



RESEARCH PAPER

A Deconstructive Analysis of the Poem *Yellow Leaves* By M. R. Gohar

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ABSTRACT

Deconstruction is a critical theory and it claims that language is a system of signs and a system of contradictions, differences, and oppositions. According to this theory, a text is deconstructed and derived new sense from that piece of literature. So, this theory is operational for the meanings ultimately and unstable. According to Derrida, the theory of deconstruction tries to suppress or defer the meaning of any text which is shown. So, literary persons cannot control their piece of literature from this point of view. "Yellow Leaves", is one of the best poems written by Muhammad Riaz Gohar. The poem depicts the autumn time in the relationship. There are too many meanings in the poem even in the title. So, the text of the poem gives us the power to generate new meanings, aesthetic value, and endless sweetness. This study tries to explore the hidden themes, and thoughts of the poem by close reading and analyzing it. The researcher applied the principles of the theory of Deconstruction for the first time to this text and the rest of the aesthetic values of this poem. This study concludes that the newly established meanings of "Yellow Leaves" can be sure of being decidable or themselves.

KEYWORDS

Binary Opposition, Deconstruction, Derrida, Indeterminacy, Signs, Subversion, Yellow Leaves

Introduction

Deconstruction is a literary theory and this theory aims to come to the terms with literary text and their meaning by reconstructing them. It is difficult for the critics to capture a particular meaning from a text. Deconstruction helps the researcher in this sense and makes the critics able to come up with the new or hidden meaning of the text. So a critic can analyze any kind of text systematically with the help of the theory of Deconstruction. For controversial poetry, this theory is very helpful as that kind of text has too many meanings in it. "Yellow Leaves" is a poem written by "Muhammad Riaz Gohar, Associate Professor and Vice Principal, Govt. Associate College for Boys, Rahwali, Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan". He is well known for his books of English poetry "Inside Out", "Images", "Metaphors" and "Yellow Leaves". "Yellow Leaves" is one of the best poems of M. R. Gohar. By reading again and again we construct new meanings for this poem. The vocabulary used in the poem suggests new meaning at any time they are read. It is a human experience that when we read a piece of literature to evaluate critically, we come across new aspects of that text. Every time, a new dimension of that text comes in front of us. Different critical theories come with different conclusions from the same text. So, deconstruction is fit to deal with the innovation in the text and to explore the hidden meanings of the text.

Deconstruction has to create new meanings and its terms explain the reason, why Derrida insisted on coining new meanings. Derrida borrowed the word "Deconstruction" from Martin Heidegger's work and started applying it to literary text reading. Derrida (1997) stated that there is nothing from the outside of a literary text. It

means the concept of difference is in the context of that text. He gave the idea of oppositions in the text as well. He argues against having ultimately a pessimistic attitude. Deconstruction does not imagine that literary text which has irreconcilable contradictory aporia of text and a distinct separate whole. A deconstructive reading of a text is called aporetic reading (Curie, 2013). According to Miller (1993), when we do further refine the reality of a literary text, then the literary and critical texts play the role of parasite and host for the others. Sometimes, they are destroyed by them and sometimes destroy them.

Literature Review

According to Casche (1987), deconstruction polishes the thoughtful text and marked regularity. It is a well-ordered procedure, which is based on step-by-step argumentations. Its base is an acute awareness of marked regularity and thoughts. The ethical aspects are discussed by Critchley (2014). According to him, deconstruction by Derrida is moral training. It opens and clears the way to make it moral for others like a term used by Levinson. Selden (1989) briefly explains that a Derridean method at work is such a thing that is un-Derridean in essence. So, he tells about the deconstructive critical practice and how it works: There is a hierarchical order to disclose the theory of deconstruction which is a substratum of metaphysical for a specific piece of literature or discourse. The binary oppositions (being/non-being, essential/inessential, good/bad, content/form, masculine/feminine, truth/lies, speech/writing, soul/body, and so on) are expected for the production of a hierarchy of truth or value. This permits a writer to exclude from the text or the field of discourse. These meanings, connotations, and contradictions do not occur with the advantaged conditions. The body is an inessential and transitory form so it is excluded from the text. It is variable and superficial so masculine is a stronger form of feminine and the feminine is a weaker form of masculine.

The deconstruction process proceeds one-sided in the hierarchy and can be reversed. A discerning chink can be taken from the discourse which permits this reversal. In this regard, a new hierarchy can be constructed or we can say displaced. Here we cannot install a new structure or truth because it is already fixed. This is the rule of indeterminacy. The structuralists always used binary oppositions to stable a formal structure. Derrida takes them as made or prepared in unbalanced instability (Selden, 1989).

A written text can have different meanings in literature as the words situated in the text have different meanings. So, the production of meaning is according to the words through difference upon which the generated inside meanings. The literary text has many differences at different levels as semantic, structural, syntactic, and phonological levels. When we put the glasses of *Deconstruction*, we see that the words themselves have different values and different meanings within the same line. These meanings are derived by comparing them to the other words or we can say by checking the differences between different words. Bressler (1999) says that a phoneme or a word is different from other phonemes or words and we reach just one or two meanings as there can be more than two meanings. So, there is no innate relationship between their signifier and signified. Derrida says that in a system of communication, the undecidability and Freeplay with the words is called writing. Derrida also says that the continuous process of Freeplay of meanings is writing. So, it can be the best representation of different oppositions. The concept of difference helps us to analyze the

text and to derive meanings at the same time. The seeds of deconstruction construct the text.

A text has no one particular or single meaning. Different readers derive different meanings from the same text by applying the theory of Deconstruction. This main concern of Deconstruction makes this postmodern theory a critical discipline. The other modern theories try to locate a unique meaning of a literary text and built one specific structure on that. But, Deconstruction theory rejects all the structural thoughts and refuses to be a particular structure. This is the nature of reality that there is no particular face in literature in sense of meaning and structures always deconstruct themselves. 2nd thing is their biasness that we make difference between good and bad because of the existence of both. When there will be one thing and there will be no opposite then we cannot compare that so, we know deception. We know black because we know white.

When we obtain a certain meaning from a literary text, it is *deconstruction* that it has that meaning in it, or sometimes we don't see the meaning in that particular text but we assume by watching a related word. When there is a meaning in the text that is a sort of *presence* and when there is a different meaning that is *absent*. In deconstruction there is no reality, everything is an assumption. We can see it clearly in "Yellow Leaves". The poet transfers his intentions very skillfully. According to Culler, J. (2014), the speaker starts the poem by sharing the moments of farewell and frequently moves toward the past relationship. He told all about the past spring days in the poem and molded it towards the sad days of farewell. The so-called intentions of the writer become meaningless if we search for the correct meaning of a literary text. Meaning is derived from the dynamic text. So, all the interpretations have multiple meanings.

Writing is considered a sort of deep structure by Derrida. According to him, writing is valued over a speech by *Deconstruction*. So, speech is a true representation of the deep structure. When the speech gets lost, the meaning will also get lost with it. Words live by transferring them into the written symbols otherwise die. Writing is considered a precondition before a speech. Derrida says that speech writing is a special type of writing called *arche-writing*. According to Derrida, writing is the origin of any language. So, writing governs speech which is a branch of writing and it is a mental process. This is a language of philosophy that is the same as the linguistic ideas given by De Saussure. These four principles of the deconstructive theory were applied to the text of M. R. Gohar's poem "Yellow Leaves". It can be seen in the data analysis that the text of Yellow Leaves is very close to the issues narrated by Derrida's theory.

Material and Methods

This is a descriptive study. It was conducted to find out the real motive behind the writing of the poem "Yellow Leaves". The poem "Yellow Leaves" was written by M. R. Gohar. The researcher took this poem as a sample of the study and the Deconstruction theory given by Derrida was used as a data analysis tool. The researcher applied deconstruction theory to the text of the sample poem to derive hidden meanings from the literary text of that poem. The theory helped to construct different meanings from the poem.

Results and Discussion

Deconstruction theory was presented by French philosopher Jacques Derrida in the 1960s. He opposed the assumptions of structuralism. It aimed to discuss the relationship between text and its meaning. The researcher took the poem "Yellow Leaves" from the blog of Mr. Muhammad Riaz Gohar. "Yellow Leaves" is book of M. R. Gohar and "Yellow Leaves" is also a poem in that books. His book is in the process to get published. The poet tried to expound on a very critical thing which is cutting off relationships with the help of a very simple idea. He tells that fallen leaves cannot be put back same as the relationships. When we cut our relations they cannot be the same as before the dispute. Thousands of the showers of love cannot retrieve the fallen leave of relationship and cannot be put back on the same bough. The researcher tried to apply all the principles of deconstruction theory to this poem "Yellow Leaves" to find out the real inner feelings and emotions of the poet. Peter Barry divides deconstruction into three points: verbal, textual, and linguistic stages. The researcher discusses all the elements of deconstruction theory available in this poem.

The Verbal Stage

The verbal stage is purely related to the paradox, contradictions, purely verbal level, and common binary oppositions in a literary text. The researcher found many words and phrases which are used as dried verses in the poem "Yellow Leaves". In this poem the researcher found 1st paradox in the 6th line of the poem:

Your eyes transfixed in me

A paradox is a sentence or phrase which is not possible in reality. So in this line eyes never transfix into someone others. The poet used this paradox very skillfully to show his love for his beloved. There is only one thing that the eyes can transfix after a physical operation. But the poet used it to be more romantic. Here the transfixion of eyes means can be taken as romance or love. When we have a love for someone, we want to see only that person. The 2nd contradiction was found in the 8th line of the poem:

storm in a teacup

The storms can be expected in the sea or rainy weather. In a teacup, we cannot expect a storm. This is also a paradox and contradiction used by the poet in "Yellow Leaves". Storms can be expected in love and war as well. So, here the poet means the storm in the thoughts. The other meaning of the storm can be taken as the storm in the sea of love. As we can expect the storm in the sea and the sea of love is blind. There can be a storm as well. The 3rd contradiction found in the 14th and 15th lines of the poem was:

I said so many words

without any syllables

Somebody cannot say words without any syllables but the poet says in the poem that he said many words without any syllables. Here are two things the poet said something or he remained silent. The third one is the language of gestures. In gestures, we don't use the word said. The gestures are just to understand. It can possible that the poet is talking about gestures. He said so many words in the language of gestures and no syllable is uttered by the poet. The poet used many paradoxes to make the poem

beautiful and a good piece of literature. The 4th paradox found in the 16th line of the poem was:

Sighs were unuttered

A sigh is always uttered it cannot be done without uttering. Here, the poet also used this as a paradox to value his conversation. When someone weeps or feels sad sighs and they always utter. Here the sighs are doubtful as the poet said them unuttered. The poet wrote it to create a scene in the poem. The verbal meanings can be derived as the poet uttered nothing but his beloved uttered some words. The 5th contradiction found in the 17th line of the poem "Yellow Leaves" was:

Drops were unshed

Here the poet talks about the teardrops. When we weep, the teardrops shed from the eyes and it is natural. But the poet says that the tears were also unshed by the poet as the poet did not weep or he controlled his tears and tried to be seen as just sad. Sometimes, we weep inside and our eyes remain dry. The poet talks about it that no teardrop was shed. Unshed drops mean the drops which were shed by the poet in the moments of union may be. The 6th paradox was found in the 19th line of the poem:

Eyes fixed like a desert

Here is the talk about the eyes that were fixed like a desert. In desert, sand is fixed and without sand, the desert cannot be a desert, so the eyes are fixed on the beloved like the sand in the desert. This is impossible so it is a paradox used by the writer in his poem to make it beautiful and effective. A total of six paradoxes and contradictions were found in the poem which is not possible in the reality but the poet used them in his piece of literature skillfully and that seems to be possible. That is the beauty of art.

The Textual Stage

In the textual stage, the overall view of the poem was taken and individual phrases, shifts, and breaks were found by the researcher. In this stage, the critic looks for breaks and shifts in the continuity of the literary text of the poem. These shifts can be the instabilities of attitude or lack of unified and fixed position. Shifts have different kinds as shifts in time, focus, point of view, tone, vocabulary, pace, or attitude. As for concern to the grammatical point of view, in this poem shift from first person to third, present or past tense also found. First of all the title of the poem is "Yellow Leaves" and it can be the green leaves or just leaves as in the poem the poet discussed that the broken leaves cannot be retrieved. Those leaves can be green, brown, or yellow. But the poet just used the word yellow leaves so it is a point denoting the bad relationship between humans. It is against phallogocentrism as that deal with the male dominance element of the meaning of the text.

Secondly, logocentrism deals with the language to assign the meaning to the words. According to logocentrism, the universe is considered with three aspects: God, Man, and Cosmos. Religion has primary importance and philosophy has secondary importance. But the structuralists keep things on one point which is fixed and stereotype which keeps us far from meaning. So, here in the title of the poem the poet just used the word yellow which is not according to the theme but it is according to the bad

relationship as a bad relationship can be compared with the autumn and in the autumn season the color of the leaves goes to yellow from green. In the 2nd line of the poem “*were sudden and small*” there is a shift of voice. Here the writer talks about the moments of farewell and his tone goes down by saying sudden and small when we compare with the words sigh and no word uttered. So the scene was very sad and the tone goes down in the sad scene. The 2nd shift of pronouns was found in the 6th and 7th lines of the poem:

Your eyes transfixed in me

with a clamor behind them

Here the poet used the pronoun you, then me, and then them. So, this is the shift of pronouns. The poet tried to make his piece of art impressive and beautiful. This is a common shift in poetry. In the whole poem, the poet used this shift in the 9th to 14th lines of poem the researcher found that the poet shifts from “I” to “we”. Same as in the 20th to 22nd lines. The shift of idea is also found in this poem as in the beginning lines the poet talks about his farewell moments and in the very next lines, he shifts to the yellow leaves and trees and makes a beautiful combination of two things. Same as, in the 6th and 7th lines poet talks about him, and in the next lines he shifts to the storm in a teacup. Here he used a simile. The poet goes with the two different ideas and combines them at the end, to sum up, his thoughts. Here the poet compares the eyesight with desert. He says, his eyes are transformed and fixed like a desert. In the last stanza, the poet shifts from the autumn to the spring and hopes for it by knowing that it is impossible. In the end, he shifts from broken leave to human relations to understand that broken relationships are like broken leaves which are an unrepairable loss. Binary oppositions were also found in this poem as: Fallen/put back, sudden/small, autumn/spring, queries/questions, words/syllable, drops/desert, boughs/leaves, days/dates, sighs/eyes, farewell/union. Binary oppositions are also used to make the literary text impressive. It’s the beauty of the literature. “Yellow Leaves” is a good piece of literature in this regard. The shift of time is also found in this poem as the poet starts from the moments of farewell and moves towards the memories, the days of union, then again at the end comes back to the sad moments so the poet used unity of time as in a single poem two times are discussed as past and present. The shift of the point of view can also be seen in this poem as a poet is a controversial person. This poem transfers us to the thoughts of the poet. Here, the point of view of the poet is that the moments of farewell were small but hurt the poet for the whole life. Broken relationships cannot retrieve the same as before so they should be cared. The poet gives us a very simple example of a fallen yellow leaf from the bough in the autumn season. We come across the autumn season in our life as well but the relationships should be strong in autumns and springs as well. We should not let them break.

The Linguistic Stage

In the linguistic stage, the critic finds the questions, adequacy of language moments, and language as a medium of communication. It involves looking for implicit or explicit references in the literary text which is under review. The untrustworthiness of language and unreliability of the language are also checked in the literary text. The critics search for the words like unsaid, for instance, unsayable something, or impossible to describe or utter something but in the very next lines, part or stanza the poet does that or says that. These are language deflates or inflates or objects which are misrepresented. In this poem, the poet used paradoxes but did not use them as possible. But he used

simile as in the 3rd line of the poem, “*like the fall of yellow leaves*”. The poet used the word “like” to compare the human relationship with the fallen yellow leaf. Same as the poet did with the eyes. In the 6th line, the poet says “*Your eyes transfixed in me*”. Here the poet used the word transfixed. The transfixion of eyes is impossible without any physical operation. The next contradiction was found in the 8th line of the poem “*Like a storm in a teacup*”. The poet used the word “like” as he used in 3rd line. The poet used simile in his poem to make it beautiful. The untrustworthiness of the language is also used in this poem as the researcher found some words in the poem: unuttered, unshed, exchanged, transfixed. The poet used these words to create a romantic aesthetic in the poem. These words show that the poet was ambiguous regarding different things like he said, the words were unsaid. The poet did not remember whether at the time of farewell he uttered some words or not. He is confused in this regard. Same as with the weeping scene. The poet says that the drops were unshed. If there was a sad scene and the time to bid farewell to his beloved, then it is not possible to be the teardrops unshed. They are shed. At this kind of farewell time, a strong person may also shed tears and the poet is so kind-hearted, that he shed tears. But in the poem, he beautifies his poem by saying the drops were unshed. Next, he is curious and hoped for springtime in his life again. In the very next lines, he told that it is just hope and in reality, it is impossible same as it is impossible to put back a fallen leaf from a bough.

Conclusion

In this paper, the researcher applied the deconstructive theory to the poem “Yellow Leaves” written by M. R. Gohar. The researcher transpired that the textual meanings of the words used in the poem are very clear and recognizable. In this poem, they are recognizably *deferred* and *never present*. The researcher tried to differentiate the metaphysical hierarchy. In the marking of the interplay of the meanings, the binary oppositions are shown by the researcher in a poststructuralist sense.

There is a constant change in the signifiers in this poem. The poet used paradoxes, similes, and ellipses in this poem to demonstrate the irreconcilable meanings. The meanings of the words are checked as they are used as fit for that occasion. They have different meanings but in this poem, they showed just the relevant meaning. Different kinds of shifts were also noted. The poet used them to make his piece of literature beautiful and impressive. According to the signifying realities, this poem has been shown to adopt ever-shifting importations. They can never be closed nor be final at any spot. Further, the poet used extra implied meaning vocabulary. The poet strived to embrace perplexed mined.

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