

JOHNSON, CHRISTOPHER. *System and Writing in the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. 235 pp. ISBN 0-521-41492-x (hardback); ISBN 0-521-44852-2 (paperback).

(...) The purpose of my reading of Derrida will therefore be twofold: to provide a structural analysis of Derrida's general theory of writing from text to text; at the same time to examine the language in which this theory is articulated. Having established the main formal and conceptual parameters of the theory, I shall compare Derrida's scriptural model with some of the principal concepts of systems theory. The goal of this comparison will not be to *explain* Derrida's philosophy from the external standpoint of another discipline, nor to suggest any direct or specific channel of influence from the one to the other; it will be rather to draw attention to significant parallels between the two discourses, and to investigate how these might extend our understanding of Derrida's work. As I have already suggested, this is also a recontextualization of Derrida's philosophy, or a contextualization supplementary to recent philosophical re-evaluations. In addition to the presentation of Derrida as legitimate heir to a certain (continental) philosophical tradition, it points to the interaction of Derrida's philosophy with a wider contemporary episteme, and, within that episteme, the singular and special case of the life sciences. An interesting corollary of this recontextualization will be its visible links with the 'atomist' or 'materialist' side of Derrida's philosophy, a side that has perhaps been more in evidence in recent texts, but which forms an important strand of Derrida's thought from *La dissémination* onwards. In certain respects, the reference to atomist philosophy in these texts represents a kind of 'short-circuiting' of the mainstream Western philosophical tradition, opening a fascinating dialogue with the semi-repressed other of that tradition.

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