

ABSTRACT

The objective of the present thesis is to analyze and examine Jacques Derrida's deconstruction. French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) born in Algeria was famous for his deconstructive strategy. To know about Derrida's new theme deconstruction, it is important to point out the postmodern turn. The student revolution of the late 60s in Europe played a crucial role in making of a postmodern sub-culture. Postmodernism denies there is an objective reality. They treat objective reality as a kind of conceptual construct. It questions the universal validity of reason and logic and distrusts science and technology as instruments of human progress. Many of them believe that reason and logic is oppressive as they have been used to destroy others. Postmodernism holds that there is no intrinsic human nature, it is completely socially determined. According to them, language does not represent reality outside us; it is not a mirror of this universe. Though in philosophy, the movement of postmodernism and in particular post-structuralism was geared by Jacques Derrida, but here it may be mentioned that Derrida was a postmodernist or even post-structuralist philosopher. It is because he never addressed himself as either postmodernist or post-structuralist. But Derrida may be considered as post-structuralist as he worked with Ferdinand de Saussure, Levi Strauss, and Michel Foucault. On the other side when he moved to France and introduces his term deconstruction he is known as postmodernist. Therefore it may be commented that his theory of deconstruction leads to postmodern thought.

During the Second World War, Algeria suffered from the Nazi Germany atrocities and Vichy government. Though it was not worsted as nuclear holocaust, that time young Derrida was deeply affected by the racial discriminations. Thus, in 1940, the anti-Semitism of Algerian Jewish Jacques Derrida in his young age encountered Fredrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Sigmund Freud, Ferdinand de Saussure, and other thinker's breakthrough thoughts, who provoked Derrida to perform deconstruction on the traditional Western philosophy. This work deals with not only the Heideggerean philosophy but Derrida was influenced by the structuralist philosophers too. Derrida's philosophical heritage starts from his relation with Plato to Heidegger. Derrida belongs to the second generation of French Phenomenologist; he himself notes that he was deeply influenced by Husserl, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Sartre, Levinas, and Saussure in linguistics. It examines how Derrida influenced by those

philosophers and why Derrida deconstructs their theories. This work tries to analyze or examine the above positions.

Deconstruction is a mode of writing, a way of reading and challenging all interpretations of texts based on conventional notions of the stability of the external world, human self, language, and meaning. According to Derrida, the term 'centre' is problematic as it always tries to attempt to exclude anything else other than itself. Thereby the 'centre' marginalized others. In doing so, binary opposites are formed. He observed that the whole Western philosophical tradition was based on metaphysical assumptions like; truth, origin, presence, reason, God, and essence. That is why he termed traditional philosophy from Plato to Heidegger as logocentric- based. To deal with this logocentrism Derrida used his strategy deconstruction.

This work tries to throw light on Derrida's relationship with contemporary French philosophers, such as structuralist philosopher Ferdinand de Saussure, who is a specialist in phonology. Derrida was influenced by structuralism because they recognize the world through language. But not only Saussure, he also deconstructs Emmanuel Levinas, Lévi-Strauss, Jean François Lyotard, and Michel Foucault's position.

According to Derrida not only in Western philosophical tradition but logocentrism is present in Indian tradition too. There are some schools such as *Sāṃkhya-Yoga*, Vedanta and *Nyāya*, where the above trend may be observed. These schools are structured in terms of dichotomies or polarities where the second term of the pair is considered as lower status. Thus, this present work tries to examine these issues.

This present thesis tries to examine and analyse some major issues that are related with 'Deconstruction'. Such as:

- I. Derrida rejects modernism. But why does he reject modernism? Or how far is it just to call postmodernism opposite to modernism?
- II. Derrida is claiming that writing and speech bear the same importance. There is no difference between spoken language and written language, but here a question arises how writing and speech can stand the same side of the binary opposition?
- III. According to Derrida Western thought has been always structured in terms of dichotomies like good and evil, presence and absence, truth and error, mind and matter, man and women, soul and body, speech and writing. Here the second term in

each pair is considered as the negative, corrupt in Western thought. But for Derrida, both first and second terms are equally important. This work tries to throw light on these aspects.

- IV. Derrida himself notes that he was influenced by Plato, Descartes, Husserl, Heidegger, Nietzsche and Saussure; then why he deconstructs those philosophers thought?
- V. The origin of language has not only been discussed in Contemporary Western philosophy but also been discussed in traditional Indian philosophy. That is why it is very challenging to observe whether there is any relationship between western and Indian schools from the perspective of language or not.
- VI. The main thrust is to analyze and examine whether it is possible to get free from the cage of metaphysics or not? We will uncover in the course of the discussion that it is not possible to get rid from the metaphysical tunes. In any philosophical discussion, the issue of metaphysics is always present in some form or other, directly or indirectly.

These are some of the questions that the present thesis will try to examine besides a critical evaluation of ‘Deconstruction’.

From the above it may be commented that Jacques Derrida’s attack on metaphysics and his deconstruction is a critical reading of a text. A text can never carry a single basic meaning, there are several meanings. Thus, he was interested to find out how the meaning of the text can be plural. He felt that philosophical problems exist in language. Derrida observed that it is possible to overcome these problems only through language. He introduces his terminology such as *différance*, *trace*, *arché-writing* and so on to unearth the above issue. Through all these terms Derrida tries to redefine ‘writing’ and remarked that writing is not secondary rather it is equally important as speech is. It has an important and more primordial role in the production of language and even in philosophical discourse.

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