

Derridean Deconstruction: An Analytical Study of its Social Impact; and Islam's Stance Thereof

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Abstract:

Purpose of the Study:

The aim of this study is to inform the readers regarding the pernicious, inimical and deleterious impact that Derridean Deconstruction – which stresses that the meaning of a text, mundane or transcendental, are not permanent and stable – has on the smooth functioning of society, individuals and their interrelationship. The article deals with Islamic stance regarding Derridean Deconstruction, too.

Methodology:

Various research tools have been used to accomplish this manuscript. Particularly, descriptive and narrative research methods have been employed in order to fulfill the task successfully and efficiently. Moreover, analytical research method has also been used in order to compare and contrast the theory of deconstruction and Islamic stance thereof.

Main Findings:

The article showed that so far as the social impact of the theory of deconstruction is concerned, it destabilizes the relationship between individuals and society. So, if the meanings of the text whatsoever are considered to be transient, impermanent and unstable, the society entangles into the maze of chaos and confusion and ceases to function efficiently and smoothly.

Application of the Study:

This study has its own significance. Though a trivial and commonplace attempt, it can have some application in numerous disciplines like philosophy, sociology, civics, anthropology and literature, too. So, it becomes evident from this that the study under consideration is momentous so far as the stability of a society is concerned.

Novelty of the Study:

This study is novel, fresh and sui generis so far as its impact is concerned. So, it will prove to be of much interest for serious readers and will be good addition in the realm of research. Besides, its special focus on the social impact of Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction makes this study of some value.

Key Words: Islam, Derridean Deconstruction, Meaning, Text, Society, Individual.

Introduction:

One of the most influential and powerful theory of Postmodernism is considered to be the theory of deconstruction, sometimes known as Derridean Deconstruction, as enunciated by French abstruse theorist and philosopher Jacques Derrida. This theory insists on the impermanence and unfixity of the meaning of a text - mundane or transcendental. According to Jacques Derrida, there is no permanent signifier of a signified which, in turn, results in the fact that language is just a chain of signifiers or play of signifiers.

Though this theory has numerous consequences but however; this theory incited me to work upon its specific social impacts which can cause an irreparable damage o the very fabric of society. Because being a human being I am so serious regarding the well functioning of society and to me the individuals are an indispensable part of society; so, the interrelationship of society and individuals should run in a better way. However, if Derridean Deconstruction is applied to society and its various institutions which come into existence by the individuals and for the individuals, he whole system loses its significance owing to the fact that no word or relation has, according to Derrida, stable or intransient meaning. Hence, this theory tends to demolish the foundations of a society and push it towards oblivion and nothingness.

Derridean deconstruction has been in vogue since its inception as a vigorous and powerful theory in the realm of history of philosophy. This theory has been lauded by many academics from various disciplines the world over. However, there are many theorists and scholars who have shown their deep dissatisfaction regarding the 'social impact' of theory of deconstruction. For them, the implications of this theory *viz-a-viz* both individual and society are very pernicious and inimical. Moreover, the emphasis that theory of deconstruction puts upon the instability, unfixity, and impermanence of the meanings of text of any sort has serious consequences with regard to the relationship between the individual and society; hence paving the way to acute deterioration and serious degeneration which may, resultantly, lead society towards

oblivion and nothingness –a state of affairs that no sensible and sagacious person ever imagine to be happened. That is why these philosopher and intellectuals have shown numerous reservations about the social impact of Derridean deconstruction. In the following paragraphs, thus, we will make an effort to analyze theory of deconstruction with regard to social impact thereof. And this theory will also be discussed in Islamic perspective particularly with regard to the Noble Quran.

Research Questions:

The following are the research questions which have been dealt with in this research article:

1. Is the idea of transient nature of the meaning of text is practicable or not?
2. The role of religion and transcendental reality in society and theory of deconstruction's impact in this regard.
3. The significance of language for individuals and society .
4. Social narratives and the undermining role of theory of deconstruction in this regard.
5. Deconstruction and the Noble Quran.

Literature Review:

Jacques Derrida is one of the most important figures of Postmodernism; his works have been dealt with in detail by various scholars – Muslims as well as Westerns – the world over. Commencing with Ahmad Nadeem Gahlan, a Pakistani writer and researcher, who in his book “Postmodernism and Islamic Teachings” (Originally written in Urdu) discusses in detail the historical background of postmodernism and also presents an introduction of some major figures of postmodernism including Jacques Derrida –the originator of theory of deconstruction. Geoffrey Bennington in his famous book “Interrupting Derrida” makes an effort to analyze Derrida's thought from various angles but he does not talks about the social impact thereof. Hugh J. Silverman, in his magnum opus “Postmodernism and Continental Philosophy” makes a fine comparison of Western philosophers and also endeavours to evaluate the true place of Jacques Derrida in the realm of Continental Philosophy.

Similarly, in his another book viz. “Derrida and Deconstruction”, Silverman writes that Jacques Derrida nullifies the claim that a text should be read from a prescribed way because of the fact a text does not have fixed or stable meanings. Leslie Hill's notable book namely “The Cambridge Introduction to Jacques Derrida” gives a detailed account of Derrida's contribution in the realm of Western philosophy and tries to discuss his theory of deconstruction in order to specify its significance in postmodern literature. Garry Gutting in his well-known work “French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century” maintains that Derrida has been a serious and voracious reader in the history of Western philosophy; that is why, he has minutely read and acutely criticized numerous notable Western philosophers like Plato, Rousseau, Heidegger etc. In the same way, Stuart Sim, in his famous work “The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism” opines that what Derrida was concerned to express was the instability and impermanence of language, in reality, systems as a whole. Systems may be educational or political or cultural or financial ones.

William E. Cain and his co-authors in their masterpiece namely “Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism” leave much space to Derrida and discuss his theory of deconstruction in detail but do not talks about its social impact, in fact. Simon Glendenning's work “Derrida: A Very Short Introduction” illustrates that Derridean Deconstruction is sheer obscurantism because of the fact that the language Derrida uses is quasi-iconoclastic. Through this, Derrida demolishes everything worthwhile in the intellectual history that has been cherished by scholars and students in the Arts and Humanities for hundreds of years. Fredric Jameson in his popular work viz. “The Prison House of

Language” is of the opinion the Derridean Deconstruction emphasizes the impermanence of meaning of a text because, to Derrida, signifiers and signifieds have arbitrary relationship; they do not have one to one linkage.

David Alderson in his book “Terry Eagleton” deconstruction is a unique method of relentlessly analyzing a text and a distinguished style of argumentation which aims at revealing the logical incompatibilities between the overt or covert plans of a discourse in a text by using a number of critical strategies showing how these incompatibilities and contradictions are concealed and incorporated by the text, was presented by French Philosopher, Jacques Derrida with such a force that he made it a vigorous literary theory. Particularly, deconstruction tends to undermine the certainties or foundations of the texts on which it goes to work.

Graham Ward in his well-known book “The Blackwell Companion to Postmodern Theology” takes the theory of deconstruction as a unique event in the history of Judaism when he says that one of the remarkable events in the history of Judaism has been caused by a literary movement known as “Deconstruction”. The ways of reading texts that we have considered natural and final are only the possible modes of reading that may be regarded interpretation in honesty of intention; however, they are, in fact, culturally bound and particular historical products-- the products of the epoch of Logos, as a consequence Logocentrism.

Philosophy is the special target of the theory of deconstruction--a process of problematising the Logocentric discourse as propounded by Jacques Derrida. Jacques Derrida's unwavering standing as a staunch adversary of Western philosophical traditions, in particular the Western Metaphysics has no parallel in the history of Western philosophy. That is why, Joshua Kates in his seminal work namely “Fielding Derrida” maintains that deconstruction is a sort of reading which draws doubting and gloomy conclusions regarding reality, reason and philosophy.

Sherwood Kevin Hart in his esteemed book “Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments” narrates that Derrida's deconstruction intends to regard God as “undecidable and unpredictable character”.

Derrida is a true enemy of the concept of dichotomies --a fundamental part of western philosophical tradition. That is why, Joan Scott also sees eyeball to eyeball with Poovey when he writes:

“Deconstruction is a sort of critique that intends to analyzing context in which the traditional dichotomies work. Deconstruction over turns and displaces this binary hierarchical erection, rather than admitting it as tangible or obvious or in the nature of things.”

Some scholars see Derridean Deconstruction as a weapon which has made severe onslaught even upon the understanding of literature. Thus, Harold Bloom in one of his famous book “Deconstruction and Criticism” maintains that Derridean deconstruction has also deconstructed the very understanding of the literary terms. As an instance, for deconstruction, irony is not a theme but a well-ordered negation of understanding.

From the above mentioned citations and references, it becomes crystal clear that a number of theorists and philosophers have discussed Derridean Deconstruction from various angles but none of them has talks about the social impact of this foundational theory of postmodernism. This is the very reason that I chose to write some lines on this topic. To me, the social impact of Derridean Deconstruction is tremendous and is likely to bring catastrophic upshots in society and its relationship with individuals.

Discussion:

In the following pages we shall discuss the theory of deconstruction by evaluating its social impact regarding the instability and unfixity of the meaning of the words, phrases and other terms which bind the individuals and society into a single whole and the deterioration thereof will lead towards the instability and annihilation of society and its very foundations. This theory is very dangerous and its perils jeopardize the very foundation upon which the edifice of the society is erected. The following headings will highlight the social impact of this theory in some detail.

Meaning and Text:

It is a matter of great concern that if meaning of a word is not taken to be fixed and stable, the whole edifice of social values and family relationships will be collapsed straight away. The names of relations—both of family and social life—demarcate the very boundaries and limits to run a peaceful, prosper and healthy life. A ‘son’ cannot be ‘father’ that is he cannot take the place of father and vice versa. Similarly, a ‘daughter’ is differentiated from ‘mother’ and inverse is also true. Same is the case with other social relations which have their own peculiar properties; hence, playing a unique and significant role in the smooth functioning of social life. Now question arises, if these words, which signify the very social relations and which provide a firm foundation to the collective life, do not have any meanings whatsoever or their meanings are postponed endlessly, as theory of deconstruction claims; how can one be able to differentiate between ‘father and son’ or ‘daughter or mother’ or other important social relations? If meanings are perpetually delayed and postponed and they have no stability, the recognition of relations will become impossibility leading to an enigmatic situation hardly to be understood. And, in this way, the whole system of social life will come into a state of quandary leading to its total annihilation. Thus, it can very safely be said that deconstruction creates utter confusion, chaos and mayhem in society by rejecting every attempt to set limits or boundaries to meaning.¹

Well-known British Novelist, Jim Powell, in his famous book “*Deconstruction for Beginners*”—written in dialogue form with very funny cartoons elaborating various aspects of deconstructive process—criticizes theory of deconstruction for its stress upon the meaninglessness of words/ postponement of meanings of words. In the conversation when asked to explain deconstruction, Uma, on the character involved in dialogue, tells that generally people read something in order to learn its meanings. For example, if you are driving and you see a sign which says ‘Stop’ and you stop your car after having read it. Uma carries on her talk and further says that if you have a liking for deconstruction, you ask not ‘*What the sign means*’, but ‘*How it means*’. Twain, other interlocutor, gets bewildered upon this queer question and asks what do you mean by ‘*How it means*’. Upon this Uma replies:

“Yes. The word ‘Stop’ is arguable and equivocal. Does it means stop driving, stop reading the sign, or stop breathing? So, you are doing all these things when you read the sign.”

Then, Twain says: “So, deconstruction is a way of reading text which challenges the ‘normal’ meaning of words”. Uma nods in yes.²

This reference of Jim Powell’s book, using a simple instance from daily life, illustrates the very importance of the ‘normal meaning’ of a ‘word’—the very reality that deconstruction outs. It also becomes obvious from this short dialogue that in order to run a smooth and normal social life, the normal meanings of words are essential

¹References

- . Martin McQuillan. (2001).*Paul De Man*. Routledge, p. 7.
² . Jim Powell. (2007).*Deconstruction for Beginners*. LLC, Danbury. p. 16-7.

to be taken; otherwise, the wheel of collective life will not move properly and the social system will come to a halt. 'Undecidability of meaning' is another hallmark of theory of deconstruction. Derrida took this concept of "undecidability" from Freud and Godel and it is to be noted that an undecidable upsets the traditional dichotomies of Western philosophy. Undecidability, in fact, problematizes any ultimate decision regarding the meaning of a text.³

However, the 'decidability of meaning' is essential in order to make society march onwards. This very fact has been nicely illustrated by Terry Eagleton, who utterly disregards this concept of undecidability, in the following fine words:

"Meaning becomes ultimately undecidable if language is seen as a chain of signifiers--as theory of deconstruction claims-- on a page; it begins to be decidable, and words such as 'reality', 'truth', 'and 'certainty' have something of their force restored to them, when we think of language rather as something we do, as inextricably interwoven with our practical forms of life."⁴

Hence, it becomes crystal clear from this statement that the decidability of meaning is a precondition in order to sustain and develop the "practical forms of life". And these practical forms of life guarantee smooth functioning of a society. If Derridean stance about the deferral of meaning is accepted, the words will lose their significance and the social system will cease to function. Derrida is of the view that there is no signified of a signifier; the signified itself becomes a new signifier. And this new signifier generates another signifier as there is no signified for it, too. In this way, a chain of signifiers generates and meanings are postponed and delayed endlessly and language, in fact, becomes the second name of a series of signifiers only with no signified whatsoever. It seems an exaggerated account to the part of Derrida. He willfully denies the reality that meanings of words are really attached with the words they refer to. Meanings are not delayed but are devised and accepted by the people over the years; their permanence and fixity is indispensable for the smooth functioning of social life and without the presence of proper meanings of words, the whole structure of social life will be collapsed. Moreover, language is not a chain of signifiers -as deconstruction says-; instead, every signifier has a specific signified whatsoever, without which language becomes a futile practice of uttering various sort of words; hence, pushing society towards a chaotic state because without a proper and understandable language, a society does not dream to be a viable entity. Thus, meanings are present and they should be treated as such.

Religion:

"Religion is also an important part of social life being an important instrument operating at every social level", according to Terry Eagleton.⁵ Also, religion proclaims that God is the creator of the world.⁶ And a fundamental idea regarding God is that He is infinite or unlimited.⁷ Deconstruction deconstructs the very beliefs and dogmas of religion which, no doubt, provide a basis for public unity and single social organization.⁸ Deconstruction of religion may cause temporal and spiritual crisis among the masses leading them to utter frenzy and unrest. Derridean deconstruction intends to deconstruct each and every claim that shows a sign of universality and absoluteness whatever; on the other hand, however, religious truths are ultimate in their nature and are par excellence to rational demonstration

³ . Powell, 2007, p. 28.

⁴ . Terry Eagleton. (1996). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, p.127.

⁵ . Eagleton, 1996, p 20.

⁶ . Muhammad Legenhausen. (2000). *Contemporary Topics of Islamic Thought*. Tehran: Alhoda Publishers, p 27.

⁷ . John J. Hick. (1963). *Philosophy of Religion* 4th Ed. NJ: Princeton Hall, p 7.

⁸ . Eagleton, 1996, p 20.

and thus absolute in their claims.⁹Hence, Terry Eagleton, as against the very deconstructionists' stance, regards religious truths not only rational but also absolute not liable to be deconstructed in any way. Besides, in reality, religion provides the requisite courage and fortitude to face the pains and pangs of life and death with bravery and valour. That is why; psychiatrists also now recognize that religion is sine qua non to face the problems of this life manfully and patiently and even a belief in the life hereafter makes death easier to deal with.¹⁰

Language:

Language is also a fundamental entity which is essential for the proper growth and development of society; to imagine a language is to imagine a whole form of social life.¹¹

And theory of deconstruction attacks the very language when it nullifies the claim that words have some certain and stable meanings. Meaning flares and fades, deleting itself as soon as it comes out.¹²Like Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Derrida is also of the view that language, through its very grammar, coins 'mega-entities' through the use of 'nouns' like God—the Noun of nouns- and other metaphysical illusions and these metaphysical illusions are created within the very structure of our language and it is impossible to eliminate them. So, it is the duty of the philosopher to wage an incessant war against them—a combat which Wittgenstein calls 'linguistic therapy' and which Derrida terms 'deconstruction'.¹³

Also, relation of reality to language is not able to be trusted because of the fact that entire language systems are essentially unreliable cultural constructs.¹⁴According to Derrida, language is considered to be a trustworthy tool of communication but such is not the case; in reality, it is a flowing, indeterminate realm of compound experience by which certain ideologies are presented in order to program the humans that is to make them robots.¹⁵ Deconstruction also claims that language does not contain the 'amalgamation of signifiers and signifieds'; it comprises only of 'chains of signifiers'.¹⁶ In this way, language is proved to be mere an entity which has 'words' only but with no 'meanings'. Hence, it can be easily appraised that deconstruction is the other name of the war against the language which is a very forceful and robust entity to guarantee a sustainable and lasting relation between individuals and society. So, the defense of the language is, in reality, the defense of social integrity and coherence.

Despair and Pessimism:

Though, theory of deconstruction has minor influence on sociology as compare to other disciplines; however, its implications utterly subvert the premises of humanism and sociology. In fact, theory of deconstruction makes a severe onslaught on these premises, so it becomes incumbent upon the sociologists to pay serious attention towards this literary and philosophical movement. It generates hopelessness in both the individuals and society, in fact. That is why; Kenneth E. Malicharin his famous book namely "Deconstruction: Critical Theory or an Ideology of Despair" opines that theory of deconstruction is not a critical theory but rather it is an ideology of despair and pessimism. Demystification is the strong claim and prime duty of theory of deconstruction; however, during this 'sacred mission' it ends up

⁹ . Eagleton, 1996, p 20.

¹⁰ . Charles Upton. (2002).*The System of Antichrist: Truth and Falsehood in Postmodernism and the New Age*. New York: Sophia Perennis, p 34.

¹¹ . Eagleton, 1996, p 53.

¹² . Eagleton. (2007).*The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, p 59.

¹³ . Ibid, p. 6.

¹⁴ . Christopher Butler. (2002).*Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, p 17.

¹⁵ . Lois Tyson. (2006).*Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide*. London: Routledge, p 249.

¹⁶ . Tyson, 2006, p. 252.

in reproducing a world which is disintegrated, alienated and invalidated and ultimately needs to be transcended. If we hope for a just and humane world, we must endeavour to develop a human reason which, unlike deconstruction, takes into account the realization of thorough and complete potential of mankind.¹⁷ This superb statement by Kenneth E. Malichar vividly manifests that theory of deconstruction, in fact, aims to untie the knot which provides coherence and unity to society and intends to shatter the very foundation which links the individuals and society into a single whole. Deconstruction causes an irreparable damage to the very fabric of society if accepted as a literary and philosophical concept in letter and spirit.

Social Narratives:

A social system is usually based on some narratives like patriarchy, as an instance, which have deep roots in society and which may be regarded as meta-narratives in some sense or the other. That is why postmodern critical ways and methods, no doubt including deconstruction too, it being perhaps the most powerful technique of postmodernism, were triumphantly applied to ethical and social issues, as an instance, to the 'nullifying' of the 'meta recit' of patriarchy and the defense of women against its supremacy.¹⁸ So, in the wake of liberating women from the clutches of patriarchic system, deconstruction intends to demolish every institution including patriarchic system, for example, which provides a firm foundation to society as a meta-narrative. Deconstruction is a robust meta-narrative itself; so it a great paradox on the part of the postmodernism that the very fact it denies with full force becomes the chain of its feet never to be broken. That is why Terry Eagleton rightly observes:

"Though, postmodernism is a staunch opponent of meta-narratives, universal Reason and non-pluralist cultures; but, however, these views are arguably essential to it".¹⁹

Postmodernism including Derridean deconstruction stresses that human life is wholly worthless just because it is the creation of God. It does not have an eternal goal and human history is leading nowhere.²⁰ This is evident from this pick that the project of postmodernism cum deconstruction intends to demolish and nullify the 'Divine Scheme' of the universe which human life is an integral part of. Life may be defined as an interrelationship between individuals and society; when life is regarded as a futile project having no particular aim, the whole social system is collapsed automatically.

Binary Oppositions:

Man, in his social life, is bound to adopt a system of 'binary oppositions' such as 'good/bad', 'inside/outside', 'speech/writing', 'up/down', 'man/woman', 'rich/poor', 'ruler/ruled to name but a few. By means of that, he becomes able to differentiate between various entities used in social life. This system of dichotomies, as a matter of fact, is very instrumental in defining different shades of the individual and the collective life. The proper functioning of this system of oppositions is necessary to maintain a balance between individuals and society for these binary oppositions help Man in understanding the very meaning of an utterance. Without these dichotomies, it will perhaps, but surely, become impossible for Man to know the very meaning of the utterance of a speaker. So, it becomes very clear that binary system is a blessing and is a basic need for the movement of the vehicle of society. However, Derridean deconstruction intends to overturn or demolish this system of binary oppositions and the very hierarchies they rely on by claiming that this system of oppositions is totally unfair and is a product of the metaphysical tradition of Western philosophy.²¹

¹⁷ . . . <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/016059768801200404>, retrieved on 29-07-2020, at 3:30 PM

¹⁸ . Butler, 2007, p. 42.

¹⁹ . Eagleton. (1996). *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. London: Blackwell Publishers, p 103.

²⁰ . Upton, 2002, p 11.

²¹ . Powell, 2007, p 34.

Derrida says that in this system of binary oppositions, first term is given respect while other term is regarded as inferior and lowly. He cites various instances from the Western philosophy in his books in order to prove his point. Derrida's claim, however, when seen a bit deeply, appears to be an exaggerated account. Like Saussure he does not even regard the union of signifier and signified a stable one. Nonetheless, that is why, Terry Eagleton says that:

"We cannot catapult ourselves beyond this binary habit of thought because it is a habit that has deep roots in society and is handy and worthwhile to establish relations of individuals and society".²²

Thus, Derrida's deconstruction is a very deleterious theory so far as the survival of the society is concerned. By attacking the system of binary oppositions, this theory of deconstruction, in reality, intends to destroy the very foundations upon which the edifice of society is erected.

The overemphasis the theory of deconstruction lays upon text leads it towards what may be called a willful negligence of its social and political duties. Hence, this theory may be regarded an "anti-society theory" which does not accord any significance to individuals and society by adversely affecting their relationships. That is why Marxist literary critics and linguists generally see deconstruction's concentration on text as avoiding social responsibilities.

Transcendental Reality:

Concept of 'Reality' has been in vogue in human society since the time immemorial. Every society believes 'Reality' in form or the other. This concept gives them a sense of security and spiritual satisfaction. That is why human society has such dogmas as 'Reality' or 'Truth' or 'Transcendental Signified' throughout the ages and there is no difference between savages of Africa and civilized of the West in this regard. Both of them have always a belief in Reality whatever. This belief provides a firm foundation for its believers. However, deconstruction has got popularity on account of its 'anti-foundationalism' stance. That is, it is against any concept of foundation or origin whatsoever. By 'anti-foundationalism', however, means that there can be no appeal to a foundation outside the bounds of text. "Derrida says that there is nothing outside the Text". By this, he does not mean that there is no Reality but he means to say that Reality is composed of relations, differences and delays.²³

But, this is not a true concept of Reality; a Reality is above all such "relations, differences and delays". A Reality is not defined by such trivial notions; rather a Reality exists by His own. Reality needs no certificates of language, differences or delays in order to exist. Thus, it can be said that deconstruction's strategy of confining the Reality within the bounds of text is utterly a childish concept and is tantamount to the denial of Reality, in fact. Even a layman can tell that Reality is above all these man-made restrictions or concepts. Man is bound to work within the limits of time and space but the Reality is above both time and space. Moreover, it is also proved that the concept of Reality is essential for the well-functioning of the social life--the very idea deconstruction intends to obliterate.

This concept of reality is also called "transcendental signified" on which we can found a stable and universal knowledge necessary for the individuals and society as well. That is why Robert Briggs in his famous essay "Transcendental Signified" opines:

"No doubt, for philosophy, the idea of transcendental signified is not a reverie.

²² . Eagleton, 1996, p 115.

²³ . Nial Lucy. (2016). *A Dictionary of Postmodernism*. NJ: Wiley Blackwell, p 29.

Conversely, it is the realist thing in the world. It is the colossal bedrock upon which we may build our definite and established knowledge of everything that is beautiful, good and true.”²⁴

So, Robert Briggs's claim really supports our view that the concept of *Reality* is sine qua non for the stability and prosperity of society and helps the individuals in attaining sublime and lofty goals in their life. Robert Briggs further writes that if someone in a debate, including philosophers does not agree to this concept of *Transcendental Signified/Reality*; this is because that there is some flaw in his reasoning or owing to some presupposition like ignorance, fallacy or prejudice, he is opposing this idea. These faults once exposed can allow truth to prevail.

Thus, from this firm standing of Robert Briggs, it becomes crystal clear that the dogma of a “Reality” is indispensable for both individuals and society as it provides them a very strong anchor in order to sustain their inter-relationship. While the Derrida's deconstructive stance looks very feeble and poor when seen through Robert Briggs's claim regarding “Reality.”

Islam and Deconstruction:

Now, we will discuss the fact whether the Words of the Holy Quran—the last book of Allah Almighty that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) --have fixed, final, intransient and unalterable meanings or not. Before this, let us have a brief look at the “*theory of deconstruction*” and its related concept of “*differance*”. Deconstruction is a way of reading that remains closely fastened to the text it interrogates. As we know that theory of deconstruction as given by Jacques Derrida with its powerful tool of “*differance*” -- a systematic play of differences -- claims that the meanings of any text contain such “*flaws or aporias*” as are against the very stance of its author; hence, making it liable to be deconstructed that is making the claims of the text stood against itself owing to some hidden shortcomings and contradictions it contains. In this way, the thread of the text is pulled apart relentlessly making it vulnerable to all types of intellectual onslaughts.

The sense of the notion of “*differance*” remains suspended between the two French verbs “*to differ*” and “*to defer*”, both of which contribute to its textual force but none of these can completely capture its meaning.²⁵ Language depends on “*differences*”; it is directly linked to binary oppositions. It is worthwhile to note that where Derrida digs up fresh foundations and where the *science of writing* takes its signal is in the extent to which “*differ*” gradually changes into “*defer*”. This involves the notion that meaning is always deferred probably to the point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification. “*Differance*” not only designates this theme but offers in its own unstable meaning a graphic example of the process at work.²⁶ This implies that it is impossible to know the actual meanings of a text because, according to Derrida, its meanings -- that are deferred, too -- are evoked by the words from which they differ. As an instance “*good*” is defined by its relation to “*bad*” and “*presence*” derives its meaning from “*absence*” and so on. As such “*binary oppositions*” construct a text so these dichotomies are a special target of Derrida's deconstruction because, for Derrida, they restrict the plurality of meanings -- the very idea Derridean deconstruction supports and propagates.

Hence, meanings are incessantly deferred or postponed owing to an endless chain of “*signifiers*”. Derrida is of the view that because of the perpetual postponement of meanings of a text, “*the Signified*” can never be achieved that is the meanings of text are caught in a spiral of meaninglessness. *Western Metaphysics* -- full of metaphors like

²⁴ . Lucy, 2016, p 29.

²⁵ . Christopher Norris. (2002). *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, p 31-32.

²⁶ . Norris, 2002, p. 32.

speech etc. which signifies truth and authenticity-- is a particular target of Derrida's relentless criticism because it claims to get rid of language and attain knowledge ideally independent of linguistic flaws and failings.²⁷ Derrida ruthlessly attacks the authenticity of the text through a new and errant style of commentary which undermines the whole range of traditional traits of literary meanings.²⁸

If this theory of deconstruction is believed to be true or let it play openly, the very foundation of the Islam--the ultimate religion, the final seal and link of the long prophetic chain²⁹ is liable to be demolished because it is the faith of the Muslims that the "Quran is not only the *Word of God* but also its *Meanings* are revealed by *God Himself*." This is the very definition of the Holy Quran. And throughout the History of Islam, Muslims have never clashed over this basic reality. Though the youngest of the epoch-making books, the Koran is the most widely read book ever written; its language is rhythmical and rhetorical.³⁰ The Holy Quran is considered to be the most truthful book of human history. That is why, Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a French surgeon who embraced Islam, in his famous book "*Bible, Quran and Science*" writes:

"Owing to its confirmed and unequivocal authenticity, the text of the *Holy Quran* holds an unprecedented place among the *Revealed Books*, shared neither by the *Old* nor by the *New Testament*."³¹

It is a historical truth that whenever the "Followers" of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) found a difficulty in understanding the meanings of a verse of the Holy Quran, they consulted the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in order to get the true meanings of the holy text. And the Holy Prophet made them understood the meanings of the divine text under the divine guidance of Allah Almighty. A number of instances can be found in the authentic exegeses of the Holy Quran that bear the testimony that the "Followers" of the Holy Prophet asked the meanings of the Holy Quran from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) whenever they stuck while reciting the Holy Quran.

To begin with the verses 15 and 16 of Surah Yunas that read as follows:

وَإِذَا تُنْتَلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا إِنَّا بُرْهَانَ غَيْرِ هَذَا أَوْ بَدِّلْهُ ۗ قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِنْ تَلْقَائِي ۖ أَنفُسِي ۚ إِنَّ اتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۚ إِلَيَّ أَخَافُ ۚ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابٌ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

"But when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed unto them, those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, Say: "Bring us a reading other than this, or change this," Say: "It is not for me, of my own accord, to change it: I follow naught but what is revealed unto me: if I were to disobey my Lord, I should myself fear the penalty of a Great Day (to come)."³²

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ ۖ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

"Say: If Allah had so willed I should not have recited it to you nor would He have made it known to you. I dwelt among you a whole lifetime before it (came to me). Have ye then no sense?"³³

²⁷ . Ibid, p. 19.

²⁸ . Ibid.,p. 24.

²⁹ . Seyyed Hossein Nasr. (2003). *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World*. Chicago: KAZI Publication, p 5.

³⁰ . Philip K Hitti. (1986). *The History of the Arabs*. London: Macmillan Education Limited, pp. 126-27.

³¹ . Maurice Bucaille. (1989).*Bible, Quran, Science*. Trans. Alastair D. Pannell and Author. Lahore: Matabah Mishkatul Islamia,, p 92.

³² . Al-Yunus, 10, Verse, No.15.

³³ . Al-Yunus, 10, Verse, No. 16.

These two verses of the Glorious Quran, first of all, testify that the Holy Quran was revealed on Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); that is it is the Word of God. And if disbelievers demand for a change--in text or meaning--in it, even the Prophet himself have no authority to change it a bit. As a matter of fact, he is duty bound to follow the signs of Allah Almighty revealed to him and has not been authorized to make a change in it whatsoever. So, any desire or whim of him finds no room in this revelation. Thus, it becomes very evident from this verse that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) used to tell the people what was revealed to him without any alteration.

Also, this verse uncovers the very reality that not only the words but also the meanings of the Glorious Quran are the revealed ones. So, these meanings, as a necessary corollary, are stable, intransient and permanent; that is why, people understood them and acted upon them in accordance with the interpretation made by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) under the direct guidance of God Almighty. If the meanings of the Holy text as narrated by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had not been stable, certain and definite, the Followers would not have been able to follow the Words of God and had got baffled altogether.

In the second verse, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) describes another *logical reality* to his listeners that all the revelation that "I have been bestowed with and its very recitation before you is in accordance with the Divine Will; if Allah had not given me the permission of recitation of revelation in front of you, I would have never done so". The last part of this verse is very deep, thought provoking and philosophical, too. The objective of these everlasting words is that this Quran is a revealed Text without an iota of doubt. The Prophet (PBUH) emphasizes: "I have not compiled it from my own desire or from the power of my imagination. The proof of this great reality is that I spent forty years of my life amongst you in Makkah; during these forty years I never spoke a word to you which resemble this revelation; nor I ever learnt any word from anyone, Arab or non-Arab. So what happened after forty years that I commenced to talk to you so elaborately and confidently in a language which you are unable to present even an instance of". Hence, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) presented his past life-- which was so holy and pure that he was given the titles of "Sadiq" and "Ameen" by the pagans of Arabia-- as the clear cut proof for the truthfulness and authenticity of his Prophethood. It was after the proclamation of his Prophethood that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) started addressing his people so eloquently that the Arabs, who were so proud of their language, got astonished. They were listening to the most eloquent, terse and succinct *Word* that they had never heard before. Moreover, this very part of the verse supplies a powerful proof of the fact that Quran is a great miracle of God that was given to Muhammad for the welfare-- both in this world and the world hereafter--of the Mankind.

The Glorious Quran also quotes that situation in which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) caught during the revelation of the Holy Quran. In fact, the Holy Prophet (PBUH), during the revelation of the Glorious Quran, used to move his lips in order to learn/ recite the divine words lest they should not be forgotten by him. At this juncture, Allah Almighty intervened and told the Messenger (PBUH) that he should not be worried about reciting the Quran at the time of revelation because it is Allah's responsibility to make not only the revelation possible but also to make the "meanings" of it comprehended to you completely without an iota of doubt and forgetfulness. The Holy Prophet was ordered to listen carefully when revelation is revealed. It manifests that both the "Words and the Meanings" of the Glorious Quran are revealed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) by Allah Almighty. That is why; the Holy Quran narrates this whole situation in Surah Qayamah from verses sixteen to nineteen. The Holy Quran says:

لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتُحْجِلَ بِهِ³⁴

³⁴. Al-Qayamah, 75, Verse 16.

“Move not your tongue concerning (the Quran, O Muhammad) to make haste therewith”.

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ³⁵

“Verily upon us is the collecting thereof and the reciting thereof”.

فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ³⁶

“And when We read, follow thou the reading”.

ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ³⁷

“Again, it is for Us to explain its meaning”.

It becomes crystal clear from above mentioned verses of the Holy Quran that both the *Words* and the *Meanings* of the Glorious Quran are revealed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) by Allah Almighty. This was, in fact, necessary for the protection and preservation of the Holy Text for the generations to come so that they cannot dispute regarding the meanings of it. This great arrangement by Allah Almighty has been narrated in the Holy Quran in the following verse:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ³⁸

“Verily We: it is We Who have sent down the Quran and surely We will guard it (from corruption)”.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, it becomes evident that theory of deconstruction as propounded by Jacques Derrida is very detrimental and noxious theory so far as its social impact is concerned. Through its emphasis on the instability and transient nature of meanings of texts—that provides soundness, coherence and organization to the relations of individual and society ~ theory of deconstruction demolishes the very foundations upon which the edifice of society is based. It nullifies, through its deconstructive attitude, all the meanings of words which bind the individuals and society together. Hence, it can be said that this theory cannot provide a basis for a balanced, fair and just society; rather it is, in reality, a nihilistic theory intend to destroy the whole social system in toto.

Also, Islam is a great proponent of providing powerful pillars to the very edifice of society and it does so through its divine book that the Holy Quran whose text and meanings, as is evident from the above quoted verses, are of intransient nature. So, it does not allow any philosophical and literary theory to make any effort to demolish the very foundations of this edifice of society. Theory of deconstruction being a nihilistic theory tends to demoralize any endeavour to aims at the smooth functioning of the relationship between individuals and society; so it cannot be supported so far at least its social impacts are concerned.

Limitation of the Study:

Research is a progressive process; it cannot be halted at any time. So, in the light of this reality, it is evident that this study of mine is not a complete or final effort but rather it is, to me, just a humble step in the long journey of research. However, this study – though it does not cover all the aspects of research problem –may prove to be a harbinger of new dawn by instigating the researchers to further search for other impacts of Derridean Deconstruction.

³⁵. Ibid., Verse 17.

³⁶. Ibid., Verse 18.

³⁷. Ibid., Verse 19.

³⁸. Al-Hijr, 15, Verse 9.