

The Mountain That Does Not Speak: A Deconstructive Journey Through Absence and Desire in Rahi's "O Zabarwan Peak!" Poem

Shabir Ahmad Dar

Research Scholar, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal, Srinagar, J&K, India

Email: drshabiredu100[at]gmail.com

Abstract: *This paper tries to examine Prof. Rehman Rahi's Poem "O Zabarwan Peak!" from a deconstructive critical perspective. The study tries to come, as close as it can, to the text in order to deconstruct it and reaches at a new reading of the poem by applying the principles of the theory of Deconstruction. So, firstly the poem is critically studied, and then it is analysed using deconstructive principles. A deconstructive critic looks for meanings in the text that conflict with its main theme, focusing on self-contradictions of which the text seems unaware. Accordingly, the theory is operative in the sense that meanings are ultimately unstable, and any text contradicts, dismantles and even destroys itself. Hence, what literary texts seem to do is often subverted by what they actually accomplish. This paper begins with an analysis of deconstruction in modern theoretical discourse. It demonstrates to the reader a concise exposition of deconstruction as a theory of decoding texts. In addition, it proceeds to examine how deconstruction can illuminate the above-mentioned poem by analysing its verbal contradictions in terms of meaning and structure. Within the deconstructive framework, these characteristics ultimately uncover the instability of literary language and meaning. This deconstructive examination of the text will allow the reader to gain a greater conceptual clarity not only of the poem, but also of deconstruction as a literary theory. Applying this approach to "O Zabarwan Peak" can deconstruct former interpretations, even Rahi's own authorial meaning, and add more mysteries to it. To address this, the binary oppositions in the poem are detected; then through the textual contradictions, it will be shown that the centrality of one side of the oppositions due to social, historical, and authorial reasons, is arbitrary. As a result, the meaning undergoes distorted.*

Keywords: Deconstruction, self-contradictions, binary oppositions, interpretations, textual, arbitrary.

1. Introduction

Post Modernism endorses reflective thought, pluralism, and intertextuality. Literature in this genre cannot be linear, postmodern literature refuses linear storytelling in Favor of flexible narratives that depict our convoluted and ambiguous contemporary reality. The philosophy of the movement underscores the need to be tolerant of other points of view extols the idea that meaning is finally only temporal and is in the eye of the beholder. This new mode of looking and seeking across the layered structures of literature and language gains profound theoretical legitimacy through deconstruction, which insists that meaning is never fixed but continuously produced through différance, textual instability, and the play of contradictions embedded within every linguistic expression. Deconstruction was first introduced by Derrida. It undermines rigid interpretations and binary oppositions. Deconstruction is one of the major tools of postmodern literature because it allows for overturning themes and language variability and defeating the structure of standards. Deconstruction presents a reference for revisiting the standards that accompany meaning generation and interpretation, as well as accentuating that language is inherently very brittle and fragile. This method opposes traditional stories, accepts intertextuality, and widens the readership's understanding of the number of viewpoints in postmodern picaresque. A poetic speaker would do well to deconstruct Derrida for its manifestation of the continuity of language and, by doing so, may uncover many other concealed tidings. Contextually, it offers a much-needed vantage point from which the terrains of poetry can be negotiated to realize a better grasp of the breadth from which poetic interest emanates. Rehman Rahi was a dynamic poet, the quintessential one, who revolutionized the art of

contemporary Kashmiri poetry. Rahi's poetry turns down traditional forms to implement splintered narratives, language inconclusiveness, and tongue-in-check linguistic use. The ambiguity and plurality of interpretations are epitomized in his poetry, which denies pre-determined meanings. The absurdist and enigmatic style mostly predominated by Rahi is a representation of the postmodern worldview. It is this enactment of deconstruction in poetry that allows the reader to grasp the duality dichotomy of that which recurs within a language and to reveal the poles of the language of the poetry. One of the fundamental aspects of the interpretation of the text of this poem is reforming problematic readings of texts and showing several meanings.

2. Scope and Limitations of Research

A cluster of ideas to be outlined includes grammatical intricacies and subtleties, contradictions, and intertextual references that are found in the writings of Jacques Derrida. The pursuit of the study is to inculcate an advanced understanding of the intricate relationships between language, identity, and meaning, which are manifested in this critical framework.

The study is limited to a famous poem of Prof. Rehman Rahi, but poetry like this can be considered representative example across his oeuvre, and consequently, the results may not comprehensively reflect Rahi's entire body of poetry. Secondly, the interpretation of deconstruction entails decisions, and numerous views from readers or scholars can be offered. This study adopts a specific interpretive framework while admitting that such interpretation takes place within a subjective standpoint. Although the research both maps out and critically explores linguistic and

philosophical motifs, it does not provide any detailed analysis of the sociocultural impact on Rahis's writings as well as his poetry reception. It is more cantered on linguistic and historical background.

Objectives of Research

- 1) To approach Rehman Rahi with a close reading study of particular linguistic elements, paradoxes, and intertextual references from the selected poem by using Jacques Derrida's deconstruction implementation.
- 2) Analysing the way deconstruction performed dilation leads to the layers of meaning and freedom from dogmatic interpretations of Rahi's poem.
- 3) The text becomes a terrain of poetic deconstruction, highlighting movements of disorientation, linguistic blurring, and multiple interpretations, all these elements present both in Rahi's language and identity as well as in the broader era of deconstructive thought.

About the Poem "O Zabarwan Peak!"

The poem is a heartfelt invocation to the Zabarwan mountain peak, which the speaker embraces as a lifelong companion and a silent observer of his whole existence. The poem is about a person who has waited entire life for a mountain (*Zabarwan*) to acknowledge his inner longing. He hoped the mountain would find its voice someday, offer clarity, and infuse life with meaning. But the mountain stands silent, unmoved and unspoken. In that silence, the person discerns that their quest for answers may remain endless. The poem renders deep emotions of waiting, loneliness, hope, and the pain of a voice that never truly finds a listener. Ultimately, the speaker decides to keep waiting, comparing himself to a motionless boat beyond a spiralling vortex—still, patient, enduring. His warm inner growth and speech fades into silence, and a calm, almost ethereal sleep begins to smile over him.

Critical Deconstructive themes and features of Poem.

"O Zabarwan Peak!" is a poem of profound lyricism and metaphysical insight. The structural and semantic core of this poem interacts with themes of absence, deferred presence, temporal suspension, and the instability of meaning. The poet invests desire through the silent mountain (*Zabarwan*) signifying both familiarity and inaccessibility. Within Deconstructive framework, the poem delves through various binaries, such as the binary of presence/absence, form/formlessness, and desire/fulfilment, ultimately demonstrating Derrida's *différance*, Blanchot's *neuter* voice, and de Man's *figural blindness*. Language seeks illumination but collapses into the void of waiting, where longing becomes the only constant. The poem oscillates between optimism and despair, expression and silence, embodiment and formlessness. In this poem what begins as invocation its conclusion is marked by suspension. The poem evokes:

- An aspiration that never finds its object.
- Articulation that disintegrates into quietude.
- Nature that is both familiar and shrouded in mystery.

The precariousness of the mountain's voice, the fragmentation of the self, and the poem's open-ended conclusion make it an outstanding text for deconstruction, as it naturally embodies *différance*, trace, indeterminacy, and the impossibility of final interpretation. Thus, the poem operates

through deconstruction, not as an analytic technique but as a structure that shapes its meaning. The self collapses into the neutral, language dissipates into the trace, and identity is overshadowed by formlessness. As Blanchot writes, "The absence of the book is still the book," so too is the absence of *Zabarwan Peak* its most present gesture.

Deconstructive dimensions with in the text's domain.

Several key deconstructive impulses emerge while unfolding the pattern and dialogue of the poem. With these currents the text fetches substantive theoretical interventions of Derrida, de Man, and Blanchot. The foremost is Derrida's concept of *différance*, through which meaning is perpetually deferred, it is refusing any sort of consolidation into a final or stable structure. *Light*, *presence*, and *awakening* as the poem's recurring motifs never arrive as fulfilled or fixed realities; in exchange, they linger in a perpetual state of deferral, advocating that the semantic elements of text or poem emerge in a space of delay instead of reaching a definitive endpoint. Closely examining the existence of mountain in poem's framework the mountain is silent, unarticulated, and withdrawn nevertheless shapes every line of the poem. Its presence is not direct; it survives as a residue or imprint, what Derrida describes as "*the simulacrum of a presence*," a sign that gestures toward what can never be fully present. Thus, the structure of mountain within the domain of this poem strongly represents Derrida's concept of the *trace*.

The poem concludes not with revelation or conviction but with a descent into stillness and sleep. With this scenario the poem is pushing the reader towards Blanchot's domain of ambiguity, where identity and meaning linger without resolution. The presence of this very notion within the context of the poem underscores Maurice Blanchot's *the neutral or il y a*. This is the place where states of being fades into an indeterminate zone between presence and absence. Moreover, the poem grants prominence to allegory over symbol, lining up with Paul de Man's position that allegory disrupts the illusion of coherence that symbols traditionally promise. Signs such as *Narcissus*, *the mountain*, *the river*, and *the lotus* do not emerge or function as stable, unified symbols; instead, they are allegorical structures that reveal the impossibility of semantic fixity.

Ultimately, the poem introduces the *self as a text*, fractured, mirrored, and repeatedly postponed through the realm of nature, time, and silence. This chimes strongly with Derrida's prospect that the subject is never a coherent, self-present entity but is instead woven from differences and traces, an ever-shifting textual construction. In this fashion, the poem orchestrates a subtle yet profound deconstructive interplay throughout the text, in which identities cleave, presence disintegrates, and meaning remains forever on the horizon without a solid reach and perception.

The poem's emotional core lies not in what is spoken but in what remains unsaid, in what the mountain withholds rather than reveals. This privileging of silence over speech, and deferral over closure, exposes the fragility of human attempts to ground meaning in external authority. Meaning is not given but endlessly postponed, an idea central to Derrida's notion that origins are never fully accessible but only experienced through traces and gaps. Let us approach the Deconstruction

of this poem by drawing primarily on the method outlined by Peter Barry in his book *Beginning Theory*. Barry identifies three stages of deconstructive analysis: the verbal, the textual, and the linguistic. These stages offer a progressively deepening engagement with the poem, moving from a close attention to individual words and phrases, to the overall structure of the text, and finally to the underlying assumptions embedded in its language.

In what follows, we shall examine the poem through each of these stages in order to develop a fuller and more rigorous deconstructive reading.

Aspect	Expression in poem	Deconstructive Logic
Paradox of Stillness	"Motionless boat beyond the spiralling vortex"	The image unites opposing qualities of contradiction and motionlessness in movement, exposing the impossibility of an absolute signifier or fixity of meaning.
Duality of Narcissus	"Narcissus might absorb the bumble bee's dance like the dew..."	By all means this is absorption without a consumption and a desire without culmination. So, through this poetic technique the language yields a sign that crumbles upon its own quietude.
Echo and Repetition	"I waited for a lifetime..." repeated with subtle shifts	<i>Iteration (Derrida);</i> Here repetition displaces meaning at its core. Every repetition varies and produces different layers of meaning.
Ambiguous "smile"	"Sleep begins to smile"	Under deconstructive scrutiny, the poetic language unfolds plurality of meanings. It drives a reader to look whether is it peace? Irony? or Death? The signifier "smile" is <i>undecidable</i> (de Man) open to endless readings.

De Man's work, particularly in *Allegories of Reading*, suggests that metaphor and irony ultimately deconstruct themselves. The poem's language operates through this ironic instability. "Smile," appearing at the end of the poem, may suggest closure, peace, or death and eludes any singular semantic framework.

2) Textual Stage

According to Peter Barry, in his book *Beginning Theory*, the textual stage of the method moves beyond individual phrases

1) Verbal Stage

In this stage it is seeking the Wordplay, Sound, Paradoxes and Contradictions, at what might be called the purely verbal level. As Barry says, for the Deconstructionist, again such movements are symptomatic of the way language doesn't reflect or convey our world but constitutes a world of its own, a kind parallel universe or virtual reality. This stage is usually seen as foundational stage for other two stages.

and takes a more overall view of the poem. In this stage we look for shifts or breaks in the continuity of the poem. These shifts may be in time, focus, tone, vocabulary and attitude. Thus, through this approach let's look for The Structure of Longing and Collapse of Centre with in the poem.

Aspect	Assessment	Deconstructive Logic
Apparent Structure	The poem presents a movement from anticipation to the edge of clarity, then back to silence and sleep.	The structure implies linear progression but collapses into cyclical suspension. <i>différance</i> (Derrida).
The Mountain as Centre	Zabarwan Peak stands as the source of revelation, light, and self-recognition.	The mountain is perceived as a metaphysical entity, but it remains silent exposing its absence as presence.
Closure Undone	The poem concludes with muted speech and smiling sleep. It refrains from offering any ultimate resolution but appreciates the movement of withdrawal.	Text undermines its own teleology; there is no final truth only the trace of desire.

Derrida notes in *Of Grammatology*, that *the centre is not the centre*, underscoring how any supposed origin or stable ground of meaning is always already displaced. Zabarwan Peak, while invoked as a foundational force, fails to act. The poet's yearning crumbles into the epiphany of an ever-deferred centre, which deconstructs the mountain's assumed transcendence.

3) Linguistic Stage:

In this stage let's look for Signs, Silence, and the Collapse of Meaning within the language and context of the poem. According to Barry this stage involves looking for moments in the poem when the adequacy of language itself as a medium of communication is called into question. These moments begin when there is implicit or explicit reference to the untrustworthiness of the language.

Aspect	Expression in poem	Deconstructive Logic
The Word <i>Light</i>	"...fill me with light" This is an example of repeated symbol of awakening or revelation.	<i>Derrida:</i> Light becomes a metaphysical metaphor; but here, light never arrives it becomes a <i>trace</i> of presence.
The Formlessness	"...primeval bang of my formlessness..."	Language tries to ground the origin, but origin here is formless an impossibility, an <i>aporia</i> .
Eyes and Gaze	"...dust-covered eyes...", "eyes might meet..."	The gaze, which would normally establish presence, is suspended here. Thus, it is clearly echoing Blanchot's notion of " <i>the neutral</i> ."
Silence vs. Speech	"Break your silence...", "warm speech... is muted..."	Language seeks voice, but ultimately becomes mute. So <i>logocentrism</i> fails.
Metaphors of Waiting	"I waited a lifetime...", "If you are given time..."	The concept of temporal fixity is destabilised. Waiting does not lead to a conclusion; it only yields sustained continuation.

Within the linguistic texture of the poem, it is completely woven with contradictions and suspended meaning. As Derrida suggests, signifiers refer to other signifiers in a play of *différance*, never arriving at fixed meaning. "Light," for instance, is cherished but never executed, turning it into a spectral trace. Blanchot, in *The Infinite Conversation*, speaks of "the murmur of the neutral" where meaning neither affirms nor negates. This is reflected in the poem's constant vacillation between hope and despair, speech and silence.

Binary Oppositions and Their Deconstruction

The poem elegantly shapes and then challenges the stability of a cluster of binary oppositions that usually weaves the meaning. The familiar hierarchy of speech over silence is rapidly thrown into instability, for it is silence, not speech, that becomes expressive within the poem's outline of interruption and postponement. Speech is muted, almost out of place, concurrently silence swells with depth and resonant quality, advocating that absence itself projects the trace of an unspoken presence. A parallel displacement is observed in the light/darkness binary. Usually, light overpowers darkness as the sign of clarity and realization; yet here light is perpetually sought but remains forever elusive. Darkness paradoxically, becomes the space through which the possibility of illumination gets significance. It overturns the conventional hierarchy and proves the dependence of light on the very darkness. So, in this paradox, darkness emerges both as a cradle and the condition for light to unfold.

The presence of waiting and arrival in the poem also makes this relationship questionable. In the linguistic scenario of the poem, here arrival is usually endowed as the climax of hope. In this text, however, waiting extends into an infinite temporal field, while arrival is perpetually deferred. There is no final moment of resolution, only the Derridean logic of difference, where meaning is always deferred. In a similar manner, the rivalry between nature and self is disbanded. Instead of standing as an external object, the mountain (*zabarwan*) becomes a mirror for the perceiving subject. The boundary between the inner and outer worlds vanishes, revealing that the self is intrinsically situated within, and constituted by, the natural landscape it beholds. The poem complicates the binary of stillness versus movement through the poem's portrayal of stasis as a form of resistance. According to established norms movement is bound to vitality and progress, stillness here procures an active quality, a poised refusal of the vortex's chaos. The inert presence becomes a kind of action in itself, proposing that inertia can be as potent and meaningful as motion.

In this poem through the inversion, shift, and eventual dissolution of these binaries, it manifests the Derridean conceptual grasp that hierarchical oppositions are constructed, unstable, and always open to subversion. In the course of this act, the poem itself becomes a discursive space where deconstruction operates from within. Because in this scenario a text performs, rather than producing mere illustrations, the breakdown of the structures that seek to limit the semantic domain.

3. Conclusion

For deconstructive analysis Rehman Rahi's "*O Zabarwan Peak!*" poem comes forth as a remarkable, well-grounded and impactful due to the defiant aspect in its nature for acknowledging fixity and stability of meaning. The text of the poem perpetually destabilizes the very structures; semantic, emotional, and philosophical that seems to be constituted through it. The poem's central dynamic of a speaker waiting a lifetime for the mountain to "break its silence" draws attention to Derridean *différance*, as meaning is endlessly deferred and never letting it to appear fully. Zabarwan Peak becomes an unstable signifier, oscillating between presence and absence, witness and enigma, origin and void, thereby dismantling conventional binaries such as speech/silence, self/other, illumination/obscurity. The unfulfilled desires of the speaker, silence of mountain and the perpetual quest for disclosure unfolds that meaning in the poem emerges not from what is spoken but constructs through what remains unexpressed or beyond articulation. The poem "*O Zabarwan Peak!*" becomes suitable for a deconstructive reading due to its open-endedness, structural undecidability and refusal for demanding the finality of meaning. Within the core of deconstructive criticism, principles such as instability, trace, and interpretive plurality are highly appreciated. This research paper has validated that the signifiers (the words) in this poem are ever shifting, a thing which affirms the irreconcilable meanings and the ellipses that are indicative of the complexity of that which the poet, or more precisely, the poetic voice, wants to convey. As a result, the signifying conditions of this poem have been revealed to take on ever changing imports that can never be final and that can never be sealed. In light of all these reasons, "*O Zabarwan Peak!*" serves as an ideal poem for deconstructive prob.

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