



22.3.2007 [709-724]

Konrad Kebung Beöang

REPOSITIONING DERRIDA'S DECONSTRUCTION

ABSTRACT

Tulisan ini adalah suatu studi fenomenologis yang mengetengahkan faham Derrida tentang dekonstruksi dan pelbagai penjelasan teknis yang mendukung ide dasar aliran ini. Bagi Derrida filsafat pertama-tama bukan dilihat sebagai hasil karya para idealis atau rasionalis, melainkan sebagai tulisan atau teks (bahasa Latin *texere* berarti menenun), semacam tenunan atau fabrikasi dari pelbagai pengalaman dan proses berpikir manusia, pola tingkah laku, dan kebudayaan, yang ia lihat sebagai wacana (diskursus). Pandangan dasar Derrida, kendati telah menuai banyak kritik, tetaplah memungkinkan kita memahami lebih dalam persoalan-persoalan yang tersembunyi di balik pandangan tradisional tentang rasio, kesadaran, esensi, fondasi, dan sebagainya.

Key Words:

Deconstruction • Trace • Limit of philosophy • Truth-seeking rigor • Phonocentrism • Text • Writing • Fabrication • Literary criticism • Transcendental • Undecidable meaning • Social criticism • Deconstruction of deconstruction

Getting into discussion of deconstruction seems to be troublesome for many, who are still maintaining the concept of the world as the way it is. To them, deconstruction is a radical movement attempting to root out, by force, traditional concepts and ideas, which are claimed as unchangeable. The post-modernist thinkers, led by Jacques Derrida, as the proponents of deconstructive philosophy, are blamed for cutting off the deeply-rooted ideas, which have been firmly preserved ever since. They are seen as consistent opponents threatening traditional and conservative beliefs ranging from the natural to somewhat spiritual and religious ones. They are accused of annihilating not only natural ideas of everyday life-discourse but also religious faith, which for many, is praised as an ultimate expression of their relationship with the highest Being. I may skeptically say that the consequences of the naive belief in the deadly power of deconstruction might probably be true. However, this feeling of threat might be more devastating if one is not able to look deeply into the essence and the adequate meaning of deconstructive ideas.

The philosophers of this group, as I understand, do not work purposely to radically change all that have been naturally believed as the fundamental and unchangeable principles. Derrida, for instance, talks about *trace*, *differance*, and *spacing*, which means that the unfolding of something other is always possible. This means that Derrida does not want to efface or to erase these static and absolute principles. Instead, he leaves them open in trace and let other possibilities emerge in this trace. Here Derrida certainly describes the limits of philosophy itself.¹

Deconstruction, with no doubt, provokes innumerable debates and discussions, which are still going on at present time. In my opinion, Derrida and all other poststructuralists are on the same line as Gabriel Marcel, Merleau Ponty, Richard Rorty, and even Plato, and many others, who allow the subject of philosophy to be open and without specific answers. In this way, they assert the limits of philosophy. I think, by doing this, we do justice to philosophy, which should be ceaselessly proposing questions and never covers itself in an objective and absolute answer and privileges itself with truth-seeking rigor.² One can conclude, therefore, that Derrida's deconstruction is always provocative to a deconstructive reading.

Deconstruction: Historically Understood

“Deconstruction”, a term coined by Derrida, is a philosophical method of reading the text and an attempt to find out what is absent in a present text. As a method, it attempts to represent something essential,

which is forgotten or suppressed by the traditional metaphysics, which mainly bases itself on the notion of foundation, presence, subjectivity, truth, identity, meaning and the like. These repressed ideas are found quite convincingly as constitutive to that very idea or concept. In Derrida's term, deconstructive main task is to deconstruct western metaphysics to show that its theories of knowledge are only construction whose very texts undermine the points they are supposed to support.³ For instance, *phonocentrism* represses the presence of writing or text, which is essentially constitutive to its being. The meaning of this very term will become clearer as we go along through its interpretations in the following lines. This term, of course, has its own history developed in a specific way until it becomes an open debate among philosophers and literary critics.

Derrida's very term deconstruction has as its inspirational source in Heidegger's highly developed ideas of destruction of the metaphysics of presence and his notion of the difference between Being and beings. Heidegger, however, was mostly influenced by Husserl's phenomenology. Derrida therefore owes much to Husserl through Heidegger and by being himself studying into Husserl's philosophy. The main idea that Husserl contributes to the emergence of Derrida's term of deconstruction is phenomenological reduction or bracketing (*epoche*). Husserl, in his search for an absolute and pure knowledge, bracketed the natural attitude toward the world in order to have the single focus on the transcendental subjectivity that constitutes it. This kind of reduction through dismantling this world is, to him, not a reflective operation.⁴ Heidegger sees this reduction as a "leading phenomenological vision back from the apprehension of a being, whatever may be the character of the apprehension, to the understanding of the being of this being."⁵ This reduction becomes, for Heidegger, a means of regaining the original metaphysical experience of Being. Heidegger claims, therefore, that the phenomenological reduction or the retrogression from what is to Being is at once the construction of Being, which necessarily becomes a chance for the destruction of tradition. In other words, destruction for Heidegger, is a "critical process in which the traditional concepts, which at first must necessarily be employed, are deconstructed down to the sources from which they were drawn."⁶ This is certainly, claims Heidegger, not a violent act, as the term destruction might have suggested, because one cannot eliminate by force a tradition which is rich in truth. Instead, it has a positive aim. Thus, Heidegger's notion of destruction, as the necessary reverse of the reductive construction of the question of Being, notably prefigures Derrida's concept of deconstruction.

It is to be noted that in the beginning the term 'deconstruction' was only a common word without any significant meaning. It is merely a renaming of Heidegger's term for destruction and dismantling. However, in the context of structuralism this term became widely valorized, which pushed Derrida to define it in a specific way.⁷

Philosophy as a Kind of Writing (text)

In his celebrated work *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida criticizes Husserl for repressing the non-presence of the presence in terms of pure presentation for the sake of his ideal essence and pure consciousness. Derrida himself claims that each affirmation of presence naturally involves within itself the absence, that is, *retention* (the experience of the past) and *protention* (the projection of the future). Husserl himself describes this, but never acknowledges this explicitly for the sake of his pure presentation. Derrida claims further that for the play of presence and absence, language is necessarily taken as the proper way.⁸ The traditionalist's view, on the other hand, emphasizing the significance of voice and speech, claims that language always exists properly in the speaking mass. One cannot handle speech except by drawing on the language. Conversely speaking, language is only possible when it starts from speech. In other words, historically, speech-phenomena always precedes language-phenomena.⁹ Derrida would argue that by saying so they repress the idea of language as a signifying system which exceeds all the bonds of individual presence.¹⁰

Husserl's emphasis on the priority of sign as an expression (*Ausdruck*) over its function as indication (*Anzeichen*) is the only way to preserve speech or voice (*phonocentrism*). Derrida would claim that sign as indicative function is many times intertwined with its expressive use. He would even claim that all expressions in communicative speech function as indicative. They serve the hearers as signs of thoughts of the speaker.¹¹ It is only sign as index that makes something significant. This he argues with the intention to privilege writing over speech. In attempting to counter-argue what Husserl says and in order to make sign as index more significant, Derrida emphasizes the presence of the absence in any act of presentation.¹² To understand this point Derrida creates many new terminologies in order to show that there are still other possible meanings coming from every present concept. These new terms are not understood as concepts or words, since concepts or words imply the essence and identity, against which Derrida is struggling.

Turning to the problem of writing or text, I do not want here to describe the whole notion of it in terms of literature and literary criticism. Instead, I would concentrate on the essential meaning of "writing" in Derrida's specific term and how this writing is discussed or debated in the course of time. First, I would like to say that the notion of writing is not a *sui generis* coined by Derrida, for it seems to have been originated in Husserl. In Husserl's *Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, Derrida shows how Husserl resorts to the very possibility of writing:

...in fragrant disregard of the contempt in which writing is held throughout the history of philosophy in order to secure the absolute ideal objectivity, and thus the traditionalization of meaning. Otherwise all meaning would as yet remain captive of the de facto and actual intentionality of a speaking subject or community of speaking subject.¹³

What Derrida claims by writing, is not primarily to be understood in terms of oral and written language. It is not something that is visible or script coded in the world. In other words, it is not to be understood in terms of factual spatio-temporalization which ensures meaning's ideality. Instead, it should be specifically understood in terms of space and the emergence of possibility in human communication the possibility which is primordial to all scriptural language and oral discourse. I may use Derrida's own words:

Writing is no longer only the wordly and mnemotechnical aid to a truth whose own being sense would dispense with all writing down. The possibility or necessity of being incarnated in a graphic sign is no longer simply extrinsic and factual in comparison with ideal objectivity: it is the sine qua non condition of objectivity's internal completion.¹⁴

It is worthy noting that writing presupposes something more primordial, which Derrida calls text. Text is the important element, which is unconsciously repressed in every-day human discourses and communications. This text, therefore, is something existential, historical, and cultural. It explains the society's basic needs, way of life, life-world, and mankind in general. Every text has a connection with other texts (*intertextuality*) and these texts intertwine each other in a good fabrication as the word 'text' suggests.¹⁵ These texts find their proper signification in writing. Derrida claims then that every speech and discourse in human language

essentially implies writing. In other words, writing as a metaphoric sign is always inscribed in every human speech (*scriptural metaphors*).

If one thinks of speech and writing in conceptual terms, then the traditional stance would be right in claiming that writing must efface itself before speech as its truth. Derrida certainly makes an analysis of a different goal, aiming at making up a law dealing with the contradiction of philosophical discourse. Such law will explain the reason that what is supposed to be pure and transcendental is always contaminated by its opposite and why that speech can only be thought by referring to writing.¹⁶ This condition which should precede the pure concept or speech Derrida calls “infrastructure” and in terms of writing, it is called *arche-writing*. It is also known as general writing (*protowriting*). The factual writing with coded script commonly understood, is only the sign or metaphor of general writing.¹⁷ It is clear though that writing in this sense does not deal with the act of writing or any other emotional feelings that come out of the activity of writing. It is not concerned with the object of writing, the sign present on pages or their production. It is not something with proper value not a concept of an essence.¹⁸ Therefore, according to Derrida, no one can efface writing as metaphorical sign. The traditional philosophy, however, strives for a long time to efface its written character but “the signs of that struggle are there to be read in its blind spots of metaphor and other rhetorical strategies.”¹⁹

This very notion of writing is a real attack upon many views in the past which are still inherited in various contemporary ideas and ways of thinking. Based on this notion he strongly criticizes, for instance, structuralism under Ferdinand de Saussure and his followers, who inherited many of the traditional ideas cultivated in their linguistic discourse. They hold that voice is the only metaphor of truth and authenticity. Writing is regarded as a means of destroying the ideal pure self-presence. Writing is seen as a deceiving shadow which falls between intent and meaning, between utterance and understanding. It is seen as only a supplement of spoken language or secondary to speech. Levy-Strauss, for instance, in his study of cultural anthropology, sees writing as the source of all cultural activity as the dangerous knowledge of its own constitution which culture must always repress. He claims further that writing, as one of the major results of new invention and civilization, is viewed as the modern medium to colonize and oppress the people. The primitive people, under this situation, lost their primordial paradise prepared for them by nature. For Levy-Strauss, exploitation and writing seem to go together naturally. Writing is seen then

as a great violence which should be erased in order to keep the unity of speech.²⁰ The same idea has been also raised by Jacques Rousseau in his *Essay on the Origin of Languages*. There Rousseau sees 'speech' as original form and the most natural condition of language. He regards writing with curious distrust and debilitating mode of expression. His philosophy of human nature claims that man is, by nature, born free and full of happiness. But a lot of problems are raised because of the new development in human new invention and civilization. He holds then that mankind had degenerated from the state of natural grace into the bondage of politics and civilized existence. It follows that nature is corrupted by language and culture. Education, for him, is an attempt to bring man back to his natural condition.²¹

Derrida has a lot to argue on this problem. He would argue this on his basic notion of writing, but he can also argue it on the basis of his frame of thinking, which is culturally and contextually conditioned, while never disregarding the whole question of human condition, which certainly determines the whole framework of one's activity. Once again, I may briefly repeat Derrida's main point that writing is the precondition of language and it is prior to speech. So the concept of writing cannot be reduced to its normal sense (graphic and inscriptural). Writing is the expression of text, which means the fabrication (*erwerbung*) of all human and cultural discourses. That is why he claims that text is everything and primordial to speech, which everybody experiences. Hence, nothing is outside the text (*Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*). The term is closely related to the element of signifying difference. It is an element of undecidability within every system of communication. In this sense oral language already belongs to a generalized writing. In other words, language is always inscribed in a network of relays and differential trace that can never be grasped by an individual speaker (Norris, p. 29).

Derrida holds further that writing is a part of a social existence and cannot be dated from the moment people are able to use the merely graphic conversion. Hence, we are not doing justice to literature if we repress the theme of writing, which has many textual ramifications in social discourse and cultural society. We conclude here that writing emerges both within the very theme of speech and within the text which strives to realize and authenticate that theme. Philosophy is therefore preeminently a collection of texts, a written archive whose authoritative claims are oddly bound up with a strong disposition to deny or efface its own textual character.²²

Critical Notions

Derrida's deconstruction raises many questions some of which are not yet satisfactorily answered and remain subtle. His strong belief in deconstructive reading, which is not clear to many, ridiculous to some, interesting and making sense to few, divides his readers into the pros and cons. The questions rapidly raised the quick acceleration of literary theories and criticism, and these very questions enrich the agenda of the present day's debates.

Is Derrida Relativist, Nihilist, or Irrationalist?

As a creative reader and writer, Derrida's works to some are regarded as profound, innovative and perhaps constructive critiques of many of our basic ideas or institutions. Others would suspect them of fostering relativism and nihilism. The careful reading, however, proves that he stands between relativism and nihilism and is not innovative or original.²⁵ To some, Derrida is considered relativist or nihilist concerning his firm belief of undecidable meaning, truth, and subjectivity. Every meaning should be seen as the sign for other possible meanings. There is no objective meaning as Husserl might have claimed. From this claim emerge numerous objections. If there is no objective meaning at all, how could we talk about language as the tool of human communication that implies in itself some meaning? Moreover if written text (or any act of communication) cannot be definitely interpreted and if meaning is undecidable, is it not the case that any text can be made to mean anything at all? How can an undecidable meaning be definitely communicated? It seems that Derrida's very statement undermines itself. Furthermore, if objective truth does not exist, is not every view seen as valid as every other? If truth is no longer available as standard, we simply can no longer distinguish between better and worse ideas. This can lead to irrationalism. When truth is abandoned, nihilism follows. Then we lack standards. In this situation, relativism remains the only alternative (Nehamas, 31-33).

However, Derrida is not an advocate of irrationalism, relativism and nihilism. Undecidability is specific. It does not make of every text a blank state on which any interpretation can be imposed. He does not make the author nothing and the reader everything. He does not mean that nothing means anything in particular, that every text is at its reader's mercy. To Derrida, as Nehamas says: "What is undecidable is only whether a text really means that speech communicates truth better than writing or, for that matter, the opposite, since the distinction between the two is being

questioned.” (Nehamas, 33). Hence, Derrida does not refer here to the undecidability of meaning in a very general term.

Philosopher, Literary Critic, or Writer?

Derrida's critic of philosophy (as traditionally understood) and his preoccupation of reading (and writing) lead his critics and readers to the question of whether he is a philosopher or a literary critic. Some claim that he is a philosopher, who is philosophizing through literary works. Most claim that he is a writer. Richard Rorty, in his *Two Meanings of Logocentrism: A Reply to Norris*, claims that Derrida is a writer. This does not mean that being a philosopher is closed to Derrida. Rorty shows that Derrida appeals to at least three different audiences, namely 1) those who admire his way of doing his dialectical sequence that runs through Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. There, his writings are predominantly under the theme such as, overcoming the tradition, originality, and starting up a new beginning. 2) Those who admire him as a writer. In this group (including Rorty himself) Derrida is seen as one of the great French writers of his time. He is regarded as the great comic writer perhaps the funniest writer on philosophical topics since Kierkegaard. 3) The larger audience would be of those who write deconstructive literary criticism. They assimilate early Derrida with the thinking of Paul de Man, who claims that one thing to be done by the readers of literature, is to continually rediscover, by close reading, the impossibility of reading. De Man's readers are always asking why poetic the most linguistic sort of language, as it were- names the presence of a nothingness. The answer would be found in Derrida's claim that the signs represent the presence in its absence. In other words, the sign in this sense is deferred presence.²⁴ Derrida's appeals to these different audiences show that he is certainly a philosopher as well as a writer. However, as has been said earlier, Derrida's most constant interest (more than philosophical interest) is literature, or writing that he calls literary. In his thesis of “Ideality of the Literary Object,” he claims that his initial inquiry into the ideality of literary object had the effect of situating his work at the margins not only of philosophy but also of literature. This brings us further to infer that his philosophy implies his literary criticism (even not immediately evident), and literary criticism in turn implies his philosophy. Hence, both philosophy and literature do not undermine each other through their content though literature has been made more and more capable of challenging philosophy's dominant categorization. For example, it becomes a radical interrogation of philosophy not only by refusing its foundation in prior being of meaning but also by disclaiming any essence as concerns its

substance of expression. This is the reason literature is said as having subversive function with regard to philosophy (Gasche, 258-9).

Apart from any acknowledgement of Derrida as a great writer, I would assert that Derrida remains philosopher in its pure sense in his writings and literary works. Norris, for example, himself a literary critic, claims that the texts Derrida uses belong to philosophy in so far as they raise certain familiar questions about thought, language, identity, and other themes of philosophical debate (Norris, 18). There are certain philosophical ideas (traditional philosophy) which he refuses, for instance, philosophy's privileged status of sovereign dispenser of reason, which has a lot of more consequences in philosophical itinerary. But this does not mean that Derrida is really hostile to philosophy. It is hard, of course, to describe precisely the relationship or the distinction between philosophy and non-philosophy, as philosophy is understood through different paradigms and discourses in the course of time. Derrida just likes to place himself on the limit of philosophical discourse—the limit on the basis of which philosophy became possible and defined itself as the episteme.²⁵

I am not quite sure whether he is a true lover of wisdom, as the very term philosophy suggests. But in the era of scientific development, philosophy is likely to be understood scientifically. Hence, a true philosopher might be seen as a thinker, who is able to reflect, to argue, and to pose his view and opinion in different kinds of discourses. Derrida himself claims that philosophical discourse involves in any scientific discipline. It is not as in logocentrism, which makes a clear distinct limit between science and philosophy.²⁶

Furthermore, in his deconstructive elaborations, he primarily explores and criticizes the texts and ideas using merely philosophical terms. It seems that he cannot get away from this fact. In criticizing philosophy he still uses the conceptual resources of philosophy and therefore belongs within its field. In criticizing transcendental ideas he absolutely needs some specific terminologies pertaining to this approach. In attacking metaphysics he absolutely needs metaphysical concepts. There is no sense of doing without using specific concepts and ideas pertaining to the subject one is contending. This is why Derrida is criticized of being perpetuating logocentrism by attempting to attack it. This same critic is also launched by Juergen Habermas as saying: "Derrida inherits the weaknesses of a critique of metaphysics that does not shake loose of the intention of first philosophy."²⁷ Similar critique is also launched by Richard Rorty, the neopragmatist, saying that Derrida's deconstruction is just wasting time because it is actually working on the grounding assumptions of logocentric

reason and then falls back into a kind of negative theology that merely replaces one set of absolutes with another. Yet Rorty is still on the same line with Derrida, trying to reject the idea of philosophy as a discourse with its own special truth-seeking rigor. They suggest that philosophy should advocate new roles as a cultural discourse on a level with others like literary criticism. This is a reason why Rorty counts Derrida as a semi-pragmatist. Here Rorty attempts to associate deconstruction with pragmatism. However, Jonathan Culler would argue against Rorty by making a distinct notion of pragmatism and deconstruction. He says that while pragmatist view of truth treats conventionally accepted norms as foundation, deconstruction goes on to point out that 'norms' are produced by acts of exclusion.²⁸ Pragmatism tends toward political radicalism.

The mood of anti-Derridean also comes from Flaubert, a literary critic, who does not see Derrida as a philosopher at all. Instead, he regards Derrida as an anti-philosophy. Or John Searle (from analytic tradition), who sees Derrida as merely playing games and wishfully ignoring all the proper and serious methods for carrying debate. To all of these critics, Derrida is seen as a latter day sophist. However, this argument, to Norris, seems to be a mistaken reading of Derrida. As reply to Rorty, for instance, Norris argues that, at certain points of Derrida's writing, he seems to be making a choice between philosophy and literature and he explicitly mentions 'literature.'²⁹ There are certainly a lot of debates and discussions going on among literary critics, a group who makes Derrida's deconstruction ever more radical. Moreover, Derrida's presupposition of the undecidable meaning and, that each meaning is merely a signifier for something else (the signified), opens up the way to the notion of signs and signification. There, Derrida is trapped again in his emphasis on the transcendental primacy of the sign against meaning. In allowing the *differance* (deferred meaning) Derrida necessarily accepts another transcendental reality, which seems to be repressed unconsciously. Gasche is therefore right in claiming that Derrida is a transcendental philosopher in this sense. It is also Norris' claim that Derrida should be read as a transcendental philosopher in the Kantian tradition, who digs out hitherto unsuspected presupposition. Like Kant, Derrida also uses some transcendental deduction, an argument to demonstrate that a priori notion of logical truth is a priori ruled out of court by rigorous reflection on the powers and limits of textual critique.

There are numerous things to be said about Derrida, whose frame of ideas seems to remain unclear for many. One thing clear is that he assumes to deconstruct traditional or common sense philosophy, which is privileged to be truth-claims. Using Husserl's texts he explores this assumption and

finally come to the strong conclusion that philosophy takes as its proposition something which it ignores or represses. From there he elaborates his notion of *textuality* and writing based on his historical and cultural discourses that are apparently clear in everyday human communication. These kinds of human discourses are called texts. The object is claimed to emerge out of the inter-connection of texts, which are the signs themselves. Under this framework of texts everything can be understood and therefore Derrida claims that everything is in the status of text. However, the radicalization of Derrida's deconstruction by deconstructive postmodernist in the USA, in particular, always creates new debates and applies this deconstructive reading in many other fields. Deconstruction is seen then as going beyond texts. One casualty which is clear is social criticism. It makes social criticism (literary, historical, and philosophical) very difficult. This radical deconstruction brings with itself a lot of difficulties. In its very extreme view, radical deconstructive criticism might epistemologically bring not only harms in philosophical discourses but also, in its applied fields, it might be considered dangerous for many.

By now it seems to be clear that Derrida's intention in posing deconstructive method, is to show the limits of philosophy and to tear down the veil of philosophical discourses understood in the past. His notion of undecidable meaning and that every meaning should be seen as signs of other's possible unfolding leads us further to the possibility of deconstructing his deconstruction. We are aware that this is one of our open intellectual explorations. There is always no absolute answer. There is only possibility. This is Derrida's precise insight of a genuine philosophy elaborated in his notion of text, textuality, writing, and literature. In other words, philosophy to Derrida is a "kind of writing."

Konrad Kebung Beöang

St. Paulus Catholic School of Philosophy

Ledalero, Flores,

Indonesia

End Notes:

1. To me, the idea of trace and oversimplification of the traditional ideas and values (as some might claim) is analogous to Plato's downgrading of the sense-world and all practical works. To downgrade does not

- mean to erase at all. There Plato still acknowledges the existence and the role of sense-world, which builds up his theory of Forms or makes his description of the intellectual pursuit work.
2. Philosophy (*philein* and *sophia*) is literally understood as “love of wisdom”. This definition suggests that a philosopher is a lover and the one who searches for wisdom and not the possessor of it (Pythagoras). He is standing closer to wisdom. He is not the one who already becomes a *sophos* and not the one who knows nothing, but he is the one who stands between these two poles (Plato in his *Lysis*).
 3. See Karen Winkler, “Evolution in Post-structuralism Owes much to Derrida, Cixous, and Others,” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (November 25, 1987), pp. A6 A9.
 4. See Rudolphe Gasche, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p.112. Confer also Erazim Kohak, “Ideas and Experience: Edmund Husserl's Project of Phenomenology” in *Ideas I* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 35-46.
 5. This is quoted by Gasche from Heidegger's 1927 lectures entitled “The Basic Problem of Phenomenology” (p. 21), in his *Tain of the Mirror, op, cit*, p. 112.
 6. Gasche, *Op.cit.* p.113
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
 8. See his *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, translated by David, B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p.10
 9. The traditional view was mostly re-articulated and summed up by the structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure and also Roland Barthes. See Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1986), p. 26. See also Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, 1967, p. 16.
 10. Norris, *op.cit.* p.27
 11. Cf. Juergen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse on Modernity*, trans. F.G.Lawrence. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 169.
 12. To Derrida, the absence is always meaning the repression of something regarded as non-being as opposed to being in the sense of presence.
 13. See pp. 87-88; as quoted by Gasche, *op.cit.*, p.271.
 14. J. Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* (New York: Humanities Press, 1978), pp. 88-89; as quoted by Gasche, *op.cit.*, p. 272.
 15. It comes from the Latin word *texere* meaning to weave or to fabricate.

16. Gasche, *op.cit.*, p. 273.
17. See Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, translated by Allan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 209. *Dissemination* (London: Athlone Press, 1981), p. 105. It is in the same way one understands Derrida's notion of text, general text, or textuality.
18. See his *Dissemination* (London: Athlone Press, 1981), p. 105. It is in the same way one understands Derrida's notion of text, general text, or textuality.
19. See Norris, *op.cit.*, p.19
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 18ff.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 32ff.
22. See W.Reed Dasenbrock, *Redrawing the Lines: Analytic Philosophy, Deconstruction and Literary Theory* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 190.
23. See Alexander Nehamas, "How to Understand Derrida: Truth and Consequences," in *The New Republic*, V, no. 197, Oct. 5, 1987: p. 31.
24. Dasebrock, *op.cit.* pp. 204 216. The same article is also found in Rorty's *Essays of Heidegger and Other Philosophic Papers*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 113 116.
25. J. Derrida, *Positions*, translated by Allan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp.5-6.
26. See Richard Kearney, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 114 115.
27. J. Habermas, *op.cit.*, p. 181. See also David Rasmussen, *Reading Habermas* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1990), p. 106
28. See J. Culler, *On Deconstruction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), p.153.
29. See his "Philosophy as not just a kind of Writing", in *Redrawing the Lines*, *op.cit.*, pp. 191-192.

Reading Lists

Primary Sources: Works by Derrida

1. *Dissemination*. London: Athlone Press, 1981.
2. *Edmund Husserl's Geometry: An Introduction*. New York: The Humanites Press, 1978.
3. *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Allan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
4. *Of Grammatology*. Baltimore: J. Hopkins University Press, 1977.

5. *Positions*, trans. Allan Bass. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.
6. *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
7. *Writing and Difference* (trans. Allan Bass). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Secondary Sources

1. Culler, Jonathan. *OnDeconstruction*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982.
2. Dasenbrock, W. Reed. Ed. *Redrawing the Lines: Analytics Philosophy, Deconstruction, and Literary Theory*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
3. Ferry, Luc and Reanult, Alain. *French Philosophy of the Sixties*. Translated by H. S. Cattoni. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1985.
4. Gasche, Rodolphe. *The Tain of the Mirror*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.
5. Goodheart, Eugene. *The Skeptic Disposition in Contemporary Criticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
6. Habermas, Juergen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans by F.G.Lawrence. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991.
7. Kearney, Richard. *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.
8. Kohak, Erazim. "Idea and Experience: Edmund Husserl's Project of Phenomenology" in *Ideas I*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.
9. Nehamas, Alexander. "How to Understand Derrida: Truth and Cosequences", in *The New Republic*, V, no. 197, Oct.5, 1987: 31-36.
10. Norris, Christopher. *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 1986.
11. Rasmussen, David. *Reading Habermas*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1990.
12. Rorty, Richard. *Essays on Heidegger and Other Philosophical Papers*. Vol.II. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
13. Salusinszky, Imre. *Criticism in Society* (interview), New York: 1987 (pp.9-24).

14. Spretnak, Charlene. *States of Grace: The Recovery of Meaning in the Post-modern Age*. San Fransisco: Harper St. Fransisco, 1991.
15. Winkler, Karen, J. "Evolution of Post-structuralism Owe much to Derrida, Cixous, and Others," in *The Chronicle of the Higher Education*, November 25, 1987: pp. A6-A9.