

# *Deconstruction of Christianity in the Postmodern Age: What Remains after That?*

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## Abstract

*This article provides an insight into the project of deconstruction of Christianity by applying the interpretation of Derrida's deconstruction in the language of Christian theology. The focus of this paper is on Caputo's work, which is known as the leading interpreter of Derrida's deconstruction. It is explored that how Caputo's project of deconstruction redefines Christianity and what remains of Christianity after that. This study analyses that the project of Deconstruction of Christianity by Caputo was based on the question that how to talk about God or how to be a Christian in the postmodern age. His response to these basic questions leads to a non-particular and non-theologized form of Christianity, which is not different from other (religions/worldviews), because Christianity which remains after the deconstruction, simply withdraws itself from the exclusivist ways/teachings, and the Bible is not an exception to that. Deconstructed Christianity is a religion, where God is distant, His truth is invasive, and Christian faith is non-particular.*

**Keywords:** Caputo, deconstruction, postmodern Christianity, religion

## **Introduction:**

In the contemporary era, postmodernism has an immense effect on all walks of life including religious studies. Because of globalization and the age of information, postmodern thought did not just affect the West, but also other parts of the world. Therefore, it is now a serious topic not only in scientific circles, but also in a variety of political, social, educational, and other fields. Alongside, the word “postmodern” is one of the most ambiguous and exciting terminologies which remains debatable among scholars when it comes to defining the term. According to Hans Bertens, “Postmodernism is an exasperating term.”<sup>1</sup> It is mainly because of Derrida’s argument in *Différance*<sup>2</sup> the basic argument of Derrida goes to show that no one can separate irreplaceable singularity and machine-like repeatability into two substances that stand outside of one another. Likewise, words and signs can never fully summon forth what they mean, but can only be understood through appeal to the additional words, from which they differ. Thus, the meaning is forever “deferred” or postponed through an endless chain of signifiers. In other words, we can say that there is no pure substance with attributes. Every substance has something of the other substance. Nothing is precisely the same or the opposite of the other.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, to understand one thing (or the word Postmodernism) we do not have to define it, but we must understand it concerning others.

Despite Derrida’s argument that words cannot define something/phenomenon, we humans are bound to interact with words in conversation, communication, writing, etc. There is no way to communicate without words. We use one word instead of another and make one choice based on the differences and similarities between the two words. Similarities and differences collectively shape the meaning of a word as a whole. Even if we cannot define a phenomenon through words, we have to tell what that phenomenon is and what it is not. What is Postmodernism? And what is it not? There is a plurality of thought in a huge variety of different ways in defining the postmodern: as a new aesthetic formation by Hassan, a condition by Lyotard, a culture by Connor, a set of artistic movements employing a parodic mode of self-conscious representation by Hutcheon, an ethical or political imperative by Bauman, a period in which we have reached the “end of history” by Baudrillard and Fukuyama, a “new horizon of our cultural, philosophical and political experience” by Laclau, an “illusion” by Eagleton, or even just a rather unfortunate mistake.<sup>4</sup>

One of the most well-known postmodernist concerns is “deconstruction”, a theory employed in philosophy, literary criticism, and textual analysis based on work begun in the 1960s by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, that calls into question the fundamental conceptual

distinctions, or “oppositions”, in Western philosophy through a close examination of the language and logic of philosophical and literary texts. Among others, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and Barbara Johnson first applied this term to work in the 1970s. Deconstruction was sometimes used derogatorily to suggest nihilism and frivolous skepticism in polemical discussions about late-twentieth-century intellectual trends. However, the term has finally come to mean a critical dismantling of tradition and traditional modes of thought in popular usage. It deconstructs or eliminates the ingredients necessary for a worldview, such as God, self, purpose, meaning a real world, and truth as correspondence, to demolish the modern worldview. Deconstruction did not confine to the literary world only but also penetrated in religious, theological, and philosophical circles. *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology* by Mark C. Taylor for example, pronounces the absence of a center, as well as the disappearance of an exceeded God or of an erased man, and uses these as the foundation of a systematic “Deconstructive A/theology”. Don Cupitt has also interpreted Derrida and deconstruction as a theology urging to abandon all referential claims. Others, on the other hand, have been more cautious, recognizing those aspects of deconstruction that are more positive. Kevin Hart and Graham Ward, for example, have welcomed Derrida's reminder that all discourse, including theology, is written in the sense of belonging to a material system of signifiers, and thus all presentation, including revelation, necessitates re-presentation, the attempt to communicate what is felt to be present.

John D. Caputo (1940) is one of the leading interpreters of Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction into the language of Christian theology. The goal of this article is to know that why and how the project of deconstructing Christianity was taken place and what remains of Christianity after it gets deconstructed, by applying the works of Caputo. He is an American religious philosopher known for his research in hermeneutics, Continental Religious Philosophy, and Radical Theology. He is inspired by late twentieth-century French philosophical tradition. He has rethought the very meaning of theology itself, moving it from speaking of God to speaking to God and to what God calls us to do. This article mainly focuses on Caputo's interpretation of Deconstruction into the language of Christian theology.

### **Literature Review:**

Recent years have witnessed a change of tone within the continental theory of religion, which is still an evolving field. This tone is mainly critical and deconstructive towards the traditional forms of understanding the phenomenon of religiosity. Mark C. Taylor's assertion was representative of this primarily critical tone from *Erring* (1984) that “the deconstruction is hermeneutic of God's death”.<sup>5</sup> Taylor set out a distinctly postmodern theology

and marked postmodern religious thought as inherently a / theological, and implicitly antagonistic to conventional religion for many. Taylor's writings are known as one of the earliest interpretations of Derrida's deconstruction.

John Caputo provides an alternative understanding of the contemporary postmodern situation as compared to Taylor's postmodern a/theology by reading of the religious passion of Derridian deconstruction. Beginning with *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* (1997), Caputo has been engaged in a concerted attempt to deconstruct the deconstructive a / theology of Taylor. As Caputo writes about his problem with a/theology:

*"The problem with Erring is that it is insufficiently aporetic, that it allows itself to be led straight down the path (poreia) inerrant, I would say, of the death of God... That version of deconstruction is undone by deconstruction itself, which refuses such closure, such exclusions, and clean sweeps".<sup>6</sup>*

The difference between Caputo and Taylor is a technical point, as described by Caputo himself. In Caputo's understanding, Taylor is not interpreting Derrida's deconstruction aptly, because Derrida speaks against choosing between the old way of seeking centers, foundations, origins, and ends; Derrida himself says there is no need, today, to choose between the two but rather to attempt to think about their common grounds. The problem with Taylor's *Erring* is that this chooses one way out of two or many, instead of going for common grounds or no grounds and comes up with a/theology. That is why Caputo says, "Erring is not the final word about the relation of Derrida and religion".<sup>7</sup>

Along with Taylor, Caputo was one of the earlier to notice not only that Derrida was reflecting on a particular religion in a positive sense, but also that deconstruction was religious in some way. From 1990, Caputo carefully unpacked many of Derrida's texts and themes including "*Circumfession*," "*Faith and Knowledge*," *Aporias*, *The Gift of Death*, and *Archive Fever*. In his analysis of these themes in "*Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*," Caputo goes to great lengths to highlight and separate the themes that make the provocative claim that in Derrida's thinking one can determine a religion without religion, a desire for the wholly other that avoids the dangerous associations with religious dogma.

Despite the increasing mass of publications by academics on the deconstruction of Christianity, there is still much uncertainty about its feasibility, conclusions, aims, and what remains of the traditional form of Christianity after its deconstruction. This paper is devoted to redefining Christianity by explaining that how Christianity is deconstructed and what remains after that.

**Basic Research Questions:**

- How John D. Caputo interprets Christianity in the light of post-modern deconstructionist philosophy?
- What remains of Christianity after its deconstruction by Caputo?

**Theoretical framework and Research Methodology:**

Derrida established deconstruction in the late 1960s, proposing that all texts were unclear. To elaborate his idea, he published three books in 1967, which are "*Writing and Difference*", "*Of Grammatology*", and "*Speech and Phenomena*" where he suggested that deconstruction is an approach to understand the relationship between text and its meaning. For Derrida deconstruction occurs through three basic thought processes.

- 1) attack on logocentrism
- 2) the truth does not exist independently of its institution, but only through its functioning within a grouping
- 3) truth exists within a system of *differences*.

The first one is an attack on *logocentrism* or "metaphysics of presence" which conceives meaning only in terms of presence. This applies to the Western tradition of science and philosophy where words and language are considered the fundamental representation of an external reality. This tradition holds the belief that speech is a privileged, ideal, and self-preserving identity through which all discourse and meanings are derived. Derrida criticizes the western thought of binary opposition in which one term is privileged over the other, e.g. rationality over irrationality, male over female, speech over writing, presence over absence, cognitive over emotive, truth over error, etc. He argued that there is no perfect opposition but every word or substance has something of other. One signifier does not lead to a totalized concrete meaning, but to another meaning, which in turn leads to another meaning, and so on, in an infinite chain of meaning. Therefore, there is no logocentrism, no single representation of reality but uncertainty. In short, uncertainty means something that has more than one meaning to it.

The other tenant of deconstruction is that truth or origin does not exist independently of its institution but is functioning within a group. We cannot define meaning except with other terms, and they call on other terms in turn, and so forth. This idea is best incorporated in Derrida's famous quote, "*there is nothing outside the text*".<sup>8</sup> For Derrida, the origin does not exist independent of its organization, but only through its functioning within a classification and therefore within a system of differences.<sup>9</sup> One word is only meaningful to its similarities and differences with other words. Truth is contextual, if we take one thing outside of its context; it means different which means that one cannot even inquire outside of a particular text about the meaning or reality of

discourse. Derrida's goal was to demonstrate that texts, structures, customs, cultures, beliefs, and practices have no definable meanings, and will always go beyond the boundaries they currently occupy. He took it as a self-evident proposition that language is a closed, centerless network of signs, and thought, interpretation or social actions cannot provide the basis for language.

The third tenant of deconstruction is "*différance*". Derrida coined the term *différance*, meaning both a difference and an act of deferring. Since every word depends on the meanings of other words for its meaning, it suggests that the meaning of a word is never fully "real" to us. Derrida expresses this idea by saying that meaning is created by the "play" of differences between words—a play that is "limitless," "infinite," and "indefinite".

Derrida's deconstruction philosophy did not confine to the literary circle but penetrated religious studies as well. This paper studies the application of deconstruction on religion, particularly Christianity. It is a qualitative study where the data is collected from books and journals to analyze the notion of Deconstruction, religion, and particularly Christianity in the light of postmodern deconstructionist philosophy.

### **Philosophical fundamentals of a deconstructed/postmodern view of religion:**

The fundamentals of postmodernism are the denial of objective truth that is independent of human minds and the belief in realities as inter-mind and social constructs. According to postmodernists, all beings have a built and constantly shifting identity, leaving them with no stable identity. According to postmodern Deconstructive epistemology, our knowledge plays a constitutive part in our culture. Knowing or perceiving, which includes desiring and behaving, plays an important part in forming the world that we experience. Absolute schemas are mistrusted, whether binary oppositions such as subject/object, mind/body, sense/reason, or human/natural worlds or presumptions of the essence of being, human nature, history, religion, or a text. Because such rigid and absolute schemes of categorization miss the richness, complexity, interrelatedness, and contextuality of life, especially in its temporal and changing character. According to postmodern deconstructive epistemology, human knowledge is always mediated, constructed, and contextual. Persons are interconnected with one another and with the world. Persons are not independent of one another and the environment. Facts may be created but not discovered. As a result, metaphysical causality, necessity, and totality are replaced in postmodern philosophical ideas by luck, incident, and fortune.<sup>10</sup>

Pluralism is the denial of pre-experimental, definite, and eternal truths. Pluralism is thus regarded as one of the most important postmodern philosophical fundamentals in a variety of fields, including ontology.

Postmodernism, rather than any other school opposes “totality” and related topics and believes them to be completely nonexistent, even in the human mind. As a result, they deny any notion of totality or fundamental values. Because of its post-constructivist roots, postmodernism opposes any constant and single reality, as well as any parallelism or similarity.<sup>11</sup>

Humans are at the core of all realities, intelligence, and beliefs, according to postmodernism, which denies any belief in the paranormal or metaphysical reality. Any talk of God's singular and everlasting presence, or the existence of other singular or constant beings, is completely rejected at this school. All that occurs in this world is a physical activity of locally and socially formed realities. As a result, postmodernists vehemently oppose religious beliefs in divine religions, and all of their proposals are not founded on religious foundationalism (structure of justified beliefs). Postmodernists do not address materialism explicitly; rather, they discuss morality and religiousness. Their goals, on the other hand, are natural religion and theology, which are created and shaped by human cultures and their desires. They have no beliefs outside of the ordinary universe, and there is no evidence of metaphysical or material dualism.<sup>12</sup>

Although postmodernism opposes analytical philosophy because it favors empiricism and objectivism, it places the greatest emphasis on “language” in educational and theoretical discussions. Language is so central to postmodernists that it occupies the same place as reason in modernism. Language shapes and expresses human thought and mentality, as well as educational and moral values. That is why postmodernists shift from objectivism to a mutual mentality. In this context, language is more than just a means of communication; it is practically everything. We discover our mindset through language, we dream through language, and we define and express our beliefs through language. As a result, human interactions are fully mingled with words. Postmodernists, influenced by Wittgenstein's language games, argue that “meaning” is not based on words, rather on the kind of connection we create between words and the kind of context we create. As a result, a word may have different and even opposing meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Speech is not fully synonymous with language; rather, different speeches may be produced in a language, allowing vocabularies to be mixed in different ways and different relationships to be formed.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the picture of postmodernity can be described, as a person can never be offloaded from the background of language, community, culture, practice, history, etc. This conflicts with the governing presumption of modernity that individuals will leave behind all physical limitations, perceptual equipment, timeliness, language, and culture to achieve a

completely privileged place where one can see all with absolute transparency and objectivity. Epistemologically, neither mind/subject, nor body/object is an absolute or privileged point of departure. There is no direct or immediate awareness of a subject, or an object in itself. In addition, there is no pure or absolute subject in which, one is represented to abstract from within the universe and culture. Likewise, there is no foundation and certain bases for knowledge in postmodernism. Postmodernism can be seen as an anti-foundationalism movement. According to Stanley Fish, Anti-foundationalism argues that problems of fact, truth, correctness, validity, and clarity cannot be asked or addressed in terms of any extra contextual, ahistorical, non-situational reality, rule, or value rather, anti-foundationalism claims that all of these topics are understandable and contested only within the confines of those settings, circumstances, paradigms, or communities in which they are discussed.<sup>14</sup>

### **Deconstruction of Christianity:**

The leading question for the project of Deconstructing Christianity is that how to speak or write about religion's objects and how to reach the broader public, in the postmodern age. If the world does not want to listen, how can we talk of the Divine in reflective ways? The question of the essence of religion and God-talk is answered by deconstructionist interpreters in a post- or anti-metaphysical way. Deconstruction of Christianity emerged in Western thought alongside the deconstruction of metaphysics. The main problem of deconstructionist interpreters with metaphysics is that Metaphysics is not faithful to the human life in this world, to the degree that it is an abstract system that privileges static unity to provide a stable and secure foundation for life. Faithfulness to life means humanity's continuous search for knowledge, while according to Caputo, metaphysics foretells knowledge that is against the very purpose of life in this world. Metaphysics aims to raise one above ("meta") the flux ("physics") of actuality, providing one with a fast way out of the flux's back door.<sup>15</sup> Such metaphysics elevates the knowledge of reality to a kind of absolute knowledge, privileged access to the real. This philosophical self-elevation is seen by Caputo as a basic tendency in philosophy. Metaphysics is a presence metaphysics, bent on providing "elegant promises about being and presence, even as physics and kinesis tossed about factual existence".<sup>16</sup> Caputo's approach is to overcome metaphysics by radical hermeneutics.

To establish such a structure through his "radical hermeneutics", Caputo follows Derrida's deconstruction, which aims to update the "strong theological" conceptions of God that are most used by humanity to legitimize a will-to-power of their own. These strong theologies are often onto-theological at their heart, according to Caputo, and bear the responsibility for

the violence done to God (as a concept) and done in the name of God (as a fact, as seen too often in religion). In response, Caputo champions the “weakness” of God, where the presence of God can be felt like a weak Messianic power that updates and exposes the cleavage between the name of God as a humanly employed force and the event of God, the event that shatters our rationale and logical constructs kept within the name and used for our purposes.<sup>17</sup> The weak theology of Caputo explicitly discusses how mankind puts “God” to work to make the whole world understandable to itself and thereby utilized for its purposes. It can be said that Caputo’s approach is diagnostic, in the sense that it diagnoses the illness of the metaphysical concept of God and cures it by deconstructing it through radical hermeneutics.

For Caputo, Metaphysics claims privileged access to the capitalized Secret to a capitalized “knowledge” of the fundamentals of existence, or ourselves, or whatever.<sup>18</sup> Deconstruction identifies such metaphysics as an ‘essentialism’ as it crosses the limits of giving mortal understanding.<sup>19</sup> For Caputo, this pretentious argument is unjustified and essentially deceptive in our severely limited human situation and it is a kind of code word. “The secret, rejoins Caputo, is that there is no secret, no capitalized know-it-all theory of breakthrough or revelation that sets out things the way they are”.<sup>20</sup> Metaphysics offers an entirely stable basis for existence by providing such a complete awareness of reality. Deconstruction charges that regardless of this, metaphysics effectively clarifies the uncertainty of life, allaying our worries with “assurances of the same”.<sup>21</sup>

There are two motivational issues behind the rejection of metaphysics and the search for an alternative. Firstly, deconstruction wants a way of thinking that avoids bringing awareness of truth to a falsely absolute status, finding a properly modest way of thinking that is acceptable to where we currently find ourselves. Secondly, it wants to be true to life and to enjoin an active engagement in life, in the meanwhile avoiding any such way of thinking that ultimately supplants the living of life (amid the flux of actuality) with the knowledge of reality (so falsely elevated). In deconstructive interpretation, on both scores, metaphysics fails. Against metaphysics like this, Caputo’s Radical hermeneutics is viewed as an alternate way of thinking about life and our role in it. As far as it is a way of thought that is concerned (interested, in the middle) in life in its particularity and distinction towards the end of leading one towards the difficulty of one’s nature, radical hermeneutics is faithful to life.

Caputo’s deconstructive thought has a problem with the metaphysical, sovereign, omnipotent, strong, and powerful concept of God because wicked things have been done by humanity in the name of the metaphysical concept

of God. What is wrong with the sovereign God is that the humans used the power given by sovereign God, wrongfully in His name. The problem with Caputo's argument is that, when you have the problem of people who do not legitimately have an authority usurping it for themselves and doing wicked things with that authority that they would not do without that authority, the solution is to attack the usurpation, not to attack the legitimate authority that has been usurped. Caputo wants us to leave a sovereign God, and he speaks about passing sovereign authority to human agencies too easily. However, the solution to that dilemma seems to be not to surrender God's authority, but to complain about human beings who in the name of God, deify themselves and do wicked things. As Merold Westphal says that, the logic of Caputo's argument goes like that, there is a police force with a certain legal power, and it has a certain power to exercise that authority. However, some criminal gangs dressed up in stolen police uniforms and went around committing crimes in the name of the police, or under the cover of being the police. There are brutal murder and rape offenses, and so forth. Therefore, the solution, according to Caputo's logic should be to reduce the authority of the police department and to lessen their power to carry on with whatever authority they have. This is fallacious.<sup>22</sup>

Post-metaphysical religion starts with the death of the God of metaphysics, of onto-theology, the God adapted to suit knowledge, as a more chastened concept of religious faith.<sup>23</sup> This post-metaphysical religion consists of a properly religious faith free from the metaphysics of the faithless (to life, to the other, to faith). This religion is a 'religion without religion' in that one can be profoundly and permanently religious with or without theology, with or without religions that is, with or without any unique or specific claims to religious understanding.<sup>24</sup>

Deconstructed religious faith is essentially concerned with love or more importantly, with the passion of non-knowing,<sup>25</sup> a passion for the impossible that constitutes an experience (if not the) structure. The passion of life, which is the love of God, involves a deep attunement and a profound attitude towards God, as the impossible, is the coming directed toward the other.<sup>26</sup> For Caputo, post-metaphysical faith is to be heterological (with radical hermeneutics and post-metaphysical ethics). The post-metaphysical religion's heteronomous is evident in that the God of proper religious faith is in short, 'the God of the other', an absolute heterogeneity that disturbs all the assurances of the same within which we comfortably ensconce ourselves.<sup>27</sup> At the center of Caputo's thought on "God" and "the other" is the close relationship between religion and obligation. There is a bond between the singular individual and the singular other in both obligation and religion. Religion is the obligation towards the singular other. According to Deconstruction, religion is the one-on-one bond of existing individuals with

the Absolute.<sup>28</sup>

Deconstructive religion means an agreement with the impossible, a relationship with the unrepresentable, a pledge made by the other with its people. Hear, O Israel (Deut. 6:4), you are the citizens of a call, created by a call, a solicitation, from the beginning. Deconstruction is a child of the promise, the covenant, the alliance with the other, the deal between the other and its unfaithful, inconstant, self-seeking followers who need prophets regularly to keep them straight and narrow and to remind them of the cut in their flesh, to remind them of the call they no longer listen to.<sup>29</sup>

Caputo firmly argues that the deconstruction of Derrida is a positive piece of news that helps to get to Jesus's prophetic spirit.<sup>30</sup> Deconstruction is a rejection of moral absolutism and dogmatism. Instead, it is suggested that deconstruction was never meant to abolish the Christian religion but compelled to reform and reconfigure it which is risky business.<sup>31</sup> This is good news for Christian churches, Caputo says. It is a religion of love that embraces the unwanted, forgives the unforgivable, finds, and saves the lost. It is motivated by Jesus's prophetic spirit against the oppressive system that neglected, manipulated, and oppressed people.

According to deconstruction theology, the cross means just humiliation and emptiness. Caputo acknowledges that both Apostle Paul and Luther, in the sense of his final triumph over the forces that executed him, affirm Christ's humiliation on the cross. Caputo would have none of that, however, because he thinks that in the past two thousand years, the death of Christ has not achieved much in the observable world. We must, he asserts, resist the temptation to compromise the cross by reducing it to "a strategy we spring on the strong to catch them unawares; an economy, a good investment with long-term rewards; or a Docetism that makes the suffering and weakness an appearance behind which lurks the real action and power".<sup>32</sup> The Apostles Paul and Luther believed that the death of Christ achieved something unknown and unseen, but eternally real: forgiveness of sins and everlasting life for those who believe. In addition, according to orthodox Christian teaching—Christ by his death reconciled believers to God. Caputo does not seriously regard this notion; rather, he focuses on the social consequences of the cross. For Deconstruction, the purpose and message of the cross is the call of God to side with the poor and weak in our lives. However, this call comes without any cognitive material that is intelligible. It is not a call based on God's established character, because God is unknowable in terms of propositional assent in deconstructive extreme apophatic view. In uprooting the notion of a call from something credible or understandable, Caputo is hesitant. With specific political movements which dethrone hierarchy and exalt the oppressed, Caputo identifies the way of the cross. This concerns a

decentering, de-colonizing, democratizing movement in the ethical, social, and political order that weakens the western privilege and builds up the third world; that worries about human rights when they come to death for food, amusement, or trinkets at the cost of torturing animals; that weakens our dominance over and respects the rights of the world, which is something.<sup>33</sup>

### **Conclusion: what remains of Christianity after its Deconstruction?**

Inspired by the writings of Derrida, Caputo proclaims that Christianity is deconstructive instead of opposing it. We have shown how Caputo's project of deconstruction of Christianity emerged alongside the deconstruction of metaphysics. The project of deconstructing Christianity is centered on demonstrating how Christianity already exposes the deconstruction of metaphysics. In addition, the deconstruction of metaphysics resulted in a *no* to desire for immediate access to meaning/truth. Caputo deconstructed concepts such as God, faith, sacrifice, incarnation, and resurrection to demonstrate how Christianity produces a detheologization of the divine. His goal in this endeavor is not simply to reject religion (to overcome metaphysics) but to find out a religious way to go out of religion. However, the basic question for Caputo to deconstruct Christianity was how to speak of God in the postmodern age or how to be a Christian, but it ends up in a non-theologized Christianity.

The traditional concept of God who is deconstructed by Caputo is stripped of the metaphysical qualities and dogmatism. God is not seen as a being outside the world, but inside, being a potential promise that matures the existence of the creature, present in language, culture, and human lives. This understanding, according to Caputo, on one hand, enables 'the self' to realize its being and of the other and thus to-be-for-the-other. Being-for-the-other is inevitable because the hermeneutic of religion is primarily aimed at human flourishing and peaceful coexistence of the whole of creation. On the other hand, it does so at the expense of deconstructing traditional texts, structures, arts, and systems. The status of Bible in the Christianity remaining after the deconstruction is not as something unique or distinct from all other books. The fates of God's Laws are simply suggestions, or another way of looking at reality, and cannot be used as a fundamental foundation to enforce the judgment. The question, which bothers here, if Christianity is necessary to be good or it, becomes an optional individual lifestyle choice.

Finally, the benefit of deconstructed Christianity is its instrumental function. It helps the Christians to make the choices they want to make, better. In addition, doing so, they are not different from what is being advocated in many of the other religions, because deconstructed Christianity simply gives up the absolutist ways/teachings, whether it be in Bible. Deconstructed Christianity is a religion, where God is distant, his truth is invasive, and

Christian faith is non-particular.



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## References

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- <sup>2</sup> *Différance* is a French term coined by Jacques Derrida. It is a central concept in Derrida's deconstruction, a critical outlook concerned with the relationship between text and meaning. The term *différance* means "difference and deferral of meaning". Derrida first uses the term *différance* in his 1963 paper "Cogito et histoire de la folie". The term *différance* then played a key role in Derrida's engagement with the philosophy of Edmund Husserl in *Speech and Phenomena*. The term was then elaborated in various other works, notably in his essay "Différance".
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- <sup>16</sup> Caputo, 1.
- <sup>17</sup> John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 7–9, 29–31, 32–35, 85–87, 93–97
- <sup>18</sup> John D. Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 5.
- <sup>19</sup> Caputo, 3.
- <sup>20</sup> John D. Caputo, *On Religion* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 21.
- <sup>21</sup> Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion*, 5.
- <sup>22</sup> Westphal. Merold, “Theism, Atheism, Anatheism A Panel Discussion with David Tracy, Merold Westphal, and Jens Zimmermann,” in *Reimagining The Sacred: Richard Kearney Debates God*, ed. Kearney Richard and Zimmermann Jens (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 230.
- <sup>23</sup> Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are*, 174.
- <sup>24</sup> Caputo, *On Religion*, 3.
- <sup>25</sup> Caputo, *More Radical Hermeneutics: On Not Knowing Who We Are*, 5.
- <sup>26</sup> Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion*, 71–76.
- <sup>27</sup> Caputo, 5.
- <sup>28</sup> John D. Caputo, *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 18.
- <sup>29</sup> Caputo, 1–5.
- <sup>30</sup> John D. Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct? The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church* (USA: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 26–27.
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- <sup>32</sup> John D. Caputo, *Cross and Cosmos: A Theology of Difficult Glory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019), 4.
- <sup>33</sup> Caputo, 30.