“Jacques Derrida: Text and Differance”

Deconstruction questions interpretation. Deconstruction is provocative.

Some Kind of Warning

This presentation on traces referring to Derrida cannot be one that abides by traditional formats; as this presenter argues that we must address the issue of language as an essential means for making sense, not a re-presentation of it.

Some Kind of Lecture

It is ab-surd. C'est absurde, n'est ce pas.
I suggest we improvise some sense
In this décor of decay and corruption.
Let us reflect about the trace of Derrida
Ma presentation est à propos de Derrida
It is à-propos. So, à-propos, why this ?
Why do we use language to make sense?
Why the question? Heidegger mentioned
That questioning was the piety of thought.
Derrida stated some kind of agreement
Then asked: “what comes before the question?”
Heidegger had proposed an answer: Dasein.
Derrida states questions about existence
And now, I propose, as a trace of a trace,
As a trace about Derrida from a other traces,
Including traces attributed to Derrida
That from what is, ab-surd and irreconcilable
We make sense, we come in that making sense
From traces, always in text, or as traced by Derrida
Never “hors texte” in a process not just being
A process becoming not just in the present
Not merely with a past present in the past
And a future present in the future but a moment
A becoming with traces to make sense
To become identified by traces of making sense
In differance and now, in this process,
We make sense with what was different
And deferred, spoken from a read trace
One that could not merely be spoken
But had to be a sustained trace
To differentiate “différance” from “différence”
Spoken the same in French but written differently
In English as well as in French, a translation,
A moment that is not limited to a “now present”
An emergence out of the control of some I
As it become with a making sense of a “present past”
On a trace for a “present future”
Becoming a teleology, undefinable,
As if I am called to perform a function
As it were for what may eventuate
According to traces and there being here and now.
Now, this is not Derrida speaking. It is I,
Pierre, just an agent in this emergence,
Or as Heidegger would have it, an efficient cause,
Sharing the burden of transformation of traces
With the material cause of traces
With the formal cause of traces
With the teleological cause of traces
As we must consider, with the traces by Derrida,
That we too are traces in a text,
Never outside of the text. Never “hors-texte”,
Textual, traces carriers of traces, ad infinitum,
In some kind of infinite progression
As changing between parallel mirrors
With every turn provoking another horizon
Another set of traces, sets after sets,
Dimensions beyond the traditions
Yet stooped into their traces
In a disrupted and ab-surd set of continuums
Where nothing is logos but for the sense we make
No past, no present, no future, just fragmentations
The paradoxical disruptions leaving traces
Compilations of diversity and differences
In “difference” for the time to emerge with sense
But that is another trace, for Derrida mentioned this,
The trace of Being and Time yet focussed
On an ab-surd becoming that makes sense
By incessant bricolage, incessant and inescapable,
The using of traces at hand for traces to hand
...
Over to us.

**Some Kind of Puzzle**

[Leaflets... Bricolage and deconstruction.]

**Some Kind of Reading(s)**

**Jacques Derrida (1930—2004)**

http://www.iep.utm.edu/derrida/ 04/04/2015

Jacques Derrida was one of the most well known twentieth century philosophers. He was also one of the most prolific. Distancing himself from the various philosophical movements and traditions that preceded him on the French intellectual scene (phenomenology, existentialism, and structuralism), he developed a strategy called "deconstruction" in the mid 1960s. Although not purely negative, deconstruction is primarily concerned with something tantamount to a critique of the Western philosophical tradition. Deconstruction is generally presented via an analysis of specific texts. It seeks to expose, and then to subvert, the various binary oppositions that undergird our dominant ways of thinking—presence/absence, speech/writing, and so forth.

Deconstruction has at least two aspects: literary and philosophical. The literary aspect concerns the textual interpretation, where invention is essential to finding hidden alternative meanings in the text. The
philosophical aspect concerns the main target of deconstruction: the “metaphysics of presence,” or simply metaphysics. Starting from an Heideggerian point of view, Derrida argues that metaphysics affects the whole of philosophy from Plato onwards. Metaphysics creates dualistic oppositions and installs a hierarchy that unfortunately privileges one term of each dichotomy (presence before absence, speech before writing, and so on).

The deconstructive strategy is to unmask these too-sedimented ways of thinking, and it operates on them especially through two steps—reversing dichotomies and attempting to corrupt the dichotomies themselves. The strategy also aims to show that there are undecidables, that is, something that cannot conform to either side of a dichotomy or opposition. Undecidability returns in later period of Derrida’s reflection, when it is applied to reveal paradoxes involved in notions such as gift giving or hospitality, whose conditions of possibility are at the same time their conditions of impossibility. Because of this, it is undecidable whether authentic giving or hospitality are either possible or impossible.

In this period, the founder of deconstruction turns his attention to ethical themes. In particular, the theme of responsibility to the other (for example, God or a beloved person) leads Derrida to leave the idea that responsibility is associated with a behavior publicly and rationally justifiable by general principles. Reflecting upon tales of Jewish tradition, he highlights the absolute singularity of responsibility to the other.

Deconstruction has had an enormous influence in psychology, literary theory, cultural studies, linguistics, feminism, sociology and anthropology. Poised in the interstices between philosophy and non-philosophy (or philosophy and literature), it is not difficult to see why this is the case. What follows in this article, however, is an attempt to bring out the philosophical significance of Derrida’s thought.

http://www.iep.utm.edu/derrida/#SH3c 04/04/2015

c. Différance

Différance is an attempt to conjoin the differing and deferring aspects involved in arche-writing in a term that itself plays upon the distinction between the audible and the written. After all, what differentiates différences and différence is inaudible, and this means that distinguishing between them actually requires the written. This
problematises efforts like Saussure’s, which as well as attempting to keep speech and writing apart, also suggest that writing is an almost unnecessary addition to speech. In response to such a claim, Derrida can simply point out that there is often, and perhaps even always, this type of ambiguity in the spoken word - *différence* as compared to *différance* - that demands reference to the written. If the spoken word requires the written to function properly, then the spoken is itself always at a distance from any supposed clarity of consciousness. It is this originary breach that Derrida associates with the terms arche-writing and *différance*.

Of course, *différance* cannot be exhaustively defined, and this is largely because of Derrida’s insistence that it is "neither a word, nor a concept", as well as the fact that the meaning of the term changes depending upon the particular context in which it is being employed. For the moment, however, it suffices to suggest that according to Derrida, *différance* is typical of what is involved in arche-writing and this generalised notion of writing that breaks down the entire logic of the sign (OG 7). The widespread conviction that the sign literally represents something, which even if not actually present, could be potentially present, is rendered impossible by arche-writing, which insists that signs always refer to yet more signs *ad infinitum*, and that there is no ultimate referent or foundation. This reversal of the subordinated term of an opposition accomplishes the first of deconstruction’s dual strategic intents. Rather than being criticised for being derivative or secondary, for Derrida, writing, or at least the processes that characterise writing (ie. *Difference* and arche-writing), are ubiquitous. Just as a piece of writing has no self-present subject to explain what every particular word means (and this ensures that what is written must partly elude any individual’s attempt to control it), this is equally typical of the spoken. Utilising the same structure of repetition, nothing guarantees that another person will endow the words I use with the particular meaning that I attribute to them. Even the conception of an internal monologue and the idea that we can intimately 'hear' our own thoughts in a non-contingent way is misguided, as it ignores the way that arche-writing privileges difference and a non-coincidence with oneself (SP 60-70).

2. “The Incorruptibles”

As we noted, Derrida became famous at the end of the 1960's, with the publication of three books in 1967. At this time, other great books appear: Foucault's Les mots et les choses (The Order of Thingsis the English language title) in 1966; Deleuze's Difference and Repetition in 1968. It is hard to deny that the philosophy publications of this epoch indicate that we have before us a kind of philosophical moment (a moment perhaps comparable to the moment of German Idealism at the beginning of the 19th century). Hélène Cixous calls this generation of French philosophers “the incorruptibles.” In the last interview Derrida gave (to Le Monde on August 19, 2004), he provided an interpretation of “the incorruptibles”: “By means of metonymy, I call this approach [of “the incorruptibles”] an intransigent, even incorruptible, ethos of writing and thinking …, without concession even to philosophy, and not letting public opinion, the media, or the phantasm of an intimidating readership frighten or force us into simplifying or repressing. Hence the strict taste for refinement, paradox, and aporia.” Derrida proclaims that today, more than ever, “this predilection [for paradox and aporia] remains a requirement.” How are we to understand this requirement, this predilection for “refinement, paradox, and aporia”?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj1BuNmhjAY 04/04/2015
Jacques Derrida on Love and Being

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2bPTs8fspk 04/04/2015
Derrida: “What Comes Before the Question?”

Some Kind of Sending

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8kyulwWXt0 04/04/2015
Por otra parte, Jacques Derrida

The other day I was watching a documentary on Derrida for not good reason but the desire to prepare a presentation on Derrida...

Derrida : « Je l’ai dit quelque part... Je ne sais plus ou ».
Derrida: “Il n’y a pas de nous”.

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/ 04/04/2015