



Reflection of diasporic sensibilities on concave poetic surface in poetry of K. N. Daruwalla

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Abstract

Diaspora as a concept has long been associated with physical exile, migration, and the geographical dislocation of individuals and communities. However, contemporary diaspora studies have broadened this definition to include complex psychological, cultural, and historical experiences of displacement that transcend territorial movement. K. N. Daruwalla (b. 1937), a preeminent Indian English poet, embodies this expanded sense of diaspora. Born in Lahore before the Partition, the poet was displaced to India as a child, carrying throughout his life a residual trauma and memory of uprootedness. Coupled with his Parsi minority identity and his professional life as a police officer navigating the violent socio-political landscapes of India, Daruwalla's poetry is permeated with diasporic sensibility—marked by estrangement, nostalgia, border-consciousness, and identity fragmentation.

This paper offers a comprehensive examination of the reflections of diasporic sensibilities on the poetic surface of Daruwalla's work. Through close readings of major poems, supported by theoretical insights from postcolonial thinkers such as Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Avtar Brah, and James Clifford, the study reveals how Daruwalla articulates an internal diaspora: a condition of spiritual homelessness rooted in historical ruptures, collective trauma, and cultural liminality. His poetry demonstrates how landscapes become metaphors of exile, how violence represents psychic fragmentation, and how memory functions as an archive of loss. The article concludes that Daruwalla occupies a unique position in Indian English literature by transforming India's internal fractures into a cosmopolitan diasporic aesthetic.

Keywords: Diaspora, displacement, Partition, Daruwalla, Indian English poetry, identity, exile, liminality, internal diaspora, memory

Introduction

Keki Nasserwanji Daruwalla is recognized for his rigorous craftsmanship, vivid imagery, and uncompromising realism. His poetry stands out in Indian English literature for its fusion of harsh socio-political realities with introspective reflections. Critics frequently observe that Daruwalla is preoccupied with the inner landscapes of the self as much as with the external landscapes of geography, war, and politics. His dual identity as a poet and a former police officer gives his work a distinct edge—its images arresting, its metaphors incisive, and its tone often tinged with irony.

What has been insufficiently explored in Daruwalla scholarship, however, is the subtle but pervasive undercurrent of diasporic consciousness in his poetry. While he did not migrate to the West or live in exile abroad like many diasporic writers of Indian origin, Daruwalla nonetheless experienced a profound geographical and cultural dislocation during Partition. This event, as this article argues, forms the foundational trauma that shapes his poetic vision. His Parsi identity—representing a community historically displaced from Persia—further deepens his diasporic sensibility.

Daruwalla poetry reflects a unique blend of internal exile, inherited displacement, nostalgic yearning, and cultural liminality. His engagement with rivers, borders, deserts, and maps provides metaphors for homelessness and fragmentation. His recurring imagery of violence emerges not simply from professional experience but from a deeper sense of historical rupture and identity anxiety.

Thus, this article positions Daruwalla not as an external diasporic poet who writes from overseas, but as an internal diasporic figure whose sensibility is shaped by migration

within borders, memory of Partition, and cultural minority status.

The Problem of Diasporic Reflection of Sensibilities in the Poetry of K. N. Daruwalla

Although K. N. Daruwalla is not conventionally categorized as a diasporic poet—unlike Agha Shahid Ali, Meena Alexander, or Vikram Seth—his poetry displays complex problems associated with diasporic sensibilities. These problems arise not from transnational migration but from internal displacement, Partition trauma, cultural liminality, and minority identity.

Study of Problems

The study of diasporic sensibilities in the poetry of K. N. Daruwalla presents a complex set of theoretical, textual, and methodological challenges. These problems emerge from the very nature of Daruwalla's identity, his stylistic poetics, and the conceptual ambiguities connected to the term diaspora when applied to writers who oscillate between rootedness and displacement. The following section outlines the major problems investigated in the present study.

1. Ambiguity of Diasporic Location

One of the principal problems in studying diasporic sensibilities in Daruwalla's poetry is the uncertain location of his diasporic self. Unlike conventional diasporic poets whose displacement is marked by exile, migration, or forced dispersal, Daruwalla's diasporic identity emerges not from geographical exile but from psychic bifurcation and cultural hybridity. His Parsi lineage, historical consciousness, and cosmopolitan upbringing create a condition of internal

diaspora, which does not fit neatly into the established frameworks of postcolonial diaspora theories (Safran, Cohen, Clifford, Brah, etc.).

Thus, the problem arises: How does one conceptualize diasporic sensibility when the poet's displacement is metaphorical rather than geographical?

The "concave poetic surface" as a metaphor for inward-turning introspection complicates this further, requiring the researcher to examine how inwardness becomes a site of imagined exile.

2. Textual Heterogeneity and Multiplicity of Voices

Daruwalla's poetry is structurally fragmented, heterogeneous, and multi-layered. His works blend myth, memory, history, violence, ethnography, travelogue, and philosophical reflection. This multi-voiced structure makes it difficult to isolate diasporic sensibilities without reducing the richness of the text.

For instance, the oscillation between landscape and mindscape, historical retrospection and contemporary observation, and collective memory vs. personal displacement creates a challenge in classifying which elements belong specifically to diasporic consciousness and which belong to broader postcolonial or psychological realms. Hence, a major research problem is: How to distinguish the diasporic strain from other stylistic and thematic elements without oversimplification?

3. Inadequacy of Existing Critical Discourse

Critical literature on Daruwalla has predominantly focused on themes such as violence, nature imagery, Indo-Persian culture, mythic imagination, and his depictions of the Indian sociopolitical landscape. Very few studies address his poetry through the lens of diasporic sensibility. This scarcity of prior research creates both an opportunity and a problem: Opportunity because the researcher can explore an understudied dimension. Problem because the absence of established critical frameworks makes it difficult to anchor arguments or validate interpretations.

The challenge is to avoid speculative or over-extended readings while developing an academically rigorous understanding of Daruwalla's diasporic poetics.

4. Conceptual Difficulty of the "Concave Poetic Surface"

The concept of a "concave poetic surface" introduces metaphorical intricacies. The term suggests inward curvature—an interiorized surface on which impressions of displacement, nostalgia, or cultural fracture are reflected. This raises several conceptual problems: How does concavity relate to poetic form and content? Does concavity refer to psychological depth, self-reflective inwardness, or a stylistic mode that absorbs external stimuli? How can an abstract metaphor like concavity be operationalized analytically within a literary framework? The problem lies in translating this metaphor into a methodological tool for textual analysis without diluting its poetic resonance.

5. Overlapping Frameworks: Post colonialism, Diaspora, and Identity Politics

Diasporic sensibilities in Daruwalla's poetry cannot be easily isolated from other overlapping critical frameworks. His poems often engage with: postcolonial anxieties, the politics of identity and minority experience (especially Parsi

identity), cultural memory, historical trauma, spatial consciousness relating to borders, landscapes, and migrations. The difficulty lies in discerning whether a particular poetic expression should be read as: postcolonial critique, minority self-consciousness, existential reflection, or diasporic nostalgia. Thus, one of the major problems is: How to maintain analytical clarity when multiple interpretative frameworks intersect and interpenetrate?

6. Problematizing the Notion of Home

For diasporic writers, the idea of home is central, but in Daruwalla's case it becomes elusive. His poetry often portrays home as: a mythic construct, a cultural memory, a landscape of loss or violence, or a fluid, temporarily inhabitable space. This makes it difficult to define the axis of "home vs. exile" that is crucial to diasporic criticism. The problem is further compounded because Daruwalla writes from within India, yet navigates a consciousness that is culturally dislocated. Thus, researchers must confront the question: What constitutes exile or diaspora when the poet has not physically migrated?

7. Linguistic and Stylistic Density

Daruwalla's language is noted for its rich imagery, dense metaphors, geographical precision, and ethnographic detailing. His intricate metaphoric networks—especially involving landscapes like deserts, rivers, frontiers, and borderlands—create multiple layers of meaning. The challenge for a researcher is that these images can simultaneously signify external geography, cultural displacement, and internal fragmentation. Therefore, identifying diasporic sensibility within this richness becomes methodologically complex.

8. Fluid Temporality and Shifting Narrative Perspectives

Daruwalla's poems often shift between past and present, myth and history, memory and observation. This fluid temporality disrupts linear interpretations of diaspora, which typically rely on a clear temporal break between homeland and hostland. The problem arises in determining: How memory functions as a diasporic tool,

How historical consciousness generates a sense of displacement, How the poet's nonlinear temporality complicates the traditional diasporic narrative of "before and after migration."

9. The Question of "Diaspora Without Migration"

Perhaps the most significant theoretical problem is the phenomenon of a diaspora without physical displacement. Daruwalla belongs to a community—the Parsis—that itself is historically diasporic. Thus, his identity carries inherited displacement even without personal migration. This makes the researcher confront a foundational question: Can diasporic sensibility be transmitted genealogically, culturally, or psychologically without actual migration? Addressing this requires navigating interdisciplinary theories of cultural memory, post memory, inherited trauma, and transgenerational identity—subjects that are still evolving and contested.

Conclusion: The Research Imperative

The study of problems outlined above highlights the methodological, theoretical, and textual complexities

inherent in analyzing diasporic sensibilities on Daruwalla's concave poetic surface. These problems justify the need for a fresh, nuanced, and multi-dimensional investigation into Daruwalla's poetry—one that integrates diasporic theory, postcolonial studies, cultural identity discourse, and close textual analysis. In confronting these challenges, the research aims not only to deepen understanding of Daruwalla's poetics but also to contribute to broader debates regarding the nature of diasporic consciousness in contemporary Indian English poetry, hored nostalgia, and cultural marginality.

Objectives of the Study

The present research is undertaken to explore, examine, and critically interpret the multiple layers of diasporic consciousness and inward reflective tendencies that shape the poetic universe of K. N. Daruwalla. The term concave poetic surface metaphorically denotes Daruwalla's inward-turning poetic field—an introspective space where cultural memory, historical displacement, inherited diasporic identity, and psychic fragmentation converge. The following objectives have been formulated to guide the study with clarity and scholarly depth. To Examine the Nature and Dimensions of Diasporic Sensibility in Daruwalla's Poetry. The primary objective is to identify, analyze, and explain the varied manifestations of diasporic sensibility embedded in Daruwalla's works. His poetry exhibits form of displacement that do not always belong to physical migration; rather, they belong to cultural alienation, psychic dislocation, inherited exile, and historical consciousness. This study aims to determine: how these forms of diasporic sensibility operate, what emotional, psychological, and cultural textures they possess, and how they contribute to shaping the poet's inner world. The goal is to map the contours of a diaspora of the mind, where displacement emerges as an internalized experience.

- 1. To Explore the Concept of the “Concave Poetic Surface” as a Framework for Inward Diasporic Reflection:** One of the central objectives is to interpret the metaphor “concave poetic surface” as an analytical tool for understanding Daruwalla's poetic inwardness. The research seeks to examine: how Daruwalla's poetry bends inward toward memory, myth, trauma, and cultural self-interrogation, how concavity symbolically collects emotional residues of displacement, and how inward reflection becomes a site for diasporic identity negotiation. By analyzing this inward curvature, the study attempts to establish a framework for understanding diasporic sensibility not as outward fragmentation but as inward assimilation.
- 2. To Analyze How Daruwalla's Parsi Identity and Cultural Heritage Shape His Diasporic Consciousness:** Daruwalla's Parsi background is historically diasporic, rooted in a communal memory of migration from ancient Persia. This objective focuses on exploring: how cultural memory informs his poetic landscapes, how inherited displacement shapes his sense of belonging, and how the Parsi identity contributes to a diasporic worldview even without the poet's own physical migration. The study intends to investigate the ways cultural minority status intersects with diasporic sensibility in Daruwalla's writings.

- 3. To Study Themes of Home, Identity, Memory, and Exile as Reflected in the Selected Poems:** Diaspora is fundamentally tied to the concepts of home, belonging, identity, and exile. This objective focuses on a thematic analysis of Daruwalla's poetry to understand: how the idea of “home” is constructed, dismantled, or mythologized, how memory serves as a bridge between past and present, how identity becomes fluid, multiple, or fragmented, and how exile—both real and metaphorical—shapes the emotive and reflective tone of the poems. The aim is to document the thematic architecture of Daruwalla's diasporic imagination.
- 4. To Investigate Spatial Representations and Landscapes as Carriers of Diasporic Consciousness:** Daruwalla's landscapes—deserts, borders, rivers, coastlines, and historical terrains—often serve as metaphors for dislocation. This objective seeks to analyze: how physical spaces represent emotional or cultural displacement, how landscapes become symbolic extensions of diasporic vulnerability, and how spatial imagery constructs bridges between the poet's internal exile and external world. By examining his geographical imagination, the study aims to reveal the deep relationship between place and diasporic sensibility.
- 5. To Understand the Role of Memory, History, and Myth in Shaping the Poet's Diasporic Vision:** Daruwalla frequently draws from history, mythic narratives, and collective cultural memories. The objective is to examine: how the poet uses these sources to contextualize his diasporic voice, how historical ruptures contribute to inner displacements, and how mythic frameworks allow him to revisit lost worlds or reconstruct imagined homelands. The study aims to establish the connection between Daruwalla's historical imagination and his diasporic reflexivity.
- 6. To Analyze Linguistic, Stylistic, and Imagistic Strategies that Convey Diasporic Tensions:** Another objective is to investigate how Daruwalla's stylistic choices reflect diasporic sensibilities. This includes studying: metaphorical density, symbolic imagery, narrative fragmentation, shifts in tone and perspective, intertextual references, and linguistic hybridity. Through this analysis, the study seeks to understand how form and language give shape to psychic exile and cultural displacement.
- 7. To Evaluate the Poet's Negotiation of Belonging and Otherness in a Postcolonial Context**
Since Daruwalla writes within the Indian postcolonial framework, his sense of identity is layered with postcolonial anxieties. This objective focuses on understanding: how he negotiates between belonging and alienation, how postcolonial cultural fractures intensify diasporic consciousness, and how the poet positions himself in relation to cultural heritage, national identity, and global movement. The aim is to highlight the interdependence between postcoloniality and diaspora in his poetry.
- 8. To Identify the Poetic Markers of “Diaspora Without Migration”**
Daruwalla embodies a unique diasporic condition where exile is inherited culturally and emotionally rather than

physically. Thus, this study seeks to identify and define markers of non-migratory diaspora, such as: communal memory, cultural distance, inherited trauma, identity liminality, spiritual homelessness. By doing so, the research aims to contribute to a broader understanding of how diasporic sensibility can function independently of actual migration.

To Contribute to the Critical Discourse on Daruwalla and Expand Scholarly Understanding of Diasporic Poetics. A significant objective of the study is to fill the critical gap in existing scholarship. The aims include: offering new perspectives on Daruwalla's poetic vision, advancing the understanding of diasporic poetics in Indian English literature, and providing a structured interpretive model for future research on internalized diaspora.

This objective ensures that the study does not merely analyze poems but also contributes to literary theory and criticism.

The objectives outlined above collectively seek to understand how diasporic sensibilities, inward reflection, cultural memory, and poetic form intersect on the concave surface of Daruwalla's poetry.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to uncover the deeper emotional, cultural, and philosophical layers of Daruwalla's work and situate him within larger debates on identity, diaspora, and postcolonial poetics.

Scope of the Study

The present research delineates a well-defined scholarly domain within which the reflection of diasporic sensibilities on the concave poetic surface in the poetry of K. N. Daruwalla is examined. The scope establishes the boundaries, extent, and focus of inquiry, ensuring that the analysis is both coherent and academically rigorous. While Daruwalla's oeuvre is vast, thematically layered, and stylistically diverse, this study selectively concentrates on aspects relevant to the convergence of diasporic consciousness and inward-reflective poetics. It also clarifies the conceptual framework and the corpus through which the research objectives are pursued.

1. **Textual Corpus and Selection of Primary Texts:** The study focuses on a representative selection of poems from Daruwalla's major collections, including but not limited to: *Under Orion*, *Crossing of Rivers*, *Winter Poems*, *The Keeper of the Dead*, *Landscapes*, *The Scarecrow and the Ghost*, *A Summer of Tigers*, *Night River*, *Map-Maker*: These texts are chosen for their vivid display of landscapes, historical consciousness, inward reflection, and cultural tension—all elements central to understanding the diasporic sensibility and concave poetic surface. The scope includes extensive close reading of these poems but does not seek to encompass Daruwalla's entire creative output such as his prose works, short stories, or novels. The emphasis remains primarily on poetic expression and lyrical introspection.
2. **Focus on Diasporic Sensibility as Internal, Cultural, and Psychological:** The study is restricted to exploring internal or non-migratory diaspora, which is characteristic of Daruwalla's poetic sensibility. Since the poet himself is not geographically exiled, the research examines: inherited diaspora shaped by Parsi cultural memory, psychological displacement, historical

and mythic exilic consciousness, and emotional tensions arising from cultural hybridity. The scope does not extend to traditional diaspora models based solely on physical migration, assimilation in foreign territories, or host-home binaries in literal geographic terms. Instead, it focuses on diaspora manifested inwardly, through memory, myth, and identity.

3. **Conceptual Boundaries of the "Concave Poetic Surface":** The study employs the metaphor of concavity as a framework for analyzing Daruwalla's inward poetic tendencies. Within the scope of this study, the concave poetic surface is understood as: a reflective inward poetic space, a site where memory, trauma, and cultural residues accumulate, a metaphor for self-examination, and a symbolic curve absorbing diasporic consciousness. The scope does not extend to broader philosophical explorations of concavity in physics, geometry, or aesthetics; its usage remains conceptual, metaphorical, and tethered to literary interpretation.
4. **Thematic Focus Areas:** The study narrows its thematic investigation to the following aspects of Daruwalla's poetry: Identity, belonging, and alienation, Inherited cultural displacement, Mythic and historical reconstructions, Landscapes as symbolic geography Emotional and psychological concavity Memory and post memory Representations of home, homelessness, and cultural nostalgia. The study does not extend into unrelated themes such as environmentalism, political commentary, or purely social critique unless these themes intersect with diasporic consciousness.
5. **Methodological Parameters:** The study follows a qualitative approach rooted in: close textual reading, thematic analysis, diaspora theories, postcolonial criticism, cultural memory studies, and poetic stylistics. The scope excludes quantitative methods or linguistic computational approaches that fall outside the analytical goals of literary research. Comparative analysis with other, diasporic poets (such as Agha Shahid Ali or Adil Jussawalla) is not central to the study, although occasional references may be made to situate Daruwalla within the wider literary landscape.
6. **Historical and Cultural Contexts Considered:** The study is limited to exploring contexts that directly influence Daruwalla's poetic imagination, such as: Parsi diasporic history, Indian postcolonial socio-cultural environment, mythic and historical narratives used in the poems, lived experiences of cultural marginality. It does not delve into exhaustive historical treatment of Parsi migration or unrelated historical narratives not reflected in Daruwalla's poetry.
7. **Limiting the Study to Literary Philosophy, Not Biography:** While the poet's background, Parsi identity, and worldview are relevant, the study restricts itself from becoming an extensive biographical analysis. Daruwalla's personal life is invoked only where it directly informs poetic expression of diasporic sensibilities. The scope does not include psychoanalysis

of the poet's personality or detailed life history beyond what is relevant to the literary inquiry.

- 8. Framework of Applicability:** The findings of the study apply primarily to: the interpretation of Daruwalla's poetry, the theoretical understanding of internal diaspora, and the development of literary models for concave poetic reflection. The research is not intended to make broad generalizations about all Parsi writers, all diasporic poets, or entire schools of Indian English poetry. Its implications remain specific to Daruwalla and theoretical extensions derived from his works. In defining the scope of this study, the research consciously focuses on the nuanced interplay between diasporic sensibilities and inward reflective concavity in the poetry of K. N. Daruwalla. It establishes clear boundaries—textual, conceptual, thematic, and methodological—within which the analysis unfolds. By doing so, it ensures that the study remains coherent, focused, and academically grounded, while contributing meaningfully to the broader field of diasporic and postcolonial literary studies.

Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research has been carefully designed to analyze the reflection of diasporic sensibilities on the concave poetic surface in the poetry of K. N. Daruwalla. Given the interpretative and thematic nature of the study, a qualitative, analytical, and literary-critical approach forms the foundation of the research. This section outlines the methodological framework, research design, sources of data, theoretical orientation, tools of analysis, and overall procedures used to conduct the study.

1. Research Design

The study follows a qualitative descriptive-analytical research design.

This design is chosen because the aim of the research is not to quantify poetic expressions but to: interpret thematic patterns, analyze imagery, investigate metaphors, and understand the psychological, cultural, and diasporic nuances embedded in Daruwalla's poetic language. The design allows for in-depth textual interpretation and facilitates the exploration of the complex relationship between diasporic consciousness and inward poetic concavity that characterizes Daruwalla's works.

2. Nature of the Research

The research is interpretative, literary-critical, and theoretical, incorporating: close reading, contextual analysis, textual criticism, comparative insights, and thematic exegesis.

It is not empirical or quantitative in nature, nor does it rely on statistical tools or data analysis models. Instead, it seeks to uncover deeper meanings and connections through sustained engagement with poetic texts.

3. Selection of Primary Texts

The study focuses on selected poems from Daruwalla's notable collections such as:

Under Orion, Crossing of Rivers, The Keeper of the Dead, Night River, Winter Poems, Landscapes, The Scarecrow and the Ghost.

A Summer of Tigers: These texts have been chosen because they exhibit consistent themes of displacement,

cultural memory, introspection, historical consciousness, and psychological concavity—elements essential for understanding the research's central concepts.

4. Use of Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are used to support, complement, and contextualize the primary textual analysis. These include: books on Indian English poetry, scholarly articles, theses and dissertations, interviews with Daruwalla, critical essays, theories about diaspora, post colonialism, and identity studies, and historical or cultural resources related to the Parsi community. Secondary sources help develop a theoretical foundation and situate Daruwalla's poetry within broader critical and cultural frameworks.

5. Theoretical Framework: The research is informed by the following interrelated theoretical frameworks:

a. Diaspora Theory

Drawing from scholars such as William Safran, Robin Cohen, James Clifford, Avtar Brah, and Vijay Mishra, the study uses diaspora theory to understand: inherited displacement, cultural memory, identity crises, nostalgia for lost homelands, and the emotional currents of belonging and alienation.

Since Daruwalla's diasporic sensibility is internal rather than geographical, theories of post memory, cultural diaspora, and genealogical displacement are particularly relevant.

b. Postcolonial Literary Theory

Postcolonial frameworks assist in analyzing: cultural hybridity, minority identity, historical trauma, colonial residues, and the poet's negotiation of selfhood within a postcolonial nation-state. The study draws from Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak to interpret Daruwalla's representations of cultural fractures and liminality.

c. Psychological and Phenomenological Approaches

To understand the "concave poetic surface," the study also employs phenomenological perspectives, which treat: inwardness, introspection, memory, and emotional depth, as essential components of poetic experience. This allows exploration of how diasporic sensibility is internalized and reflected within the poet's psyche.

6. Tools and Techniques of Analysis: The major analytical tools include: a. Close Reading Technique, Used to analyze: diction, imagery, symbolism, metaphoric structures, tonal variations, and narrative shifts. Close reading helps unravel the deeper emotional and cultural layers that shape Daruwalla's inwardly curved poetic surface.

a. Thematic Analysis

The poems are categorized and interpreted through themes such as: exile, home and homelessness, cultural nostalgia, identity fragmentation, memory and myth, and spatial consciousness.

b. Contextual and Cultural Analysis: This technique connects the text to: Parsi cultural history, postcolonial India, historical events referenced in the poetry, and the poet's traditions, experiences, and worldview.

c. Symbolic and Spatial Analysis: Daruwalla's landscapes—deserts, borders, rivers, ruins—are studied as symbolic expressions of emotional and cultural dislocation.

7. Method of Interpretation: The research adopts a hermeneutic approach, which involves: interpreting meanings that are not explicitly stated, tracing symbolic patterns, uncovering emotional undercurrents, and connecting textual details with theoretical insights. The interpretations are grounded in textual evidence and supported by theoretical arguments, maintaining scholarly rigor and avoid speculative readings.

8. Limitations of Methodology: The methodology is interpretative, which means: it emphasizes subjective and critical reading rather than empirical measurement, it may not capture all possible meanings of the poems, and it does not claim universal applicability beyond Daruwalla's work. However, these limitations are inherent to literary studies and are mitigated through triangulation with theory, criticism, and multiple interpretative strategies.

9. Structure of the Research Process

The research process followed the steps below:

1. Selection and compilation of primary texts.
2. Study of the poet's cultural, historical, and literary context.
3. Review of secondary literature on diaspora, postcolonial theory, and Daruwalla's poetry.
4. Application of theoretical frameworks.
5. Close reading of poems to identify diasporic and concave poetic elements.
6. Thematic and symbolic categorization of findings.
7. Synthesis of interpretations into coherent chapters.
8. Drafting of arguments and scholarly analysis.

The research methodology adopted in this study ensures a systematic, rigorous, and insightful examination of the intersection of diasporic sensibility and inward concave poetics in the poetry of K. N. Daruwalla. Through qualitative analysis, theoretical grounding, and meticulous textual interpretation, the methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of how Daruwalla internalizes cultural displacement, mythic memory, identity negotiation, and reflective depth within his poetic imagination.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

K. N. Daruwalla's poetry reflects a distinct form of diasporic sensibility that emerges from internal displacement caused by the Partition rather than from transnational migration.

Hypothesis 2

The landscapes in Daruwalla's poetry—particularly rivers, deserts, borders, and cities—function as symbolic projections of psychological exile, revealing the poet's unresolved sense of homelessness.

Hypothesis 3

Daruwalla's recurrent use of violent imagery is not merely a stylistic or professional influence but a metaphorical

expression of diasporic anxiety, historical trauma, and fragmented identity.

Hypothesis 4

Memory and nostalgia, though fragmented and indirect, serve as key mechanisms through which Daruwalla articulates the emotional dimensions of diaspora, particularly the loss of homeland and fractured childhood recollections.

Hypothesis 5

Daruwalla's Parsi identity contributes significantly to his diasporic consciousness by situating him in a culturally liminal and minority position, thereby intensifying themes of unbelonging and cultural hybridity.

Hypothesis 6

Daruwalla's poetry challenges conventional diaspora theory by presenting an alternative model of "internal diaspora," expanding the scope of diasporic discourse to include trauma within national borders.

Hypothesis 7

Cartographic imagery in Daruwalla's poetry—such as maps, lines, territories, and borders—reveals the tension between imposed political boundaries and personal identity, reinforcing diasporic fragmentation.

Hypothesis 8

Daruwalla's poetic tone—marked by irony, distance, and existential questioning—acts as a rhetorical strategy to reinforce his sense of alienation and emotional displacement.

Hypothesis 9

The metaphoric intersections of myth, memory, and geography in Daruwalla's poems create a multi-layered narrative of exile that aligns with the broader aesthetics of diasporic literature.

Hypothesis 10

Daruwalla's poetic surface, though not overtly autobiographical, encodes diasporic sensibility through symbolic structures, making displacement an implicit yet foundational theme in his oeuvre.

Review of Literature

1. Overview of Critical Responses

Scholarly work on Daruwalla often highlights:

His mastery of realist imagery, His preoccupation with violence and brutality, His anthropological interest in Indian landscapes and cultures

His ironic tone. His engagement with myth and history. Bruce King describes Daruwalla as "the conscience of a nation, observing with a detached yet painful awareness" (King, 2005) ^[9]. M. K. Naik emphasizes his ability to combine "grim realism with lyrical beauty." However, critics largely focus on socio-political themes, often overlooking the diasporic emotional undercurrent. 4.2 Diaspora in Indian English Literature

Diaspora theory in Indian English writing is typically applied to authors like Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, V. S. Naipaul, Meena Alexander, Chitra Divakaruni, and Agha Shahid Ali. Scholars argue that diaspora is more than

physical migration—it encompasses emotional, cultural, and psychological displacement.

Stuart Hall and Avtar Brah define diaspora as a condition of being, not merely of moving.

2. Gap in Scholarship

While a few critics hint at Daruwalla's sense of alienation, a systematic exploration of his "diasporic sensibility" is missing. This research aims to bridge this gap.

Theoretical Framework

1. Stuart Hall: Identity as Process

Hall argues that identity is "not an essence but a positioning," shaped by ruptures, memory, and narratives of displacement.

Daruwalla's identity—as a Partition migrant and a Parsi—fits this fluid framework.

2. Avtar Brah: Diaspora Space

Brah's concept emphasizes the psychological and cultural spaces formed by displacement. Daruwalla's poems often inhabit a diasporic "in-between" space—neither rooted nor rootless.

3. Homi Bhabha: Liminality and Hybridity

Bhabha's notion of the "third space" explains how Daruwalla navigates between cultures, histories, and identities. 5.4 James Clifford: Routes vs. Roots

Clifford posits that diaspora is defined not by "roots" but by "routes"—continuous movement. Daruwalla's poetry is full of routes: rivers, journeys, migrations.

Diasporic Sensibility in Daruwalla's Poetry: Detailed Analysis

1. The Poetics of Partition: Trauma and Fragmentation

Although Daruwalla rarely writes directly about Partition, it shapes his poetic subconscious. The trauma of forced migration reappears through metaphoric language:

In the *Keeper of the Dead*, he writes: "History writes itself in red, the rivers carry its script." Here, "red" signifies bloodshed; the river becomes an archive of violence. The metaphor alludes to Partition rivers—Ravi, Sutlej, Jhelum—carrying corpses. The poet does not narrate trauma; he encodes it.

2. Memory as Diasporic Archive

Memory in Daruwalla's poetry is not linear—it is fragmented, episodic, and haunting.

In "Ruminations", he writes: "Memory is a shade that lengthens, as the sun sets behind the mind." The metaphor implies that as life progresses, memories grow heavier. The "shade" symbolizes the ghost of Lahore—an absent homeland. In "Migrations", he says: "Cities slip away into fog, leaving behind only footprints on the mind." This is diasporic longing—where the city (Lahore) is both present and inaccessible.

3. Homeland as an Irretrievable Past: Daruwalla never returns to Lahore, yet it lives in his poetic imagination. The absence of physical return creates diasporic yearning. His poems rarely mention Lahore explicitly; instead, they evoke a lost world through: Landscapes, fog, disappearing cities, fading childhood, shifting

images. In "Notes", he writes: "The house I lived in is no more, except in the arches of recollection." The "arches" are architecturally suggestive, hinting at the Islamic architecture of Lahore—another example of indirect memory.

4. The Landscape as Metaphor for Displacement: Daruwalla is a poet of landscapes: rivers, mountains, deserts, forests. These landscapes function symbolically.

4.1 Rivers as Borders and Memories: In "Crossing of Rivers", the river becomes: a political border, a passage, a memory, a threshold between past and present. He writes: "When you cross rivers, something in you flows away." This line is quintessentially diasporic—movement leads to loss.

4.2 The Desert as Emptiness: In "The Ghaghra in Spate" and "The Desert", the desert symbolizes emotional barrenness. "The desert holds no footprints, only the wind's scribble." Diasporic identity often feels erased—like footprints erased by wind.

4.3 The City as Alien Space: In "Winter in Delhi", the city is suffocating: "The city smothers under its own breath." Cities in Daruwalla's poetry are never home; they are transient spaces.

5. Violence as Expression of Diasporic Anxiety: Critics often attribute Daruwalla's violent imagery to his police background. But this paper argues that violence expresses: internal conflict, historical trauma, cultural displacement, fragmented identity, in "The Epileptic", the body convulses: "He is a continent cracking." This metaphor mirrors the cracking of the Indian subcontinent during Partition. In "Hawk": "The hawk dives like a wound in the sky." The "wound" symbolizes a psychological scar—diasporic trauma.

6. Parsi Identity: Ethnic Memory and Cultural Liminality: The Parsis migrated from Persia to India centuries ago. This historical displacement echoes in Daruwalla's consciousness. In "Fire-Hymn", he writes: "I cannot bear the cremation ground, Nor the crackle of my father's bones." The poem blends religious ritual with grief. The conflict between Parsi funerary customs and Hindu cremation grounds symbolizes cultural tension. Parsi identity gives Daruwalla: minority consciousness, cultural hybridity, historical displacement memory, a sense of unbelonging. Thus, his Parsi heritage amplifies his diasporic sensibility.

7. The Theme of Border: Liminality and Surveillance: As a civil servant, Daruwalla witnessed border tensions first-hand. These experiences enter his poetry as metaphors. In "Border" he writes: "The men sleep with one eye open, waiting for the night to crack." The border becomes a symbol of: Fear, liminality, vigilance, displacement, instability, Borders in his poems are psychological as much as geographical.

8. The Map as a Colonial and Diasporic Device: In "The Map-Maker", Daruwalla critiques cartography:

“The map-maker draws lines, the earth never agreed to. Maps represent artificial boundaries—often the cause of migration and trauma. Mapping is an act of power, creating diasporic subjects.

Poetic Techniques Enhancing Diasporic Sensibility

1. **Imagery of Fragmentation:** Daruwalla frequently uses: broken images, abrupt shifts, disjointed narratives. These stylistic devices express fragmented identity.
2. **Irony and Cynicism:** His ironic tone reveals disillusionment typical of diasporic consciousness.
3. **Non-linear Time:** Daruwalla blends: Past, present, memory, myth, Diaspora collapses time; his poetry reflects this.
4. **Multilingual and Multicultural Allusions:** His poetry references: Persian motifs, Hindu mythology, Islamic landscapes, Western philosophical ideas; This intertextuality reflects hybrid identity.

Discussion: Daruwalla as the Poet of Internal Diaspora

The article argues that Daruwalla’s poetry represents internal diaspora—a form of displacement rooted in historical trauma within a single nation. This internal diasporic state is expressed through: violence as inherited trauma, shifting landscapes, border anxieties, cultural hybridity, memory of Partition, emotional homelessness. Daruwalla’s poetry shows that diaspora is not only geographical; it is emotional, cultural, psychological, and historical.

Research Questions

1. How does K. N. Daruwalla’s experience of Partition and childhood displacement influence the emergence of diasporic sensibilities in his poetry?
2. In what ways do Daruwalla’s poems express an “internal diaspora,” and how does this differ from conventional notions of diasporic writing?
3. How do landscapes—rivers, deserts, borders, and cities—operate as metaphors for exile, dislocation, and psychological homelessness in Daruwalla’s poetry?
4. What is the role of memory and nostalgia in shaping a diasporic consciousness in Daruwalla’s poetic narratives?
5. How does Daruwalla’s Parsi identity contribute to a sense of cultural liminality and inform his representation of displacement?
6. How does the recurrent imagery of violence reflect diasporic anxiety and trauma in Daruwalla’s poetic imagination?
7. In what ways does Daruwalla’s tone—marked by irony, detachment, and bitterness—encode the emotional complexities of diasporic sensibility?
8. How does Daruwalla use cartographic and border-related symbols (maps, frontiers, boundaries) to express fractured identity and political displacement?
9. What poetic strategies—imagistic fragmentation, symbolic contrasts, mythic allusions—does Daruwalla employ to represent diasporic identity as fluid and hybrid?
10. How does Daruwalla’s poetry challenge traditional diaspora theory by presenting displacement without international migration?
11. What tensions emerge between belonging and unbelonging, memory and forgetting, home and homelessness in Daruwalla’s poetic universe?

12. How do the emotional, cultural, and psychological aspects of diaspora manifest in Daruwalla’s poems even when explicit autobiographical references are minimal?

Major Critical Trends and Scholarly Engagement

Immigration from Lahore became a subtle point of discussion, though often secondary to his depictions of India’s socio-political landscapes. Ethnic and Religious Identity: Scholars began noting his Parsi heritage and the implications of minority consciousness for his literary sensibility. Historical Realism: His poems were analysed as responses to the postcolonial Indian nation-state, particularly the trauma of communal violence and political fragmentation.

Representative studies: Eunice de Souza (1999) highlighted the poet’s ironic tone and historical consciousness. Harish Trivedi (2011) ^[14] contextualized Daruwalla within Indian English literature’s postcolonial trajectory, focusing on trauma, memory, and regionalism.

Observation: While these works acknowledged cultural liminality, few connected it directly to the diasporic paradigm.

Scholarship on Memory, Trauma, and Partition

A growing body of criticism in the 2000s examined Daruwalla’s subtle engagement with Partition and personal displacement:

Scholars argue that Daruwalla encodes trauma metaphorically, using rivers, borders, and landscapes as repositories of loss.

The fragmentation of memory in his poetry was linked to psychological exile, a precursor to later diaspora-focused interpretations.

Key works

Bruce King (2005) ^[9] discussed “history in red” and the rivers of blood, connecting Daruwalla’s images to historical trauma.

Shyamala A. Nair (2010, in *Indian English Poetry: Trauma and Memory*) emphasized

Daruwalla’s indirect treatment of Partition, framing it as a poetic archive of dislocation.

Observation: These studies foreground trauma and fragmented memory but do not fully theorize it as a diasporic sensibility.

Emerging Trends in Diaspora Studies and Indian English Poetry

Recent scholarship in the 2010s and 2020s reflects a shift toward:

Internal Diaspora: The recognition that diaspora is not necessarily transnational. Scholars like Avtar Brah and Stuart Hall have expanded diaspora to include cultural and psychological displacement, which applies to Daruwalla’s poetry.

Cultural Hybridity: Daruwalla’s Parsi identity is being interpreted as a form of cultural liminality, consistent with Homi Bhabha’s theory of the “third space.”

Memory and Nostalgia: Critics now see Daruwalla’s fragmented recollections as emblematic of an internalized diasporic consciousness.

Representative works

Suman Bala (2018) highlighted internal displacement and diasporic memory in Daruwalla's *Crossing of Rivers*.

Priya Nair (2020) examined landscapes as metaphors of exile, noting the absence of overt migration narratives yet presence of profound alienation.

Observation: These studies mark a shift from externalized violence and historical realism toward internalized trauma, liminality, and diasporic consciousness.

Gaps in Current Scholarship

Despite increasing attention to trauma and memory, the diasporic dimension of Daruwalla's poetry remains underexplored:

- 1. Internal diaspora:** Most research focuses on conventional diasporic writers; Daruwalla's displacement within India is rarely analyzed through diaspora theory.
- 2. Integration of Parsi identity:** The intersection of ethnic minority consciousness and displacement is insufficiently explored.
- 3. Symbolism of landscape and cartography:** Existing criticism often treats landscapes as literal or aesthetic rather than as diasporic metaphors.
- 4. Encoding of violence:** Violence is often read socially or politically, not as a poetic device articulating diasporic anxiety.
- 5. Memory and fragmentation:** While discussed in trauma studies, its relation to diasporic consciousness is rarely theorized.
- 6. Scholarly Engagement:** This research aims to address the gaps identified in critical discourse: It applies diaspora theory (Hall, Brah, Bhabha, Clifford) to Daruwalla, extending the understanding of diaspora beyond transnational movement. It examines Partition, Parsi identity, and internal displacement as mutually reinforcing factors producing diasporic sensibility. It reads landscapes, memory, violence, and cartography as markers of exile and psychological homelessness. It situates Daruwalla's poetry within Indian internal diaspora, offering a new lens for interpreting displacement in Indian English literature. The trajectory of critical engagement with K. N. Daruwalla reveals:

Phase 1: Realism, violence, professional experience (1970s–1980s)

Phase 2: Postcolonial and historical contextualization (1980s–2000s)

Phase 3: Trauma, memory, and internalized exile (2000s–2010s)

Phase 4: Diasporic sensibility, internal diaspora, and hybrid identity (2010s–present)

This research contributes to Phase 4, offering a systematic analysis of Daruwalla's poetry as an articulation of internal diasporic consciousness—an approach not fully developed in existing scholarship.

Findings

1. Daruwalla expresses diasporic sensibility not through overseas exile but through internal displacement.
2. Partition trauma deeply influences his poetic imagery of fragmentation and violence.
3. His Parsi identity enriches his diasporic consciousness.
4. Landscape motifs—rivers, deserts, borders—function as metaphors of exile.
5. Violence in his poetry symbolizes psychic rupture.
6. Memory acts as a diasporic archive.
7. His work broadens the definition of diaspora in Indian English literature.

Conclusions

K. N. Daruwalla's poetry operates at the intersection of historical trauma, cultural hybridity, and psychic displacement. Though not a diasporic poet in the conventional sense, his poetic surface is marked by profound diasporic sensibility. His experiences of Partition, his minority identity, and his exposure to border violence inform a poetics of exile. Landscapes become metaphors for inner voids; rivers for memory; borders for anxiety; violence for identity fragmentation. This expanded understanding of Daruwalla's work positions him as a major voice in conceptualizing an Indian internal diaspora, thereby enriching both diaspora studies and Indian English literary criticism.

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