tells of being a bored student who decides to pass notes in class while his biology teacher drones on about evolution. The stack contains about twenty cards the backgrounds of which depict a torn page, as though a student ripped a page from her textbook and scribbled a note on it to pass on to a friend. The content of these notes questions the hegemony of scientific education and asserts its failure to acknowledge the mysteries of existence. Each card has written text as well as an image that directly relates to the note, which demonstrates the limitations of this interface: while the source of these torn pages is ostensibly a student's textbook, their actual content reflects the concerns of the "student" Brian Thomas. There is no attempt to maintain the illusion from which the interface originated.

A similar breakdown in the "user illusion" occurs in the interface metaphor for the stack entitled "Meat and Conversation," which opens with an open book: on the left a woodcut image of Brother Andrew, on the right

³⁷Clicking on the "inkstand" icon opens up a stack entitled "Journal," which is subtitled "a companion stack to *Imitatio*." The user can also get to this stack by clicking on the image of the pad with the quill on it on the opening card.

the title "Meat and Conversation," subtitled "Excerpts from Brother Andrew's journal." The first couple of "pages" establishes the context for what is to become a hypertext version of a video game: Brother Andrew is asked to dine with a Russian monk visiting the monastery; the monk speaks of how his fellow monks in Russia had to travel to other monasteries in order to borrow books to study, as they were so scarce. "The journey is often viewed," says the monk, "as a kind of trial," and he proceeds to speak of how "the devil spins a dream-bed of lies among those rocks for every monk. . . ." Brother Andrew's journal then tells of how he suddenly finds himself on the path. When the user pushes the arrow to turn the "page," the book disappears and there appears on the screen a map indicating Andrew's position. The user is now within Andrew's hallucination and must make decisions about which direction to walk in and what actions to perform. The book interface completely breaks down as the "reader" becomes the player of a game, a puzzle that requires a solution.

The fashion in which the interface described above breaks down indicates the limitation of the book metaphor for interface design. A more recent set of hypercard stacks by John McDaid, entitled *Uncle Buddy's Phantom Funhouse*, employs a variety of different interfaces, one of which depends on a book metaphor.³⁸ But the purpose of this particular stack, entitled "Fictionary of the Bezoars," is to provide an intertextual parody of Milorad Pavic's *Dictionary of the Khazars*, which Robert Coover classifies as a hypertext novel.³⁹ The author employs the book metaphor to invoke the

³⁸Significant for my purposes is the "home" card of *Uncle Buddy's Phantom Playhouse*, which portrays a house with windows bearing the titles of the various stacks one can explore. While this is only a very simple use of architecture as interface metaphor, it does point to the path which this dissertation wishes to clear: the conscious use of the memory palace as an organizational schema for the storing of information in electronic media.

³⁹See Landow, *Hypertext*, 107.

Pavic text (the "title page" of the "Fictionary" exactly emulates the title page of the *Dictionary*), and this invocation is meant to suggest the absurdity of the book metaphor as interface: the book interface constitutes a limitation of hypertext's potential that is just as problematic as having a book like the *Dictionary of the Khazars* in book form. That is, the *Dictionary* does not belong in book form just as the book interface does not belong in a hypercard stack, for the *Dictionary* is the closest thing to hypertext that one can achieve in book form. Each entry has key words that lead the reader in different directions, forcing him or her to make decisions about what order to read the selections in. Pavic writes, "the reader has no other choice than to begin in the middle of any given page and forge his own path. . . . Hence, each reader will put together the book for himself" (13). This kind of reading differs from the kind of semantic production a reader provides when reading a typical printed text in that the author invites readers to construct the order in which the parts of the texts are read. Such is the ideal of hypertext: a multitude of different pathways through a given textual network which invites (or forces) the reader to become an active reader making choices and therefore affecting his or her own reception of the text.

Despite the apparent headway that a stack like *Uncle Buddy's Phantom Funhouse* makes, with its parody of the book interface and its gesture toward an architectural interface, recent theorists of hypertext composition call for an ethos of composition in print when composing with computers. George Landow, as one of the major theorists of hypertext to date, provides a set of compositional guidelines to follow if one is not to upset or disorient the reader. His feeling is that, because readers are used to reading books, a medium in which they always feel oriented, they must be catered to by the hypertext author, and he sees this imperative as creating three problems for

authors in this medium: "First, what must they do to orient readers and help them read efficiently and with pleasure? Second, how can they inform those reading a document where the links in the document lead? Third, how can they assist readers who have just entered a new document to feel at home there?" (Landow, "The Rhetoric of Hypermedia" 82). While Landow's rules may be appropriate to a certain kind of text, one perhaps more informative or functional, his generalized approach limits many of the possibilities open to the author as well as the potential for a different kind of reading experience that only the computer can provide.

Landow's concern is rooted in this phenomenon of residual literacy, which applies the standards of print literacy to the medium of computercy. He expects of the computer what scholars and pedagogues in an age of logocentrism expect from its primary organ, the book: transparent and direct communication, educational efficiency, the elimination of confusion. "In particular, authors should label folders and descriptions of linked blocks with an eye to clarity and efficiency" (88). Calling for hierarchical overviews and other such "devices of orientation," Landow praises the use of the desktop metaphor as an interface which enables the user to navigate without fear of disorientation. Speaking of his hypertext document *The Dickens Web*, Landow writes, "Equally important, the desktop and folder system efficiently serve to orient the reader by making movement back to documents opened previously a quick and easy matter" (87).

The desktop metaphor itself, the icon-driven interface perfected and popularized by Apple Computers, has come under much fire lately, which suggests that the interim period of residual literacy may be beginning to end. Benedikt recognizes the desktop as a product of designers who unconsciously incorporated the way that information has been organized on the page:

Here is a simple example of the hidden valences of the WM [window manager] space of a "desktop" GUI [graphical user interface]: why is the Macintosh trashcan icon—pale and ashen—positioned at the bottom right of the screen, while the rainbow-colored apple icon of the Apple system menu—happy and edenic—is positioned diametrically opposite, at the top left? Why have almost all GUI designers agreed that the top of the screen is icon/menu territory? These are vestiges of the organization of *pages*, which for thousands of years (even before there were "pages") have given different value to the top and bottom, center and margin, left and right. . . . (131)

This critique makes sense coming from a cyberspace architect who wants to escape the two-dimensional organization of information that has dominated from the time of antiquity in order to enter an era of three-dimensional representations in the form of virtual reality. Benedikt's point, similar to one made above, concerns the conversion, the flattening, of a three-dimensional representational space into a two-dimensional one.

Theorists of human-computer interface design also critique the desktop metaphor as manifesting residual literacy, which is said to limit the ways that information can be stored and retrieved electronically. Alan Kay, for instance, writes that "the very idea of a paper 'metaphor' should be scrutinized mercilessly" (199), and he goes on to attack the desktop metaphor, the idea of the "folder," and the metaphors in Hypercard, the latter of which are not "just imitating paper with a vengeance—it is building in a limitation not imposed by the physical world" (200). Another theorist, Theodor Nelson, writes of how the interface of a desktop does not *act* like a real-world desktop and therefore is not believable or consistent: "We are told to believe that this is a 'metaphor' for a 'desktop.' But I have never personally seen a desktop where pointing at a lower piece of paper makes it jump to the top, or where placing a sheet of paper on top of a file folder causes the folder to gobble it up" (237). Nelson here perhaps asks too much of metaphor, demanding of the

desktop metaphor of interface design a transparent reproduction of real-world experience.

Nelson, in fact, finds fault with the very use of metaphors, pointing to the false restriction that accompanies their use of having to avoid mixing metaphors: "*the metaphor becomes a dead weight. Once the metaphor is instituted, every related function has to become a part of it*" (237).⁴⁰ He calls this debilitating aspect of resorting to metaphor the new "Metaphoric Ideology" and says that "this 'metaphor' business has gone too far" (236).⁴¹ Alan Kay, too, has similar trouble with the use of metaphor, locating the problem with the term itself: "One of the most compelling snares is the use of the term *metaphor* to describe a correspondence between what the users see on the screen and how they should think about what they are manipulating" (199). His alternative is the phrase "user illusion," which provides "clear connotations to the stage, theatrics, and magic—all of which give much stronger hints as to the direction to be followed" (199). For Kay, as for Marcus Novak, it is the magic that makes this medium special and that therefore should be augmented. "Magic" might be viewed as another way of stating what the electronic media have to offer in terms of communicative potential: the speed of associative linking or "travelling" that print literacy can not provide.

⁴⁰One glaring failure that Nelson points to is the trashcan icon in the Macintosh interface. This allows one to either delete files or to eject one's disk at the end of a session. Once, when working together on a project with a person who did not know this, I dragged the icon of the disk into the trash to eject it, and she thought that I was deleting the entire disk at one time. She loudly expressed her fear, which suggests the need for consistency, if only for personal comfort.

⁴¹Thomas D. Erickson's essay, in the same volume, wants on the other hand to understand metaphor and to recognize its pervasiveness in our language as a means of creating more consistent interface metaphors. See his essay "Working with Interface Metaphors," 65-73.

A similar distaste for metaphor occurs in the work of Deleuze and Guattari.⁴² Deleuze wants to invent concepts,⁴³ which are actions upon the world, rather than metaphors, which are representations that polarize meaning within a vehicle and a tenor. In considering this, Brian Massumi writes, "The concept has no subject or object other than itself. It is an act. Nomad thought replaces the closed equation of representation, $x=x=not\ y$ ($I=I=not\ you$) with an open equation: $\dots+y+z+a\dots$ " (6). The emphasis here is on motion: the open equation of the concept moves, while the closed equation of representation, in which the metaphor falls, is a stoppage. The open equation evokes a "logic of the AND" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 25), which establishes a different kind of comparison, "neither a union, nor a juxtaposition, but the birth of a stammering, the outline of a broken line which always sets off at right angles . . ." (Deleuze and Parnet 9-10). This movement *is* nomadic; it is not merely compared to nomadism as in metaphor. Writing of Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari speak of his anti-aestheticism:

"Grasp the world," instead of extracting impressions from it; work with objects, characters, events, in reality, and not in impressions. Kill metaphor. Aesthetic impressions, sensations, or imaginings still exist for themselves in Kafka's first essays where a certain influence of the Prague school is at work. But all of Kafka's evolution will consist in effacing them to the benefit of a sobriety, a hyper-realism, a machinism that no longer makes use of them. (*Kafka* 70)

Since they view metaphor as unreal, the creation of concepts is marked by "sobriety" and "hyper-realism."

⁴²Deleuze and Guattari are attracted to Kafka in part because "Kafka deliberately kills all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation" (*Kafka* 22).

⁴³Deleuze writes that "philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts" ("The Conditions of the Question: What is Philosophy?" 471).

It is not my intention to resolve the debate over the virtues of metaphor which is found not only in the works of philosophers like Deleuze and Guattari but also in the speculations of computer interface designers. This debate among interface designers concerning the problems inherent within the desktop metaphor and, indeed, in metaphor itself demonstrates the heightened awareness of these issues that has come about as a result of recent rapid changes in the communicative capacities of electronic media. My goal, then, is to offer a theory of hypertext composition which, as I have suggested, will find its tutor in the writings of Gilles Deleuze. The next chapter constitutes a beginning exploration of the instructions that one can find there. The primary concept that I will draw upon will be that of the rhizome, a surface-phenomenon which manifests the web-like quality of hypertext linkage. The rhizome will provide the conceptual model for a multi-linear mode of writing appropriate to hypertext, a three-dimensional writing that opposes the two-dimensional linearity of the book.

CHAPTER 5
RHIZOGRAPHY: A MANIFESTO FOR HYPERTEXT COMPOSITION

The Rhizome and Hypertext Writing

I have worked to define grammatology as an application of post-structuralism which explores the feedback loop of technology, institutional practices, and subject formation. This particular grammatological study has been specific to the Early Modern period, taking that transitional moment as analogous to our own. I have tried to demonstrate what can happen in our moment by carefully considering what happened in the sixteenth century: Ramus, a pedagogue in the midst of this transition, invented a system of mnemonics that exploited the two-dimensional writing space of the printed page, as we might invent a system of mnemonics that will exploit the three-dimensional writing space of the electronic technologies; Spenser, a writer in the midst of this transition, employed a trope that realized the monumental nature of the print apparatus in his minor poems at the same time that he incorporated the memory palace as an organizational strategy in *The Faerie Queene*. Like Spenser, we too can search for a primary trope of computercy while inventing a hybrid mnemonics. I have suggested that the memory palace can be a useful part of such a mnemonics, helping us to conceptualize hypertext composition as a rhetoric that takes full advantage of its electronic features, thereby breaking free of the residual literacy that has dominated the use of these media. The time is ripe for the resurrection of this once defunct Art of Memory, given the returning emphasis on allegory and the capacity for

writing with images that the new hypermedia computers are promising. Current use of computers for writing does not tap its full potential for communicative efficacy and efficient information storage and retrieval.

It remains to explore the philosophy of Deleuze as a philosophy of the screen. Within my historical analogy, I am equating Deleuze with Ramus. The difference, however, is that, while Ramus specifically worked as a pedagogue, theorizing a new method of mnemonics that released the full potential of the page, Deleuze is a philosopher whose work does not directly affect either pedagogy (especially given the degree of difficulty it poses for the student/scholar) or electronic rhetoric. My role in this chapter will be to build that bridge between Deleuze's concept of the rhizome and the new institutional practices of hypertext composition that might emerge in twenty-first century English departments. Given our knowledge of the transition that occurred in the sixteenth century, given what we know of the spatial nature of classical mnemonics and how Ramus adapted previous mnemonic strategies to the technology of the printed page, this grammatological frame may allow us to accelerate the current process of transition, such that the three-dimensional mnemonic prosthesis that hypertext can be is fully employed as such.

The notion that hypertext manifests the tenets of poststructural philosophy and deconstruction has almost become a commonplace in recent commentary on the phenomenon of hypertext. These commentators connect abstract notions of subjectivity, intertextuality, multivocality and de-centeredness to the experience of composing a hypertext with a computer and reading a hypertext composition from a computer screen.¹ Landow suggests that post-structural philosophy precedes the technology of hypertext in its struggle to

¹See Landow, *Hypertext* Chapter One, for a sustained treatment of these connections.

break the boundaries of the book; as such, it demonstrates a program similar to that of hypertext engineers:

This sweeping change has many components, to be sure, but one theme appears in both writings on hypertext (and the memex) and in contemporary critical theory—the limitations of print culture, the culture of the book. Bush and Barthes, Nelson and Derrida, like all theorists of these perhaps unexpectedly intertwined subjects, begin with the desire to enable us to escape the confinements of print. (*Hypertext* 28)

In fact, Landow accounts for the difference in tone between these two sets of theorists as being due to their common vision of textuality as well as their relationship to the existing technology: the poststructuralists are pessimistic because of the apparent hopelessness of expressing a multi-linear kind of writing in linear book form whereas the hypertext theorists are optimistic because of what the computer makes available to writers as composers of hypertext documents.

Bolter also points out the parallel that occurs between poststructural theory and hypertext. He attributes the monumental status that printed books have taken on since the fifteenth century, the establishment of a literary canon, and the current ethos of authority to the permanence that print brings to writing and points to how recent literary theories (like reader-response theory and deconstruction) are embodied in the experience of reading a hypertext. Bolter's task becomes that of saying what the theorists could not say because of their writing prior to the advent of hypertext: "All that is left to say—what Barthes could not say because he did not know about computers—is that the paradigm for the work is a finely bound, printed volume, whereas the paradigm for the Text is a network in a computer's memory" (161). The sense that one gets from both Bolter and Landow is not so much that poststructuralism influenced the engineering of hypertext but

that we are experiencing a generalized paradigm shift of which these are two aspects.

These commentaries have primarily focused upon Derrida and Barthes as representatives of poststructural philosophy.² While much in their writings is helpful in conceptualizing hypertext as a multi-linear medium, as Landow and Bolter have worked to point out, I am proposing an extensive study of the ways in which the poststructural philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari can also be helpful—perhaps even more so than Derrida and Barthes—in thinking about hypertext composition. Others have gestured toward such a study. Gregory Ulmer, for instance, in his work inventing a genre for videography, writes of the value of the rhizome:

They give us, that is, an image of wide scope that helps us to experience the quality of a new memory, ordered in a paleo-logical way, as well as to begin to imagine how to remotivate the tradition of mnemotechnics to the needs of electronic cognition. . . . What the tree diagram was to the book, the rhizome map is to electronics. . . . (140-141)

Craig Saper also recognizes the value of exploring Deleuze and Guattari for theoretical guidance on how to write electronically. His essay "Electronic Media Studies: From Video Art to Artificial Invention" attempts to explain as well as demonstrate this by providing a "guided tour" through a hypothetical hypertext which, as he says, "must, nevertheless, only hint at the electronic version" (123). Saper conceives of *A Thousand Plateaus* as itself being like a hypertext document: "I would argue that Deleuze and Guattari have written a theory about electronic learning which addresses the ideological concerns of media theory; their model of writing resembles a CD-ROM disk or hypermedia program" (122).

²Terence Harpold's Lacanian "reading" of hypertext, which offers a "psychoanalytic theory of narrative digression in hypertexts" (172), is one notable exception to this generalization.

To recognize fully the role that the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari can play in theorizing an electronic rhetoric, I propose to call one possible genre that can be based on their work "rhizography," which suggests that hypertext writing is like their notion of the rhizome, and I will work in this chapter to demonstrate this equation. My comments will be specific to one particular hypertext writing program called Storyspace, of which Jay David Bolter is one of the co-creators. While this may limit the range of this chapter's application as instructions for hypertext writing, the Storyspace medium has the virtue of being "user-friendly" and of having achieved a degree of popularity (probably for this very reason). Conversion software exists for converting a storyspace document into Hypercard, and a recent posting to the Technoculture discussion list on the Internet tells of a program that will convert Storyspace documents into "MOO" architecture, a form of Internet communication.³ Prominent authors like Robert Coover are singing its praises and even beginning to author hypertext documents in it. For these reasons, Storyspace will at least be competitive with other hypertext formats such as Hypercard and Intermedia and will therefore be a force to be reckoned with.

If it is true that hypertext "creates an almost embarrassingly literal embodiment" of Derridean and Barthesian poststructural tenets, as Landow

³David Blair, author of this posting of April 6th, 1994, writes of his project titled "Waxweb," which "is a large constructive hypertext (with hypertext extensions coming later) which has been converted to MOO-space at Hotel MOO. . . . 'Waxweb' formally began as a hypertext groupware project, in which 25 net-connected people around the world would use the groupware functionality of Eastgate's Storyspace hypertext software to add counter-writings, counter-structures, imaginary backstory or characters, or simpler things, onto a hypertext 'baselayer' which I constructed. . . . Not long after the above project began, Tom Meyer, a grad student in computer science at Brown, decided to open the hypertext-based Hotel MOO, which incorporated an extension he had written that allowed the conversion of 'Storyspace' hypertext files into coherent MOO-architecture. . . ." For a recent article on MOO spaces, see David Bennahum's article entitled "Fly Me to the MOO: Adventures in Textual Reality," *Lingua Franca* 4.4 (June 1994): 22-36.

writes (*Hypertext* 34), the same might be said about the rhizomatic network that Storyspace creates. A rhizome is characterized by shoots and runners; its shallow roots do not achieve the degree of depth that a tree does, but, as a result, it runs along the surface of the earth, covering much ground. In the same manner, the opening screen of a hypertext document might have four, five, or more different directions that a reader can choose. Rather than developing in a single, progressive manner, as in a linear book, a hypertext can scatter as it shoots off runners going in many different directions. This multiplicity is very much in the Deleuzoguattarian spirit of the rhizome, as the following passage will demonstrate:

We will enter, then, by any point whatsoever; none matters more than another, and no entrance is more privileged even if it seems an impasse, a tight passage, a siphon. We will be trying only to discover what other points our entrance connects to, what crossroads and galleries one passes through to link two points, what the map of the rhizome is and how the map is modified if one enters by another point. (*Kafka* 3)

This latter notion of affecting the "map" depending upon a particular entry point parallels the talk among hypertext theorists of the interactive nature of hypertext reading, how the reader co-authors the text, in a sense, via the decisions she makes while reading.⁴ One has no choice but to do these tasks, for one enters a hypertext in the same way that one enters a rhizome. From that point on, a reader will discover "what other points" or nodes along the path are connected to an entrance into the text.

The connectivity of a rhizome also comes very close to the linking potentials in hypertext: "unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any point" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 21). Hypertext, like the rhizome,

⁴See, for instance, Bolter's discussion of the hypertext-style novel *Composition No. 1*, which is a sheaf of unnumbered, unbound, individual "pages" that comes in a box and can be shuffled around, and Michael Joyce's renowned hypertext "Afternoon" (written in Storyspace): "In both fictions, the burden of constructing the text is thrown back on the reader" (142).

has the potential of linking every node to every other node in its textual network. This, in fact, is the virtue of reading a (hyper)text from a computer screen: it provides ways of moving through the information stored within it that differ from book browsing. It might be said that hypertext internalizes an index and contents system that has a specific locus in a book, so that, rather than turning to the back of the book to locate the next page reference that appears under a given entry, a hypertext can provide immediate access to the passage with the keyword in it merely by selecting that keyword.

This elimination of steps in a process, this manifestation of a newly acquired speed, should not be underestimated: though the computer may only allow us to do what we already do a lot faster, it is the speed itself that will contribute to changing the way scholars read, write, and do research. Once the majority of scholarly information is available on-line via the Internet, the speed of accessing "books" and "articles" will increase tenfold. As an example of this process, imagine a scholar reading a book in her office. She discovers a footnote that she wants to trace, so she takes down the bibliographic information, physically goes to the library, finds the call number, searches for the item (which may or may not be there), and then leaves. Within a hypertext environment such as the World-Wide Web promises to provide, this scholar could have merely selected the footnote itself to access the article in question; the time spent retrieving it from the library collapses in that moment of access, and the associational path that her research takes because of this immediate access may differ from the one that would emerge later in the delays that physical transit cause.

Some recent texts consciously try to emulate this process. J. Hillis Miller's recent book, *Illustration*, is one example: while it tries to embody a hypertext format, "illustrating" an electronic rhetoric, it can only fail to do so

because of its book status. In her review of his book, Rosalind Krauss writes the following:

J. Hillis Miller takes his leave of the reader of this nonbook with the insouciant thought that if this conglomeration of fragments and set-pieces has not added up to a "continuous argument" this is because it is, in its very formlessness, anticipating the brave new world of "large digitized databases." It is not for *him* to build a discursive structure that will unfold between the covers of a book; instead, he writes, "One can imagine a computerized version of my essay in which each section would have a 'button' leading out to the large context of which my citations are a part and in which a much larger set of illustrations (in the sense of both pictures and texts) would be available through computer links." (133)

One must "imagine" a computerized version of the essay, which of course can only fall short of the actual experience of reading the essay from a computer screen. Miller's book retains the linear format of the book; other more experimental texts such as Saper's essay mentioned above and Ulmer's "Grammatology (in the Stacks) of Hypermedia, a Simulation: or, when does a pile become a heap?" emulate the composition in fragments in which a hypertext writer must engage. Each prepares a sequence of "screens" or "cards" that represent one line or path through a larger hypertext document. While this evocation of a single path among other paths comes closer to the actual experience of hypertext reading, it does not allow for the experience of wandering from the main path—and even getting lost—that reading from the computer screen allows. Such wandering can provide an experience of discovery similar to that often associated with browsing at the library: one might stumble across some interesting or useful information that one did not intend to seek. This form of browsing, however, differs from electronic wandering in that some links and associations have already been provided by previous travellers who have forged a path through the information, and other links can be made by the one who is travelling.

So the question that this chapter asks, to state it once more, is this: how can the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari help to theorize composition in hypertext, specifically in Storyspace? I have suggested that Storyspace literally embodies the rhizome as much as this is possible, and others have pointed out this connection as well. But the rhizome is part of a complicated network of philosophical concepts that form and inform it; to explore a rhizomatic style of hypertext composition therefore will be to demonstrate the connections between their notion of the rhizome and Storyspace as a medium of information storage and retrieval in which one writes (or, more accurately, types). In doing so, I will discuss conception and method together, as they feed off of each other in a fashion that directly manifests one goal of Deleuze and Guattari's writings.⁵

A Deleuzoguattarian Conception and Method of Hypertext Composition

The first characteristic of this electronic rhetoric is speed. The speed that hypertext brings to composition and reading has already been acknowledged by hypertext commentators. As George Landow writes,

The speed with which one can move between passages and points in sets of texts changes both the way we read and the way we write, just as the high-speed number crunching computing changes various scientific fields by making possible investigations that before had required too much time or risk.
(*Hypertext* 61)

⁵In Brian Massumi's reading of their work, "meaning is force" (as the first chapter of *A User's Guide* is entitled). Concepts have a material effect in the world and are not merely of the ethereal realm of the "mind." "Interpretation is force, and an application of force is the outcome of an endless interplay of processes natural and historical, individual and institutional. This gives us a second approximation of what meaning is: more a meeting between forces than simply the forces behind the signs. Force against force, action upon action, the development of an envelopment: meaning is the encounter of lines of force, each of which is actually a complex of other forces" (11). The goal of their work, then, is to invent concepts which exert some force in the real world.

If we take Landow's word for it, then both reading of and composition in hypertext should be fast, as fast as it lets readers read and writers compose, because it will generate new and different kinds of "investigations."

One line of investigation might be to explore how this characteristic of speed changes the kind of composition that is produced. In the age of alphabetic literacy, texts were most likely composed by hand. Walter Ong recognizes how the chirographic process affected the product of composition: "The very reflectiveness of writing—enforced by the slowness of the writing process as compared to oral delivery as well as by the isolation of the writer as compared to the oral performer—encourages growth of consciousness out of the unconscious" (*Orality and Literacy* 150).⁶ Ong suggests here that the material conditions of writing—i.e. using a writing utensil to compose a text on parchment or paper—helped to generate the textual norms of the present as they are manifest in the genres of high literacy (the essay and the novel), norms of depth and development which emerge from standards derived from slowness. On the other hand, the speed of typing on a computer wordprocessor, which allows some to type upward of 100 words per minute, allows one to compose much faster than a person could write.

One could see how the new conditions of composition that word-processing creates could affect the resultant composition. Judged from the point of view of literate standards, however, "fast" compositions would fall

⁶Despite Carruthers's problems with Ong, she writes of Quintilian's comments on writing as a hindrance in passages which agree with Ong on this point: "Quintilian stresses one matter in regard to the layout of the waxed tablets. Waxed tablets best serve excision and correction (though people with poor eyes may have to use parchment in order to see the letters better—parchment slows down the writing process, however, and so may hinder thought)" (204). The slowness is necessary for achieving the degree of depth that alphabetic literacy makes possible: "Writing is crucial because it forces us to concentrate and its slowness makes us careful: 'as deep ploughing makes the soil more fertile . . . so, if we improve our minds by something more than superficial study, we shall produce a richer growth of knowledge and shall retain it with greater accuracy'" (204). These references to depth and superficiality should resonate with my earlier discussion of these issues.

short of standards derived from centuries of chirographic practice and applied to "slow" compositions. Such judgment is reminiscent of the residual literacy previously examined in chapter four, and we also see this inertia manifest in institutional norms of tenure tracking, which demands that the work of young professors achieves some degree of monumental success—that is, that their work as professors becomes acknowledged by the academy as achieving "weight" or "gravity." The ideology of the heavy, the grave, corresponds to the monumental status that print achieves for thought: the technology of print brought with it the weight of the gravestone, the effect of thought etched into stone, into a monument, unchangeable, wrought forever. Here, I evoke the sense of monumentality both as something that endures, something that marks an achievement, and as something that is heavy, something that marks a grave/gravity.

This figure of the monument draws a connection between weight and gravity in a metaphorical sense: an argument has "weight" if it achieves a degree of "gravity" or seriousness that must be acknowledged by other authorities. One can achieve such seriousness only by arriving at a certain depth of analysis that is determined by editorial boards of older, more established professors. Receiving a Ph.D. simulates this process: the candidate writes a practice book, which must meet the standards of a committee of authorities. But the process of publishing itself secures tenure insofar as it signifies an institutional rite of passage by writing a text that becomes fixed in print. The book becomes a marker similar to a gravestone in its monumental status, for it marks an unchanging permanence. As Ong writes, "Print is comfortable only with finality" (*Orality and Literacy* 132). And what is more final than the "grave"?

Deleuze and Guattari oppose this tradition of gravity and weight that constitutes the apparatus of print literacy, instead espousing the opposing virtues of lightness and speed. As Kristin Ross writes of their philosophy of *action libre*, "'Absolute' speed and the way in which parts of the body escape from gravitational pull in order to occupy a nonstratified, nonpunctual space characterize 'free action'" (68). Gravity here signifies a force of tradition, a force of stasis, that which denies experimentation by perpetuating a particular world-view. They draw their example for this force of cultural inertia that exists within even science from physics itself:

Universal attraction became the law of all laws, in that it set the rule for the biunivocal correspondence between two bodies; and each time science discovered a new field, it sought to formalize it in the same mode as the field of gravity. Even chemistry became a royal science only by virtue of a whole theoretical elaboration of the notion of weight. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 370)

Gravity here is said to provide the terminology by which new sciences defined themselves. Speed, then, does not necessarily signify actual motion but represents the concept of freeing oneself, as much as this is possible, from institutional restraints and the inertial forces of a culture that are imposed upon its individuals. In terms of hypertext composition, it just so happens to be the potential speed of composition that allows one to "pick up speed" in this figurative sense in order to free oneself from the gravitational forces of residual literacy.

To present their position in another way, the opposition to gravity is an opposition to what they call "arborescent thinking," which is the binaristic form of logic that they oppose to the rhizome. Arborescence is the realm of print literacy, which always manifests a unity, and it is to this unity that the poststructural thrust of Deleuze and Guattari's work is addressed. They write of three different kinds of books:

A first type of book is the root-book. The tree is already the image of the world, or the root the image of the world-tree. This is the classical book. . . . One becomes two: whenever we encounter this formula . . . what we have before us is the most classical and well reflected, oldest, and weariest kind of thought. (5)

The "root-book" represents arborescence in its purest form: binary logic, the "weariest" kind of thinking from which their work tries to free us.⁷ The second kind of book, the "radicle system," appears to undermine the unity of the root-book but ultimately reasserts a higher unity:

This is as much to say that the fascicular system does not really break with dualism, with the complementarity between a subject and an object, a natural reality and a spiritual reality: unity is consistently thwarted and obstructed in the object, while a new type of unity triumphs in the subject. (6)

These two forms of arborescence are elsewhere connected to the force of gravity, which implicates the concept of arborescence as a form of institutional stasis: "In short, it seems that the force of gravity lies at the basis of a laminar, striated, homogeneous, and centered space; it forms the foundation for those multiplicities termed metric, or arborescent, whose dimensions are independent and are expressed with the aid of units and points (movements from one point to another)" (370). If gravity is in the realm of arborescence, then speed is in the realm of the rhizome, the third form of "book."⁸

⁷The desire to escape the dichotomous thinking of binaristic logic is a commonplace of poststructural thought. See for example Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, in which he writes of "the glorious end of logical thinking" (21) and of how he "seeks a new unheard-of consciousness beyond dichotomies" (61). See also Derrida, "White Mythology," in which he writes that the "logic of the abyme is the figurative ruination of logic" (262).

⁸Gregory Ulmer, in *Teleteory*, draws upon these terms to characterize his genre for videography that he calls "mystory." He opposes "models" to "relays": models are problematic in that they inspire only imitation and not invention, not experimentation. As he writes, "The problem is that nomadic texts such as those authored by Artaud or Kleist themselves end up becoming monuments, 'inspiring a copy to be modeled.' This alternative—the relay, organized by speed, rather than the gravity of a monument—will be one of the most difficult and important issues for teleteory. . . ." (170). Insofar as rhizography emphasizes speed, it is similar to this aspect of Ulmer's "mystory."

This connection between speed and the rhizome becomes clearer when, in the process of defining the concept of the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari invoke simple geometry in characterizing the notions of arborescence and gravity as being similar to the mathematical exercise of plotting points. In their plateau entitled "The Smooth and the Striated," they write, "Of course, there are points, lines, and surfaces in striated space as well as in smooth space. . . . In striated space, lines or trajectories tend to be subordinated to points: one goes from one point to another. In the smooth, it is the opposite: the points are subordinated to the trajectory" (478). The plotting of points, of localizable *loci*, then, is antithetical to the rhizome: "Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns the point into a line!" (24). Speed here becomes instrumental in converting the striated into the smooth, the heavy into the weightless, the point into a line. The progression of exclamations suggests that the rhizomatic gesture is one of speed, and the geometric description suggests that speed creates a dimension: if a point, which is zero dimensions, becomes a line when it is speeded up, a line being one dimension, then it is the speed itself that acts as a dimensional generative, that creates a dimension where one never before existed.

It is in this "space" of dimensional generation that Deleuze and Guattari create the tensions that promote rhizomatic thinking. Indeed, "between" dimensions is where speed occurs: "The middle is by no means average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed" (25). This statement develops their theory of the between, the middle space between dimensions, for it is there that points are not localizable: "Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other

and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle" (25). This fascination with the between or the middle explains their fascination with fractals, as fractals are fractional dimensions, dimensions that exist between the typical one, two, or three-dimensional objects that we are most familiar with in Euclidean geometry:

Is it possible to give a very general mathematical definition of smooth spaces? Benoit Mandelbrot's "fractals" seem to be on the path. Fractals are aggregates whose number of dimensions is fractional rather than whole, or else whole but with continuous variation in direction. An example would be a line segment whose central third is replaced by the angle of an equilateral triangle. . . . [S]uch a segment would constitute an infinite line or curve with a dimension greater than one, but less than a surface (= 2). (486)

They continually refer to mathematics in defining their key philosophical concepts, as in this definition of "multiplicity":

In a multiplicity what counts are not the terms or the elements, but what there is "between", the between, a set of relations which are not separable from each other. Every multiplicity grows from the middle, like the blade of grass or the rhizome. We constantly oppose the rhizome to the tree, like two conceptions and even two very different ways of thinking. A line does not go from one point to another, but passes between points, ceaselessly bifurcating and diverging, like one of Pollock's lines.⁹ (*Dialogues* viii)

This abstract sense of betweenness that appears so central to their thinking relates to hypertext composition in that, when one is composing in Storyspace, there is a sense that the job is never finished—one is always "in

⁹The notion of the space between is also significant and recurs in definitions of other key concepts, such as the following clarification of "becomings": "We said the same thing about becomings: it is not one term which becomes the other, but each encounters the other, a single becoming which is not common to the two, since they have nothing to do with one another, but which is between the two, which has its own direction, a bloc of becoming, an a-parallel evolution" (*Dialogues* 6-7).

the middle," so to speak, as always another potential line of development (or "line of flight" as Deleuze and Guattari are fond of calling it) offers itself, or a link between two nodes that went unrecognized presents itself. Thus, hypertext composition in Storyspace manifests this rhizomatic action of "transversal movement," this perpendicular off-shooting that resembles a living rhizome. It allows the composer, upon thinking of something only tangentially connected to the "line" of reasoning being developed at whatever point in a composition, immediately to realize its presence, to make it real, by making a textbox, establishing the link that generated the tangent in the first place, and then—depending on the composer's desire—either developing the new line or returning to the "main" or initial line of reasoning. Whichever way the composer, the rhizographer, chooses to go, both paths are in (computer) memory. There is a smaller chance of forgetting that new idea, that potential pathway. This notion of having "lines" of thinking employs the terms of the rhizome that Deleuze and Guattari offer: rather than making a "point," a rhizographer would make a "line."

This leads to the second characteristic of electronic rhetoric, which suggests that the mind should be allowed to wander as much as possible during composition, taking advantage of the speed with which Storyspace allows one to compose in order to map the mind in action. This precept assumes that Storyspace is somehow particularly amenable to representing mental activity. This is so because it is, as I am arguing, a hypertext program that embodies many characteristics of the Deleuzoguattarian concept of the rhizome, and the mind, from their point of view, is structured like a rhizome:

Thought is not arborescent, and the brain is not rooted or ramified matter. What are wrongly called "dendrites" do not assure the connection of neurons in a continuous fabric. The

discontinuity between cells, the role of the axons, the functioning of the synapses, the existence of synaptic microfissures, the leap each message makes across these fissures, make the brain a multiplicity immersed in its plane of consistency or neurologia, a whole uncertain, probabalistic system ("the uncertain nervous system"). Many people have a tree growing in their heads, but the brain itself is much more a grass than a tree. (15)

The recent work building neural networks and connectionist models of the mind also supports this rhizomatic conception of the mind. Theorists of cognitive psychology write of how the mind works like a network,¹⁰ while artificial intelligence (AI) researchers have realized that conceiving of the mind as a computer, which works serially (logically), does not approach the way the mind really works.¹¹ A misconception of AI research posits that a piece of information has a single, identifiable address in the mind,¹² whereas connectionist theory allows for two or more memories to reside in the same place and also that the same memory may reside in several places at once:

Not only is an item of knowledge smeared out across an expanse of network instead of being at one pinpoint location; it is also superimposed on other items, so that any given place

¹⁰Jeremy Campbell, writing of these matters, says, "Papert and his colleague Marvin Minsky see the brain as a network of networks . . ." (215). Minsky, in his book *The Society of Mind*, tells how the structure of his book emulates the mind itself: "One trouble is that these ideas have lots of cross-connections. My explanations rarely go in neat, straight lines from start to end. . . . Instead they're tied in tangled webs. Perhaps this fault is actually mine, for failing to find a tidy base of neatly ordered principles. But I'm inclined to lay the blame upon the nature of the mind: much of its power seems to stem from just the messy ways its agents cross-connect" (17).

¹¹Campbell writes, "Throwing out the metaphor of the serial computer and replacing it with the metaphor of a brain which is not a logic machine but a knowledge medium . . . leads to a considerably more expansive and generous view of the mind" (16).

¹²George Johnson, in *In the Palaces of Memory*, writes, "Inspired by artificial intelligence, many psychologists were seized by the idea that the churning of the mind could be thought of as algorithms, step-by-step procedures that could be embodied in computer programs. But when eyed too closely, the metaphor became strained. In a computer, memory and processing are completely separate functions—different boxes on the architectural plans. Every parcel of information is assigned an address and stored in an array of memory chips or on a magnetic disk. When the central processor needs the information, it must be summoned from its numbered cell. The computer has to know where the memory is stored in order to retrieve it" (163-164).

in the network thousands of different memories may reside, one on top of the other. (Campbell 157)

The multi-layered connections and networks of memories stored in the brain help to explain how the mind is nomadic by nature, how it encourages wandering.¹³

The debate between AI researchers and theorists of neural networks concerning where and how memories are stored parallels Deleuze and Guattari's dichotomy of the arborescent vs. the rhizome. Recall that the arborescent privileges the point over the line; it plots locatable points that are places of stoppage. The rhizome, on the other hand, privileges the line over the point, or the point in motion (which constitutes a line); it is constantly trying to avoid stopping at any given point by remaining in motion and attaining speed. Its desire to be between represents a desire to avoid being "weighted down" by gravity at any one place. In this way the concept of nomadism overlaps with the concept of rhizomatics insofar as each encourages a wandering from fixed points of habitation as well as from habitual thinking.

The nomadic concept of the rhizome forces us to reconceive our use of classical rhetorical training in terms of this poststructural abhorrence of the localizable point.¹⁴ The memory palace tradition, as I have written in

¹³Deleuze and Guattari recognize the epic quality of thought when, in one passage treating nomadism, they write that "To think is to voyage" (482).

¹⁴This emphasis on the "nonlocalizable *loci*" has become common among poststructural thinkers. The notion of the nonlocalizable recurs in Deleuze's *The Fold*, which finds in Leibniz's baroque philosophy much that connects to his own thinking. Writing of the motion of the fold at one point, Deleuze says, "It is an extremely sinuous fold, a zigzag, a primal tie that cannot be located" (120; see also pp. 103 and 111 for references to the nonlocalizable). Derrida's conception of the crypt also participates in this trend. According to J. Hillis Miller, "The chief obstacle to a complete cartography of Derrida's topographies, however, is not the extent and complexity of the terrain but the presence within any place on his map . . . of a place that cannot be mapped. This place resists toponymy, topology, and topography, all three. Somewhere and nowhere in every Derridean topography is a secret place, a crypt whose coordinates cannot be plotted" ("Derrida's Topographies" 6).

previous chapters, instructs us to have specific places in which images are stored. This is a topographic gesture, a desire to map out knowledge in the same way that AI researchers wanted a single address for each item of information stored in a computer, and as such it is a manifestation of logocentrism, according to J. Hillis Miller: "Topography is a logocentric practice through and through. It depends, for example, on the law of noncontradiction. A place is either there in a given place or not there, and no thing, a building for example, can be in more than one place at once" ("Derrida's Topographies" 12). But memory, as we have seen, is not logocentric in this sense; memory places can overlap, can be in more than one place at once.

So, while the memory palace is a mnemonic tool that helps us to remember, it may not work the way the mind does when it remembers. In terms of hypertext composition, the traditional process of building a memory palace—with fixed places and localizable *loci*—can help to organize the architecture of a Storyspace environment, but we do not want it to foreclose the anti-logocentric possibilities of wandering, of being between places. This is the subject matter of Craig Saper's *Tourism and Invention: Roland Barthes's Empire of Signs*. Barthes's book is about getting lost as a tourist in Japan. According to Saper, Barthes is playing with the idea of the "commonplaces" as topoi for orienting a speaker/writer within the treasure-house of memory. If one is properly trained as a rhetorician, one will never get lost, for speaking and writing effectively becomes a matter of going to the memory *loci* and retrieving information. Saper writes that Barthes's book is a set of instructions for getting lost; he suggests that the losing of one's way ultimately can be an inventive process.

Knowing where every item of information is within a memory-palace or a database denies one the pleasures of getting lost, the pleasures of discovering some knowledge that one had not intended to discover. While some would find such an efficiently mapped topography to be an advantage, others, like Michel de Certeau, find it problematic:

Both contemporary scientific analyses that reduce memory to its "social frameworks" and the clerical techniques that in the Middle Ages so cleverly transformed it into a composition of places and thus prepared the modern mutation of time into a quantifiable and regulatable space, forget or reject its detours. . . . In this way, surprises are averted. (89)

De Certeau is calling here for an embrace of memory's detours, its nomadic wanderings that lead one away from the quantified and regulated spaces of a topography, away from the plotted points of arborescence.

This emphasis on getting lost, on travelling like a nomad between established points, is very much part of the anti-Cartesian tendency in poststructural thought. Descartes is, after all, the one who codified the link between algebra and Euclidean geometry, the one who invented the mapping of points in the first place.¹⁵ Georges Van Den Abbeele is very helpful in identifying the use of travel as metaphor in Descartes's philosophy and deconstructing the grounds upon which the philosopher bases his system of thought. Insofar as Descartes perpetuates the logocentrism that he inherited from ancient Greece, Van Den Abbeele's work participates in the general poststructural project of overturning the reign of the arborescent and its privileging of unity. In *Travel as Metaphor*, Van Den Abbeele writes of Descartes's negotiation of the semantic void by means of a mixed metaphor.

¹⁵"Descartes had both 'algebraized' geometry and 'geometrized' algebra. (And it is this second movement that is of most interest to us here.) With one profound invention, he had built the conceptual bridge we today call the Cartesian coordinate system" (Benedikt, "Introduction" 20).

According to Van Den Abbeele, in his *Second Meditation* Descartes first describes being thrust into a disorientation that is like an abyss of water out of which one is unable to swim. But suddenly a ground appears upon which he can climb out of the abyss. Van Den Abbeele comments that the very fact of having a certain destination is what provides this grounding:

In other words, the very act of positing certainty as a destination already puts the philosopher on firm ground and keeps him from slipping into the drift of aimless nomadism. To say where one is going is to orient one's position in relation to that destination, to define one's position *as* a position in relation to that destination, toward which one can proceed teleologically. (43)

With Descartes's position, any deviation is already taken into consideration: "No notion, in sum, is more circumscribed than the notion of transgression. . . . The very metaphor of wandering precludes wandering . . ." (47). The *cogito* becomes a point of origin, an anchoring point, "certain and unshakable," from which any wandering can occur and to which any such wandering will return. "What is projected is a circular journey, a wandering that is not at all aimless but in fact always already circumscribed, such that it must inevitably return to the point of departure" (45).

An anti-Cartesian perspective such as poststructuralism fosters would therefore encourage an aimless wandering with no return, a perpetual nomadism.¹⁶ One engaged in a rhizographic writing style embracing this dictum would never try to make a "point"; rather, one should let the mind wander and record that wandering as quickly as possible with the speed of a Storyspace program. Such speed should encourage the automatic style of writing that surrealists attempted but would avoid the senseless quality of its

¹⁶This follows Ulmer's strategy in *Heuretics*, in which he revises Descartes's discourse, deriving an anti-method, by contrasting all of Descartes's points, since "so many theorists of the contemporary paradigm have declared themselves to be Anti-Cartesians" (12). One of the instructions in ANTI-(BOOK)THREE provides the following moral rule: "wander aimlessly (vagabondage)" (13).

results, the goal being to map the mind in its rhizomatic branching in a medium that mirrors its structure. The problem with Surrealistic automatic writing lay with the medium which they were using: while typing enabled them to approach the speed of the keyboard, their writing could only go in one direction because of the linearity of the page. The Storyspace program, on the other hand, combines speed with a rhizomatic medium.

A scholarly essay on Spenser written in Storyspace, for instance, would not seek to be completely objective, to obliterate the subject who is writing it, but would develop any associational lines of thinking that presented themselves, because the Storyspace hypertext program encourages their pursuit. Reference to the writer's experience with comic-book heroes, dungeons and dragons, video games or popular fantasy movies all would become viable subject matter in various rhizomatic offshoots branching from an essay on *The Faerie Queene*, for instance. Personal experiences that perhaps relate only allegorically would also become included, as well as fictional storylines that might masquerade as real experience. The injunction to wander nomadically, that is, would encourage interdisciplinary, multi-generic compositions and could open up to include other people's comments, essays, short stories, poems, whatever. A rhizography may be by many people or it may be by only one, but either way it will reveal the dialogic character of the mind as the various voices are set free from the gravity of a single, unified self.

This leads to the third and final characteristic of electronic rhetoric that I will treat here, that of density. The kind of text described above has the quality of a patchwork quilt or, perhaps more accurately, an aggregate of loosely connected nodes that are networked via hypertext links. These links may be determined only by very superficial associations, hence its rhizomatic,

surface-oriented status. I have previously discussed the prevalence of an ideology of depth which is privileged in the apparatus of print literacy and argued that a resurgence of the surface is presently working to undermine this hegemony of depth. Rhizography, then, helps to deconstruct the metaphorical concept of depth and substitutes the concept of superficiality. The rhizome grows on the surface and covers much ground, whereas the tree achieves great depth but does not spread out along the surface to the extent that a rhizome does. Such is the advantage of the multi-linear format of electronic composition in hypertext as opposed to the oftentimes linear format of literate composition. Because a rhizography can only be composed in an electronic hypertext program, the rhizographer can create a true "text" in the etymological sense of the word: a woven network of connections that resembles the way rhizomes like watermelons or crabgrass grow.

But even these metaphors, rhizomatic though they are, do not adequately describe the structure that the Storyspace hypertext will take, for they are two-dimensional, describing the surface of a plane, whereas Storyspace (among other hypertext programs) enables the composer to visualize a three-dimensional entity. I have discussed in chapter four how the spatialization of knowledge in hypertext takes an important leap from two-dimensional representations on the page to three-dimensional representations in cyberspace (hypertext being a primitive form of cyberspace). The model of the rhizome need not be abandoned, however; it merely needs adaptation to the third-dimension. Deleuze and Guattari provide this adaptation with their concepts of the molar and the molecular.

Extracting the connections among their concepts is not always easy, though. Often it is a matter of identifying a parallel description which applies to two or more of the concepts. The idea of the line of flight as a descriptive

phrase, for instance, is clearly connected to the rhizome: "There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. . . . You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything . . ." (*A Thousand Plateaus* 9). This passage suggests that the concept of escaping an organizational structure is an integral part of the rhizome, and we see that the rhizome joins a complex of terms that suggest motion, escape, destabilization: nomadism, speed, deterritorialization. At the end of the introductory chapter on the rhizome in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the philosophers summarize the principal characteristics of a rhizome, at this point further defining the concept:

Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature. (21)

This passage helps to highlight one primary perception that their work continually emphasizes: a sense that things are always in flux, that either a state (of things, matter, people, whatever) is reaching toward stability or in the process of (escape from) dissolution. Any one state of affairs is never fixed but always in a state of change, of flux.¹⁷ Many of their concept-pairs reiterate in different terms this same idea: the nomad vs. the State, deterritorialization

¹⁷One example of this tendency occurs in a passage in which they discuss the 1968 uprising in France, which "was molecular," according to Deleuze and Guattari: "A molecular flow was escaping, minuscule at first, then swelling, without, however, ceasing to be unassignable. The reverse, however, is also true: molecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the molar organizations to reshuffle their segments, their binary distributions of sexes, classes, and parties" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 216-217).

vs. reterritorialization, destratification vs. (re)stratification, the smooth vs. the striated, the rhizome vs. the arborescent.

The concept-pair molecular/molar also follows this tendency, with the molecular falling on the side of the rhizome. In defining society, they speak of the molecular in terms used in descriptions of the rhizome: "From the viewpoint of a micropolitics, a society is defined by its lines of flight, which are molecular. There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, the overcoding machine . . ." (216). The molecular is rhizomatic insofar as it opposes a totality—the "molar," which is defined as being "of or pertaining to a body of matter as a whole, perceived apart from molecular or atomic properties."¹⁸ The molar here functions like the arborescent as that which hierarchizes, that which imposes an external structure: "In a molecular population (mass) there are only local connections between discrete particles. In the case of a molar population (superindividual or person) locally connected discrete particles have become correlated at a distance" (Massumi 54-55). These molecular connections between discrete particles, like atoms that are bonded in a molecule, constitute a rhizome in its multiple connectivities.

In terms of writing, a "molecular" approach would suggest a form of writing that is equivalent to brainstorming strategies in current composition-al methods. Rhizographers, that is, should spontaneously generate text-boxes, as the urge or desire drives them, with no fear or concern of relevance or disposition (in the rhetorical sense of "arrangement"). Such a method would

¹⁸Massumi offers a helpful discussion of these matters, here speaking in terms of an individual: "The basic change is in the 'mode of composition' or 'consistency' of the individual, in other words in the way in which the particles hold together. The statistical accumulation started as a shifting mass brought together by fragmentary processes operating particle by particle through strictly local connections, or in a manner that could be called 'molecular.' The resulting multilayered individual was then grasped as a whole by a set of outside forces working in concert and molded into a well-defined superindividual or 'molar' formation" (48).

cultivate "local connections" between discrete ideas that are associationally related. The proximity of two text-boxes in Storyspace, then, would indicate some relation, though this relationship would not have to follow logically but could be metaphorical, allegorical, or metonymic. Pursuing tangential lines of thinking would thus be encouraged—even insisted upon—in a rhizography.

Defining this procedure in the terms of classical rhetoric, the first and third steps of rhetoric—inventio and elocutio, brainstorming and writing—collapse and become the same step. Composition as such would take on the appearance of a brainstorming cluster done on paper: nodes/topics linked to other nodes/topics by associational links (the lines connecting the topics). The traditional second step of rhetoric—dispositio, arrangement—would follow. In terms of the molecular/molar distinction, arrangement would be the molar formation, the perception of patterns among the various molecular clusters that emerges after the molecular growth has spontaneously occurred. Brian Massumi uses the analogy of "muck" in its process of formation as an example of this transition from a chaotic, molecular state to an overarching molar organization:

Our granules of muck were an oozing molecular mass, but as their local connections rigidified into rock, they became stabilized and homogenized, increasing the organizational consistency of different regions in the deposit (correlation). (55)

The writer can then arrange the emergent molarities into an architecture, into a three-dimensional memory palace built within the Storyspace program. The electronic memory palace, then, comes to fulfill the role of dispositio.

But in this electronic rhetoric, the writer is not confined to following the steps in precise order. S/he may decide to consider the arrangement first,

and then go on to inventing/writing. In this procedure, *dispositio* becomes step one, and the combined steps of *inventio*/*elocutio* come afterward. As Massumi writes, "Molarity implies the creation or prior existence of a well-defined boundary enabling the population of particles to be grasped as a whole" (55). Molarity as the creation of a well-defined boundary describes rhizography when *dispositio* comes after writing has begun; molarity as the prior existence of a well-defined boundary describes rhizography when *dispositio* is the first step in the process.

Does not this latter version of rhizography contradict the rhizomatic process of undermining arborescent totalities? Not necessarily. The difference lies in the relationship of the structure to the content. In traditional composition instruction, no such relation between content and form exists; the five-paragraph theme structure is the empty vessel into which students put their thoughts. To use the language of mnemonics, the topics (the paragraphs) of a five-paragraph theme are empty places (*topoi*) to be filled by the student. In rhizography, on the other hand, the molar structure should relate somehow to the molecular infrastructure. While it may be more difficult to start with a molar structure and then write spontaneously in a way that fulfills the demands of the molarity, it would not be impossible. Of course, the molar structure can always be changed later should the molecular particularities mutate into some other form. But as long as the quick, light, associational writing is not constricted by the initial imposition of a structure, then taking the step of *dispositio* first should not conflict with the spontaneous spirit of rhizography.

Massumi's use of "muck" to illustrate the transition from molecular to molar includes a qualification that maintains the Deleuzoguattarian emphasis on flux: "Its particles are correlated, but not rigidly so. It has boundaries,

but fluctuating ones. It is the threshold leading from one state to another" (55). This aspect of muck, of the molecular/molar fluctuation, and of their general focus on the liminal moment of transition—the between—corresponds to the general unfinished state of electronic texts. Commenting on how electronic publishing will change scholarly publishing, R. A. Shoaf writes the following, paraphrasing Bill Readings' essay in the electronic publication *Surfaces* :

In the world of Internet publishing, length is no longer a valid criterion for rejecting an item of work. Similarly, related to the issue of length, a work need never be "finished" again (works, of course, are never finished anyway, simply abandoned). Any work can be updated, revised, expanded, altered, corrected indefinitely, because of its electronic form and availability through the Internet. These are radical changes if one stops to consider the criteria used in the past for judging what does and does not go into a journal. . . . [T]hese developments can clearly be liberating. (7-8)

Electronic media are suited to a philosophy of the fluid, which characterizes the poststructural paradigm as well as electronic texts.¹⁹

¹⁹Characterizing Leibniz's philosophy, Deleuze writes, "Essentialism makes a classic of Descartes, while Leibniz's thought appears to be a profound Mannerism. Classicism needs a solid and constant attribute for substance, but Mannerism is fluid, and the spontaneity of manners replaces the essentiality of the attribute" (*The Fold* 56). The emphasis on flow and fluids recurs: in the chapter "What is an Event?" Deleuze writes, "Events are fluvia. From then on what allows us to ask, 'Is it the same flow, the same thing or the same occasion?'" (79). The monad is said to be "a lapping of waves" (86), and the baroque view sees matter as overflowing like fluid: "matter tends to spill over in space, to be reconciled with fluidity at the same time fluids themselves are divided into masses" (4). Luce Irigaray also emphasizes the fluid in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, in which she recognizes the correlation between logocentric logicity and solids: "what structuration of (the) language does not maintain a complicity of long standing between rationality and a mechanics of solids alone?" (107). In this chapter, titled "The 'Mechanics' of Fluids," she writes of how scientists try to make a solid out of fluids in order to render it predictable, to analyze it, to find formulas that define its behavior, and she sees this as characteristic of the masculine attitude toward women in general. Fluids, then, suggest a kind of feminist thinking beyond the masculine: "And yet that woman-thing speaks. But not 'like,' not 'the same,' not 'identical with itself' nor to any x etc. Not a 'subject,' unless transformed by phallogocritism. It speaks 'fluid' . . ." (111). These poststructural texts rely on fluidity as a significant metaphor in the development of their respective theories, which makes fluidity common to poststructural theory as well as the characteristics of electronic textuality as described by scholars like Shoaf and Lanham. In *Revising Prose*, Lanham writes of "Electronic Literacy" and of the difference between printed

Recent theories of the mind, as developed by cognitive scientists, describe the activity of the brain in similar terms. The insight that these theories provide points to a conception of memory that supports the connectionist theory as opposed to the AI theory: the latter builds computers that store memories in a single, localizable place, whereas the former tries to build computers that store memories in no particular place:

In a standard computer, information sits there, waiting to be used, and is the same entity while it is waiting as it is while it is being used. Something far more exotic and ethereal is going on in a connectionist network. The information cannot really be said to exist at all when it is not being used. . . . Memories are not stored, they are recreated over and over again in response to whatever reminds you of them. (Campbell 163)

This description of memory follows from the recent theories of the schema, theories which posit that structures of neuronal pathways form in the brain from our everyday experiences, and these are activated by stimuli from the outside world. Any new experience is always tested against existing schemas to make sense out of the experience. Thus, schemas work to filter out much of the information entering through our senses. But these schemas are by no means fixed in the mind; on the contrary, like memories, they are recreated every time a stimulus activates a particular neuronal pathway and are therefore liable to revision. The following passage describes the schema in terms of a fluid metaphor:

Only in the most superficial sense can a schema of this kind be described as a mental object, a ready-made interpretation that is stacked in memory like a book on a shelf, always the same no matter how often it is taken down from the shelf and read. In fact, it is more like the pattern of waves on the surface of an ocean, reflecting the countless influences and forces at work beneath the surface of the water, and in the shifting, restless depth. (Campbell 197)

and electronic texts: "[Print] *fixes* things. Electronic text *unfixes* them. It is by nature changeable, antiauthoritarian" (86).

To fully engage in rhizography as a mode of electronic composition that avoids residual literacy, then, we must encourage the naturally associative tendencies of our brains. The network effect that hypertext provides calls for a method of writing that emulates the brain in its connectivity: the more connections there are, the more densely meaningful the composition is, as in this description of "bridge-definitions" by Marvin Minsky:

What people call "meanings" do not usually correspond to particular and definite structures, but to connections among and across fragments of great interlocking networks of connections and constraints among our agencies. (131)

A higher number of connections brings about an increased quality of information storage, as the increased number of "molecular" connections facilitates navigation through the information: "The connections as a whole define the information content of the system" (Campbell 12). The more connections there are, the more information is contained in the system, despite its limited volume.

Competence, then, would be based on criteria other than those derived from an ideology of depth. The mode of evaluating the performance of a rhizographer—his level of competence—cannot come from the metaphor of depth, which governs evaluation within the alphabetic apparatus (answering questions like "Is he a *deep* thinker?" "Has his analysis achieved *depth*?" "Is it a *penetrating* analysis?"). In comparison to density, which describes proximity within a three-dimensional space, depth merely acknowledges one vector in a three-dimensional model—that of one downward line perpendicular to the surface. Density, therefore, a word signifying the tightness of a cluster of discrete particles (such as molecules or hypertext nodes) is one way of evaluating the success of a hypertext document.

A nomadic style of rhizography therefore compares to essay writing as neural network research compares to AI research: the former affirms the simultaneity of parallel processing while the latter affirms the seriality of computer logic. An essay is written in a linear fashion, serially presenting point by point, one after the other, whereas a hypertext composition allows for multiple pathways through the information to co-exist simultaneously within a given text rather than choosing one of these pathways as in the essay.

The virtue of rhizography, then, may lie in its privileging of simultaneity, its graphing of the rhizomatic nature of parallel processing, as current research in cognitive science views the brain to be a neural network: "The brain seems to be able to perform as many as two hundred trillion operations in a second; not serially, but simultaneously" (Campbell 12). This is the difference between computer thinking and human thinking, between the brain as AI research conceives it and the brain as connectionist theory conceives it: one requires a hierarchized, step-by-step process to achieve its retrieval of information while the other functions by a multiple and synchronous firing of the neurons. This is why the multi-linear format of hypertext is more amenable to representing human brain activity than the strictly linear format of print literacy.

My position assumes that representing the mind in action is a useful endeavor to pursue. Given the efficiency and power of the brain's storage and retrieval system, such a goal would be favorable if the desire were to approximate the capacity of the mind to perform these functions. This dissertation has addressed throughout the need to adopt a more efficient means of information storage and retrieval, since the pressure due to information overload has provided stress upon current storage strategies (i.e.

book/paper storage). Setting aside the relative virtues of more accurately representing brain activity, however, I have here shown hypertext to have the potential of being structured like the brain insofar as each manifests a rhizomatic pattern, a multi-linear format that differs drastically from the arborescent pattern of literacy.

As a philosophical concept that considers the brain as a nonlinear entity more similar to crabgrass than to trees, the rhizome is also characterized in terms of memory. Deleuze and Guattari contend that "the rhizome is an antigenealogy. It is a short-term memory, or antimemory" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 21). They categorize the two different kinds of memory within the rhizome-arborescent schema: "The difference between them is not simply quantitative: short-term memory is of the rhizome or diagram type, and long-term memory is arborescent and centralized" (16). Such a conception of the rhizome as short-term or antimemory might seem to problematize my project. After all, if my goal is finding strategies for improved storage and retrieval of information, if I have set out from the start treating hypertext as a mnemonic prosthesis, then why this talk of forgetting? If short-term memory is rhizomatic and "includes forgetting as a process" (16), then how can the rhizome be an appropriate conceptual foundation for a hypertext compositional practice?

To answer these questions, I must briefly return to a consideration of Spenser as providing instructions for how to negotiate our current transitional shift. This return will justify the earlier discussions of Spenser's use of prosopopoeia and his motivation for doing so as relating to changes that print literacy brought to textuality. In the same way that Spenser grasped and exploited the monumental possibilities of print, we too must consider

how composers can fully embrace the electronic media that are more and more at our disposal.

I have argued that Spenser turns to prosopopoeia as a trope that crystallizes the experience of print. Its rhetorical capacity to give voice to the voiceless dead serves a memorial function that becomes more efficacious with the permanence that print can provide. The permanence of stable textual production takes some time to truly establish itself as the norm, of course, but Spenser senses, I suspect, this inherent characteristic and uses this ploy as a new way to persuade potential patrons. Insofar as prosopopoeia is associated with remembering the dead, it figures the emotion of mourning, both in Spenser's minor poems and in contemporary theoretical considerations. The equivalence of a printed text to a concrete monument marking a grave might be exaggerated, but when compared to the relative instability that preceded it in the age of chirography, their association is not inappropriate.

Given my desire to learn from Spenser how to negotiate our current moment of transition, I find in Spenser's choice of prosopopoeia as the primary trope of print literacy the injunction to choose a trope that would help to cohere the experience of working in electronic media. Finding such a trope might help to accelerate the process of transition within which we as an educational institution find ourselves, as it would organize people's perceptions about the new media by establishing and clarifying the key characteristics of computeracy in the same way that prosopopoeia clarifies the key characteristics of print literacy. This trope should therefore function as an artificial indicator of potential attributes which create expectations and thereby reduce the anxiety induced by the transition in cognitive modes from arborescence to rhizomatics.

The trope that I propose will perform this function for the medium of hypertext is metalepsis. The main element of metalepsis, according to Lanham's *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, is the "omission of a central term in an extended metaphor" (66). Metalepsis therefore manifests a quality of jumping to conclusions or of skipping the presentation of a step-by-step progression from point to point, metaphor to metaphor, as a way of providing its rhetorical effect. This definition embodies the filmic logic of hypertext insofar as hypertext is a medium of juxtaposed fragments that could facilitate the process of metalepsis. As a defining feature of video and filmic media, juxtaposition embodies the metaleptic feature of omitting the explanatory link between two terms, leaving a gap to be filled in by the one encountering the text. One might perceive this process of omission as a kind of forgetting, a conscious forgetting that omits its central term on purpose. Such a structure, then, would position literacy and computeracy as opposed in the same way that remembering and forgetting are.

Other features of literacy and computeracy that oppose one another, as in the descriptions of the monumentality of print documents versus the anti-monumentality of electronic texts, reinforce this opposition between remembering and forgetting.²⁰ I have described the monumental drive in the apparatus of print as being motivated by an attempt to remember, to make permanent. In electronic texts, however, forgetting becomes the norm, as drafts of previous texts, once made inexorably permanent by print, are now able to be forgotten in electronic formats, replaced by different versions that can be replaced again.²¹ This anti-monumental feature of electronic

²⁰For one of these accounts, see Lanham, *Revising Prose*, chapter five on "Electronic Literacy."

²¹See the editorial comments of any published essay in the electronic journal *Surfaces*, which requests those wishing to cite its texts to "consult the journal at source in order to be sure of using the latest version."

publishing is similar to the features of short-term memory, which functions because of its ability to forget what was previously stored there in order to store the new information. Though the computer's capacity to save various versions of a document undermines this comparison of electronic textuality and short-term memory, the ephemeral and ethereal quality of electronic texts, which provide them with the anti-monumental features that Lanham and Bolter point out, makes it more similar to short-term memory than printed texts.

So the Deleuzoguattarian emphasis on forgetting as rhizomatic described above supports the choice of metalepsis as an organizational trope for the medium of hypertext, given my conception of metalepsis as embodying a form of forgetting in its very structure. Deleuze's notoriety for studying the philosophers of joy also reinforces this choice of the trope of forgetting, in that forgetting might be viewed as a joyful process. Certainly the antithesis of gravity and weight, both metaphoric features of the seriousness of traditional Western philosophy, can be found in the lightness or joy that the nomadic rhizome manifests. I imagine that Deleuze was attracted to these philosophers of joy for the reason that, from his point of view, they opposed this Western tradition of the melancholy philosopher, providing an alternative to the typical conclusions reached. Metalepsis as a trope of forgetting, then, replaces prosopopoeia as a trope of remembering in the move from print to electronics, and the primary emotion evolves from mourning into joy.

The question of how to incorporate the memory palace tradition within an electronic rhetoric that foregrounds forgetting remains to be answered. Umberto Eco asks a question similar to the one posed here in his essay "*An Ars Oblivionalis? Forget It!*" Playfully imagining the existence of

an "art of forgetting," Eco proceeds to show that such an art would be impossible by demonstrating mnemotechnics to be a semiotic system, which is "inherently ill-suited to stimulat[ing] forgetfulness" (255). After providing a thorough discussion of the semiotic character of mnemotechnics, he does, however, provide "strategies for producing oblivion": "There are no voluntary devices for forgetting, but there are devices for remembering badly: it is necessary to multiply the semiosis. . . . One forgets not by cancellation but by superimposition, not by producing absence but by multiplying presences" (259-260). Personal examples of forgetting in this manner reinforce the fear expressed by writers of many memory treatises that one might have so much stored in memory that one would confuse the ideas and therefore, in effect, forget.

Eco's definition of forgetting as a multiplication of presences provides a description similar to the process of rhizographic writing: the multiplication of genres, the multi-linearity, and the molecular proliferation of cells all contribute to a conception of the electronic memory palace as a place of forgetting, a potentially vast mnemonic space in which writers wander in a metaleptic, nomadic network of associations. As the World-Wide Web comes to fruition and more and more people begin to access information via the hypertext-based Mosaic, the experience of skipping along a surface of information, of getting lost like a tourist wandering through foreign streets, of forgetting from where one has come or how one arrived at a particular node, will become more common. Maybe then Deleuze's assertions will have become common sense.

CONCLUSION

Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen's latest collaboration, *Imagologies: Media Philosophy*, is symptomatic of the effect that the electronic technologies have had upon scholarly compositional practices. Like J. Hillis Miller's *Illustration*, it calls itself a "non-book," but *Imagologies* comes much closer to the possibilities of such a phenomenon than *Illustration* does. One has a table of contents providing page locations to the beginnings of chapters, the other has a list of topics with no page references to facilitate location; one has consecutively counted pages, the other only numbers the pages of each topic, so that one must know the title of the "chapter" *and* the page number to locate a quote; one has page after page of uniformly sized text set in the text-blocks standardized by the print apparatus, broken occasionally by an illustration; the other employs multiple fonts in variable sizes, maximizes the amount of white space on the page, in short fully engages the potential that the computer offers compositional practice.

Imagology, as Taylor and Saarinen theorize it, presents an electronic rhetoric that is similar in many ways to the theory of rhizography I have offered in chapter five. Both recognize the significance of the surface as the tropic focus of the poststructural, the new mandate of speed that promises to change the way we think about thinking, and the need to wander through information as though a tourist. The synchronicity of my work with that of the very recently published *Imagologies* points to the convergence of these

issues at this transitional moment, when the apparatus of print is giving way to the apparatus of electronic media.

As a way of negotiating this current shift, I have pointed to a prior transitional moment in the sixteenth century, when the effects of the printing press were beginning to bear upon the pedagogical practices and textuality of the time. Studying Edmund Spenser as a case in point, I show him to be a writer in the midst of a shift in the apparatus, a shift from manuscript culture to print culture, during which methods of mnemonic storage and retrieval changed dramatically. My study of Spenser offers no illuminating insights into Spenser's textuality; it merely attempts to situate him within a particular period of historical change that has frequently been compared to our own as a way of better understanding our own moment. His poems straddle the divide between the oral mnemonics of the memory palace and the literate mnemonics of prosopopoeia, and his ambivalent embrace of the latter mirrors our own hesitancy to enter the electronic era as quickly as it has come upon the scene of scholarship and pedagogy in the 1990's.

From Spenser's adoption of prosopopoeia as the primary trope of literacy, I extrapolate the need to discover a primary trope of computeracy that will organize the experience of writing within the electronic apparatus. The trope that I propose will provide this is metalepsis, a trope of forgetting. Contrasting the paradigm of print literacy to the emergent paradigm of computer literacy helps to understand the differences between prosopopoeia as a trope of mourning which monumentalizes inscription, making it permanent, and metalepsis as a trope of joy, of a playfulness which makes inscription fluid and impermanent. The investment in an ideology of depth, which marks the gravity and seriousness of academic discourse, is giving way to an ideology of the surface, of the superficial, which allows for the play of

the signifier and the predominance of the pun. Poststructuralism, in particular the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and his work with Félix Guattari, provides the theoretical justification for these emphases on the surface, on anti-memory, on a philosophy of joy, giving my choice of metalepsis as the trope of computeracy its necessary philosophical foundation.

Aside from this schematic comparison of prosopopoeia and metalepsis and of print literacy and computer literacy, which grows out of my analysis of Spenser's method of fully exploiting the potential of print in all of its characteristics, I have derived a model for employing the memory palace as a way of organizing information from the House of Alma episode in FQ II.10, which allegorizes the body as a memory palace in which information is stored. Recall that the heroes Guyon and Arthur tour the House of Alma, starting at the bowels, moving to the heart, and ending at the brain, where they discover the mythical histories recounting the succession stories of Britain and Faery Land in the chamber of Eumnestes (which translates as "Good Memory"). As I have pointed out in chapter three, the storage of books containing information within a chamber, a memory "cell," invokes the Art of Memory tradition, which instructs one to locate *imagines agentes* within pre-established *loci* or memory places as a way of storing information in the mind. Spenser's method of allegorizing the body as a castle or memory palace suggests a similar practice for organizing a hypertext document: finding in the body a means of arranging its textual elements in a sensible fashion.

From Spenser's model, then, I derived a structure for a hypertext that I composed entitled "Genetis: A Rhizography."¹ The title suggests the structural metaphor of genetics, the "natural" medium for information

¹ This has been published in disk form in *Perforations* 5, a multi-media publication that includes text, computer disks, audio tapes, and video.

storage,² and suggests something of its contents, which proposes on one level genetics as a metaphor for generic invention. The use of genetic principles and structures to conceptualize the organization of a hypertext environment draws upon a twentieth-century understanding of the body in the same way that Spenser drew upon sixteenth-century physiology in his allegorized body.³ Since the current biological term "cell" comes from the Latin word *cella* meaning "store-room," having a hypertext composed of "cella" or store-rooms modeled after the cells of the body made sense (if only at the level of the signifier). Jay Bolter's use of "cell" to describe the fundamental elements of the Storyspace hypertext program and his equation of hypertext as a dungeon, as I have pointed out in chapter four, also support this conflation of the memory palace with genetics.

Choosing DNA as a specific aspect of cellular composition offers a number of advantages. First, it provides a three-dimensional model for the problem of structuration, thereby offering one solution to a new compositional problematic posed by the three-dimensional status of the hypertext environment. The writers of one essay advise composers of electronic texts to look to the sciences for ways to visually communicate information, which is

² Biochemistry employs the metaphor of language to describe the processes of genetic reproduction. Wood et al. write, for instance, that "most biomolecules are built from 30 small-molecule precursors, sometimes called the alphabet of biochemistry" (7) and that "The genetic code is the relationship between twenty-letter language of the proteins to the four-letter language of the nucleic acids" (462). Lewontin, a leading geneticist, compares the information that DNA provides with words in a language, which require a particular context to determine meaning: "A deep reason for the difficulty in devising causal information from DNA messages is that the same 'words' have different meanings in different contexts and multiple functions in a given context, as in any complex language" (66). Eric Havelock examines this metaphor and derives from it a model of cultural inheritance to explain how an oral culture preserves its identity: "The term 'information' [used by biologist Ernst Mayr in his discussion of genetics] embodies a metaphor borrowed from the idiom of human culture and applied backwards to the genetic process" (55).

³ Another possibility, one perhaps more appealing to Renaissance scholars, would be to use sixteenth-century conceptions of physiology as a way of organizing a hypertext about the sixteenth century.

precisely the problem that writing a hypertext presents to the writer, and mention DNA as one model:

Nevertheless, a more formalized "rhetoric" of visual communication already exists in advanced science. While "graphic" equivalences for mathematical formulae have been standard ancillary forms of expression, some fields of science can only be comprehended in pictorial form: the twisting, paired strands of DNA, brain maps, flight dynamics, and fluid-flow computations. Surely, given the tremendous interest in scientific visualization and data-driven graphics, the notion of text-driven abstractions can't be far behind. (Carlson and Gonzalez 26)

Carlson and Gonzalez recognize the value of scientific strategies of visualizing information as potential metaphors of hypertext architectures, and such recognition supports the assertions by theorists like Landow that hypertext will foster not only interdisciplinary collaboration but also interdisciplinary cross-pollination of ideas and concepts. For my hypertext, DNA, with its helical structure and its linked pairs of purines and pyrimidines structured in a plateau or ladder-like fashion, furnishes a visual schema for the deployment of information in a three-dimensional writing space.

Second, DNA provides an allegorical model for invention. DNA, as the basis for the generation of new life, supplies the guidelines for inventing hybrid forms or mutations of pre-existing entities, be they animal species or literary forms. Such is one goal of grammatology: the invention of new genres that emerge from the characteristics of the electronic media. Ulmer's work in *Teletheory: Grammatology in the Age of Video* and *Heuristics: The Logic of Invention*, in which he creates the genre of "mystory" for videography and "chorography" for hypermedia composition, provides two exemplars of such inventive practice. Such generic invention stems from the close etymological association of genre and genetics and suggests a general model of procedure in the electronic realm, especially during the embryonic

formation of electronic genres. I subtitle my hypertext "A Rhizography" to indicate the variant genre defined in chapter five, the principles of which guided my compositional strategy.

Finally, DNA provides a conceptual model for organizing information in a three-dimensional space as well. This conceptual model is derived from the spatially organized feature of DNA molecular structures. These structures have four levels of organization:

Primary structure is the linear sequence of amino acids in a polypeptide. *Secondary structure* refers to certain repeating conformation patterns. . . . *Tertiary structure* refers to the overall polypeptide conformation. No clear distinction can be made between secondary and tertiary structure. *Quaternary structure* refers to the spatial relationships between subunits in proteins that consist of two or more polypeptides. (Wood et al. 75)

The emphasis on patterns and on the "spatial relationships between subunits" here is significant insofar as electronic rhetoric will be a three-dimensional rhetoric of patterns.⁴ Readers will need to become adept at detecting patterns encoded within the information to fully realize the potential inherent in visual representations of knowledge: "Features (patterns of meaning and characteristics of content) can be extracted at a glance, once the reader becomes attuned to the new 'rhetoric' and the new definition of 'sight' reading" (Carlson and Gonzalez 30). And composers of three-dimensional texts will have to consider this visual potential for the conveyance of meaning.

⁴ Ulmer writes, "There are three ways to organize the release of information, which are used across all media: narrative, exposition, and pattern. The three modes are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, all three are present in any work, with one dominant, and the other two subordinate. . . . Narrative is the native form of oral culture, exposition is the native form of alphabetic literacy (in the sense that scientific writing is the privileged discourse of the print apparatus), and collage pattern is the native form of electronics" ("Grammatology in the Stacks" 160, 163).

In my hypertext, I attempted to incorporate such structures into the disposition of my Storyspace boxes by establishing five plateaus, each of which had its own primary structure of a strictly linear narrative [taking the cellular phenomenon of "H-bonds," in that they are "linear and therefore maximally stable" (Wood et al. 75), as a parallel to the maximal stability that linear narrative provides and has provided in both oral and literate cultures]. I then tried to incorporate secondary/tertiary structures of patterns by repeating themes and motifs in each plateau rather than having each plateau deal with only one subject. I also conceived of a helical spire twisting downward through the plateaus, similar to the strands connecting the base pairs constituting the DNA molecule. While this was not an actual structure within the three-dimensional authoring environment of Storyspace, working with such a visual conception allowed me to organize some of the cells in an alternative pathway that amounts to a tour of the text. DNA, therefore, came to provide both a literal as well as a metaphoric model for organizing my hypertext.

This dissertation has worked in part to furnish the hypertext composer with a three-dimensional mnemonic strategy, found in the pre-Ramist art of the memory palace, as a basic organizational device for situating the cells of a Storyspace document. The above discussion of the structure of "Genetis" offers one example of how knowledge of Spenser's specific use of this tradition helped me in negotiating the problem of hypertext *dispositio*. As an attempt to answer the question concerning how our educational institutions will write in hypertext, therefore, this work is a first step in the direction of the "New Rhetoric" that Barthes and Barilli call for in their writing of the history of rhetoric, an electronic rhetoric of the image as well as the word, of the three-dimensional writing spaces that electronic media provide.

The memory palace is not the only feature of Medieval and Renaissance culture that offers viable strategies for compositional practice in hypertext, however. For additional instruction on how to fully exploit the potential for writing with images that the computer offers, I suggest that further research be carried out in the Medieval and Renaissance periods, a time when writers quite naturally fused image and text. One such area of potential exploration, as Tom Conley has suggested, should be typography:

The delight we sense in contact with the materiality of early modern writing can be used to open a dialectic between our grasp of the sixteenth century and that of our own historical moment. I would like to suggest that typographical form may provide one avenue of appeal. (2-3)

Conley identifies the ways in which Early Modern writing manifests a concern for the visual aspect of letters, a concern inherited from the period prior to the advent of the printing press. During that time, composers of illuminated manuscripts artistically rendered letters according to what their forms indicated, in a manner reminiscent of hieroglyphics or runes.⁵ Given the current revolution in "desktop typography," a revolution which indicates how the computer has resurrected a hieroglyphic sensibility among graphic designers who create new fonts based on their visual appeal and allegorical possibilities, such study could be fruitful.

A second area of potential exploration should be the emblem book, with its use of images (sometimes repeated in variable contexts) chastened by words. As writers begin to write visually, a fusion of writing and image reminiscent of the emblem book will come about, and the kinds of practices engaged in by emblem book readers and writers will become more frequent.

⁵ For one example of this process, see Viglione, 377. For further discussion of allegorical letters, with consideration of the ideological suppositions implicit in handwriting practices of the sixteenth century, see Goldberg, *Writing Matter*, chapter four.

Images from one context will be appropriated and used in different contexts, their meanings determined by the surrounding text. Daniel Russell illuminates such emblem book practices:

But however an emblem is constructed, any emblem picture taken alone could accommodate other texts that would, effectively, turn it into a different emblem according to the will of an active, interpreting viewer, be he the author of another emblem book or simply the reader who changes the text he has just read or who physically attaches the picture to another text, perhaps in another book, as was done from time to time. (174)

Such a description reminds one of the postmodern artistic practices of appropriation and collage in that "the emblematic processing of traditional materials" consists of "the fragmentation of well-known allegorical works or traditional sign systems and the subsequent recombination of fragmented elements of them into new and striking signifying units" (Russell 164). In this "age of electronic reproduction," in which some individuals now have laser printers and scanners in their homes as well as the capacity to manipulate video imagery in desktop editing programs, the kind of appropriation once confined to clipping images from an emblem book becomes digitized, and the kind of active reading inaugurated in the sixteenth century becomes the norm.⁶

A final area of potential exploration would engage in a sustained treatment of how Medieval and Renaissance definitions and uses of allegory compare to twentieth-century definitions and uses of allegory. One reductive feature of this dissertation involves its conflation of the former with that of the latter, insofar as the allegory in Spenser's texts and in the practice of pre-Ramist mnemonics is unproblematically equated with the allegory of post-structural theorists and poststructural historians of rhetoric. The treatment I

⁶ For a discussion of how this situation has put stress upon the current system of copyright law, see Landow, *Hypertext*, 198-201.

am calling for here would consider exactly what features of Medieval and Renaissance allegory could be translated into the allegorical form of writing that the computer encourages.

This "computerate" allegory that promises to emerge also deserves careful study if composers of electronic texts are to take full advantage of the possibilities that writing with images offers. Because the everyday practice of writing will soon incorporate digitized imagery as a standard feature, a return of "picto-ideo-phonographic" writing will occur, "a double-valued Writing, ideographic and phonetic at once, which puts speech back in its place in relation to nonphonetic elements" (Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology* 98). In providing the potential to fulfill Derrida's desire "to restore to writing the balance between design and symbol it had in hieroglyphics" (*Applied Grammatology* 46), electronic writing will foster a more allegorical and/or ironic bent.⁷ If scholars learn to exploit the allegorical potential in typography⁸ and rebus-writing, then the reading of scholarship might become equivalent to the reading of "literature."

⁷ On the allegorical nature of hieroglyphic writing and its connection to poststructuralism, see Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse." On the relation of allegory to irony, see Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality."

⁸ Conley writes of the allegorical nature of letters and this awareness as manifest in the sixteenth century: "If perspectival, calligraphic, or hieroglyphic properties of the visible letter were used to structure literature of the time, its decipherment also offered poets and artists other avenues for transcoding meanings. A piece of type could become a landscape, a chimera, it could turn into what it was not—into a monogram, a cipher, a number, a vocable from a foreign tongue—all the while remaining a letter" (12).

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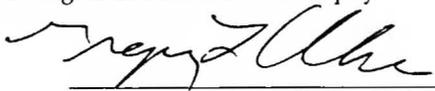
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

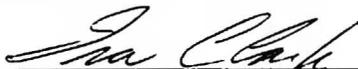
Richard Edward Smyth was born in Tarrytown, New York, on March 30, 1964. He grew up in Ossining, New York, and moved to North Port, Florida, in 1978, graduating from Lemon Bay High School in 1982. Having started his undergraduate studies at the University of Tampa, he finished his B.A. in English at the University of Florida, receiving his degree in 1986. He then continued, receiving his M.A. in English in 1988 and doing one year of Ph.D. work, at which point, due to the birth of twin boys, he went to work as a high school English teacher at Port Charlotte High School in Southwest Florida. Returning to graduate school two years later, he received his Ph.D. in English in August, 1994. His publications include essays entitled "Rhizography: A Manifesto for Hypertext Composition" in *Inner Space Outer Space: Humanities, Technology, and the Postmodern World* (Proceedings from the Southern Humanities Council) and "Old Solutions to New Problems: Looking to Renaissance Texts for Strategies of Hypertext Composition" in *The Politics and Processes of Scholarly Publishing* (forthcoming); a hypertext document entitled "Genetis: A Rhizography" and published as part of the *Perforations 5* multi-media publication; and poetry in such publications as *Southern Poetry Review*, *Tampa Review*, *Kansas Quarterly*, *The Florida Review*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Wisconsin Review*, *South Florida Poetry Review*, *Caesura*, *Apalachee Quarterly*, and others. He accepted a position as Assistant Professor of English at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, beginning in September, 1994.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



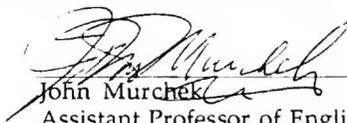
Gregory L. Ulmer, Chairman
Professor of English

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Professor of English

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Jack Perlette
Associate Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ben Nelms", written over a horizontal line.

Ben Nelms
Professor of Instruction and
Curriculum

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August, 1994

Dean, Graduate School

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