

ALIGNMENT

JACQUES DERRIDA'S theory of *deconstruction* asks how representation inhabits reality. How does the external image of things get inside their internal essence? How does the surface get under the skin? Western culture since Plato has been governed by such oppositions as *inside/outside* and *mind/body*. justified

If *writing* is but a copy of spoken language,
typography
is even further removed from
the primal source of meaning
in the mind of the author.
The alphabet aims to represent
the sounds of speech with a finite set of marks.
Derrida used the term
grammatology
to name the study of writing as a
distinctive form of representation.

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The intellectual achievements of the West—its science, art, philosophy, literature—have valued one side of these pairs over the other, allying one with truth and one with falsehood. Deconstruction attacks such oppositions by showing how the devalued, negative concept inhabits the valued, positive one. flush left

Consider, for example, the Judeo-Christian concept of the body as an external shell for the inner soul, a construction that elevates the mind as the sacred source of thought and spirit, while denigrating the body as mere mechanics. The original work of art carries an authenticity that its copy lacks—the original is endowed with the spirit of its maker, while the copy is mere empty matter.

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