Exoticisation in Some Sri Lankan Expatriate Texts: Re-inscribing Colonial Stereotypes?

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The field of literary activity constitutes a site of struggle where the continuing tensions between the "constructed" and "de-constructed" ideologies of the Occident and the Orient often get played out. The persistent longing on the European's part to posit the so-called Oriental as the "primitive", mysterious and seductive Other of his/her "superior" European Self is betrayed through the kind of "exotic" literary products – assured to be "first-hand, and "authentic" since they are said to emanate from the Orient itself – readily embraced and patronized by the Western world. In such a context, the expatriate writer's role invites careful examination owing to his/her position as one who either assumes, or to whom is attributed the status of "native informant" by the wider European community. In fact, this paper argues that exoticization that *some* expatriate writers resort to when portraying their home country should not be interpreted only in terms of certain abstract literary/aesthetic standards, since to do so is to merely overlook the politics underlying their "exotic" narratives. This paper analyses selected texts by some Sri Lankan expatriate writers which, as these writers themselves claim, carry an "authentic" account of their homeland. One aim here is to examine why these expatriate writers seek to qualify their Narratives of Homeland as "authentic". A further intention of this paper is to analyse how politically correct it is for these writers to pass their representation of homeland as an "authentic" version than presenting it as *one* out of the multiple representations/re-presentations of Sri Lanka which are possible. The texts studied for the present purpose include Micahel Ondaatje's *Running in the Family,* Christopher Ondaatje's *The Man-Eater of Punanai* and *The Last Colonial: Curious Adventures from a Vanishing World*, and *Heaven's Edge* by Romesh Gunesekera.

Key words: exotic/exoticisation, expatriate, authentic, represent, politics