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Authors:

Saman Salah: (Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.
(Email: samanmkn@gmail.com)

Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem: MPhil Scholar, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.

Maryam Shah: MPhil Scholar, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.

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Title

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Authors:

Saman Salah

(Corresponding Author)

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.

(Email: samanmkn@gmail.com)

Khair-Un-Nisa Azeem

MPhil Scholar, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan.

Maryam Shah

Lecturer, Balochistan University of Engineering Technology, Khuzdar, Balochistan, Pakistan.

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Abstract

The research aims to highlight the diasporic elements from one of the diasporic writers, Derek Walcott. By the end of this research, it must be ensured that certain factors would affect the diaspora writers after their placement from one area to another, whether intentionally or unintentionally. The paper in hand is specifically a discussion on one of the most prominent works of Derek Walcott, which is 'A Far Cry from Africa'; hence, it proves that this poem is a diasporic work. Moreover, it would significantly highlight some of the prominent elements of any diasporic work, which include home and belonging, displacement and migration, or identity. This research has been conducted using the qualitative research content analysis method of Wellek and Warren (1997). Through this specific study of Derek Walcott's diasporic work, readers will have an expansion in better understanding and identification of diaspora works.

Keywords: Diaspora, Elements, Home, Migration, Hybridity

Introduction

Since it has been quite clear that when a writer leaves his or her place and shifts to a new place, there will be so many new challenges that he/she will face; however, we would never realize it until we start reading one of his\ her works. Only then would we

be able to clearly see and highlight those diasporic elements. Diasporic studies have become a major concern in the 21st century for their historical and cultural values (Oucha et.al, 2024; Banki & Adhikari, 2024). The experiences of displacement are visible in the works of those writers who have shifted from their place, which means they have faced displacement, so



their works would also include elements of diaspora, which are: home and belonging, displacement and migration, or hybridity. Hence, among those of diaspora writers, our great Nigerian writer, "Derek Walcott" and his works also include the diasporic elements. As a result, this research would significantly discuss one of his works, which is "A Far Cry from Africa," and would prove how some writers' works would automatically adopt diasporic elements after the diasporic writers' movement and displacement.

The diaspora works are highly based on the background of the author or poet. Since we know that the great poet of the poem 'A Far Cry from Africa' is a Nigerian writer who belonged to Saint Lucia, and mostly because most of his works are about identity loss, colonization, and other African literature themes, he is mostly confused with an African writer, although he isn't. Thus, the fact that he has shifted from his first location and that he includes many colonial themes in his works makes all his works diaspora literature (Chaudhry, [2024](#)).

Problem Statement

As we know, Derek Walcott is already such a prominent and well-known writer whose works are read and known by many; therefore, many of his works have been thoroughly researched. Even his poem 'A Far Cry from Africa' has been the target of many post-colonial critics, but this very poem of Derek Walcott has never been discussed from a diasporic point of view. So, this aspect of the poem should have been given importance, which wasn't under notice of any researcher; thus, this poem needed to be discussed as diasporic literature, which has been left undiscussed and untouched.

Research Gap

Although there has been much research done widely on many diasporic literatures, each discusses different aspects of diaspora works or implements different elements of diaspora in different literatures. However, this was found so interesting and unexplored to discuss an awesome Nigerian writer, Derek Walcott, who had also written many diasporic works in his

second country (the United States). Among all the other works, "A Far Cry from Africa" has been under notice of many critics and researchers, but it has never been studied through the lens of a diaspora, highlighting the themes and elements within the lines of this poem. Therefore, this study was considered crucial and significant to read this poem once again, but this time through a different lens of diaspora.

Theoretical Framework

This study shall be conducted based on the framework of the famous theory of postcolonial theory, which is most prominently based on the concept of movement from one place to another. Further, there used to be many of those theorists whose theories would really help this research to achieve its objectives, like Homi K. Bhabha's hybridity theory and Edward Said's othering theory.

Moreover, not only would the postcolonial theory help us fulfill the objective of our research, but also the "Diaspora Theory" of Stuart Hall, as his work on "cultural identity in diaspora" can help explain Walcott's dual belonging (African and British).

Highly, this research has been conducted based on Homi K. Bhabha's theory of the Diaspora. In his Theory, he introduced the concept of Hybridity, which refers to the mixing of cultures after the shift of colonized to the colonizer's society. Further, his theory also includes the concept of third space, where two or more cultures come together, conflict, and merge to form something new. And finally, his theory of diaspora will be used as a helpful framework to let us examine Derek Walcott's poem as a diaspora work.

Literature Review:

Diaspora

The Greek word *diaspora* comes from the combination of the prefix *dia* and the verb *speirein*, which together give the meanings "to scatter," "to disperse," or "to be spread out or separated". The term diaspora has been defined by many writers, like Robin Cohen, who describes it as "the sowing of seeds," capturing both geographical dispersal and cultural regeneration (Cohen, [2022](#)). By this, he means that a

diaspora is the situation of movement of an individual or group from one place to another, just like the sowing of seeds, where one will have to start their growth from the beginning, and this causes the immigrants to face displacement and rebirth of tradition.

In the framework of postcolonial literature, diaspora means a psychic split, a struggle between cultural memory and current life (Khan, Yaseen, & Imran, 2024). Straut Hall, who presented the idea of split identity in diaspora, believed that diaspora causes a type of movement from one place to another, which would cause the individual to have a split identity.

Thus, these two definitions can really provide an overall insight into a diaspora: it is a shift in the geographical existence of individuals that causes lots of issues like displacement, identity, or cultural hybridity.

Diaspora Literature

We can consider all the works of those writers after their movement from their ancestral place to a second country or location to be diasporic literature because then the writers would include their feelings of hybridity, home and belonging, or identity shifts in their works.

According to Bhawana Pokharel, "Diasporic literature is defined as writing that is created by diasporas and that typifies their emotions and experiences" (Pokharel, 2020). It illustrates how the diaspora's psychological, social, economic, and cultural conditions are deeply ingrained in the literature they produce.

However, it's also possible that some non-diasporic writers also write diasporic literature, but it must only hold the diasporic characteristics and themes. "Traditional definitions of diasporic literature include writings produced by people who have spent a significant amount of time living in a diasporic community. Recent debates, on the other hand, propose a more expansive definition: diasporic literature can also refer to any literary work that expresses diasporic sensibilities, regardless of the author's geographic location or origin," said Bhawana Pokharel.

Diasporic Themes

"It examines issues including identity crisis, a sense of alienation, ongoing psychological ambivalence, a strong sense of belonging, and a deep-seated, enduring wish to reestablish a connection with and finally return to one's native country." Says Bhawana Pokharel about the themes in diasporic literature.

Almost all diasporic works include the diasporic works on a large scale, which might include an identity crisis where they are left with an ambiguity about their identity. They are in a state of confusion about their identity. Moreover, they also feel lonely because they are surrounded by a new mass who hold different beliefs, cultures, and psyches (Dutt, 2025; Newton, 2024). And also the diaspora writers would strongly miss their ancestral place, thus this dealing would lead to a special feeling of belonging, although they might have been in this new place for a much longer period, but they still won't find the peace of their homeland and connection. As further elaborated in the discussion part of this research, it will be further elaborated on how this poem 'A Far Cry from Africa' holds these themes and how badly the writer still misses his original language, but at the same time, he uses this new colonizer's language because he can't help it. There can be many elements for the identification of diasporic literature, but here are some of the most common ones:

Home and Belonging

"Diaspora literature also looks at the challenges diasporic communities have when adjusting to new countries and their ongoing search for a sense of identity." Saeed Ahmed claimed in his work. It's quite obvious that a diasporic literature would surely include the diasporic elements, and among the diasporic elements, the elements of home and belonging could be seen the most because after their movement to a host country, a writer will face such problems that the writer feels like an alien, and that would further lead to the feeling of nostalgia and missing his own ancestral country (Saeed, 2025). Moreover, since all the other members of the new country would act accordingly in case of their cultural, social, or physical aspects, he would start

missing being in his own country, and he would start growing a sense of belonging to his own country.

Displacement and Migration

Naji (2024) asserts that 'in diasporic writing, displacement is a common theme that reflects the experiences of many writers who have fled their home countries. A strong need for the familiar, homesickness, and nostalgia are often brought on by this separation. Many diasporic writers find that their experience of uprooting greatly influences their literary expression and shapes their identity.'

In this part of the diaspora work, when we hear about the displacement and migration, the only thing that pops into one's mind is just the physical movement, shift, or displacement of an individual, whereas this displacement also refers to the psychological, identity, or emotional shift of an individual, which will ultimately cause identity fragmentation and cultural hybridity.

Hybridity

Bhabha's (1994) concept of the "third space" emphasizes the hybrid and transitional nature of diasporic identities, which do not entirely belong to either the homeland or the host nation. Instead, they occupy a liminal space that disrupts traditional binary views of cultural identity. According to Bhabha, the significance of hybridity lies not in identifying two original sources from which it stems but in recognizing the "third space" as a site where new and alternative identities can form.

Thus, this study aims to disclose how technically the elements of diaspora have been embedded in the poem "A Far Cry from Africa" by Derek Walcott. Since the writer himself belongs to a diasporic population. The study seeks to determine and prove the poem "A Far Cry from Africa" as a diasporic work by highlighting the diasporic themes and other diasporic elements used by Derek Walcott.

This research utilizes the qualitative research design as given by Wellek and Warren (1997). The whole specific text of Derek Walcott's poem A Far Cry from Africa would be analyzed thoroughly by

considering the themes, characters, or narrative structure of the poem. Moreover, we would also delve deeper and look for any element like displacement, identity crisis, cultural hybridity, nostalgia, and the exploration of homeland and belonging, which would prove this poem is a diaspora work done by a diaspora writer, Derek Walcott.

The selected content is the full text of the poem "A Far Cry from Africa," which contains 33 lines written in 3 stanzas, where each stanza has various lengths and sizes. The poem "A Far Cry from Africa," written by Derek Walcott, contains many lines that prove it is a diaspora work, like in the first few lines when the author mentions.

Discussion

The poet of the poem, whose full name is Derek Alton Walcott, was born on January 23, 1930, in Castries, Saint Lucia, a Caribbean Island. When Derek was just a year old, his father, poet and painter Warwick Walcott, passed away. His artistic education was encouraged by his mother, Alix Maarlín, who taught in schools. Education and the Origins of Literature received their education in St. Lucia before attending the University of the West Indies in Jamaica. He published 25 Poems, his debut collection, when he was eighteen. The challenges of postcolonial cultures are frequently reflected in his writing, which examines colonialism, identity, exile, and hybridity.

Major works are mostly epic poetry and drama in particular, as well as Caribbean culture, which are frequently combined in Walcott's writing. One of his most prominent works that has been described as diasporic work, with much of the discussion over it, is "A Far Cry from Africa."

The overall summary is about a movement in Africa. The poem opens with a description of the veldt, or African terrain, which is likened to an animal with a tawny coat. Blood-stained streams and bodies strewn all over the landscape accompany the introduction and depiction of the Kikuyu tribe. Speaking, a worm suggests that the dead should not be treated with compassion.

After that, the poem critiques colonial policies and their effects while referencing the “Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya”. The speaker brings up the killing of a white child and the colonial depiction of Africans as “savages.” Images of African wildlife and customary hunting techniques are reintroduced, and then a comparison between human violence motivated by power and control and natural killing for survival is made.

Here begins the discussion on the lines of the poem that make it a diasporic element:

Firstly, if we keep the title under discussion, the title itself is also a symbol that stands as a symbol for ‘distance.’ This distance is interpreted differently by different interpreters. However, most interpretations of this distance refer to the emotional, physical, and cultural distance that the poet feels from his own ancestral culture (Africa). As Dr. Suresh Frederick said in his article, “The title suggests, on one level, that the poet is addressing an African issue from afar. While physically situated in St. Lucia, Walcott also experiences a symbolic or emotional distance from Africa. On another level, the title conveys the idea that the poem itself is like a distant cry—a call that has traveled across vast stretches of ocean, emphasizing both separation and longing.” (Frederick, 2024). So, the significance of the symbol of ‘distance’ is his own distance from his ancestral country, creating a diaspora theme.

Moreover, the word distance itself is also supporting the diaspora experience. Like the term “A far Cry,” which refers to both sense of belonging and disconnection, this symbolizes the diasporic separation from his ancestral origins.

If we specifically start talking about the analysis of lines from the poem, so we can see and highlight the mentioned elements of home and belonging, migration and displacement, or the cultural hybridity somewhere along the lines, too.

For instance, in the poem, the fifth and sixth lines of the third stanza say:

“I who am poisoned with the blood of both,
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?”

By these lines, the poet has tried to highlight the element of hybridity and identity, which means his diaspora of facing the biological or the cultural hybridity, since he was tied to both cultures of colonizers (British) and colonized (Africans). Due to his ‘blood of both’ passing through his veins, he was placed in a moral and emotional dilemma that made him quite indecisive to fully take one side of either European or African. As Dinesh Kumar, in his article of 2023, claimed ‘As a postcolonial writer, Derek Walcott utilizes the concept of hybridity in *A Far Cry from Africa* to express a sense of homelessness, referring to himself as a ‘mongrel.’ While he resents English culture, he admires and cherishes the English language. He also expresses sympathy for the Irish, recognizing them as fellow victims of colonial rule, drawing parallels to his own struggle with identity.’ (Kumar, 2023)

Moreover, in the 8th and 9th lines of the last stanza, when the poet says

“...how to choose between this Africa and the English tongue I love?”

These lines again show the theme of diaspora, in which the poet shows confusion related to his identity, since the poet has an African root, so he is really confused whether he has to use English, which would alienate him from his ancestral language. However, he can’t do that either because he shows a deep love for the English language, as he was raised speaking this language.

Furthermore, Walcott’s experience is similar to Homi Bhabha’s theory about ‘The Third Space,’ which means a state that is in-between conditions of identity where he doesn’t belong to either side. He found himself somewhere in between the Europeans and Africans. He is neither completely and fully British nor African; this creates an idea of in-betweenness of psychological and cultural identity tension.

As long as we know that the writer’s original place has never been in Britain, he was first born and raised in a faraway place, which was a Caribbean island; therefore, we can also sense the presence of displacement and migration through his poem, which once again proves that this poem is a diasporic work.

For instance, in the last line of the poem, the author says that

“How can I turn from Africa and live?”

He proves through this one line that the current location he is having hasn't initially been his ancestral place, but it was due to displacement and migration that he had to leave his place and start living in a totally different place (Britain). Here, as the poet has mentioned his wonder about his survival in any other place than Africa, it simply proves that he was moved from his initial location, facing the difficulties of displacement during migration.

If we bring the characteristics of this poem as a home and belonging theme, which makes it a diaspora work, we can see that through the lines:

“Corpses are scattered through a paradise.”

These lines simply highlight the importance of a home. Mostly, Africa is considered to be paradise, and that too is for the reason that everyone loves their homeland so much that they start thinking of it as a paradise. Like if a person is far away from their original place, so they start loving their place even more and start missing their country more, they will call it Paradise. Now we know that there are so many Africans out there who are colonized and have been far away from their country, so on a large scale, Africa is specifically known as Paradise.

The poet has compared and called his country or ancestral location a ‘Paradise,’ although he has mentioned that there were corpses that were scattered all around the Paradise, so this line can simply show how desperately he wanted his country, that he loved every detail about his country, that despite being full of corpses being dispersed, still the poet misses his country so much that he calls it a paradise.

Moreover, if we talk about the word “corpses” here, we can say that the writer subtly wants to make the audience aware of the history of his country, when the colonizers killed many of them, and Africa was filled with the blood of the innocents. The question arises here: why would he mention this in this poem? And the answer is again the same because of its diasporic theme. If the poet gets to mention his original and ancestral location in his poem despite being safe in a second country, it's just for the reason that he still feels connected to his old location; he still misses it and feels like he belongs to that place. Thus, the poet believes that even though many years have passed due to the diaspora, he still feels like his first ancestral location is his home.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of this research has been to detect the diasporic elements such as home and belonging, migration and displacement, or hybridity in the poem ‘A Far Cry from Africa,’ written by a diasporic writer, Derek Walcott. In the discussion portion of the research, each element of diaspora has been mentioned with reference to the lines of the poem, discussing the usage, explanation, and purpose of use by the poet. Firstly, considering the background of the poet and the other consequences faced by the poet, there has been a thorough use of all the mentioned elements of the diaspora by the poet. Like in the lines of this poem, we could really see that there's an excessive use of home and belonging, hybridity, or displacement and migration; thus, this all leads us to one conclusion: that the poem ‘A Far Cry from Africa’ is a diaspora work by a diasporic writer, Derek Walcott.

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