



Derrida's reading however, it constantly is, as it is the concept's location in metaphysical space, which allows one concept to be intelligible from another. That is, in the last instance it isn't the internal coherence of the idea or concept which distinguishes it from other concepts or ideas but rather just the metaphoric, corporal continuity which it is secretly presumed to possess. In this sense, metaphysics is "white mythology", the mythology practiced by the white man, as that culture which understood as eminently 'rational' and defined by the absence of mythology in its thought. All of Derrida's thought takes place in a kind of 'reprojected space', or he derives the sense of his ideas in terms of a conceptual space where the events which define the the pre-understood coherence of metaphysics would be taking place. This space is like the unconscious of metaphysics, but thinking this space and its objects as a type of insubstantial model is the basis for the practice of deconstruction.

Derrida promises to play with the question in the book, not to answer it 'properly'. The metaphor of 'tympanum' (барабанная перепонка) as that limit of philosophy that establishes a difference between a question and an answer and by establishing it destroys it.

"If Being is in effect a process of reappropriation, the 'question of Being' of a new type can never be percussed without being measured against the absolutely coextensive question of the proper." (xix) Argues that most discourses (e.g., on sexuality, economy, semantics) organize their limits (and therefore themselves) "in sonorous representations." (xix) "A quasi-organizing role is granted, therefore, to the motif of sonic vibration..." (Hegel, Heidegger).

Derrida engages multiple physical metaphors to identify the place of "the unthought, the suppressed, the repressed of philosophy." (xxviii)

### **Differance**

"we must let ourselves refer to an order that resists the opposition, one of the founding oppositions of philosophy, between the sensible and the intelligible. The order which resists this opposition, and resists it because it transports it, is announced in a movement of *differance* (with an a) between two differences or two letters, a *differance* which belongs neither to the voice nor to writing in the usual sense, and which is located, as the strange space that will keep us together here for an hour, *between* speech and writing, and beyond the tranquil familiarity which links us to one and the other, occasionally reassuring us in our illusion that they are two." (5)

"differance is not only irreducible to any ontological or theological—ontotheological—reappropriation, but as the very opening of the space in which ontotheology—philosophy—produces its system and its history..." (6)

Language constitutes itself historically through the play of differences in speech (*differance*). *Differance* links any given element of language not only with its semantic synchronic environment, but also—through that notorious play of differences—with past and future meanings. *Temporization* as 'becoming-space of time' and 'becoming-time of space', as two-concepts-in-one that try to fix this interplay of time and space in the making of any meaning through differences.

*differance* as the economic detour which, in the element of the same, always aims at coming back to the pleasure or the presence that have been deferred by (conscious or unconscious) calculation, and, on the other hand, *differance* is as the relation to an impossible presence, an expenditure without reserve, as the irreparable loss of presence, the irreversible usage of energy, that is, as the death instinct, and as the entirely other relationship that apparently interrupts every economy?" (19)

Differences are, thus, 'produced'—deferred—by *differance*. But *what* defers or *who* defers? In other words, *what is differance?* With this question we reach another level and another resource of our problematic. Draws on Heidegger, Freud and Nietzsche to argue that the very human presence in the world is subordinate to the same rules as linguistic presence: it doesn't exist per se, but identifies itself through the play of differences (*differance*) and through permanently referring itself into the future. Refers directly to Freud when he explains that

Language constitutes itself historically through the play of differences in speech (*differance*). *Differance* links any given element of language not only with its semantic synchronic environment, but also—through that notorious play of differences—with past and future meanings. *Temporization* as 'becoming-space of time' and 'becoming-time of space', as two-concepts-in-one that try to fix this interplay of time and space in the making of any meaning through differences. The present can manifest itself only through temporization and the presence—through spacing. But in order to get meaning as the present, any meaning (word) should defer (отсрочить) its *differance*, to temporize delay, what Derrida calls "the economic signification of the detour." (13)

What is Difference? It is a non-place, or possibly a panoptic place that is void of signifiers. Thus, to those who love, it is the Peace of Heaven, but to the contentious it is a continuously cacaphanous Hell.

Difference is the Real, the voice says. The TV world is an invention - a Supplement - that kicks out the Reality of Difference. So says our inner voice.

That voice is right, Derrida says. There IS no TV world! But civil order requires us to imagine one, cause that's the way the newsmen say it is.

And civil order says reality isn't a set of hieroglyphics that needs a magical Rosetta Stone to decipher.

So how come we don't feel quite at home in it? And why do we read and watch the news In the first place? And if we read a lot, how come there is still no final answer that satisfies us?

Cause there is none, he says. Except within ourselves. And outside ourselves in the presence of the Real - Difference - or Nature.

And on the day when the disconnect between truth and lies becomes too glaringly unendurable, it may be time to throw away all our presuppositions. To finally begin our personal quest in all its gloriously obstinate and unyielding difficulty, knowing we may never get to its end.

Derrida's metaphysically different (and purposefully ABSTRUSE? - as if he wants to break it to us gently, maybe?) Difference is the Beginning of it.

You see, difference in modern Newspeak ALSO means endless DEFERRAL of conflictual differences - black/white, rich/poor, and powerful/disenfranchised - into a pervasive fog of jabberwocky. Even though we SEE those differences.

So it soon becomes impossible to disentangle truth from lies. The Truth is a Vast Difference.

This beautiful but hugely difficult - in all its ingenuous irony - book helped lead me back to a Different Destination: a Road Less Travelled.

To my own distinctly different kinda Oz - and then back home, to a radically renewed at-homeness in the world.

And shone a Bright Light onto, and honed and corrected, my own long-standing confusion...

That in turn led me back to my own - decidedly different - forgotten Self.

Derrida is all about deconstructions. There are ideas all over the place in this volume of twelve essays, but nearly all of them take the form of a discourse between Derrida and his chosen text: Foucault, Edmond Jabes, Emmanuel Levinas, Husserl, Bataille, Freud, Antonin Artaud, and Levi-Strauss are among the subjects. One of the main pillars that Derrida returns to is the idea that while the overriding concept of metaphysics that has ruled Western thought since Plato has been challenged (by Freud, Heidegger, Nietzsche), they haven't gone nearly far enough, and many of their challenges are predicated upon assumptions from the system they're attacking. They're attacking the structure from the inside, so their attacks have to make assumptions of the attacked system. Another central point is the problem of language: there are too many things signifying and its questionable whether there's any central object, beyond language, that gets signified. For Derrida, language is play and its impossible for it to indicate any single immutable thing (you can see it in his own text - even if it's often inscrutable it's almost always light and playful, with the prose gliding along). It's a new way of thinking of things that questions the foundations of what's come before, what Derrida at one point calls the end of the book (finite and meaningful) and the beginning of the text).

I thought it was interesting that his essays in here about literature and theater differed quite a bit in tone and structure (!) from those that were more traditionally philosophical. I felt like Derrida, to a certain extent at least, saw Edmond Jabes and Antonin Artaud as kindred spirits, having started (incompletely) the process of decentralizing and deconstructing their field's traditions.

Jacques Derrida exploded onto the scene of post-modern philosophy in Europe and the US though he didn't have a doctorate or teaching position at the time. In it, he demonstrates for the first time his conception of 'deconstruction,' an apparently inexplicable concept which enables the analysis of 'inter-textuality' and 'binary-oppositions,' to be revealed. 'Writing and Difference,' is of course a difficult text, and analytic philosophers don't even bother with it, though that may be their greatest mistake, for Derrida attempts (and not without success) to demonstrate that the notion of purely objective, enlightened truth seeking is an impossibility. That the essence of thought always operates within a given schema, a given facticity. 'Differance,' the famous phrase of Derrida, indicates that writing is necessarily primary to speech, we can see the 'differ a nce' in text, not phonetically.

The first essay in this collection 'Force and Signification,' attempts to apply a philosophical rigour to the analysis of literature, wherein Derrida explains Flaubert, Mallarme, and a number of others. 'Cogito and the History of Madness' is an extremely famous essay about Foucault which triggered a feud between the two intellectuals that would never fully be mended. In it, Derrida argues that Foucault's book does not address the Cartesian notion of the Cogito adequately in the History of Madness, and that Foucault ultimately relies on the same principles of the enlightenment while attempting to expose the dynamics of its power simultaneously. The essay (along with violence and Metaphysics) is a perfect example of Derrida's capacity to deconstruct. However, he moves very quickly and without assistance to the reader. If you have not read the author Derrida is deconstructing he will simply leave you in the dust.

The abstract art of modern philosophy. Self-indulgent (others say playful), unnecessarily digressive and round-about---the actual conceptual depth of what is conveyed, while it was surely groundbreaking, can be stated in terms much simpler than Derrida's. Derrida is a cultural hero to many and the gravitational mass of the cult that surrounds him has bent the light in the eyes of those who adulate a man that can do no wrong.

The structural nature of Western thought. He says:

"the concept of structure and even the word 'structure' it self are as old as the episteme that is to say as old as western science and western philosophy and their roots thrust deep into the soil of ordinary language, into whose deepest recesses the episteme plunges in order to gather them up and to make them part of itself in a metaphorical displacement. Nevertheless, up to event which I wish to mark out and define, structure-or rather the structurality of structure-although it has always been at work, has always been neutralized and this by a process of giving it a center or of refining it to appoint of presence, a fixed origin." (Derrida, Writing & Difference, Ch 10, pg 278, pa II)

Derrida points out that the very analysis or the structural addressing of the structure, also involves the very process that he is addressing, which is not oddly the cause for paradox. At times Derrida seems ambiguous so it's very hard to understand what exactly he is trying to say or the undertone of his purpose. P>T...Derrida's idea though is subjected to its own criticism, so he seems to have a deeper truth value that's not directly ascertained, which requires much more meditation (on what I perceive to be a viable paradox.)

More or less the idea that I get is that the structure of Western philosophy is not entirely built upon knowledge... but rather symbolic thought in the language of logic, the symbolic is prone to error and the logic is just a language that is ultimately unaccounted for... when the symbols are traced back to their foundation the symbols are not able to make the jump to the non symbolic center... "Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which while governing the structure, escapes structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it." (Derrida, W&D, pg 279, pa II) Now at this point we are talking epistemology and arguably western metaphysics...

Derrida's whole approach is basically to take a piece of writing and say "Well now, this whole thing is just bullshit." And when he says that everything everyone is talking about is bullshit he means it as a compliment. Then he spirals that off into metaphysical reflection.

Edit: Derrida's theory of "face" appears to be rooted in Kant's idea that what is beautiful in art is moral. Characters in a book could act immorally, but the whole work would be moral. This would be showing something beyond what is seen in the work. This abstraction would probably be similar to Derrida's idea about face, although for Derrida I do not believe that a work is default moral.

Derrida, inheriting from Saussure, deals with structuralism, a "type of analysis which understands individual elements of language and culture as embedded in larger structures." While his text *Of Grammatology* deals with Deconstruction in a much more explicative fashion, its underpinnings are heavily present in this book. As "language as a system of signs and words only has meaning because of the contrast between these signs... meaning is never present, but rather is deferred to other signs... [a] concept, then, must be understood in the context of its opposite: for example, the word "being" does not have meaning without contrast with the word "nothing."

. "A new epiphany of the supernatural and the divine must occur within cruelty," is no easy task, but it is certainly a necessary one. In these essays Derrida stresses not only Artaud's poetical genius, but also the necessity of the Theatre which he was trying create-

"Theatrical art should be the primordial and privileged site of this destruction of imitation: more than any other art, it has been marked by the labor of total representation in which the affirmation of life lets itself be doubled and emptied by negation."

Derrida pitches and elaborates his philosophy of *Writing* (or, *différance*) with and against his gamut of (now) dead, white, European men (Husserl, Freud, Bataille, Levi-Strauss, Levinas, Arataud, Jabes). Not that he ever pretended to do anything else than work with the tradition he inherited. Still, it's an incredibly demanding work, not necessarily because of its style (I thoroughly enjoy the way Derrida writes), but because of how much assumed knowledge each essay takes for granted on the part of the reader. This is undoubtedly a work for the initiated, which is why so many who aren't seem to find it so perplexing.

Interesting to compare the opening essay with "Sign, Structure and Play," as both are critiques of structuralism using Nietzsche as base. The difference being: the earlier essay is still using the Nietzsche of Deleuze, while the latter is wholly Derrida. So you get a metaphysical and extra-textual *force* which undergrids the possibility of structure or you get the textual play of signifiers. And after the opening essay, Derrida abandons any mention of force. It's no wonder the pieces on Bataille and Artaud are so bloodless as compared to their place in *Anti-Oedipus*.