EXPLORING FARZANA AQIB'S *CHASE* THROUGH DERRIDA'S THEORY OF DECONSTRUCTION

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Abstract
This research analyzes the poem Chase (2021) by Farzana Aqib using Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory. The purpose of the study is to show how the poem's meaning is not fixed or clear but full of contradictions, opposites, and hidden tensions. The study uses a qualitative method and applies close reading to examine how the poem's language creates confusion between finding and searching, presence and absence. The poem uses unclear images like "glimpse" and "shadow," which makes its meaning uncertain. The analysis finds that the poem breaks down its own message and shows that meaning is always changing. This supports Derrida's idea that language can never fully express one single truth. The study helps readers understand how poetry can be open to many interpretations.

Keywords: Deconstruction, Jacques Derrida, Chase, Farzana Aqib, binary oppositions, difference, poetry analysis, instability of meaning, post-structuralism, close reading

Background of the Study

Poetry often employs figurative language and ambiguity, allowing multiple layers of meaning. While traditional criticism seeks fixed interpretations, Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory argues that meaning is always unstable, deferred, and shaped by contradictions within the text (Derrida, 1976). Deconstruction focuses on binary oppositions and the idea that texts undermine their own authority through internal tensions (Barry, 2017). Farzana Aqib's poem Chase presents emotional uncertainty and abstract imagery, making it suitable for deconstructive analysis. This study explores how the poem reflects Derrida's ideas of différance, undecidability, and textuality, revealing how meaning in poetry is never complete but always open to reinterpretation (Culler, 2007).

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the poem *Chase* by Farzana Aqib through the lens of Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory. The study aims to explore how the poem reveals internal contradictions, binary oppositions, and the instability of meaning. By applying deconstructive principles, the study explores that how the poem resists a singular interpretation and instead opens multiple layers of meaning through its language, imagery, and structure.

Literature Review

Deconstruction, a critical approach introduced by Jacques Derrida, has been widely applied in literary studies to analyze the instability of language and meaning. Derrida (1976) argues that meaning in texts is never fixed but constantly deferred through binary oppositions, such as presence/absence and self/other. This view opposes traditional structuralist beliefs in stable meaning, encouraging readers to uncover contradictions within texts.

Barry (2017) explains that Deconstruction is not about destroying meaning but exposing the hidden tensions and contradictions that texts contain. He emphasizes that literary works often

undermine their own claims, making interpretation complex and open-ended. This approach has proven especially useful in poetry, where figurative language, ambiguity, and metaphor naturally lend themselves to deconstructive analysis.

Several scholars have demonstrated how Deconstruction can reveal deeper layers of meaning in poetic texts. According to Culler (2007), Deconstruction focuses not on what a poem says directly, but on how it says it, exploring language as a system that resists closure. In this regard, poetic texts become sites where meaning is constructed and deconstructed simultaneously.

Furthermore, Farzana Aqib's poem *Chase* has been previously examined from different critical angles. For instance, Shah et al. (2025) carried out a qualitative analysis of the poem through Carl Jung's psychoanalytic framework. Their study focused on the speaker's internal psychological journey, interpreting it through central Jungian concepts such as individuation, animus, persona, and shadow. Using textual analysis, they uncovered the emotional layers embedded in the poem, concluding that the speaker's pursuit reflects a profound journey toward self-awareness and emotional completeness.

In this connection, Shah et al. (2025) conducted a stylistic analysis of *Chase* based on Leech and Short's theory of foregrounding. The study examines how the repeated use of determiners such as "every" and "any" enhances the poem's psychological and emotional depth. Through close textual analysis, the researchers demonstrate that lexical parallelism symbolizes a spiritual quest, personal struggle, and collective hope, emphasizing the poet's distinct cultural expression within modern Pakistani English poetry.

Besides, Khan et al. (2025) also conducted a cognitive stylistic analysis of Farzana Aqib's *Chase* through Text World Theory, exploring how emotional and mental experiences are constructed in the poem. The study reveals that Aqib skillfully uses language, imagery, and repetition to reflect inner confusion, longing, and imagined presence. By analyzing discourse-worlds, text world, and sub-worlds, the scholars highlights how readers mentally build emotional worlds, emphasizing the poet's depth and unique voice in contemporary Pakistani English poetry.

Lastly, although Farzana Aqib's poem *Chase* has been previously studied through various lenses such as psychoanalysis, textual analysis, and the theory of foregrounding, it has not yet been explored through Derrida's theory of deconstruction. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the poem using Derridean deconstruction, focusing on how meaning shifts, breaks down, or remains unstable within the text.

By applying Derrida's theory to poetry, researchers can explore how poems resist singular interpretations, destabilize binaries, and deconstruct their own language. In the context of *Chase* by Farzana Aqib, such a framework is useful for analyzing the interplay between clarity and confusion, presence and absence, and the fluidity of emotional expression.

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature, as it focuses on the interpretation of literary text rather than numerical data. A textual analysis approach has been adopted to explore the underlying meanings, contradictions, and binary oppositions within the selected poem.

The method of **data collection** is purposive sampling, as the poem *Chase* by Farzana Aqib has been intentionally selected due to its rich figurative language and potential for deconstructive analysis.

For **data analysis**, the study uses Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory as the analytical framework. The poem is examined through close reading to identify binary oppositions, contradictions, and the instability of meaning, following Derrida's concepts such as différance, undecidability, and textuality.

Theoretical Framework

This study applies Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory, which argues that meaning in language is unstable, context-dependent, and shaped by binary oppositions such as presence/absence and known/unknown. Derrida's concept of différance suggests that meaning is always deferred, never complete or fixed. Through this lens, the selected poem is analyzed to uncover contradictions, tensions, and the instability of meaning within the text, showing how it ultimately deconstructs itself.

Analysis & Discussion

Deconstruction theory challenges the idea of fixed meaning and emphasizes the instability of language, the presence of contradictions, and the fluidity of interpretation. Deconstruction allows readers to uncover the hidden tensions and binary oppositions within the poem that ultimately lead to the breakdown of stable meaning.

At first glance, the poem appears to depict a straightforward emotional search, possibly for a lost love or a spiritual connection. The speaker's heart is portrayed as constantly chasing someone or something:

"*It halts on every corner / In every nook / In every cranny…*"

These lines give the impression of a determined yet endless pursuit. However, when analyzed through deconstructive principles, several binary oppositions become apparent: presence/absence, known/unknown, stillness/movement, and mind/heart. These binaries suggest contrasting ideas, yet Derrida argues that such oppositions are not stable and often depend on one another for meaning. For example, the heart's search for presence is only meaningful in relation to the absence it constantly faces.

The contradiction becomes more visible in the lines:

"I don't know in the / Rustling bustling of / The whole city / To whom my heart is / Finding every day"

Here, the speaker claims that the heart is "finding" someone "every day," but this assertion is immediately undermined by the confession of uncertainty: "I don't know…" This contradiction lies at the heart of deconstruction, the text attempts to assert meaning while simultaneously unraveling it. The speaker appears to "find" someone daily, but the poem's imagery suggests ongoing confusion, wandering, and ambiguity.

Moreover, the use of vague and ephemeral imagery, "any glimpse," "any shadow," "any wisp", further destabilizes meaning. These expressions lack concreteness and represent things that are momentary or unclear. The pursuit described in the poem becomes more like a chase after illusions rather than a journey toward a clear destination. Derrida's concept of "différance" (différance + deferral) is at play here, as meaning is constantly postponed; the subject of the *chase* is never fully captured or understood.

Therefore, the poem deconstructs itself. What initially seems like a linear narrative of emotional searching is, in fact, an exploration of the impossibility of final meaning. The language resists closure, and the emotional truth the speaker seeks remains elusive. As Derrida (1976) emphasized, "there is nothing outside the text", and within this poem, meaning is not discovered, but deferred, questioned, and ultimately dissolved.

Findings and Conclusion

The analysis of Chase by Farzana Aqib through Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction theory reveals that the poem does not offer a single, fixed meaning. Instead, it is marked by binary oppositions such as presence/absence, known/unknown, and finding/searching, which are shown to be unstable and interdependent. Although the poem seems to describe the heart's pursuit of someone, it simultaneously expresses confusion, uncertainty, and emotional ambiguity.

The study finds that the poem's language, through vague imagery like "glimpse," "shadow," and "wisp", creates a sense of emotional deferral, aligning with Derrida's concept of difference. The poem appears to promise emotional resolution but consistently undermines this through contradictions, such as claiming the heart is "finding" someone while simultaneously declaring "I don't know." These tensions expose the poem's self-deconstructive nature, where meaning is constantly postponed and questioned.

In short, the poem concludes the central principles of Deconstruction by resisting closure, destabilizing meaning, and revealing the contradictions within its own structure. The findings confirm that Deconstruction is an effective lens for analyzing poetic texts that rely on ambiguity and emotional depth.

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Appendix
Chase
It halts on every corner
In every nook
In every cranny
At every turning
On every door
At each junction
Any glimpse
Any shadow
Any wisp
I don't know in the
Rustling bustling of
The whole city
To whom my heart is
Finding every day
By Farzana Aqib