CHAPTER - II
DIFFERENCE AND POSTMODERNISM:
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Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) is the founder of “deconstruction”, a way of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts but also political institutions. Derrida expressed regret concerning the fate of the word “deconstruction,” its popularity indicates the wide-ranging influence of his thought, in philosophy, in literary criticism and theory, in art and, in particular, architectural theory, and in political theory. Indeed, Derrida's fame nearly reached to the status of a media star, with hundreds of people filling auditoriums to hear him speak, with films and televisions programs devoted to him, with countless books and articles devoted to his thinking. Beside critique, Derridean deconstruction consists in an attempt to re-conceive the difference that divides self-reflection, the re-conception of difference, and more importantly, deconstruction works towards preventing the worst violence. It attempts to render justice. Indeed, deconstruction is relentless in this pursuit since justice is impossible to achieve.

Born on July 15, 1930 in El-Biar (a suburb of Algiers), Algeria, into a Sephardic Jewish family, Derrida’s writing concerns autobiography, many of his writings are auto-biographical. In Monolingualism of the Other (1998), Derrida recounts how, when he was in the “lycee” (high school), in particular Berber. Derrida calls his experience of the “interdiction” “unforgettable and generalizable” (Derrida, Jacques 1998, 37).

After World War II, Derrida started to study philosophy. In 1949, he moved to Paris, where he prepared for the entrance examination in philosophy for the prestigious Ecole Normale Superieure. Once Gilles
Deleuze accepted him, smiling and saying, “My thoughts are with you, my very best thoughts.” Indeed, Derrida entered the Ecole Normale at a time when a remarkable generation of philosophers and thinkers was coming of age. There was also Foucault, Althusser, Lyotard, Barthes, and Marin. Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Levi-Strauss, Lacan, Ricoeur, Blanchot, and Levinas were still alive. The Fifties in France was the time of phenomenology, and Derrida studied minutely Husserl’s phenomenology. He published works as well as some of the archival material. The result was a “Memoires” from the academic year 1953-54 called *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl’s Philosophy*; Derrida published this text in 1990. Most importantly, at the Ecole Normale, Derrida studied Hegel with Jean Hyppolite. Hyppolite was to direct Derrida's doctoral thesis, “The Ideality of the Literary Object”; Derrida did not complete the thesis. His studies with Hyppolite however led Derrida to a noticeably Hegelian reading of Husserl. Derrida claimed in his 1980 speech “The Time of a Thesis” it is possible now to see similarities between Merleau-Ponty’s final studies of Husserl and Derrida’s first studies. One is taken aback by Derrida’s one hundred and fifty page long Introduction to his French translation of Husserl’s “The Origin of Geometry” (1962). Derrida’s Introduction looks to be a radically new understanding of Husserl insofar as Derrida stresses the problem of language in Husserl’s thought of history.

The 1960 is a decade of great achievement for the generation of French thinkers. 1961 sees the publication of Foucault’s monumental (*Madness and Civilization*). Derrida is participated in a seminar where Foucault delivered speech; on the basis of it, he wrote *Cogito and the History of Madness* (1963), in which he criticizes Foucault’s early thought especially Foucault’s interpretation of Descartes. *Cogito and the History of Madness* is result in a rupture between Derrida and Foucault. It
is hard to determine which of Derrida’s early essays is the most important, but certainly *Violence and Metaphysics* has to be a leading position. What comes through clearly in *Violence and Metaphysics* is Derrida’s great sympathy for Levinas’s thought of alteration and at the same it is clear that Derrida goes away from Levinas’s thought. Despite this distance, *Violence and Metaphysics* opens up a lifetime friendship of Derrida and Levinas.

In 1967 Derrida has published three books at once: *Writing and Difference*, *Speech and Phenomena*, and *Of Grammatology*. In all three, Derrida uses the word “deconstruction” in passing to describe his plan. The word attracts the scholar’s attention of immediately and comes to define Derrida's thought. It comes to be associated with a form of writing and thinking that is irrational and vague. It must be noted that Derrida's style of writing contributed not only to his great popularity but also to the great animosity some felt towards him. His style is frequently more literary than philosophical and therefore more evocative than argumentative. Certainly, Derrida’s style is not traditional. In the same speech from 1980 at the time of him being awarded a doctorate, Derrida tells us that, in the Seventies, he devoted himself to developing a style of writing. The most famous or infamous example is his 1974 *Glas*. Here Derrida writes in two columns, with the left devoted to a reading of Hegel and the right devoted to a reading of the French novelist-playwright Jean Genet. Another example would be his 1980 *Postcard from Socrates to Freud and Beyond*; the opening two hundred pages of this book consist of love letters addressed to no one in particular. It seems that sometime around this time (1980), Derrida reverted back to the more linear and somewhat argumentative style, the very style that defined his texts from the Sixties. However he never gave up a kind of evocation, a calling forth that truly defines deconstruction. Derrida takes the idea of a call from
Heidegger. Starting in 1968 with *The Ends of Man* Derrida devoted a number of texts to Heidegger’s thought. In particular, during the 1980’s, Derrida wrote a series of essays on the question of sex or race in the style of Heidegger. While frequently critical, these essays often provide new insights into Heidegger’s thought. The culminating essay in Derrida’s series on Heidegger is his 1992 *Aporias*.

Throughout the Sixties, having been invited by Hyppolite and Althusser, Derrida taught at the Ecole Normale. In 1983, he became “Director of Studies” in Philosophical Institutions in Paris; he will hold this position until his death. Starting in the Seventies, Derrida has accepted many appointments in American universities, in particular Johns Hopkins University and Yale University. From 1987, Derrida taught one semester a year at the University of California at Irvine. Derrida's close relationship with Irvine led to the establishment of the Derrida archives there. During the Seventies, Derrida associated himself with GREPH (“Le Groupe de Recherche sur l'Enseignement Philosophique,” in English: “The Group Investigating the Teaching of Philosophy”). As its name suggests, this group investigated how philosophy is taught in the high schools and universities in France. Derrida wrote several texts based on this research, many of which were collected in *Concerning the Right to Philosophy in 1990*. In 1982, Derrida was also one of the founders of the College Internationale de Philosophie in Paris, and served as its first director from 1982 to 1984.

In the 1990’s, Derrida’s works went in two simultaneous directions that tend to intersect and overlap with one another: politics and religion. These two directions were probably first clearly evident in Derrida's 1989 “Force of Law”. But one can see them better in his 1993 *Specters of Marx*, where Derrida insisted that a deconstructed (or criticized) Marxist thought is still relevant to today’s world despite globalization. A
deconstructed Marxism consists in a new messianism of a “democracy to come.” Sometime in 2002, Derrida was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He died on October 8, 2004. Since his death two biographies have appeared (Powell 2006 and Peeters 2013).

First published in 1967, *Writing and Difference*, a collection of Jacques Derrida’s essays written between 1959 and 1966, has become a landmark of contemporary French thought. In it we find Derrida at work on his systematic deconstruction of Western metaphysics. The book’s first half, which includes the celebrated essay on Descartes and Foucault, shows the development of Derrida’s method of deconstruction. In these essays, Derrida demonstrates the traditional nature of some supposedly non-traditional currents of modern thought. One of his main targets being the way in which structuralism unwittingly repeats metaphysical concepts in its use of linguistic models. The second half of the book contains some of Derrida’s most compelling analyses of why and how metaphysical thinking must exclude writing from its conception of language finally showing metaphysics to be constituted by this exclusion. These essays on Artaud, Freud, Bataille, Hegel, and Levi-Strauss have served as introductions to Derrida’s notions of writing and difference—the untranslatable formulation of a non-metaphysical ‘concept’ that does not exclude writing—for almost a generation of students of literature, philosophy, and psychoanalysis (Julie Rivkin and Michale Ryan 1998, 399).

*Writing and Difference* reveals the unacknowledged program that makes thought itself possible. In analyzing the contradictions inherent in this program, Derrida focuses on new ways of thinking, reading, and writing, new ways based on the most complete and rigorous understanding of the old ways. Scholars and students from all disciplines find *Writing and Difference* as an excellent introduction to the most
challenging of contemporary French thinkers because Derrida questions thought as we know it.

Derrida’s basic argumentation always attempts to show that no one is able to separate irreplaceable singularity and machine-like repeatability (or “iterability,” as Derrida frequently says) into two substances that stand outside of one another; nor is anyone able to reduce one to the other so that we would have one pure substance (with attributes or modifications). Machine-like repeatability and irreplaceable singularity, for Derrida, are like two forces that attract one another across a limit that is indeterminate and divisible. Yet, to understand the basic argumentation, we must be, as Derrida himself says in *Rogues*, “responsible guardians of the heritage of transcendental idealism” (Derrida, Jacques 2005, 134; and 1988, 93). Kant had of course, opened up the possibility of this way of philosophizing: arguing back (Kant called this arguing back a “deduction”) from the givenness of experience to the conditions that are necessarily required for the way experience is given. These conditions would function as a foundation for all experience. Following Kant (but also Husserl and Heidegger), Derrida then is always interested in necessary and foundational conditions of experience.

Reflection on experience in general is conditioned by time. Every experience, necessarily, takes place in the present. In the present experience, there is the kernel or point of the now. What is happening right now is a kind of event, different from every other now I have ever experienced. Yet, also in the present, I remember the recent past and I anticipate what is about to happen. The memory and the anticipation consist in repeatability. Because what I experience now can be immediately recalled, it is repeatable and that repeatability therefore motivates me to anticipate the same thing happening again. Therefore,
what is happening right now is also not different from every other now I have ever experienced. At the same time, (Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan 1998, 399) the present experience is an event and it is not an event because it is repeatable. This “at the same time” is the crux of the matter for Derrida. The conclusion is that we can have no experience that does not essentially and inseparably contain these two agencies of event and repeatability.

This basic argument contains four important implications: the trace, arche-writing, derivative, heterogeneous, as such, anachronism, spacing, espacement. First, experience as the experience of the present is never a simple experience of something present over and against me, right before my eyes as in an intuition; there is always another agency there. Repeatability contains what has passed away and is no longer present and what is about to come and is not yet present. The present therefore is always complicated by non-presence. Derrida calls this minimal repeatability found in every experience the trace. There is no facilitation without difference and no difference without a trace (Ryan 1998, 398). Indeed, the trace is a kind of proto-linguisticality (Derrida also calls it arche-writing, since language in its most minimal determination consists in repeatable forms.

Second, the argument has disturbed the traditional structure of transcendental philosophy, which consists in a linear relation between foundational conditions and founded experience. In traditional transcendental philosophy (in Kant) an empirical event such as what is happening right now is supposed to be derivative from or founded upon conditions which are not empirical. Yet, Derrida’s basic argument demonstrates that the empirical event is a non-separable part of the structural or foundational conditions. Or, in traditional transcendental philosophy, the empirical event is supposed to be an accident that
overcomes an essential structure. But with Derrida’s argument, we see that this accident cannot be removed or eliminated. We can describe this second implication in still another way. In traditional philosophy we always speak of a kind of first principle or origin and that origin is always conceived as self-identical (again something like a Garden of Eden principle). Yet, here we see that the origin is immediately divided, as if the “fall” into division, accidents, and empirical events has always already taken place. In Of Spirit, Derrida calls this kind of origin “origin-heterogeneous”: the origin is heterogeneous immediately (Derrida, 1989 107-108).

Third, if the origin is always heterogeneous, then nothing is ever given as such in certainty. Whatever is given is given as other than itself, as already past or as still to come. What becomes foundational therefore in Derrida is this as origin as the heterogeneous as. The as means that there is no knowledge as such, there is no truth as such, there is no perception as such. Faith, perjury, and language are already there in the origin. Fourth, if something like a fall has always already taken place, has taken place essentially or necessarily, then every experience contains an aspect of lateness. It seems as though I am always late for the origin since it seems to have always already disappeared. Every experience then is always not quite on time or, as Derrida quotes Hamlet, time is “out of joint”. Late in his career, Derrida calls this time being out of joint “anachronism” (Derrida, Jacques 1995, 94). Anachronism for Derrida is the flip side of what he calls “spacing” (espacement); space is out of place. But we should also keep in mind, as we move forward that the phrase “out of joint” alludes to justice: being out of joint, time is necessarily unjust or violent.

So far, the argument is quite simple although it has wide-ranging implications. It is based on an analysis of experience, but it is also based
in the experience of what Derrida calls “auto-affection”. We find the idea of auto-affection (or self-affection) in ancient Greek philosophy, for example in Aristotle’s definition of God as “thought thinking itself.” Auto-affection occurs when I affect myself, when the affecting is the same as the affected. Derrida frequently write about autobiography as a form of auto-affection or self-relation. In the very late The Animal that Therefore I am, Derrida tells us what he is trying to do with auto-affection: “if the auto-position, the automonstrative autotely of the ‘I,’ even in the human, implies the ‘I’ to be another that must welcome within itself some irreducible hetero-affection Derrida have tried to demonstrate elsewhere), then this autonomy of the ‘I’ can be neither pure nor rigorous; it would not be able to form the basis for a simple and linear differentiation of the human from the animal” (Derrida, Jacques, 2008, 95). Derrida tries to show that auto-affection is hetero-affection; the experience of the same is the experience of the other (insofar as I think about myself I am thinking of someone or something else at the same time). But, in order to understand more fully the basic argumentation, let us look at three of these “other places” where Derrida has “attempted” to show that an irreducible hetero-affection infects auto-affection. Examples include day-night, near-far, man-woman, and sun-moon.

The first occurs in Voice and Phenomenon, Derrida’s 1967 study of Husserl. Here, Derrida argues that, when Husserl describes lived-experience, even absolute subjectivity, he is speaking of an interior monologue, auto-affection as hearing-oneself-speak. According to Derrida, hearing-oneself-speak is, for Husserl, “an auto-affection of an absolutely unique type” (Derrida, 2011, 67). It is unique because there seems to be no external detour from the hearing to the speaking; in hearing-oneself-speak there is self-proximity. It seems therefore that I hear myself speak immediately in the very moment that I am speaking.
According to Derrida, Husserl’s own description of temporalization however undermines the idea that I hear myself speak immediately. On the one hand, Husserl describes what he calls the “living present,” the present that I am experiencing right now, as being perception, and yet Husserl also says that the living present is thick. The living present is thick because it includes phases other than the now, in particular, what Husserl calls “protention,” the anticipation (or “awaiting,” we might say) of the approaching future and “retention,” the memory of the recent past. Derrida focuses on the status of retention in *Voice and Phenomenon*. Retention in Husserl has a strange status since Husserl wants to include it in the present as a kind of perception and at the same time he recognizes that it is different from the present as a kind of non-perception. For Derrida, Husserl's descriptions imply that the living present, by always folding the recent past back into itself, by always folding memory into perception, involves a *difference* in the very middle of it (*Ibid.* 56). Derrida is trying to demonstrate here is that this “spacing” (*espacement*) or blindness is essentially necessary for all forms of auto-affection, even tactile auto-affection which seems to be immediate.

In 2002 “The Reason of the Strongest,” the first essay in the book called *Rogues* Derrida discusses the United Nations, as combination of the two principles of Western political thought: sovereignty and democracy. But, “democracy and sovereignty are at the same time, but also by turns, inseparable and in contradiction with one another” (Derrida, Jacques 2005, 100). Democracy and sovereignty contradict one another in the following way. And here Derrida is speaking of pure sovereignty, the very “essence of sovereignty” (*Ibid.* 100). On the one hand, in order to be sovereign, one must wield power oneself, take responsibility for its use by oneself, which means that the use of power, if it is to be sovereign, must be silent; the sovereign does not have to give
reasons; the sovereign must exercise power in secret. In other words, sovereignty attempts to possess power indivisibly, it tries *not* to share, and not sharing means contracting power into an instant, the instant of action, of an event, of a singularity. We can see the outline here of Derrida's deconstruction not only of the hearing-oneself-speak auto-affection but also of the auto-affection of the promising-to-oneself to keep a secret. On the other hand, democracy calls for the sovereign to share power, to give reasons, to universalize. In democracy the use of power, therefore, is always an abuse of power (Haddad, Samir 2013, 51-65). Derrida also emphasises that sovereignty and democracy are inseparable from one another (the contradiction makes them heterogeneous to one another) because democracy even though it calls for universalization also requires force, freedom, a decision, sovereign power. For Derrida, in democracy, a decision, the use of power is always urgent; and yet contradiction, democracy takes time, democracy makes one wait so that the use of power can be discussed. Power can never be exercised without its communication; as Derrida says, “As soon as I speak to the other, I submit to the law of giving reason(s), I share a virtually universalizable medium, I divide my authority” (Derrida, Jacques 2005, 101). There must be sovereignty, and yet, there can be no use of power without the sharing of it through repetition. More precisely, as Derrida says, “Since [sovereignty] never succeeds in [not sharing] except in a critical, precarious, and unstable fashion, sovereignty can only tend, for a limited time, to reign without sharing. It can only tend toward imperial hegemony. To make use of the time is already an abuse” (Ibid. 102). Derrida calls this tendency “the worst,” a tendency toward the complete appropriation or extermination of all the others. Derrida uses the basic argumentation that we have laid out against the idea of the worst; today the tendency towards the worst is greater than ever.
The purpose in the application of this purpose defines deconstruction as “deconstruction is to move us towards, not the worst violence, not the most violence, but the least violence (Derrida, Jacques, 1978, 130). How does the application of the argumentation against the worst work? Along with globalization, the post-Cold War period sees, as Derrida says in *Faith and Knowledge*, a “return of the religious” (Derrida, Jacques, 1998, 42-43; Caputo 1997, 152-159). So, in “Faith and Knowledge,” Derrida lays out the etymology of the Latin word “religion” (the etymology is problematic). The etymology implies that there are “two sources” of religion: “religio,” which implies a holding back or a being unscathed, safe and sound; and “re-legere,” which implies a linking up with another through faith (Ibid. 16). The inseparable dualities examined: singular event and machine-like repeatability; auto-affection as hetero-affection. Most importantly, Derrida is trying to understand the “link” that defines religion prior to the link between men as such and the divinity of God. What we can see in this attempt to conceive the link as it is prior to its determination in terms of man and God is an attempt to make the link be as open as possible. Derrida attempts to “un-close,” as much as possible, the sphericity or englobing of thought thinking itself – in order to open the link as wide as possible, open it to every single other, to any other whatsoever. Throughout his career, Derrida is always interested in the status of animality since it determines the limit between man and others. His final book demonstrates Derrida’s attempt to open the link even to animals. Animals are other and, because “every other is wholly other” the link must be open to them too. Here despite the immense influence they have had on his thought, Derrida breaks with both Heidegger and Levinas both of whom did not open the link this wide (Derrida, Jacques 1995 279). Here, with the “door” or “border” open as wide as possible, we encounter Derrida's idea of “unconditional
hospitality,” which means letting others in no matter what, without asking them for papers, without judging them, even when they are uninvited. All are to be treated not as enemies who must be expelled or exterminated, but as friends. One more point is the impossibility of unconditional hospitality means that any attempt to open the globe completely is insufficient. Being insufficient, every attempt therefore requires criticism; it must be “deconstructed,” as Derrida would say. But this deconstruction would be a deconstruction that recognizes its own insufficiency. Deconstruction never therefore results in good conscience; in the good conscience that comes with thinking that have done enough to provide justice.

Deconstruction at the beginning is the most famous term of Derrida. He seems to have appropriated the term from Heidegger’s use of “destruction” in Being and Time. But we can get a general sense of what Derrida means with deconstruction by recalling Descartes’s First Meditation. Descartes says that for a long time he has been making mistakes. The criticism of his former beliefs both mistaken and valid aims towards uncovering a “firm and permanent foundation”. The image of a foundation implies that the collection of his former beliefs resembles a building. In the First Meditation Descartes, in effect, takes down this old building, “de-constructing” it. Derrida is indebted to traditional transcendental philosophy which really starts with Descartes’ search for a “firm and permanent foundation”. But with Derrida, the foundation is not a unified self but a divisible limit between myself and myself as another (auto-affection as hetero-affection: “origin-heterogeneous”).

Derrida has provided many definitions of deconstruction. But his three definitions are classical. The first is early, being found in the 1971 interview “Positions” and in the 1972 Preface to Dissemination: deconstruction consists in “two phases” (Derrida, Jacques, 1981, 41-42).
At this stage of his career Derrida speaks of “metaphysics” as if the Western philosophical tradition was monolithic and homogeneous. At times he also speaks of “Platonism,” as Nietzsche did (Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan 1998, 398). Simply, deconstruction is a criticism of Platonism, which is defined by the belief that existence is structured in terms of oppositions (separate substances or forms) and that the oppositions are hierarchical, with one side of the opposition being more valuable than the other. The first phase of deconstruction attacks this belief by reversing the Platonistic hierarchies: the hierarchies between the invisible or intelligible and the visible or sensible; between essence and appearance; between the soul and body; between living memory and rote memory; between voice and writing; between finally good and evil. In order to clarify deconstruction's “two phases,” let us restrict ourselves to one specific opposition, the opposition between appearance and essence. Nietzsche has also criticized this opposition but it is clearly central to phenomenological thinking as well.

So, in Platonism, essence is more valuable than appearance. In deconstruction, however, we reverse this, making appearance more valuable than essence that shows that all knowledge of what we call essence depends on the experience of what appears. The essence and appearance are not related to one another as separate oppositional poles. The argumentation in other words would show us that essence can be reduced down to a variation of appearances (involving the roles of memory and anticipation). The reduction is a reduction to what we call “immanence,” which carries the sense of “within” or “in.” So, we would say that what we used to call essence is found in appearance, essence is mixed into appearance. Now, we can track back a bit in the history of Western metaphysics. On the basis of the reversal of the essence-appearance hierarchy and on the basis of the reduction to immanence, we
can see that something like a decision (a perhaps impossible decision) must have been made at the beginning of the metaphysical tradition, a decision that instituted the hierarchy of essence-appearance and separated essence from appearance. This decision is what really defines Platonism or “metaphysics.” After this retrospection, we can turn now to a second step in the reversal-reduction of Platonism, which is the second “phase” of deconstruction. The previously inferior term must be re-inscribed as the “origin” or “resource” of the opposition and hierarchy itself. How would this re-inscription or redefinition of appearance work? Here we would have to return to the idea that every appearance or every experience is temporal. In the experience of the present, there is always a small difference between the moment of now-ness and the past and the future. In any case, this infinitesimal difference is not only a difference that is non-dualistic, but also it is a difference that is, as Derrida would say, “undecidable.” Although the minute difference is virtually unnoticeable in everyday common experience, when we in fact notice it, we cannot decide if we are experiencing the past or the present, if we are experiencing the present or the future. Insofar as the difference is undecidable, it destabilizes the original decision that instituted the hierarchy. After the redefinition of the previously inferior term, Derrida usually changes the term's orthography, for example, writing “difference” with an “a” as “differance” in order to indicate the change in its status.

Difference is found in appearances when we recognize their temporal nature, then refers to the undecidable resource into which “metaphysics” “cut” in order to makes its decision. In Positions Derrida uses names like “differance” “old names” or “paleonyms,” and provides a list of these “old terms”: “pharmakon”; “supplement”; “hymen”; “gram”; “spacing”; and “incision” (Ibid. 43). These names are old because, like the word “appearance” or the word “difference,” they have been used for.
centuries in the history of Western philosophy to refer to the inferior position in hierarchies. But here they are being used to refer to the resource that has never had a name in “metaphysics”; they are being used to refer to the resource that is indeed “older” than the metaphysical decision.

The first definition of deconstruction as two phases gives way to the refinement we find in the *Force of Law* (1989-1990). This second definition is less metaphysical and more political. In *Force of Law*, Derrida writes that deconstruction is practiced in two styles (Derrida, Jacques, 1992, 21). These “two styles” do not correspond to the “two phases” in the earlier definition of deconstruction. On the one hand, there is the genealogical style of deconstruction, which recalls the history of a concept or theme. Earlier in his career, in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida has laid out, for example, the history of the concept of writing. But now what is at issue is the history of justice. On the other hand, there is the more formalistic or structural style of deconstruction, which examines a-historical paradoxes or aporias. In *Force of Law*, Derrida lays out three aporias, although they all seem to be variants of one, an aporia concerning the unstable relation between law and justice.

Derrida calls the first aporia, “the *epoche* of the rule” (Derrida in Cornell, Drucilla 1992, 22-23). Our most common axiom in ethical or political thought is that to be just or unjust and to exercise justice, one must be free and responsible for one's actions and decisions. Here Derrida in effect is asking: what is freedom? On the one hand, freedom consists in following a rule; but in the case of justice, we would say that a judgment that simply followed the law was only right, not just. For a decision to be just not only must a judge follow a rule but also he or she must “re-institute” it in a new judgment. Thus a decision aiming at justice (a free decision) is both regulated and unregulated. The law must be conserved
and also destroyed or suspended, suspension being the meaning of the word “epoch.” Each case is other, each decision is different and requires an absolutely unique interpretation which no existing coded rule can or ought to guarantee. If a judge programmatically follows a code, he or she is a “calculating machine.” Strict calculation or arbitrariness, one or the other is unjust, but they are both involved; thus, in the present, we cannot say that a judgment, a decision is just, purely just. For Derrida, the “re-institution” of the law in a unique decision is a kind of violence since it does not conform perfectly to the instituted codes; the law is always, according to Derrida, founded in violence. The violent re-institution of the law means that justice is impossible.

Derrida calls the second aporia “the ghost of the undecidable (Ibid 24-26). A decision begins with the initiative to read, to interpret, and even to calculate. But to make such a decision, one must first of all experience what Derrida calls “undecidability.” One must experience that the case, being unique and singular, does not fit the established codes and therefore a decision about it seems to be impossible. The undecidable, for Derrida, is not mere oscillation between two significations. It is the experience of what, though foreign to the calculable and the rule is still obligated. We are obligated - this is a kind of duty to give oneself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of rules and law. As Derrida says, “A decision that did not go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process” (Ibid. 24). And once the ordeal is past, then the decision has again followed or given itself a rule and is no longer presently just. Justice therefore is always to come in the future, it is never present. There is apparently no moment during which a decision could be called presently and fully just. It has not followed a rule, hence it is unjust; or it has followed a rule, which has no foundation, which makes it
again unjust; or if it did follow a rule, it was calculated and again unjust since it did not respect the singularity of the case. This relentless injustice is why the ordeal of the undecidable is never past. It keeps coming back like a “phantom,” which “deconstructs from the inside every assurance of presence, and thus every criteriology that would assure us of the justice of the decision” (Ibid. 24-25). Even though justice is impossible and therefore always come in or from the future, justice is not, for Derrida, a Kantian ideal, which brings us to the third aporia. The third is called “the urgency that obstructs the horizon of knowledge” (Ibid. 26-28). Derrida stresses the Greek etymology of the word “horizon”: “As its Greek name suggests, a horizon is both the opening and limit that defines an infinite progress or a period of waiting”. Justice, however, even though it is un-presentable, does not wait. A just decision is always required immediately. It cannot furnish itself with unlimited knowledge. The moment of decision it remains a finite moment of urgency and precipitation. The instant of decision is then the moment of madness, acting in the night of non-knowledge and non-rule. Once again we have a moment of irruptive violence. This urgency is why justice has no horizon of expectation. Justice remains an event yet to come. Perhaps one must always say “can-be” for justice. This ability for justice aims however towards what is impossible.

Derrida’s career formalizes, beyond these aporias, the nature of deconstruction. The third definition of deconstruction can be found in an essay from 2000 called Et Cetera. Here Derrida in fact presents the principle that defines deconstruction: Each time that I say ‘deconstruction and X (in spite of of the concept),’ this is the introduction to a very singular division that turns this X into, or rather makes appear in this X, an impossibility that becomes its proper and sole possibility, with the result that between the X as possible and the ‘same’ X as impossible,
there is nothing but a relation of homonymy, a relation for which we have to provide an account. For example gift, hospitality, death itself and so many other things can be possible only as impossible that is, unconditionally (Foucault, Michel 300).

Even though the word “deconstruction” has been bandied about, we can see the kind of thinking in which deconstruction engages. It is a kind of thinking that never finds itself at the end. Justice - this is undeniable – is impossible (perhaps justice is the “impossible”) and therefore it is necessary to make justice possible in countless ways.

It also includes disciplines like philosophy, linguistic humanities. At best, Derrida as described as linguistic philosopher whoever, in 1966, as a Charles Lamert informs us, Derrida talked about the dawn of poststructuralist age in a Lecture. Derrida thus, became a poststructuralist as well as postmodernist. His purpose is largely concluded in linguistic structuralism and philosophy. Derrida as a postmodern thinker has created a science of writing which he calls Grammatology. He thinks of Grammatology as a science. It is clearly not a positivistic science. In fact, Grammatology is a type of Knowledge rather than a science. Derrida is heavily influenced by the movement of Structuralism, which swayed the whole of Europe.

*Of Grammatology* is Jacques Derrida’s revolutionary work about deconstruction, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, and structuralism first voiced in the 1960s which forever changed the face of European and American criticism. The ideas in *Of Grammatology* sparked lively debates in intellectual circles that included students of literature, philosophy, and the humanities, inspiring these students to ask questions of their disciplines that had previously been considered indecent. Thirty years later the immense influence of Derrida's work is still catching light.
controversy, thanks in part to Gayatri Spivak’s translation, which captures the richness and complexity of the original.

Poststructuralist theorists have sought to revalorize the signifier. The phonocentrism which was allied with Saussure’s suppression of the materiality of the linguistic sign was challenged in 1967, when the French poststructuralist Jacques Derrida, in his book *Of Grammatology*, attacked the privileging of speech over writing which is found in Saussure linguists (Rivkin, Julie and Ryan, Michael 1998, 392).

From Plato to Levi-Strauss, the spoken word had held a privileged position in the Western worldview, being regarded as intimately involved in our sense of self and constituting a sign of truth and authenticity. Speech had become so thoroughly naturalized that not only do the signifier and the signified seem to unite, but also, in this confusion, the signifier seems to erase it or to become transparent (Derrida, Jacques 1981, 22). Writing had traditionally been relegated to a secondary position. The deconstructive enterprise marked the return of the repressed (Derrida, Jacques 1978, 197). In seeking to establish ‘Grammatology’ or the study of textuality, Derrida championed the primacy of the material word. He noted that the specificity of words is itself a material dimension. The materiality of a word cannot be translated or carried over into another language. Materiality is precisely that which translation relinquishes this English translation presumably illustrating some such loss (ibid.210)

Before Derrida the postmodernist thinkers such as Baudrillard and Lyotard waged a war against the founding fathers of foundational universalistic theories such as marxism. There was a whole hearted condemnation of grand theories and metanarratives. Derrida gives a new turn to postmodernity and then there came poststructuralism. Derrida has developed his own particular poststructuralist blend of philosophy,
linguistics and literary analysis. It is known as the name of deconstruction.

The postmodern thought tends to reject the idea that has a single, basic meaning. There is no single reason, there are reasons. Postmodernity embraces fragmentation, conflict and discontinuity in matters of history, identity and culture. It is suspicious of any attempt to provide all embracing total theories. And it rejects the view that any cultural phenomenon can be explained as the effect of one objectively existing, fundamental cause.

Derrida’s central theoretical concern is with Deconstruction. In Deconstruction, Derrida tries to dig out the meaning of meaning. The structuralists look for conditions, which allow texts to be meaningful; it shares their interest in the relationships between language and what. Derrida is interested to find out how the meaning of texts can be plural and unstable than in fixing them to a rigid structure. Multiple meaning is possible plurality.

Logocentrism is the search for universal system of thoughts that reveals what is true, right and beautiful, and so on. The thought of logocentrism dominated the whole of western world. It has suppressed the whole of writing since Plato. Logocentrism has laid to the closure not only of a philosophy, but also of human sciences. Derrida is interested in deconstructing or dismantling the sources of suppression. Derrida’s deconstruction can be defined as the deconstruction of logocentrism. It’s like Plato’s idea of real, God, first truth in the world.

It should be mentioned here that a major objective of postmodernism is to focus on epistemology. Baudrillard, Lyotard, Foucault and Derrida have all tried to find out the truth about the reality in society. And, in their objective they have rejected the foundational theories or the theories of the kind of logocentrism. Thus, epistemology is
the core enquiry of postmodernism. Derrida in his own way strikes to the route of knowledge in his works.

The central theme of Derrida is to go deep into the things as they appear to us. The meaning that we are communicated might not be the meaning. There is always something hiding behind that which is present. Presence includes absence as in Man-woman, day-night. It is contradictory/oppositions in the language.

Derrida argues that fields of knowledge always put a necessary limit on what can and cannot be validly said. Any discourse- medical, artistic, legal, or whatever is defined by the methods. And understanding, it makes available to its practitioners, and as such prevents meaning from ever spinning off in appropriate direction.

Structuralism is very popular literary theory when Derrida starts his career as writer it is the best thought, an approach and method rather than as a clearly defined discipline. As a method structuralism can be applied to scientific discipline. Glen Ward (1997) has defined structuralism as a methodology. Structuralist idea can be used in number ideas they first received widespread attention with the work of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, and also affected the thinking of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan-and they can be applied to many different kinds of texts. Also, although the term structuralism indicates a restricted cluster of things, there is not a single set of rules to which all thinkers that have been labelled structuralist will rigidly stick.

Structuralists do not pay much attention to what is written in the text under consideration. Derrida, commenting on structuralism, writes that the relief and design of structures appears more clearly when content, which is the living energy of meaning, is neutralized. In other words, structuralism is about the formalities of how texts mean rather than about what they mean.
There are some factors that have influenced the development of postmodernist thought. We use language to organize- and even construct reality. Language enables us to give meaning to the world. No single thing mocks off a meaning of its own accord. Meaning is possible through its relationship to other things. Verbal and written language provides the clearest demonstration of these structural or relational properties of meaning.

Ferdinand de Saussure had the strong impact on Derrida besides other Structuralists. Saussure is said to be the founder of both modern linguistics and structuralism. He argued that to understand the working of language, it is useless to seek the root or history of words. Instead of it, we should look at the interrelationship of words within language as a whole. Thus, Saussure for the first time gave up the history of words to understand their meaning. He only tried to know the meaning of words with reference to other words.

Saussure’s contribution to linguistic structuralism is that there is no natural or inevitable bond between words and things. For him, language is an arbitrary system. From this Saussure believed that all of our culture is made up of signs. A sign for Saussure is simply any device through which human beings communicate to each other. To the extent that anything can have meaning attached to it, this could be taken to suggest that just about anything can be called a sign.

Saussure argued that verbal and written language offered the best model of how signs made meaning through a system of arbitrary, social conventions. Linguistics could, therefore, provide a strong basis for a scientific study of the life of signs in society. This propped science of signs could be called semiology or semiotics.

Derrida is not the only postmodernist influenced by Saussure. Jean Baudrillard, Judith Williamson, Pierre Macherey and few others also
borrowed heavily from Saussure. All these postmodern structuralists argue that we should try to find out fundamental order behind texts. Texts not only try to cover their own internal gaps and conflicts, but are created out of the meanings they omit or repress: what a text puts ‘outside’ of itself determines what it says. Poststructuralism does not necessarily believe that everything is meaningless; just that meaning is never final.

In Derrida’s structuralism words have meaning in relation to others, Derrida says that meanings and truths are never absolute or timeless; they are determined by the social and historical conditions. No word is outside the language as a whole, no meaning of word can be made outside the language system. Following this broader linguistic principle, Derrida says that there can be no knowledge outside of history and culture. Meaning is regarded as a ‘presence’ in the text, and the critic believes, one has a special power to drag it into the light. Derrida’s theory of deconstruction discovers hidden assumptions. There is no pure knowledge outside of society, culture of language.

Derrida’s grammatology and writing disclose the knowledge. Grammatology is not a positivistic science for Derrida. It is writing which is manifestation of knowledge. What differentiates Derrida from Saussure is that the later focuses on speech while the former talks about writing. Writing is of two types: graphic notation on tangible material. It is the narrow meaning of writing. Our drafting on a paper, writing letter are the examples of ‘Living’ or ‘Natural’ writing. It is the natural writing where we erase the word already written by us. In place of it we write another alternative. This writing is a gesture that is effacing the presence of a thing and yet keeping it legible. This is exemplified by the use of a word that is crossed out in such a way that the word is still legible to the readers. Both the original word and the fact are important to writing.
According to Derrida, writing is a sign, the radical alternative to those signs, and their relationship to one another. Inherently, both Saussure and Derrida use writing in the sense of a sign. The difference is that Saussure uses signs in terms of binary signs: day-night; male-female; black-white. Derrida accepts signs but does not use this in the sense of binary. For him, writing includes erasure. Erasure is an essential part of writing. This makes Derrida a grammatologist.

Derrida’s concept of ‘Difference’ has two basic relations. Writing is never neutral; it does not give the truth. Derrida argues that writing is not transparent. It is always opaque. It is here that we find the concept of difference important. A piece of writing from any newspaper is an innocent bit of reportage, sometimes newspapers get their facts wrong and are often selective in what they tell us, but structuralism and poststructuralism would go further than that: they would look, not at how the article told the truth, but at the way language itself was being used. The idea that language is transparent serves only to distract attention from the possibility that the story could have been told in any number of other ways. The use of different words can, for instance, create different meanings. The idea that language is neutral denies that writing always sets up particular constructions of reality, and that these constructions of reality are always tied in the history, society and that these constructions of reality are such thing as neutral language.

Derrida gives his concept of difference in various ways with reference to trace, Freud’s thoughts, Nietzsche’s thought on the restricted economy factor, Hegelian economic movement of difference. Bataille’s scientific thought relates to a restricted economy, Freud’s thought relates each concept to a detour, within an economic difference.

Derrida very forcefully argues that language is never transparent, it is always obscure. In a language, there is presence of meaning best
hidden behind it there is also a meaning of absence. In difference there is a play of presence and absence. Derrida says that difference cannot be thought without the presence. He says that there is always an alternative lurking behind the sign or language. There is always something hiding behind the present. The image communicated by a positivistic science, *Grammatology* leaves us with a sense of a radically different type of knowledge and, indirectly, a very different kind of world.

Derrida’s central contribution to poststructuralism and postmodernism is deconstruction. In his interview, regarding his special emphasis on the term ‘difference’ the logic of deconstruction Derrida’s replies that in March (1981), he published a book entitled: *The Postcard from Socrates to Freud and Beyond.* This book dealt with the theory of difference and the question of difference with an ‘a’. He explains the notion of difference through an example of telecommunication or compares it with the waiting period between the relay station and the receiving station of a postal communication. Difference is an intermediary phase, not finality. It is cause why Derrida hesitates to give a clear exposition of difference (Rivkin, and Ryan, Michael 1998, 399). Derrida has explained the concept of difference in the context of deconstruction. It is because of difference that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called ‘present’ element, each element appearing on the scene of ‘presence’, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not... An interval must separate the present from what it is not in order for the present to be itself, but this interval that constitutes it as present must by the same taken, divide the present in and of itself,
thereby also dividing along with the present, everything that is every being and singularly substance or the subject (Rivkin, Julie and Ryan 1998, 394).

Derrida has reduced language to writing that does not constrain its subjects. Derrida deconstructed language and social institutions, and when is still a focus here on language, it is not as a structure that constraints people.

The basic argument to Derrida is that whatever we see in the reality is through sign, that is, writing. Further, there is always something hiding behind the present in the sign. And, here Derrida brings forth the concept of deconstruction. Actually, Derrida is mediating between writing, difference, and so on to deconstruct structuralism and put forward poststructuralism. The sign in Derrida’s work is reduced to more than a legible yet indistinct unavoidable tool.

Derrida has developed the theory of deconstruction. According to him, deconstruction discovers hidden assumptions about a text. There is no knowledge outside of society, culture or language. The dictionary meaning of deconstruction is: a critical technique, especially in literary criticism, which claims that there is no single intrinsic meaning and thus no single correct interpretation of a text. It is the task of the reader to find out implied unity of work and focus on the variety of interpretations that are possible. The core of Derrida’s argument is that the things do not have a single meaning. Instead, the meaning embraces fragmentation, conflict and discontinuity in matters of history, identity and culture. Derrida is against the originals, centres and foundations in social sciences. The texts can be interpreted in a number of possible ways. Deconstruction implies meaning of meaning. And, in doing that, it deconstructs the explicit meaning of text and tries to find out the hidden meaning which is implicit.
The first postmodern perspective in Derrida’s work is that it does not put emphasis on progress, totality and necessity but on the very opposite of these intellectual emphases, namely, discontinuity, plurality and contingency. Postmodernity in this vein is more ‘deconstructive’ style of reasoning and enquire, offering itself as a stimulant to dialogue and to conversation among human beings without the universalizing pretensions of enlightenment philosophies. The idiom of postmodernity therefore is: discontinuity, plurality, fragmentation rejection of progress, and totality.

The second perspective concerns structuralism and, poststructuralism. The poststructuralists attack the notion that there might be a metanarrative, metalanguage through which all things can be connected, represented or explained. Postmodernists have a different view of language compared to modernists. The modernists presupposed a tight and identifiable relation between what was said (the signified or message) and how it was being said (the signifier or medium). The postmodernists see these as continually breaking apart and reattaching in new combinations. Kenneth Thompson has interpreted the meaning of Derrida’s deconstruction as under: Deconstruction views cultural life as intersecting texts; deconstructing cultural analysis is concerned with reading texts by deconstructing them or breaking down the narrative to show how it is composed different textual elements and fragments.

According to Thompson, Derrida argues that there is fragmentation and instability of language in poststructuralism. Words gain their meaning from being part of a sequential chain of linked signifiers in a sentence. If the links become unstable and the sequence disjoined, then there will be a fragmentation of meaning, manifested in an instability to think things through- including an inability to think through one’s own biography and to unify the past, present and future in one’s psychic life.
Gayatri Spivak is credited to have translated Derrida’s original work *Of Grammatology* in English. In her Perface, she interprets deconstruction “To locate the promising marginal text, to disclose the undecidable moment, to pry it loose with the positive lever of the signifier, to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it to dismantle it, in order to reconstitute what is always already inscribed” (Spivak, Gayatri 1974).

It is deconstructing in order to deconstruct endlessly again and again; there is no sense of ever hitting bottom, of ever finding the truth. While reconstruction may take place along the way, it will only give way to further deconstruction. It is indeed very difficult to define deconstruction in precise terms. Actually, postmodernists in general and Derrida in particular have always opposed any sorts of definition. In this context Paulos Mar Gergorios clearly wrote “if you ask any postmodernist to say what postmodernism is, he is lost. There is no way of defining it”. It is also true of Deconstruction.

Deconstruction is a characteristic method of enquiry. Deconstruction is the method of enquiry in any field especially language and literary work of art. It is a play of presence and absence. The structure of present is seen as being constituted by difference as well as deferent. Instead of simply concentrating on the presence, the focus in the study of a text is on play of presence and absence. Deconstruction is post-structural blend of philosophy, linguistics and literary analysis. Meanings and texts can be plural and unstable. Deconstruction rejects the surface meaning and tries to find out the hidden meaning. The texts never carry a basic, single meaning. There is fragmentation, plurality and discontinuity in the text.

Deconstruction means critical reading of texts. It implies that there is dismissal of all notions about truth in the interpretation of texts. The
texts are open to new critical discoveries. Any attempt to arrive at truth must be carried out within textuality, because there is nothing outside of the text. We can only trace from one text to another and can never go beyond textuality. Christopher Norris writes: “Texts are stratified in the sense that they bear along with them a whole network of articulated themes and assumptions whose meaning everywhere links with other, other genres or topics of discourse.” (Norris, Christopher,). A text gives several meaning. Like any form of grammar, graph or writing, it transcends its author and points to its origin. Hence, the meaning of a text is not exhausted by the author’s intentions or the particularity of the historical context.

Derrida suggests that the reader and analyst much approach the text with the awareness of the arbitrariness of sign and meaning. This implies that the search for a unified coherent meaning within the text must be given up. In fact, one should not see the text as a united single whole. Instead, the focus should be on the inconsistencies and conditions of meaning in the text. A reading of absences and the insertion of new meanings are the twin strategies employed by postmodernism to emphasize that knowledge is not a system of ‘tracing down’ or discovering truth. It is instead the field of free play. Derrida, as we observed, was more a philosopher than a structuralist/historian. He suggested that we should critically look at the assumptions rooted in widespread beliefs and dogmas. There is no objective point of view which gives access to a pure global truth. Derrida conveys a lot as a poststructuralist to understand present-day language and philosophy.

Post-modernism quickly adopted a vocabulary of anti-enlightenment rhetoric which used to argue that rationality was neither so sure nor as clear as rationalists supposed. Knowledge was inherently linked to time, place, social position and other factors from which an
individual constructs their view of knowledge. In order to escape from constructed knowledge, one must step outside it and critique it, ultimately deconstructing the asserted knowledge. Jacques Derrida argued that in order to defend against the inevitable self-deconstruction of knowledge, systems of power called hegemony would need to declare the possibility of an originary utterance, something Derrida dubbed the logo. The ‘privileging’ of original utterance first word is called ‘logo centrism’.

So, from Derrida knowledge ceased to be rooted in particular utterances, or ‘texts’, and the basis of all information was something more rootless, that couldn't be traced to source but could be identified in and as the free play of discourse itself, an idea rooted in Wittgenstein’s idea of a language game. Through its unique emphasis on the permission of free play within the context of conversation and discourse leads postmodernism to adopt the stance of irony, paradox, textual manipulation, reference and tropes. Postmodernism defines language’s function as its play; an important distinction between function and purpose or means and ends. Language, from Dadaism onwards, has become something not lacking purpose, merely sidestepping the usual criteria of usefulness. Since it became self-aware, language needs answer to no one but itself. In Derrida’s words, ‘the study of the functioning of language, of its play, presupposes that the substance of meaning and, among other possible substances, that of sound, be placed in parenthesis. The unity of sound and of sense is indeed here, as I proposed above, the reassuring closing of plan. (Derrida, Jacques 1976) Similarly, according to Hjelmslev, economics and grammar are fallaciously and frequently compared, while semiotics on the Saussaurian model is overlooked, but presents a better explanation of language, An economic value is by definition a value with two faces: not only does it play the role of a constant vis-a-vis the concrete units of money, but it also itself plays the
role of a variable vis-a-vis a fixed quantity of commodities which serves it as a standard. In linguistics on the other hand there is nothing that corresponds to a standard. That is why the game of chess and not economic fact remains for Saussure the most faithful image of a grammar. The scheme of language is in the last analysis a game and nothing more.

Derrida’s concept of “play” within language has been at risk to considerable criticism. Derrida draws another false conclusion from the theory of Saussure. He believes that the arbitrary quality of sounds, letters, and meanings makes all meaning indeterminate or uncertain. According to the back cover of a collection of essays by Derrida entitled Limited Inc, Derrida’s “linguistic meaning is fundamentally indeterminate”. Derrida’s conclusion here is self-contradictory and therefore false because, if linguistic meaning is fundamentally indeterminate, then so is the linguistic meaning of that statement. To say that meaning is indeterminable is like saying; ‘I cannot utter a word of English’. It is ridiculous intellectual nonsense that should be rejected by all thoughtful people.

In the research study researcher responds to the challenge posed to the Church and the Academy by some of the ‘Signs of our Times’, in particular Postmodemism, Deconstruction and the Narrative Identity of the Subject. In pursuing a genealogical hermeneutic through various fields of discourse we discover emerging Postmodemism is characterised by a sense of mourning for a lost metanarrative and a tension between an impulse towards narrative and an anti-narrative impulse. Deconstruction, we argue, intensifies the antinarrative impulse within postmodemism and therefore represents one important site for the Death of the Subject. However, in order to place Deconstruction in context we investigate the question of Derrida’s style of writing in relation to his strategic
philosophical aim. In addition, the distorting effects of the Reception of Deconstruction in the USA are introduced. This enables us to go on to pursue the opening of Deconstruction in the text of Husserl’s phenomenology. It involves a detailed reading and critique of Derrida’s *Introduction to Husserl’s Origin of Geometry* and *Speech and Phenomena*. The writing will be guided by a structural feature of Borromean knot linking together the themes of the Self, the Sign and Time; as well as a Historical revisionist picture of Husserl's project. The third sign of our times investigates the rediscovery of the Narrative Identity of the Subject by using the later Paul Ricoeur’s notion of Narrative and the Narrative Identity of the Self. We trace a path through the sign, the text, and narrative in order to recover a notion of the narrative identity of the Self. The conclusion of the postmodern is to learn again that we must speak more than one language. According to church we indicate three possible voices or idioms: a witnessing self, a worshipping self and a listening/acting self.