

Impact and Influence Of Literary Figures and Philosophers on Jacques Derrida: A Detailed And Critical Study

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- p-ISSN: 2663-3299
- e-ISSN: 2663-3841
- L-ISSN: 2663-3299

Abstract: In the paper, a detailed study has been undertaken on how Jacques Derrida has propounded his theory of deconstruction and how crème de la crème writers cum literary figures have impacted and influenced Jacques Derrida either partially or outright. Plenty of men of letters in the course of their intellectual, literary and philosophical detour are influenced by other illustrious writers, and Jacques Derrida is no exception to that. No doubt, Derrida was influenced by many great names of literature and philosophy, such as Plato, Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Roland Barthes, and Ferdinand De Saussure, Samuel Beckett, Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, Friedrich Nietzsche and James Joyce to name but a few. And some of them have an everlasting and galvanizing impression on Jacques Derrida in developing his theory of deconstruction.

Key Words: Literary Figures, Philosophers, Jacques, Critical Study, Derrida

Introduction

As it is putative that great personalities like writers, scientists, philosophers, critics and theologians are influenced first by some other personalities, then they leave their indelible influence over others. Algerian-born French abstruse theorist, Jacques Derrida, is considered to be a celebrated philosopher, an influential intellectual, a renowned literary writer and a critic of the twentieth century. Being a towering figure of the age of Post-modernism – he put forward his magnum opus, the "theory of deconstruction", --a theory considered to be one of the most important building blocks of

Postmodernism. Through this 'aggrandized theory' (David, 2004), Jacques Derrida makes an effort to problematize the basis of 'Reason', 'Reality', 'Truth', and 'Knowledge'. That is why his text upsets the whole line of ideas and notions leading to any philosophical lineage (Geoffrey, 2000). Derrida reads the history of philosophy in terms of classical philosophical dichotomies: intelligible/sensible, speech/writing, presence/absence, etc. and finds that these disagreements do not tranquilly coexist; one side of the dichotomies is given special status, whereas the other is belittled (Hugh, 1988). In a nutshell, Jacques Derrida's work

poses the greatest challenge to the trodden ways of thinking in epistemology and philosophy of science (Christopher, 2012). Deconstruction, a French word that he resuscitated but did not create, means a sharp method of analysis, a keen way of close reading, a kind of critical examination of the text of any type that questions the very assumption about the capacity of language to represent reality; it challenges the traditional thought about text and its conventional and customary interpretations. In particular, it assaults the binary oppositions (speech/writing, good/bad, inside/outside, superior/ inferior etc.) that have been part and parcel of Western philosophy and traditional Metaphysics since the time of ancient Greeks. This theory, as a matter of fact, endeavoured to diametrically transform the reader's angle of thought regarding "text" and its "meaning". That is why Leslie Hill has opined about Jacques Derrida – a leading figure in the literary movement of deconstruction – that deconstruction has been the most vibrating movement of this century.

Through his forceful and logical arguments, Jacques Derrida compels his readers to make a de novo inquiry into their long-established ways and notions regarding 'text and its meaning' whatsoever. It is owing to this fact that Leslie Hill has emphasized: That Jacques Derrida is perhaps the most difficult and complex Western philosopher. Ambiguity, inexactness and ellipticity are the hallmarks of his genre. On the other hand, he is also an indefatigable, untiring and determined reader intended to make progressive inquiries into the traditional philosophical concepts with unprecedented vigour and lofty fortitude. Owing to this vehement spirit of research and vigorous power of probing into the text, Gutting has said:

“Derrida has devoted himself to reading and commenting on the writings of others more than any important philosophers since

the middle ages” (Garry, 2001). The first half of the twentieth century witnessed two major schools of thought regarding literary theory and criticism, namely "Formalism" – a literary theory that emphasizes the significance of form and technique over content; it focuses on the intrinsic features of a piece of writing such as syntax, grammar, meter and other figures of speech--- and “Structuralism”--- a literary theory that value deep structure over surface phenomena (William, 2001). Thus, the former was interested in the form of the text while the latter had an interest in the structure. Whereas, Post-structuralism was a critical theory that was totally against Structuralism. Post-structuralism, in fact, diametrically denies any structure present in the text of any sort.

Discussion

Now we will discuss how and which philosophers impacted and influenced Jacques Derrida. We will also succinctly discuss the life history and works of those literary figures who influenced Derrida. At the very start, we will talk about ancient writers and philosophers.

Plato (427 BC—347 BC)

“*Plato is philosophy, and philosophy Plato*”, says Emerson.

Plato not only pioneers philosophy but also accounts for its progress and development beyond Platonism: a very Hegelian proposition (Gaston, 2007). According to Plato, the *Logos* (the Ideal Word) is written upon the soul; however, it is out of the reach of the five senses. *Logos* reside in the transcendental realm of Being, not the real world of becoming (Christopher, 2011). Plato, Socrates' best-known pupil, born in Athens, is a philosopher and an insightful writer of great genius and charm, whose match perhaps cannot be found in any epoch of the history of philosophy. His meeting with Socrates was a turning point in his life,

as has rightly been enunciated by Will Durant in his famous book "*The Story of Philosophy*" on page 12.

Plato was a staunch follower of Socrates; that is why he regarded his master as the wisest and the noblest of all men that ever lived in Greece. He wrote many dialogues covering various aspects of life, but questions of pure philosophy have been dealt with from the later part of book 5 to the end of book 7 of his magnum opus work "*The Republic*." Plato, the founder of the Academy— an educational institution envisioned to train philosopher kings as per principles set forth in his most influential text, *The Republic* – is considered to be the most influential philosopher of all the ages. That is why Bertrand Russell writes:

"Plato and Aristotle have been the most influential of all philosophers, ancient, medieval, or modern; and of the two, it was Plato who had the greater effect upon subsequent ages" (Russell, 1945).

His mouthpiece is Socrates, but he is not the one famous for his wisdom in Greek history of philosophy. So, his dialogues' complications have perplexed many western philosophers, including Derrida. In particular, Plato's "*Theory of Forms or Ideas*" – which is not traceable to his predecessors – has much impact on Western philosophers, including Jacques Derrida. This theory is partly logical and partly metaphysical. According to Plato, "*Forms*" are tangible and immutable, whereas the objects of this changeable world are subordinate to them; a copy of these *Forms*, in fact.

Plato's *Phaedrus* has especially attracted contemporary theorists because of its discussion of the evils of writing and lauding speech or spoken language. Writing cause the memory to atrophy says Plato. Of his famous *Thirteen Letters*, the *Seventh Letter* narrates the ills of writing, too. Plato's theory of writing has drawn much influence from Derrida. This prejudiced view of Plato against writing has raised much concern in the

philosophical minds, particularly of Derrida, who, as a result, has ruthlessly dealt with this notion of Plato about writing in his prominent philosophical works like "*Speech and Phenomena*".

The concept of "*Aporia*" is to be found in the dialogues, especially the early ones like "*Symposium*" and "*Meno*", of Plato, which had much influence upon the post-structuralist philosophers like Derrida. *Aporia* in philosophy means a kind of stalemate and impasse in a situation; it can represent a state of being perplexed, too. Socrates, the mouthpiece of Plato involved in discussion with his interlocutor in order to settle a concept and, by way of his famous "*elenctic testing*", tells his interlocutor that his answer is unsatisfactory, hence pushing him into a state called *Aporia*. This concept of *Aporia* proved to be of much value for Derrida, and he used it in his famous theory of deconstruction as "*postponement and deferral of meanings*" in a text that is the "*differance*."

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

J. Hillis Miller, a well-known American literary critic and a prominent figure of the famous *Yale School*, writes about Nietzsche that his thoughts about interpretations are akin to the modern deconstructive theorists, who have "*reinterpreted Nietzsche*" or have written, "*directly or indirectly under his auspices*."

Charles Upton writes that Nietzsche, with his "*death of God*", announced the end of metaphysics—the natural partner of theology/religion. (Upton, 2002). This is owing to the fact that Nietzsche considers philosophy is nihilistic (Critchely, 2001).

Though Postmodernism does not pay any heed to modernism, its related events and personalities are involved; however, Friedrich Nietzsche is the only philosopher who has been given great value by it owing to his cataclysmic and disastrous anti-religion

thoughts. This German philosopher was, in fact, the first powerful voice in the history of Western philosophy that categorically denied the existence of any religion, morality or God and put forward his notable idea of "nihilism", which utterly undermines the meaningfulness of life; hence, ruthlessly refuting any ethical or moral foundations associated with it. After the Second World War, Nietzsche was given more attention, and he became an object of study for phenomenologists and existentialists. Moreover, during the 1960s and 1970s, he became a cynosure for the critical theorists, post-structuralists and deconstructionists, including Jacques Derrida.

"As God was the fount of all values and the origin of all possible meanings, 'the death of God'--- idea propounded by Nietzsche--- leaves life valueless and annihilates any notion of ultimate meaning in life. ([Levin, 2001](#))

This destruction of meaning is also the ultimate aim of Derrida's theory of deconstruction. His stress upon the instability of the meaning of a word remembers the deep influence of Nietzsche upon him.

Will Durant, in his famous book "*The Story of Philosophy*", writes about this philosopher: "Nietzsche was the child of Darwin and the brother of Bismarck." Jason Powell, the author of "*Jacques Derrida: A Biography*", writes that Derrida's philosophical beginnings are rooted in Nietzsche and French Existentialism.

This is the very philosopher who proclaimed the death of God—a claim that wholly denied the very existence of any meta-narrative based in religion or any other field. Hence, in Western philosophical thought, this man has left indelible impressions upon the philosophers who succeeded him. Jacques Derrida was so much influenced by Nietzsche, too. In many essays, Nietzsche castigated the Western Philosophical traditions, and so did Derrida.

Jacques Derrida got recognition as a voracious reader and stern and unrelenting critic of the historical and philosophical texts, perhaps under the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose importance is primarily in ethics and secondarily as an acute historical critic, too. Another main influence of Nietzsche upon Derrida is found in his writing style—a style that is so ambiguous and equivocal that a reader finds it quite difficult to understand. The same is true in the case of Nietzsche, who is also fond of expressing himself paradoxically and with a view to shocking conventional readers. ([Russell, 1945](#)).

When Jacques Derrida calls women undecidable, he is, in fact, following the footsteps of Nietzsche, who, in his pseudo-prophetic book "*Thus Spake Zarathustra*", says that women are not, as yet, capable of friendship; they are still cats or birds, or at best cows.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Sigmund Freud was born in Austria in a Jewish family. He was a famous neurologist and is called the father of psychoanalysis--- a clinical method of treating abnormal behaviour and experiences by means of a dialogue between patient and psychoanalyst. He is famous for his terse, clear and straight style of writing (Strachey, 1990). Derrida was deeply influenced by Freud's concepts of "Overdetermination" and "Unconsciousness". The concept of "unconscious" has an important place in Freud's description of the 'mind'. And this concept of the unconscious is directly related to the theory of repression, which illustrates that repressed ideas do not vanish; they remain in mind. Though these repressed ideas are removed from 'Consciousness' but they remain operative and reappear in the 'Unconsciousness' under particular circumstances. "*Dream Psychology*", "*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*", and "*Interpretation of Dreams*" is his famous works that developed

the science of psychoanalysis in a positive way. Freud is of the view that the study of dreams may be taken as the most reliable source of knowing deep mental processes. Dreams, to him, are concealed realizations of repressed desires and need analysis for their understanding ([Freud, 1920](#)).

The unconscious is the second name of repressed desires. According to Freud, this 'Unconscious' is the true psychical reality ([Freud, 1920](#)). This can mean at least two things. First, unconsciousness is a sort of underlying 'presence' concealed from consciousness but able to be 'unveiled' by psychoanalysis. Secondly, the unconscious is effectively untranslatable (Lucy, 2004)

Derrida was much influenced by this notion of the untranslatability of the unconscious; that is why, in this second sense, an unconscious is a form of what Jacques Derrida calls "*différance*"--- a non-originary origin. The unconscious is not merely a dark pool of 'repressions'; it is operated by repressions, too. Derrida is of the view that the revolutionary 'otherness' of the unconscious cannot be comprehended as a series of "*modified presents*" as if the unconscious were a reservoir of previously conscious experience. Thus, to Derrida, the unconscious acts as a text; its make-up and its functions are textual (Lucy, 2004)

For Freud, 'meanings' are always "overdetermined"; they are never the product of a solitary cause. And Derrida regards this 'Overdetermination' as 'Undecidability', 'Supplementarity' or *trace-like play* of differential meanings. That is why Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan maintain:

"This is where Derrida's deepest indebtedness to Freud is revealed" (Smith, 1984)

Ferdinand De Saussure (1857--1913)

Born in 1857 in Geneva, Switzerland, Ferdinand De Saussure—the father of modern linguistics--- remarkably presented

his ideas regarding structure and language, hence, rendering unprecedented services in the realm of twentieth-century linguistic sciences. After accomplishing his PhD from Leipzig University, he chose to teach as a profession and excelled in this field a lot. He was very famous among his pupils and was enormously influential as a teacher. He taught at the School of Advanced Studies in Paris from 1881 to 1891 and gained much popularity during his stay at this famous institution in France.

According to Ferdinand De Saussure, the meaning in a language is just a matter of difference. "Dog" is a dog because it is not a "cat" or "cap" (Eagleton, 1983). Both "signifier and signified" are entangled in a play of distinguished attributes where differences in sound and sense are the solitary markers of meaning ([Norris, 2002](#)). This idea of arbitrariness--- there is no one-to-one linkage between signifier and signified – of meaning impressed Derrida much, and it took the shape of "*Différance*" in his theory of deconstruction.

Ferdinand De Saussure gave birth to Structuralism by means of a book he never wrote. "*The Course in General Linguistics*", based on student notes, was compiled by his junior colleagues – Charles Balley and Albert Sechehaye – in 1916 after Saussure's death. Language, for Saussure, is a structured system of conventional signs – blends of signifiers and signifieds, a word and a notion associated with it – studied in their internal complexity as if frozen in time (synchronically) rather than as changing over time (diachronically).

"The particular relationship between a word and concept is arbitrary. A sign, as a matter of fact, has no significance in segregation from other signs in the same language. On the other hand, a sign has significance due to its position in a system of differences. This type of procedure of differences is extended in a straight chain of signifiers comprising a signifying chain

(Silverman, 1993).

Ferdinand de Saussure says that the “*sign*” does not entail significance for designating a particular feature of the material world but in working as an indispensable part of a system. Thus the importance of “*sign*” is wholly arbitrary. This implies that there is only a traditional or conventional bond between the “*signifier*” and the “*signified*”. That is, the meaning rests completely on social convention and acceptance, and it has no natural fitness in and of itself (Jameson, 1972). Besides, the *signified* is not considered to be a real object; rather, it is, according to Saussure, a “*sign’s place*” in a web of differences that comprises the language in general. Thus, a sign works in relation to other signs so that the meaning of a word, for instance, “eagle”, is formed by both its relation to and difference from a number of possible replacements such as “hawk”, “falcon”, “erne”, “raptor”, “aquiline”, and “bird of prey.” Hence, Saussure’s theory of sign narrates that the meaning is an interaction of “*presence*” and “*absence*”. This model of Saussure influenced Derrida a lot. That is why; Derrida asserts that the traditional dichotomies of oppositions are not superior or inferior to each other; rather, they reinforce each other; they are independent of one another and meaning is generated by their difference. This is how; Derrida deconstructs the traditional binary oppositions.

Umberto Eco, an Italian literary critic, novelist and philosopher, is of the view that Saussure’s emphasis on the fact that the signifier has an arbitrary nature became the point of departure for the latest claims, advanced with remarkable and exceptional prowess by Jacques Derrida in particular, regarding the fickleness and instability of all meaning in writing (Umberto, 1992). As a matter of fact, the theory of language as put forward by Saussure left indelible imprints upon philosophers and literary critics, including Derrida; it absolutely transformed

intellectual history. Saussure is of the view that language does not come to light accumulatively from concepts or things but rather generates ideas or things from a pattern of differences. Derrida took this notion of difference from Saussure and adjoined to it the feature of temporality that Saussure’s synchronic structure did not permit and coined a new term “*différance*”—a noun which refers to a temporal procedure of “*postponing and deferring*”. *Différance* is a central concept in the theory of deconstruction as put forward by Jacques Derrida.

A text always contains some ‘*aporias*’ that are logical contradictions of what Derrida calls ‘*blind spots*’ of any metaphysical argument. The famous ‘*speech-writing dichotomy*’ contains an *aporia*: on the one hand, speech has been placed before writing just to avoid that *Aporia*, while on the other, the *Aporia* can be manifested as an essential part in the composition of the speech-writing dichotomy. Derridean deconstruction says that it is writing which comes first in this binary opposition, in fact. Thus, the *Aporia* -- or the *aporetic moment*--- takes the form of something which cannot be described within the standard rules of logic: writing can be comprehended as coming after speech only because, in reality, it comes before speech. In the simplest way, it can be said that “*différance*” always comes before difference (Lucy, 2004). ‘*Différance*’ is a French term that highlights an arbitrary state of language in which signifiers countless refer to each other. Derrida also criticized Saussure for according a superior status to spoken language as compared to writing.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)

Edmund Husserl has been termed a towering figure among twentieth-century philosophers. He is famous in philosophical circles for his principal works on Phenomenology – the philosophical study of

the structures of experience and consciousness. That is why; he is rightly known as the "Father of Phenomenology". According to encyclopedia Britannica, phenomenology is a philosophical movement of the twentieth century whose prime aim is the direct investigation and illustration of the phenomenon as consciously experienced and as free as possible from untested obsessions and assumptions. Most of the biographers of Derrida are of the view that his philosophical training goes about with Edmund Husserl.

Jacques Derrida began studying Husserl in 1949, and his commitment to him increased as his formal education continued ([Powell, 2007](#)). He wrote his first comprehensive essay on Edmund Husserl viz. "The Problems of Genesis in the Philosophy of Husserl."

Through this essay, the idea of genesis in the phenomenological sense underlies permanence and impermanence, history and philosophy, temporality and atemporality, resulting in a tensivity that Derrida considers eventually unresolvable yet pivotal to the practice of phenomenology. Though Husserl was not his first love in Philosophy, he left an eternal influence on Derrida's work as a "discipline of incomparable rigour ([Powell, 2007](#)).

The study of Husserl also resulted in his famed research work, "Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction"—Derrida's first book-length publication—and "Genesis and Structure, Form and Meaning." Jacques Derrida was a Husserl scholar in the true sense of the word because he read Husserl like a true follower. However, Derrida being a young scholar, always maintained his own distinguished position during his study as well while being influenced by Husserl. Moreover, Derrida not only read Husserl minutely but also won a triumph over him, as has been narrated by Jason Powell in the following words:

"It is true that Derrida was always to be

interested in the history of concepts, and the use of concepts in the various sciences, but to master Husserl (who is a very difficult thinker) and to overcome and then to discard him, having won a victory over him, was perhaps a great motivation for the young Derrida ([Powell, 2007](#)).

Husserl also influenced Derrida's thinking behaviour as has been rightly elaborated by Leslie Hill in the famous book "The Cambridge Introduction to Derrida" in the following words:

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Martin Heidegger, a celebrated pupil of Husserl, famous for his great contributions to phenomenology, hermeneutics and existentialism, has an immense influence upon Jacques Derrida. "The acknowledgement that meaning is historical was what led Martin Heidegger to break with Husserl's system of thought. Husserl commences with the transcendental subject; Heidegger repudiates this point of departure and embarks on instead from contemplation on the irreducible 'givenness' of human existence, or "Dasein", as he calls it. This is because of this that his work is often regarded as 'existentialist' against the relentless 'essentialism' of his teacher. To move from Husserl to Heidegger is to move from pure intellect to a philosophy which meditates on what it feels like to be alive ([Eagleton, 1996](#)). Famous American philosopher Richard Rorty while comparing the writing style and critical thinking of Heidegger and other Western philosophers like T.H. Green, Samuel Wheeler, Donald Davidson, and Wittgenstein, calls Heidegger's genre a catastrophic and cataclysmic one. "So their polemics are deficient of the apocalyptic character, which is an established feature of late Heidegger and early Derrida (Rorty, 1991).

He delivered lectures on Aristotle, Saint Paul, and Saint Augustine, which

strengthened his position in the intellectual quarters. Owing to his dazzling brilliance and deep insight, Heidegger was called the "hidden king" of philosophy. His "*Being and Time*" has intense and far-reaching impacts upon theologians, sociologists, and as well as philosophers, including Derrida.

However, Heidegger is also considered to be one of the obscure philosophers as Bertrand Russell, in his "*Wisdom of the West*", has said:

Derrida confesses that deconstruction is a tradition inherited by way of Heidegger. The term "deconstruction" is a term coined to translate Heidegger's use of the words "destruktion"—literally "destruction"—and "Abbau"—more literally "de-building". So, it becomes evident from this that Derrida's theory of deconstruction is obliged to Heidegger so far as, at least, its name is concerned. Derrida's "*Psyche*" includes at least four major essays on Heidegger ([Powell, 2007](#)).

Derrida's reading of Heidegger reveals the metaphysical substrate of things, called 'difference' and not called 'Being'—a philosophical term from Heidegger's magnum opus "*Being and Time*".

Like Heidegger, Derrida wants to reinvent the language in which philosophy is done. However, Derrida also criticized Heidegger for considering the language as a speech, not writing. This tendency to privilege speech over writing is what Derrida calls "*Phonocentrism*" or "*Logocentrism*."

It is to be noted that Heidegger's philosophy is sometimes called "*hermeneutical phenomenology*" to distinguish it from the "*transcendental phenomenology*" of Husserl; it is called this for it relates itself to the queries of historical interpretation rather than transcendental consciousness ([Eagleton, 1996](#)). To Heidegger the meanings of a text are historical. This stance leads to the door of utter relativism. In this argument, a literary work may have one

meaning on Monday and another on Friday. This concept of Heidegger regarding the meaning of a text influenced Derrida much, and he put forward his theory of deconstruction by taking into account this notion of his predecessor Heidegger.

In "*Being and Time*", Heidegger reiterates in order to get solidity with the question of Being, we need to go through the process of pulverizing ontological tradition. Here, ontological tradition suggests a discourse of metaphysics (Heidegger, 1962). This question, in fact, locates Heideggerian; thought within the discourse of Postmodernism. And this destruction of ontological tradition finds its powerful manifestation in Derridean deconstruction. Perhaps Derrida was much influenced by this Heideggerian thinking ([Levin, 1988](#)).

Lastly, "all acknowledge that Heidegger has had a tremendous influence on philosophy, particularly in Europe, as exemplified powerfully in the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre, the phenomenological hermeneutics of Hans Georg Gadamer, and the deconstructive philosophy of Jacques Derrida ([Cain, 2001](#)).

Influences by Derrida

Thinkers and philosophers who were influenced much by Jacques Derrida form a long series. In this series, all types of intellectuals and prodigies like his peers, students, allies, and literary theorists are included. Paul De Man, Jean Francois Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Luc Nancy, Sarah Kofman, Joseph Cohen, Geoffery Bennington, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Samuel Weber, Geoffery Hartman, Judith Butler and Catherine Malabou, J. Hillis Miller and John D. Caputo are some of those academics who were greatly influenced by the philosophical theory of deconstruction of Derrida in one form or the other.

Let us have a Glance at Some of them

Paul De Man (1919-1983)

One of the most significant critics of the “Yale School”—famous for deconstructive literary criticism in the United States of America---, Belgian-born Paul De Man played a key role in revitalizing American Literary criticism by espousing deconstruction. He emerged as a literary critic and philosophical thinker of international standing; he is a key figure in the history of critical thought (McQuillian, 2001). Paul De Man praises Derrida because his concept of reading comes out from certain encounters with individual texts rather than a generalization regarding the reading process from a wide-ranging and extensive experience of reading (McQuillian, 2001).

The most eminent friendship of Jacques Derrida commenced in the mid-1960 during his intellectual detour with Paul De Man; this closeness commenced with their encounter at John Hopkin University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA, and continued till Paul De Man's demise in 1983. At the time of his death, he was considered to be one of the most prominent literary critics in the USA. Complementing Derrida's broader philosophical project, Paul De Man promulgated deconstruction in literary criticism.

Shortly after the death of Paul De Man, Derrida wrote the book “*Memoires: Pour Paul De Man*” which highlights the deep friendship and proximity that Derrida had with Paul De Man. “*Blindness and Insight*”, “*Allegories of Reading*”, “*The Resistance to Theory*”, and “*Critical Writings and Deconstruction*” are included in some of his most renowned works that are much influenced by Derrida.

Jean -Luc Nancy (1940)

Jean-Luc Nancy is among some of the famous pupils of Jacques Derrida in France, and subsequently, he himself became a well-

known writer and philosopher in the history of Western Philosophy because of the fact that his writing and the associated method of thinking were sui generis (Miller, 2009). The author of more than twenty books and hundreds of other research articles, Nancy was much impressed by Derrida in particular. “*Being Singular and Plural*”, “*The Sense of the World*”, “*The Birth of Presence*”, and “*The Disavowed Community*” are some of Nancy's famous books which manifest the indelible influence of Derrida upon him in one form or the other.

Derrida also wrote a long book on Nancy, namely “*On Touching-- Jean-Luc Nancy*”, which manifests his close rapport and unprecedented affinity with Nancy. Derrida used to say Nancy's work was “immense” and “great”; however, this love of Derrida did not sustain for a longer period of time and owing to certain circumstances, Derrida parted ways with Nancy. Hence, Derrida took back with the left hand what he had given with the right (Miller, 2009). And to show his resentment, Derrida, in a prosopopoeia – a device of speech or rhetoric in which an absent, imagined or deceased man is projected as speaking – wrote a devastating paragraph addressed directly to Nancy himself (Miller, 2009).

John D. Caputo (1940)

John D. Caputo is an American theorist and philosopher whose works are well-known for his serious insights into hermeneutics, theology and deconstruction. “*Radical Hermeneutics*”, “*On Religion*”, and “*Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Derrida*” are famous texts in which his ideas regarding religion, hermeneutics and deconstruction are diligently and efficiently narrated.

The person who accepted the influence of Jacques Derrida, the most John D. Caputo, is one of them. He is considered a significant figure in the history of Western Philosophy and is among the most distinguished and

celebrated contemporary highbrows of continental philosophy. Hermeneutics, theology, phenomenology, and deconstruction are the most rudimentary areas of investigation of much of his work.

The development of 'deconstructive hermeneutics' by John D. Caputo that is also known as 'radical hermeneutics', is proof of the immense influence of Jacques Derrida. His recent work has been to refute the charges of relativism against the theory of deconstruction that proves him to be a true disciple of Derrida.

He is one of the most eminent personalities associated with post-modern Christianity and is the founder of the theological movement known as "Weak Theology". He is of the view that the deconstruction theory of Jacques Derrida sprang from a positive and affirmative religious passion; so, to him, Derrida is a religious thinker in his own right.

On the religious front, too, John D. Caputo was much impressed by Derrida's conception of religion, which regards religion and religious rites, and rituals as an impossibility; however, he has his own particular way of thinking in this regard.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an Indian scholar and feminist critic, is famous in the literary and philosophical circles for her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" and translation of Jacques Derrida's notable text "De La Grammatology". She completed her PhD in English literature at Cornell University, where Paul De Man was one of her mentors.

She is also hailed as a critical theorist who has feminized and globalized the theory of deconstruction under the influence of Jacques Derrida.

Edward Said wrote of Spivak's work

"She pioneered the study in literary theory of non-Western women and produced one of

the earliest and most coherent accounts of that role available to us."

Judith Butler (1956)

Judith Butler, in full Judith Pamela Butler, was born in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. She is among those philosophers who are greatly influenced by Derrida--- the principal proponent of the theory of deconstruction. She completed her PhD in Philosophy from Yale University, USA.

Her notable books are "Excitable Speech: A Politics of Performative", "Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex", "And Undoing Gender", which clearly show the signs of the influence of the theory of deconstruction of Derrida, but the most influential theoretical text of Judith Butler is considered to be her book "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity". This text of Judith Butler is considered to be a founding document of *queer theory*--- a theory that is based on concepts from various studies related to gender, feminism, gayism and lesbianism. Queer theorists believe in the infirmness and instability of all gender-based identities (Cain, 2009). Judith Butler's work, against the standpoint of *essentialists* who assume that identities are distinct, definite and fixed, traces those ways and means through which identity is established within language and theory.

She deconstructs the idea of an opposition between "man" and "woman" and also challenges the claim that feminist politics requires a distinct identity; she is of the view that identity is the product or result of action rather than the source of it.

Her aim in her writings is to unmask the assumptions that hinder the meaning of gender to traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. She being a true disciple of Derrida, strictly believes in deconstructing the very ideas and notions regarding gender inequalities, in particular.

Judith Butler thinks that deconstruction is necessary as it leads to real construction.

For her, destruction is so invariably restoration--- that is, the destruction of a set of categories which makes artificial rifts into an otherwise consolidated ontology (Butler, 1999).

Conclusion

This was a brief account of the philosophers and literary theorists whose works have been greatly influenced by Jacques Derrida. The

works and influence of Jacques Derrida were so extensively unleashed that their impact is still not diminished. Rather, his theory of deconstruction is finding new horizons of meanings and new explanations. His theory has also met with a severe onslaught of literary critics. Certain ancient literary figures influenced Derrida, and certain modern literary figures were influenced by Derrida.

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