

A Postcolonial Reading of Cecil Rajendra's Selected Poems

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Received: July 13, 2013 Accepted: September 30, 2013 Online Published: October 29, 2013

doi:10.5539/ass.v9n15p60

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/ass.v9n15p60>

Abstract

This study analyzes poems written by Cecil Rajendra, a Malaysian poet, from a postcolonial perspective. In other words, it entails a postcolonial reading of his selected poems. It seeks to identify and illustrate embedded concepts of postcolonialism and orientalism in the poems. It also seeks to understand how these concepts operate.

The theoretical framework used in this research is the postcolonial theory, specifically employing Bill Ashcroft et al.'s Key Postcolonial Concepts and Edward Said's Orientalism. It uses the Close Reading methodology to analyze the corpus, looking specifically into the concepts being used.

The study reveals that although colonization has ended in many countries, a new form of colonization, namely Neo-colonialism is evident in many developing ex-colonies. This includes replication of colonial powers by today's political leaders. It also speaks about Euro-centrism and its related ideologies which can operate oppressively against eastern nations.

It is hoped that this study contributes to a better understanding about postcolonial issues, especially in the Malaysian context.

Keywords: postcolonialism, decolonization, neo-colonialism, orientalism, other/othering

"It is difficult to be indifferent to Rajendra: his vitality ensures a response of one kind or the other, and in this the familiar strength is underpinned by a more deft skill with words, and a deadlier aim for his barbs....."

Keith Addison (1983)

1. About the Poet-Cecil Rajendra

Raffel (1989), in his essay *Malaysian Plainspeak* says, "Rajendra is without question, the best English language poet in Malaysia". Nazareth (1989), in his article *World Literature Today* speaks of Rajendra as "fearless in his writing ... not having any ideological biases: he exposes and attacks all those who are anti-people. Quoting the 'Far Eastern Economic Review', Nazareth says that Rajendra is a "one-man pressure group, committed to awakening people to the social evils that beset his country and the world in general". In 2006, he was also nominated for the Nobel Literature Prize. Although he did not win, he deems the nomination itself a great thrill and honor (The SUN newspaper). "Dynamic" was how a reviewer of Britain's Times Literary Supplement judged Rajendra's work. Addison (1982) admired Rajendra's work by saying that "The whole experience was a complete, if unconscious, refutation of the academic and disengaged approach".

While receiving much acclaim from outside Malaysia, Cecil Rajendra is hardly acknowledged by the literary circles within his own country. It is a quirk of fate that Cecil Rajendra is a local poet, yet his poems have not received due recognition locally. Studies done on his works have benefited the educational fraternity outside Malaysia more than they have benefited Malaysians.

There have been several articles about Cecil Rajendra from time to time in foreign newspapers, magazines and journals. Foreign writers, journalists and educationists have acknowledged and paid tribute to his poetic talents and his skills in crafting poetry. They have also hailed him for his commitment in awakening people to the burning social issues that afflict Malaysia and other developing nations.

Equally important, this study also aims to look at the dismantling of colonial ideologies that Cecil Rajendra's

poetry attempts. The exploration of the selected poems is expected to create some awareness amongst readers regarding postcolonialism, which Nkrumah (1965) argues that neo-colonialism is more insidious and more difficult to detect and resist than the older overt colonialism. While we can read about postcolonialism in history texts, reading about it through Rajendra's poetry brings on a new experience where he delves into incidents, experiences and issues that are slices of life.

Rajendra makes us aware how we are still being colonized today through a phenomenon known as Neo-colonialism and, through his poems, resists colonization. Not only does the poet hit out at the colonizers, he also criticizes the once colonized subjects who ape the colonial masters.

2. Postcolonial Issues and Concepts

History tells us that during the nineteenth century, Britain emerged as the largest imperial power, and by the turn of the twentieth century, the British Empire ruled one quarter of the earth's surface, including India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland. It also had significant holdings in Africa, the West Indies, South America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. This domination by Britain continued until the end of World War II. The colonized nations, starting with India in 1947, slowly gained their independence and by 1980, Britain had lost most of its colonial holdings.

3. Imperialism

Imperialism is the enterprise of a nation that extends its rule over other nations, thus forming an empire. Imperial expansion amongst the European nations became rampant for various political, cultural and economic reasons, from the nineteenth century (Ashcroft et al., 1998). Ashcroft et al. also contend that it was the power of the imperial discourse that established the imperial hegemony in the empires.

Boehmer (1995, p. 2) defines imperialism as the "authority assumed by a state over another territory". Colonial writing during this time sought to support the venture of imperialism. Imperial writers, sharing the "imperial antipathies and controversies", infused in their writings the "awareness that a vast portion of the earth's surface was subject to Britain" (p. 24). Accordingly the imperial officers saw themselves as heroes, on the mission to conquer and civilize the world (p. 23).

Although the terms 'imperialism' and 'colonialism' are generally used interchangeably, there is a subtle difference between the two. Said (1993, p. 8; cited in Ashcroft et al., 1998) distinguishes imperialism and colonialism by pointing out that the former is the "practice, theory and the attitudes of the dominating metropolitan centre (as opposed to the margin or periphery) ruling a distant territory and its outcome is colonialism, the "implanting of settlements in distant territory".

4. Colonialism

Colonialism is the undertaking to rule and administer the settlements and inevitably, its resources and people as well. At this point, colonial literature proceeded to communicate the "colonial ethos" by "organizing and reinforcing perceptions" of the imperialists' dominance and world power (Boehmer, 1995, p. 2-3). The Europeans turned to these writings, which were instrumental in "making, defining and clarifying" the colonial endeavor, to help them understand the "strange and complex world beyond the seas" (p. 5).

Colonial writing is significant for it divulged a world that naturalized the degradation of other human beings, perceiving it as an "innate part of degenerate state". Besides stereotyping the indigenous as a homogenous group by ignoring their "agency, diversity, resistance and thinking voices" (Boehmer, 1995, p. 21), the colonies were also described as "places of banishment, unlawful practice, oppression, and social disgrace, dark lands where worthy citizens might not wish to stay" (p. 26). Furthermore, the colonizers feared that unrestrained association with the natives would bring about regression to the white race as well as the onslaught of the miscegenation problem.

Colonial discourse, according to Ahluwalia et al. (2001), is concerned with discourse of colonialism and colonization. It demonstrates the way in which such discourse obscures the underlying political and material aims of colonization. It points out the deep ambivalences of that discourse, as well as the way in which it constructs both colonizing and colonized subjects.

5. Postcolonialism

According to Ashcroft et al. (1989), the word "post-colonial" refers to the period after independence but it also covers all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. It is currently used in wide and diverse ways to include "the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empires, the subtleties of subject

construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects” (Ashcroft, 1998, p. 187). Moreover, it is becoming widely used in historical, political, sociological and economic analyses, as these disciplines continue to engage with the impact of European imperialism upon world societies.

Postcolonialism offers a non-Eurocentric perspective on the cultural displacement caused by colonial conquests. It “radically questions” imperialism (Bertens, 2001, p. 200). It also demands a change in power and a “symbolic overhaul” to reshape dominant meanings (p. 3). To sum up, postcolonialism looks critically at imperialism and its legacy, and seeks to undo the ideologies that fortify and validate imperialist practices. It highlights the struggle that occurs when one culture dominates another.

6. Postcolonial Theory

According to Ahluwalia (2001), postcolonial theory investigates, and develops propositions about the cultural and political impact of European conquest upon colonized societies, and the nature of those societies' responses. Mongia (1996) seems to share a similar opinion, for he views postcolonial theory as carrying out the deconstruction of Western thought within the areas of literary studies, philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, and political science. Postcolonial theory is also very much concerned with the concept of resistance. According to Lye (1998), the concept of resistance carries with it or can carry with it ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality, etc., which may not have been held, or held in the same way, in the colonized culture's view of humankind.

Lye (1998) posits that post-colonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized countries, or literature written in colonizing countries which deals with colonization or colonized peoples. He puts forth that this theory focuses particularly on (1) the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority of the colonized people and (2) literature by colonized peoples which attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness. It can also deal with the way in which literature in colonizing countries appropriates the language, images, scenes, traditions and so forth of colonized countries.

7. Orientalism

According to Said, the Orient is “almost an European invention” that has been a place of “romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes and remarkable experiences” (Said, 1978, p. 1). To further elaborate, Said in delineating the Orient, says that it is:

...the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Other has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience... Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial style.

(Said, 1978, p. 1-2)

Hence, it is explicit that the Orient's role in constructing as well as sustaining the image of the west is an essential and vital one. It is also evident that the Orient was exploited and denigrated to elevate the Western stature. The dichotomy of the Orient and the Occident serves to position the former as the powerless object while the latter is posited as the powerful subject. Moreover, Said contends that the discourse of Orientalism helps to comprehend how the European culture effected and administered the Orient “politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively” (Said, 1978, p. 3). Thus, Orientalism is the “body of knowledge” that helped the West “develop an image of the East” in its imperial enterprise.

8. Othering

An important concept that came about in the wake of colonization is the discourse of Othering. The term ‘Othering’ coined by Spivak refers to the imperial discourse's numerous ways and processes of creating and producing ‘colonial subjectivity’ (Spivak, 1985; cited in Ashcroft, 1998, p. 171-172). Generally, the term ‘other’ refers to a disjoint or separate entity. The presence or occurrence of the ‘other’ is important for it defines what is standard, natural and normal. Hence, the colonizers defined themselves as the ‘Self’ and as a binary contrast, characterized the colonized subjects as the ‘Other’ (Ashcroft, 1998, p. 169). This contrast helped to establish the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view. Prescribed as the Other, the identity of the colonized is constructed as inferior to the colonizers (Ganisha, 2004, p. 23-24).

Othering is perpetuated by the colonizers' endeavour of conceptualizing their antagonists and proceeding to demarcate them (the Others) from the Self. Mills (1991) contends that in colonial writing, the natives are often

degraded as 'sub-human or childlike species', thus denied 'full human status. Mills further states that the natives are fixed to the past through words such as 'primitive', 'backward' and 'developing', and metonymised, thus reiterating their deficiency of full human qualities. In *Othering the nations*, the colonies were described 'in terms of abhorrent smells and filthiness' (Mills, 1991, p. 89-90).

The colonizers glorified themselves by putting down the colonized. This was carried out by renouncing the natives' humanity and characterizing them as "simply absences of qualities-animals, not humans" (Memmi, 1967, p. xxvi). Alatas (1997) contends that besides being perpetually featured as "lazy, incapable, treacherous and scheming, the most conspicuous trait of the Other is their "alleged indolence" (p. 204). In short, the rhetoric of *Othering* was put into place by the colonialists, not only to delineate the Others as separate entities but also to define their own (colonialists') superiority as against the perceived inferiority of the Others.

9. Postcolonial Literature

The English language is a legacy left behind by the British. Like other once colonized nations, we too have many local writers who write in English. Such works emanating from formerly colonized countries are widely known today as literature in English (not as English literature). Postcolonial literature refers to the writings by those peoples who were formerly colonized by Britain, in particular, and other European powers as well. Ashcroft et al. (1989) states that the term 'postcolonial' covers "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" and that "it is concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European imperial domination and the effects of this on contemporary literatures" (pp. 1-2).

Ashcroft et al. (1989) further puts forth that the idea of 'postcolonial literary theory' emerges from the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural provenance of postcolonial writing. European theories themselves emerge from particular cultural traditions which are hidden by false notions of 'the universal'. Theories of style and genre, assumptions about the universal features of language, epistemologies and value systems are all radically questioned by the practices of post-colonial writing. Therefore it can be said that postcolonial literary theory attempts to decenter such false assumptions, not only through challenging them but also through developing and rediscovering indigenous theories of value, language, etc.

While each of these colonized country's literature has its own special and distinctive regional characteristics, Ashcroft (1989) states that "they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial center". It is this which makes them distinctively postcolonial literatures (p. 2). These features are clearly evident in Cecil Rajendra's poems.

10. The Empire Writes Back-A Resistance

The Empire Writes Back, written by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, was first published in 1989. Zabus (1997) points the book out as the most widely used and most widely quoted introduction to the field of postcolonial studies. He says that "today's theorists and academicians still deal with the ideas and rubrics set forth in this book because the Empire really did define a large, inchoate area of academic and political interests". Ashcroft et al. refer to the whole lot of the British colonies as the 'Empire' and to Britain as the 'Center'. So, what the title of the book actually means is that the Empire now writes back 'to the Center'.

Zabus (1997) says that the notion of "writing back" is crucial in understanding the various strategies of decolonization (including resistance), that Britain's former colonies have used, to set the record straight. 'Writing back' is an important form of resistance towards colonialism and the westerners' perceptions about the colonized. Much of such writings have been produced by writers from colonized cultures. They have not been silent or silenced. Such writers have appeared from many formerly colonized nations, including Malaysia.

As Bressler (1998) points out, such post-colonial writers and thinkers have dared and continue to challenge the dominant cultures and the dictates such cultures decree. He further says that by defying the dominant culture, they demonstrate that an individual's view of life, values and ethics do matter. These writers prove that there is not one culture but many, not one cultural perspective but a host, not one but countless numbers of interpretations of life. The postcolonial writers work to reclaim the past, since their own histories were often erased or discredited under colonization, and to understand their own cultural and personal identities, and chart their own futures, on their own terms rather than the terms superimposed on them by colonialist ideology and practices.

Their contributions have provided new avenues to see and understand cultural forces at work, not only in literature but also in ourselves. Rajendra is seen, in this light, as a writer who expresses his resistance towards colonialism through his poems. In his poems, Rajendra also hits out at current powers that be, which replicate the

colonizers' way of running the country.

11. Methodology Employed for Researching

The postcolonial theory has been used as the theoretical framework for this study. The analysis of the corpus had been done using a close-reading, as the literary tool in this study.

1) The Corpus

The corpus for this study consists of 8 poems selected from 4 of Cecil Rajendra's anthologies. They are as follows:

1. The Cup that Cheers (from Bones & Feathers-1978)
2. Tourists, Transistors or Stones (from Bones & Feathers-1978)
3. A Song for Fanon (from Bones & Feathers-1978)
4. Brain Drain (from Bones & Feathers-1978)
5. Republic of Contradicta (from Hour of Assassins-1983)
6. Turncoats (from Hour of Assassins-1983)
7. Lessons From The Recession (from Shrapnel, Silence & Sand-1999)
8. London (from Embryo-1965)

Although Rajendra has published many anthologies, poems have been selected from only 4 of them. This is because it has been found that poems from these 4 anthologies, especially Bones & Feathers (1978), deal extensively with postcolonialism and orientalism. For the same reason, two poems from Hour of Assassins (1983) and one each from Shrapnel, Silence & Sand (1999) and Embryo (1965) were selected. Because these poems deal with postcolonialism and orientalism, they form a fertile base for this study. Furthermore, having been written by a Malaysian poet, the study provides a Malaysian perspective and background.

2) The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that has been used in this study is the postcolonial theory, specifically employing Bill Ashcroft et al.'s Key Postcolonial Concepts and Edward Said's Orientalism. All the selected poems are analyzed using the Close Reading methodology.

Although colonization has ended in most countries, a newer form of colonization, namely Neo-colonialism is evident in many developing countries. This includes the replication of colonial powers by today's political powers. Likewise, Euro-centrism and its related ideologies have the potential to operate oppressively against eastern nations. When these issues are looked into, it becomes inevitable that many other concepts of postcolonialism and orientalism come into play. As such the postcolonial theory becomes very relevant to this study.

Using the Close Reading literary tool, first the concepts of postcolonialism and orientalism found in the selected poems are identified. Next, the issues raised or addressed by the poet are investigated thoroughly in relation to the above mentioned concepts.

3) The Conceptual Framework

Seven concepts of postcolonialism expounded by Bill Ashcroft et al. and five concepts of Orientalism developed by Edward Said, that are highly relevant to this analysis, have been looked at. It has to be noted here that Orientalism is actually a subset of Postcolonialism. However, for the purpose of this study, Orientalism has been treated as a separate entity. This is to highlight the concepts that fall distinctly under Orientalism. In his introduction, Ashcroft says that postcolonial studies have, over the last three decades, developed conceptual vocabularies that are themselves sites of negotiation and progressive refinement (Ashcroft, 1998, p. 1). He argues that 'ordinary' words take on new meanings and are redeployed with different emphases and contexts. As such, even an experienced scholar is sometimes bewildered by the apparent instability of what are apparently key terms in the debate (p. 2).

Said's Orientalism (1978) is considered one of the key texts in the establishment of the postcolonial theory. According to Said, the colonizing First World tried to justify their territorial conquests by propagating a manufactured belief called Orientalism, that is the creation of non-European stereotypes that suggested that 'Orientals' were indolent, thoughtless, sexually immoral, unreliable, and demented. The European conquerors, Said notes, believed that they were accurately describing the inhabitants of their newly conquered land. What they failed to realize, maintains Said, is that all human knowledge can be viewed only through one's political,

cultural, and ideological framework. No theory, either political or literary, can be totally objective. All these concepts help to identify issues and foreground the resistance towards colonization in Rajendra's poems.

In order to uncover the embedded concepts of postcolonialism and orientalism in Rajendra's writings, each of his selected poems had to undergo several close readings and had to be scrutinized carefully. This helped to draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable issues pertaining to colonization which the poet has expounded in his poems.

Being a member of the empire, Rajendra 'writes back to the centre' and this is a key feature in this conceptual framework. In the 'writing back' process, Rajendra dismantles many postcolonial ideologies put in place by the colonizers. This study therefore, among other things, seeks to investigate how Rajendra dismantles these ideologies. The close reading analysis involves the diction, imagery and tone employed by the poet in his works. These features help to explicate the poet's resistance towards colonization and to better understand the related concepts. In short, the Close Reading illuminates the postcolonial resistance in the selected poems. Rajendra's 'writing back' then, is a manifestation of that resistance. It is through his poems that he voices his dissatisfaction, unhappiness, anger and disappointments towards colonization.

4) The Literary Tool-Close Reading

The Close Reading method mentioned above is the tool that has been used in the analysis of the selected poems in this study. In analyzing the poems, the steps or procedures outlined by this method have been adhered to closely.

Close reading means not only reading and understanding the meanings of the individual printed words, it also involves making the reader sensitive to all the nuances and connotations of language as it is used by skilled writers. This can mean anything from a work's particular vocabulary, sentence construction, and imagery, to the themes that are being dealt with, the way in which the text is written, and the view of the world that it offers. It involves almost everything from the smallest linguistic items to the largest issues of literary understanding and judgment. All these aspects have been taken into account while analyzing the poems in this study.

Close attention has been paid to the surface linguistic elements of the text-that is, to aspects of vocabulary, grammar, syntax, figures of speech and the writer's individual style. The reader takes account of the meaning of words at a deeper level-that is, what information they yield up, what meanings they denote and connote. The possible relationships between words within the text are considered. The relationship of any elements of the text to things outside it is also noted, and these might be other pieces of writing by the same author, or other writings of the same type by different writers. They might be items of social or cultural history, or even other related academic disciplines. All these have also been taken into account in the analysis of the poems in this study.

In employing the Close Reading method in this study, the diction, imagery and the tone of the poems have been specifically looked into. Diction involves the choice of words used. Apart from providing plenty of information on the subject being discussed, Muller (1995) says that words have both denotative and connotative meanings and values. Muller further says that poets make conscious choices concerning the denotations and connotations of words. Therefore, regardless of stylistic strategies, they always start with the denotative and connotative power of words to convey experience and meaning. It is the careful selection, compression and arrangement of language by the artist that gives poetry the power to project experience vividly and memorably for the reader (pp. 274-275). As such, diction is deemed as a feature not only worth analyzing, but is essential for a better grasp of the poems.

Apart from diction, imagery is another area that has been given importance to, in analyzing the poems. It can be defined as the verbal representation of sensory experience (p. 292). As Muller (1995) points out, "imagery conveys an understanding of things, whether the imagery is literal or figurative, denotative or connotative (p. 293). Therefore, in analyzing the poems, the visual impressions (things that we can see in the mind's eyes) that the poet has put forth in his poems, have been looked at critically.

Tone is yet another aspect that has received importance in this analysis. Tone is the poet's attitude toward the subject. Muller (1995) points it out as the "voice of the writer" (p. 282). This voice may be serious or playful, modest or arrogant, irreverent or devout. Tone may be constant, or it may shift from line to line or stanza to stanza in a poem. By paying close attention to the tone in the poems, the poet's unique emotional and intellectual approach to his subject can be traced.

Close reading involves reading a text more than once. When reading a text for the first time, a reader is busy absorbing information, and cannot appreciate all the subtle connections there may be between its parts-because the complete picture does not emerge. Only when reading it for a second time (or even better, a third or fourth) is

the reader in a position to assemble and compare the nuances of meaning and the significance of its details in relation to each other, hence the term 'close reading'. It entails getting used to the notion of reading and re-reading very carefully, meticulously, and in great detail. Close Reading also enhances the reading enjoyment. This is because we get more out of a piece of writing if we can appreciate all the subtleties and the intricacies that exist within it (What is close reading..., n. d.).

Kain (1998), from the Harvard University Writing Center has authored an essay "How to Do a Close Reading". This essay says that after a close reading of a text and making observations, the next step is interpreting the observations. This is basically inductive reasoning, moving from the observation of particular facts and details to a conclusion, or interpretation, based on those observations. As with inductive reasoning, close reading requires careful gathering of data (the observations) and careful thinking about what these data add up to.

The Close Reading had involved a thought process that moved from small details to larger issues. As mentioned above, each poem was read several times over the various stages, namely reading, understanding, extracting relevant issues, jotting down details, interpreting words, phrases and issues and rereading. This was followed through with the writing process. The writing after a close reading began by looking at the larger issues in the poems (the concepts and issues of postcolonialism and orientalism) and used all the relevant small details as evidence. In other words, the writing was based on all the gathered observations and information from the poems. The final analysis thus ties down all the details together by determining how the close read poems illuminate the concepts, issues, concerns and themes at hand.

12. Findings

A postcolonial reading entails a way of reading both metropolitan and colonial cultures (in this case, colonial cultures) to draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of colonization. Here it is a form of deconstructive reading applied to works emanating from a colonized culture.

The three Questions (RQ) that this study attempts to answer are as follows:

RQ 1: What are the concepts of postcolonialism and concepts of orientalism expounded in Rajendra's selected poems?

RQ 2: How does Rajendra illustrate the concepts of postcolonialism and the concepts of orientalism and related issues through his poetry?

RQ 3: What are the ways employed by Rajendra to dismantle the colonialists' ideologies?

After examining the entire corpus, it was found that a total of 12 concepts of both postcolonialism and orientalism have been expounded in the selected poems. Table 1 below provides a summary of all the various concepts found, the poems that they are found in and the frequency (freq) with which they have appeared. In the table, the poems are referred to in numbers according to the sequence in which they have been analyzed. For ease of reference, the sequence in which the poems were analyzed and their titles are listed here:

Poem 1: The Cup That Cheers.

Poem 2: Tourists, Transistors or Stones.

Poem 3: A Song for Fanon.

Poem 4: Brain Drain.

Poem 5: Republic of Contradicta.

Poem 6: Turncoats.

Poem 7: Lessons from the Recession.

Poem 8: London.

Table 1. Frequency of concepts of postcolonialism and orientalism

	CONCEPTS	POEMS								Freq
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Postcolonialism	Ambivalence		√			√		√		3
	Anti-colonialism	√	√			√			√	4
	Cultural Imperialism		√			√		√		3
	Euro-centrism							√	√	2
	Hegemony		√			√		√		3
	Mimicry			√				√		2
	Neo-colonialism	√	√		√	√	√	√		6
	Discourse			√				√		2
	East vs West				√	√		√	√	4
Orientalism	Ideology				√	√	√	√	√	5
	Othering	√		√		√	√		√	5
	Representations				√			√		2
No. of Concepts Found		3	5	3	4	8	3	10	5	

RQ1: The most extensively used concept is Neo-colonialism. It has appeared in 6 poems, namely poems 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7. This is a clear indication that Neo-colonialism is very rampant and ‘alive’ in our midst today. Colonialism is now replaced by Neo-colonialism, a new form of colonization. Most developing countries are still being controlled in some ways by developed, powerful (usually Western) countries.

Concepts of ‘Othering’ and Ideology were found to be the second most frequently appearing concepts in these poems. They appear 5 times each. Othering has appeared in poems 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 while Ideology has appeared in poems 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. The table also suggests that the concept of Ideology works hand in hand with Neo-colonialism for these two concepts have appeared consistently in the same poems.

The concept of Anti-colonialism and the East versus West (E vs W) concept are the third most frequently used concepts. Anti-colonialism appears in poems 1, 2, 5 and 8 while E vs W appears in poems 4, 5, 7 and 8. However there does not seem to be a direct correlation between them in these poems.

In contrast to the above, in poems 2, 5, and 7, the three concepts of Ambivalence, Cultural Imperialism and Hegemony appear together. In fact, in these three poems, these are the only concepts involved. It therefore appears to be an indicator that there is a very close correlation between these three concepts. It also suggests that Ambivalence and Hegemony occurs in an environment where Cultural Imperialism is prevalent. They do indeed function collectively in a colonial environment.

The other remaining concepts appear quite minimally. But their importance cannot be understated. It has to be noted that the corpus for this study is not too wide to disregard the importance of the infrequently appearing concepts here. For instance, Mimicry is a very important postcolonial concept but in this study it appears only in two poems, namely poem 3 and poem 7. Its impact in poem 7 is quite negligible but in poem 3, it is about the only concept present and Rajendra has presented it in an excellent, powerful manner. Likewise concepts such as Euro-centrism, Colonial Discourse and Representation appear only twice each in the selected poems. As mentioned above, it would be a flaw to conclude that they are less important or not prevalent in postcolonialism. It is just that they appear less in this study.

Having looked at the frequency with which the various concepts have appeared in the poems, the following paragraphs talk about the number of different concepts that have shown up in each poem and their implications on this study. Every poem analyzed has at least 3 concepts expounded in it.

Referring to Table 1 again, Poems 1, 3 and 6 have three concepts each dealt with in them, but not necessarily the same concepts. This is probably because the issues that these three poems deal with are rather specific, and not diversified. Poem 1 talks about unfairness, poem 3 about mimicry while poem 6 deals with betrayal. Poem 4

contains four concepts in it while poem 2 and poem 8 utilize five concepts in each to present their cases.

Poem 5 and especially poem 7 emerge as poems that use the maximum number of concepts in them to deliver their messages. This is not surprising as the themes that they deal with are very diversified, involving many issues to be expounded. For example, both poem 5 and poem 7 are politically inclined. Poem 5 is a satirical poem that is critical of political leaders and their misdeeds, their flaws and their indifferent attitude towards their people. Poem 7 is similar in some ways to poem 5 in that it also deals with political issues. It is also a satirical poem that deals with a political leader who does not quite practice what he preaches. Both these poems deal with many peripheral issues that are strongly linked with the main themes. Probably this is the reason why many concepts of postcolonialism and orientalism have come into play in these two poems.

RQ2: This section looks at some of the more frequently appearing concepts (Table 1) and how Rajendra highlights them in his poetry. The concept of Neo-colonialism has appeared in several of the selected poems. Literally 'New-colonialism', it is a form of control of the ex-colonies. Power flows in from outside and control is exerted. In Poem 1, Rajendra demonstrates that it is possible for an 'outside power' to control an entire local region from someplace far away. He illustrates the local tea plantation workers' sufferings, especially in stanza 2. The reason for this is that the ex-colony is still somewhat economically dependent on Britain and that setback makes it possible for Britain to exert control from afar. The beneficiary of the local workers' hardship is none other than the former colonizer.

Rajendra also brings us a vivid picture of Neo-colonialism in Poem 2. In this poem, foreign multinationals have come here and set up their big businesses. This is done at the local people's expense. They are here on a business mission, not a military mission. They are not brandishing their latest arsenal of weaponry. Yet we are defenseless. We just stand aside and watch them transform our country. Rajendra makes us see that the control these foreign powers have over us is economic control. Because we are dependent on them economically, we are rendered powerless. Clearly the power flows in from the west and it penetrates and controls the neo-colony. In short, the western powers exert economic control over us because we are, in some ways, economically dependent on them. This is unmistakably Neo-colonialism.

Still at Neo-colonialism, in poem 4, Rajendra gives us an excellent analogy of the mantis' behavior. He illustrates this to make us see how Malaysian 'top brains' are lured out to go and work for America. The Americans are not here physically to kidnap and carry away our countries' brainy professionals by force. They entice, cajole, coax, persuade and control us from afar. This is a form of Neo-colonialism- an external power that controls us from far away.

In Poem 6, Rajendra paints a picture of how some of today's leaders in ex-colonies replicate the colonizer's ways and exert that power and control on their own people. This replication of power and control is a form of Neo-colonization. Rajendra explicates this through a political scenario in this poem. The new political leaders make many promises to their people and when they have achieved what they set out to, all their promises go unfulfilled. Rajendra compares and equates these local leaders to the ex-colonizers.

The poet has also elucidated the concept of 'Othering' in his poems. In Poem 1, he uses an entire stanza (stanza 2) to illustrate the negative ways in which the local workers are treated by the whites. The non-white, local workers are viewed and treated in a degrading manner. They are denied 'full human' status. Rajendra's portrayal of the tea plantation workers makes readers empathize and sympathize with them. As pointed out, Rajendra makes us wonder if the treatment of the plantation workers would be similar in fashion if the workers were white.

Poem 3 is an excellent poem on the concept of mimicry. However, the concept of 'Othering' works hand in hand with mimicry here. The persona in this poem is the 'other' who strives to become like the 'self'. Although he is not subjugated as the 'other' the persona undergoes a psychological trauma that makes him want to 'become a white'. Rajendra puts himself into the persona's shoes and takes readers on a wonderful journey of self-discovery, thus illuminating this concept for the readers' pleasure.

Both Poems 5 and 6 have some political issues in them. In both these poems, Rajendra brings to us the concept of 'Othering'. However the othering here is not done by the whites unto the coloured. Rajendra's objective here is to make us see that it can happen even in a non-white, no-colonizers environment. In these poems, the othering is done unto the local population by local leaders. This is what was mentioned above, a replication of the colonizers' powers and control.

In Poem 8, the concept of 'Othering' is unmistakable. Rajendra illustrates to us how the non-whites are viewed by the whites (Londoners). He 'takes us to London' and puts us in its midst so that we are able to see this concept at work. We see that just because we are unlike them, the whites think of us as primitive, backward and

maybe even sub-human. Perhaps it is only by othering the non-whites that they can define their own superiority. Rajendra resists this notion of negativity by writing back, on our behalf.

In the issues that Rajendra addresses through his poems, incidentally, there are three concepts, namely Ambivalence, Cultural Imperialism and Hegemony that have always appeared together. It also suggests that Ambivalence and Hegemony occurs in an environment where Cultural Imperialism is prevalent. Therefore, these three concepts would be discussed here collectively.

In Poem 2, the issues Rajendra raises illuminate these three concepts embedded in it. This poem deals with the influx of foreign multinationals into our country. The foreigners also bring along with them their cultures. Rajendra laments that the multinationals have displaced and shortchanged us in many ways. Their progress is detrimental to our culture, economy and environment. However he says that although we are discontented with what is happening around here, we are not actively doing anything to stop them, let alone sending them back to where they came from. His poem makes us ponder the reasons. The foreigners seem to be dominating us and that too, seemingly with our consent. By highlighting these issues, Rajendra gets us acquainted with the concept of Hegemony. We do not want the foreigners to come here and disrupt our lifestyle, yet we want them here for the benefits that come with their presence- the job opportunities, the economic growth, the new developments, the new infrastructures and so on. Here, the poet highlights 'Ambivalence'. Of course, the issue of Cultural Imperialism is inescapable. Their newly brought cultures are surely going to have an impact on our local population. Rajendra speaks of escort agencies, casinos and massage parlors in relation to the newly introduced cultures. Therefore, Rajendra illustrates the concepts involved indirectly by highlighting relevant issues that surround these concepts. All the three concepts, as we can see are closely interwoven.

Similarly, Rajendra points out the key roles played by these three concepts (Ambivalence, Cultural Imperialism & Hegemony) in Poem 5 and Poem 7. In Poem 5, we see some politicians opposing western mentality, yet they are 'western' themselves in several ways. Rajendra underscores this to enable us to see Ambivalence at work. Their attire and their indulgence in drinks speak volumes about Cultural Imperialism. By telling us about the politicians who preach about their education policies, yet send their children for western education, Rajendra sheds light on Ambivalence and Hegemony at the same time.

In Poem 7, for instance, the dominant concept is Cultural Imperialism. By describing a local minister's preference for western merchandise, the poet enables us to see how Cultural Imperialism plays such a dominant role here. Rajendra makes us realize that there are a lot of people who subscribe to the notion of western superiority.

Many issues that Rajendra raises in these poems draw attention to other concepts like Colonial Discourse, Euro-centrism, and East versus West, Ideologies and Anti-colonialism. Needless to say all these concepts are interrelated. All these concepts are foregrounded in Cecil's poems through the issues he raises or addresses. Thus, Rajendra illustrates concepts of postcolonialism and Orientalism by way of foregrounding related issues. Readers thereby get a clear understanding of how these concepts operate around us.

RQ3: This discussion looks at the ways in which Rajendra dismantles the colonialists' ideologies in the selected poems. When we talk about the colonialists' ideologies, it basically refers to western ideologies about the east. Thus, issues such as Euro-centrism, Colonial discourse and the 'East versus West' theory become very relevant.

An important ideology, which has become deep-rooted, is euro-centrism. It propagates that Europe and European cultural assumptions are constructed as or assumed to be the normal, the natural and the universal. Generally speaking, colonialists' ideologies are part and parcel of euro-centrism. Other related ideologies are that the west (the self) is superior to the east (the other). As far as the west is concerned, when the East is pitted against the West, the clear winner is always the West. The whites (the colonizers) consider themselves superior to the non-whites (the colonized) in all aspects. In fact, white is deemed beautiful while black is not. In short, the Europeans have been consistently propagating this notion of white supremacy for such a long time that it has become rather difficult to unseat that belief.

In the selected poems, Rajendra has tried to dismantle such western ideologies. The purpose is to make his readers conscious of the fact that there are such ideologies put in place today, very neatly. These western ideologies still somewhat have an impact on our daily lives. Cecil, as a postcolonial writer, 'writes back to the centre' voicing his dissatisfaction, disappointment, anger and concerns. Herein lies his resistance towards colonialism.

Fundamentally, Rajendra endeavors to bring awareness to readers, especially to eastern people about the said oppressive western ideologies that marginalize or victimize them (nonwhites). Such awareness empowers the

easterners in the sense that they no longer have to readily subscribe or believe these so-called normal, natural, universal norms. The knowledge empowers them to question the westerners. This creation of awareness is a move forward in the process of dismantling the colonialists' ideologies that Rajendra has ventured to do. Apart from this, Rajendra has also, through his writings, criticized the west for their ideologies that oppress and marginalize the non-whites. He also criticizes the east for so easily falling prey, sometimes to this notion of western supremacy.

As an example, in Poem 1, we see the western ideology of white supremacy. The non-white local workers are treated as lesser humans by the whites. Rajendra dismantles this ideology by elucidating that the workers are just as human as any white man. He highlights this in the second stanza in which he speaks about the worker's physical and emotional needs. He speaks on the workers' behalf of their sufferings and hardships, how children *are sowed with death in their eyes* and the elderly *discarded*. This poem chides the whites for their misdeeds. It also creates an awareness of the sufferings of fellow humans. What has subjugated these non-white workers is the western ideology which seems to imply that is okay to treat them inhumanly because they are not 'fully human'.

A similar scenario is seen in Poem 8. Here, the non-whites are not physically ill-treated. They are psychologically mistreated. The whites look lowly upon the non-whites. They are 'othered'. The whites scorn them and shun them. Having said this, Rajendra lampoons the whites for their ignorance and flawed belief in their own superiority. Rajendra makes readers realize that we are no different from the whites at all. It is only in our skin colour. He dismantles the white man's ideology by making readers see that the whites have their many imperfections too.

Rajendra also criticizes the western ideology that it is superior to the east, in Poem 2 and Poem 4. He thereby attempts to dismantle that ideology. Here, the west is seen throwing its weight around in developing countries. The poet tells us how the powerful western countries portray themselves as being superior, intelligent and better than eastern countries. Such ideologies make it easier for these powerful nations to bully poorer developing countries by convincing them (east) that their (west) interests are for the eastern countries' good as well. Such ideologies make the eastern countries submissive and let the western powers have their way. Thus, we see how the foreign powers 'invade' developing countries and reign supreme there economically as well as culturally. The ideology that the west is much better than the east lures the best brains of a country to go and serve these western countries at the expense of their own country. We see this in Poem 4. Rajendra attempts to dismantle such ideologies by putting things in their proper perspectives.

The 'white is beautiful' is a western ideology that has particularly taken its roots in many developing nations. Skin whitening creams from the west are mega businesses in Asia today. Of course, the white people do not need this product. The ready market for these cosmetic creams is in the east where the skin colour 'is not of the right shade'. So the non-white people keep buying and applying this product feverishly in the hope of becoming fair skinned. Rajendra illustrates the skin colour issue beautifully in Poem 3. In this poem, he dismantles the ideology that 'white is beautiful' by propagating just the opposite- that black is beautiful. He gives his readers many examples of beautiful things that are black. This surely is effective in dismantling the said ideology. As mentioned above, this poem certainly brings readers a lot of awareness on skin colour issues.

Rajendra dismantles the western ideology that all things western are superior to eastern in Poem 7. This poem is an eye opener to the easterners and Malaysians, in particular as this poem uses a local example. It criticizes Malaysians for being naïve in accepting without questioning, for accepting wholeheartedly, the false believe that western culture and merchandise are superior to eastern. Using a political leader who venerates western merchandise in this poem, Rajendra rebukes Malaysians who exude this attitude. Such veneration which has been propagated by western nations has surely succeeded in shaping the minds of the easterners, and Malaysians in this case. The idolization of their products surely benefits the western economy for their products become easily marketable here and in other eastern countries.

In Poem 5 and Poem 6, Rajendra admonishes eastern political leaders for trying to follow in the footsteps of the westerners in administering their own countries. He dismantles the western political ideology that their ways are the best in running a country. He highlights the point that when these eastern leaders try to follow the western ways, they become flawed by replicating the westerners entirely. They also fall prey to outside, western interference in administering their country. Thus blindly following the western way, as Rajendra points out, is injudicious.

13. Conclusion

Cecil, through his poems voices his resistance towards colonization by 'writing back to the centre'. In these selected poems, he attempts to dismantle the colonialists' ideologies. In so doing, he at times criticizes the west for their flawed ideologies which generally oppresses the east. At other times, he reprimands the east for falling prey to those western ideologies by subscribing to them. His attempts on dismantling those ideologies bring some awareness to readers about how these ideologies work against us.

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