

logocentrism: a philosophy holding that all forms of thought are based on an external point of reference which is held to exist and given a certain degree of authority. A philosophy that privileges speech over writing as a form of communication because the former is closer to an original transcendental source.⁵

10. The two term's definitions make it apparent that these admitted "philosophes" are used to alter, change, and ultimately replace Western-European, Anglo-Saxon culture.
11. The following excerpts provide some guidance about the concept of deconstructionism:

Deconstructionism, a form of philosophical and literary analysis derived mainly from work begun in the 1960s by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, that questions the fundamental ... distinctions of Western philosophy through a close examination of the language and logic of philosophical and literary texts. In discussions of intellectual trends of the late 20th century, the term *deconstruction* was sometimes used pejoratively to suggest nihilism and frivolous skepticism. In popular usage it came to mean a critical dismantling of traditional modes of thought.⁶

12. Among the targets of deconstructionists is the literature of Britain. The development of the culture of the Mother Country is imbedded in its prose and poetry. Here are a few references that some of you may remember reading and are targets of this idea:
Beowulf, Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*, Richard Lovelace's "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars," John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Rudyard Kipling's "The Ballad of East and West" and "Justice," William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," and anything by William Shakespeare.

⁴ "Transcendentalism: a philosophy that asserts the primacy of the spiritual and transcendental over the material and empirical; visionary idealism" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. "transcendentalism.")

⁵ *Ibid.*, s.v. "logocentrism."

⁶ "Deconstruction," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010), 3:952.

The writings of American authors were popular once upon a time, but probably not so much anymore. Three in particular rose to prominence before, during and after the War Between the States: Brett Harte, Joel Chandler Harris, and Mark Twain. Harte became famous for his short stories about the westward expansion: "The Luck of Roaring Camp," "Tennessee Partner," "Plain Language from Truthful James," and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat."

Joel Chandler Harris wrote in Negro dialect which resulted in contributing to mollifying the tensions between North and South following the Recent Unpleasantness. His character, Uncle Remus, spoke common-sense logic that put a humorous take on the everyday challenges of the human condition. Uncle Remus was characterized by James Baskett in Walt Disney's *Song of the South* in which Baskett also provided the voice of Br'er Fox

Mark Twain, the pseudonym of Samuel Clemens, became famous as a philosopher and authored the classic tales of Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer among others.

There are a number of American authors that encompass literature from the nineteenth century to the present. Religious thinkers include Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards; Benjamin Franklin, *The Federalist Papers* (Hamilton, Madison, Jay), James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allen Poe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and William Gilmore Simms.

The literal meaning of *deconstruction* is the undoing, piece by piece ... until nothing is left. According to Jacques Derrida who is one of the developers of deconstructionist criticism, all texts and works of art say something other than what they are appearing to say, regardless of the artist's intention. There is no single meaning to be extracted from a text. Every text, through interpretation, can be shown to contain a multiplicity of meanings, and the job of the critic is to deconstruct the artist's intended meaning and expose the multiple meanings contained within the work.

The techniques deconstructionist critics use to expose the inconsistencies within a work are:

- Comparing that work to other works by the same artist;
- Analyzing internal contradictions in the work;
- Using the artist's life history and social, political, and class background to contradict claims of the work;
- Using statements made by the artist in interviews, reviews, and so on to expose inconsistencies between the artist's claims and statement in the work;
- Analyzing the actual language used and its relationship to the attitudes, emotions, ideas, and so forth that the artist is communicating in the work.

An example of the third technique can be found in some recent critiques of the works of Shakespeare. Attempts have been made to discredit and challenge the claims made for Shakespeare's works and his literary authority. This is done through an examination of Shakespeare's political alliances and social status during the time he was writing. In the opinion of some critics, Shakespeare was committed to the Elizabethan political hierarchy and held a privileged position within that social structure that is reflected in the attitudes toward royalty expressed in his plays. The commonly held opinion that Shakespeare speaks with a "universal voice" is deconstructed, and he is shown to write with the bias of his class and historical time.⁷

13. The critique of Shakespeare's oeuvre by the deconstructionists is treated with far more objectivity by Encyclopaedia Britannica, first by its brief *Micropaedia* biography:

William Shakespeare (b. ca. April 26, 1564, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, Eng.—d. April 23, 1616, Stratford-upon-Avon), English poet, dramatist, and actor, often called the English national poet and considered by many to be the greatest dramatist of all time.

(E)arly works were influenced by prevailing contemporary dramatic conventions and artifices but also are marked by vivid characterizations and an unprecedentedly rich and inventive use of the English language.

In the early years of the 17th century Shakespeare produced his great tragedies, which mark both the summit of his art and one of the high points in the history of Western literature.

⁷ Herbert Kohl, "deconstruction," in *From Archetype to Zeitgeist: Powerful Ideas for Powerful Thinking* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1992), 29–30.

The four principle tragedies are *Hamlet* (1599), *Othello* (1603–04), *King Lear* (1605–06), and *Macbeth* (1606–07). These plays examine with great psychological subtlety how personality flaws in the main characters lead almost inevitably to the tragic destruction of themselves and almost everyone around them. However, such faults as overintellectual detachment and indecision (*Hamlet*), unwarranted jealousy (*Othello*), childish willfulness and impulsiveness (*King Lear*), and vaulting, unscrupulous ambition (*Macbeth*) serve also as vehicles for profound explorations of human character, morality, and spirit. These tragedies are further strengthened by complex, perfectly structured plots and are enriched by a quality of language that is at once deeply poetical and emotionally expressive while conveying mature philosophical ideas.⁸

14. Encyclopaedia Britannica's *Macropaedia* presents an in depth, 20-page article on Shakespeare including a section on "Deconstruction":

The critical movement generally known as deconstruction centered on the instability and protean [diversity] ambiguity of language. It owed its origins in part to the linguistic and other work of French philosophers and critics such as Ferdinand de Saussure \de-sō-sūēr\, Michel Foucault \fü-kō\, and Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction stressed the extent to which "meaning" and "authorial intention" are virtually impossible to fix precisely. Translation and paraphrase are exercises in approximation at best.

The implications of deconstruction for Shakespeare criticism have to do with language and its protean flexibility of meanings. Deconstruction as a philosophical and critical movement aroused a good deal of animosity because it questioned the fixity of meaning in language. At the same time, however, deconstruction attuned readers to verbal niceties, to layers of meaning, to nuance.

Late 20th-century and early 21st-century scholars were often revolutionary in their criticism of Shakespeare. To readers the result frequently appeared overly postmodern and trendy, presenting Shakespeare as a contemporary at the expense of more traditional values of tragic intensity, comic delight, and pure insight into the human condition. No doubt some of this criticism, as well as some older criticism, was too obscure and ideologically driven. Yet deconstructionists and feminists, for example, at their best portray a Shakespeare of enduring greatness. His durability is demonstrable in the very fact that so much modern criticism, despite its mistrust of canonical texts written by "dead white European males," turns to Shakespeare again and again.⁹

(End CR14-57. See CR14-58 for continuation of study at p. 571.)

⁸ "Shakespeare, William," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia* (2010), 10:690.

⁹ "Shakespeare: Deconstruction," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia* (2010), 27:267.

15. The hidden agenda of deconstruction is to discredit Western European culture by imputing cultural prejudice into its literature and thereby dismantling traditional modes of thought.
16. The devious purpose of Progressivism's promotion of a multicultural society is exposed by its equating alien philosophies with those standards historically amalgamated into our national culture.
17. Over time, this strategy converts a significant number of people over to the Dark Side. Once enough people develop a lifestyle dictated by the lie, they significantly alter the nation's Zeitgeist.
18. Ultimately, the majority's inventory of ideas will be based on the lie. That inventory is presently drifting toward opposition to our nation's Constitution with concentrated attacks on the Bill of Rights. Progressive ideology despises freedom!
19. Those who adopt this ideology are budding tyrants. They wish everyone to think as they think, speak as they speak, and do as they do. Dissenters must be suppressed by pejoratives, arrested for noncompliance, and ultimately disenfranchised by the advent of a benighted electorate.
20. The rapid trend toward totalitarianism is seizing the moment in the current political season. The permitted criminality which got governmental approval in Ferguson is now fait accompli in silencing political discourse.
21. Those that disrupt, shout down, or suppress free speech are protected by the inability or lack of courage by local governments to disburse these aggressive attacks.
22. The opponents of free speech, now acting with no fear of reprisal, spread disinformation which most media are pleased to disseminate sans critique.