CHAPTER III

Deconstruction of Jacques Derrida: An Exposition
3.01 Introduction

We in this chapter, shall examine and expound the deconstruction of Jacques Derrida on the basis of structuralism, and post-structuralism which are the school of post-modernism. Structuralism has been developed by Ferdinand de Saussure with the help of his paradigm of signifier and signified. With the development of structuralism we would like to join post-structuralism and also 'Deconstruction' and 'post-modernism'. Derrida has developed Deconstruction with the help of his logic of 'Differance'. Differance' means both 'to differ' and 'to defer' and its technical meaning is difference and to delay. We shall also try to show that deconstruction is a critique of logocentrism.

3.02 Structuralism

In fact, structuralism flourished as an academic fashion between 1960-1970 and its founders were the Persian thinker Claude Levi-Strauss, an anthropologist, Michael Foucault, a historian of ideas, Ronald Barthes, a literary critic, Louis Althusser, a political scientist and Jack's Lacan a psycho-analyst. They have developed a set of
ideas which can be applied in various disciplines. But at the same time post-structuralism centered by two pioneer thinkers namely Jacques Derrida and Michael Foucault (1960-1970).

The founding father of this terrain was Swiss linguistic professors Ferdinand de-Saussure (1857-1913) born in Geneva and started a structural movement of linguistic sign. Sign is a relation between the language and reality. Jacques Derrida has taken this concept of sign in his post-structural thinking.

Structuralism is an intellectual movement and a simple method to study history, language and literature. Generally it was started as a method to study historiography, psychoanalysis and it presents a separate shape and an unified order of understanding then the previous fragmented ones.

In order to understand Saussure's structuralism we would like to develop his concept of 'Langue' Parole', and the procedure to study the languages. The word Langue is a 'system' or 'collective consciousness', where as parole is actual utterance. Langue is a structure and parole is
an event (abstraction and real). For Saussure the 'Langue' is a social bond and said:

"It is a fund accumulated by the members of the community through the practice of speech, a grammatical system existing potentially in every brain, or more exactly in the brains of a group of individuals; for the language is never complete in any single individual, but exists perfectly in the collectively".\(^1\)

Thus Saussure emphasize that Langue is the collectiveness. Justin elaborates about structuralism, and says:

"... Structuralism has considerable implications for the view that we take human capacities, as well as strengthening the belief common to all versions of structuralism that the human mind is structuralist because it cannot be anything else, that the structures it finds in what it analyses match in some sense innate-mental structures, in a pattern reminiscent of Leibnitz's 'pre-established harmony'."\(^2\)

This shows the clean analysis of structural systems of Saussure.

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2. The Collins Publishing Group, Glasgow, LA Division, 1986, pp.77.
Saussure emphasized that the language can be studied along with two axes. One is temporal and other one is spatial, or diachronic and synchronic respectively. Diachronic is changes through time whereas synchronic linguist studies it statically, in its given state at a particular moment of time. Saussure draws the vital distinction between the two areas of study and says:

"Synchronic linguistics will be concerned with logical and psychological connexions between coexisting items constituting a system, as perceived by the same collective consciousness. Diachronic linguistics on the other hand will be concerned with connexions between sequences of items not perceived by the same collective consciousness, which replace one another without themselves constituting a system.\(^3\)

### 3.03 Sign, Signifier and Signified

In the structuralist sense language is an abstract object and possession of society which Saussure named as collective consciousness, not the possession of an individual.

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\(^3\) Saussure Ferdinand, *Course in General Linguistic*, etc., p.98.
"... signs are forms because they determine one another, as fellow members of one integral system..... and the value of sign on the other hand is an internal relation, depending as it does on that sign multiple relations with other signs of the language".4

Sign is a form and value in the internal relations with other sign. 'Play of difference' a concept of post-structuralism is based on the use of sign in Derrida. This sign of Saussure is used by his two word 'signifier' and 'signified'. In order to use the signifier and signified of Saussure we will take an example of Saussure.

A sign is consists words signifier and signified. The word 'tree' known as signifier and the concept tree is signified. In the above picture Saussure says that 'A' and 'B' are two types of wave lines and language is this dotted lines which connects and divides

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when creating the sound image and concepts. The signifier and
signified is inseparable. Sign has two co-relative qualities called
'Arbitrary and differences'. In Saussures word "Arbitrary and
difference are two correlative qualities.5

But 'sign' has played an important role in the history of
philosophy. Structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, post-
modernism in all philosophical system 'sign' placed in an important
position. Saussure in his Course in General Linguistics given
importance to 'sign' than language. He said:

"A language is a system of signs expressing ideas, and
hence comparable to writing, the deaf and dump alphabet
symbolic rites, forms of politeness, military signals and
so on."6

The above passage shows the role of signs as a part of the life.
Sign is simply a matter of difference as structuralist asserts.

5 Ibid., p.118.
6 Saussure Ferdinand de, Course in General Linguistics, Trans. Roy Harris,
3.04 Post-Structuralism

But post-structuralist points out some of the fundamental inconsistencies of structuralist method which are ignored. As Justin says "In the work of Derrida the principles laid down by Saussure serve the sweeping and skeptical purpose of undermining a prevailing and generally unconscious 'idealism', which asserts that language does not create meanings but reveals them, thereby implying that meanings pre-exist their expression. This for Derrida is a non-sense, for him there can be no meaning which is not formulated: we cannot reach outside language".7

While structuralist claims fundamental conclusions in the way language works but - post structuralist Derrida emphasized over the in-depth of language and failure to grasp language and its nature and meaning.

Post-structuralist emphasizes the role of language and discourse in shaping subjectivity. In language the relation of difference lead the binary opposition between man/woman, body/mind, and speech/writing. But these linguistic social orders are not fixed or stable, which means unstable, multivocal, shifting etc. Language is placed in the heart of post-structural analysis and constitutes a system, a culture practice by which people are able to understand their world and their relations to other.

3.05 Deconstruction

In the English speaking world, Derrida's work has occurred in two waves: As we have stated earlier the literary reception of deconstruction and the philosophical reception of deconstruction. But lot of question arises about what is deconstruction? In response to this question Derrida wrote a short text in 1983, published in 1985, in order to aid the possible translation of the word deconstruction. Derrida writes:

'The instance of the Krinein or the Crisis (decision, choice, judgment, discernment) is itself as is moreover the entire apparatus of transcendental critique, one of the essential 'themes' or 'objects' of deconstruction. 9

Again he says

"deconstruction is not a method or way that can be utilised in the activity of interpretation... deconstruction can not be reduced to a methodology (among compacting methodologies in the human or natural sciences or a technical procedure assimlable by academics and capable of being taught in educational institutions..." 10

Further Derrida says:

"... deconstruction is not an act produced and controlled by a subject; nor is it an operation that sets to work on a text or an institution. Derrida concludes the letter by writing 'what deconstruction is not'. But everything! What is deconstruction but nothing!" 11

9 Derrida Jacques - Psyche Invention ded autre, etc., p.390.
10 Ibid., pp.390-91.
11 Ibid., p.392.
It is clear from the above quotation Derrida's intention and definition of the word deconstruction. In *Of Grammatology* Derrida explain to the question how deconstruction taking place and answer in the subject 'the exorbitant. Question of method'. That deconstruction is always deconstruction of text and deconstruction is always engaged in reading text. Deconstruction can be opened only through the close reading of a text, what Derrida calls it a "first task, the most elementary of tasks". From the above quotation we can say that deconstruction what Derrida explained is concerned about the textual reading which we will like to develop in the later portion of this chapter.\(^{12}\)

3.06 Logic of Differance

Derrida in his deconstruction has used the terms like "differ" and "defer" whose technical meaning is difference and delay. Let us examine his concept of differance. This 'differance' is one of the most important term in his theory of deconstruction.

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Derrida once interviewed with James Kearns and Ken Newton, in Dundee University, 1980 where he has developed his concept of differance clearly. He has been asked to clarify the actual uses of the term differance when Kearns asked "May we begin by asking you to outline the present state of our research particularly as it relates to your theory of 'differance'.

Derrida - In March (1981). I shall publish a book entitled: The postcard from socrates to Freud and beyond which will deal with this theory of differance... and since you have raised the question of differance with an 'a' differance is here postal relay of delay relay station or waiting period.

From the above passage it is clear that Derrida has not clarified the exact meaning of differance. He had simply answered about the telecommunication and its connexion. The receiving center and relay centre, it is purely an intermediary period or phase. Nothing is finality may be the thrust behind Derrida's answer. Again in Margins of Philosophy Derrida advocates regarding the uses of the same word differance and says:
"It is because of 'differance' 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 telling itself by vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future elements, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than 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 token, divide the present in and of itself, thereby also dividing, along with the present, everything that is thought on the basis of the present, that is in our metaphysical language, every being, and singularly substance or the subject."\textsuperscript{13} again in the Grammatology Derrida writes, "that its passage through form is a passage through imprint. And that the meaning of differance in general world be more accessible to use if the unity of that double passages appeared more clearly."\textsuperscript{14} And further he says "Differance is therefore


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, p.63.
the formation of form. But it is on the other hand the being imprinted of the imprint".15

In the Margins of Philosophy where Derrida advocates that 'differance' is the movement of signification which indicates the present. Saussure also used this in his theory of structuralism. It indicates the presence by utterance to the future elements. "Differances are produced- deferred - by differance" what Derrida explained in his Margins of Philosophy Language of binary opposition is differance in concept of post-structuralism. In the above passage 'of Grammatology', Derrida characterized differance as the "formation of form". He has used differance in the most appropriate thinking through the present epoch. This very word 'difference' refers to both the meaning of 'to defer' and 'to defer'. Simon says:

"... differance is neither a word nor a concept, but rather the condition of possibility for conceptuality and words as such. Differance is the playing movement that produces the differences constitutive of words and conceptuality".16

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16 Siman Critically, The ethics of deconstruction, etc. p.37.
Derrida says... difference is neither active nor passive. The "ance" ending is the mark of that suspended status..."17 Derrida's use of differance is simply a 'movement of signification'. Again in response to his explanation about neither active or passive he says

"differance refers to the (active or passive) movement that consists in deferring by means of delay, delegation, deprive, referred, detour, postponement, reserving. In this sense differance is not preceded by the originally and indivisible unity of a present possibility that I could reserve, like an expenditure that I would put off calculatedly or for reasons of economy, what defers presence on the contrary, is the very basis on which presence is announced or desired in what represents it, its signs, its trace..."18

Each present element of a linguistic system signifies the differences of the other element. In order to the present it must related to some thing non-present. As Derrida in his margins of philosophy says "An interval must separate the present from what is not in order for the present to be itself, but this culture that constitutes it as present

must, by the same token, divide the present in and of itself, thereby also dividing, along with the present, everything that is thought on the basis of the present. that is, in our metaphysical language every being, and singularly substance or the subject".19 It shows the importance of presence and its relation of traces. Each present element - implies differentially to another element. In the final pages of La Differance, Derrida claims that there is no essence to differance and that the latter itself - "remains a metaphysical name."20 Difference is unnamable which makes possible nominal effect.

Exactly, Derrida's own coinage word 'differance' is technically related with defer and differ, used for the purpose to deny the reserve meaning of language in a conceptual analysis. Difference when is neither active nor passive, no essence, unnamable, is an important factor in Derridian deconstruction.

'Differance' is placed as a critique of logocentrism in western metaphysics and in the semiotical lease of his deconstruction, which

suggest a shiftedness of relation and importance. 'Difference' is an essential part of Derridian deconstruction. Though Derrida has not given any defination to differance, still has given certain subtle argument to it. Derrida says "the differance between "difference" and "differance" is in-audible".

Deconstruction is an intellectual endeavour to analyse the operation of different text. There is no such definition given to it. Derrida himself has denied any sorts of definition rather it is a strategy to analyse the various text with the knowledge of certain condition. Deconstruction can provide a new resource for thinking of culture and responsibility.

Derrida has explained his concept of deconstruction through the negative description. He writes "deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transferred into one". He further says that "deconstruction as an attempt which insists that all thinking about languages, philosophy and culture, and Derrida uses this term in order to make a massive interrogation of logocentric text. Deconstruction is consist of

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series of tactics and devices rather than a method. It is neither a
destruction of the existing intellectual norm nor their replacement or
deconstruction by new. Derrida himself is prepared to give any sorts
of definition and opines:

"All sentence of the type 'deconstruction is X'
deconstruction is not X' a priori, miss the point, which is
to say that they are at least false. As you know, one of the
principal things of stake in what is called in my texts
'deconstruction', is precisely the delimiting of ontology
and above all of the third person present indicative: S is
p".22

The existence of reversal binary terms can occupy in a positive
position by a negative position and also placed the negative position
by the positive term. In this context Elizabeth Grosz Writes "... the
movement of displacement, in which the negative term is displaced
from its dependent position and located as the very condition of the
positive term..."23

22 Derrida Jacques, Letter to a Japanese Friend, in David Wood and Robert
Barnasconi, eds., Derrida and differance, University of Warwick, Parousia Press,
1985, pp.1-8, (Quoted in Norris Christopher, Derrida, Fontana Press, Glassgow,
1987, p.19).

In fact Derrida wants to explain the metaphysical structure and also explains the historical tenacity to displace its independent position. It is an attempt to continue certain unsaid of a domination and to replace the structure. Deconstruction is a response to bring out certain unsaid and marginal concepts of a text to center. It posing an idea of the dispersed text and searches a difference of the text in itself.

Christopher Norris says:

"...deconstruction is the vigilant seeking out of those aporias, blind spots or amounts of self-contradiction where a text involuntarily betrays the tension between rhetoric and logic, between what is manifestly means to say and what it is nonetheless constrained to mean. To 'deconstruct' a piece of writing is therefore to operate a kind of strategic reversal, seizing on precisely those unregarded details (causal metaphors, footnotes, incidental turns of argument) which are always and necessarily, passed over by interpreters of a more orthodox persuasion".\(^{24}\)

Derrida is not going to deny any empirical fact of our speech, 'consciousness', 'self-presence' rather make an argument to give

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priority to this phenomena. Experience can't be understand simply as perception rather it is a chain of sign.

3.07 A critic of Logocentrism

Though we have already given a detailed account of logocentrism in chapter '1' of our thesis, yet power of implications need to be resolved. Derrida's deconstructing proceeds to reinvestigate within Metaphysics which has developed through logocentrism. Logos is the term which is one of a dominant form in the western metaphysics. It is a conceptual order which obtained the presence or immediacy of things. This is the 'logic of presence' where many systems are centred around. It is a concept related with truth, identity, real, presence of being. It is based on the logic of identity, a believe over reason and rationality. Derrida denying the logos, relates it to a linguistic sign and its disputant meaning. When it has a disputant meaning then the ontological presence is also denied. In writing and difference Derrida opens that:
"eidos, arche, telos, energia, ousiacescence, existence, substance, subject, aletheis, aletheia, transcendentalty, consciousness or conscience, god man and so forth".25

In a system of language the meaning of a word can be traced by the other but can't transccndent the sphere. Again Derrida remarks "these are only traces here, traces of trace without tracing or, if you wish tracing that only trace and retrace other texts".26

Deconstruction seeks a double procedure which occupies simultaneously outside and inside. The truth can be obtained through the retrace of the text. This logocentrism is placed in the heart of western metaphysics and European philosophy examines any concept through this foundational of truth. But Derrida treats it as mythology and in margins of philosophy mention that:

"Metaphysics - the white mythology which resembles and reflects the culture of the west; the white man makes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own

logos that is the mythos of his idiom, for the universal forum of that he must still wish to call reason".27

There is universal or foundation truth through which one is able to examine the whole truth and so. Derrida has used many terms in the deconstructive reading, like 'trace' (both presence and absence); 'supplement' (plenitude and lack); 'differance' (sameness and difference) which are used systematically in this study. The play of the differance is the condition of logocentrism which is to deny. Derrida says:

"On the one hand, it indicates difference as distinction, inequality or discernibility, on the other, it express the interposition of day, the interval of spacing and temporalizing... (T) here must be a common although entirely different root within the sphere that relates the two movements of differing to one another. We provisionally gave the name differance to this sameness which is not identical".28


Difference is the conditionality with the difference and identity. It is difference and identity, that when identity is positive then difference is absence of identity. Derrida argues that the primary term derives its identity from the suppression and curtailment of its opposite and both are uncontrolled textual play.

About aim of deconstruction, Derrida says:

"we wanted to attain the point of a certain exteriority with respect to the totality of the logocentric epoch. From this point of exteriority a certain deconstruction of this totality (...) could be broached". 29

3.08 Deconstruction is a Play of Difference

Deconstruction has been used as a play of difference in text in order to find out the meanings of the text. Binary opposition which is reversal and displacement is the important play in a deconstruction. In a particular history this term plays an interdependence and relative. Barbara Johnson describes deconstruction as a term depending on 'difference' and has elaborated it.

"The starting point is often a binary difference that is subsequently shown to be an illusion created by the working of differences much harder to pin-down. The differences between entities... are shown to be based on a repression of differences within entities, ways on which an entity differs from itself... The 'deconstruction' of a binary opposition is this not an annihilation of all values or differences; it is an attempt to follow the subtle powerful effects of differences already at work within the illusion of a binary opposition".\(^{30}\)

Deconstruction is an important exercise which allows us to get an idea through the simple analysis and expression. Derrida attempts to show the primary term and derives its privilege from suppression of its opposite. The lack of identity is difference.

3.09 **Identity and absense of Identity**

This is actually a post-structuralist dimension which is based on the logic of binary opposition and placed in Derrida, in order to bring out some of the basic uses of the term in the textual analysis. Here we can elaborate the logic of this binary opposition of meaning as a name.

refers to its identity as well as the absence of identity, and the absence
of identity to not absence of identity which denied the ontological
presence and signify a interrelation of text and textuality. In brief A--->
A, A----> - A, -A --> & --A -------, only sign and symbol implies
each other.

So language is the general circulation of sign and symbol.

Derrida in dissemination says:

"if there is no thematic unity or over all meaning to
reappropriate beyond the textual instances no total
message located in some imaginary order, intentionality
or lived experience, then the text is no longer the
expression or representation. Any truth that would come
to diffract or assemble itself in the polygamy of
literature".31

Language as the finality and there is nothing beyond the
textuality or textuality is the finality. Our Concepts, institutions,
philosophy, history, belongs to a metaphysical or logocentric tradition
and only in order to give a new and modest thought we have to think

31 Derrida Jacques, Dissemination, trans. Barbara Johnson, Chicago University Press,
Chicago, 19, p.262.
within the textuality. As in Of Grammatology Derrida Says "any text which identifies truth with presence or logos, occurring in the voice and entailing the debasement of writing and all forms of exteriority."32

3.10 It is a Critical Reading of Text

Derrida stressed that deconstruction is always engaged in the critical reading of a text. "a first task. the most elementary of tasks,"33 reading is necessary in any sorts of clarification and judgment. An important thing what Derrida has elaborate in his book of Grammatology that first 'there is no outside text' (11 n'y a pas de hors texte),34 and second "there is nothing outside of the text".35 The first sentence shows that there is no text outside our 'outside text' where as the second one is, there is nothing outside the text which simply says that signified outside textuality is illusory. A textuality reading must remain within limits of textuality.

32 Derrida Jacques, Of Grammatology, etc., p.3.
33 Derrida Jacques, Margins of Philosophy, etc., p.41.
34 Derrida Jacques, Of Grammatology, etc., p.158.
35 Ibid., p.163.
Thus reading becomes an internal factor for deconstruction. As Derrida answered to the question in account of deconstruction that "deconstruction is always deconstruction of text". Derrida in his textual proactive given double reading of the text. First what Derrida calls "the dominant interpretation"\textsuperscript{36} of a text and the second is within and through this repetition.

One important thing what Derrida has used in the deconstructive reading is "supplement" "blind spot".\textsuperscript{37} When Derrida reads Rousseau he organised this word supplement which pre-supposes a logic of supplement. Between writer's intention and the text lead a space what Derrida calls the 'signifying structure'.\textsuperscript{38}

Critical reading of text pre-supposes a different interpretation and clarification. Post-structuralist like Derrida attempts to deconstruct the textual interpretation in the basis of certain critical discoveries. Derrida on his Glass says 'there are only traces and retrace other text'. Therefore any attempt to arrive at truth must be carried out within

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Derrida Jacque, \textit{Limited Inc.}, Gallile, Paris.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Derrida Jacque, \textit{Limited Inc.}, 1990, p.265.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p.158.
\end{itemize}
textually, because there is noting outside text. The exact use of a word can be interpret by a critical reading and in this respect Christopher Norris says "Texts are 'stratified' in the sense that they bear along with them a whole network of articulated theories and assumptions whose meaning everywhere links up with other texts, other genres or topic of discourse."^39

The theme or meaning of a text is link up with other text and we can’t go beyond the textuality.

Derrida demonstrate that there is a logic at work within texts and text says always they are more then able to control. Identity of the sign, the subject and text are put into the question mark in Derrida. Critical reading of text is requires a series of tactics and devices. A less centralized, marginalised notion has emerged by this development of Derrida. It produce many ready-made evaluate criteria inspite of any pre-set goals.

Derrida develops a textual strategy and numbers of tactics in his deconstruction. Deconstruction is spawned by logocentrism where he

says "the movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible, nor effective, nor can take accurate aims except by inhabiting those structures inhabiting them in a certain way, because one always inhabits, and all he more when are does not suspect it. Operating necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally ... the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work.40

Deconstruction follows a double procedure and it occupies both the position inside and outside at a time. For this purposes Derridas' reading strategies involve both reversal and displacement together.

Dominant interpretation reflects the meaning of the text and its contents. Derrida elaborated it as "I believe that no search is possible in a community - (for example, academic) without the prior search for this minimal consensus". Further Levinas says:

"... thus, although 'commentary' alone does not open a genuine reading, the latter is not possible without a movement of commentary, without a scholarly

competence in reading, understanding and writing, without a knowledge of text in their original languages, without knowing the corpus of an author as a whole, without knowing the multiple contexts - political, literary, philosophical, historical and so forth - which determine a given text or are determined by that text.\textsuperscript{41}

Hence, Derrida's explanation about the double reading strategy is establishing the presence of text with its content carefully.

3.10(a) Conclusion

We can bring this chapter to a close by stating Derrida has developed post-structuralism, deconstructionism, which is based on the logic of differance to show that the whole western philosophy operates through a false conception of language and presupposes 'metaphysic of presence'. (Logocentrism) In his deconstruction Derrida denied to give any definition and has emphasized over the binary difference. The very logic of differance can be understood with the help of presence and absence both i.e. a can be understood with the absence of b and c.

\textsuperscript{41} Derrida Jacques, \textit{Limited Inc.}, etc., p.269.
Apart from this Derrida has cited out deconstruction as a critical reading of text. Textuality is the finality, we can not go beyond the text, only language is non-transcendable in nature because it is general circulation of signs and symbol.

Also Derrida has taken into account the deconstruction of logocentrism. Logocentrism which is placed in the heart of every centre and treated it as the foundation of the system. All systems is based on the false conceptions of language. Reality follows the diverse model and reaches in conflicts. Derridas usage of difference leads a tension to logocentrism in western metaphysics. He uses his own coinage word defer and differ in order to deconstruct the logos. No truth can be obtained beyond textuality except metaphysical, as textuality is the finality and nothing outside the text. 'Multivocality' which is embedded in the different meaning of a text and 'The death of author', is declaimed.