

Book Title: “Déconcert: a post-Derridian theory”

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Abstract:

The notion of Edmund Husserl’s ‘epoche’, as an exploration of new degrees of freedom in experience, is a very rich one. Husserl says, my ‘Epoche’ is nothing but a ‘sedimented’ or, ‘reflected’ part/portion of a ‘Phenomenological Reduction’. And it (epoche) to me is - “*The reflected soul (Photo) of the external world through human consciousness*”. After reflection from ‘epoche’, there results ‘photo consciousness’, which in turn outcomes as an “*humanized essence of the external presence*”, through a series of ‘photo- reflections’. As in the case of ‘Photosynthesis’ the tree leaves receive sunlight from the sun and then it is synthesized, in this way in ‘Photosyntagmatics’, the ‘Tabula rasa’ (Lock’s concept), receives *conscious light* from ‘Epoche’ or ‘Photo’, and then it (‘Photosyntagmatics’) results as a meaningful literal structure, as it is according to me. The *theory of the syntagm* casts a new light upon the role of ‘epoche’ towards **concert-ment** of photo-reflections. ‘Photosyntagm’ is the theoretical or literal presentation of ‘photoconscious ideas’ of ‘photoconscious image(s)’ in human mind which results after reflection from ‘Epoche’ or ‘Photo’; and ‘Photosyntagmatics’ is the method of translating the photoconscious ideas into meaningful literal structures with the help of respective syntagm, as are according to me. Syntagmatic analysis can be applied not only to verbal texts but also to audio-visual ones. In film and television, a syntagmatic analysis would involve an analysis of how each

frame, shot, scene or sequence related to the others (these are the standard levels of analysis in film theory). At the lowest level is the individual *frame*. Since films are projected at a rate of 24 frames a second, the viewer is never conscious of individual frames, but significant frames can be isolated by the analyst. Beyond the fourfold distinction between frames, shots, scenes and sequences, the interpretative frameworks of film theorists differ considerably. In this sense at least, there is no cinematic 'language' but may have a newly approached '*Photo-syntagmatics*'. And Derrida's effort towards deconstructing the formation of *Language* in respect to *Pheno* or *Photosyntagm* may lead towards deconcert-ing its Linguistic formation, as it appears to me. Thus '*Déconcert*' to me, may be explained as: a *Philosophical Method* for evaluating *pheno-reflective-concerts*, resulting from '*Concert*'-ment of two (2) or more *photo-syntagms*, all at a time. And "**Concert-ing Déconstruction**" is only an effort towards exploration of the *resultant-metaphysics of presence* of Derrida's *Déconstructive Philosophy* or the *Philosophy of Déconstruction* in the present era.

Introduction:

Syntagmatic relations are the relations holding across the horizontal sequence of words uttered one after another. It's by relation between words that language can sustain itself since words have no positive substance of their own. But Ferdinand de Saussure, a French Linguist, proclaims the equal importance for both types of relation and so why his orientation is entirely towards the paradigmatic relations of words-sentence-to-language. Jacques Derrida is the poststructuralist who undertakes the challenge of articulating the metaphysical implications of structuralism. Structuralism, as narrowly defined, never rendered explicit the metaphysical framework upon which it relied. While deconstruction inherits from structuralism a holistic approach to language, it twists around its commitment to the 'principle of immanence;' namely, the belief in functioning 'linguistic states' as the necessary condition for the existence of a structured and intelligible totality. Derrida's kind of holism is transcendental insofar as its conception of a structured totality does not depend on functioning states but rather is the sufficient condition for the very idea of totality. At the level of two different justifications of what a structure is and does for a language. In line with its commitment to an immanent kind of holism, structuralism defends an externalist justification, where externalism to indicate, in barren terms, that meaning depends on factors external to the mind. By contrast, in line with his own version of transcendental holism, Derrida deconstructs the externalism characterizing the structuralist understanding of structure, for the first time exposing the concept of structure in its ontological implications.

Language requires a double level moving from old meaning to new meaning, creating what we don't know out of what we do. This movement is precisely the movement of synthesis and projection, carrying us from the meanings of single word to the meaning of the projected syntagm. 'Photosyntagm' is the theoretical or literal presentation of 'photoconscious ideas', which results after reflection from 'Epoche' (Husserlian concept) or 'Photo' (to me); and 'Photo-syntagmatics' is the method of translating 'photoconscious ideas' into meaningful literal structures with the help of respective photosyntagm: as it appears to me. And Derrida's effort towards deconstructing the formation of Language in respect to Photosyntagm may lead one towards Deconcert-ing its Linguistic formation by concerting its syntagmatic structures. Thus the term 'Déconcert' according to me, may be explained as: a *Philosophical Method* for evaluating pheno-reflective-concerts, resulting from 'concert'-ment of two (2) or more photo-syntagms, all at a time.

Idea-1 Deconstruction: One way to understand the "idea" of Deconstruction is to see it in relation to the critique of philosophical foundationalism. Derrida sees the history of Western philosophy as a continuous attempt to locate a fundamental ground, a fixed center, and Archimedean point, which serves both as an absolute beginning and as a center from which everything originating from it can be, mastered and controlled. But as one tries to pin down the set of structuralist assumptions responsible for such an effect the picture becomes quite confused; particularly because, whenever put under philosophical pressure, the historical classification of structuralism tends to give way to that of post structuralism. From the mid to the late 60s, Jacques Derrida is the poststructuralist who undertakes the challenge of articulating the metaphysical implications of structuralism. Structuralism, as narrowly defined, never rendered explicit the metaphysical framework upon which it relied; Derrida's work on structuralism is one of unfolding what is implicated, or folded together. Derrida's relation to structuralism cannot be properly explained in terms of either continuity or discontinuity, inside or outside, as most Derrida scholars as well as structuralist critics attempt to do. While deconstruction inherits from structuralism a holistic approach to language, it twists around its commitment to the 'principle of immanence;' namely, the belief in functioning ²'linguistic states' as the necessary condition for the existence of a structured and intelligible totality. Derrida's kind of holism is transcendental insofar as its conception of a structured totality does not depend on functioning states but rather is the sufficient condition for the very idea of totality. At the level of two different justifications of what a structure

¹1. Derrida, J. (1967), *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Edition de Minuit.

²2. Derrida, J. (1967), *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*. David B. Allison (trans). Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.

is and does for a language. In line with its commitment to an immanent kind of holism, structuralism defends an externalist justification, where externalism to indicate, in barren terms, that meaning depends on factors external to the mind. For structuralism, crucial amongst such factors is social usage. The structuralists call structure the explanatory model for the relations binding together a specific set of existing linguistic states, such as those constituting a natural language or a culture. Structure is therefore descriptive of an occurrence which is external to the individual mind. This externalist element is indispensable for the kind of comparativist strategy at the heart of the structuralist method, particularly in the versions promulgated by Derrida's two main interlocutors: Saussure and Claude Lévy-Strauss. By contrast, in line with his own version of transcendental holism, Derrida deconstructs the externalism characterizing the structuralist understanding of structure, for the first time exposing the concept of structure in its ontological implications. In so doing, Derrida shifts from the pragmatic plane, where structure is the explanatory model for an already existing set of relations, to a plane which is genealogical; because, in it, structure is defined in terms of its conditions of historical emergence in Western thought. Friedrich Nietzsche was the first to name this type of conditions as 'genealogical.' To Derrida, structuralism's justification of structure-externalistic seems to be a genealogical justification. Having reasons for being happy about certain of John Austin's major contributions to philosophy and being also rather happy on the whole with Jacques Derrida's contributions. Derrida's study of Austin occurs in a paper given at Montreal in a symposium on ³"Communication." Derrida considers himself obliged to begin by resisting a certain temptation which represents a proclivity of contemporary common sense. A tremor, a shock, can be physically "communicated" from place to place, and one can also say that in underground labyrinths one cavern "communicates" with another by means of a passage or opening. The temptation is to say that the *literal* meaning of "communicate" is found in such physical applications of the word, while the application of the term "communication" to meaningful human speech is a *metaphor* derived from primary and literal physical applications. Derrida's has two interesting reasons for not thus distinguishing between the "literal" and the "metaphoric" meaning of the word "communication":

First, because the whole notion of distinguishing the true, literal, meaning of a word from its metaphoric meanings is nowadays problematic. If this first reason is valid, it levels not just this proposed conceptual hierarchy, through which the "primary" physical significance of

³3. Derrida, J. (1967); pp.279-288.

"communicate" is ascribed a higher rank (as, perhaps, "hard data") than the merely metaphorical significance of the same word. It levels every conceptual hierarchy which depends on a literal/metaphorical distinction. In particular, the distinction St. Thomas encountered and worked with, between the literal spiritual truth (the baptism) and the physical image (the water) is leveled. And in particular Ayer's distinction between sentences with literal meaning (those which refer to sense-contents, directly or indirectly), and nonsense (all other sentences except tautologies) is leveled.

The second reason Derrida gives for not construing its application to physical objects as the "literal" meaning of "communicate," and its semiotic use as the "metaphoric" meaning of "communicate;" is that the very idea of "metaphor" already presupposes a notion of "displacement," or "transport." "Displacement" is the more general notion, which is constitutive for the idea that a tremor "is communicated" when motion is *displaced* from one place to another; and also constitutive for the idea that the meaning of the word "communicate" has been *displaced* from its allegedly literal application to the communication of tremors from the epicenters of earthquakes, to its allegedly metaphorical application to the communication of ideas from mind to mind.

Hence according to Derrida what we really need is not a decision about which sense of a word is to be regarded as the literal one, but rather an account of how "sense" begins in the first place through "displacement," and through that which is indexed by other terms which Derrida presses into service in order to characterize the primary process through which meaning gets started: "mark," "trace," "the structure of locution," "spacing," ⁴*differance*, "*écriture*," "the graphematic in general," "iterability." Derrida introduces the neologism "iterable" as a synonym for "repeatable." A few lines later "iterable" serve as a synonym for "readable." A writing that is not structurally readable - iterable - beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing. At the same place Derrida suggests that the Latin root *iter* probably is derived from the Sanskrit *itara*, which means "other." Then, in a remarkable *precis* of the complex and subtle remarks on "communication" which contain his critique of Austin, Derrida writes as - everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic that ties repetition to alterity.

Literal Deconstruction: What Derrida has worked out as consequences of iterability is all to the good from the point of view of those of us who want to work with a nature/culture distinction, and

⁴4. Derrida, J. (1978), *Writing and Difference*. Alan Bass (Trans). London: Routledge.

to reconstruct culture in order, as Gramsci says, to adjust it to physical functions, all to the good. The transformation of the global economy into a humane and sustainable mosaic of ways of life can only benefit from realizing that even the ⁵"ordinary" and "serious" language-games have a ritual character, and from realizing that even such categories as "intention" and "person" are socially constructed and can be reconstructed. A consequence of Derrida's deconstruction of Austin is that speech acts depend even more radically on socially constructed contexts than Austin supposed, or at least more radically than Austin worked out and demonstrated. Derrida's work is consciousness-raising, in Freire's sense, because it pushes back the perceived boundary between nature and culture, diminishing the realm of what is taken to be natural, and augmenting the realm of that which depends for its existence on human symbolic interaction. It implies that those of us who deliberately set out to reconstruct social reality have more scope; and it implies the same for everyone else too, since everyone is always recreating and being recreated by social reality, guided or misguided by varying degrees and kinds of deliberation. After Derrida, more is action; less is inevitable. Austin showed that to speak is in many ways a performance; it depends on conventions as does acting on a stage. Derrida breaks down the distinction between the "real" performance and the "stage" performance, and helps us to see that in all our performances we participate in social processes which construct the stage we act on, assign us our parts, and write the script. Many philosophers in history, from Plato onwards, have favoured speech over writing. Writing, it has been assumed, represents speech (although often imperfectly) and is subsequently further away from thought, which is the primary locus of meaning. Writing is often viewed as something that is parasitic upon, or supplemental to, speech. Whereas speech involves one or more subjects, the reading of writing is characterised by the absence of a subject. As it is closer to thought, speech is better able to express meaning than writing. Writing is not viewed as an essential or reliable means for the production and transmission of meaning. Derrida questions these "phonocentric" sets of assumptions and argues that writing has a more important role in the production of meaning than the western philosophical tradition has acknowledged. To Derrida, writing is at least as important as speech with regards to the production of meaning and in fact writing is viewed as a necessary precondition for speech itself. Derrida's deconstructive readings of thinkers such as Plato and Rousseau have shown that these thinkers actually require a concept of writing in the first place in order to get their "pro-speech" views articulated. More recently, philosophers such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Ludwig Wittgenstein (in his later works at least) have offered theories of meaning

⁵5. Jacques Derrida. "Signature, Event, Context," in *Limited Inc.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988. pp.1-5.

that differ significantly from Locke's and Ayer's. Developing a structuralist theory, de Saussure argued that language could be viewed as a closed system, in which individual words within narratives or texts only had meaning in relation to other words (through opposition and combination). De Saussure argued that it was difference and not reference that secured the meaning of a word. To Wittgenstein, meaning was essentially "inter-subjective" and social in nature. Wittgenstein argued that the meaning of a word could only be found by its use within a social practice or "*language game*".

The Contrast:

In contrast to the horizontal sequence of words uttered one after another, this dependence is as if vertical: the absent words are coeval and simultaneous with the present word. What's more, these unuttered words are also unthought, at least in the mind of the individual language-user. The dependence of a present word upon absent words is also the dependence of parole upon langue; and langue is a total social system of differentiations, existing before the individual language-user and outside of the language-user's consciousness. Admittedly, Saussure sometimes lapses into a more psychologistic vein, as when he talks of bringing forth absent words by principles of mental association. But the overall thrust of his ideas points elsewhere, and subsequent linguists in the Structuralist tradition have discarded all such talk. The kind of vertical dependence to which Saussure draws attention is ultimately logical, not psychological.

Syntagmatic relations of word-language:

Syntagmatic relations are the relations holding across the horizontal sequence of words uttered one after another. In the sentence 'If the weather is fine, we will go out', it is obvious that 'the' relates in some way to 'weather', 'weather' to 'is', and 'is' to 'fine'. It is also obvious that these relations are actually thought and present in the minds of utterer and receiver(s). In fact, syntagmatic relations are radically different to paradigmatic relations -not merely as two distinct dimensions of relating, but as two distinct types of relation. Saussure himself recognizes as much when he remarks that they 'correspond to two forms of our mental activity, both indispensable to the life of language'. But in spite of this recognition, Saussure still tries to bring syntagmatic relations in under the same

⁶ Stanley Cavell. "*On the Availability of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy*," in George Pitcher [ed.] - *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

conceptual framework as paradigmatic relations. ⁷In the syntagm', he argues, 'a term acquires its value only because it stands in opposition to everything that precedes or follows it, or to both. But what is the opposition between 'the' and 'weather', between 'weather' and 'is', between 'is' and 'fine'? Such terms are simply different, with no common scale between them. But the nature of syntagmatic relations will never appear to eyes that are looking to perceive likenesses and contrasts. It is hardly surprising, then, that Saussure never gets around to demonstrating exactly how oppositions work within the syntagm. In fact, his way of dealing with syntagmatic relations is a way of getting rid of them -or rather, two ways of getting rid of them. On the one hand, he relegates them to parole; stringing words together in sentences is viewed as a particular, occasional and unpredictable affair. The sentence, he says, 'belongs to speaking, not to language'; and 'speaking is characterized by freedom of combinations'. That is, the choice of what to string together is determined not by language but by personal and psychological factors. Saussure even seems to imply that the sequence of words is merely the sequence of concepts arising in the utterer's mind. As elsewhere, he shows a curious blindness towards the kinds of necessity governing words as parts of speech. By insisting that langue and not parole is the proper province of linguistic study, he effectively banishes consideration of syntagmatic relations in ordinary sentences. On the other hand, he is prepared to consider a special type of syntagm which does have its place in langue. This is the special type of syntagm where habitual sequences of words have solidified into single blocks. These single blocks are virtually equivalent to single words, and, like single words, can enter into paradigmatic relations with all the other semantic units in langue.

Derrida's grammatical effort:

⁸*Writing*, as Jacques Derrida conceives it, represents as an ideal form of word-sentence-language structure. When Derrida considers language unsyntagmatically, he reduces words to a condition of ultimate isolation. When he lets meaning spread out around a word like supplement or hymen, his meditation is akin to the kind of meditation which might be inspired by the word '*Eternity*' painted up on a rock, a single word in the middle of nowhere. But such a condition is abnormal and leads to an abnormal form of signifying. To deprive a word of all contexts is to deprive it of the

⁷ Culler, Jonathan (1975): *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

⁸ Derrida, Jacques (1978): *Writing and Difference* (trans. Alan Bass). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

environment that it needs to survive. There are two obvious kinds of context: the context of other words, and the context of shared situation and interactive behaviour. When the context of shared situation and interactive behaviour is very strong, as when a particular speaker addresses a particular hearer face to face, then single words may unify normally without any help from other words. On the other hand, when the context of other words is very strong, as when someone reads a book by an unknown author, then words together may signify normally without any help from behavioural cues or shared situation in the world. It is possible to give priority to the context of shared situation and interactive behaviour, as functional Linguists and Speech-Act philosophers have done. There are good reasons for giving priority to the purely verbal kind of next in a philosophy of language. The danger of beginning with the non-verbal kind of context is that situation and behaviour seem fairly easy to plain -indeed, those who have taken this approach have generally spent more time on description than explanation. But in this case, the special powers of language tend to slip out of sight, and linguistic communication appears as mere incremental outgrowth of other, more basic forms of communication. Biologically, the frontal lobes are an incremental outgrowth of the more basic arts of the brain -but what an outgrowth!) If we want to recognize the special powers of language, then we must look to the way in which words can communicate even in the absence of their utterer. It is enough to have shown how deeply grammatical category is involved in such meaning, involved in the very slice and conceptual cut of such meaning. For now it becomes possible to see how the unstable and precarious meanings of single words are redeemed when words come together syntagmatically. There is a parallel to this when meanings under different grammatical categories are squeezed together.

Role of Husserl's 'Epoche' towards establishing 'Photo-syntagmatics':

The notion of an epoche, as an exploration of new degrees of freedom in experience, is a very rich one. Edmund Husserl, a German Philosopher says, my 'Epoche' is nothing but a 'sedimented' or, 'reflected' part/portion of a 'Phenomenological Reduction'. And it (epoche) to me is - "The reflected soul (Photo) of the external world through human consciousness" ; and after reflection from 'epoche', there results 'photo consciousness', which in turn outcomes as a "humanized essence of the external presence", through a series of 'photo reflections'.

⁹ Culler, Jonathan (1981): *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature & Deconstruction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

The theory of the syntagm casts a whole new light upon the role of parole. Saussure's focus is all upon langue, upon the socially shared system that underlies particular utterances. On Saussure's view, particular utterances are little more than the droppings of langue -as though speaking a sentence were merely a matter of selecting a small number of verbal items out of a very large catalogue. The social and conventional side of language dominates until it becomes difficult to see how one person can ever communicate something that another person does not already share. Parole has the power of the syntagm. This power appears most strikingly in exceptional syntagmatic combinations. In the case of an ordinary combination like 'big dog', the power of the syntagm cuts down upon the normal range of meaning socially instituted for the word 'dog' in langue. But in the case of 'billion-ton pebble', the power of the syntagm actually pushes 'pebble' out beyond the normal range of its meaning altogether. And 'Photosyntagm' is the theoretical or literal presentation of 'photoconscious ideas' of 'photoconscious image(s)' in 'Mind' which results after reflection from 'Epoche' or 'Photo'; and 'Photosyntagmatics' is the method of translating 'photoconscious ideas' into meaningful literal structures with the help of respective photosyntagm, are according to me.

As in the case of 'Photosynthesis' the tree leaves receive sunlight from the sun and then it is synthesized, in this way in 'Photosyntagmatics' the 'Tabula rasa' (Lock's concept) receives conscious light from 'Epoche' or 'Photo', and then 'Photosyntagmatics' results as a meaningful literal structure, as it is according to me.

Conclusion:

Syntagmatic analysis can be applied not only to verbal texts but also to audio-visual ones. In film and television, a syntagmatic analysis would involve an analysis of how each *frame*, *shot*, *scene* or *sequence* related to the others (these are the standard levels of analysis in film theory). At the lowest level is the individual *frame*. Since films are projected at a rate of 24 frames a second, the viewer is never conscious of individual frames, but significant frames can be isolated by the analyst. Beyond the fourfold distinction between frames, shots, scenes and sequences, the interpretative frameworks of film theorists differ considerably. In this sense at least, there is no cinematic 'language' but may have a newly approached '*Photo-syntagmatics*'. And Derrida's effort towards deconstructing the formation of *Language* in respect to *Pheno* or *Photosyntagm* may lead towards deconcert-ing its Linguistic formation, as it appears to me.

And thus '*Déconcert*' to me may be explained as: a *Philosophical Method* for evaluating *pheno-reflective-concerts*, resulting from '*concert*'-ment of two (2) or more *photo-syntagms*, all at a time.

¹⁰'Deconstruction' is an attempt to open a text (literary, philosophical, syntagmatic, pheno or photo-syntagmatic or otherwise) to several meanings and interpretations. Its method is usually to take binary oppositions within a text — inside and outside or subject and object or male and female, which he argues are culturally and historically defined, even reliant upon one another — and show that they are not as clear-cut or as stable as it would at first seem, that the two opposed concepts are fluid, then to use this ambiguity to show that the text's meaning is fluid as well. This fluidity stands as a legacy of traditional (that is, Platonist) metaphysics founded on oppositions that seek to establish a stability of meaning through conceptual absolutes where one term, for example "good", is elevated to a status that designates its opposite, in this case "evil", as its perversion, lack or inferior. However, these "violent hierarchies", as Derrida termed it, are structurally instable within the texts themselves, where the meaning strictly depends on this contradiction or antinomy. This is why Derrida insisted that deconstruction was never performed or executed but "took place" through ¹¹"memory work": in this way, the task of the "deconstructed" was to show where this oppositional or dialectical stability was ultimately subverted by the text's internal logic. The result is to find often strikingly new interpretations of texts, to the point where Derrida's supporters claim his work consists of meticulous readings that find philosophy anew. No "meaning" is stable: rather, the only thing that keeps the sense of unity within a text is what Derrida called the "metaphysics of presence", where presence was granted the privilege of truth. Thus, *'Déconcert' from philosophical feature, may be explained as: the Theory of culturing syntagms as well as photosyntagms, by concerting themselves with suitable literatures, making and plying all at a time.*

¹⁰ Roy, Manas (2008): *Transcendent Philosophy* Journal, U.K, December, 2008 edition. Pp.237-246.

¹¹ Eco, Umberto (1984): *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press

Key Words: *Photoconsciousness, Photosyntagm, Photosyntagmatics, Déconcert.*

Déconcert - Feature(s):

1. It educates as a philosophical technology, for the literal concertment of Pheno & Photo-concept(s).
2. It functions as a Pheno→Photo→Word concerter: as Techno-syntagmatics.
3. It is the resultant Husserl→Derridian déconstructive concert.

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