

Research Article

QJantic Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (QJSSH)

Resistance and Identity in the Poetry of Derek Walcott: A Comprehensive Study of "A Far Cry from Africa"

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Abstract: Through "A Far Cry from Africa," Derek Walcott reveals his exploration of resistance and identity through his development of historical colonialism themes and cultural elements. This paper thoroughly investigates the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya through Walcott's poem as well as his approach to violent resistance against colonial governance. The author performs a complete evaluation of colonial heritage-related identity factors to show Walcott's experiences of life as a Caribbean poetry writer with a blended ancestral heritage. This research investigates how the Mau Mau Uprising demonstrates resistance and studies all the obstacles that stand in the way of independence attainment. As someone of African-European descent, Walcott gained expertise in hybridity and cultural estrangement because of his Caribbean background. The author uses poetic approaches to display the powerful emotions along with ethical dilemmas that occur when a person forms their identity. The study incorporates fundamental perspectives from postcolonial theory as it integrates Walcott's literary work into academic discussions about cultural heritage and historical memory in addition to power structures. Walcott's critical insights about identity remain relevant today because the author shows how individual and social identity frameworks support postcolonial research. The author overviews "A Far Cry From Africa" as a work that shows how identity develops between colonial legacies before asking readers to actively research history today and in the future.

Key Words: Resistance, Identity, Poetry, Derek Walcott, A Far Cry from Africa, Colonialism, Cultural

Introduction

Through his poetry, Derek Walcott explores postcolonial identity and resistance themes, while his work derives from colonial histories combined with displacement events and cultural fusion. Saint Lucia native Walcott accessed his writing skills from his roots as a person with African and European ancestry. Throughout his work, he explores the dual nature of being both colonized and colonizer, which stands as the main theme in his poem "A Far Cry from Africa" (Walcott, 1986).

The ballad reflects on the brutality of colonial control and the opposing moral perspectives between rulers and the people who fight against them because it emerged from the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya. Through direct descriptions, Walcott presents British imperial atrocities as well as African rebel attacks to display the true conditions of colonial history during his period. Throughout the poem, the voice confronts the struggle between two roles: their African heritage and their British education. The speaker confronts a dual identity because he possesses African ancestry and British academic training, through which he appreciates the colonial legacy (Ashcroft et al., 2003).

This poem uses evocative pictures to represent the challenges people experience in reconciling fragmented identity aspects within postcolonial spaces through the combination of historical insights and

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• **To Cite:** Adil, M., Bilal, F., & Zahid, A. (2025). Resistance and Identity in the Poetry of Derek Walcott: A Comprehensive Study of "A Far Cry from Africa". *QJantic Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 6(1), 305–313.
<https://doi.org/10.55737/qjssh.vi-i.25331>



emotional depth. Throughout his poem, Walcott depicts enduring dilemmas experienced by those who live between diverse worldviews and cultural heritage systems. Walcott uses poetry to battle colonial oppression and fight hybrid identity exclusion while examining the actual essence of belonging under the imperialist rule in his poetic work (Bhabha, [1994](#)).

Literature Review

Scholars extensively investigate Derek Walcott's "A Far Cry From Africa" because it presents both intricate expressions of resistance and poignant displays of identity issues that emerge throughout colonial turmoil and cultural integration eras. This Kenyan rebellion functions as the base for this composition as it explores problematic features of mixed heritage that operators in postcolonial countries face. Many scholars study how the poet faces battles across two continents since he maintains dual affiliations between Europe and Africa. The scholars agree with Walcott's ability to portray colonized peoples as handling the weight of the "imbalanced relationship between the colonizer and the colonized" through his characterization of a character embodying cultural identity confusion. The autobiographical aspect appears clearly in the poem because Walcott grew up in a mixed race between European and African people, which leads to both personal truth and emotional depth in his writing. The topic of dual identity emerges when the poet reveals his passion for his original homeland and the English language, which creates an everlasting cultural challenge. This poem finds its position among postcolonial resistance writing, according to literary critics. Through the Mau Mau rebellion story, the poet comments on colonial brutality and the blurred moral boundaries during anti-colonial revolutions. Through his poem, Walcott reveals his dual feelings about anti-colonial movements because these struggles both gain his support and distress him with their acts of violence from both sides. Scholars state that the poem leaves readers without simple answers about allegiances by presenting the speaker whose divided loyalties create confusion and uncertainty (Bhabha, [1994](#)). Multiple scholars examine in detail how Walcott uses his poem to stage the mental breakdown that emerges from having two cultural identities. According to critics, the poet remains poisoned by mingled blood ties between his two ancestral traditions since he fails to adopt either. The poem illustrates a widespread postcolonial issue in which people face the daunting task of dealing with legacies of violence alongside forced displacement and social banishment. Throughout the poem, the speaker fights to resolve his fractured feelings about his ambiguous heritage while facing emotional detachment and guilt associated with a hybrid cultural identity. The research analyzes Walcott's intricate relationship with his use of the English language. Although the colonizer's language represents power and creativity in literature, it remains an ever-present symbol of cultural dispersal and conformist behavior. The poet faces tension when he experiences love for the English language and his original identity roots because this situation mirrors the underlying postcolonial conflict that demands people use colonial tools to build their identity (McLeod, [2013](#)).

The critical discussion about "A Far Cry from Africa" demonstrates how the poem deeply examines the three essential ideas of resistance, identity development, and cultural mixture. Walcott demonstrates an unflinching method to examine the complications that people face when they inherit colonial heritage as they battle against external authority and internal divisions. Postcolonial scholars identify the poem's inability to resolve its tensions because this creative approach creates both strength and melancholy beauty that distinguishes it from other postcolonial works (Low, [2020](#)).

Resistance in A Far Cry from Africa

Through "A Far Cry From Africa" Derek Walcott examines deep aspects of colonial violence and combines it with imagery of blood alongside death symbolism and historical identity evolution and civilizational ironic contrasts. Throughout his poem the author uses the Mau Mau Uprising to examine colonial violence as he outlines how historical brutality creates personal along with national identities (Mamdani, [2018](#)).

Walcott reveals the literal and psychological damage of colonial violence by detailing blood scenes and death through his writing while initiating discussions about rebellious ethics. The verse imagery reveals how colonial oppression makes all people equally suffer because it permeates throughout the entire colonial history. Particular feelings of cultural mismatch make the speaker ill because the person inherits genetic material from two different cultures (Patterson, [2018](#)).

Walcott illustrates throughout his Mau Mau Uprising depiction how historical oppression forms both societal and individual identities. The transition after colonial rule together with questions about one's existence makes it harder to discover personal authenticity along with genuine cultural roots. According to the poem's structure individuals need to confront their previous obstacles together with acknowledging shared adversities before obtaining their lost cultural history and personal rediscovery becomes possible (Bhabha, 1994).

Walcott illustrates in his work the way civilization maintains problems with no solution, along with persistent unethical events. The poem uses portrayals of colonial mistreatment of people to build a case against colonial advancements so readers confront tragic historical realities concealed under progress narratives (Mamdani, 2018).

Through the poem "A Far Cry From Africa," the author showcases the enduring power of colonialism, which interferes with both personal identity and ethical values. Through his written works, Walcott establishes messages relevant to existing postcolonial dialogue while persuading modern readers to analyze colonial legacies and identity-seeking processes. Through emotive words and vivid images, Walcott develops an effective argument for historians to understand the restoration of harmony and the healing process. The poem reveals both the scars inflicted by colonial power and the enduring power of cultural identity during experiences of returning to genuine origins.

Colonial Brutality and Moral Critique

The poem opens with a striking contrast between Africa's tranquil beauty and the shocking reality of colonial violence:

*"A wind is ruffling the tawny pelt
Of Africa, Kikuyu, quick as flies,
Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt."*

The poet describes Africa as an active "tawny pelt" with flies and blood, symbolizing Australia's violence towards the natives. Through this imagery, the poet depicts the brutal nature of colonialism, showing both natural beauty and human suffering alongside each other. The Kikuyu uprising is depicted as a rebellion against years of repression, although its violent nature clouds the moral implications (Young, 2016).

Representation of Colonial Brutality

The poet uses straightforward images to depict how colonial forces caused their destructive impact. The speaker initially reveals their distress about the bloodshed because colonized peoples endured extensive trauma from these events. Through blood-related imagery, Walcott represents both external brutality and internal emotional damage that affects communities and their individual members.

Although the poem presents numerous obstacles in its discussion of violence and resistance, it concludes by understanding resistance as vital for defining oneself as well as reclaiming cultural heritage. The poem shows resistance against colonial tyranny serves as an essential path to national sovereignty and personal cultural expression. Walcott argues that fighting for autonomy enables people to achieve self-definition beyond colonial descriptions. The poem shows how cultural identity remains essential for colonial times. Throughout the piece, the speaker immerses themselves in history to unite African heritage with colonial damage while forming lingering attachments to their original homeland (Bhabha, 1994).

Walcott depicts the violence that colonized people endured through vivid, strong imagery. Walcott introduces the theme through blood imagery at the start of the poem in a sad tone which emphasizes urgency:

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

Through this line, the author shows the split identity between their African roots and European heritage while simultaneously using metaphor to represent colonial violence. Colonial violence causes irreparable harm to both the mental states of individual people and entire communities, as the writer describes being "poisoned."

Imagery based on blood serves as the poem's foundation to depict both one-sided violence of colonial



conflict and inner wounds affecting both imperial forces and indigenous people. Through the mention of "blood" the author intends to show wounds from suffering that unite opponents and victims beyond simple good and bad.

The poem originates from the turbulent times of the Mau Mau Uprising when Kenyans fought aggressively against British colonial dominance. Throughout the poem, Walcott invokes this historical conflict to demonstrate the cruel measures colonizers used to fight native rebellions. Colonial powers displayed violent opposition through detentions combined with torture as well as physical violence, which exposes the full extent of dominator control methods. Through his analysis of this historical context, Walcott shows how colonized populations suffered together from trauma, leading to the speaker's conflicted inner life (McLeod, [2013](#)).

Moral Critique

Through its discussion, the poem admits to the requirement of resistance, but it also analyzes the methods used to achieve freedom. The speaker tries to understand the ethical issues surrounding violent resistance as he identifies multiple layers of freedom's pursuit. Throughout the entire poem, readers notice how uncertain the speaker remains about resistance through violent means. Such actions lead to liberation through human sacrifice, as the speaker observes. The poem presents these ambiguous moral issues in the lines:

"I could not / bear to be killed for the sake of the dead."

Through these lines the speaker expresses deep misgivings toward using violence to reach their freedom goals. The speaker represents the psychological struggle that fighters in resistance movements endure because they need liberation yet must face the moral consequences of their resistance (Young, [2016](#)).

Throughout the poem, the author delves into an evaluation of colonial global powers by questioning their ethical behavior. The poem shows that both oppression and brutality targeting colonized communities constitute spiritual deficiencies. Walcott indicates through his writing that the colonizers lose their moral position through destructive behavior. Through their violent acts, the colonizers damage their victims as well as destroy their own capability to maintain human qualities. Walcott establishes the dubious morality of colonial rulers through his storytelling to make readers examine the far-reaching impacts of destructive colonial activities. Shared guilt acts as a central theme that appears throughout the whole poem. Through his mixed heritage, the speaker shows that colonial atrocities impact every group involved. The speaker's inner turmoil demonstrates a common struggle against colonial history, which shows that all people are involved regardless of their position of power (Ashcroft et al., [2003](#)).

Throughout his work, Walcott establishes a link between colonial violence and ethical evaluation alongside personal identity development as he shows how humans unite their social and personal elements. Post-colonial populations experience fragmented selves due to the torn identity that holds twin bloodlines. The internal psychological war represents a universal representation of every major dispute caused by past imperialistic events. Post-colonial identity formation requires residents to manage the multiple inheritance legacies of both their colonial past and the subject people because this heritage constructs complex identity structures. The writer critiques the process of forming personal identity throughout various periods of history in the presented poem (Patterson, [2018](#)).

Individuals strive to identify themselves in relation to the moral challenges produced by colonial activities. The speaker engages in self-reflection as well as learning by pondering about violent behavior and rebellious acts. Throughout their inner conflict the speaker questions their authentic nature together with their natural origins. The speaker develops an individual identity operating as a fusion of multicultural history and personal first-hand experiences as anti-colonial resistance.

The Irony of Civilization

Walcott challenges the colonial rationale that uses violence to 'civilize' those deemed 'savage.' He states:

*"The brutality between beasts is seen
As natural law, yet nobleman
Seeks his divinity through causing suffering."*

The controversy of colonialism becomes evident through this passage which shows that violent conduct from colonizers destroys their pretense of ethical dominance. Through this comment the poet shows that human activities masquerading as ethical conduct demonstrate greater brutality than animal behaviors.

Throughout colonial history manipulative powers used the term civilization as a justification to control indigenous populations. Colonial power structures depicted their position through a mission to bring education and progress as well as order to their view of savage territories. Through his critique Walcott reveals how much contradiction exists within the colonial civilizing ideology. The colonizers displayed cultural superiority as a core paradox because of its factual erroneousness. Their conduct displayed opposing values of a civilized society by instead executing actions of violence alongside exploitation.

Walcott uses colonial violence in his poem to demonstrate how strange it is when civilization fails to fulfill its mission. Through its presentation, the poem shows that the civilizing mission was commonly combined with oppressive violence, which destroyed its claimed beneficial values. The poetry uses blood imagery and violence to create the effect of exposing this contradiction. The poem exhibits bloodshed references, which reveal how colonial intrusion led to casualties of human life, thereby dismantling the typical establishment of progress and enlightenment as markers of civilization.

Walcott conducts an investigation of identity during the post-colonial era. Colonialism has resulted in a cultural disruption that makes people who belong to both colonizer and colonized identities live in a state of identity confusion. The speaker combines their identity of African ancestry with European cultural heritage. People face the contradictory nature of civilization because they must unite different cultural stories that result from colonial times.

Being subjected to colonial violence leads people to make finding their true identity their most important goal. The speaker explains how colonial "civilization" forces people to shift their ancestral connections resulting in multifaceted routes to cultural connection. Such authentic self-discovery exists in the direct approach toward our past experiences. The speaker aims to establish a new wholesome identity through the understanding of colonial injuries.

Walcott's poem announces an analysis of civilized morality which demonstrates how colonial domination conceals its destructive nature through false benevolence. The poem exposes the moral tensions that appeared in colonial projects known as the civilizing mission. Through his thoughts, the speaker demonstrates a deep understanding of the ethical challenges that appear while attempting to achieve freedom and define oneself. Colonial activities create an ironic situation because they clearly demonstrate the damage that results from such actions. The speaker shows contradictory reactions toward liberating violence because the pursuit of freedom carries ethical confusion.

Throughout his work, Walcott establishes a link between colonial violence and ethical evaluation alongside personal identity development as he shows how humans unite their social and personal elements. Post-colonial populations experience fragmented selves due to the torn identity that holds twin bloodlines. The internal psychological war represents a universal representation of every major dispute caused by past imperialistic events. Post-colonial identity formation requires residents to manage the multiple inheritance legacies of both their colonial past and the subject people because this heritage constructs complex identity structures. The writer critiques the process of forming personal identity throughout various periods of history in the presented poem.

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Confronting Colonial Violence

The poem "A Far Cry From Africa" by Derek Walcott uses emotional analysis to explain the numerous components of colonial violence by addressing spiritual and moral aspects of oppressive practices. Walcott uses purposeful language to reveal the actual colonial historical events while illustrating the Mau Mau



Uprising in his description of Kenya during that time. History confirms that the 1950s Mau Mau Uprising of Kenya served as the inspiration for "A Far Cry From Africa" by triggering intense armed battles between British colonial soldiers and Kikuyu people fighting for their rightful lands after decades of Kikuyu mistreatment. British records indicate that the Mau Mau Uprising provided resistance against the British colonial administration while also fighting against the derogatory treatment used by colonial powers.

Walcott explores various aspects of colonial violence because he views this phenomenon as a defensive response to unfairness yet without clear moral boundaries. The author evaluates resistance fighters' ethical conundrums when fighting for liberation in the poem. Throughout the opening lines of the poem the speaker presents acute pictures of violent conflicts fundamental to the effort of attaining independence. At the beginning of colonial contact the poet presents a direct account of the real-world situations to create both an impending sense of tragedy and unfortunate circumstances.

The author uses repeated mentions of blood throughout the poem to create a powerful metaphor representing violence and the traumatic impact of colonial administration. Through their admission of being affected by poison, the speaker demonstrates how collective blood from both repressors contaminates natural identity at personal and cultural levels. The poem merges imagery from the natural world with the destructive effects of colonial wars. The author details these opposing scenes to build a stronger emotional response, which underscores the devastating loss of beauty because of suffering.

Within the poem, the author uses violence to demonstrate the harsh requirements of ongoing opposition to oppression. The speaker understands that fighting oppression demands action, although this fight requires a constructive acceptance of the associated ethical dilemmas. During the poem, the characters fight with themselves about the costs and ethical issues of using violence to get freedom. The writer reveals the psychological turmoil of people involved in fighting colonial violence through their internal battle. Colonial violence forces aggressors and victims to develop new personal and communal identities, according to the speaker, who shows inner conflict about their resulting split between independence.

Walcott studies colonial violence to raise major ethical questions about combat strategies that claim freedom as their goal. The author demonstrates various moral dilemmas that confront revolutionaries who resort to violent tactics against their oppressors through the poem. The author sees violent rebellions as an avenue to restore independence, although he recognizes their negative moral consequences. Because colonial violence affects everyone, the process of assigning guilt becomes obscured along with responsibility identification. Everybody who inhabits colonial systems suffers since official violence concerns every resident, which leads to questioning the moral traits of unwilling participation.

Walcott delivers strong criticism against colonial rulers because their policies inflict dual damage to colonized individuals and supplanted authority groups while erasing humanity from both parties. The colonizers became unable to exist as human beings through unethical actions they conducted on behalf of civilization. People who follow their declared values accept violence, which leads to moral degradation when they cannot disconnect from them. According to the speaker, everyone involved in colonial oppression and colonization shares a similar painful experience due to colonial violence.

The speaker's experience of colonial violence develops into an intense internal struggle as a symbol of the widespread mental deterioration of post-colonial society residents. Several lines describe this identity confusion because of historical trauma as the speaker explains their suspicion of both cultural identities through their mixed ancestry during their quest for genuine self-expression after colonial violence ended. The speaker mourns all the losses produced by colonial terror since this destructive force continues to impact human lives and cultural components even after actual violence ends.

Despite violent confrontations there are indications in the text that healing between people remains possible. The author tries to recover their personal history through their literary work as they develop alternative ways of understanding their identity. The speaker combats colonial violence to retrieve both personal control and cultural treasures to reshape their heritage-related identity.

Imagery of Blood and Death

Through blood and death imagery, Derek Walcott powerfully portrays the severe horrors of colonial violence, which scar both communities and individual people. The central imagery in this poem delivers

both emotional intensity and represents the multi-faceted identity and resistance as well as moral uncertainty in African colonial history.

From the start, Walcott announces his poisoned state that stems from feeling blood from two different sides. The speaker stands in a dual cultural heritage landscape that is marked by violence in this opening statement of the poem. Through the use of the word "poisoned," the poem demonstrates how colonial history has damaged the speaker from within and combined their origins into one contaminated identity. The toxic substance expresses extensive early-life pain connected to bloody events, which creates feelings of grief and sadness.

Multiple meanings exist throughout the poem within the depiction of blood. The image represents the physical harm suffered by colonized peoples combined with the emotional consequences of such violence that they experienced. The poem transforms blood into an allegorical symbol to depict both military losses and familial breakdowns that result from colonization. Through its direct presentation of blood imagery, the speaker exposes historical distress in an emotional way that creates deep reader engagement.

The visual imagery of blood, in turn, is linked by the poet to words that have an orientation to death and bring themes of sorrow and mourning to the composition. The poem illustrating the heart-breaking results of colonial aggression is a repetition of the death-related imagery. The mere act of losing life in an anti-colonial revolt is mentioned, and readers are able to see the stark losses resistance fighters had to endure when attempting to win independence. In this poem, the mention of the specific death serves as a way to represent the time past and is still a reminder of the associations of death by means of historical traumas that have had collective effects today.

In his poem, Walcott contrasts peaceful nature images with bloody, violent scenes. The African natural elements come out to shackle themselves, 'the wild,' until nature is destroyed by violent events that seem to destroy everything. These dramatic opposites add to the effect of the poem, with which society's progressive development comes at the expense of the people. For him, the poem shows harmful colonial period in which pristine nature was destroyed by an offensive colonizer.

Through his use of poetic death-themed imagery, the poet works out the moral questions relating to the fight for liberation. It becomes difficult for the speaker to carry out justifiable violent resistance against their enemies. But it incorporates their questions about the ethics of being in battle with the colonial authorities and fighting against them for survival. When armed in resisting colonial power, it is difficult to use morality as a shield because often, the armed revolutionary will lose the image of positivism among revolutionary supporters.

Walcott has a very effective metaphor throughout his poem, associating various forms of human distress with related blood imagery. Speaks on the violence he has received from both opposing sides and the stain of colonial bloodshed he has become. Through this metaphor, the author paints the picture of how colonial aggression is equal for both parties to mark both as they are together. Existing historical knowledge about the mutual suffering of colonialists and those they colonized make up traditional character categories in colonial history, and readers are forced to examine the moral questions of the study of colonial history.

Historical Context and Identity Formation

Historical factors in Derek Walcott's poem "A Far Cry From Africa" provide a fundamental understanding of identity growth that deepens the analysis of colonial influence and its enduring consequences. The central focus within the poem pertains to the Mau Mau Uprising in Kenya because it represents an essential period during the resistance against British colonial leadership. Through historical references, Walcott examines how colonial procedures shaped individual and collective identities. He studies multiple aspects of identity creation that are affected by domination and force.

Walcott establishes strong opposition between serene natural imagery and bloody, violent imagery throughout his poem. Through "The Wild," Walcott allows natural elements of African origin to appear until violent events seem to destroy nature. By designating tranquil elements against violent ones, the poem demonstrates that society must necessarily incur undesirable losses during its progressive advancement. Through his use of opposing tensions in the poem, Walcott reveals the destructive results



of colonial times that brought harmful destruction to natural terrain.

The poet evaluates ethical uncertainties about freedom battles by employing images of mortality. The speaker faces considerable logistical hurdles in the justification of employing violent resistance tactics against their enemies. The characters maintain survival through fighting colonial authority but they hesitate to engage in rebellion because of ethical quandaries. The adherence to bloodshed resistance against colonial power makes it difficult to use morality as a defense since revolutionaries frequently damage the public perception of their revolutionary support base.

Throughout the poem, Walcott presents an extensive metaphor that establishes connections between all forms of human suffering by using blood imagery. Through his words, the speaker demonstrates that participating in colonial conflict polluted him after confrontations between opposing forces. Through this metaphor, the author demonstrates how colonial aggression similarly marks both parties throughout their time of interaction. Knowledge of mutual suffering among colonialists and colonized groups affects traditional character classifications in colonial settings, thus enabling readers to examine the moral components of colonial history (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

Conclusion

Through "A Far Cry From Africa" Derek Walcott examines deep aspects of colonial violence and combines it with imagery of blood alongside death symbolism and historical identity evolution and civilizational ironic contrasts. Throughout his poem the author uses the Mau Mau Uprising to examine colonial violence as he outlines how historical brutality creates personal along with national identities.

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