

Language, Metaphor, Truth: The Role of Metaphor in the Development of Post-structuralism, based on Derrida's Ideas

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Abstract

Poststructuralists, especially Derrida rely on processes and mechanisms such as deferment, trace and otherness to deal with the criticism of binary oppositions and metaphysics-based approaches. Despite the emphasis post-structuralism puts on its own mechanisms and approaches, explaining the theoretical deep structures of post-structuralism (and especially the ideas of Derrida) helps to realize the fundamental role of metaphor and metaphorical functions in the development of its theoretical foundations. This paper seeks to demonstrate that post-structuralism is essentially formed based on the metaphorical nature of language, and its theoretical and methodological bases are also inspired by the mechanisms of "metaphor" and "metaphorical function". On the other hand, it is the basis for a critique of post-structuralism. The results of this study show the other functions of "metaphor" in the evolution of human cognitive and thought system.

Derrida takes *différance* as the prior aspect in (to) language. He believes there is no truth beyond the system that is based on *différance* and otherness in language since such conceptions as center, truth, reality, origin, existence, absolute signification, and signified never come to be. This approach is the ground for Derrida's view of such categories like the rejection of signs, plurality of signification, plurality of identity and absolute subjectivity, priority of text, floating of signifier and deferral of signified. Among the fundamental oppositions that Derrida addresses to deconstruct, the opposition of signifier / signified is of great importance, as it affects his approach to oppositions such as: speech / writing and form / meaning. Derrida's purpose of deconstructing such oppositions is to criticize their metaphysical deep structures, and to cut the metaphysical roots of sign. Relying excessively on the "signifier" and its functions in the referral system of language, Derrida neglects the important role of the "signified" in identification of the signifier in this approach. There stands a permanent gap between the signifier and the signified, however, the identification of the subject relies on its reference to the signified, and it represents the proportionality and ontological conjugates extant between them.

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Interpreting all ideas "in language" and "through language", ignores many deep and deciding bases. The recognition of reality in human perception system is based on a metaphorical process that is formed by distancing from the reality, and through the transfer from one signification to another signification. On the other hand, the mechanism of human mind is based on separating the things and putting them (or their components) "in relation to one another". In such a case, the integral concepts like truth, center, origin, and existence, would never find linguistic and mental manifestations. Accordingly, Derrida does not believe in the existence of truth, center or origin that are beyond *différance* as the prior aspect to language. Although metaphysics is itself a system of signification, its deep structure, as well as its relation to intuitive perceptions (not concepts) makes metaphorical and referral mechanisms underlying language to ultimately operate on a metaphysical ground. As his methodological approach shows, Derrida finally, and in spite of his claim, has operated on a metaphysical ground. The deep structures of Derrida's ideas are more specifically in common with the ideas of Maimonides, and this shows that Derrida was influenced by his ideas.

Keywords: Language, Metaphor, Center, Post-structuralism, Derrida

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