

## CHAPTER ONE

### **DERRIDA'S PHILOSOPHICAL HERITAGE**

Not only the Heideggerean philosophy but Derrida was influenced by the structuralist philosophers too. Derrida's philosophical heritage starts from his relation with Plato to Heidegger. This chapter tries to bring out the relation between the above-mentioned philosophers. It examines how Derrida influenced by those philosophers. Derrida belongs to the second generation of French Phenomenology and he himself notes that he was deeply influenced by Husserl, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Sartre, Levinas, and Saussure in linguistics. In his books and articles, for example in his diary *The Postcard* which is published in 1977-1979, he includes his relationship with some famous philosophers. Especially he follows Nietzsche and Heidegger to elaborate the critique of 'Western metaphysics' in Western philosophical tradition and 'everyday' thought and language. According to Derrida Western thought has been always structured in terms of dichotomies like good and evil, presence and absence, truth and error, mind and matter, man and women, soul and body, speech and writing. Here the second term in each pair is considered as the negative, corrupt in Western thought. But for Derrida, both first and second terms are equally important. This chapter tries to throw light on these particular aspects.

In 1967 Derrida's dreadful impact began on contemporary theoretical thought with his three major philosophical works, such as; *An introduction to the problems of the sign in Husserl's phenomenology*; which is translated by David Allison as *Speech and Phenomena*. A collection of essays on the problematic of writing in philosophy, literature, psychoanalysis and anthropology; which is translated by Alan Bass as *Writing and Difference* and a sustained analysis of the repression of writing in western theories of language, culture, a methodological and theoretical outline of a new 'Science' of writing; which is translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as *Of Grammatology*. After five years his other major works are *Positions* translated by Alan Bass, *Margins of Philosophy, Literature and Linguistics* and *La Dissémination*. As a student of Husserlian phenomenology, he began his philosophical career with a number of close writing. He studies *Logical Investigations* and *The Origin of Geometry* also. Some of the central conceptions of Derrida are deconstruction, presence, repetition, traces, and *différance*. In contemporary philosophy Derrida's influences are

undeniable and it is no doubt that he is one of the great influential philosophers of twenty-first century.

For Derrida, with Plato's *Pharmacy* especially in his dialogue, *The Phaedrus* is a good place to start because it occupied Derrida's argument about textual and analytic commentary. Here Derrida engaged with some mythic moments in the *logocentric* epoch. For him, it is an inaugural moment, and its effects reach down from Plato to Saussure. However, Derrida does not like to talk about the origins but it is in Plato and in *Phaedrus* Derrida discovered certain a prototypical scene of instruction which deals with the priority of speech over writing and the dangers moral philosophical thinking which inverted that priority. Derrida in his writings challenged this traditional philosophy and its rigorous protocols of argument. Thus we can say that Derrida provides a new and brilliant interpretation of Plato's dialogue.

The central reason for handing down of tradition was the new idea of philosophy. Derrida finds these principles in Hegel's writings on philosophy. Therefore, that pattern established a patriarchal inheritance and a situation where a father retains his full power until his son came or until his son is able to exercise reason. Even in the *Phaedrus*, Plato adopted an exotic mythology to explain why writing menaces or threatens the interests of morality and truth. For example, in the Greek period this myth, which was in question, tells a story about the Egyptian King Thamus. That time a visitor named 'Thoth' or 'Theuth' (who believed to invented mathematics, the art of geometry, astronomy, and writing) came to the King and wanted to give him 'writing' as a gift. But later when he measured its virtues and vices, then he steadily declined that offer. For him, the man was better off without writing. The reason which he gave was the King's response about writing that writing was a dangerous gift for the authentic living presence of spoken language and writing rejects or set-aside mere inscriptions that are: arbitrary, alien, and lifeless signs. According to the King, with the access to writing means real power of memory rapidly reduced. Although they would no longer need to remember anything; but when they can simply look upon things it inwardly and actively gets by heart.

Therefore, the effects of writing on the one side break those peculiar ties of paternal sanction and on the other side of filial obligation. Thus, from each generation to the next generation these ties are served to ensure the passage of authentic truth. So, by respecting the authority which is vested in the teacher and which is achieved through self-knowledge but not just obtained by reading books is written by some other men. This is why pupil can arrive at

genuine wisdom on their own account. But Derrida called knowledge as 'memory' and non-knowledge as re-memoration. Plato applied the word 'anamnesis' to good kind of memory and it is not possible to get rid of it. It is a recollection of spiritual truths and the soul has forgotten it in its fallen state but through the discipline of self-knowledge and wise teaching, it can be summoned to mind. Another type of memory or bad kind of memory alternates some mnemonic devices for a living and genuine wisdom, and by a crafty resort to the remedy of writing it simulates knowledge. Thus, for this reason, Egyptian mythology agrees with Judaeo Christian account of God's creating word and the power of the logos. But in contrast to the authentic and natural self-present speech, Derrida in *Of Grammatology* gave numerous instances of this logocentric will to devalue written language.

In the evolution of Greek thought and culture, we have seen the contest between logos and mythos as one of the great transitional stages. In Plato's writing it was dramatized through various dialectical encounters, where against the sophists, rhetoricians, poets, and other purveyors of false wisdom, Socrates's voice of reason and truths comes. Plato condemned writing and also he seeks to denounce the effects of writing and uphold the authority of spoken truth. So, whenever philosophy refuses to acknowledge its own textual status, this predicament repeats itself. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato's treatment of writing sets a pattern and which was similar to the history of Western thought. Therefore, Derrida traced this pattern in the texts of that tradition from Plato to Husserl and also other representative thinkers. So, if Plato's thought was a special case then it is because of their thinking about language, truth, and reality. These ideas of origin, subject to mere repetition and mythology are mentioned in Plato's dialogue. However in a paradigmatic way his dialogue sets for deconstructive treatment.

If we observe the platonic tradition we realize that Plato plays a very crucial role in the debate between Derrida and Foucault. There is a saying that 'Plato is to Derrida as Aristotle is to Foucault'. Their time period was different but if we ponder over the statement, it is possible to follow that there is a connection between them. First of all, Aristotle was a student of Plato and their time period was the same. Like Plato and Aristotle, Derrida and Foucault live in the same time period. In the case of Plato, he gives us the theory of Idea and also he saw the possibility of a political institution with classes, which would not clash with one another which was ruled by the aristocracy. But Aristotle directly attacked the ideal theory of Plato and he did not accept Plato's thought, in favor of a system that was between democracy and an oligarchy. Plato sees justice as a human virtue but whereas Aristotle sees happiness as

the ultimate goal to pursue. In *The Republic*, Plato says that "... if each person does one thing for which he is naturally suited, does it at the right time, and is released from having to do any of others"<sup>12</sup>. But Aristotle comments, "Both oligarch and tyrant mistrust the people, and therefore deprive them of their arms."<sup>13</sup>

In the same way Derrida and Foucault, based on their position, they were in opposition to one another. In *Truth and Power*, M. Foucault takes a stand which is more akin to Aristotle's argument that looks upon those in power with scrutiny. Although their arguments were not the same but Foucault's position in the respective debate is similar to how Aristotle stood against Plato. Foucault states, in his book *The Foucault Reader*, "... it's not so much a matter of knowing what external power impose itself on science, as of what effects of power circulate among scientific statement, what constitutes, as it were, their internal regime of power."<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Derrida takes a position, which is more akin to Plato. For example, Derrida uses 'deconstruction' and his focus on self-reflection (self-consciousness), is similar to Plato's innate human desire for virtue. But although by the nature of deconstructionist thought virtue or justice is not possible and Derrida does not agree with Plato's aristocratic control. Derrida admits that the combination of sovereignty and democracy is a contradiction of terms. He does not directly subscribe to Plato's school of thought but in modern times, Derrida's role in the contemporary debate would be similar to the role that Plato played in the classic argument.

Another important relation with Platonic tradition is this; Like Plato, Derrida sees the relation between author and text as one of the filiations. Following Platonic Tradition Derrida gives importance to Speech. But there is a difference, Plato's idea of filiations involves only the relation of father and child, but according to Derrida author alternates the relation between father and also the mother of the texts. Although for Derrida Speech is important but he added that actually, human writing is prior to human speech. "Speech, according to Derrida, tends to make us imagine that all meaning is fully 'present', in the manner that the speaking self and her or his interlocutor appear to be. It is this phenomenon which encourages the further delusion that there are ideas or things present to us before and outside the signifying

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<sup>12</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 1955, p 56. As quoted in Derrida, Foucault, Plato and Aristotle- Best Academic Research and Writing Service.

<sup>13</sup> Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Work of Aristotle*, 1984, p 345. As quoted in Derrida, Foucault, Plato and Aristotle- Best Academic Research and Writing Service.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, 1984, p 200.

system.”<sup>15</sup> Derrida says that this realization is the end of the Platonic domination of Western culture. For Plato, the idea of any realization is taken as a lapse from original completeness. But according to Derrida, simply there is no original idea, only an original sign whose meaning is itself mediated, and deferred by another sign.

Derrida points out in *Of Grammatology* that our philosophical tradition, basically from Plato to Heidegger has been dominated by speech as a direct way of communication. While writing is seen as a technical supplement for representing speech, in the *Phaedrus* Plato blames that writing as bastard which is separated from its source; it is separated from the father, from the *arché* and also from the origin. Writing gives rise to some misunderstandings because the speaker is not there to protect, even to explain his or her words. For Derrida, the characteristic of metaphysics is the emphasis on presence, truth, unity, reason, essence, good, and meaning. These are all metaphysical themes and presence is the basis of such metaphysical themes. For him, traditional philosophy gives importance in reason and they give primacy and priority to speech over writing. That is why he calls it ‘logocentric’. He proposes a new concept of ‘writing’ for dealing with *logocentrism* (phonologism and presence or onto-theology). Besides Plato, Derrida bears affinity with Husserl, Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Levinas. But René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, and G.W.F. Hegel they are the masterminds and major founders of modern thinking. Hence, their philosophies are found within the logocentric basement.

#### René Descartes:

One of the major figures of modernity is seventeenth-century French thinker René Descartes (1596-1650), who tried to find proof of existence in our ability to think, recognize and reflect upon the process of thinking. His aim was to discover a new foundation for thought. The famous formulation of Descartes was ‘I think therefore I am’ (in Latin, *the cogito ergo sum*), which means there is only a mind or consciousness doing the doubting and even believing its perceptions. He explained while we doubt we cannot doubt our existence. According to him, mind and body were two separate and distinct entities. He stated that if the body exists it does not mean the ‘I’ (subject) exist. The mind is something which is indivisible, thinking, and non-extended. On the other side, the body is something which is disabled, non-thinking and extended. There is no earth, no sky, no mind, and no bodies; there is nothing in the world.

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<sup>15</sup> John Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, 1997, p 55-83. As quoted in: Tolkien, *Plato and Derrida: A Differance that makes a Difference*.

But 'I' certainly exist if 'I' convinced him or her of something. There is a supreme power who constantly and deliberately deceiving, in that sense 'I' too undoubtedly exist. In short, Descartes thinks that whenever it conceived in my mind or put forward by me, I am, I exist, is necessarily true.

In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida mentioned a detailed study about Descartes. Descartes contributes to the development of human subjectivity, science, rationalism; here truths are examined rigorously. But Derrida criticized this, and on the various ground, he deconstructs Descartes. He reads Descartes's *Meditation* and *Cogito*. In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida investigates the Cartesian *Cogito*, reason, doubt, and existence of God. In *Discourse on Method* and *The Meditation*, Descartes begins with Scepticism and states that "I have sometimes found that these senses played me false, and it is prudent never to trust entirely those who have once deceived us."<sup>16</sup> But in the same book, someone claimed that a madman only can doubt sensory evidence which was so strong. Here about sensibility, Derrida acknowledged the same opinion of Descartes and mentioned that Descartes has stated not only to measure madness; but questioned the general truth of ideas. In *Descartes and Derrida: Economizing thought*, this issue was analyzed by Judovitz Dalia in connection with Derridean description of the problematic as "Derrida's claim relies not on the particular terms in which doubt is presented but on considering its function that is its economizing and totalizing character. He understands madness to be merely one term, in a constellation of terms that include dreams and *error*, necessary to interrogate the totality of ideas of sensory origin. Descartes's reference to madness is thus framed by the larger question regarding the danger of deception that the subject experiences in dreams."<sup>17</sup> Through the concept of *Cogito*, Descartes tried to develop a philosophy like the revival of Renaissance. It is because repeatedly it emphasized subjective and individualistic tendencies.

Derrida agreed with Descartes statement that there is no real than his dreams in the world. He emphasized doubt as an idea of truth. For him, Descartes's doubt is simply an amalgamation of the hypothesis of insanity, dreaming argument, an example of a madman, and most of the sensory origin. Although he agrees with Descartes but he rejects Cartesian concepts by his own way of interpretation. For Derrida, the reason is constructed through the totalizing gesture of hyperbolic doubt. Descartes believed that reason can be used in everything from the methods of mathematics to the criterion of truth. Derrida in this context takes the

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<sup>16</sup> Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, 1979, p 96.

<sup>17</sup> R.P. Singh, *Philosophy: Modern and Postmodern*, 1997, p 21.

existence of 'truth of *Cogito*' through rhetoric of negation as an exercise of an impossible fiction. Here the truth of rhetoric was based on the totalizing character of fiction. Then he says that on the power of representation *Cogito* depends to perform its own negation "as if the appearance of subjectivity did not require the substrate of language, even when attempting not to speak."<sup>18</sup> In the *Second Meditation*, Descartes admits at every time when he used the phrase 'I exist', that time mentally he conceived it. It shows the role of language in the thought process.

Derrida deconstructs this problem in order to "underline that in question is a self-dividing action, a cleavage and ferment interior to meaning in general."<sup>19</sup> Derrida mentioned that the self-dividing action of the subject was internal dissension within meaning and language. This is called 'logos', which we have to carefully erase by scrutinizing the exteriority of madness and the interiority of reason. He holds that contradictions are continued in the logocentric tradition and even in every doctrine these contradictions are enforced the hierarchy. They carried these contradictions as "it can be proposed that the classical crisis developed from and within the elementary tradition of a logos that has no opposite but carries within itself and says all determined contradictions."<sup>20</sup>

Back to Descartes, in *Sixth Meditation*, he described the existence of material things, the distinction between soul and body, the primary qualities and secondary qualities, different emotions, various sensual activities, his physical body parts, about external objects and their qualities. After that, he realizes that material things independently exist of the perceiving subject. It was because of the impact of physical science, which was originated by Galileo. Due to these assumptions, the problem of mind and matter was emerged. For him, the relation between mind and body was a 'mystery'. After that, he predicted that the psychophysical interaction takes place at pineal gland and through this thought, he thinks that mind and body are relative substance and 'God' was the absolute substance. That is why he tried to give proofs for the existence of God through the ontological arguments.

According to Derrida, Descartes gives his proof for the 'existence of God' in the context of reason, doubt, the *Cogito* and he finds the 'interiority of reason'. Again Derrida explained that, for the proof of God, the idea of fictitious perfect being was the base. He observed the rupture between Meditations and Discourse. Then he mentioned that, "Now, the recourse to

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<sup>18</sup> Devadasan. P.(Parol), Chapter- 2 Deconstruction of Derrida, 2008, p 108.

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 2002, p 38.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p 42.

the fiction of the evil genius will evoke, conjure up the possibility of total madness, a total derangement over which I could have no control because it is inflicted upon me – hypothetically – leaving me no responsibility for it. Total derangement is the possibility of a madness, insanity, will spare nothing, neither bodily nor purely intellectual perceptions.”<sup>21</sup> But in Cartesian hyperbolic doubt, Derrida traced a paradoxical element. Thus he first decentralized the Cartesian subjectivity, then marginalized and then rejects it. He applied his *différance* on it and in this way he sidelined the concept of reason, doubt, *Cogito*, and God.

At the end of the eighteenth century, after 150 years almost, Immanuel Kant like Descartes tried to introduce a new account of subjectivity through which he reconciles the arguments of earlier philosophers.

#### Immanuel Kant:

Like Plato, Immanuel Kant develops a kind of conceptual Scheme. For him, without concept perceptions are blind. Thus, concepts are necessary for perception to have meaning, these concepts are beyond space and time; therefore these are universal, which are temporally true but perceptions are spatio-temporal. That is why Derrida marked the philosophy of Kant as an ‘illusion’, it was more than ‘writing’. In regarding the relationship between words and the world, Derrida tried to give a non-Kantian account, which was dialectical. Derrida with dialectics breaks Kant’s claim, ‘understanding makes nature’. Basically, to illustrate the paradox of Kantian project, Derrida takes the philosophical language of Kant. Through this, he showed how in a spatio-temporal vehicle this ‘a-temporal’ true could be contained. It formalizes the relationship between a man and what he seeks through exhibiting its structure. Therefore it can be mentioned that on writing Derrida’s position has no end, it leads to more writing and it goes on and on. For Derrida, texts and books exhibit truth through writing, which they contained. But this truth was not about the world but about the texts.

About Derrida’s method of deconstruction of Kant’s philosophy R.P. Singh mentioned, “With the method of deconstruction, Derrida claims that he is not writing a philosophy like Kant who claimed that only a transcendental idealist could be an empirical realist. Derrida is also not offering a comprehensive view of the world, like Kant who said that the order and regularity in the field of appearances that we entitled nature we ourselves introduced. Derrida is also not protesting against the errors of a philosophical school, like Kant who critically

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p 53.

examined the claims of rationalism and empiricism. Derrida is, however, protesting against the notion that the philosophy of language, pursued realistically as the study of how language and the world are related is something more than it is First philosophy. The basic question is what is Derrida's solution to the problem of the relation between language and the world? Derrida does not come right out and tell his views about the relation of language and the world."<sup>22</sup>

According to Derrida, just like always a sign has a reference to another sign, a text refers to other text. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was purely epistemic. Kant believed in a-priori activity of human minds and their theory of knowledge was synthetic a-priori. But he never answered how language expressed thought and represents the world. He observed that philosophy was just like Newtonian physics, where a literary pretension doesn't work. This is why Derrida deconstructs Kant's modernist epistemic preoccupations. For him, literature was the best way of doing philosophy rather than mathematics or physics. In doing so, Derrida finds writing as a philosophical activity. Therefore he bears a non-Kantian dialectical thinking.

During the twentieth century enlightenment Immanuel Kant, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Edmund Husserl, and Martin Heidegger each of them are assigned a different conception of the world. In that time many different texts regarding aesthetic have been published. For Kant, the idea of the world cannot be confirmed as empirically it is regulative. He treats the world as a principle which constitutes the possibility of experience. He thinks that for the sake of the unity of reason it is necessary to postulate the wholeness of the world.

There was a relation between Kantian aesthetics and two philosophers, Hans-Georg Gadamer (who was a German philosopher of the continental tradition) and Jacques Derrida. They both react against Kant's first critique (*critique of pure reason*). Gadamer tries to develop a philosophical hermeneutics, a reflection on how possible understanding is. In his main work, *Truth and Method* (1960), he takes 'work of art' as a starting point. In this book, he says that in relation to a community, these works of art create a truth experience, which we have to interpret over and over again. Gadamer gave attention to Kant's aesthetics (Kant's third critique: *a critique of judgment*). In his third critique, he tries to investigate our ability to judge, which have no domain of knowledge of its own. In his first critique, he tries to investigate theoretical knowledge and second critique (*critique of practical judgment*) is

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<sup>22</sup> R.P. Singh, *Philosophy: Modern and Postmodern*, 1997, p 4.

associated with practical knowledge. For this analysis, the transcendental method comes, which Gadamer criticizes for its lack of interest in reality. Through the transcendental method, Kant tries to search philosophically for scientific legislation of knowledge. In his transcendental critique, he focussed on the conditions of possibility for something to appear, the art of human knowledge or belief. His critique seeks in the necessary combination of the pre-existing framework not in things themselves or in pure ideas in the mind. According to him, for any human experience, knowledge, and consciousness, space and time are the grounds of possibility that is why they are not observable material things. From that, we have experienced that the world appears to us in a similar way in which the human mind understands them. Due to this, there is a division between things in themselves and their mental appearances. According to Kant, an aesthetic judgment introduces us to intersubjectivity but George Gadamer criticizes it and argues, it happens within an analysis of the thinking process only. He argued that Kant is not interested in the work of art. For him, the work of fine art is the expression of our freedom to be moral and as the creation of something which looks as if it has a purpose in itself we recognize this (a fine art). Though there was a conscious intention of the artist, Kant's aesthetic judgment is not a pure judgment, needs to be transposed to nature to return to pure judgments, Gadamer argued that it. He believes that here an understanding of our being in the world is lost. He says like Kant we cannot follow a scientifically inspired method to arrive at this truth (understanding of our being in the world). Rather than following Kant's way of thinking, he made his own path of the humanistic tradition to explain this.

Jacques Derrida began his career with a set of problems from Kant to Heidegger and moved to critique of structuralism (as a method), and philosophy of language. He deconstructed Kant's aesthetic judgment and called *parergon*. Deconstruction is not an analysis or a critique; it is a way of reading texts. Actually, by bringing the construction to the fore, the construction of truth is deconstructed and shows how it differs from the content. While Derrida reads the Kantian text as a work of art, he follows the reasoning of Kant. Although he himself experiences aesthetic pleasure but not as Kant suggests an absolute and pure pleasure. Aesthetic judgments are disinterested and pure for Kant. But according to Derrida, there is a possibility of a neutralization of myself and the world. In an absolute sense, there was no pure pleasure as a consequence of the disinterestedness. Actually, Kant has created a science of metaphysics and laid the foundation for that science with his three critiques.

Both Derrida and Gadamer interpret Kant and they define the truth of art in their own way. Derrida reads Kant's text as if it's a work of art while Gadamer in his hermeneutics takes work of art as a starting point. However, they both elaborate the work of art and its relationship with truth in different ways. Gadamer's goal was concerned with an understanding beyond a scientific method. In the essay, *The Relevance of the Beautiful* Gadamer discusses that aesthetic experience has to be embedded in the world. For him, the work of art creates a common world and this art invents the truth of a community. In short, the reality of art in relation to the world was searched by Gadamer whereas Derrida demonstrated the context forms of our aesthetic experience. Derrida elaborates aesthetic as a kind of feeling, which escapes and questions our conceptual understanding. It has no pure formal understanding of it is possible. Gadamer's thought about aesthetic judgments or experience stands in the phenomenological tradition. He holds that a picture or image was a work of art and it has the power which immediately affects us. Thus, which Gadamer experience as a work of art, Derrida experience 'thing' as if it is a work of art. By demonstrating how truths are created in texts, Derrida's deconstruction shows the limits of rational thinking. However these two philosophers not only interpret Kant's theory, they takes Kant in a positive way. They mentioned that Kant inspired their thinking. Gadamer in his book *The Relevance of the Beautiful* mentioned that he was inspired by Kant. Here it may be mentioned that Derrida also remains dependent on Kant's thought and texts when he deconstructed Kant. This two ways of thinking in an absolute sense can never be fixed, which brings us the constantly evolving truth.

#### Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel:

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel was one of the greatest philosophers who had a profound influence on the course of Western philosophy. He belongs to the period of German idealism. He was an art lover and expressed art as the spirit of particular cultures, as well as individual artists and the general human spirit. When he started thinking about the philosophy of art, Kant, Friedrich Von Schelling (1775-1854) and Schiller influenced Hegel with their ideas. For him, the aesthetic experience meant all about art, whereas for Kant aesthetic experience is related to the beauty of nature. According to Hegel artistic expression and artistic consciousness was the climax of the history of the human spirit, where truth of art revealed in a direct and intuitive way.

Derrida was influenced by Hegel's dialectics. Hegel's dialectics with contradictions was parallel with Derrida's deconstruction. Even Hegel's theory of speech and writing, and semiology was parallel with the theory of sign. Derrida claimed that "his philosophical formation owes much to the thought of Hegel and it is within and around this particular framework, more than anything else, that his thinking has evolved."<sup>23</sup> This is the reason of Derrida's purpose of deconstructing Hegel's philosophy which embraces Hegel's theories of spirit, truth, dialectic and sign. For Derrida, it is because just as writing leads to more writing, truth leads to more truth, but it cannot lead to absolute truth. Here Derrida rejects Hegel's conception of God, self presence of God, and World, as 'myth of the presence'.

In the chapter entitled *The Pit and Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology*, of the *Margins of Philosophy*, Derrida deconstructs Hegel's theory of speech and writing. In Hegel's thought Derrida clearly catches the logocentric tradition, and he 'defers' and 'differs' from Hegelianism. In *Of Grammatology* he shows that he differs from Hegel's theory of signs, which always determined by and dependent on metaphysical opposition such as; the sensible and the intelligible. Here he mentioned, "The problematic of the sign derives from a fundamental logocentrism, from a philosophy of consciousness or of the originary subject."<sup>24</sup> Here Derrida followed Hegel's thought to show that philosophical generation points out some unconscious presuppositions which built into the vocabulary of its predecessor. However, Derrida's thought is difficult because he is aware of the problem of the vocabulary, phrases, terms, and metaphors (metalanguage). Some postmodern thinkers saw Hegel's philosophy as arrogant and reductive. Hegel thinks that speech is the natural state of the language. For him, non-phonetic writing is hieroglyphics and phonetic writing is a faithful transcription of the voice. In his theory spoken language and phonetic writing faithfully records the intentions of the author, which is an apparently ideal coincidence of meaning and intention. But Derrida engages with ordinary language philosophy. Here with normative overtone, we encounter the elevation of the natural attitude into metaphysics of communication. Derrida deconstructs the idealism of the bond between speech and writing. He was not trying to 'rehabilitate' writing rather than he discusses in his deconstruction the difference between writing and speech.

Derrida analyzed the chapter *psychology* and subchapter *Imagination* in Hegel's work *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Derrida decentres theory of speech and writing. He criticized this approach to psychology first, where subjective spirit has the psychological

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p 53.

<sup>24</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Positions: An interview with Jean Louis Houdet and Guy Scarpetta in Positions*, 1981.

temper and it shows that reason was the active elements of spirit. Hegel's dialectics was an absolute idealism, where thought was primary and reality was secondary. So, first, he formulates the principle of dialectics in the concepts, categories, and sphere of logic. After that he introduced laws of dialectic to the world outside, which Derrida called 'Hegel's idealizing mastery'. It is because from spirit laws of dialectics are arise, and his semiology built on this along with onto-teleological or onto-theological synthesis. Another point is, according to Hegel, within the limits of meaning and explanation thoughts are beginning and also progressed. "So nothing is in the thought that can occupy a spurious elevation above the world."<sup>25</sup> In that case, Derrida was ready to accept Hegel's concept about the otherness of the world, but when Hegel gives the meaning for interpreting that otherness in a dialectical way, Derrida does not accept his thought.

#### Edmund Husserl:

Derrida was influenced by Edmund Husserl. Actually, when he was in Ecolé Normale, he initially focused on Husserlian phenomenology. Derrida, in 1962, translated *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*. Husserl plays an important role in Derrida's philosophy. Because Husserl's role in written language was the main inspiration for Derrida's claim that western culture totally dependents on speech. Like Husserl, Derrida tries to criticize western traditional philosophy. Husserl is known as the 'Radical' beginner of a new philosophy. He wanted to establish the scientific ideal in philosophy. Although he was attracted by the Cartesian ideal of certainty and like Descartes, he wanted to ground philosophy on the model of mathematical knowledge but his thinking is radically different from Descartes. Descartes started with the method of doubt to reach to certainty but Husserl started with pure essence to reach to the quality of thinking. In *The Origin of Geometry*, Husserl says "Our problem now concerns precisely the ideal objects which are thematic in geometry: how does geometrical ideality (just like that of all sciences) proceed from its primary intrapersonal origin, where it is a structure within the conscious space of the first inventor's soul, to its ideal objectivity?"<sup>26</sup> For Husserl, geometrical discoveries are objectified in written forms. "In writing down symbols, the addressee is removed and what is written down becomes a 'sedimentation' which can be reactivated by new acts of

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<sup>25</sup> Devadasan. P.(Parol), *Chapter-2 Deconstruction of Derrida*, 2008, p 114.

<sup>26</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's The Origin of Geometry: an Introduction*, 1978, p 161. As quoted in: Karen François, *On The Notion of A Phenomenological Constitution of Objectivity*, p 123.

understanding”<sup>27</sup>. Husserl gives importance in symbolic thought for science that is why he recognizes the need for written language to underpin the ideality of meaning. “The objectivity of geometry is made possible, for Husserl, through the ‘body of language’.”<sup>28</sup> In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida comments “Husserl is the first philosopher to recognize that writing is the condition of the possibility of ideal objects and therefore of objectivity.”<sup>29</sup> In *Writing and Difference* Derrida remarks: “Meaning must await being said or written in order to inhabit itself, and in order to become, by differing from itself, what it is: meaning. This is what Husserl teaches us to think in *The Origin of Geometry*.”<sup>30</sup>

For Derrida, phenomenology plays the role of tradition. However, Husserl’s phenomenology was a great source from which a succession of the major philosophical project comes. Edmund Husserl plays the lead role in shaping the thoughts of Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau Ponty. Derrida treated Husserl as a main actor who played the lead role in classical philosophy in the European context. Derrida’s deconstruction is not just a system of concept but a way of traversing the body of a text, a textual labour. His works leave a track in the texts of Husserl, which cannot be traced without reference to the text in which it was marked. From the *Logical Investigations* to *Crisis* Husserl’s central concerns are the firstly, to establish the objects of our knowledge. The objects of our knowledge are transcendent to the mental act through which we know them. They are not ‘real’ component of our psychological flow but these are the ideal identities which could be repeated as identically the same by different subjects. Secondly, he was concerned about that man was not just a technician, where they manipulated knowledge; because according to Husserl, we constantly recovered the constitutive or generative activity of thoughts in the process of knowledge accumulation. And this is necessary for the original institution of truths in language, where for others they will be available. Language is a store of insights for us and our ethical responsibility is to quicken them with our own minds constitutive activity. That is why Husserl mentions in *Crisis*, the meaning of a scientific formula is not just in the relations of numbers but is a task given to scientific humanity.

The aims of philosophy are to know what true knowledge is. Because knowledge is something through which we know another. So, if we have knowledge about something then

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<sup>27</sup> Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 2000, p 447.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of grammatology*, 1976, p-27; 42-43.

<sup>30</sup> Martin Travers, *European Literature From Romanticism to Postmodernism: A Reader in Aesthetic Practice*, 2001, p 296.

what we know is true. But sometimes it may happen that the fact can be false also. But everything depends on that 'if'. So, the only way to check it is to examine the matter what we seek to know. And whenever we go back and verify the previous judgments then we get a new judgment.

The ideal knowledge is a kind of knowledge which must be in 'itself'. Knowledge adjusts itself to the structure of what is independently existence of the cognitive act, but the object cannot be created whimsically. But here the paradox is "what is independently of our experience only becomes accessible in *experience*, and the experience is not the same as the thing of which it is the experience."<sup>31</sup> It is a common assumption that objects such as rocks, trees, river exist in the outer world even when no one is observing them. But about this un-experienced existence, we have no experience. And we are not satisfied with saying to the skeptic that when we do not look towards the object even then whether it exists or not. Here Realists have admitted that "objects are by their very nature objects of knowledge only in the experience of subjects."<sup>32</sup> According to Empiricism (all knowledge based on experience), experience means the only experience of the object, and Husserl called this, the problem of transcendence. By 'transcendence' he refers to the objectivity of objects and outside of the temporal flow of consciousness they exist. So, in this sense, it can be said that material objects and ideal objects e.g. mathematical truths are also transcendent.

According to Husserl, the telos of rationality was the objective knowledge and the knowledge of the world. He persisted upon self-evidence, and this was the goal of phenomenological reflection. 'Phenomenology' was a transparent method and free from presuppositions. It describes consciousness exactly as it is and objects are described as given to consciousness. However, at the same time within consciousness, it obtained to preserve the relation to the outside and within subjectivity, it obtained the relation to objectivity. But through the concept of intentionality, he solved the problem of this relation. According to Husserl, the directness of consciousness to the object of which it is conscious called intentionality. No object appears without experience. So, there is no experience without an object of which it is an experience. Therefore, from the beginning of the world, everything has its place in the pure internality of the ego but the object is given to consciousness as what it is appropriate for the objectivity. And the 'specific sense' or meaning which we experienced is the transcendent or an object outside. It is given within experience but accurately given as the sense 'an object out there'.

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<sup>31</sup> Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, 1984, p 33.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

So, what is transcendent or outside is also given as a part of the immanent or inside. But these are sense material object, not an actual or real material objects, which means if we want to attain the phenomenological viewpoint then we have to leave the natural standpoint which a common man and science shares. Explicitly the natural standpoint is the objects about which we are conscious really exist but sometimes we raise a question about this existence. And upon this natural consciousness, phenomenology as a kind of reflection tries to describe what is absolutely given within consciousness. For this reason, phenomenological reflection 'brackets or suspends' the question of existence. So, the thesis or judgment that things are actually present to my perception belongs to the natural standpoint, which further belongs to the experience of an object as a whole. Therefore, according to Husserl when we said that there is a tree before us, then it engages in the phenomenological *epokhé* or abstention. He never said that *epokhé* is a skeptical questioning of existence. Even it is not a Cartesian doubt but a change of perspective or an absolute being of the modality of consciousness which makes judgments. So, whether really the tree is there or not is indifferent. Here what remains is that the tree appears which is judged by the consciousness to be really there.

Husserl reacted against the psychologistic or sensualistic view, where he showed that from the bundles of sensations the ideas of objects enter into consciousness, which functions in the consciousness as a representative of the objects or as images. But according to Husserl, there must be a constitutive or interpretive activity of consciousness, if someone has an accurate description of perceptual consciousness. For example 'a box'; here the bundle of sensation which we experience about this box, as a real content of consciousness, is a different bundle from what someone experiences or what we experience tomorrow. So, our perception of this box to be the same as our own yesterday or it is to be the same as someone's perception but between the perceptions, there must be an ideal identity. However, as a real content of an individual consciousness, sensations of a particular moment could not be the same with other consciousness. Thus, by the consciousness as having a particular 'sense' the sensations must be animated or apprehended.

In *Investigations*, Husserl solved the problem of immanence through distinguishing the objects. For him, it is transcendent. He remarked that the identity of the object must be ideal and identity of sense or meaning but not of sensations. It means that by understanding the object (real object) through an ideally constituted identity, the relation of a real object transcendent to subjectively be guaranteed here. So, in *Logic*, he mentions that only this type

of ideal objectivity is capable of being experienced as identically the same objectivity for different subjects, which never share the same real sensory content.

So, it is very important to keep in mind the distinction between the natural and phenomenological standpoints. For example, when I see a tree at that time on the basis of experience I perceive the tree itself but not the inner representation of the tree. This is a natural standpoint. Here someone's attention is absorbed in the object which is intended by his or her perception. But when we describe the perceiving object's character as given to our reflection, then such description has different characteristics of that tree. Since the object (that tree) has an infinite number of perspectival viewings. So, the tree or object which has in my perception is noema (co-relate of consciousness). But when we look at the tree from distance and then approach closer and when we stand below the branches of the tree and look at that tree, then each moment we have some different perspectival apprehension about that tree, which is not identical with all over the tree. For the phenomenological reflection, the object has no reality of its own. But noema is directed towards the modes in which consciousness is aware of objects. And for Husserl this reflection brackets or suspends the question of reality, which is called the phenomenological reduction. For him this reduction of the natural and empirical standpoint is fundamental. He wanted to describe and to deny nothing which is undeniable and to assert nothing which was not evident. According to him subjectivity and objectivity are the two sides toward which his phenomenology is oriented. Husserl maintains the balance between these two, between conceptual judgment and pre-conceptual experience and between real objects and ideal objects. But the phenomenological reflection is everything is preserved just as it is but some new elements of the scene are coming, which are thematized as objects.

Husserl's phenomenological investigation is an investigation which is present in the sense of experience. It demands the understanding glance of the wakeful *cogito*, and it demands insights into the sense in which it investigates. But in this perspective, the ordinary geometers or logicians are not farther from naive sensualists. However, phenomenology finds a world that is given to consciousness and covered in the interpretations which are accumulated in the history and this is obviously found underneath the sedimentation or accumulation. It tried to discover by some interpretation that what the object is prior to being given form. It demands that we withdraw ourselves from the layers of the interpretive form where this world is covered in front of us, and it tries to return back to those primitive moments where due to the consciousness, things jump of the being. This is the only way to reach into the

presuppositionless or a truly evident description. So, if we want to take the world as it appears to unreflective experience which is shaped by tradition, previous experience and language then we have to take or accept it as a habitual world, as a world we can only manipulate and understand and as it were from the outside.

Husserl's followers have criticized and widely reject his transcendental phenomenological reduction, for example Iso Kern's evaluation. According to him, 'reduction' is designed to break through the limitations of natural objective consciousness and it sees the object as foreign things, a static fixed, which tries to lighten the depth character of the world as a dynamic achievement of consciousness. Kerns quoted Husserl's word that "to exclude the world means not to want to pass judgment on it straightway."<sup>33</sup> According to Husserl's axiomatic thought if the world is intrinsically capable of being known as a whole then in some implicit way it contains the protoform, from where the forms of conceptual identity is developed. In this case, phenomenological reduction (which suspends the question of the object as such) focuses on the noematic idealities and tries to lighten the transcendental subjectivity, where this ideality appears as a way of unfolding the totality of the ideal possibilities.

According to Husserl language is the necessary medium of intersubjectivity. And by the verbal expression, the ideal objectives are fixed. It is the object of knowledge. This object of knowledge makes possible their accumulation in the communal tradition, for example, the tradition of philosophy or science which culminates into the phenomenology. Therefore, Husserl's treatment of language is neither essential nor in-essential. For example, there is a living body of language which is transparent to intention and there is an opaque body (dead) of language. So, Husserl's thought of language carried a tension and Derrida discussed this topic in his reading of Husserl. Even due to his deconstructive turn, he considered Husserl as the main agent of motivation. Some issues about the *Origin of Geometry*, which Derrida discussed, firstly, Husserl takes to examine the dependency of ideality on language and tradition. But the problems which created from this dependence are called *The Origen of Geometry*. This essay clearly expressed the necessity of original reactivation of ideal meaning occurs via subjectivity. Derrida focused on this necessity and the conflict of the worldliness of the linguistic sign.

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p-41.

In *The Origin of Geometry*, Husserl mentions that the original inventor of geometry has to be engaged in a primal creative spiritual act. In this spiritual act, the inventor of geometry achieves the geometrical truths with the consciousness of its original being-itself-there. But in the mental space of proto-geometer (original inventor of geometry), this original moment of insight is restricted. Due to this reason, the real temporal event belongs to their empirical subjectivity. Those geometrical entities are not psychological; rather they are present in their essence, which exist supratemporally. So, to escape from its primary intrapersonal origin, where it structured within conscious space of the first inventor's soul and to achieve an ideal objectivity, the geometrical idealities should be expressed in language or a linguistic living body. Then the second person catches these linguistic expressions, which was experienced by the proto-geometer.

For historical tradition, by writing the activity of original reproduction is possible. Derrida took interest in Husserl's text. In one side, writing is necessary for ideality to be freed from the contingency of any particular empirical subject. For this reason, it permanently remains as virtuality. From an ideality, the originating consciousness achieves a wakeful moment of self-evidence. Then consciousness stores this fully wakeful moment in language. After that, it sleeps or dies. But at the end, the ideality or the permanent possibility of wakefulness remains. In another side, ideality and linguistic formula are not the same (which embodies the ideality and avails permanently). So, the being and ideal objectivity of permanent availability are different from their linguistic embodiments. Even they are essentially independent. Therefore, these are possible because of that linguistic embodiment. Thus the linguistic formulas are receptacle only. This has to be transformed through a recite, in the corresponding activity of meaning constitution. It is an activity which re-activates the primal self-givenness in the originator's mode of full conscious presence from being-itself-there. For this reactivation, this necessity is impeded on a level of habitual response by the fact that we can read and in general operate with language. That is why Derrida mentioned that for ideality writing embodiment is necessary.

Husserl commented that through the sense perception an act of intellect involved. And by this intellect, an object is realized through sense or an ideal object-identity. For him, meaning gets completed in language, in the presence of an object. This is intended before consciousness. The intellectual form is the shape of the intention and of the object as given to this intention. According to him, the act of pure meaning operates as a 'goal-seeking-intention' and when the object is thought within the symbol then it is present in the intuition. Here the meaning

intention is just like the outline of the form, where the object is intended. Then the intuition of the actual object unifies a perfect corresponding filling into an empty outline. In this moment of object intuition, meaning and object both get united or blended in a single unity (ideal or intentional blending). But this blending and intended in a single mental act is possible in one condition. This is that, meaning-bearing a linguistic sign which is drop out of the picture. He remarked that signs are never an object in our thought; rather we fully survive in the consciousness of meaning.

Husserl sometimes stressed in the difference between the sensuous sign and mental act, which passes in the ideal meaning through the perceptual sign. He mentions that when we experience some certain data from that tree, then based on the sensational content we perceive the tree. Therefore between sense data and object perceived, there is an intrinsic relation. But in the case of the sign, the relation between the experiences of the sign is a sensuous phenomenon. And this sensuous phenomenon and its meanings are arbitrary. Therefore the connection between sensuous sign and realm of meaning is less prior compared to the ordinary material objects. Signs are the indispensable medium of meaning but the meaning (logical meaning) is not bound to sign.

Logical meaning is the essence of meaning. Thus, the meaning is always in its essence. However, it is not free or separate from the sign. A principle sign never creates opacity between the merging of intention and object. For instance, when I think or when I speak that 'this box', although the box is before me, then the meaning and object becomes one and that time the signifying medium assumes a kind of transparency. Even after this cognition and thought, these two are not the same. The thought is meaningful although it points towards the object within the principle. But the time between intention and fulfillment can be indefinitely extended on that time thought functions signitively or emptily. So, the signitive intention functions in the absence of fulfilling intuition which is thought. Thought not only plays in case of some sign but it also plays in case of the meaning of those sign. For this reason, it (signitive intention) moves in the ideality. And by the contingency of the material sign, it is not essentially conditioned. According to Husserl, the meaning intention and intuition or sense perceptions both are the freedom of thought.

Derrida expressed Husserl's two side projects as formalist and intuitionist. In this case, he comments that Husserl in his analysis about formalist moment succeeded a lot. Husserl's analysis of intentionality yielded a distinction between meaning and object. In his *Fourth*

*Investigation* of a pure logical grammar, this distinction was in the center most. Grammar is the universal structure of the language. This grammar, for the linguistic meaningfulness, defines a-priori conditions of possibility. And in the interval before the fulfillment of sense perception, the pure forms of meaning are unfolded. Derrida explains, sometimes without knowing any object we can speak. According to him, we know the act of meaning which always tries to create a relationship with the object. In this case, intention animated the body of a signifier for speech to take place. But by an intuition, the fulfillment of that aim is not indispensable or absolutely not necessary in the original structure of the expression. It tries to distribute with the full presence of the object which is aimed at by intuition. Due to this reason, we remember a meaning symbolically. But it is not true and never gets fulfilled. For instance, the square is a triangle. According to Husserl, this expression does not refer to even possible or actual object; rather they have some meaning. Because as an expression they have some forms and they follow some rules. On the other hand, Husserl has given another example 'green is where'. In this case, the expression is nonsense. It has no form and meaning. Thus Husserl in his formalist moment separates the stratum of meaning from the stratum of object intuition. Here he tries to see how these stratum functions according to its own laws. However, Husserl described the emancipation of speech as non-knowing and independent of fulfilling intuition. In another side, he effaces this emancipation.

Husserl explained that, meaning waits upon truth. As a relation to an object, it is a-priori in its essence. And only in its grammatical form it makes sense. This tolerates the possibility of a relationship with objects. Here Derrida questioned this teleological determination of the essence of meaning. According to him, the essence of meaning is its power on the ability to do some function in the absence of the object by animating the body of a signifier. But when the object is present in front of us that time we cannot see the distinctive or unique character of the meaning as a distinctive from the object intuition. Due to this reason, Derrida tried to break the concept of meaning far away from the moment of intuition. Here he tried to attach or fix to the moment of signification. But to deconstruct the Husserl's meaning and signification does not mean to deny it or to refute it rather his deconstruction almost followed the conceptual path which is traced by Husserl. Even he followed some major steps which took by Husserl.

However, the above discussion is not meant for criticizing Husserl, though there is a contradiction in his thinking; it tried to show some aspects of the articulation of his concepts by which one leads to another. Here we try to lighten up that ethico theoretical character,

which Derrida used. This discussion tries to explore a perfect shape to the articulation and their linkage. We already have seen that Husserl choose a path according to the telos of the fulfillment of the signitive intention by something itself. Due to this reason in the case of the moment of signification, that kind of subordinate value has been prescribed. In his discourse, the path which he chooses is a subordinate place in the linkage of moments. Although his decision about ethico-theoretical determines the value of the moment of the sign. This decision of Husserl suspends the decision to throw open the question of the place and the value of the sign. According to James Joyce, the way of Husserl leads by the fixing of terminology in univocality. It is transparent to the logical units of ideal meaning. But, Derrida thought that this work of James Joyce is a repeated one and he has taken the responsibilities for that equivocation. He utilized language, which is equalized the greatest potential for buried with the greatest possible synchrony. Even he accumulates and tried to interwoven these intentions within each linguistic atom, vocable, simple propositions, each word, actually in all worldly cultures and their ingenious forms (science, mythology, art, religion, politics, philosophy, literature and so on). According to James Joyce, it is very difficult to read Derrida as poetry and as a simple philosophy.

Another important point where the difference between Husserl's thought and Derrida's thought are mentioned. The point is described as follows:

Derrida has shown his model of the sign as the structure of difference on the basis of rejecting the theory of Husserl's model of presence. According to Husserl, the essence of sign is a type of character which is present in the mental or spiritual act. But, he was aware that there is another level of ideality, the ideality of the signifier or verbal corporeality, in between the material substance of the sign and its meaning. Here for Derrida the sign into a worldly or material side and an ideal side was not splited by the ideality of the signifier. Thus, the existence of the sign is not bracketed in favor of its ideality. In general, Husserl defines idealities as identities. And by a rational subject, it presented the standing possibility of repetition. So in this sense, the sign is too an ideality. But the identity of the sign is a kind of a 'type' of a contingent existent (or of a set of allowable sensuous configurations) which is recognizable as the same sign. However, these types of identities are not real things. Therefore, for thought the sign is not a final route (terminus). So, the fact is that beyond this there are various sensuous configurations which can also count 'as the same sign might have no objective identity with each other'. And within the system of a difference, they retain the relative function in a long time. This system of difference constitutes the whole system of

sign to which they belong. In that way the language can treat 'I', 'K', and 'R' as the same as another language treats them as different phonemes. As a result neither in the purity, ideality the sign is an ideal object nor is it quite a material object. Derrida mentioned that there was nothing amazing or something new about the nature of the sign. For Husserl, the sign confounds the categories of ideality and materiality. He introduced meditation to make the nature of the sign as the focus of thought, which is no longer that of classical metaphysics. It is something other than a being but not being a thing. It is no longer a meditation on the being of the thing but the 'sole thing'. But it is not a matter of a question. So, Husserl reduced the sign in favor of their ideal signification. Because according to him, the essence or non-essence of the sign lacks freedom and presence both. Through this thought, the sign remains in its essence. Therefore following Derrida, it can be remarked that necessarily the sign belongs to ideality. We can bracket the existence of ordinary materiality but in the same way, we cannot bracket the sign.

The difference between Husserl and Derrida is, Derrida takes the sign as something which is the limit point of the movement of idealization. And he wanted to show that how modern philosophical waves (from Plato to Husserl) break on that point. He tried to go in another direction and re-capture the ground which he previously accepted. The distinctive structure of the sign was identified by him as a repetition of what was not fully present. For that reason, he reinterprets the fundamental structure of presence in its terms. He re-conceived his all experiences on the model of signitive experience. And for him, "'Repeatability' is the condition for the existence of idealities (all), whether they are the "senses" of real or ideal objects, turns out to infect the entire domain of presence."<sup>34</sup> Because at that time he understands that on the repetition the constitutive form of all ideality depends. But according to Husserl by a unifying and unified form of ideality repetition is possible. He concerned about presence or self-givenness of objects to consciousness. According to him, consciousness depends on the primal impression that 'an object makes on consciousness in an absolute "now".'<sup>35</sup> And that moment of primal impression only has full being. At the place of past 'now' comes a new 'now' and the moment would be changed into past 'now' immediately. Here Husserl realized that the concept of a primal 'now' and irreducible 'now' is an idealization and it is a limit concept. So, an appropriate sense from a primal 'now', a

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<sup>34</sup> Henry Staten, *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, 1984, p- 50.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

complete concept of now was created which contains the anticipations of the future. 'Retention' retains itself a previous now and so on.

Husserl talks about time consciousness in terms of the object, they are themselves temporal; mainly sounds and melodies. When an individual person can listen to any melody "the individual notes do not completely disappear when the stimulus or action of the excited by them comes to an end. When the new note sounds, the one preceding it does not disappear without a trace; otherwise, we should be incapable of observing the relations between the notes which follow one another. We should have a note at every instant... but never the idea of a melody."<sup>36</sup> For this reason, phenomenological retention is a kind of descriptive concept which acknowledged the fact that in any given moment perception is immediately informed by the sense that which has preceded it. That kind of sense is not a self-contained and different thing. In the case of Kant, we observed that he realized the problem about the isolation of the moment of consciousness and tried to give a solution by reference to the concept of an object. But in phenomenology according to Husserl the moments of originary consciousness are essentially or naturally linked in a continuous gradation, which is possible from that time constituting continuity, from where the idealities of objects are derived. Although each moment of consciousness is filled with a new content and the form of that consciousness always remains the same. So, ultimately the consciousness of the unity of an object is possible only because of the formal structure of the flux of the time-constituting consciousness. For Husserl, through an impression, a 'now' is constituted and it joins a horizon of protention with a chain of retentions.

But according to Derrida, this analysis (time consciousness which concerns the nature of retention) of Husserl have some problems. The problem is: if the 'now' of impression consciousness was constituted by its relation to past 'now' which it already retains, then the question is, is it followed that previous retention? Which belongs to the perception in the primordial sense, what Husserl wants to assert? However, there is some descriptive difference between retention and recollection but it does not demonstrate that previous retention as opposed to recollection (secondary remembrance), which means there is a character of perception 'of the immediate intuitive presence of consciousness of its objects' Husserl mentioned that consciousness in its every phase is necessarily consciousness. When Derrida competes with Husserl's observation about the nature of retention, he challenged the fullness

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p- 51.

of consciousness. If the primary remembrance does not belong to the primordial fullness of objective consciousness then it contaminates the originality of the origin.

Thus Husserl's own analysis expressed that there is no content which is possible as lived experience without retention. But the problem is, whether these retained contents are perceptually present? According to Husserl, the answer is yes, they must be. The reason is, his whole system was based on a-priori assumptions that all forms of mental representation referred back to the primordial experience of full perceptual presence which determines phenomenology as a philosophy of presence. Here deconstruction of phenomenology treats retention as a non-fullness which infects perception. So, just because without retention there is no perception, the trace of non-presence come out as essential to the principles of perceptual presence and the 'originary' of 'now' depends on that repetition of 'not now'. Thus, for the appearing of the phenomenon, the non-present 'not-now' becomes the condition of possibility. So, we cannot imagine consciousness as full and it is no longer conceived in the 'now' of perception but it becomes possible only for Derrida to move into the direction of an accommodation to the psychoanalysis, and postpone constitution of a mental content which is never present consciously.

Derrida starts with the structure of sign, and then on the same model, he reinterprets the structure of transcendental consciousness and the structure of ideality. To appear in any present term, 'in-principals multiplicity' is a condition within a repeatable identity. There are some beliefs or habits which are common to people but at the same time, it is difficult to follow the underpinning meaning of the sentence. Derrida's proposal evoked that opposition which it has. However, his formula is attractive and noticeable of the established formula and it is rationally formulated. Its intention was to provide an alternate description of a set of phenomena. According to Derrida the ideality of the sign was broken or divided by repeatability. So, as a follower of the logic of deconstruction, it may be mentioned that we not only revise our concepts; rather we will revise our concept of language and the concept of concept also. Like Wittgenstein, Derrida mentioned that deconstruction is not a pure thought but by the medium of language it allows itself to work. For him, the divided essences have a trace structure. Here trace is retention within the same of the reference to the other. However, the other itself has never been present. It is the transcendental structure of experience. As the structure of the 'now' and of the sign, the trace is the possibility of experience and meaning. In general, the first possibility of a trace is the possibility of a particular language and it (trace) is the pure form of signification.

In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida supplements his trace structure with Saussure's concept of the sign. According to Saussure, the sign is not a positive term. It is "constituted in its identity by its difference from the other terms in the system to which it belongs."<sup>37</sup> For him, language is not a substance but 'a form'. He gives an example, such as: "the term a and b are radically incapable of reaching the level of consciousness – one is always conscious of only the a/b difference."<sup>38</sup> Here it may be marked that the form of ideality is the trace of difference. Here, by the double difference, the sign is constituted from itself and from the other signs. But Derrida radicalized the concept of the differential form of language, which is Saussure's concept, and Derrida assimilates it to Husserl's concept of ideality.

In *Of Grammatology*, it is mentioned that the sign is an 'irreal' identity. As a system of differential trace structure, the pure form of language only can appear in the phenomenological lived experience zone. But on the other hand, in terms of Saussure's concept of significative value, Derrida redirects the phenomenological discourse on which he draws by analyzing the structure of lived experience. However, signification is not 'presence', not self-identity but only it appears as a lived ideality. In *Of Grammatology* it is stated that a sign is a structure of reference in which not pure identity and difference appears as such.

So, the signification as the trace of a difference, the split identity of the sign, Derrida summarized all these themes under 'writing'. According to the usual sense, writing is a kind of language which is detached from the subject physically who intends the meaning. But for Derrida, it is more than that. It is the signitive essence of language experience of speech and thought. Derrida argued, "From the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs."<sup>39</sup> Thus within someone's own experience the partial nonpresence or spacing of writing as the possibility of that experience is at work- where someone not fully present to his or herself and not fully wakeful: "Arche-writing as spacing...marks *the dead time* within the presence of the living present."<sup>40</sup> So, René Descartes's proposition 'I think, therefore I am' (*Cogito ergo sum*) put forwards the fullness of self-presence to flower as the fullness of self-present thought. Within thought, spacing opens the relation to death and to the unconscious, and experiences are written. But in one hand, apart from the constitutive intention of a wakeful consciousness, it makes a sense of its own and for the same reason in another hand,

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p-59.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p-50

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p- 68

the sense which it makes is equivocal, partially opaque and lacking in unity. However, deconstruction is not a new explanation of how things really are; rather difference and writing, in general, are that kinds of the zone in which the concepts are designed to contest are located. In deconstruction, the turn to writing is not just a simple return to the natural standpoint which precedes the phenomenological reduction. For Derrida, it is a reduction of the reduction.

From the above discussions, it is clear that equivocal surface of writing; the zone of ideality begins itself to show up in the ordinary sense of the text as a textual zone. The phenomenological reduction which is opened by Husserl is a linguistic effect. On the other side about *différance*, Derrida said that it is neither a word nor a concept. For him, it is a grammatical device. It is a trace structure which is constructed as a baffle. Therefore against the pressure of the paternal tradition that baffle holds open the texture of language to allow different kind of text to be interwoven. For example a Freudian discourses on the irrational and unconscious to flow into the philosophical texts.

Derrida attacked 'logocentrism' or 'phonocentrism' (western culture, since Plato's Phaedrus) by his new or a general science of writing, which he called 'grammatology'; it is not just one science among others but the 'true science of science'. For Derrida: "It is true that for me Husserl's work, and precisely the notion of epoché, has been still is a major indispensable gesture. And in everything I try to say and write the epoché is implied. I would say that I constantly try to practice that am speaking or writing."<sup>41</sup>

It may be commented here that Derrida is influenced by Husserl but the differences between them are, Husserl's phenomenology is concerned with 'phenomenology of language' and 'speech' but Derrida's 'deconstruction' concerned with the 'text'. That is why Derrida bracketed Husserl within the group of 'logocentrism'. The problem of Husserl is that like Descartes, Hume, and Kant, he accepts the character of modern epistemology and the presumption, the content of consciousness represents only our certain knowledge. He believed that Descartes's method of doubt is still a valid method. But Derrida opposed to Husserl. By the influence of structuralism, which is developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, Derrida developed his path with the Saussure's concept of sign. According to Husserl, living present of human consciousness is the ultimate locus, the ground of meaning and

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<sup>41</sup> See Stephen Boos, *In the Blink of an Eye: Derrida's Deconstruction of Husserlian Phenomenology*, vol-82, 2008, p-5.

understanding. But for Derrida meaning depends on sign-system. He explains that there is no self and no other, which can be understood apart from the sign. For Derrida 'logocentrism' is the tendency, which is associated with truth, with the voice of word or logos, it involves a prejudice in favor of 'presence', what Derrida calls 'metaphysics of presence' and Husserl's logocentrism leads him to privilege the presence of the voice or speech as opposed to writing. That is why Derrida says that Husserl reproduced another deep prejudice of Western thought and Derrida calls it 'phonocentrism'.

### Martin Heidegger:

After Husserl, another philosopher who played a crucial role in French Philosophy was Martin Heidegger. Derrida was strongly influenced by his position. He was deeply interested in Heidegger, and his relation with Heidegger is critical. Heidegger's influence on Derrida is especially visible in Derrida's central concept of deconstruction. Some commentators say about deconstruction that 'Derrida as merely taking over and developing on the earlier Heideggerian concept'. In 1927, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger used the word 'destruction', which is contrasted with 'construction'. Here "he describes the Phenomenological method in terms of three basic components: reduction, construction and deconstruction. Deconstruction is a critical process in which traditional concepts that at first must necessarily be employed are deconstructed down to the sources from which they were drawn."<sup>42</sup> Heidegger observes in *Being and Time*, that destruction is a hermeneutic tool. Like Heidegger, Derrida understands, by 'Metaphysics of Presence', the meaning of beings has been determined, in the Western philosophy. For this reason it can be mentioned that Derrida's philosophy is a Post-Heideggerian. But Derrida does not begin his philosophical career with a question on being, he does not engage in any rational inquiry of the meaning, it is always directed to the center, and reason. Derrida claims that he deconstructed Heidegger's important *essay The Origin of the Work of Art* by which he actually tries to overcome the metaphysics of presence. With some thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, and Saussure; Derrida finds difference at the origin of truth. Like Heidegger, he says that a philosopher at all time has gone wrong in trying to make sense of meaning by looking for essential truth lying with the essence of things.

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<sup>42</sup> See, Susann M. Laverty, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A Comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations*, 1 September 2003.

Heidegger used the term ‘destruction’; there is a difference between Heidegger’s ‘destruction’ and Derrida’s ‘deconstruction’. Heidegger used the term ‘destruction’ as something positive, it is not aimed to do away with metaphysics; rather phenomenological reduction is oriented towards the reconstruction of the meaning of beings which is found mixed within the hard layers of ‘Being’. Heidegger’s master word is ‘Being’. Aristotle, who wrote *Metaphysics*, raises the question of what is being (entity) as being? For him, everything is a being. After a long time, Heidegger reformulates Aristotle’s question and he enquires what the being of beings is? According to Heidegger “philosophy is not a science of beings but of being.”<sup>43</sup>

As an existentialist, Heidegger begins the analysis of being not with the meaning of entity but with ‘Dasein’ (existential structure or the human subject whose existence precedes his essence). And “Heideggerian destruction of metaphysics is a de-structuring of philosophy in order to arrive at the meaning behind the structure of Being. For Heidegger origin of truth is neither the *a-priori* categories nor the truth of proposition, but non-originary origin, which is explained in terms of the disclosedness or truth of *Dasein* and that of work of art.”<sup>44</sup>

However, Derrida does not reject Heideggerian concept of ‘being’ but he used the word ‘trace’ (*arché-writing*). Derrida says Heidegger’s destruction signified an operation bearing on the structure or traditional architecture of the fundamental concepts of ontology or of Western metaphysics. Both Heidegger and Derrida teach us, to use in terms of trace – structure; but the difference between them is, Heidegger’s being is the inarticulate presence and Derrida’s trace is the mark of the absence of a presence. Derrida’s writing is a kind of radical critique of Western metaphysics, and his strategy for overcoming logocentrism is called deconstruction. It is closely related to the word ‘analysis’, etymologically meaning “to undo”, not related to Heidegger’s ‘destruction’.

### Friedrich Nietzsche:

Nietzsche was one of the remarkable philosophers who bear major influences not only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but also in the present, especially on Jacques Derrida. His ideas of individuality, morality and the meaning of existence contributed to the thinking of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida. Nietzsche declares the end of metaphysics; he was the first philosopher who

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<sup>43</sup> Peter Alawa, *Martin Heidegger on Science and Technology: It’s Implication to the Society*, vol-12, Issue- 6, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Manihottill, *Difference at the Origin: Derrida’s Critique of Heidegger’s Philosophy of the Work of Art*, 2008, p- 2.

says that 'God is dead', not only the death of 'God', but as a necessary consequence of the human subject. His genealogy plays a deconstructive critique of the tradition. Like Nietzsche, Derrida tries not to lay importance to 'reason'. We can say that actually Nietzsche's ideas are developed in Derrida's thought on literary authority and its relation to the deconstruction of the subject. His central concept is will to power and the authority of the '*Übermenschem*' (supermen). Postmodernism challenges the modernist and medieval mindset. It tries to overcome logocentrism or reason on metaphysical and mythical worldview. But in the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new anthropological project started and Nietzsche is credited with this change in Western philosophy. He says that reason is nothing but the will to power; it is overtly and covertly operates for power. According to him, knowledge is a means of power, even in science, morality, art, and metaphysics. Power is a major category.

But the difference is that Derrida does not endorse Nietzsche's statement of 'the death of God'. Derrida's doctrine of 'God' is a negative theology, for him, it is 'the divine God', which is distinct from the metaphysical 'God', and it cannot be known by conceptual knowledge. Derrida's deconstruction is neither theistic nor atheistic; it is directed to the 'ism' rather than the 'theos'. Deconstruction is not the doctrine, which is directly denounced 'Western thought' or 'metaphysics' but it questions all the assumptions of the 'Western tradition'.

#### Ludwig Wittgenstein:

There is an important relationship between the philosophy of Postmodernism and Wittgenstein's analysis. They both reject any kind of foundationalism (like Descartes tradition even like Platonic and neo-Platonic tradition). Because foundationalism adopts that there must be some ultimate grounds for human knowledge and reality. In any interpretive exercise, they both emphasize the importance of interpretive communities as the final point of reference and as in the Postmodernist's 'local communities of interpretation'. Even they emphasises the importance of that interpretive communities as in 'language games' (Wittgenstein's concept) where we are inescapably involved and our forms of life connected with them. Another point is, they both questioned the traditional assumptions and they are claiming that everything must be understood and interpreted within specific contexts. It is true that Derrida and Wittgenstein come from different cultural and intellectual traditions, Derrida from French and Wittgenstein from the British, but they both reject 'metaphysics'. That is why they belong to the contemporary movement of analytical skepticism. That means

they deny any kind of Meta contextual facts, for example, ‘God’, from which we can judge and justify our epistemological views about human knowledge and our metaphysical views about the structure of reality. Both Wittgenstein and Derrida changed the milieu of philosophical discourses. The word ‘deconstruction’ first time used by Derrida, but even it would be ‘practiced’ by other philosophers. This deconstructive activity is as old as the philosophy and he himself says that there are three proto-deconstructors like Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Freud.

Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* deals with thinking activities and the writing modes, which are similar to the deconstruction of Derrida. Like Derrida, Wittgenstein describes his Investigations as not a method. The word ‘Game’ plays an important role in both Wittgenstein and Derrida’s philosophy of texts; they both understand the game as a ‘strategy’. Wittgenstein used in his philosophy, ‘language game’, which should be understood not as a theory but as an activity. With some concepts like *différence*, *reserve*, *réstance*, and *dissémination* ‘game’ has a specific role in the texts of Derrida.

It may be mentioned that there are some similarities between them but the important differences between deconstructions of Wittgenstein and Derrida are about the relationship to the texts of the history of philosophy. Derrida adopts the history of philosophy as a ‘tradition’. He deconstructed the individual texts. But Wittgenstein does not analyze historical texts. Wittgenstein questions about the language, always he speaks about forms of language and forms of expressions. He gives a “deconstruction of the reading, and trying to differentiate between three art of reading: the reading-machine, the beginner and the reading as mental activity in his *Philosophical Investigations* and also in his *Brown Book*.”<sup>45</sup> But according to Derrida, reading is not the search for meaning; it’s a kind of special text interpretation and text writing. Derrida in his book *La Dissémination*, says that his deconstructive reading is contrary to the “metaphysical model of reading”<sup>46</sup>; it is a “prudent, differentiated, slow stratified” reading. Another difference between them is about ‘game’. Although they both used the word ‘game’ but Wittgenstein thinks from the language and from the sense of language that is why he used language game. But Derrida writes from the writing and from the sense of writing, which is known as ‘writing game’.

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<sup>45</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1958, p-156-178.

<sup>46</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Dessemination*, 1981, p- 40.

There is no doubt that there are similarities between the philosophy of Postmodernism and Wittgenstein's analysis, but their philosophical structures are radically different. The sources of Wittgenstein's philosophy are totally different from the sources of Derrida's philosophy. The philosophical ambitions of postmodern philosophy are much larger than the Wittgenstein's analysis. Postmodernism is completely a new way of treating the social-cultural being.

Derrida criticizes linguistics and main traditions of western realist philosophy. He started with a critique of foundationalism and realism, where he deconstructs the assumption that language can reflect, correspond or represent to real things outside of language and the human mind. Like Saussure he stated that our inherited theory of signs entails an unacknowledged metaphysics; e.g. presence (ideas, concepts, things are somehow present in thought or in an objective transcendental realm which reflected in words). For him, in language we acknowledged the structure of presences and absences which constitute sign and meanings, which means in writing and speaking we perceived something as present signifiers in letters, images, and in verbal sounds, and absent means something (values, beliefs, and meaning) supplied by our knowledge of the system of relationship but they are not present in signs. It must be acknowledged that Derrida got influenced by Saussure but he criticizes structuralism and says that structuralism is a kind of logocentric thought, a speech centered thought. But according to Derrida, there is no structure or center. For Saussure sign is the basic elements of language. Meanings are always explained in the relation between signs and their referents; whereas Derrida decentres the idea of sign system and structure. He remarked that there is no truth, God, being (transcendental signified) when signs and signification are examined.

Thus it may be commented here that if we compare Derrida's reading with Husserl, Heidegger and Nietzsche's reading, then we can realize that Derrida's reading is strong reading; mainly his theoretical concern with deconstruction. It is about subverting illusions (there is no 'there', centers are an illusion) in our knowledge and ideologies, not about the demolition truth or reality. It is not something we can do, but something we are in.

Before delving into the issue of deconstruction, it is necessary to discuss how Jacques Derrida became a deconstructionist?

Derrida did a lot with artistic circle, literary spheres, aesthetic arenas, and social sciences. One interesting topic arises that is he contested at some zone as postmodernist or even as a

post-structuralist? When he related with Levi Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault, he was appeared as poststructuralist. He was just not reacting to structuralism. He started with philosophical phenomenology. Instead of people raised their voice that his deconstruction is a postmodern philosophy.

In the history of philosophy especially in each tradition we probably find that either they are refusal or development of previous philosophies. Let's start with Socrates. In his philosophy, to reconstruct a true wisdom he introduced the method of dialectics and questioned the naturalistic principles of pre-Socratic thinkers. After Socrates, Plato came and he raised some objection to his teacher Socrates and introduced his doctrine of Universal Idea. But by his student Aristotle's first philosophy Plato was criticized. But later by the theocentric thoughts of medieval philosophers, all these stalwarts were submerged. Soon the metaphysical theories are upheld by the theological thinkers, who were overturned by the revolt of rational cum progressive conceptions, but later these are reconstructed by some distinguished modernist philosophers, who centered upon human subjectivity, rationality, the concepts of rights, freedom, and democracy.

Thus from the above discussion, it is clear that at every point of time till modernists philosophers, what they have actually done. First, they read carefully their forerunners and then they critically analyzed their previous thoughts. After that, they constructed their own conceptions and doctrines. Another delicate aspect is, although each school denied the other school but they believed in the existence of universal truth, and all these different philosophies accommodated within two different schools of thought, either it was idealism, or materialism. This categorization of ideology was propagated and well established by the great modern philosopher René Descartes. He introduced dualism. According to him, things, reality and their relationship are viewed either idealistically or materialistically. "Postmodernism enframes modernism without identity or unity. It is fragmented, discontinuous, multiple, and dispersed. Where modernism asserts centering, focusing, continuity- once the break with tradition has already occurred- postmodernism decenters, enframes, discontinues, and fragments the prevalence of modernist ideals."<sup>47</sup> In short, in the time of postmodernism, reality follows diverse models which are rich and mutually exclusive in conflicts. Mostly, postmodernism desires for fragmentation and pluralism. Here totality

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<sup>47</sup> Hugh J. Silverman, *Postmodernism: Philosophy and the Arts, 1990*, p- introduction 5.

and unity was shattered with continuity and determinism. Therefore, the significance of relativism was revealed.

At the International School for Holocaust Studies, in an interview with Dr. Michal Ben-Naftali, Derrida explained the situation, when he turned as a deconstructionist. He said that for twelve years, European churches, diplomacies, universities collaborate with Nazism in their own ways, which happened through diplomatic arrangements, discourse, silences, through bad faith and also looking other way. The question is, before the war how could French and English diplomacy go along? How could the church behave in that manner? And why they behave like they do not understand what was happening to the Jews culture? And all these thoughts connect European culture as a whole. This is why deconstruction is work on the European culture, which does not take forms rather it takes without the reference to that moment and which was that of interwar period.

For Derrida, the deconstructive philosophy is an ‘event’, a kind of rupture occurred in the history of the concept of structure. Derridean deconstruction is not just a redefinition or reconstruction or replacement of the past. During the Second World War, Algeria suffered with the Nazi Germany atrocities and Vichy government. Though it was not worsted as nuclear holocaust, that time young Derrida was deeply affected by the racial discriminations. Thus, in 1940, the anti-semitism of Algerian Jewish Jacques Derrida in his young age encountered Fredrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Sigmund Freud, Ferdinand de Saussure, and other thinker’s breakthrough thoughts, which provoked Derrida to perform deconstruction on the traditional Western philosophy.

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