

AL-AZHAR UNIVERSITY
BULLETIN OF THE FACULTY
OF
LANGUAGES & TRANSLATION



جامعة الأزهر
مجلة كلية اللغات والترجمة

**The Green Postcolonial Citizen: a Postcolonial
Eco study
of Rohina Malik`s *Unveiled***

by

Dr. Dina Helmy Ahmed Shalaby

*Lecturer of English literature and Criticism
Faculty of Arts- Menofiya University*

The Green Postcolonial Citizen: a Postcolonial Eco study of Rohina Malik`s *Unveiled*

Dina Helmy Ahmed Shalaby

Department of English Language, Faculty of Arts, Menofiya University, Shebeen
El-Koom, al- Menofiya, Egypt

Language, Faculty of Arts, Menofiya University, Shebeen El-Koom, al- Menofiya,
Egypt.

Email: dandash-1982@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: This study examines the “green postcolonial citizen” as one of the major terms in the postcolonial eco critical studies. The unique citizenship which is created by this citizen is the pursuit of each postcolonial citizen who aspires to be embraced as a real citizen in his\her new home in the nation state. Committing to the green bonds which naturally embrace the different citizens who inhabit one society, instead of only clinging to the ethnic roots, enables the postcolonial citizen who is categorized as an outsider to be incorporated to a new home as a citizen. The green plants which are part of the indeterminate eco system, and which every human eats, or drinks, and generally consumes allow those who are called outsiders, or strangers in the host society to become real citizens. This is what Rohina Malik (1986-), the American playwright proved to her audience in her one act play *Unveiled* (2009).

Keywords: Green, Postcolonial, Citizen, Tea, Eco.

المواطن الأخضر: دراسة بيئية في نقد ما بعد الاستعمار في مسرحية (بلا حجاب) لروهينا مالك

دينا حلبي احمد شلبي

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الاداب، جامعة المنوفيه، شبين الكوم، المنوفية، مصر.

البريد الإلكتروني dandash_1982@yahoo.com

ملخص :

تتناول الدراسة الحالية مفهوم المواطن الأخضر كواحد من أهم المصطلحات المستخدمة في الدراسات البيئية في نقد ما بعد الاستعمار. ويعتمد هذا النوع من المواطنة على استخدام النبات الأخضر - في شكله كطعام أو شراب - كأساس لبناء علاقات مواطنة بين المواطنين من ذوى الأصول العرقية المختلفة والمواطن الذي ينتمي إلى الغرب، وذلك علي اعتبار أن النبات هو جزء من النظام البيئي الذي لا يعرف الاختلافات، وكذلك لأن النبات هو استهلاك بشري مطلق وليس حكراً علي عرق من الأعراق بعينه. يظهر ذلك جلياً في مسرحية (بلا حجاب) للكاتبه روهينا مالك؛ حيث اعتمدت علي رسم شخصيات لمواطنين اعتمدوا علي مفهوم المواطن الأخضر. إستخدم هؤلاء المواطنون الشاي الممزوج بالنكهات المحليه و القهوة والبرتقال، وذلك لمد جسور التواصل والترابط بينهم وبين كل من ينتمي إلي المجتمع الغربي. أكدت مسرحيه بلاحجاب ل روهينا مالك في النهايه ان كوب الشاي او القهوة او حتي البرتقاله قد تعطي اساسا قويا لعلاقات مواطنه متوازنه و متوائمه بين ذوى الاعراق المختلفه الذين يضمهم وطن واحد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أخضر، ما بعد الاستعمار، مواطن، الشاي، البيئة.

Finding a thread which links together the people who belong to different origins was always, and forever the inspiration of Postcolonialism (Ashcroft 10). It was like the fire which made postcolonialism always embrace several fields of knowledge such as the eco studies. Like the theorists of postcolonialism who attempted to find common grounds for those who belong to different races, the postcolonial eco studies theorists adopted a system to fulfill a similar purpose. They attempted to find not just an ordinary, but a natural contact zone which inevitably connects First, and Third World ethnic groups who should become fellow citizens in the nation states. In fact, nothing could create this magnificent zone better than the eco system which naturally incorporates all living beings on earth in one pot. This system is not only considered inclusive by its ability to include all living beings in one pot, but also by its use of the green plants which all people on the globe eat, drink, and generally consume. The theorists of the postcolonial eco criticism have understood this fact, and thus innovated the term, “green postcolonial citizen”.

In order to have a full picture of the term “green postcolonial citizen”, the reader needs first to understand what is postcolonial eco criticism? In fact, it is an intriguing question. Probably this is because postcolonial eco criticism includes a strange connection between two different, and irrelative words; “postcolonial”, and “eco”. If the reader splits the two words, she\he will find that each word has a meaning different from the other. Generally, postcolonialism is “an anthropocentric study” (Afzal 1) which examines “only human behaviors” (Afzal 1), and their “culture” (O’Brian 140). This means that postcolonialism considers man “as a significant subject over non-human entities” (Afzal 1-2), and highlights culture.

While postcolonialism pays attention to cultures, and considers human as a superior being, the ecological studies adopt a different vision. Ecology is defined as a: “branch of science that deals with the study of interaction between living organisms and their physical environment” (De, and Arnab 15). According to this definition all living beings interact, and are involved, and engaged in relationships with a huge, and limitless entity called the environment. Also, this definition indicates that it is only the physical environment, not the culture which possesses the power to include all of the living beings, and that Man, the creator of culture is an ordinary living being just like any other living being. That is to say that Man is not the superior being in the ecological studies.

When the ecological studies mingled with the humanities later, especially the literary, and critical studies, it began to “focus on the interface between culture and

the physical environment” (O’Brian 140). Thus, they attempt mainly to explore “the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty xviii) . Through this new relationship, the eco studies could combine literature with the physical environment.

In a similar vein, when the eco studies invaded the realm of the postcolonial criticism creating the new term called the “postcolonial eco criticism” (Handley 119), a different, and new vision of postcolonialism as a field of study emerged. This vision began to make “a balance between ecocriticism’s important critique of anthropocentrism and post-colonialism’s concern for social justice” (Handley 119). Therefore, the postcolonial eco criticism can be viewed as a critical approach which focuses on the missing part in the anthropological studies which is nature, and examines as well the man especially in her\his most burdening pursuit to reach the social justice. It is an “integrity of the culture and the environment” (Afzal 2) which includes “Humans, and non-humans” (Afzal 1).

In fact, the Postcolonial eco criticism is not a new critical approach. Its roots extend to the era of colonialism. It could be said that it is colonialism which has contributed in creating this critical approach. Colonialism was not only related to the Third world humans who the colonizers viewed as others, but it also had a “joint history” with what can be called the “ecological disruption and exploitation” of the nature in the colonies of the Third World (Bartels et al 109). According to George Handley: colonialism “degraded cultures and ecosystems alike” (133), and led to “destructive social and ecological” effects in the colonies (Grove 486).

It seems that the European colonizers were interested in the first place when they invaded the Third World in the “Other non-human nature” (Plumwood 53). For them it was like the “pre-Adamic world” (Gebert 99). Certainly, the East’s being a paradise like place which enjoys primitive, and rich nature incited the white man to exploit its wealth. The colonizers were “driven by the ideologies of possession” (Huggan, and Tiffin Postcolonial 205). These ideologies were mainly “utilitarian” (Adams 22) ideologies which aim essentially, and in essence at “yoking nature[of the Third World] to the economic gain” (Adams 22) of the First World. They aim at “making home [of the white man]‘productive’” (Marzec 42), regardless of the “destruction” (Adams 22) which they could make to the ecosystem in the Third World which they called colonies.

Strangely, the European colonizers held a very oppressive, and antagonistic relationship between them, and mother nature, or what can be described as “the more-than-human world” (Plumwood 52) in the colonies. This unexcused

confrontation, and enmity with nature has extended to include later the people who belong to the colonies` nature. That is why the colonizers viewed the Third World Man “as exemplifying an earlier and more animal stage of human development” (Plumwood 52). Also, they “Treated the others and their land as wild, savage, primitive, and exotic” (Marzec 75), and “constructed themselves in hierarchical relations to other societies, *both* human *and* nonhuman” (Huggan, and Tiffin Postcolonial 22). Moreover, the colonizers` paranoia made them imagine that they are responsible for guiding the inferior others who inhabit the colonies. Thus, they completely believed that the Third World is a “place [which] needs development by the first world” (Curtin 45), and refused to see that there are “common human realities like joy,[and] suffering” (Said 233) and above all environment which certainly embraces all the people on the globe regardless of their race, or colour, and makes them equal.

The colonial refusal of the environment as a common human reality which inevitably incorporates both the colonizer, and colonized in one pot, is what obviously led to the destruction of the eco system earlier in the Canaries. The colonizers ruined these islands. They were like the “snake of every Eden” (Crosby 92) who came to spoil, drain, and deflower the fertile Canaries, and turn them to a wreck land. When the colonizers` feet first touched the land of the Canaries, they did not prefer its “‘wild’ landscapes apparently little altered by man” (Grove 5), and they worked hard to change it to “cleared, usable land” (Gebert 101). That is why, they began in a long, continuous, and persistent transformation of the land`s structure. In their endeavor to make what they called as “ the plantation economy” in order to benefit their homes, the colonizers “damaged the established ecosystems” (Huggan, and Tiffin Green 1) of the Canaries. They “damaged the forests” (Gebert 102) in these lands, and replaced them with “huge variety of plants” (Grove 5) which they “brought with them” from Europe (Crosby 89), and the other countries in the “tropical world [which] became vulnerable to colonization” (Grove 5).

To tell the truth, the colonizers` deforesting of the Canaries, and the other colonies as well reflects their real intentions. They wanted “to create versions of Europe” (Crosby 89) on the others` lands. That is to say, they wanted to impose their European eco system even on the lands which do not belong to them. One of the major evidences which prove this argument is that the “archipelago” in the Canaries which included only forests became later a place for “cane fields”, and producing sugar (Crosby 96). Indeed, that was exactly what the European colonizers wanted to create in the archipelago.

As a matter of fact, imposing only the European version of the “white eco criticism” (Talukdar 247) has been negotiated by the postcolonial eco criticism because generally the: “postcolonial eco criticism attempts to reimagine something beyond [or] in place of the currently running (dominant) ‘white’ eco-criticism” (Talukdar 247). That alternative which “reckons with the ways in which ecology does not always work within the frames of political interests”(Talukdar 247) is supposed to “contest the western ideologies of development” (Huggan, and Tiffin Postcolonial 27) of the Third World`s nature, and people. These ideologies have earlier led to the imposition of the European eco system on the East. They are the plague which caused the deforestation, and degradation of both the land, and the people of the East.

“Green postcolonialism” (Huggan and Tiffin Green 10) could be that possible alternative. As a term which is produced by, and “applied in postcolonial eco criticism”, it focuses on the concept of the “ecological beings” (Huggan and Tiffin Green 10). According to this concept all “living beings”, either men, or any other living being are alike who should enjoy justice, either social for men, or environmental for the rest of the living beings (Huggan, and Tiffin Green 10). Justice, then is the focus of green postcolonialism. It is also what simply each postcolonial citizen pursues in the nation state where he\she suffers from being marginalized for being originally not from the West. This inferior citizen is the person who does not have an “access to social, civil and political rights” (Babacan 4). She\he could “only gain[the] minimal formal civic rights and obligations” (Ahluwalia 502) which do not allow her\him to pass the racist “binary citizen/ non-citizen” hierarchy which positions the Western citizen “as a distinct and separate ‘type’ of being” (Sharma National Citizenship 639), and “imposes the culture of the dominant group” (Castles 29) .

That is why some of the postcolonial citizens were attracted to “green postcolonialism”. They attempted through this concept to find a code which connects them with the other citizens especially those who belong to the West in the nation states. Belonging “to the more-than-human cosmos” (Handley 125), or nature, and its elements such as the green plants affords this code, and overwhelms the differences between the citizens who belong to different origins in one home. Like the “shared air, water, and land” (Sharma Nandita 648), green plants belong to the huge eco system which is basically “a space of indeterminacy and instability” (Handley 119), and “a world without a center” (Handley 123). Green plants` being a product of this indeterminate, and an anti centrism entity called the eco system make them naturally reflect the eco system`s marvelous ability to embrace the

differences without giving superiority to any living being. That is why like the eco system which “[could easily] disrupt and render perpetually contingent the binary of center and periphery” (Handley 123), green plants could end the long conflict between those who belong to center, and consider themselves citizens, and those who do not belong to the center, and are viewed as non citizens in any nation state.

Being committed to the green plants, not to the ethnicity which naturally exists among the citizens of one home, and becoming then a green postcolonial citizen could end the dilemma of citizen/non citizen in metropolitan cities. The shared plants which the citizens in one home eat, drink or consume, enable all of them to be “accepted as fellow citizens with cultural rights” (Lister 49). That is to say, those who belong to different origins will be all accepted as fellow citizens to the white citizen, and their different backgrounds will be respected as well. Through the green plants, the citizens of a nation state who originally belong to the East will not only be able to “survive” (Kapur 568), or to be “accommodated” (Isin and Turner 17), but they will also feel the true feeling of the real citizen. They will become “equal partners” (Bellamy 114) to the others. They will feel the sense of “fraternity, equality, liberty” (Isin 130), and “solidarity” (Kabeer 7) with others.

In *Unveiled* which is divided into five parts, Rohina Malik portrays what can be called “the green postcolonial citizen”. In this play, the audience find themselves most of the time face to face with female fictional characters who share the trauma of being Western citizens who are inferiorized by the mainstream. Such citizens believe that maybe tea, coffee, or orange which are originally green plants could end their trauma which goes back to the era of colonialism, and became more flaming after 9/11 attacks in the United States, and in the West generally.

In the first part entitled as “chocolate chai”, Malik introduces her first female protagonist Maryam, the American citizen who belongs originally to Pakistan. Throughout her life, she felt like being an American citizen. Probably this is why Maryam felt freedom, and did not ever think of changing her Pakistani British accent, or her Pakistani clothes, and she freely chose her career as a fashion designer, and opened her fabric store on Devon avenue¹. Also, she determined in a very early time in her life to wear her veil because she felt that she “was growing in her spirituality” (8).

After 9/11 attacks, everything changed. Maryam, and others like her became aware of a new fact. She realized that for some Americans she is not an American citizen. For these people, Maryam is only a terrorist who should be kicked off the United States. There was an accident which made Maryam become aware of this

fact. Maryam told one of her white clients who came to her in order to design a wedding dress that it is a white man who made her realize this terrible fact which she desperately wishes to erase from her memory. Maryam recalled, and told in details her client about this painful accident which has, and still hurts her heart. It was when Maryam decided to design, and make a dress for her Pakistani friend, Lena. When the time of the wedding was settled, Maryam was invited. She chose to wear for this wedding her favourite grey hijab which her mother has given her when she wore the veil for the first time at the age of twenty. After parking her car, and putting her children in the double stroller, heading towards the entrance of the hall where the wedding is held, she noticed an American white man, named John with a girl, and when Maryam walked past the man, he said: “You`re in America, take that shit off your head” (9). Apparently, John considers Maryam`s veil a reason to expell her from the area which she thinks she has already inhabited. In other words, John attempts to tell her that because of her hijab which he calls a “shit”, Maryam is not an American citizen. In fact, John seems to act like his old ancestors who colonized the Third World`s land, and viewed themselves as: “distinct or separate type of beings” (Sharma Nandita 639). They believed that they alone have the right to “develop” the others (Curtin 45), and “impose their dominant culture” (Castles 29) over them. That is why John believes that he could play a similar role with a woman like Maryam who belongs originally to the East.

Maryam who knows quiet clearly that she has the right according to the American constitution to wear whatever she wants, stopped, and turned around to confront John saying: “Sir, I`m in America, where I have my constitutional right to practice my religion and dress how I like” (9), John kept insulting her. Maryam`s words extremely irritate John, and made him unable even to rethink reasonably of what she said. That is probably why he went further, and accused her of being a terrorist Arab who should go back to Afghanistan where he thinks that Maryam originally belongs: “You Arabs are all terrorists. Go back to Afghanistan!” (9).

It was useless for Maryam to convince John that she is a US citizen just like him, and that she is not an Arab, or Afghani. He told her: “If you`re American, then dress like one!” (9). As a matter of fact, Maryam did not understand what John means by his words because she is sure that she is dressed like Americans even if she wears a veil. She announces him firmly: “I am dressed like one” (9) .

Apparently, Maryam`s resistance, reasonable argument, and her insistence on being an American citizen, caused John, to get extremely angry, and that is why he kept insulting her. He accused her of being a crazy Muslim who believes that

killing non-Muslims will get her into paradise: “You people are crazy. You want paradise kill all non Mozlems” (9). Maryam, patiently, attempts to correct John’s idea about Islam, and Muslims, and to make him understand that Islam has nothing to do with killing the innocents, and that his insults result from his lack of knowledge about Islam.

At this moment, John could not go on holding a peaceful argument with Maryam, who is from his point of view, only an objectified other who keeps telling him that she is an American, and that he is stupid, and ignorant. He shouted: “Don’t call me stupid you bitch!” (9). Then, he began to act violently against her. Suddenly, “He charges towards her with his fist getting closer and closer to her face” (9). John intended to hit Maryam but his lady friend pulls him back just in time saying that Maryam “is not worth it” (9).

After that terrible night which Maryam spent most of it in the police station instead of her best friend’s wedding, Maryam reached a conclusion which shook her life. She realized that she does not really worth, as the lady friend of John said, because she is not for some Americans, an American mother, wife, or daughter, and not even a human: “in John’s eyes, she was not a mother, a wife, a daughter. she was just a “Mozlem”, a “terrorist”, not human” (10). It is impossible for her to be elevated to the rank of a US citizen.

Certainly, that traumatic, and horrible conclusion which Maryam reached is what makes her become doubtful of her being accepted as an American citizen by her fellow citizens. It is what makes Maryam think that there should be a way through which she can prove to the others that she is a “fellow [American] citizen with cultural rights” (Lister 49) which must be respected. She thought that perhaps pursuing a common ground between her, and the others will end her trauma. For Maryam, the green plant, called tea is this ground. Though it is the same plant everywhere, yet every culture has a different recipe for it. Maryam determined to use her recipe of tea. As a green postcolonial citizen, she changed the conditions of making the wedding dresses for her white clients. Instead of setting a good price for the dresses, she insisted on making her white clients have her new version of tea called the chocolate tea. Any female white client should drink the chocolate tea with her. If she accepts to drink this strange mixture of tea and chocolate, then this client will consider Maryam a fellow citizen who has cultural rights.

In fact, Maryam did not choose tea haphazardly. Tea belongs to the eco system, and that means this it is part of a huge “space of indeterminacy” (Handley 119), that could “disrupt the binary of center and periphery” (Handley 123). That is

to say, tea especially Maryam`s recipe of chocolate tea could turn over the Western, and colonial hierarchy which positions Maryam as an inferior, not as a citizen. Unlike John, the female white client who listened to Maryam`s story with John seems to consider Maryam as an “equal partner” (Bellamy 114). She drinks her chocolate tea. That makes Maryam have the same feeling towards her white fellow client, and determines to make for her a wedding dress: “ I will design your wedding dress. Let`s celebrate with some Chocolate Chai” (10).

The Pakistani music which suddenly blends with a Moroccan music accompanying this celebration, ends this part, and begins another. Malik chose another title for the second part of her play. She entitled it “Shay bil Nainai”. This new part is portrayed in a new setting. It is in the office of a Moroccan lawyer called Noor. This woman passed through a horrible experience which could force her to uproot her identity as a US citizen, but she could resist it, and survive. Although tea especially the Moroccan mint tea, or as it is called in Morocco “Shay bil Nainai” is present in this part as the nucleolus which creates the green postcolonial citizen, but it is not the only plant which could melt the differences, and enable all American citizens to be equal. It is true that the mint tea successfully plays this role with Noor`s female client who is portrayed without mentioning whether she is white, or not, yet orange as a plant could also play the same reconciliatory role. This is what Noor said to her client.

While drinking the mint tea with this client, Noor narrates her life story. As a veiled American young girl, Noor suffered a lot from bullying at school, and she used to remain silent. At school, the students believed that only white people are US citizens while others especially those who wear hijab are "not" (Sharma Nandita 639). The pupils followed Noor, and called her the “towel head” (14). They further attempted to take off her hijab, and “almost pulled her *hijab* off” (14). These boys could have made a crime if another white boy called Joe did not interfere. Joe grabbed one of the boys, and then warned them not to bother Noor again, or he will beat them up.

Unlike the boys who did not accept Noor as an American “fellow citizen with cultural rights” (Lister 49) including the right to put on a different piece of clothing over her head, Joe is a US citizen who could accept this fact. Probably this is because he passed through a devastating, and deadly experience. This is what Noor knew from him after they became friends. She knew that he is a musician, and that he converted to Islam because of an orange. He told Noor that he was in a car accident, and that while he was receiving his medical care in the hospital, he ate an

orange, and a candy bar. Probably, he had much time to contemplate both kinds of food, and set an objective comparison between them. For Joe both are similar in their being sweet, having a wrapper, and segments. However, he thought:

If I threw the candy bar away, it would just decompose. But if I threw the orange away, the seeds could grow into an orange tree...The candy bar was designed by someone, so must the orange, which is a miracle because it can reproduce. Existence can't come out of nothing (14, 15).

It is true that Joe's speech explains why he converted to Islam, yet it also uncovers another hidden, and symbolic fact. Joe believes that there is one creator of this marvelous universe which is absolutely created "without center and periphery" (Handley 123). The orange echoes the universe, and simply reflects the great capabilities of this broader frame. Thus, it does not have a center, or a periphery, it does not know differences. Like any plant if you throw its seeds anywhere, it will grow, and reproduce. Humans who resemble the orange in their being fellow living beings of the broader eco system are supposed to adopt a similar ideology. They should know that all humans are alike, and that setting borders between people especially if they are citizens of one home is only an arrogant human choice which is absolutely not related to the heavenly, and ecological system.

The symbolic message which lies behind the orange story has completely changed Joe. This green plant which does not know differences turned him to a green postcolonial citizen. It was the bridge which connects him with his fellow citizens who belong to different origins. The orange makes him accept the others. Part of his acceptance of the other appeared later in his pursuit to know, and even embrace the other's culture. That is probably what makes him not only convert to Islam, but also play Oud which is purely an oriental musical instrument. Moreover, he got married to the veiled Noor who is a "non citizen" (Sharma Nandita 639) for some Americans. For Joe, she is completely an "equal" (Bellamy 114) American citizen who has "cultural rights" (Lister 49) which should be respected. That is why she has the full right to wear her veil.

Apparently, this right was not accepted by some of the Americans. A month after his marriage, Joe had his first Oud concert at the college. He wore "Jalaba [which is] a long garb that Arab men wear" (16). He, and Noor planned to meet before the show to get coffee, and when Noor came to the parking, and got out of her car, she did not find him. She has only heard a scream near the garbage cans,

and when she went to see the source of this scream, she found a group of boys who beat Joe. When Joe saw her, he cried and told her that she should run, but unfortunately two boys could grab her. After pinning Noor on the floor, and punching her, they used their knives to cut open her clothes. Before raping her, Noor begged them to stop but: “they kept saying, ‘No mercy for terrorists’” (16). Indeed, Noor could not stop them, but a siren was heard later and, when these boys heard it, they ran. Noor then went to see Joe who was stabbed, and did not have time to say anything before his passing away more than the Shahadah.

The American boys who raped Noor, and killed Joe consider themselves as “distinct or separate type of being” (Sharma Nandita 639). They believe that they exclusively have the right to “impose” their dominant culture (Castles 29) or their colonial “version” (Crosby 89) over those who they consider “non citizens” (Sharma Nandita 639). If such non citizens wear something which is different according to the American mainstream, then the citizens of the mainstream have the right to change it even by force. That is what the white boys did with Noor who wears a veil, and Joe who wears a Jalaba. The white boys attempted simply to deforest the others` cultural background, and preferences.

Noor suffered from deep depression after this accident, and instead of resisting the criminals who have raped her, and murdered Joe, she locked herself in her bedroom. Even when the States attorney needs her to testify against the boys who were arrested, and charged with murder in order to convict them, Noor did not want go because she did not want to bring shame to her family by telling the details of this crime. It is only her mother who encouraged Noor to leave her room, and go to testify against those criminals. She told Noor that she should not feel shame because “there is no shame in the truth. There is only shame in silence...Silence that protects Murderers! And one day, you will stand before Allah, and answer for your crime...silence is sometimes a crime” (17). These inspiring words convince Noor to go next day to meet the States attorney, and to speak up.

In fact both of the advice of her mother, and the memory of Joe`s orange story made Noor rethink of her being accepted as a US citizen by some of her fellow citizens. Instead of staying silent against uprooting her identity, Noor determined to become stronger. She determined to open routes of communication between her, and the mainstream. One of these routes is Noor`s pursuit of the green ties which already exist between her, and her white fellow citizens. As a green postcolonial citizen, Noor chose tea as the common plant which could fuse her in one pot with her fellow American citizens. It is part of the eco system which is “a space of

indeterminacy” (Handley 119) that is able to “disrupt the binary of center and periphery” (Handley 123). Thus, accepting to drink tea mixed with mint is a sign for Noor that the mainstream wishes as well as her to remove the barrier. It is a sign which proves that she is a citizen who owns “cultural rights” (Lister 49). She has the right to wear a veil, and to drink mint tea, and the other should respect her. This is why when Noor graduated from the law school later, she was always keen to keep a tray with a Moroccan tea, and fresh mint in her office. She was always interested in making her clients drink it. Her mint tea ends her silence, and even the silence of the others. The silent client, and the victim of rape finally speaks up, forgets the “bitterness of evil [and] tastes the sweetness of hope” (18). It could be said that the mint tea succeeded in holding true sense of “fraternity” (Isin 130), “solidarity” (Kabeer 7) between Noor, and her clients .

With the end of this scene, the Moroccan Oud music blends with the Southern Blues sounds in order to prepare the audience for the third part of this play. Its title is not very far from the former two titles. Part three is entitled as “Kahwa Saide.” Inez, the protagonist of this part is a black female, and this is a heavy burden to carry especially for an American citizen. That is why her grandma advised her earlier to be tough: “Inez, you better learn to be tough, cuz you were born with two strikes against you, you`re black, and you`re female” (20). Though these two strikes are hard enough, yet Inez added later another strike which threatened her American identity. She converted to Islam when she turned twenty one. This was “Strike Three” (20) as her grandma told her.

Especially after she determined to wear her veil, Inez became sure that becoming a Muslim, and wearing the hijab is her most challenging strike as an American citizen. She realized this fact after 9/11 attacks. This day was an unforgettable day for Inez. She was forced on this day to take off her veil in order to prove to the mainstream citizens that she is an American citizen. Everybody on the grocery on that day was watching the attacks on the screen when Inez, and her friend Jameela entered. Inez heard Jim, the owner of the grocery who Inez knew for a long time shockingly says: “We need to bomb those Arabs back to the stone ages” (20), and then suddenly, a man stared at Inez, and “took his fingers and went like this (She takes her finger and pretends to slice her throat)” (20). Of course such act scared Inez, and made her quickly get out of the grocery.

Though Inez has suffered a lot from marginalization earlier because she is a black, and veiled female, yet it is the first time which Inez feels scared of her fellow American citizens. Both Jim, and the man who threatened Inez brought to life the

image of the old colonizer, or the old master who imposed his power by force on those he\she considered as the people who represent “an earlier stage of human development” (Plumwood 52). Even when Inez walked out of the grocery, she was surprised that there are other Americans who want to “impose [their] dominant culture” (Castles 29) over her. These people did not only stare at her, or even terrify her, but they also attempted to touch her veil, sending her a message that if you did not take your veil off, you won’t be safe, and we will take it off by force. There was a woman who walked right up to her, and touched her Hijab, and told her: “Sweetie take that off. It’s not safe to wear that right now” (20).

Inez realized that if she did not submit to the mainstream, she would not be safe. She could be forced later to face a violent act against her. This is what Inez understood from the other people’s faces in the street who have strange looks condition which: “chills up her spine” (20). Such depressive conclusion caused her to take off her hijab which she considered “part of her” (20) identity as an American citizen. She said: “I took it off, in front of everyone, and I ran home” (21).

Inez realized later that she took off her veil in order to prove to some of her fellow citizens who are still obsessed with, and engulfed by the legacy of colonialism that she is an American citizen. In order to satisfy them, and “to look American” (21) like the majority, she had to sacrifice an original part of her identity which is the hijab. As a matter of fact, Inez did not have to do this because she is already an American citizen who enjoys the full rights of any other American citizen. She realized that what has been done to her is clearly a futile attempt to steal her “cultural rights” (Lister 49) by some of her fellow citizens: “I felt like our rights as Americans were stolen from us. By our fellow Americans! I took off my *Hijab*” (21). She realized how superficial this culture is.

It is true that Inez could finally realize the truth, yet she became sure that in the future she might face other situations that could make her fellow citizen consider her not an American. That is probably why she wanted to teach them the lesson that whatever you wear cannot determine whether you are an American citizen, or not, and that according to her: “We are *all* Americans, and we have to protect each other” (21).

This is a fact which Inez kept proving annually. Every year in the memory of 9/11, Inez mourns over the victims of this horrible attack. She drinks “Kahwa Saide” after she prays, and reads Koran for them. Drinking coffee which is originally a plant turns Inez to a green postcolonial citizen who attempts to find a

zone of contact between her, and her fellow citizens without disrupting her “cultural rights” (Lister 49). “Kahwa” is part of the eco system which is basically a “world without a center” (Handley 123). That is why it knows no differences. It is drunk by Inez in her own recipe over the victims of 9/11 attacks in order to create a spiritual link between her and the other dead Americans who might not be black, or even Muslim. It can simply create, the sense of “solidarity” (Kabeer 7), and “fraternity” (Isin 130) among all Americans regardless of their colour, or clothes.

Kahwa Saide`s scene ends with a Southern music which blends with a hip hop beat that arises suddenly to begin the fourth part of this play. This new part carries the title “Kashmiri Chai”. Here the playwright moves suddenly in a swift trip to the UK. Rohina Malik moves to another metropolitan society which treats its citizens who belong originally to the East as outsiders. Probably, the playwright determined to make this quick movement in order to prove to her audience that 9/11 attacks refreshed the colonial mentality which has never been silent in the different nation states all over the world.

Malik presents to her audience another protagonist in this part. She is called Shabana Abdul Aziz. This woman is a veiled Muslim daughter of a South Asian immigrant family who inhabits West London. Apparently, Shabana, who works as a rapper in a Mic café, feels extreme agony for her being treated as a “non citizen” (Sharma Nandita 639) by some of her fellow citizens only because she wears a veil. That is what she told the reporter who held an interview with her in the Mic café.

Shabana told the reporter that though she enjoys a western look, for she wears a hooded sweatshirt, and baggy jeans, yet she is not treated as a UK citizen by some of her fellow citizens especially after 9/11 attacks. It seems that these attacks have suddenly germinated the seeds of colonialism which were latent in their souls. That is why they began to view her as a stranger Eastern woman who belongs to another “wild, savage, primitive” (Marzec 52) society, and needs to be rescued from the patriarchal authority of the Eastern man. They assume that Shabana is forced to wear the hijab by the male members of her family. Like the old colonizers, Shabana`s fellow citizens believe that they can “develop” (Curtin 45) and civilize Abdul Aziz who from their viewpoint has become a stranger, and not an equal citizen.

The truth is that Shabana`s fellow citizens did not want to develop her. Rather, they wanted to impose their Western “version” (Crosby 89) of clothes even on the citizens who belong originally to a different culture. This is what Shabana finally

inferred when she reasonably held a comparison between the West's different reactions towards the veiled Muslim women, and the nuns who are also veiled. Abdul Aziz realized that her Western fellow citizens persistently refuse to see that Shabana wears the veil because she wants to look modest like the nuns, not because she is forced to wear. Apparently, the veil is only a problem when it is on a Muslim woman's head: "Except when it is on a Nuns head! But a Muslim woman, she's oppressed" (24).

Indeed, the veil is the problem which makes her not a UK citizen for some of her fellow citizens who accuse her of being a terrorist who belongs to extremist Islamic groups, not to the British society. This is what she said in her rap song before she is interviewed by the reporter: "My name Shabana. Not Osama. Not Bin Laden. I'm not a bomber. South Asian Londoner...Calling me Terrorist Iraqi" (22-23). Shabana believes from the bottom of her heart that she is an English citizen who needs to be "accepted as a fellow citizen with cultural rights" (Lister 49). That is why she attempts to find a way which makes this acceptance possible.

For a green postcolonial citizen like Shabana, a cup of her Kashmiri tea or her "beautiful intense pink tea that blazes the horizon" after the sun sets (23) already makes her an accepted British citizen who feels the sense of "fraternity, and equality" (Isin 130) with the others. This is because tea is mainly a plant which belongs to the eco system, or to the "world without a center" (Handley 123). When Shabana drinks it especially in her flavour, she feels that there is no difference between her, and the other fellow citizens. They are all "partakers of the civilization" (Sharma Jayeeta 1288) in the UK, and that is why they have to respect Shabana's different tea, or hijab. They should know that her Kashmiri tea is "a cup of home" (23) which combines not only the culture of her original home, but also her present home which is England. It is exactly like her clothes which include the hijab, and the Western look. That is why she refuses to "undress" (26) the hijab. This is what Shabana confirms to the reporter, and to her audience in a rap song in the cafe at the end of this part.

The fifth, and last part of *Unveiled* carries the title: "Shay bil Maramiya". The protagonist of this part, Layla is a veiled American citizen who belongs originally to the Arab world. Apparently, her identity as a US citizen was threatened especially after 9/11 attacks. This day can not be erased from her memory. What Layla watched on TV was unbelievable. She watched: "Tayyara fly like bird into building, and there is too much Nar, fire" (27). She could not contact her brother

Kareem who lives in New York when the terrorist attack took place. She attempted to call him but he did not answer.

On this terrible day, Layla felt for the first time that she is not an American citizen. There was a call from her children`s school. They told her that there is mob in front of the school who: “were screaming, U.S.A! U.S.A! Go back to your country you terrorists!” (28), and that she should come to take her children who might be in danger. When Layla reached the school, she could not imagine something worse than what she saw, and heard. The mob`s racist screams which Layla heard suddenly uncover the overwhelming colonial arrogance of some of her fellow American citizens. Their screams tell that they are still hanging up in the old snobbish dreams of colonialism which position them as a “separate type of being” (Sharma Nandita 639), and view Layla and even others like her as terrorists who are “wild, savage, and primitive” (Marzec 52). According to the mob, the American Layla, and her likes should be expelled from USA which they believe that it is their home, and be forced to return back to their original homes.

This awful, and heart breaking attitude of some of Layla`s fellow American citizens did not shake Layla`s beliefs. It did not make her doubt that she is an American citizen like the others, and that she has rights exactly like the majority. That is probably why makes Layla did not hesitate to help her friend Imm Asad against a young white man from the mob who started to hit Imm Asad when she attempts to get inside the mosque. Layla walked towards this young man, and instead of getting into clash with him, she gently spoke to him. She told him that they are all Americans who share one home, and thus they all have the same feeling of anger for murdering the innocents in this attack. Layla`s position is even worse because as she told the young man her brother lives in New York, and she does not know anything about him: “I know you are angry. I am angry too! My brother, he lives in New York. I don`t know if he is alive or dead!” (28).

Having the sense of “solidarity” (Kabeer 7) with the other fellow citizen no matter how different is he\she is, is a feeling which though Layla enjoys, yet she could not see in the eyes of the young man who spat at her instead of consolidating her. Like the old colonizer who did not accept the differences of the others, this young man was completely induced by Layla`s veil which discredits her of being an American citizen. Layla knows this fact quiet well. That is probably why she ignored his misbehaviour, and asked him to forget about the veil which she puts on her head, and attempt instead to remove the veil over his heart: “I wear veil on my head, but my heart is not covered... Remove veil from your heart” (28-9). If the

young man succeeds in removing the veil which was originally placed by the old colonizer, he “will realize [as Layla told him] that we are one” (28-29), and will attempt to know her and “accept [Layla] as a fellow citizen with cultural rights” (Lister 49). This is what Layla asks the young man to do: “Get to know me. Get to know my community. We are good people, we want peace. Islam, it means peace! Get to know me...GET TO KNOW ME!” (28-29).

During their argument, an officer attempts to arrest this young man, but Layla asked the officer not to arrest him: “Do not arrest him. This hatred and anger must end here. Let him go” (29). Maybe this tolerance which Layla showed is what suddenly changed the young man, and made his eyes` look different: “The boy`s eyes changed. They looked human” (29). It is true that this young man`s eyes look different, but this is not the end. What Layla aspires for is unveiling this young man`s heart: “I prayed to Allah for that boy, I prayed to Allah, to make his heart unveiled” (29).

As she mentioned earlier, in order to unveil the young man`s heart and to let him, and even others like him have the same feeling of “fraternity” (Isin 130) with other citizens, Layla believed that the mainstream should know her. Layla`s brother who passed away because he risked to help the others whom he did not know in the burning towers, endeavoured to let the mainstream know him. He did not hesitate to save, and even die for any fellow citizen whether black, or white in that attack. It seems that Layla`s brother reached the true essence of the green postcolonial citizen earlier. He used to recite in his lifetime a poem by Saadi² which says: “Human beings come from the same source. We are one family” (29). The words of this poem simply reflect what every green postcolonial citizen calls for. In fact, they cope with what Layla did at the end of this play when she served “Shay bil Maramiya” to her guests in her new Middle Eastern restaurant, and with what she said to the audience, or the fellow citizens who attended the performance of *Unveiled*.

It seems that her “Maramiya tea” is the key word. Tea as a plant is generally a very microcosm part of the eco system which is basically a “space of indeterminacy” (Handley 119) that “disrupts the binary of center and periphery” (Handley 123). In that marvelous system, tea grows, reflecting the features of that reconciliatory system. It simply reflects the eco system`s ability of making the fair incorporation, of the center, and the periphery. That means that tea which Layla presented in her oriental style to the audience, or more precisely fellow citizens in order to confirm her rights as a different citizen with “cultural rights” (Lister 49)

plays a pivotal role. It is capable of “uniting the metropolis and the colony in shared tastes and habits” (Sharma Jayeeta 1288). By drinking the “Maramiya tea” which is originally the plant of tea mixed with a kind of herb called Maramiya, American citizens whether Easterners, or Westerners by origin become: “partakers of civilization” (Sharma Jayeeta 1288), and home. In other words, tea helps Layla, and other US citizens become true fellow citizens.

To conclude, the postcolonial eco literature and criticism appeared as a revolt against the white colonizer`s plans to present the Third world`s eco system as wild, and untamed. Postcolonial eco criticism provided an alternative of the white man`s plans of exploitation. It was the green postcolonialism. That approach of postcolonialism proves that all living beings are equal ecological beings that should enjoy justice. In fact, justice is what every Eastern eco- postcolonial citizen aspires to have especially when he\she is fighting a colonial hierarchy that positions him\her as a non citizen in the nation states. That is why some of the postcolonial citizens were attracted to green postcolonialism. They attempted through this alternative produced by the postcolonial eco criticism to find a common ground which connects them with their Western fellow citizens. Becoming green postcolonial citizens, Easterners, and Westerners will themselves succeed in positioning themselves as green plants enjoying equality, and justice among the different citizens of the nation states. In *Unveiled* by Rohina Malik, tea, coffee, and orange were the green plants set by the playwright in order to portray multiple fictional, yet possible green postcolonial citizens.

Notes

- 1- Devon avenue is a major east-west street in Chicago.
- 2- Saadi, or Saadi Shirazi (1210-1291) was a Persian poet, and prose writer of the medieval period who is known by his philosophical writings which highlight moral and social topics.

List of works cited

- Adams, William. "Nature and the Colonial Mind". *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-colonial Era*. Eds, William Adams, and Martin Mulligan. London: Earthscan Publications, 2003. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Afzal, Alia. *Ecocritical Post-colonial Studies on Humans, Land, and Animals*. 2017. University of Northern Iowa. Master dissertation. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu>. Online.
- Ahluwalia, Pal. "When Does a Settler Become a Native?: Citizenship and Identity in a Settler Society." *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*. Eds, Gaurav Desai and Supriya Nair. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005. Print.
- Ashcroft, Bill. *Post-colonial Transformation*. London: Routledge, 2001. Online.
- Babacan, Hurriyet. "Challenges of Inclusion: Cultural Diversity, Citizenship and engagement." (2005). 1-18. <https://researchonline.jcu.edu>. Online.
- Bartels, Anke, Lars Eckstein, Nicole Waller, and Dirk Wiemann. *Postcolonial Literatures in English: an Introduction*. Germany: Lehrbuch: J:B Metzler, 2019. <https://link.springer.com>. Online.
- Bellamy, Richard. *Citizenship: a Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. <https://www.pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Castles, Stephen. "Citizenship and the Other in the Age of Migration." *Globalization and Citizenship in the Asia-Pacific*. Eds, Alastair Davidson, and Kathleen Weekley. Britain: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999. <https://link.springer.com>. Online.

-
- Crosby, Alfred. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Curtin, Deane. *Chinnagounder`s Challenge: the Question of Ecological Citizenship*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- De, Anil, and Arnab De. *Environment and Ecology*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers, 2009. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Gebert, Lizabeth. "Deforestation and the Yearning for Lost Landscapes in Caribbean Literatures". *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*. Eds, Elizabeth Deloughrey, and George Handley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Glotfelty, Cheryll. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Harold Fromm. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Grove, Richard. *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*. U.S.A. Cambridge University Press, 1995. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Handley, George. "The Postcolonial Ecology of the New World Baroque". *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*. Eds, Elizabeth Deloughrey, and George Handley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. "Green Postcolonialism". *Interventions*. 9:1(2007). 1-11. www.Academia.edu. Online.
- Huggan, Graham, and Helen Tiffin. *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*. London: Routledge, 2010. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Isin, Engin, and Bryan Turner. "Citizenship Studies: an Introduction." *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*. Eds, Engin Isin, and Bryan Turner. London: Sage Publications, 2002. <https://epdf.pub>. Online.
- Isin, Engin. "Citizenship After Orientalism." *Handbook of Citizenship Studies*. Eds, Engin Isin, and Bryan Turner. London: Sage Publications, 2002. <https://epdf.pub>. Online.

-
- Kabeer, Naila. "Introduction." *The Search for Inclusive Citizenship: Meanings and Expressions in an Inter-Connected World.* Ed, Naila Kabeer. London: Zed Books, 2005. <https://opendocs.ids.ac.UK>. Online.
- Kapur, Ratna. "The Citizen and the Migrant: Postcolonial Anxieties, Law, and the Politics of Exclusion/Inclusion." *Theoretical Inquiries in Law*. 8:2 (2007). 537-570. <https://researchgate.net>. Online.
- Lister, Ruth. *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*. Houndmills: Palgrave, 1997. <https://link.springer.com>. Online.
- Malik, Rohina. *Unveiled*. www.Academia.edu. Online.
- Marzec, Robert. *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature From Daniel Defoe to Salman Rushdie*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- O'Brien, Susie. "Articulating a World of Difference: Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism and globalization". *Canadian Literature*. 170:171(2001). 140-158. <https://ojs.library.ubc>. Online.
- Plumwood, Val. "Decolonizing Relationships with Nature". *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-colonial Era*. Eds, William Adams, and Martin Mulligan. London: Earthscan Publications, 2003. <https://pdfdrive.com>. Online.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. Print.
- Sharma, Jayeeta. "'Lazy' Natives, Coolie Labour, and the Assam Tea Industry." *Modern Asian Studies*. 43:6 (2009). 1287-1324. <https://sai.columbia.edu>. Online.
- Sharma, Nandita. "National Citizenship and Postcolonial Racism". *Citizenship Studies*. 26:4-5 (2022). 638-649. <https://www.tandfonline.com>. Online.
- Talukdar, Sunil. "Eco Criticism: a Study from Postcolonial Point of View". *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies*. 4:2. (2017). 244-8. <https://www.ijelr.in>. Online.