



Diasporic Testimonio in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*

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Abstract

Aim: The Research Article showcases the fact that Diaspora Literature and Testimonio are not Irreconcilable terms and also at the same time it is not an emerging phenomenon. This paper for grounds the fact that Diaspora and Testimonio can be in brought together as an independent theoretical discourse and it is evident in the good old literary texts.

Methodology/ Approach: This Research Article is based on the Paradigmatic Shift in literature through critical insights and interpretations.

Outcome: Diaspora is utilized to allude to any individuals or ethnic populace who are constrained or initiated to leave their conventional country. They are scattered all through the world, shaping a local area in the place where there is their own decision. Tribute Literature is gotten from the word Testimonio which signifies 'witness account.' The scholarly community is viewed as that Diaspora, and Testimonio is two finishes of range, both unique and hopeless. Yet, Diaspora people group may communicate their root lessness through Testimonial Literature. The term 'Diasporic Testimonio' expresses the secret voices as it forefronts the sufferings looked at by individuals who are either ousted or treated as outcasts in their own country.

Conclusion and Suggestion: This paper exhibits that there is a significant interface between Diasporic Literature and Testimonial Literature. Uprooting, Dislocation, and Disjunction are the catchphrases in Diasporic Literature. Any place there is uprooting and disengagement, and disjunction, struggle happens which finishes in delivering Testimonios. The paper will contend that Diasporic Testimonio is clear in William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. The presence of Shylock, a virtual untouchable in Venice, gives one a chance to consider his to be overflowing as a case of Diasporic Testimonio.

Keywords: Homeland, Hidden Voices, Displacement, Dislocation, Disjunction, Conflict

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*It is, therefore, a great source of virtue for the practical mind to learn, bit by bit, first to change about invisible and transitory things, so that afterwards it may be able to leave them behind altogether. The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.” Edward Said from *Culture and Imperialism*.*

The word 'Diaspora' which from a genuine perspective suggests a scattering passes on with it the unclear status of being both a priest and an evacuee. The necessities of two positions are uncommon. While one requires the projection of one's lifestyle and the ability to improve its plan; various searches for haven and security and relates even more unequivocally to the host culture. The part in The Dictionary of Global Culture starts with two understandings of the word, Diaspora. In its exceptional use it suggested the cycle by which the Jews were removed from their country, while in later events, it insinuates the Jewish public dwelling outside Israel. Diaspora is consistently associated with Zionism, which is the confidence in the Jews certified case to a country.

Testimonial Literature is derived from the word 'Testimonio' which means 'witness narrative'. Testimonial Literature had its origin in the Latin America. The Latin American women protested against the patriarchal norms of the society and their protest was against the government too. Testimonial

Literature took various dimensions which is a welcome sign too. According to John Beverley “The Best way to approach the Subaltern is through Testimonial Literature”.(1) It is true, that the subalterns undergo the Problem of misrepresentation and through their false representations their voices are not registered properly. Testimonios firmly showcase the authentic events and through their authenticity the plight of the oppressed is known to the world. The role of the testimonios is to create the bridge between the people who are in a position of power in society and the people who are underprivileged.

Culture studies is a broad and comprehensive term which includes Literature, Anthropology, Politics, Social Science, numerous ideological influences and the advancement in the scientific technologies too. Due to the advent of culture studies the gap between the humanistic scholars and the social scientists has been bridged. The Anthropologists and the social scientists have an intellectual flourish on give and take. Thus, begins the interdisciplinary approach. In the academia, academicians consider Diaspora and Testimonial Literature as two ends of a spectrum have less or no relationship between them. As theories they are currently much in use. This paper tends to showcase the interface between ‘Diasporic Literature’ and ‘Testimonial Literature’. The term ‘conflict’ is the key factor in both the theoretical discourses. Through the presence of conflict, the contextualization of both these theories becomes similar.

William Shakespeare the world’s renowned playwright is said to be the pioneer for the theoretical discourses. The current literary scenario is being dominated by the theoretical discourses and Shakespeare seemed to have alluded to the theoretical discourses which are existing today. As a playwright his greatest achievement is that his texts were universalized according to different cultures.

This paper shows that Diasporic Testimonio was prevalent in the time of William Shakespeare. In his play *The Merchant of Venice* the character Shylock indulges in Diasporic Testimonio. Diaspora creates a specific state of mind; it is important to understand and analyze the nature of mind. The seven elements which are used to investigate or recognize the diasporic consciousness are: memory, return, strangeness, desire to integrate, transience, desire for performance, a sense of belonging and embedding. Shylock is said to be an embodiment of all these characteristics. George Yudice defines Testimonial Literature as “an authentic narrative, told by a witness who is moved to narrate the urgency of a situation (eg, War, Oppression, Revolution...etc) Yudice also explains [...] the testimonialista gives his or her personal testimony “directly” by addressing a specific interlocutor.”(2). Shylock’s speeches have the characteristics of a Testimonio. His famous speech against Christians in general and Antonio in particular smacks of diasporic testimonio. He says:

To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else,

It will feed my revenge.

He hath disgraced me, and

Hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses,

mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my

bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine

Enemies and what’s his reason?

I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes?

Hath not a Jew hands, organs, arms, legs,

Senses, affections, desires? (Are we not)

Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to diseases

Healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter

And the summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle

Us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall

We not revenge.? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.

If a Jew wrongs a Christian, what kindness does he return? Revenge.

If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be, by Christian example

Shall go harder to you than it has come to me. (1287-1307)

The above dramatic lines foreground the characteristics of Diasporic Testimonio. Shylock registers that being a Jew in Venice he is alienated which is one of the characteristics of Diasporic studies. Estrangement, appropriation, absorption, despair, uneasiness, demise, wistfulness, underestimation, rearrangement, rootlessness is a portion of the highlights of the diasporic composing. The hole between local culture and the way of life of reception stays unedited and the limits are regularly conflictual. Literature of Diaspora affords the area of critical studies in themes, forms, modes, characters and techniques.

Testimonios can be in any form. Memoirs or the Confessional School of Poetry traces back to Testimonial Literature. According to Gugelberger

The situation of narration in Testimonio has to involve an urgency to communicate, a problem of repression, poverty, subalternity, imprisonment, struggle for survival, and so on. For him Testimonio emphasizes the popular oral discourse, the witness portrays his or her own experience as a representative of collective memory and identity and truth is summoned in the cause of denouncing a present situation of exploitation and oppression or excusing and setting aright official history. (3)

It is true, in the case of Shylock his voices are not heard; even if it is heard the power structures dominate the oppressed and renders them mute. He registers that how he was ill-treated. He is voiceless for two reasons: first being a Jew he is an alien and second, he is a Subaltern because he is constantly disgraced. Conflict and Resistance play a vital part in 'Diasporic Testimonio'. 'Space' and 'Nation' are being problematized in" Diasporic Testimonio. Shylock had undergone Displacement, Dislocation, and Disjunction. In Rushdie's words "Both Home and Homeland has become a Ghost". Diasporic Testimonio show that the victims too have voices and due to the politics, their voices have been muted. They are even denied the basic recognition that they are human. Once Shylock loses his roots and is rendered homeless, he is forced to embark on a journey in different routes. In Venice the physical space and the construction of the Jews by the Venetians become oppressive.

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