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Deconstructing context: exposing Derrida

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ABSTRACT

Deconstruction has become a theme in various strands of geographical research. It has not, however, been the subject of very much explicit commentary. This paper elaborates on some basic themes concerning the relationship between deconstruction and conceptualisations of context, with particular reference to issues of textual interpretation. The double displacement of textuality characteristic of deconstruction is discussed, followed by a consideration of the themes of 'writing' and 'iterability' as distinctive figures for an alternative spatialisation of concepts of context. It is argued that deconstruction informs a questioning of the normative assumptions underwriting the value and empirical identity of context.

key words Derrida deconstruction context interpretation spacing textuality

Deconstructing context: exposing Derrida

Thinking thrusting against the limits of language?

Language is not a cage.

(Waismann 1965, 15)

If words and concepts receive meaning only in sequences of differences, one can justify one's language, and one's choice of terms, only within a topic [an orientation in space] and an historical strategy. The justification can therefore never be absolute and definitive. It corresponds to a condition of forces and translates an historical calculation.

(Derrida 1976, 70).

Stitching up Derrida

Deconstruction, and the work of Jacques Derrida in particular, has taken-up a place in geography's panoply of theoretical reference points through a diverse set of debates and discussions around postmodernism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, the cultural turn, feminism, identity politics, the crisis of representation, and so on. And yet, it continues to be treated as a peculiarly esoteric discourse, by detractors and defenders alike. This paper elaborates on some basic themes concerning the relationship between deconstruction and conceptualisations of context, with particular reference to issues of textual interpretation. The modest aim is to render a representation of deconstruction as an accessible, open, and useable supplement to existing geographical methodologies. The paper starts with a discussion of the deployment of deconstruction in geography, and proceeds to a critique of the conceptualisation of context as a principle of explanation and interpretation. It then provides an account of the deconstructive displacement of usual understandings of textuality and an account of the themes of writing,

iterability and spacing in deconstruction. It concludes with a reconsideration of the normative value accorded to 'context'.

The appearance of deconstruction in geography takes a variety of forms. For some, reference to deconstruction serves as a limit-case which secures the continued identity of critical social science, established political positions, and respectable forms of moral judgement. Deconstruction is found to not conform to existing rules of how theory should address 'politics', 'reality', or 'history', and corrected, dismissed, or just pilloried as a result. So, one can find deconstruction presented as merely a mode of de-mystification which disallows any critical or ethical judgements (Livingstone 1998); as an example of a postmodern discursive idealism which has nihilistic tendencies at best, and elitist-conservative ones at worst (Peet 1998); or as an inconsistent, even nonsensical modern day sophism which proposes that we are locked in the prison of language, and that reason is impossible (Sack 1997). Alternatively, while deconstruction might be admitted as having some potentially interesting insights, it seems necessary to guard against an excess of negative energy imputed to it, for fear of undercutting the conditions of action, decision, and judgement (Bondi and Domosh 1992, McDowell 1991).

Deconstruction also inhabits other fields of geographical research in a more positive fashion. It is a shadowy presence in discussions of postcolonialism, radical democracy, and critical geopolitics, for example. Geographers have addressed the relevance of Homi Bhabha's notions of 'thirdspace', the 'in-between', and 'hybridity' (Bhabha 1994, Pile 1994, Rose 1995, Soja 1996), and of issues of anti-essentialism, positionality, and subalternity which draw upon the work of Gayatri Spivak (Spivak 1990, Gregory 1994, Radcliffe 1993, Routledge 1996): both Bhabha and Spivak work over distinctively deconstructive intellectual terrain. There has been convergence with work which deploys deconstructive insights to question conceptual boundaries in political theory and international relations theory in order to re-think conceptualisations of sovereignty and territoriality (Connolly 1995, Agnew and Corbridge 1995, 78-100), as well as a re-configuration of geopolitics as a distinctive form of writing (Ó Tuathail 1994, 1996).

Deconstruction has informed innovative re-theorisations of economic value and the nature of capitalism (Castree 1996, Gibson-Graham 1996). And the geographical dimensions of anti-essentialist understandings of radical democracy which bear the traces of deconstruction have also been a subject of discussion (Mouffe 1995, Natter 1995, Massey 1995). In all of these fields, geographical research is being re-thought in directions which, at one remove, testify to a deconstructive sensibility. Yet the explicit consideration of deconstruction continues to be left in abeyance. Its application remains limited to those 'in the know'.

Deconstruction is also eagerly championed in the name of the delirious disruption of all epistemological certainties (Barnes 1994, Hannah and Strohmayr 1993). This particular understanding depends upon staging a dramatic departure from methodological approaches which were previously consumed by the ruses of scientific rationality and naively mimetic conceptions of language (Dixon and Jones 1998). These sort of arguments tend to enclose deconstruction within the plane of meaning, conforming to the broader hermeneutic recuperation of post-structuralism in geography. Post-structuralism has come to be the name ascribed to pretty much any general sense of reflexivity towards 'language', 'discourse', or 'representation'. This sustains in turn a casual reference to 'deconstruction' as a shorthand for a de-mystificatory form of ideology-critique which reveals the essential constructedness of categories, concepts, and identities (Harley 1992). A related presentation of deconstruction in geography refers to it as an authoritative reference point for a set of substantive theoretical propositions. Deconstruction is alluded to as having conclusively demonstrated the necessary instability of meaning, the necessary fluidity of identities, as well as the necessary incoherence of correspondence theories of truth. This staging bolsters arguments in favour of anti-essentialism, radical epistemological anti-foundationalism, and pluralist social theories of difference.

When confronted with such accounts of deconstruction, one might legitimately ask where the imputed demonstrative force of deconstruction is meant to derive? The translation of deconstruction into a set of epistemological and ontological propositions raises the question of

whether the ‘conceptual’ significance of deconstructive *practice* has been effectively communicated in these sorts of grand statements of deconstructive lore. In so far as deconstruction implies any truth-claims whatsoever, a consideration of these must acknowledge the extent to which they are dependent upon what one might call a distinctive epistemology of exemplarity: “There is no work of theory without examples. The examples are essential to the theory. The theory cannot be fully understood without the examples.” (Miller 1994, 323). Deconstructive concepts are all drawn from particular texts, and they function as examples of general rules of which they are the only available characterisations. Derrida’s work, for example, consists of painfully detailed, somewhat idiosyncratic readings of other texts. Deconstruction is rigorously parasitic on the corpus of other texts, idioms, and traditions. It does not involve an abstract analysis of conceptual oppositions, but only ever works over conceptual systems in particular contexts. This has consequences for the sorts of generalisations one can make about deconstruction. In a sense, deconstructive practice guards against an immediate application as a general theory of meaning, reference, or truth.

The exemplary, parasitic, and performative character of deconstructive practice suggests that deconstruction might be fruitfully approached not in terms of the binary oppositions which have been so characteristic of geography’s encounter thus far (representation and reality, difference and identity, essentialism and constructionism, foundationalism and relativism), but rather as elaborating a different order of ‘quasi’-transcendental questioning (see Gasché 1986, 1994, Bennington and Derrida 1992, 267-284). The favoured terms of deconstruction (for example, writing, trace, supplement), are each derived from the singular context of the particular text where they are found. They are also re-inscribed towards a meta-theoretical level of significance to which they never quite attain. This re-inscription lays bare the constitutive relationship between the conditions which make possible a given phenomena in the apparent fullness of its identity or meaning, and how these same conditions also mark the impossibility of these phenomena ever being realised in their ideal purity. Deconstruction therefore involves an

exposure of conditions of possibility *and* impossibility. This does not refer to two separate sets of opposed conditions. Rather, possibility and impossibility are doubled up in the same conditions. This doubling of (im)possibility excludes an emphasis solely on either the pole of enabling conditions or of disabling conditions. Or, to put it another way, it suggests an analysis in terms other than the simple, all or nothing choices between success or failure that so often characterise debates in geography. The distinctive epistemological significance of deconstructive practice does not primarily lie in relation to issues of certainty or scepticism, constructedness or correspondence. Deconstruction implies a different, non-oppositional placement of necessity and contingency, rule and chance, fact and fiction, repetition and change.

If, then, deconstruction is a presence in various fields in human geography, it continues to be the subject of very little explicit exposition. There seems to be an unacknowledged investment in the idea that deconstruction is too difficult, or too precious, to be opened up and made accessible. As Sparke (1994, 1066) observes, there is a tendency for some commentators on deconstruction to adopt an attitude of “vanguardist theoreticism”, which justifies a haughty disdain for any and all attempts to make deconstruction available. But it is not in the spirit of deconstruction to constantly insist that it is an unremittingly difficult idiom. This only encloses deconstruction, contains it again, imposes and celebrates inaccessibility as a badge of radical potential never to be realised. The purpose here, in a spirit of wilful naiveté, is to provide a commentary on some features of deconstruction which might apply to certain methodological and conceptual issues in human geography. The specific focus is upon the issue of context, a theme of general concern in geographical empirical and theoretical research. It will be argued that by helping to draw out the spatial imaginary of conceptualisations of context, deconstruction works to resist the temptation to turn immediately towards historical, linguistic, or social context in all their empiricist obviousness.

The authority of context

The importance of context in human geography is both substantive and theoretical (Sunley 1996). Substantively, there is a strong sense that geography is actually all about contexts. 'Place' is once again a favoured reference point for research, a theme which can be traced back to debates in the 1980s over localities, regions, and structure and agency (Thrift 1983, Massey 1984). These debates laid the ground-work for what is now a much broader appreciation of the place-specific constitution of social processes, registered not least in the turn to 'culture' in various sub-disciplines. 'Context' is shorthand for a sensitivity towards the ways in which general processes are embedded, modified, and reproduced in particular, local places. Theoretically, this concern is related to a critique of universalist epistemologies. Ideas, representations, and theories are understood to be intrinsically connected to the particular contexts in which they are produced. Post-structuralism is just one reference point for this understanding of the contextual nature of knowledge and conceptualisation. Across a range of sub-disciplines, context is conceptualised as the particular and the contingent, contrasted to and re-valued over and above general processes and universal logics of necessity. Thus, contextualism is staged in opposition to essentialism (Barnes 1989), the cultural is staged in opposition to the economic (Crang 1997), and place is staged in opposition to space (Curry 1996); in all cases as the particular is staged in opposition to the general, the contingent to the necessary. In short, a general, oppositional conceptualisation of the difference between the general and the particular underwrites the theoretical ascendancy of context in contemporary human geography (see Strohmayer 1993, 326).

It is at this point that a series of theoretical difficulties present themselves, revolving around the tendency to map distinctions like necessary and contingent, abstract and concrete, space and place onto each other (see Cox and Mair 1989, Sayer 1989a, Sayer 1989b). The question which emerges from these discussions, one which bears upon contemporary geographical contextualism in general, concerns the image of space that underwrites the clear demarcation of necessary relations from contingent conditions, general process from local

realisations, while also enabling the former to be augmented by the latter. Discussions of context in human geography tend to conform rather to the 'strange logic of the supplement' elaborated by Derrida, according to which what seems at first to be a secondary, unnecessary, or superfluous addition to an apparently authentic and natural form (e.g. writing to speech, translation to original), turns out to be necessary and essential to it: the addition of the supplement marks "the originality of the lack that makes necessary the addition of the supplement." (Derrida 1976, 214). The affirmation of the necessity of contingency in human geography, evident in the proliferation of context as a general theme, suggests that contingency is folded back into the realm of necessity or generality in a pattern that threatens to undermine the very possibility of clearly and decisively distinguishing two different sets of relations or conditions in the first place. And this suggests that the localisation of context on one side of a divide between place and space is equally problematic. Rather than imagining some tidy resolution to these problems of dualistic thinking (Sayer 1991), it might be necessary to consider a wholly other way of imagining the space of conceptualisation through which to re-think context.

The importance of context is, then, widely taken for granted in human geography. But there is very little explicit consideration of just what constitutes 'context'.¹ In fact, context often serves as a sort of explanatory black-box. It should therefore be possible to raise some questions regarding what is excluded by the unquestioned imperative to 'always contextualise'. Deconstruction only indirectly addresses the predominant thematic concerns which geographers have concerning context. In what follows, the issue of context will be addressed through the specific prism offered by conceptualisations of context in relation to issues of textuality and interpretation, which have become significant themes in recent human geography (see Barnes and Gregory 1997). It is hoped that deconstruction's particular concern with questions of textuality (which is not to be denied), will be shown to articulate with broader questions of concern to geographers, in so far as this concern turns upon a problematisation of the characteristic spatialisation of categorical conceptualisation.²

The starting point for this exercise in exposition is the observation that invocations of the authority of context in human geography are characterised by a reference to context as the explanatory or interpretative principle with which to reign in the apparent threat of linguistic indeterminacy. Human geography's recent encounter with theories of discourse, representation, and textuality, and associated interpretative methodologies, has gone hand in hand with a careful foregrounding of context as a guiding principle of interpretation. There is a taken-for-granted consensus that ideas, discourses, and representations need to be placed in historical, economic, or social contexts if they are to be properly interpreted, explained, and criticised. Landscapes-as-texts need to be placed in the context of material landscapes (Mitchell 1996, Peet 1996); textual spaces need to be understood in relation to real spaces (Gregory 1995, Smith 1994); spatial metaphors need to be grounded in material spatiality (Smith and Katz 1993); literary representations need to be understood in broader social contexts (Cresswell 1996); generalised commodification is ascribed differential significance in local contexts (Jackson 1999). There are two notable features about the spatialisation of concepts implied by appeals to context as the principle which fixes and determines meaning. Firstly, texts or utterances are characteristically put (back) in context, in an act of re-placing. The appeal to context is an act which localises, returning artefacts to their original situations or their proper locations. Secondly, the appeal to context (whether understood as places, periods or epochs, or linguistic communities), involves the installation of borders which provide a secure frame within which calculations of an otherwise unbound textuality can be contained. Deconstruction suspends both these operations, and in so doing opens a space in which to address explicitly the theoretical formulation of context.

One of the sub-disciplines where there has been extensive conceptual reflection on issues of context is in the history of geographical ideas. The evolution of modern academic geography has been placed within a broader, inter-textual context of institutional and scientific developments (e.g. Stoddart 1981, Livingstone 1992). There has also been a consideration of

contexts which lie beyond the narrow confines of the academy: economic, political, and social contexts (e.g. Driver 1992, Godlewska and Smith 1995). In his most recent work, David Livingstone has further refined understandings of context by reflecting explicitly upon the spaces in which geographical knowledge is produced (Livingstone 1995). In this field as in others, discussions of the relations between texts and contexts has come to serve as a means by which to develop general theories of communication which tend to privilege certain understandings of 'community', 'meaning', and 'practice'. Robert Mayhew has proposed an understanding of context as a field of shared communicative action which regulates the production and circulation of geographical knowledge, and its historical interpretation (Mayhew 1994). In searching for a secure epistemological foundation for the possibility of historical recovery, Mayhew is forced to posit an idealised linguistic consensus as the basis of the possibility of meaning (Mayhew 1998). This conceptualisation of linguistic context starts from the acknowledgement that meaning might be difficult to pin-down, but only as a prelude to an account in which this possibility is ascribed no place in explaining how meaningful communication works. In this account, a 'performative' theory of language is understood as one which confirms the legitimacy of established rules and norms of language-use (*ibid.*, 23).³

The exclusion of indeterminacy and chance from the essential understanding of communication in conventional theories of language is the index of the moment at which context, understood as the linguistic context in which utterances are contained by the sanctions which reproduce accepted public senses, is conceptualised according to an enclosed, bounded image of space. The link between an idealised model of communication which accords unquestioned legitimacy to the conventional authority of idealised homogenous communities, and a distinctively areal, enclosed conception of context is made explicit in Michael Curry's programme for a 'geography of texts' (1996). Curry's project is dependent upon a certain conception of the proper place of texts in the world. Place-making is understood as a collaborative, consensual practice, the subject of which is an undifferentiated "we" (*ibid.*, 96-98).

It is, furthermore, an unselfconscious practice: it is a matter of habit, custom, routine, not of cognition or conceptualisation, nor of applying rules. This understanding provides the basis for Curry's account of the sociable geographies of written texts. They enable the establishment of community and solidarity, the construction and maintenance of places, and extension of understanding across space and time.

The problem with written texts, for Curry, is that while they have a series of proper locations (real and virtual places such as libraries, seminar rooms, or communities of readers), they also have the unfortunate tendency to promote an image of the text "as something mobile, something that could be anywhere" (*ibid.*, 204). This mobility somehow belongs properly to texts, but is also prone to an excessive drift which must be controlled if understanding is to be maintained. While Curry admits the possibility that texts might turn up in unusual places (such as the street, for example), this is only conceptualised as a mis-placement which is not accorded any conceptual significance. He posits an all or nothing model of communication, in which the reproduction or translation of texts is always governed by a binary, hierarchical opposition between identity and difference, success or failure. The admission that texts can drift out of place serves only as a preliminary to an assertion that any tendency to excessive spatial mobility needs to be contained. An idealised model of undifferentiated, consensual place-making underwrites an account in which texts and utterances are considered only to have any meaning by virtue of being backed up by rightful authority, which is made equivalent to being in their proper, rightful places.

Both Mayhew and Curry provide conceptually detailed accounts of issues of texts and contexts which acknowledge the latent possibility of indeterminate and mis-placed textuality, but only to exclude this possibility from their conceptualizations of the essential features of language, meaning, and communication as an exceptional event, a mere accident. This repudiation of the possibility of meaning going astray binds together the inside of context, whether this is understood as a linguistic community, a social consensus, or a bounded place. A

certain image of space, made up of defined borders and edges enabling clear distinctions to be made between essence and accident, is pivotal to this sort of conceptualisation of language. There is an unobserved prescriptivism involved in these kinds of accounts of communication and linguistic context. An acknowledgement of the conventional qualities of communication practices slides imperceptibly into a theoretical warrant for limiting proper language usage to a narrow range of activities sanctioned by given cultural communities. Behind an inflated rhetoric of 'practice', a seemingly neutral and functional account of language in terms of rules, consensus, shared codes, and proper usages transforms social norms into facts and put them beyond question (see Cameron 1995).

Deconstruction is often presented as involving an unconditional affirmation of pure linguistic indeterminacy. This position can in turn be rhetorically rejected on the grounds that it putatively leaves no firm foundation for social communication or meaning. There is also an almost axiomatic assumption that deconstruction is a narrow, idealist textualism that warrants a cavalier disregard for issues of context. In both cases, 'context' or 'practice' tends to be invoked as the principle which stabilises the slipperiness of meaning which deconstruction is supposed to celebrate. Particular representations of deconstruction help to secure the normalisation of consensual, agreeable communication as an *a priori* principle of order. But deconstruction does not enter this field on one side of a choice between whether to contextualise or not, nor whether to decide that meaning is absolutely secure and transparent or absolutely indeterminate. It is not the conventional, social nature of communication practices that is at stake, but the question of how to judge the operation and force of norms and conventions. The rest of this paper will show that deconstruction offers an account of textuality and contextualisation that differs from conventional understandings by virtue of its characteristic treatment of exceptions. Exceptions are taken as indices of an alternative understanding of the rules governing communication practices, rather than the occasion for confirming the obviousness and legitimacy of existing

rules and their operation. And deconstruction's treatment of exceptions disrupts the stable spatial order of categorical conceptualisation.

Displacing textuality

Prising open the enclosure of language

A starting point for this discussion is to ask whether deconstruction does indeed teach that we are confined to the prison-house of language. Isn't this the inevitable reading of Derrida's (1976, 158) infamous little phrase, "there is nothing outside the text"? One can find in geography a positive interpretation of this as necessarily meaning that there is no way to get outside of language to justify truth-claims. There is "only a shifting system of signifiers which is inescapable" (Barnes 1994, 1025). In fact, human geography's encounter with deconstruction opened with this founding act of containment: "Deconstruction shows how language imposes limits on our thinking" (Dear 1988, 266). Such readings only confirm an established convention of representing language in terms of boundaries, confinement, and limits. Isn't it possible to imagine the space of language differently?

The distinctive images of enclosure which characterises so many discussions of language is put in question by deconstruction (see Bennington 1989). Deconstruction interferes with understandings of borders and boundaries by re-writing spatial categories according to a rhetoric of movement, tracking the ways in which conceptual closure is only ever constituted by regulating the play of opening and exposure. Any discussion of deconstruction therefore needs to negotiate the static spatial imaginary of categorical conceptualisation, which is closely tied to a territorial vocabulary of de-limitations (Bennington 1994, 259-273, Reichart 1992). Deconstruction not only recasts the spatial imaginary of concepts like text and context, but the result of this insistent questioning of the operations of borders and boundaries is a set of rather blurred 'concepts', with no clear edges, which keep slipping from view. Deconstructive concepts are always on the move (Doel 1994).

The deconstructive sense of textuality refers to the movement by which all apparently enclosed, totalised, and self-identical objects and concepts are fractured by their necessary relations with other elements:

If there is no-thing outside the text, this implies, with the transformation of the concept of text in general, that the text is no longer the snug air-tight inside of an interiority or an identity-to-itself [...] but rather *a different placement of the effects of opening and closing*. (Derrida 1981a, 35-36) [emphasis added].

This has two implications which bear upon the issue of the image of space that underwrites conceptualisations of context. Firstly, by questioning the division between the pure interiority of texts and the absolute exteriority of contexts, it suggests the inadequacy of any representation of deconstruction as remaining within the 'inside' of a text (or a system of signifiers). Fraying the edges between texts and contexts, and rendering the distinction finally undecidable, deconstruction promises to free a concern with texts from a characteristic reduction to the plane of meaning, and from subordination to all the reassuring ethical values of community, identity, and integrity that the uncritical deployment of hermeneutic protocols implies (De Man 1989, 218-223).

Secondly, and perhaps paradoxically, the questioning of the setting of boundaries and borders between texts and their contexts renders problematic any claims that the 'world-is-like-a-text'. The metaphorical generalisation of text has been an important factor in the extension of interpretative methodologies in human geography (see Duncan 1990, Barnes and Duncan 1992). Paul Ricoeur's metaphorical generalisation of text as a model for social action has served as a theoretical reference point for this operation (Ricoeur 1974, 1981). Texts, on this model, continue to be understood as intelligible unities, subject to hermeneutic interpretations which reconstitute the meaning-full-ness of texts, of social action, or of landscapes and places. Another important source of expanded notions of textuality in human geography is Roland Barthes (Duncan and Duncan 1988, Duncan and Duncan 1992). Barthes (1977) dissolves the hermeneutic

search for original meaning into an endless plurality of acts of reading. Singular and original meaning is displaced from its position of authority, only to be replaced by the uninhibited sovereignty of multiple interpreting subjects. These two notions of textuality conform rather exactly to the ‘two interpretations of interpretation’ characteristic of modern philosophies which determine language as co-extensive with meaning. On the one hand, the search for origins (in intention, desire, context). On the other, original meanings are dissolved into an interminable polysemic play of signifiers (Derrida 1978c, 292-293). One should certainly hesitate before assimilating deconstruction to either position. Deconstruction gives rise to neither hermeneutic deciphering or the semiotic decoding of meaning (Derrida 1982a, 29).

And nor is deconstruction particularly well read as a programme which presents philosophy, conceptualisation, or language as primarily and inescapably metaphorical: “Derrida is widely mistaken for a friend of metaphor” (Patton 1996, p. 120). The Derridean re-inscription of textuality effectively deconstructs the conceptualisation of metaphor that underwrites the ‘world-is-like-a-text’ theme, according to which a proper sense of text is simply transported to its outside (Derrida 1978b, 1982a, 207-271). Derrida recasts the spatiality underlying understandings of language: conceptions of metaphor depend upon a stable spatial order, and on the maintenance of secure borders which allows the transportation of a given sense to new domains. Deconstruction’s generalised textuality is not strictly metaphorical at all, since it depends upon an abuse of meaning that refers to no proper norm (Derrida 1984, 123). Derrida’s generalisation of text might be better understood as a metonymic effect, articulating contiguous elements. Unlike the logic of identity which characterises metaphor (see De Man 1996), the epistemological effects of metonymy depends upon maintaining the play of irreducible difference between senses.

A strategy of intervention

If the deconstructive generalisation of the concept of text “almost without limit” (Derrida 1986a, 167) is not merely a metaphorical carrying over of one meaning to other realms, then what does it involve? This generalisation is predicated upon a transformation in the very sense of text, one which depends on re-figuring the spatial image of the relations between borders, frames, insides, and outsides. This is well illustrated in the following citation, which indicates the *double displacement* at play in the deconstructive sense of textuality:

If we are to approach a text, it must have an edge. The question of the text, as it has been elaborated and transformed in the last dozen or so years, has not merely “touched” shore, *le bord...*, all those boundaries that form the running border of what used to be called a text, of what we once thought this word could identify, i.e., the supposed end and beginning of a work, the unity of a corpus, the title, the margins, the signatures, the referential realm outside the frame, and so forth. What has happened, if it has happened, is a sort of overrun (*débordment*) that spoils all these boundaries and divisions and forces us to extend the accredited concept, the dominant notion of a “text”, of what I still call a “text” for strategic reasons, in part - a “text” that is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far (not submerging or drowning them in an undifferentiated homogeneity, but rather making them more complex, dividing and multiplying strokes and lines) - all the limits, everything that was set up in opposition to writing (speech, life, the world, the real, history, and what not, every field of reference - to body or mind, conscious or unconscious, politics, economics, and so forth). (Derrida 1979, 84-85).

As noted above, there is a double displacement of text at work in this citation. Firstly, this passage demonstrates that text no longer functions, in an immediate way, as the name of an

intelligible textual object, counter-posed to an extra-textual outside. Rather, in deconstruction, 'text' is re-positioned as the very medium across which the division is established and traversed. Text is just one figure for an understanding of mediation cut loose from an origin or a teleological end, in which the middle is not merely a passage between two pre-existing entities, but is given priority as a constitutive play of chance and necessity.⁴ Secondly, the displacement of text, as a figure of mediation, depends in turn upon the transformation of the normal concept of text. Derrida's writings re-inscribe the usual sense of text in relation to a vocabulary of fabrics and cloths, woven tissues and threads, weaving, lacing, binding, rending, knotting. This underwrites an infrastructural re-definition of text (Derrida 1982a,160). Writing is a woven texture, an "interlacing that weaves together the system of differences" (Derrida 1981a, 165), bringing elements into relation in a network of interruptions, interlacing them while respecting their alterity. Understood in this way, textuality has no beginning or end, it is inextricable, or 'limitless'.

Derrida's text is, then, an "anagram" (1981a, 98), constantly and productively crossing between settled and innovative senses. The mobilisation of this citational drift between senses underwrites the 'strategic' purpose animating the re-inscription of terms like text, writing, trace, or supplement: deconstruction makes use of words that 'slide' in order to make the discourses from which they are taken slide (Derrida 1978c, 262-270). Deconstruction does not supplant one set of concepts with a completely new set. It *supplements* existing concepts. Deconstruction "liberates" characteristics of a concept which are normally held in reserve, and extends them beyond their normally restricted scope. In so doing, it blurs the clear boundaries that underwrote their restriction. This is described as a practice of "paleontology", retaining an old name to establish a new concept (Derrida 1981b, 71). The retention of the old name for the new, generalised concept is the condition for retaining the power of intervention that deconstruction aims to make in certain institutional domains. In borrowing the resources from the discourse it traverses, deconstruction "finds its very foothold there." (Derrida 1976, 314). The aim is to

demonstrate the systematic relations between concepts that are often subjected to a rigorous separation, revealing the possibilities which are available to manipulate these separations in all their ambiguous potential. Deconstruction opens a line of questioning regarding the installation of frames, limits, and boundaries with respect to practices of reading and writing, from the scale of the micro-geographies of written texts through to the macro-geographies of cultural formations and social institutions. It makes visible the ways in which texts are embedded in regulatory technologies of reading, writing, and performance that imply a distribution of political effects all of their own.

A focus on institutional questions is not therefore missing from deconstruction (which is not to say that deconstruction's attention to the institution cannot be usefully supplemented). The double displacement of text is related to deconstruction's particular mode of traversing the institutional and discursive spaces in which it takes up residence. Deconstruction should not be too rapidly conflated with the radicalisation of the structuralist conception of the sign (Derrida 1981a, 261). It does not simply offer a theory of language as an infinite semiosis of meaning. This notion remains tied to a binary metaphysics of the intelligible and sensible, and necessity and contingency. It in turn informs a particular reading of the relationship between language and power. Effects of social power are understood to take the form of wholly arbitrary stabilisations of the necessary indeterminacy of meaning. In turn, this supports the notion that simply performing or uncovering the essential instability of clear, sharp conceptual divisions is a political act with unambiguously oppositional value.

The deconstructive analysis of the undecidability of meaning implies that the articulation of social power and language does not, necessarily, take the form of stabilising the instabilities of meaning or naturalising social constructs at all. Quite the contrary, it might be the case that the articulation of certain real-world power relations works through the recognition and explicit manipulation of irresolvable instabilities of meaning.⁵ One lesson of deconstruction is that the political value of either fixing meaning (of closure or of identity) or of maintaining instability (of

ambivalence or of difference) is not open to prior, conceptual determination. Deconstruction certainly points towards the contradictory and finally irreconcilable conditions of acts of identity, of events, and of institutions. But it also affirms that these are necessarily given foundations in performative acts which pass through a structure of repetition (see Butler 1997, Weber 1989). This renders their foundations or grounds unstable, but not, simply for that reason, wholly dispensable (e.g. Derrida 1986b, 1989, 1990). It follows from this understanding of the necessary institutionalisation of foundations that the critical energies released by deconstruction are neither wholly transformative of that upon which they act, nor wholly conservative. Rather, deconstruction raises the question of what boundaries it is necessary to assume and protect for certain practices to get underway.

If, then, deconstruction is to be understood as an analytics of ‘effects of opening and closing’, how does it promise to alter understandings of contextualisation as a norm of interpretation? To address this question, it is necessary to consider a little more closely the thematics of writing, iterability, spacing, and *différance*.

Writing, iterability, spacing

Communication and community

The relevance of the deconstructive generalisation of text to understandings of the spatial order underwriting conceptualisations of context is most clearly indicated by Derrida’s engagement with Anglo-American ordinary language philosophy and speech act theory, and particularly the work of J. L. Austin (Derrida 1982a, 307-330, 1988, Austin 1962).⁶ This tradition presents a philosophy of language where meaning is understood in relation to the communicative contexts in which words are used. In so far as meaning is secured by context, it is presumed that context can be totalised and theoretically reconstituted, at least in principle. In Austin’s account of performative utterances, the “felicitous” outcome of a communicative act depends firstly upon a context of shared understanding between interlocutors, and secondly upon the self-presence of

intentions to speakers and listeners in spoken words. The possibility of an “infelicitous” outcome, of meaning going astray, is admitted but conceptually separated from its alternative. Exceptions are characteristically deployed to establish the priority of a particular model of proper usage secured by the force of consensus. Austin’s is a highly normative account which turns upon the maintenance of a clear division between legitimate and illegitimate uses.

In recognising the social and communicative aspects of language-use and meaning, speech-act theory nonetheless determines the social field of inter-subjective communication as homogenous, harmonious, and unified. It presents an account of language-use as an essentially co-operative form of activity in which subjects are regulated by shared aims of agreement and consensus (Pratt 1986a). An image of spatially bounded communities of a particular scale is posited by this account of proper usage. Austin’s philosophy of language remains conceptually dependent on a representation of a community of self-conscious, self-identical speakers communicating within the immediate proximity allowed by the range of the voice: “a community immediately present to itself, without difference, a community of speech where all the members are within earshot.” (Derrida 1976, 136). Deconstruction entails a rigorous questioning of the ethical and political presuppositions of theories of language and interpretation which presume “linguistic utopias” in which communication is secured by a single plane of meaning shared by all members of a community (see also Pratt 1987, 1986b). Conventional theories of communication and meaning such as speech act theory, but also including contemporary theories of dialogism and of ideal speech situations, privilege an ideal of a community of speakers and listeners inhabiting the same horizon of consensus teleologically directed towards mutual understanding. Identity of interest, of purpose, or of culture is presupposed as the condition of successful communication .

Rather than presume shared language and the pre-given boundaries of a homogenous community as a prior condition for communication, deconstruction exposes difference, chance, disjuncture, and uncertainty as necessary conditions of communication (see Chang 1996).

Difference is not understood as the negation of identity nor as opposition. Difference is re-written according to an alternative spatialisation, not of containment and enclosure, but of folds, openings, passages. Communication negotiates across an aporetic space-between which gathers up and separates speakers and listeners, writers and readers in a non-reciprocal ethical relationship of responsibility which exceeds calculation (see Critchley 1992, Derrida 1992a, 1992b, Levinas 1969). Communication is thus re-thought along the lines suggested by a certain understanding of translation (Derrida 1985a), one which affirms a necessary element of untranslatability as its very condition. This is not regarded as a barrier to communication, but as the mark of an articulated play of opening towards alterity which is not assimilated in the event of communication which it makes possible. It follows that in deconstruction, commonality is figured not in terms of identity or homogeneity, but in light of an acknowledgement of “the impossibility of an absolutely pure and rigorously uncrossable limit” (Derrida 1993, 75). Deconstruction thus informs a wider effort to re-think the possibilities of community, ethics, and universality beyond the horizon of shared identity and transparent communication (Nancy 1991, Young 1990, 1997).⁷

Articulating différance

The affirmation of difference in deconstruction, freed from conceptual subordination to identity where difference is understood as derivation, negation, or opposition (Doel 1992), leads onto the related themes of ‘spacing’, ‘writing’, and ‘iterability’. These terms are central to the disruption of the normative value accorded to context in theories of interpretation. Writing serves as the figure of an alternative understanding of space, in terms of spacing and opening. Derrida consistently uncovers a normalising impulse at work in classical and modern theories of meaning. This is registered in the reduction of the contingencies of space and time to an order of essence, identity, necessity, presence. Conceptions of the ‘normal’ operation of speech, meaning, communication, or signification are routinely secured by the thematisation of empirical

exceptions which need to be excluded from conceptual consideration. Yet just as routinely, the subordinated term re-appears to metaphorically describe the normal operation: it is in two places at once, both inside and outside an enclosed conceptual space of essence or necessity.

For Derrida, it is writing that is most often simultaneously thematised and elided in this way, as a necessary supplement and as a figure of absence, deferral, difference, and spatial extension which must be neutralised or recuperated in the name of identity, meaning, understanding, and unity. Writing is usually understood as the medium in which meaning is transported, but also as a medium which is risky, dangerous, and liable to usurpation. It is this ambiguity that is exploited in the deconstruction of context. Written texts must be able to operate in the absolute absence of their author's intentions or wider conditions of original production (Derrida 1978a, 123-143). Writing must be able to be read out of context, it is "born by suspending its relation to origin" (Derrida 1976, 243). Derrida deploys the notion of writing to indicate that the power of dispersal usually reserved for writing inheres in all language-use: "That language must traverse space, be obliged to be spaced, is not an accidental trait but the mark of its origin" (Derrida 1976, 232). The extension of language in space is not a secondary, derivative, or accidental feature which is added to the proper ideality of meaning. The characteristic of 'iterability', the capacity for differential repetition out of context, is therefore the condition of writing *as* writing: writing must be repeatable and remain legible even in the event of the disappearance of its author or any specifiable addressee (Derrida 1982a, 315).

Three issues immediately follow from Derrida's re-evaluation of writing as a figure for a non-reducible movement of spacing as the condition of communication. First, the theme of originary writing redraws the notion of origin. The generalisation of writing, as condensed in various figures of movement, spacing, and temporalisation, are indicative of an effort to think of conditions of possibility without reference to an origin of punctual presence or pure form. Secondly, writing names the spacing or drift at the origin of all identity and presence, and this suggests a re-worked sense of representation. In affirming the irreducibility of representation,

this term is now understood in relation to textual figures of presence and absence, thereby displacing a purely visual notion of representation (see Derrida 1982b, Spivak 1988, Castree 1996). Repetition of the 'same' element in a new context involves a movement of re-presentation that passes through a structure of iterability. And thirdly, the theme of writing indicates a re-evaluation of chance. The unreliable and error-prone characteristics usually ascribed to writing as a mere supplement are generalised as constitutive conditions of all communication. This should not be confused with a simple evaluation of chance in opposition to necessity or rules. It is, rather, connected to a sense of the necessity of the play of chance or indeterminacy in any successful communicative practice (Lawlor 1992, 111-122).

Combining these three themes of a non-original origin, re-presentation as differential repetition, and chance, allows one to approach the importance of the theme of *différance* in deconstruction. *Différance* is names an understanding of difference that is not subsumed within an order of the same. It testifies to the continuing importance ascribed to certain 'transcendental' questions. *Différance* implies a double reference: to spatiality, in the sense of difference as apartness and separation, and dispersal; and to temporality: in the sense of deferring, delay, and postponement (Derrida 1973, 82). It is above all important to underscore the processual sense of the movement of *différance*. *Différance* is another figure for a movement of mediation that opens presence, identity, and time, and their conceptual derivatives, absence, difference, and space (Derrida 1982a, 1-27). It is one name for the 'practice of spacing' that opens the space for repetition and representation, but this is understood as an aleatory space which ensures that pure repetition or representation of the same is finally impossible.⁸ *Différance* is therefore a 'concept' which works to free understandings of temporalisation and spacing from subordination to any teleological horizon: "To say that *différance* is originary is simultaneously to erase the myth of a present origin" (1978c, 203).⁹

Dissemination without return

In deconstruction, the possibility of repetition in the absence of original context, which is usually reserved for the conventional concept of writing as an addition which transmits the content of a speech-act, is generalised as a condition for all language-use. The possibility of written marks being taken out of context, their 'iterability', is the expression of an originary dislocation that inheres in all communicative acts. All communication inhabits a structure of iterability: all signs can be cited, can break with context, and can be engaged in new contexts. Any original event is therefore irredeemably lost as soon as it is enunciated, unrecoverable in its apparent singular and original plenitude, inscribed as it is in a pattern of displacement and repetition. Language is always already delivered over to an unforeseeable destination.

A condition of the intelligibility of a text in any context is that it is already on the move. The practice of deconstruction reveals this movement; so does translation. That texts are subject to translation is an empirical fact that has theoretical consequences for the spatial and temporal order underwriting conceptualisations of context as a norm of interpretation. Translation is here understood not in terms of an abstract division between original and copy, but as a process that passes through a whole continuum of transformations (see Benjamin 1978, 325). As such, translation is another figure of fragmentation, movement, and instability at the 'origin':

This movement of the original is a wandering, an errance, a kind of permanent exile if you wish, but it is not really an exile, for there is no homeland, nothing from which one has been exiled (De Man 1986, p. 92).

Iterability, the movement of textuality which accounts for the potential of elements to be grafted into new contexts, is therefore characterised by a "dissemination without return", a pattern of dispersal without an expected, anticipated trajectory (Derrida 1992a, 48). This is not to be confused with a hermeneutic conception of polysemy, wherein multiplicity and variety is contained within a plane of meaning, so that plurality is pre-determined as essentially semantic. Dissemination does not project a horizon of (indeterminate) multiple meanings. It is not a matter

of lexical or semantic richness at all; dissemination is a ‘concept’ derived from the observation of syntactic variance (Derrida 1981a, 220-221). Deconstruction directs attention to the ‘horizontal’ placement of elements in relation to each other. It therefore implies an analytics of *articulation*, not of correspondence, interpretation, or necessity.

Displacing context

Deconstruction’s characteristic re-ordering of the value ascribed to citations, deviations, the marginal, and the secondary implies a different approach to questions of context. Rather than subordinating exceptions to transcendent norms, deconstruction takes them as the starting point for developing a different understanding of the ways in which rules operate, disrupting the ground of self-evident truths against which the exception appears as such (cf. Pêcheux 1982, 199). Again, the specific properties normally ascribed to writing are invoked here. It is useful to cite Derrida here, to make clear what this resistance to the normalising restriction of chance, error, and indeterminacy as non-essential accidents or exceptions reserved for writing implies for conceptualisations of context:

This is the possibility on which I want to insist: the possibility of extraction and citational grafting which belongs to the structure of every mark, spoken or written, and which constitutes every mark as written even before and outside every horizon of semiolinguistic communication; as writing, that is, as a possibility of functioning cut off, at a certain point, from its “original” meaning and from its belonging to a saturable and constraining context. Every sign, linguistic or non-linguistic, spoken or written (in the usual sense of this opposition), as a small or large unity, can be *cited*, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every given context, and engender new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not suppose that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any centre of absolute anchoring. This citationality, duplication, or duplicity, this iterability of the mark is not an accident or an

anomaly, but is that (normal/abnormal) without which a mark could no longer even have a so-called “normal” functioning. (Derrida, 1982a, 320-321).

The important point is that, because of the iterable character of all signification, context is always open: “the limit of the frame or the border of the context always entails a clause of nonclosure” (Derrida 1988, 152-153). This understanding does not lead onto a disregard for issues of context, nor of intention, it should be noted. But it does imply that if there is no meaning without context, then nor can any context ever be finally closed or present to itself. Contexts must also be open to serve as contexts, but therefore they cannot finally contain the force of iterability: “This is my starting point: no meaning can be determined out of context, but no context permits saturation.” (Derrida 1979, 81).

The meaning of texts and utterances is dependent on already being on the move, spaced-out towards multiple, unanticipated re-contextualisations. It is the value ascribed to certain unproblematised notions of context as an authoritative methodological protocol, dependant upon a whole set of unstated philosophical and ethical assumptions, that is put in question by deconstruction. Traditional questions of context are not abandoned. They are re-located into a practice in which they no longer serve as the governing norms. The deconstructive affirmation of spacing, in the figures of writing, iterability, and *différance*, suggests that any analysis of texts is thrown forward:

One of the definitions of what is called deconstruction would be the effort to take this limitless context into account, to pay the sharpest and broadest attention possible to context, and thus to an *incessant movement of recontextualisation*. (Derrida 1988, 136) [emphasis added].

Deconstruction affirms a heightened awareness of contextualisation, understood as the limitless potential for texts to be re-articulated in an infinite number of times and places.

After deconstruction, context might be best thought of as a distinctively spatial figure not of containment but, in so far as it refers to what precedes, follows, and surrounds texts, for the

relations of contiguity and proximity between elements. While deconstruction certainly acknowledges that texts cannot not appear in places, it also provokes a re-thinking of place in terms of difference, mobility, dislocation, and openings, rather than in relation to the areal logic of consensus and enclosure. The trace of *différance* inheres in all self-contained and self-present entities, such as community, or place, or context, or the subject (Derrida 1976, 44-73).¹⁰ The play of repetition at the origin of the experience of identity and difference, presence and absence, time and space suggests an approach to place understood as a performative ‘scene of writing’ (Derrida 1978c, 196-231; see also Casey 1997, Wigley 1993). The passage through a differential movement of spacing indicates that meaning takes place in an oscillation between articulations and dis-articulations, attachments and de-tachments, which are already underway. Postcards are, perhaps, a primary figure for the deconstructive understanding of the relations between texts, contexts, and spacing implied by this incessant movement of recontextualisation (Derrida 1987a). Addressed to a specific interlocutor, a postcard is nonetheless potentially open to be read by anyone. Successful communication is not therefore dependent on the precise containment of messages within enclosed channels of exchange. Postcards exemplify the disseminating force of textuality which exceeds all attempts at finally enclosing meaning in proper places, since they cannot be secured from being read by unexpected readers in unanticipated places. Yet postcards are also a figure for the affirmation that meaning is irreducibly tied to local sites. That is, meaning is dependent on, but not finally reducible to, local practices. If meaning is related to context, then this does not require that meaning be made conceptually dependent on utterances being always articulated in proper contexts by the proper person backed by the proper authority.

The different orientation to relations between context, place, and norms of propriety suggested by deconstruction is revealed by the observation that the repertoire of terms which characterise deconstruction’s re-inscription of philosophical conceptualisation (such as the supplement, the trace, writing) are all figures of the parasite. Parasites are certainly defined by their relation to places; but not their own places. They have no *proper* place: no place which is

properly their own, nor a place which is theirs to own. They also all tend to elude attempts to contain them on one side of clear conceptual boundaries. The parasite is a figure of mediation, localised between insides and outsides, defined by its apparently paradoxical spatial location: proximate *and* distant, similar *and* different, inside a domestic economy but not of it, this side *and* the other side of a threshold (Miller 1991, 145). The figure of the parasite therefore disrupts models of communication premised on ideals of exchange, identity, and community (see Serres 1982). In its insistent affirmation of figures of the parasite, deconstruction accords considerable attention to questions of space, time, and place. In so doing, it undoes the stable spatial order which secures a thinking of difference according to a specific normative economy of identity and opposition. The proliferation of figures of the parasite in deconstruction indicates an alternative spatial order not of oppositions, but of articulation, folding, opening, and spacing.

Departure points

In closing, it should be acknowledged that deconstruction does not necessarily lead onto a unique theoretical or empirical programme that can be schematically summarised. It is not the intention here to point towards a new empirical agenda as such. Rather, this paper has pursued three broad themes. Firstly, it has tried to indicate the need to re-think the characteristic spatialisation of concepts that underwrites the construction of context as a possible empirical objects of analysis or norm of interpretation and explanation. It has done so by calling into question understandings of borders and limits, images of enclosure, and representations of stable spatial patterns that are routinely taken for granted in discussions of context. The paper has therefore suggested that the tendency to take 'context' for granted, both as an empirical object and theoretical theme, is related to a particular image of space which underwrites the possibility of making clear categorical distinctions between insides and outsides.

Secondly, it has been suggested that deconstruction moves through other programmes, methods, and theories in distinctive ways. This paper has tried to give some sense of the direction

of this emphasis, rather than set out a number of rules that could be applied. In particular, it has been suggested that what is distinctive about deconstruction is the way in which it directs attention towards a thinking of context without nostalgia for a lost presence, however formulated. It helps to call into question the authority of usual appeals to context, whether this is framed as the intention of a consciousness, the communicative horizon of inter-subjectivity, or as a determinant historical or social ground. Deconstruction's concern for context is not, therefore, governed by an ethics of proper usage, rightful authority, or necessary relations which is closely tied to a particular spatial regime of conceptualisation.

Thirdly, deconstruction does not reduce everything to the status of a text. On the contrary, it multiplies and recasts context, and liberates an empirical and theoretical concern for contextualisation from the normalising rules which usually govern explanation and interpretation. Deconstruction is a creative practice of the articulation of new relations that are not established in advanced.¹¹ The movement of undecidable address at the 'origin' suggests an analysis of openings and closings, movements and dispersals, arrivals and departures, deliveries and returns. This analysis might be pursued in two directions. Firstly, through an investigation of how relevant contexts for texts are stabilised discursively, institutionally, and socially (see Bennett 1987, Genette 1997). This would be an analysis of the installation and dissemination of the rules, protocols, and norms of conduct that secure consensus and agreement in communities of interpretation.¹² Secondly, through an analysis of the production of novelty through practices of re-signification (see Butler 1997). Any such practice necessarily negotiates a field of authority relations, calling in turn for an analysis of the conditions which enable relations of authority in language-use to be productively re-directed.¹³ What both of these possible directions of analysis share is an appreciation of the constitutive movement of mediation and recontextualisation through which any communicative practice passes. This suggests that a geography of texts must be premised upon movement, spacing, and difference, rather than upon place, identity, and containment. And above all, this implies an analysis freed from assumptions of propriety that

often continue to govern interpretation. Amongst other things, this form of analysis affirms chance and creativity, and in so doing makes visible questions of responsibility: “Our interpretations will not be readings of a hermeneutic or exegetic sort, but rather political interventions in the political rewriting of the text and its destination” (Derrida 1985b, 32).

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NOTES

¹ The discussions in Thrift (1994, 1996) provide important exceptions to this general absence of conceptual considerations of context.

² The concern for the spatialisation of concepts directs attention to the distinctive images of space that arrange orders of knowledge and understanding. See Foucault (1973), and in geography, Rose (1995).

³ It is open to question whether the performative force of utterances or texts follows from correctly following accepted laid-down norms of linguistic communities, or whether it is better thought of as deriving from the capacity of utterances to break with contexts, to assume new ones in a movement of appropriation which re-works the economy of established norms. See Butler (1997, 127-163).

⁴ Other Derridean figures for this sense of constitutive mediation include: trace, dissemination, supplement, iterability, writing, mimesis, hymen, pharmakon, supplement, and *différance*.

⁵ This point is demonstrated forcefully by Sedgwick's (1990) analysis of the operations of modern hetero-normative practices and systems of power (see also Fuss 1995).

⁶ It is worth noting that the relationship between speech act theory and deconstruction is not an oppositional one, in spite of the nature of the exchange between Derrida and John Searle (1977). Derrida's interruption of this tradition has generated new lines of inquiry into the conceptualization and the politics of performativity" (e.g. Cavell 1995, Felman 1983, Parker and Sedgwick 1995), as well as a more general reassessment of the relations between so-called 'Continental' and 'Anglo-Saxon' philosophical traditions (e.g. Dasenbrock 1989, Staten 1984).

⁷ See Low (1999) and Rose (1997) for applications of this line of thought in geography.

⁸ For a related discussion, see also Deleuze (1994).

⁹ It should be noted that Derrida's deployment of *différance* works over themes of space and time found in the phenomenological tradition, which are discussed in detail in Strohmayr (1998).

¹⁰ For deconstruction, the 'trace' marks the place for the arrival of the Other, which cannot be anticipated or constituted in an identity without a reduction to the Same. 'Trace' therefore bundles up the three overdetermined themes of the possibilities of meaning, the ethical relation to the Other, and the opening of space-time in the movement of temporalisation and spacing (Derrida 1976, 46-47).

¹¹ For further discussion of articulation as an analytic practice, see Grossberg (1992).

¹² For analyses of this sort, see Barnett (1996, 1998, 1999).

¹³ This practice of re-signification is characteristic of postcolonial literary writing. Perhaps the best example is the long history of appropriations of *The Tempest* in a variety of geographical and historical contexts. See Nixon (1987), Zabus (1994).