

THE POETICS OF PAIN AND SURVIVAL IN SELECTED CARIBBEAN AND SOUTH EAST ASIAN POETRY

By

Adamu Pangmeshi (PhD)

Associate Professor

Department of English

Faculty of Arts, The University of Bamenda

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the selected poems of some South East Asian and Caribbean poets and seeks to demonstrate that South East Asian and Caribbean poets have rapidly created new national literatures serving as the cultural side of decolonization and the new nationalism, an indication of their continuous quest for survival. It further demonstrates that colonialism has had a negative impact on the South East Asians and the West Indians socially, politically and economically. However, the paper evolves on the hypothesis that although writing and evolving within two varying sociocultural backgrounds, the poets under study are united by their poetic vision which consists in debunking the traumatic experiences of the colonized peoples of the world. The paper concludes that colonialism has not only affected the culture of the people but has equally affected their psychological stability. As such, it has generally made life painful and miserable, thus, pushing the people into a quest for their survival. In terms of methodology, we will employ some of the tenets of new historicism and postcolonial theory will be employed to buttress our analyses.

Keywords: *Angst, pain, postcolonialism, colonialism, survival*

1. Introduction

Writings about the West Indies and South East Asia began with the European discovery of the New World and later followed with the settlement of other European nations due to the fertile nature of the different islands. Writings from these slave descendants emerged in the nineteenth century. In spite of colonial domination and the history of slavery, individual writers have risen in the different genres of literature within South East Asia and the West Indies. With regards to poetry, some of them include Nissim Ezekiel, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Gilda Nassief and Una Marson. They have established themselves as highly competent and even outstanding writers. Homi Bhabha in “Signs Taken for Wonders” underscores that:

poetry is no less powerful a medium for registering the postcolonial condition and the cultural aftermath of empire which is often described using

metaphors of mixing and other cognate concepts illustrating this inclusiveness characteristics of postcoloniality. (22)

It is with this argument in mind that the above prominent poets have been selected for this study. It should be pointed out here that poetry generally projects the inner experiences of people and their socio-cultural and political experiences. These poets have been brought together because they share a common history and they make an attempt to project the experiences of their people. Talking about the focus of Caribbean poetry, David Toh Kusi in ‘“(Re)Constructing Memory and Building ‘Monuments of Unageing Intellect’ in W.B Yeats, Vera Bell, George Campell, George Lamming and Derek Walcott”’, quoting O.R Darthone contends that:

Their poetry enhance truth and reveal a vigorous attempt to recreate an identity misapprehended by the colonizers and poorly presented by expatriates who up to the 1930s were trapped between futile adoration for Empire and muffled to live for the home.(158)

This self realization has been very significant. This is because much pain has been inflicted on them. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* the new 8th edition defines the word ‘pain’ as a feeling that you have when you have been hurt or when you are ill/sick (1057). It also refers to a mental or emotional suffering (1057). In other words, it refers to a thing that is very annoying or irritating. Survival on the other hand, the same dictionary defines survival as “the state of continuing to exist despite difficulties or danger(1505). However, it refers to the struggle, battle, and fight to live on despite all the pains. Pain and survival are among the major preoccupations of Caribbean and South East Asian writers. These ideas feature predominantly in a majority of their writings. The writers advance several causes of pain, predominant among them being slavery and migration. The history of slavery has inflicted so much pain on the people and the Caribbean psyche. Joblessness and homelessness are also major causes of pain that these poets have advanced. Poor governance, identity crisis, disillusionment, domination, war are all causes of pain. As the pain persists, the people have also devised several means to survive.

2. Voice of the Oppressed and Traumatic Feelings

Una Marson, one of the major female Caribbean poets in her poem “kinky hair blues” paints a vivid picture of an African who is alienated from her cultural identity as being black in colour and having kinky hair. The African girl in the poem is detested by the white boys because she does not look like one of them. Her life is in danger and as such, she is forced to assimilate the European culture. She accepts this for her life to be spared. This is highlighted in Marson’s poem thus;

I hate dat ironed hair
And dat bleaching skin
I hate dat ironed hair

And dat bleaching skin.
 But I'll be done
 If I don't fall in. (lines 13-18)

From the lines above, it is evident that Marson expresses her strong disdain and rejection of the 'ironed hair' and 'bleaching skin' carried about by the whites. Her disgust is invoked when she satirizes the skin colour of the whites. This is in response to the painful situation in which she and the rest of the descendants of the African slaves find themselves. They have been made to feel inferior and have generally been naturally identified with blackness and having kinky hair.

The poet, in spite of her hatred for ironed hair, finally succumbs. She changes her color and skin texture to look like the whites. She does so because she wants to receive a better treatment in the hands of these colonizers. This has brought in much depression and stress and above all pain. The reason being that she is doing all of these against her wish. We understand because imitating leads to accepting falsehood and this rather inflicts more pain and trauma in the victim. Bill Aschroft et al in *Key concepts in Postcolonial Studies* note that;

When the colonial discourse encourages the colonized subjects to 'mimic' the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, instructions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that is quite threatening. (139)

As I indicated above, mimicking the colonial values only lead to psychic fragmentation and cultural alienation. This has led the persona in this poem to be standing astride the grave. In spite of the fact that the speaker in the poem has been culturally pushed away from her identity, Marson in an attempt to uphold the black values, goes ahead to state that:

Lord is you did give me
 All dis kinky hair
 Tis you did give me
 All dis kinky hair (line 19-22)
 And if don't envy gals
 Who got those locks so fair
 I like me black face,
 And me kinky hair
 I like my black face
 And me kinky face (lines 23-28)

Although the speaker in the poem has been forcefully assimilated, she proudly admits that her beautiful black face and her soft kinky hair were given to her by her creator in a way to identify her as a black. The emphasis on kinky hair and black colour shows how Marson celebrates the personality of the blacks and the African culture. Her emphasis is re-echoed when she says:

Gwine find a beautiful shop, find a beautiful shop

Cause ain't a belle cause ain't a lovely belle
 I hat dat ironed hair and dat bleaching skin
 I hat dat ironed hair and dat bleaching

This excerpt is an indication of the speaker's state of being at that time. What the speaker is undergoing is just a replica of the discrimination, domination and repression that the slave descendants went through during the colonial period. They were equally forced to take up the norms and customs of the colonial masters. The repetition that is demonstrated in the poem shows the excruciating pain that goes through the mind of the speaker in the poem. The tone of the poet is that of disappointment and frustration. Although she likes her skin color, there is nothing that she can do about it. She is thus forced to destroy it. This is highlighted in the last stanza thus:

Now is gwine press me hair
 And bleach me skin
 I bleach my skin
 What wont a gal do,
 Some kinda man to win.(lines 31-36)

Her frustration and pains are summarized in the lines above. The fact that she has been assimilated, takes away her original African qualities. It should be emphasized here that colonialism had a much more destructive effect in the colonies that were colonized. Edward Said in *Orientalism* talking about this, underscores thus:

Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment. The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien. (207)

This is the image that was conceived of the colonized. They do not have any particular thing that could be thought of as positive. Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizen, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined or-as the colonial powers openly coveted their territory-taken over (Said 207). This is excruciatingly painful.

3. Gilda Nassief, Nissim Ezekiel and the Trauma of Pains

Similarly, Gilda Nassief, one of the giant female Caribbean poets is also very preoccupied with the excruciating pains that the Caribbeans have incurred. In her poem entitled 'Caribman' Nassief, like Marson, touches on cultural alienation and racial extinction. What used to hold the Caribbean person together is no more. This explains why they are gradually being wiped out. The rich culture of the Caribman was the 'ancestral stamp', yellow skin straight hair' and 'hawked nose' which is completely fading out as a result of colonial

pressures and racial superiority. This is clearly seen when she laments in the following lines:

You look at your people
And count the few
Who still bear untouched
The ancestral lamp
Of yellow skin straight hair
Hawked nose almond eyes
And you know for sure
Your face is dying...(Lines 9-16)

Nassief, therefore, appeals to the Caribbeans to stand up and fight for their roots and cultural heritage which is being completely cut off from them. The poet through her use of imagery projects in the minds of the readers and the Caribbeans, the original culture of the Caribbeans which was carrying the 'ancestral stamp', the 'yellow skin' and the 'hawked nose' which is a clear symbol of African mark and legacy. In doing this, Nassief through the above aesthetic element, brings out the beauty of the African culture and their rich heritage and values. This shows survival in the midst of the destructive colonial forces. The poet's tone is that of sternness and disappointment. Her mood on the other hand, is pessimistic. This is partly because the poet thinks that the few Africans remaining untouched will eventually become assimilated like those who have been culturally cut off from their roots. This is underlined when the poet says '...the death of your race /will leave an indelible scar/in the heart of man'.

It is evident that the complete alienation of the Caribman as a result of European hegemony will lead to the extinction of his/her culture in favour of that of the colonizers. This is part of the reason why the Caribbean live in angst and total anguish.

4. Nissim Ezekiel and the Trauma of Pain

Nissim Ezekiel on the other hand is equally one of the great figures as far as South East Asian poetry is concerned. He has also recapitulated the frustrations and the painful realities in his poetry. For this study, two of his poems: "Background, Casually" and "The Patriot" have been used to portray pain and survival in the South East Asian poetry. Ezekiel's "Background, Casually" is an autobiographical poem that gives an account of the poet's life from childhood to adulthood. The poem gives an account of the dreadful conditions under which the poet was born, his sufferings as he grew up, and finally, how he tries to survive. The poet's persona in search of solace, migrates to the mother country, but he is forced to return home as a result of torment, discrimination, and the pain he undergoes simply because he is a Jew. The idea of pain already features here. The persona's pain result from the torments and discrimination he suffers as a result of his origin. His migration is a possible way of survival and finding solace. The idea of suffering, pain, and possible

quest for survival are highlighted by the poet to show the speaker's struggle and the deplorable and nervous conditions under which the South East Asians live. The persona symbolizes the South East Asians and the Indians who are under the yoke of pain and exploitation.

This poem is divided into three parts and thus presents a consistent and chronological flow of ideas from the speaker's birth, his struggles as he grows up and eventual survival. Part one describes his infancy. We are told that he was born a:

rascal-clown' who had nothing to eat.
The frightened child who would not eat/Or
Sleep a boy of meagre bone".
He never learnt to fly a kite
His borrowed top refused to spin lines (1-4)

The absence of food and the rate of terror in the land is enough to inflict the infant with pain. This pain that is characteristic of the Southeast Asian life can be likened to the painful realities that characterized the life of South Africans during the Apartheid days. In his 'the sounds begin again', Denis Brutus re-echoes the pains that were inflicted on the South Africans during the Apartheid period. Like the South Africans, the speaker in 'Background Casually' cannot sleep because he has not eaten. Thus, his pain is both physical and psychological. "Meager bones" as the poet puts it, portrays the image of poverty and suffering.

Despite the pain which is as a result of his impoverished background, the persona still manages to survive, when he finds himself in a Roman Catholic school. His impoverished background does not stop him from studying and gaining home education which can help him to move on. The speaker underlines thus:

I went to Roman Catholic school,
A mugging Jew among the wolves
They told me I had killed the Christ
That year I won the scripture prize
A muslim sportsman boxed my ears (lines 5-8)

The poet also looks at religious disparity as a source of pain. Being a Jew, the Hindus and Buddhists in India despise him. Yet, he emerges a winner of the "Scripture prize", indicating that he has the aptitude to survive. He is accused of killing Christ since he is a Jew and the killing of Christ is associated with the Jews. Even though the conditions surrounding the speaker's life are traumatizing he still survives. There is a lot of tension around. The speaker tells the readers thus:

At home on Friday nights the prayers
Were said, my morals declined
I heard of Yoga and zen
Could I, perhaps be rabbi-saint?

The more I searched, the less I found.

He is an embodiment of the postcolonial identity. Though fragmented, he forges on. This quest for survival is characteristic of the colonial mind.

The second part of the poem examines the poet's life abroad (England). He spends two years in London but all he achieves is severe pain which comes as a result of racial bias and Eurocentric prejudices against him. London does not provide any warm reception for him. He feels disappointed and dejected but the only thing that makes him laugh is when he thinks of his home. This is underlined when he says:

In everything, a bitter thought.
So, in an English-ship
Taking French guns and mortar shells...
And learn to laugh again at home. (lines 31-35)

The poet's use of guns and shells projects insecurity and trauma. At least he receives some education while there but he longs to come back home in order to save himself from the turbulent conditions under which he lived there in England. The speaker says 'How to feel home, was the point..had I observed, except my own exasperation?'. Thus, returning home is another means of survival. He has hope that he will be worthy in his ancestral land. There is a sense of nostalgia.

The last part of the poem is a flashback of the 'Boer War'. This war further symbolizes insecurity and pain. This is clear in his words; "I dream that/fierce men had bound my feet and hands". This idea of war features in "The Patriot". The poet in this poem portrays war and violence as a major source of pain among people of the world. These wars as the poet observes, have robbed many of their peace and left them in pain. In "Background, Casually", the poet equally states that later dreams were all words. It is these words that he puts down in writing, thus helping him to triumph over pain especially as he wins the world prize which enables him to survive. He states that every wise person can survive with whatever inspires them. Be it "inner and outer storm". The poem ends with the speaker being stable, comfortable and contented back home. He underlines:

I have made my commitments now
This is one: to stay where I am,
As others choose to give themselves
In some remote and backward place is where I am. (line 75)

The poet by this demonstrates that survival from pain cannot only be obtained from abroad but it can as well be gotten back home. This confirms the fact that one can get real satisfaction at home especially in this context.

In "Background Casually", Ezekiel further raises the idea of religious intolerance. He examines it as a major source of conflict that robs people of

peace, stability and thereby afflicting them with much pain. The speaker highlights the pain he suffers due to religious intolerance when he says:

A Muslim sportsman
boxed my ears.
I grew in terror of the strong
But undernourished
Hindu lad,...
One noisy day I used a knife. (lines 10-15)

As a result of so much torture from those of other religions and the strong, the speaker has resorted to using a knife as a means of survival from those who inflict pain on him. The knife here symbolizes self defense. Pain as the poet portrays, equally stems from the failure to satisfy one's desires or simply what we are looking for. The poet uses a paradox to expose this, when he says; "The more I searched, the less I found" (line 20). This paradox exposes the speaker's pain and frustrations in life. Thus, at the age of 22, he decides to migrate as a means of survival. He sees migration as a solution to his frustrating and traumatizing situation. But the situation is even complicated when he cannot afford the fare for his voyage. The three things that riots in his mind now are: philosophy, poverty, and poetry. This alliteration is used by the poet to emphasize the themes of pain, hardship, and poverty.

In yet another poem entitled, the "Patriot" Ezekiel, starts by declaring his intentions. This has to do with the propagation of peace and non-violence. He shows his indignation at peace distorters when he observes that the main trend in the world today is; "...fighting, fighting". (line 2). He frowns at the fact that ancient wisdom which stands for peace as the ideal has been neglected for modern trends which propagate war as the ideal. Fashion and the quest for foreign things have led to the abandonment of local cultures. The desire to integrate into the English society has led Indians to adhere to new forms of colonialism. The speaker observes with indignation, the many ethnic tensions and discriminations among people of the world in general and Indians in particular. All these prevail as a result of intolerance. The speaker in the poem underlies that he /s is 'standing for peace and non violence' and further questions why people are fighting in the world. The poem, however, ends with a note of hope for a brighter future and a rejuvenation of Indian culture. In underlining this, the poet notes "One day Ram Rajya is surely coming" (line 41).

The poet examines neo-colonialism as a source of pain and suffering. He observes with so much disdain the fact that the modern generation in pursuit of fashion and integration has neglected the wisdom of peace crusaders like Mahatma Gandhi. Foreign values which enslave the Indians are upheld while local values are seriously neglected thus, leading to the demise of local cultures. This is part of what has inflicted much pain in the youth. They think that they can only mimic European values for survival. But they fail to understand that

the consequences are enormous. Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called in itself that is in the past. The effect of mimicry is camouflage. It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled—exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare. (Bhabha 1994: 121). Bhabha's analysis of mimicry in his essay 'Of Mimicry and Man' is largely based on the Lacanian vision of mimicry as camouflage resulting in colonial ambivalence. He sees the colonizer as a snake in the grass who speaks in "a tongue that is forked," and produces a mimetic representation that "emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (Bhabha 1994: 122). This explains why coming to terms with colonial ambivalence only helps to inflict pains and fragment the personality of the colonized.

The poet further looks at racial discrimination among international and national communities or ethnic groups as another source of tension. He sees ethnic tension as another impediment to world peace and especially amongst the South East Asians. This is seen in the following lines:

What do you think of prospect of world peace?
Pakistan behaving like this,
China behaving like that,
It is making me really sad,
I am telling you. (lines 29-32)

The fact that Pakistanis have failed to consider Chinese as brothers and vice versa has led to socio-political unrest. The same is true for many international communities. The indifference of one nation to the plight of others further inflict pain and suffering the world over. Disunity is not only found among international communities, but among nationals as well.

The poet's frustration as well is highlighted when he says:
Most harassing me
All men are brothers, no?
In India also
Gujaratis, Maharashtrians, Hindi Wallabs
All brother-.

The poet sees this as a source of pain. Tolerance as seen in the poet's perception is very important for survival. If people can only learn to tolerate the lapses of each other, fighting and violence will cease and peace and security will prevail. The poet has also called on the modern generation to return to ancient wisdom from peace crusaders like Mahatma Gandhi. In his opinion, "Ancient wisdom is 100% correct/I should say 200% correct". (lines. 6-7). Thus survival lies in tolerance and a rejection of neo-colonialism. This can be done by adhering to ancient wisdom. If this is done, the world and South East Asians will enjoy relative peace.

5. Edward Kamau Brathwaite and the Trauma of Pain

The Caribbean poet and scholar, Edward Kamau Brathwaite was born in Barbados in 1930. Using 'nation language' as well as linguistic and typographic innovation, Brathwaite composes poems that reveal the connected strands of postcolonial, historical, and personal inquiry. Brathwaite's work is generally exciting. He is the author of numerous collections of poetry. He is also concerned with the painful realities of the Caribbean. This concern amongst other things, is highlighted and projected in "Home Coming" and "Prelude".

He preoccupies himself with issues of slavery, exploitation, self assertion, and identity crises which are all subsumed under the painful realities that West Indians have been victim of in the hands of the colonial masters. Sarah Anyang, in *Critical Perspectives on Commonwealth Literature* underlines that:

Edward Braithwaite's collection of poems portrays the plight of the West Indians who were taken from Africa to the West Indies as captives. While in the West Indies they were found in a white dominated world where they were mistreated and despised upon. (246)

This demonstrates the angst and painful realities the West Indians have been victims of. Braithwaite's "Home Coming" exposes the pains and torture of the speaker as he endeavours to return home. The persona is further subjected to severe pain as he returns home naked, without anything. He expresses his frustration when he says that he expected nothing while returning home, and that even his name has been "burnt out", probably from the minds of his relatives. The speaker returns to find out that he has lost all respect even from his own kinsmen. This pain inflicted on him is not only physical but psychological which thus puts him in severe trauma. The persona's pain becomes even more severe with the realization that his skin colour now looks very unfamiliar. His body has lost its content like a snake that has undergone moulting. As he says, all these have happened as a result of "whips, strips of flesh and beaten labour". He portrays the true intensity of his pain when in his lamentation he says he is a man walking without a home, flesh and cannot travel far. It should be understood that the speaker in this poem is a representation of the large population of the West Indies.

Brathwaite in this poem, castigates diasporic movement. He sees it as a source of melancholy to the Caribbeans. The migrants are in pain because their dreams are deferred Braithwaite unveils the frustration and dilemma in which the West Indian finds himself/herself. The colonizers indeed had painted a good picture full of milk and honey but the colonized have been disappointed. They lack places to sleep on because they are generally discriminated against. Coming home which should be a source of survival rather afflicts them with more pain because they return empty-handed and have lost their identities. The poet expresses it in these words;

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And so without my cloth,
Shoulders uncovered
to his new doubt
And desert, I return,
Expecting nothing;
My name burnt out;" (lines 1-6)

These lines clearly reveal the persona's loss of identity, which causes him serious pain. Brathwaite further portrays the pain of the West Indians which results from intense labour. They work endlessly in the plantations owned by their masters. They are subjected to dehumanizing conditions in the plantations, as their masters torture them physically just to make them work. Unable to bear this torture, the lone means of survival is homecoming. The incessant subjection of the West Indians to forced labour and physical torture brings a longing for home in them. They think that home is the only safe place. Home here, is the only safe place as they think.

Pain is further aggravated by the fact that they work without food. At some point, they are forced to lick the blood that oozes out of their bodies as a result of whips and strips. The poet uses repetition to stress on the intensity of the pain the labourers go through. "Strips, strips, of flesh, flash". Not only are the labourers beaten, they are also chained like bulldogs. "The jaws of the shackles,/clanking bulldog,/grapple to slaved ankles;". The poet by this reveals the excesses of the colonizers' ruthlessness on the masses.

Despite the dehumanizing condition of the labourers, the poet has not failed to at least show forth a glimpse of hope- The picture painted by the black is a bleak one, but hope and survival lie in going back to their roots. Realizing the bleak situation is already a step towards survival. Thus, the subject prefers to die at home than to be mocked at as a slave in the diaspora. There is hope for rejuvenation when the poet says, "...even my skin/now sheds it shame;/like a snake".(lines.11-13) Shedding of the skin may symbolize separation from the turbulent past and an entry into new life that is a better future.

"Prelude" is another poem in which Brathwaite delves into the precarious and devastating conditions of the African slaves in the West Indies. He takes a keen look at the trans-Saharan slave trade, where slaves had to move from Africa through the Sahara desert to the West Indies. He commences by examining the awkward effects of the sun on the slave as they go through the desert. We see this when he says; "...master sun's/cutting edge of /Heart, taut/Surface of things". (line.2-4).The metaphor of the sun as used in these lines, emphasises the pain inflicted on the slaves by their masters. Thus, the pain that Brathwaite exposes in this poem is deeply rooted in slavery.

Stanza two further highlights the pain and suffering the slaves go through under the scorching heat of the sun. The desert is flood with dust, dead bodies/carcasses of dead slaves, pastry from butter flies, no water for the slaves to drink, and nowhere for them to shelter themselves from the heat of the sun.

All these factors culminate to put them in deep pain. This repetition; “without hope/without hope/of a morning”, portrays the poet’s pessimism about the dehumanizing conditions of the slaves.

Brathwaite does not only look at the pains inflicted on the slave, he as well looks at the adverse effects of slavery on the home country, that is, Africa. This is because those taken as slaves, according to the poet, are “Children of stars”. Thus, slavery is looked upon as a form of brain-drain to the continent, as it robs it of its best intellectuals. This way may even in a deeper connotation explain why Africa remains backward to this day.

After examining the ruins of slavery on the homeland, he calls on all the West Indians to rise and rebuild their lives. The poet by this clarion call moves the readers from the pessimistic portrait he has hitherto painted to a more optimistic one. He stirs hope with the fact that all is not lost. New villages, walls and cities can be raised if and only if the people are determined to do that. He calls on all the Africans to do everything within their power to revive all that has been ruined when he says;

...you
must mix spittle
with dirt, dung
to saliva and
Sweat: round
mud walls rise
in the dawn
walled cities
arise.

By this, the poet ties survival to the determination of the people to rise again.

From stanza 7-9, the poet continues to rekindle hope about the way out of the devastating situation of the slaves. This is seen when he says: “But no/rain comes”. Rain here is a symbol of rejuvenation. He further appeals to God to come and release them from thieves, robbers, insects and poison. This appeal demonstrates his faith in God and his optimism about a better future for the Caribbean natives. He further instigates a rebellion when he talks about ‘warm fire flames’. The slave master or colonizers orchestrate violence on the natives by burning down their homes and villages. Now the poet calls on the masses to use the flames to fashion weapons that they can use to defend themselves. With God’s help, he believes, they are going to prevail. This to him is the possible means of survival. Thus, survival lies in determination, faith in God, and revolting against those that enslaved them. It should be understood that the Caribbeans and South East Asians have the need to invent. This is partly because they cannot go back to their roots. Michele Praeger emphasizes thus;

Caribbeans have everything to invent, as they cannot return to a particular culture or tradition. Some Caribbean writers and thinkers ...have in the past been tempted by the idea of a return to Africa, but this ideology seems

obsolete in the contemporary Caribbean as Caribbean writers know that their origins, like the origins of language, are irretrievable.(2)

Colonialism has made them lose their pride. The colonialists did everything in their interest. The colonized were summarily made to feel inferior and subhuman in the face of everything.(Pangmeshi, xiv).These Caribbeans are only in the process of self discovery. This explains why the poets studied have made an attempt at presenting their pains and thus dismantling boundaries and the determinants that create unequal power relationships.

6. Conclusion

This study has hopefully demonstrated that pain and survival feature predominantly among the issues raised in South East Asian and Caribbean poetry. The causes of pain as the paper has examined are wide and varied. Slavery, colonialism, forced labour, racial bias and prejudice, indifference to the plight of others and intolerance is prevalent among the causes of pain, suppression, marginalization and suffering. Although the pains persist, so too have the people devised various means of survival. No matter how bleak the painful situation may seem, there will always be a way forward This paper has further revealed that colonialism has inflicted a lot of pains on the West Indians and Southeast Asians as a whole. Their sufferings and pains have come as a result of colonial domination. It could be said that the paper has unravelled the predicaments of the postcolonial Caribbean and the South East Asian society through their poetry. It has further demonstrated that poetry is an active weapon in the projection of peoples' inner lives as well as their socio-cultural and political experiences. Above all, the paper has revealed that domination always engenders resistance.

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