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### Analyzing the Logic of “Deconstruction the Earthquake”

The main purpose of “Deconstruction the Earthquake” is to attempt to define the word “deconstruction” and show how one could utilize this literary theory in order to think more critically and efficiently. Royle states that Derrida himself was not a fan of the term “deconstruction” and argued that it has no “true definition” (23). In the chapter, Royle gives an example of how McQuillan (another well re-known rhetor) believed that “deconstructionism” was a word used only by idiots (24). Royle therefore attempts to define that which Derrida could not.

The key question that Royle attempts to answer is the definition of deconstruction itself. What is deconstruction? Can it truly be defined and how does it benefit one’s critical thinking abilities?

Though Royle does touch on some other topics addressed later on in the chapter, the main and most important information found in “Deconstruction the Earthquake”, can be found in Royle’s fairly broad and open-ended definition of deconstruction. He starts out by giving a very generic dictionary definition of deconstruction itself and then he transitions into rather lengthy definition which he himself has given for it.

Some conclusions that Royle comes to is that though Derrida could never truly define deconstruction, upon reading this chapter, the reader will be able to better understand the concept of deconstruction and will hence come to define it in his or her own way.

The key concept presented throughout this chapter is that of deconstruction and the way Royle compares it to that of an earthquake. He states that deconstruction is the force of irruption that upsets the entire inherited order; in essence an earthquake (25).

One of the main assumptions that Royle makes is that his audience or in this case, the reader, knows who Jacques Derrida is and understands that he was a renowned rhetor and philosopher. Another assumption is that the reader has somewhat of an understanding of philosophical terms and theories.

If the chapter is to be taken seriously then the reader should learn to see deconstruction as more than merely taking apart that which has been constructed but rather as Royle defines it as “what remains to be thought; the experience of the impossible.” Though this concept might prove difficult, it is necessary, like Derrida in a way, to view deconstruction as something that though superficially might seem relatively straight forward, upon further examination, is a concept that, if embraced and studied by all, could go on to change the way we view the world.

If, however the reader fails to embrace Royle’s train of thought and his view on deconstruction, then presumably they would be oblivious to the fact that deconstruction as well as other literary theories, are much denser and perhaps abstract than what the generic dictionary would define it as. Though there are no serious “life threatening” implications if one does not follow Royle’s train of thought, it is inferred from the chapter itself, that if one chooses to not see the full scope of deconstruction then he or she would be subject to merely seeing things through a very narrow and subsequently superficial lens. Take for example a car. Someone who would perhaps not embrace Royle’s view on deconstruction would view it simply as a vehicle in which one would move from point A to point B. Now take for instance someone who *would* embrace Royle’s view on deconstruction, they would see the car as more of a summation of its individual

parts such as the motor, the alternator, fuel pump, transmission etc. Which in themselves, are comprised of many other individual parts. The second individual would therefore have a greater appreciation for a car than the first and would subsequently see it as more of an engineering marvel as opposed to a “grocery getter.” So too can our understanding of the world around us benefit from our understanding of deconstruction.

The main points in “Deconstruction the Earthquake” are Derrida’s view on deconstruction, the generic dictionary definition of the word, Royle’s definition, and the ways in which the reader can interpret and apply this new found literary and philosophical theory to better understand and view the world around us.

Works Cited

Royle, N. (2008). *Jacques Derrida*. London: Routledge.