

**European Hypostases of the Thinker's Authority:
Derrida's Approach on the Narcissus' Love for Echo**

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to point out one of the most stunning adventure of the European modern thought, Derrida's method of *deconstruction*, according to which the reader can see beyond the words and perceive the meaning starting from the authors'/thinkers' perspective and discover by himself the meaning of the reality that can be perceived as by "the slats of the venetian blind". The text is openness/gate for the thought/thinking and it stimulates this process. Thus, like in the Narcissus and Echo myth, the Philosophical systems obtain substance from the readers' understanding, as well as Narcissus's words obtain their adequate substance/content from the Echo's love.

Keywords: European culture; deconstruction; divine differentials

A famous collection of Derrida's most important essays was entitled "A Derrida reader between the blinds" stressing on the role of "the slats of a venetian blind, or a jalousie, which partially obstructs the view", that the derridarien text has for the reader (Kamuf, 1991, p. 13). This metaphor suggests a new equation for the Author, text, reality and Reader relationships as well as for the Thinker, reality, culture, society and contemporaries.

The Saussurien idea of the arbitrary report between the referent and the linguistic sign composed of the signifier and the signified and that of difference as a structuring principle become pillar of the new, surprising and fascinating Derrida's approach.

Roland Barthes already showed that "the worst sin a writer can commit is to pretend that language is a transparent medium through which the reader grasps a solid and unified "truth" or "reality" (Selder, Widdowson, Brooker, 2005, pp. 148-149). The idea of the conventionality of all forms of representation leads him to

define literature as “a message of the signification of things and not their meaning. This distinction between signification- as the process which produces the meaning - and the meaning itself,” opened a new perspective in criticism, Barthes himself stressing the process of signification (Waugh & Waugh (eds), 1989).

The word deconstruction that many first associate Derrida’s name with is emblematic for this vision which has proved to be “one of the most stunning adventure of modern thought” (Kamuf, 1991, p. 7).

For Derrida the reader can see beyond the words and perceive the meaning starting from the authors’ perspective and discovering by him the meaning of the reality that can be perceived by “the slats of the venetian blind”. The text is openness/gate for the thought/thinking and it stimulates this process like in Glass.

But even the author is blind, as well. Talking about the myth of Echo and Narcissus, in the famous documentary film *Derrida* (Kofman & Dick)¹, the philosopher points out on two different kind of blindness. Narcissus can speak but he can see only himself. To see only oneself is a form of blindness. He sees nothing else. “As always with speech, one is blind. To speak is not to see. So all speech is to some extent blind” told Derrida there.

The young and beautiful Nymph Echo, who was punished by Hera by taking away her voice, except the possibility to repeat the voice of another, has a different blindness. She can see but not speak. She was never allowed to speak for herself and was allowed to repeat the end of the other’s phrases. In her infinite love for Narcissus, by repeating the last syllables of her lover’s words, Echo was able to speak in such a way that the words become her own. Derrida suggests that only because of her love she appropriates his language and was able to signs her own love. Only in love it is possible that, by repeating, to respond the other’s words so that they may become yours and become communication.

Echo and Narcissus are two blind people who love each other, emphasize Derrida. Echo is the one who fills Narcissus words with meaning. That who produces the words, Narcissus, the Thinker/Author, is blind. He cannot see anything else but himself. But his words receive meaning from Echo who could be seen as the reader who re-finds in the Author’s words the tool to express herself and to disclose/reveal herself. Her identity that matters is as a lover and this is the essence of her

¹ *Derrida*, (a film by Amy Kofman & Kirby Dick) Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TswHCM2cOmg> (5.07.2011).

existence that she is able to reveal only by Narcissus words. Narcissus as well is able to “touch” with his words repeated by Echo, the meaning of the reality which exists outside him. Moreover, the Author is able to produce words/speech, texts which are filled with meaning by the reader. The reader is the one who will repeat these ideas, enriching them forever, as Echo survived to Narcissus.

Derrida is asking himself in the documentary movie if the love of two blinds could be realized. This love between two blinds which appears through the communication empowered by love which interrogate and maximize each identity involved, creates the gap of light that illuminate all the things which could be seen by the slats of a venetian blind/the Author’s text/reader’s creation.

Even the idea of a fragmentary image of the world created by the blinds belongs to the concept of deconstruction that is similar somehow to “The Divine Differentials” that Lucian Blaga described in his work with the same title (Blaga, 1997). For the Romanian philosopher, it is The Great Anonimous the one who created the world by a controlled self-reproduction through “differentials” which are small fragments of himself. The human being is also a special “divine differential”, living in a universe of mystery for the purpose of “revealing” it and gifted with conscience. Historicity and history as a science are those which could help the highest humanity’s aspiration toward the absolute, that of overcoming the transcendent censorship instituted by the Great Anonimous in order to keep the mystery and the equilibrium.

The word “deconstruction” is now often used merely to refer to the revelation of partially hidden meanings in a text, but Derrida’s image in itself as the Author seen through the slats of a venetian blind which exists on the covers of the volume edited by Peggy Kamuf invites the reader to construct and deconstruct Derrida’s work and personality.

This love between Echo and Narcissus is the love for differences and completion by language and communication.

To welcome the limitation as a chance to open shutters and blinds to what comes from its Other, is an invitation to play through love with the eternity of the moment, that Derrida asked for as an European Thinker/Author.

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