A Deconstructionist Reading of William Blake's *A Poison Tree*

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to have a deconstructionist reading of William Blake's "A Poison Tree." Highly associated with the well-known poststructuralist Jacques Derrida in the late 1960s, deconstruction's primary concern is "the otherness" and "indeterminacy" or "instability" of the ultimate meaning of the text. A deconstructionist reader tries to bring out elements of marginality, supplementarity, and "undecidability" in the reading of texts. Involved in reading the text very closely and critically, a typical deconstructionist tries to recognize how the text differs from what it (its writer) tends to express. Accordingly, the present study sets out to read and analyse William Blake's "A Poison Tree" to discover if the poem, as deconstructionists assert, might include inconsistencies and contradictory points making the meaning of the text "undecidable" and beyond reach. Methodologically, the present study makes an attempt to show how the text is undermining its own philosophy and logic – that is – to demonstrate how the text subverts and differs from what it appears to communicate. At the end it might be concluded that language can be used as an effective means by its user(s) (speakers/writers) to get power, and suppress or marginalize others. It is also demonstrated how texts seem to include contradictory elements- that is – they differ from what they intend to express. All these argumentations can bring us to "indeterminacy" and "instability" of meaning within the text.

Key words: deconstruction; poststructuralism; text; indeterminacy (undecidability) of meaning; the otherness

INTRODUCTION

> After a millennium in a coma
> When do we wake up?
> Mo Nua, when shall we wake up?

(Aidoo's June 7, 1989 on Tiananmen square': as cited in Royle 2000, p. 278)

'Meaning' has always been, and still continues to be a fundamental concern to all humankind. In our everyday life we sometimes keep arguing about the real meaning of a word, text sign, picture, or most often, a poem .This has not been a recent argument. From primitive lives when there were no such really well-developed means of communication but a few sets of signs with restricted communicative functions, (e.g., fire, smoke, etc.) up to now as we experience miscellaneous ways of communicating our ideas, meaning has been drastically important in almost all human communicative practices, including texts. With the advent of

language 'meaning' has become a controversial phenomenon. After all, language and 'meaning' are inseparable.

However, there exists a constant anxiety for the exactitude of language. There is an almost universally felt anxiety that language, including our words, will really express things we intend to say or convey the wrong impression leading to a state of misunderstanding which we experience in our casual daily exchanges with others. Words seem not to be exact enough to communicate and embrace our very intention(s) unproblematically. Of all theories of meaning in the history of criticism, structuralism is one of the most dominant approaches to language and meaning. It still has numerous opponents and followers. Almost like the majority of traditional critics that have attributed meaning to a particular, authoritative centre, structuralists assume that the meaning of a text drives from what they call 'langue': the underlying abstract structures. In addition, structuralism is too dependent on binary oppositions. It is these polarities, structuralists believe, that form the coherence and the logic of the text as well as its meaning.

However, Derridean deconstruction is another recent approach in which language, texts, and meaning are viewed quite differently. Due to its anti foundationalist nature, deconstruction generally disagrees with assuming any kind of 'centre' for texts and their meaning. Jacques Derrida, the founder of deconstruction, sharply criticizes most traditional theories, especially Saussure's linguistics, for being based on such centralist or logo centric notions- that of attributing the meaning of the text to a particular source or centre. For Derrida, due to the absence of such a centre of any specific sort (e.g., author's intentionality, underlying rules, etc.), texts are 'decentred' that is, free from any particular controlling entity to determine their meaning: this leaves the text incoherent and (thus) its meaning slippery, indeterminate and impossible to pin down. Therefore, the transcendental (final) meaning turns into a fiction in deconstruction. In short, while structuralists hold that the text is coherent and composed of a meaning which can be discovered through a mastery of the underlying rules as a centre which gives unity to the text and produces the meaning of the text, poststructuralists and deconstructionists are generally sceptical to "the capability of language in representing reality adequately, hence for them no text can have a fixed and stable meaning" (Royle 2000, p.1). In other words, as Guerin et al., (2005, p.377) argue:

> Whereas structuralism finds order and meaning in the text…., deconstruction finds disorder and a constant tendency of the language to refute its apparent sense, hence the name of the approach: texts are found to deconstruct themselves rather than to provide a stable identifiable meaning.

Accordingly, through analysing William Blake's *A Poison Tree* the main concern of this study is to discuss this deconstructionist scepticism toward the adequacy and transparency of language in terms of showing the meaning of the text. Drawing on deconstructive arguments, the researchers intends to discuss the fact that, due to the disunity of the text, the ultimate meaning of the text cannot be identified and decided.

METHODOLOGY

Deconstruction does not involve a formulaic process. Inherent in deconstruction is its resistance to offer a clear-cut strategy or methodology. According to Derrida (as cited in Royle 2000, p.10) "deconstruction does not settle for methodical procedures." In his letter to a Japanese friend, Derrida stresses the non-definability of his approach saying:

"deconstruction could not be reduced to some methodological instrumentality or set of rules and transposable procedures" (as cited in Lye 1996, p.3).

In spite of deconstruction's unique refusal of offering fixed principles and methodological procedures, some critics have suggested a number of points which can be used in operationalizing the theoretical assumptions of deconstruction. For example, Burgass (1999, p.11) summarizes the "protocol" of deconstruction in three steps:

1. Identification of the binary oppositions by which a text is structured
2. Demonstration of the hierarchical organization of these binaries
3. Investigation into the ways that the rhetoric of the text subverts the hierarchies its argument is predicated upon

Similarly, Culler (1982, p.86) agrees that deconstruction is an overturning or reversal of philosophical (i.e. rational) and discursive privilege and hierarchy. He states that "to deconstruct a discourse [communication in a variety of ways] is to show how it undermines the philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies, by identifying in the text the rhetorical operations that produce the supposed ground of argument, the key concept or premise."

In his attempt to remove the "violent hierarchy" nested within texts, Derrida calls for a reversal and overturning of privileged positions. He writes:

> On the one hand, we must traverse a phrase of overturning. To do justice to this necessity is to recognize that in a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a vis-a-vis, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the terms governs the other … or has the upper hand. To deconstruct the opposition, first of all, is to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment. (1981, p. 41)

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Drawing on what knowledge of deconstruction, the researchers believe that the following steps might be followed in deconstructing the text:

Step 1: Select a work to be deconstructed. This is generally a piece of text, though it need not be. In fact, this can be a very useful thing to do, since it leaves the critic with broad discretion to define what it means to 'read' in and thus a great deal of flexibility in interpretation. The text can be of any length, from the complete works to a single sentence.

Step 2: Decide what the text says (i.e., reading with the 'grain') usually this involves a common, non–deconstructionist way of reading the text.

Step 3: Identify within the reading a distinction of some sort. This can be either something which is described or referred to by the text directly or it can be inferred from the presumed cultural context of a hypothetical reader. It is a convention of the discourse to choose a duality, such as man/woman, good/evil, earth/sky, etc.

Step 4: Convert your chosen distinction into a 'hierarchical opposition' by asserting that the text claims or presumes a particular primacy, superiority, privilege or importance to one side or the other of the distinction.

Step 5:   Derive another reading of the text, one in which it is interpreted as referring to itself (i.e., re-reading the text). In particular, find a way to read it as a statement which contradicts opposition (which amounts to the same thing). This is called 'reading the text' against itself. This can involve a search for or focus on etymology, puns, and a variety of other wordplay.

In the present study the researchers first do a conventional reading of the text: they explain the binary oppositions that structure the text or its apparent unity or 'philosophy' (i.e., logic). They explain what the text seems to suggest, challenge, dramatize, or disparage. In this stage, the text seems to convey a temporary unity, order, and closure. This stage is usually called 'reading with the grain'. Here, the word 'grain' implies the philosophy, unity and logic of the text.

Once they have read 'with' the grain in the previous stage, the researchers read 'against' the grain and much 'closely' criticize the stability of those binaries, hierarchies, and the ideology mapped in the previous stage. In other words, the researchers try to problematize the either/or oppositions which, according to structuralists, construct the unity, logic and meaning of the text.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A Poison Tree
I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine.
And he knew that it was mine,

And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole;
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

William Blake

READING WITH THE GRAIN

Commonly, the first thing in a deconstructionist attempt is to start with a non-deconstructionist reading of the poem (i.e., a conventional reading or reading with the grain) in order to come up with a common interpretation of the text.

At first sight, the title of the poem seems associated with a well-known, historical event- the biblical allusion of Adam and Eve. The poem generally seems to have a final

message which is conveyed through a parable or extended metaphor, rather than explicitly stated.

In *A Poison Tree,* there seems to be a central metaphor which explains a truth of human nature. This poem appears to teach how anger can be dispelled by goodwill or nurtured to become a deadly poisonous tree. It is appropriate that poems touching on biblical themes should be expressed like this in which a spiritual meaning is expressed in a vivid story. The opening stanza sets up everything for the entire poem, from the ending of anger with the "friend," to the continuing anger with the "foe." Blake startles the reader with the clarity of the poem, and with metaphors that can be applied to many instances of life.

The personification in *A Poison Tree* exists both as a means by which the poem's metaphors are revealed, supported, and as a way for Blake to forecast the greater illustration of the wrath. The wrath the speaker feels is like a tree, something that grows slowly and bears fruit. In the opening stanza the speaker states, "My wrath did grow." The speaker later describes the living nature of the wrath as one which, "grew both day and night," and "bore an apple bright." This comparison of wrath to a tree illustrates the speaker's idea that like the slow and steady growth of a tree, anger and wrath gradually accumulate and form just as mighty and deadly as a poisonous tree.

To understand the metaphorical sense of the poem, one must first examine the title, *A Poison Tree* which alerts the reader that some type of metaphor will dominate the poem. In the second stanza, Blake employs several metaphors that reflect the growing and nurturing of a tree, comparing them to the feeling of hate and vanity (anger, wrath) explored by the speaker. The line, "And I watered it… with my tears" shows how the speaker's nurturing of the tree leads to destruction.

The speaker goes further to say, "And I sunned it with smiles" describing not only false intention, but the process of "sunning," giving nutrients to a plant so that it may not only grow and live, but flourish. In both of these metaphors, the basic elements for a tree to survive, water and sunlight are shown in human despair and sadness.

The religious context of the poem is also evident in two metaphorical allusions made by the speaker towards the end of the poem. The deadly fruit borne of the tree is an apple, while the scene of death and treachery occurs in the speaker's garden. The apple is a product of hate, and a biblical metaphor for sin. This connotes that destruction will occur if the tree is showered with sour emotions. The garden, which could be viewed as a place of life and prosperity, is simply the stage for the sinful act, as it was in the Bible. Like the events of the biblical story of Adam and Eve, man gives in to the weakness of sin and falls.

The powerful figurative language in *A Poison Tree* is so apparent that it brings forth an apparent message as well. The poem is not a celebration of wrath; rather it is Blake's cry against it. In his poem, Blake finally seems to warn the reader of the dangers of repression and of rejoicing in the sorrow of our foes.

READING AGAINST THE GRAIN

One characteristically deconstructive mode of reading is challenging the concept of binary oppositions. These oppositions tend to encourage hierarchic meanings and interpretations of the text.

Either pole of binary oppositions is to be culturally (conventionally rather than intrinsically) privileged over the other one. This mode of thinking can encourage the reader to think of the text as containing polarities in which one is preferred over the other in its value and meaning (e.g., dark vs. light). When reading the text, the reader might be strongly

tempted, by this logo centric mode of thinking to consider 'light' superior to 'dark'. However according to Barry (2002, p.64), "the meanings words have can never be guaranteed one hundred percent pure 'but' contaminated by their opposites" in the sense that – "you cannot define night without reference to day, or good without reference to evil." In this sense, each element (e.g. day) is not privileged over the other (e.g. night), but rather dependent on, not superior to, 'night' in its meaning. They are supplementary and are not hierarchic oppositions. This deconstructionist thinking would finally result in what is called fluidity and indeterminacy of meaning.

One typical deconstructionist attempt is to recognize the point where these oppositions are already troubled and questionable in the sense that the text (i.e. the writer) tends to undermine their logical effects and bonds. Below are some implicitly and explicitly existing opposition nested within the poem.

Privileged Term	Suppressed Term
Angry	happy
The speaker (friend)	foe
End	start
To tell	keep one's silence.
Wrath	calmness
Grow (increase)	alleviate (decrease)
Morning (light)	night (dark)
Bright	rough (not shiny)
Tears	smiles
Wiles	honesty
Deceitful (or dishonesty)	honesty
Innocence	guilt
Revenge	forgiveness
Present	absent

Reading the text critically and closely, one can find that some of these oppositions are already troubled in their logical or commonsensical hierarchic orders or rules violating the so-called universally fixed, and traditionally; 'value–laden' relations (e.g., wrath being dramatized and privileged over forgiveness), hence the text's self-deconstruction. This is elaborated below.

FOCUS ON INDIVIDUAL WORDS IN THE TEXT

One way of deconstructing the text is, however, to focus on individual elements of the text to discover the points at which the text is different from what it tends to express, hence

deconstructing itself. Reading the text closely, one might also come across points where so-called logically fixed oppositions are notoriously reversed. For example, revenge, which is generally agreed to be immoral and inhumane, seems to be implicitly encouraged by the poem (e.g., the speaker's gladness at the foe's death at the end of the poem): revenge is preferred over forgiveness, hence the reversal of the opposition. Below are some other instances spotted in the text:

1. In the second stanza there exists a seemingly illogical metaphoric concept: "Watering a tree with fears and tears": tears are unlikely to make trees grow. While "water" is a symbol of "life," "tear" seems to be an indication of "destruction." It does not seem rational to say that tears can naturally make a plant develop. It can even dry the tree and result in its death and withering, although one might argue that this tree is a special one (a poisonous tree of wrath). After all, it is a tree, be it of any possible sort: rationally speaking, any kind of plant needs to be watered with something pleasant (e.g., water) rather than something destructive (i.e., tears), in order to grow.
2. In addition, in the second stanza the poisonous tree is nursed with something pleasant (i.e., smiles) but in the following line the speaker is metaphorically sunning it with something "unpleasant" (e.g., wiles).
3. Another contradictory instance is "soft deceitful wiles": on the one hand, the speaker is trying to state his/her honesty and guilt; on the other hand s/he seems to be dishonestly and mischievously planning "soft deceitful wiles" against her/his opponent. This phrase can well betray his/her possible insincerity and meanness.
4. One might also argue that "death" is dramatized at the end of the poem, in the sense that it becomes the privileged term in the text (i.e., the speaker is "glad" about his/her foe's death): it seems that the speaker has achieved what s/he has longed for (i.e., "revenge"). Paradoxically, the traditional opposition death/life is already deconstructed in this poem so that what is commonsensically unpleasant (i.e., death) is celebrated at the end of the poem. Thus the text seems to be undermining its own logic; hence it is incoherent and contradictory.
5. Though not explicitly mentioned, the revenge/forgiveness dichotomy in the poem seems to be the most conspicuous one among the others. The death of the foe (i.e., revenge) at the end of the poem seems to be the very intention of the speaker. After all, revenge is revenge- something mean and undesirable. But in this poem, the hierarchy has changed and revenge is implicitly encouraged and dramatized.

However, one might argue that this depends on the context one is involved in. But structuralizes generally claim that oppositions are inherent in our mind, hence universal (or unchangeable) and unaffected by context. However, it is otherwise in the text: the hierarchy of bad/good (revenge/forgiveness) is undermined.

Deconstructionists suggest that this contradiction is inherent in language. Saussure (as cited in Allen 2003, p.67) maintains that "in language there are only differences with no positive terms, meaning is ceaselessly postponed rather than conveyed, dispersing and 'disseminating' itself throughout the realm of endless differing and deferral, of limitless free play." Putting forward the notion of difference, deconstructionists concentrate on the notion of trace in order to demonstrate that meaning can hardly be fixed. They argue that there are no boundaries between the oppositions; that is, term A, instead of being privileged over term B, is a trace of it. A 'differs from' B and 'defers to' C, D, etc. There is only difference between them, but no privilege. This makes meaning beyond reach, keeping it in ceaseless flux and deferral, hence the indeterminacy and undecidability of meaning.

According to Peck and Coyle (1984, p. 139) "Derrida sees a constant sliding between meaning and a plurality of differences in which opposites always bear traces of each other." What Derrida does is to look at how the two terms in a pair of binary opposition cannot exist without reference to the other – light (as presence) is defined as the absence of darkness, goodness as the absence of evil, etc., hence each term bearing a trace of the other.

LANGUAGE AND POWER: "THE OTHERNESS" OF THE TEXT

As stated by Hooti and Davoodi (2011, p.1) "Postmodernism is a move against all the black gardens where the dominating superpowers have planted their victimizing beliefs and norms and keep on insisting adamantly to make the ordinary people take care of their fruitful crops." McQuillan (2008, p.128) puts forward that "the promise of deconstruction would be that in encountering the other, justice ought to be done, even if the progressive structure of the promise relied on the necessary, in principle, ability for promises to be broken or to fail." Keeping in line with deconstruction another way of reading the text deconstructively is to concentrate on the way language is used to suppress someone in his/her absence. Language is considered an effective means to get power in various discourses such as media, the press, and literature as well as on TV, radio, etc. Language might well empower the speaker in such situations.

Discourse is said to be the medium through which power is expressed and people and practices are governed. Foucault (as cited in Murfin and Ray 1998, p.365) shows how discourses regulate what can be said, what can be thought, and what is considered true or correct. He maintains that the development of knowledge (i.e., truth) is intertwined with the mechanisms of power (as cited in Murfin and Ray 1998, p.365).

The term "power," however, seems to take on a different meaning in Foucault's theory. According to Murfin and Ray (1998, p.365) this power "is not simply a repressive power; that is, a tool of conspiracy by one individual or instruction against another." They argue that "even a tyrannical aristocrat does not simply wield power, for he is empowered by discourses (accepted ways of thinking, writing , and speaking) and practices that embody, exercise, and amount to power." Likewise, Selden and Widdowson (1993, p.158) assume that "real power is exercised through discourse."

Similarly, in *A Poison Tree* one can well recognize the way the speaker makes use of language to marginalize his/her foe. Taking the floor in the absence of his/her foe, the speaker evidently appears to have probably concocted a story in which the foe is to blame for his tyranny and dishonesty. Monopolizing the whole discourse through his/her non–reciprocal speech (repetition of the pronoun 'I' in the first stanza is an indication of this monologue); s/he seems to have a dominant, ghostly presence (obtained through the language) throughout the poem.

However, the reader just has the words and the voice of the speaker in this text. One can argue that the veracity of the story cannot be trusted based merely on what the speaker says. It seems to be unfair to condemn the foe in his absence because, unlike the speaker, he does not have the necessary chance of using language to speak out in defence of the speaker's accusations against him.

Therefore it seems as if the foe is needed to be "present" to voice (i.e., speak) his own words. Without his presence, our interpretations seem to be unfairly affected by what the speaker says only. Using the efficacy of language as well as taking advantage from the absence of the foe, the speaker might be pretending that s/he has been hurt by the foe. Trying to work out the meaning(s) of the text, one cannot merely rely on the speaker's monologue.

S/he might be shedding crocodile tears, making the readers take pity on his/her so-called guiltlessness and feel hatred for the foe's aggressiveness.

One might argue that the particular position that either of them (the foe/the speaker) occupies in this poem could have been reversed with the inclusion of the foe in the poem to negotiate his ideas and have a dialogue with the speaker. As a result, it seems that one possibility to make a sounder and purer interpretation of the poem is to include the foe in the text so that both (the speaker and the foe) can reciprocate their words. Taking his own turn (like the speaker) to make use of the power and effectiveness of language, the foe might really become a friend, leaving a different, desirable impression on the reader(s), while the "friend" (i.e., the speaker) turns into a foe.

One might, however, argue how it is possible to make the foe present in the already–written poem. It does not mean to make him physically present in the text. Rather, what is meant is to include and take into account this 'otherness' in one's interpretation; that is, one of the primary concerns of deconstruction is to make an awareness of the fact that the otherness is a significant part of what the text can mean, and that our interpretative practices are greatly interfered with this otherness which is kept suppressed by the power of language. The speaker, as mentioned above, seems to be taking the greatest advantage of the power of language in order to exclude the foe and condemn him, in his absence, for being guilty. However, a typical deconstructionist strongly emphasizes the suppressed otherness of the text (e.g. the foe) to demonstrate how the text is monopolized by the speaker using the language as effectively as possible in order to marginalize the foe, hence the failure of any possibly genuine interpretation. The presence of both the foe and the speaker seems, however, to be necessary; otherwise, our interpretation(s) would appear to be questionable. The power of language should be fairly and equally distributed between them.

As mentioned above, the binary opposition of foe/friend (the speaker), which is assumed in the reader's mind when reading the poem, can be reversed and loosened if the speaker were possibly deprived of the power of the language s/he is using in describing the foe. It is assumed that this power serves as an extraordinary help for the speaker to shut the foe out of the text, sending him to the margins. A typical deconstructionist does know that, this otherness forms a major part of the text's reality and that, with the exclusion of this otherness; her/his interpretation (s) would be highly questionable. Thus, unlike a conventional (traditional or uncritical) reader, s/he is not ignorant of and/or inattentive to this parameter throughout her/his practice of reading and interpreting the text.

CONCLUSION

One of the most primary concerns of deconstructionists is to attend to the otherness of the text- that is – to what is left out or silenced (marginalized) in the text. Deconstructionists assume that 'the otherness' forms a considerable part of what the text might mean as well as the way readers are to interpret the text. With the involvement of this marginalized aspect in reading the text, readers' interpretations can be closer to what the text might really mean, as deconstructionists argue.

Through focusing on the margins of the text and attracting the reader's attention to this absent otherness in their practice of reading and interpreting the text, deconstructionists are characteristically involved in reading the text in a way in which this otherness is noticeably appreciated and emphasized. For them, unlike for non-deconstructionist readers, this otherness is quite noteworthy and influential in one's interpretation(s). However, it is worth noting that deconstructionists' ultimate aim is not to establish a new hierarchic

opposition in which one element (e.g. "the speaker") is to be suppressed or marginalized; rather, they wish to remove the hierarchic bond or relations between the elements of binary oppositions.

Drawing upon this characteristically deconstructionist thinking, the researchers attempted to read William Blake's *A Poison Tree* in order to show how the otherness in the text (i.e. the foe) has been suppressed through the power of language. Likewise, the researchers tried to demonstrate that those taking the floor in a given piece of discourse can well marginalize their opponent(s) or addressee(s) through a monologic, dominant and effective way of using language in their argumentations (as the speaker of *A Poison Tree* does in describing the foe).

Therefore, to focus on the suppressed otherness of the text is a deconstructionist way of reading it. Again, it is necessary to remind that the deconstructionist's ultimate concern is not to give power to this otherness because this can result in establishing new hierarchic oppositions and meaning in the text. Rather, s/he tries to take this otherness into account, hence a hindrance of hierarchy in the text and meaning.

However, this is only one, and not the ultimate, way of reading the text deconstructively. In their argument, deconstructionists put forward a set of other ideas in order to demonstrate that the meaning of the text is never stable, but indeterminate and suspended. Instead of assuming a fixed and final meaning of the text (created through binary oppositions), deconstructionists highlight the instability and deferral of meaning through loosening (deconstructing) the relationships between these oppositions. A close reading of texts in search for textual gaps and contradictory elements is another typically deconstructionist activity to show that texts are seldom coherent. Therefore, a common deconstructionist attempt is concerned with seeking textual inconsistencies and paradoxes which can finally lead to 'aporias' of reading and 'undecidability' or 'indeterminacy of meaning'.

Peck and Coyle maintain that "deconstruction starts from the premise that language itself is an endless chain of meanings that cannot come to any fixed, final position: it is an endless chain in which final meaning is always deferred and differential, for this reason texts can never be coherent or stable" (1984, p. 138). They argue that what a deconstructive critic is really supposed to do is to pursue within the text the 'aporias', or contradiction, that undermines its seeming unity, and to show how the text's meanings are, in fact, 'undecidable'.

According to Derrida (as cited in Peck and Coyle 1984, p. 139) contradiction and the deferral of meaning in language are sharp criticisms on what is called "logocentricism." He argues that Western culture tries "to make meaning seem full, unified and immediate, centering upon an ultimate principle or presence." He disagrees with the desire for arriving at any ultimate, stable and independent entity or meaning outside language (i.e., "transcendental signifier"). He argues that "there is only language and difference- that is- meanings which are always differential and deferred."

Peck and Coyle (1984, p. 139) maintain that difference which is considered a central concept in deconstruction implies difference and deferral of meaning. Derrida proposes this neologism in his opposition to the Saussurean idea of "there being fixed differences in language." According to Peck and Coyle, Derrida emphasizes a constant slippage between meaning of words, and also "a plurality of differences in which opposites always bear traces of each other" (1984, p.139).

What Derrida does is to demonstrate how the terms in a pair of opposition cannot exist without reference to the other- light (as presence) is defined as the absence of darkness, goodness as the absence of evil, etc. Therefore, each term seems to be a trace of the other.

Derrida does not seek to reverse the hierarchies implied in binary pairs- to make evil favoured over good, dark over light, etc. Rather, he intends to erase the boundaries (the slash) between oppositions, to demonstrate that the values and order implied by the opposition are fixed and rigid. As Chandler (2002, p.227) states, "deconstruction is not simply a reversal of the valorization in an opposition but a demonstration of the instability of such oppositions."

According to Peck and Coyle (1984, p. 195), Derrida is fully aware, however, that his own readings can be deconstructed, for all readings are misreadings in that they impose ordering-strategies. The ordering strategy of Western culture is the organization of our thoughts in binary pairs. Derrida argues that all languages are considerably affected by this Western ordering strategy and language users are unavoidably influenced by this Western thought. However, he assumes that this ordering strategy, which is deeply rooted in all languages, is itself questionable and inadequate in its function. According to Peck and Coyle (1984, p.195) "such ordering strategy is likely to betray a dependency upon pairs in order to create a coherent case." Deconstructionists try to show that these pairs are questionable themselves, and texts are incoherent and contaminated with contradictory points. This is a typical deconstructionist attempt to demonstrate that the Western ordering strategy, which is built on binary oppositions, is inadequate and questionable.

To sum up, the researchers do know that what they have done and written in this paper is inherently subject to be deconstructed by its readers. Therefore, this paper, like any other texts, might include textual gaps and possible contradictions, hence undermine its own philosophy or logic. After all, deconstruction is a reading approach that not only exposes the limitations or inconsistencies of any particular set of conceptual oppositions and priorities in a text, but also shows how the text's attempt to maintain this system undermines the very principles of its own operation. In other words, deconstruction is simultaneously a critique of the categories proffered by a text, and an exposé of the text's unacknowledged challenges to its own premises. As Derrida (1976, p.158) puts it in his "of Grammatology":

> Reading … cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it … or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place, outside of language … [hence] the absence of the referent or the transcendental signified. There is nothing outside the text.

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