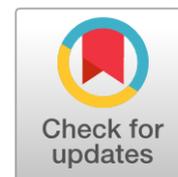


COUNTER CLASS AND COUNTER IDENTITY: CONFRONTATIONS OF POWER IN TONY HARRISON'S POETRY

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Abstract

Tony Harrison is a contemporary British author whose poetry is highly influential in encountering the issue of identity and class struggles. As a working-class student, Harrison was subject to prejudice and discrimination for his working-class accent. This paper investigates two of his highly admired poems, "On Not Being Milton" and "Them & [uz]" from a cultural standpoint, mainly concentrated on John Fiske's theory of power and language. The role of language in the context of his poems is probed. The multiaccentuality of language is represented in his poetry and these two poems become the site of struggle for the imperialising and the localising power. It is intended to illuminate the sought space of identity which Harrison is constantly referring to as a member of the English working-class society. Lastly, the social and personal relationship between Harrison and Milton has been explored positing Harrison in a transcendental context in his relationship with Milton.

Keywords: Tony Harrison, Cultural Studies, *On Not Being Milton*, *Them & [uz]*, Imperialising Power

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A major British poet, playwright, and translator, Tony Harrison is among the most prominent literary figures in contemporary British literature. Harrison is well known for reverberating the working class's voice and identity. "Harrison will always remain important as an advocate for Leeds, for ordinary speech, for the working class, the common tongue" (Bower & Blakesley, 2018, p. 5). The issue of identity is constantly referred to which directly mirrors Harrison's social identity as a working-class poet. "He has never felt fully at home in either the world of literature or the world of his working-class background" (Handley, 2016, p. 276). Harrison's career as a poet distanced him from his background, and this issue caused a feeling of loss, a void in identity, which deprived the poet of a certain sort of belonging. A significant part of his poetry was published in January 1978 in his *From the School of Eloquence and Other Poems*, which includes many poems from his sonnet sequence devoted largely to the issue of identity considerably more than his previous work *The Loiners* (1970). In this article, I intend to analyse *On Not Being Milton* and *Them & [Uz]* to illuminate the role of individual identity as well as social identity. The purpose of this study is to show how power and resistance are constantly at work to take hold of social and individual identities.

Cultural scholars have been embarking on the issue of identity for decades. "Cultural Studies is to be seen as the expression of a projected alliance between various social groups" (Jameson, 1993, p. 17). The space which these social groups create to represent their identity has largely been analysed in the domain of Cultural studies. "Stuart Hall is a central figure in history and the continuing evolution of cultural studies" (Wolfereys, 2006, p. 84). Hall suggests that identities "emerge within the play of specific modalities of power" (Gay & Hall, 2013, p. 4). The significance of power in shaping identities is extraordinary. John Fiske, a media scholar, and a cultural critic illuminates the role of power in creating different identities. This article aims to analyse two of Harrison's poems (*On Not Being Milton*, *Them & [uz]*) under Fiske's theories of power, identity, and language. This paper explores the role of power in shaping opposing discourses which results in opposing identities in Harrison's *On Not Being Milton* and *Them and [uz]*. Imperialising power and localising power are dominantly illustrated in these poems. This study further analyses the role of language as a vehicle of both imperialising and localising power to elucidate how language functions under these two

forces. Furthermore, the anxiety that the poet senses between these two forces is fastidiously explored.

In the poem "Them & [uz]", Harrison portrays two opposing voices. On one hand, the teacher who is strict with accent urges the students and the narrator to speak with Received Pronunciation which is the dominant accent of England, and the narrator, with a working-class background, tends to speak Cockney. This encounter of accents creates a conflict between the teacher and the narrator. "The clash of discourse in this poem is not merely a matter of juxtaposition: a literal struggle is enacted" (Roberts, 2007, p. 217). The title of the poem is quite self-explanatory. Houdu (2017) illuminates: "The title 'Them & [uz]' contains the ampersand which unites but also makes a distinction between the two elements associated" (p. 5). 'Them' represents the speakers of RP while '[uz]' represents the working-class identity. In a study, Whale (2018) elucidates what necessitates Harrison to take poetry as a passion as well as an occupation. Analysing his interviews, he claims that "The making of Tony Harrison as a poet...requires a deep-seated engagement with the dominant mores of English society in the mid-twentieth century" (pp. 8-9). His poetry makes him a meticulous observer of social and political issues. Consequently, Harrison's poetry simultaneously functions beyond the realm of poetry for the poetic techniques and literary genius are well appreciated in British social context.

It is difficult to limit Harrison's career and success in the realm of poetry. He is a poet, a translator, a playwright, and a director. His encounters with literary works and translation of some works from a language other than English has provided Harrison with a vast insight that is depicted in his poetry. Bower & Blakesley (2018) suggest that for fully appreciating Harrison's works one must "look beyond Leeds, beyond Britain, beyond English" (p. 5). He takes the example of his hometown 'Leeds' and he questions universal issues in the same context. "Harrison has always been resolutely committed to justice and equality, and above all, to highlighting the way that culture is inextricable from barbarism" (Bower & Blakesley, 2018, p. 5). In his poetry, personalisation of universal subjects takes place which enables the reader not only to question social conditions but also to experience these issues alongside the poet. Investigating Harrison's poetry, much of his work is recognised as a reaction to political and international issues. Copley (2018) "prompts a critical re-examination of the poet's position as an international war writer" (p. 19). She admits the dominant voice of a proletariat raging to reflect his identity, yet

she explains: “Harrison also exhibits his concern with historical and political events that extend within and beyond the borders of Leeds, Britain and Europe, and that transcend the class conflicts of post-War England” (p. 20). This universal outlook of Harrison which is largely reflected in his poetry suggests that he is well-aware of the political circumstances. Moreover, by representing such significant issues in his works, he yields for reform on multiple social and political grounds.

Harrison’s “On Not Being Milton” is a significant poem which has been appreciated by critics and readers. In a study, Handley (2016) elucidates two opposing voices in the poem. One which belongs to the poet as a working-class character and the other one “the form of the dominant language, [which] is framed, constructed, exclusive, and owned like the knitting-frames by representatives of a dominant social class” (p. 281). These opposing voices were also seen in “Them & [uz]”. It appears that opposing voices are always at work in Harrison’s poetry which indirectly resembles Bakhtinian Heteroglossia. “Heteroglossia is ... constituting condition for the possibility of independent consciousness in that any attempt to impose one unitary monologic discourse as the Truth’ is relativized by its dialogic contact with another social discourse” (Bakhtin et al, 2003, p. 73). Although Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia was concerned with novels, it appears that Harrison’s poetry is capable of presenting such features. Opposing discourses are constantly at hand and they actively participate in undermining and subverting one another. In this paper, it is intended to illustrate how power functions in Harrison’s social context in relation to Fiske’s theories of power and identity.

Power, Language, and Identity

Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field of research which is majorly concerned with the definition of culture and how it comes to existence as well as its identity and formation. “Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (Williams, 2017, p. 49). This difficulty is due to its unlimited terrain which involves nearly all social activities and every singular act is somehow related to culture. Like many developing fields, Cultural Studies’ “earliest encounters were with literary criticism” (Johnson, 1986 p. 38). The issue of identity is constantly under scrutiny in cultural analysis. Consequently, and in order to comprehend the essence of identity, cultural critics have been engaged with the concept of power and how it works in social

contexts. "It is ... impossible to carry through any serious cultural analysis without reaching towards a consciousness of the concept itself" (Williams, 1977, p. 12). Many different cultural critics have been meaning to narrow down the definition of culture to a specific and restricted terrain and among whom, John Fiske has been rather more successful. "Culture is a living, active process: it can be developed only from within, it cannot be imposed from without or above" (Fiske, 2011, p. 23). What we need to know is that culture is a constantly moving train which never stops experiencing new social realms. It is always in the "constant process of producing meanings" (Fiske, 1989, p. 1). It is through meaning that culture comes to existence and subjects of culture act accordingly, where a certain form of meaning is constantly being reproduced, the subjects tend to value it more.

Meanings are being produced and reproduced consistently through discourses. Discourses are vehicles of power; they work either in the alliance of one another or in opposition to each other. The dominant power shapes a web of discourses to produce meanings aiming to necessitate its existence and simultaneously, to suppress other opposing forces. On the other hand, resistance produces meaning through an opposing set of discourse to subvert the dominant power. Resistance to power "exists all the more by being in the same place as power" (Foucault, 1980, p. 142). Therefore, resistance is an inseparable part of power. It is the nature of language which permits clashes of various discourses and encounters of different meanings. The imperialising power is the power of the dominant. "It strives constantly to extend the terrain over which it can exert its control extensively to outer space and the galaxy and intensively to people's most mundane thoughts and behaviours" (Fiske, 2016, p. 11). The imperialising power extends its terrain through power blocs; that is "social formations... which can readily turn to their own economic and political interests" (Fiske, 2016, p. 10). The imperialising power has an unlimited thirst to conquer more terrain of human's social context for its own benefits and its survival. As earlier suggested, it does so through unaccentuality of language. Power blocs form a homogenous hegemony which facilitates the process of control. In this sense, the imperialising power is monophonic.

Contrary to the imperialising power, the localising power is "the power sought by subordinated social formations" (Fiske, 2016, p. 11). The purpose of localising

power, unlike imperialising power, is “not concerned with constantly expanding its terrain but interested in strengthening its control over the immediate conditions of everyday life” (Fiske, 2016, pp. 11-12). It can be argued that the purpose of localising power is to resist the forces of imperialising power. “The function of this power is to produce and hold on to a space that can, as far as possible, be controlled by the subordinate who live within it” (Fiske, 2016, p. 12). This space that Fiske argues has got four dimensions (interior, socio-political, physical, temporal). It is in these four dimensions that localising power operates and the combination of these four elements creates a ‘locale’. A locale is a space where the subordinated subjects can experience their own identity in its interior, physical, socio-political, and temporal sense. As opposed to the imperialising power, localising power is polyphonic; that is, it produces heterogeneity of voices to resist the imperialising power.

Everything takes place in the terrain of language. “Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated” (Ashcraft et al, 2010, p. 7). The reason why Foucault (1990) suggests that “power is everywhere” (p. 79), is because language as the most powerful sign system exists everywhere. Consequently, everything takes place within the domain of language and as a result, it becomes “a crucial site of struggle” (Fiske, 2016, p. 30). A wide range of discourses from the most covert to the most overt exist in the realm of language and these discourses are constantly at war to win the production of meaning. This suggests that “language is multiaccentual. That is, it always has the potential to be spoken with different accents that inflect meanings towards the interest of different social formations” (Fiske, 2016, p. 31). The issue concerning language and its multiaccentuality, however, is that “it is neither neutral nor equally available” (Fiske, 2016, p. 30). It is usually more available to the dominant imperialising power rather than the localising power. The reason behind this is that imperialising power has more control over language than the localising power. “The language of imperialising power is uniaccentual. Localising power, on the other hand, exploits the multiaccentuality” (Fiske, 2016, p. 31). This is because imperialising power always seeks unity to better control its subjects and the localising power strives for heterogeneity to make it difficult for the elements of imperialising power to subvert it.

Them & [uz]; Battleground of Language

The title of the poem separates two opposing forces, two different and conflicting identities. The representations of these two identities are meticulously drawn by the poet. The poem consists of two parts. In the first part, the representation of 'them' is drawn while in the second part '[uz]' participates largely in the poem. "*Them* is clearly different from [*uz*], even more so since one is written English whereas the other is phonetics and consequently related to oral language" (Houdu, 2017, p. 5). Written language is more associated with a unifying dominant voice whereas oral language is naturally heterogeneous and with various accents. Following the title, the first stanza appears:

αία, ay, ay! ... stutterer Demosthenes
 gob full of pebbles outshouting seas – (1-2)

The beginning of the poem is an allusion to Demosthenes who was believed to have cured his stutter by filling his mouth with pebbles and speaking out loud. This stanza signifies a difficulty in speaking in a literal sense while the poet, we later realise, has difficulty with a different issue; that is a different accent from the dominant one. This is vividly sketched in the second stanza:

4 words only of mi 'art aches and ... 'Mine's broken,
 you barbarian, T.W.!' He was nicely spoken.
 'Can't have our glorious heritage done to death!' (3-5)

It appears that in this part, the narrator who is a student, is reciting the beginning verse of Keats *Ode to a Nightingale* (1819), which he has difficulty pronouncing in the dominant Received Pronunciation therefore, he creates an unwelcome scene where the teacher mocks and humiliates him. The teacher's treatment of a schoolboy is rather harsh.

"Mine's broken, you barbarian T.W.!" (3-4), represent a disappointment in the student for his lack of proper speech. "The concern for 'proper' speech seems a classic demonstration of cultural hegemony" (Ashcroft, 2013, p. 58). The issue is barely a simple mispronunciation or a different accent, it is rather, the confrontation of two opposing identities. The teacher represents the imperialising power even though the student signifies the localising power. The teacher, consequently, fails to acknowledge the student's identity, therefore, he refuses to call the student by his name and rather calls

him 'T.W'. By hailing him to a different name than his own, the imperialising power commences its active process of subversion. "The aim of *imperializing power* is to extend its reach as far as possible_ over physical reality, over human societies, over history, over consciousness" (Fiske, 2016, p.11). The teacher continues his role as the representative of the imperialising power by saying "Can't have our glorious heritage done to death" (p. 5). The use of the word 'our' reflects something different from its literal meaning. In this case 'our glorious heritage' signifies a formation of a power bloc; that is "a relatively unified, relatively stable alliance of social forces" (Fiske, 1989, p. 8). By proposing a significant power bloc in English culture, the teacher intends to subvert the student by including him in this power bloc. The poem follows:

I played the Drunken Porter in Macbeth. (6)

It appears that due to the speaker's inability to speak with Received Pronunciation, his role in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) has been relegated to the drunken porter. The role of a 'drunken porter' indicates the encounter of the imperialising power with opposing forces. Instantly after identifying the elements of localising power reflected in the student, he is marginalised to a 'drunken porter'. The next stanza moves back to the classroom:

'Poetry's the speech of kings. You're one of those
Shakespeare gives the comic bits to: prose!
All poetry (even Cockney Keats?) you see
's been dubbed by [As] into RP,
Received Pronunciation, please believe [As]
your speech is in the hands of the Receivers.' (7-12)

In this part, the teacher keeps magnifying the significance of Received Pronunciation. In fact, he considers the student's accent rather incorrect or improper than simply different. "Poetry's the speech of kings. You're one of those Shakespeare gives the comic bits to: prose!" (7-8). The teacher suggests that the student deserves only the minor role who serves Shakespeare a comic relief. He is justifying the fact that the student has been given the role of 'drunken porter'. The fact that the teacher states that 'poetry has been dubbed by us' suggests the dominance of the imperialising power. The imperialising power keeps representing and reproducing everything for its own purpose.

“A culture of power is a culture of representation” (Fiske, 2016, p. 143). At first the teacher claims that “poetry’s the speech of kings” (7). This glorification of poetry is also decided. Poetry is overvalued because it has been fully ‘dubbed’ and represented by the imperialising power, hence it works as a strong element for imperialising power. “The association between accent and class in Britain is well-established and has a long history” (Donnelley et al, 2019, p. 2). Cockney, represents the accent and identity of the working-class people and it is therefore, consisted of localising power since it belongs to people. On the contrary, and “[h]istorically, much prestige was associated with the accent referred to as Received Pronunciation (RP), itself originally associated with the gentry, aristocracy...” (Donnelley et al, 2019, p. 2). If in the current era RP does no longer belong to the aristocracy, it is undoubtedly the dominant accent in England. “your speech is in the hands of the Receivers” (p. 12), illustrates how RP speakers are representatives of the dominant imperialising power. The second part of the poem is significantly different from the first part:

So right, ye buggers, then! We’ll occupy
your lousy leasehold Poetry. (17-18)

The multiaccentuality of language is at work. The term ‘bugger’ is a vulgar slang meaning “a worthless person” (Entry 1 of 3) which is aligned with ‘ye’ meaning you with the student’s accent. By stating “We’ll occupy your lousy leasehold poetry” (17-18), the student is resisting the imperialising power. By occupying, he means he will continue resisting the dominant power and will utilise his own accent when reciting poetry. “Resistance is itself a form of power; what distinguishes one form from the other is not an essential difference between them, but a difference in their relationship to the social order” (Fiske, 2016, p. 75). The resistance of the student to the dominant power is localised, it seeks to preserve its locale to present the subject’s identity. The speaker, therefore, undermines and questions the authoritative voice of the dominant. Two different knowledge is at work. The knowledge which is produced and represented by the imperialising power suggests “Poetry’s the speech of kings” (7), and the knowledge which is produced and represented by the localising power suggests “lousy leasehold poetry” (18). Consequently, “truths compete with each other for power within a social system” (Fiske, 1989, p. 177). It can be arguably stated that localising and imperialising knowledge are continuously acting against one another. The next stanza follows:

I chewed up Littererchewer and spat the bones
into the lap of dozing Daniel Jones,
dropped the initials I'd been harried as
and used my name and own voice: [uz] [uz] [uz],
ended sentences with by, with, from,
and spoke the language that I spoke at home.
RIP, RP, RIP T.W.
I'm Tony Harrison no longer you! (19-26)

The narrator proceeds with his resisting discourse. Daniel Jones “whose *outline of English phonetics* (1918) is considered the first comprehensive description of Received Pronunciation” (Ferguson et al, 2005, p. 1874). The narrator vehemently confronts RP and its supporters as an opposing force. “I'd been harried as and used my own voice: [uz] [uz] [uz]” (21-22) is the voice of the narrator who seeks to be himself, his localised identity. In the first part of the poem, the language was in service of the imperialising power. In the second part, however, language becomes a means of subversion contrary to the first part. As the poem proceeds the narrator keeps revolting against the imperialising power. “RIP, RP, RIP, T.W.” (25), is a temporal victory won by the localising power. The narrator is done with RP and with his assigned name and tends to be called by his own name which once more refers to his localising identity. This poem is a spectacular sketch of the multiaccentuality of language and the hostility of two contrasting forces. The meticulous narration of the poem suggests the poet's awareness of understanding the nature of power. The outburst of the narrator, be it temporary, constructs a narration where two forms of truths, two different knowledge, and two contradictory discourses exist in parallel to one another. One side seeks to subdue and suppress the other while the other attempts to create a space where it can exercise its own identity. The localising power, neither can nor cares to subdue and subjugate the imperialising power since the imperialising power is indeed stronger in essence.

The Unsettling Ground of Tony Harrison in *On Not Being Milton*

The title of the poem creates an illustrative description concerning the nature of this poem. Harrison attempts to create a poem which is the least related to Milton; at least this is what the title suggests. There are mainly two reasons why the poet urges to

distance himself and his work from Milton. The first reason is the anxiety of influence; that is “an anxiety that compels a drastic distortion of the work of a predecessor” (Abrams, 2015, p. 176). Every poet is constantly confronting the previous poets. It is a love-hate relationship which is impossible for the poet not to be influenced by the previous poets. Harrison tends to make the impossible, possible and as the title of his poem suggests, he attempts to be the least concerned with Milton, one of the greatest English poets. Nevertheless, as we analyse the poem we realise that he is not all done with Milton. The second reason is rather social than individual. In the previous poem, the teacher suggested that “Poetry’s the speech of kings” (7). Milton, with his eloquent language and unique, moving style overshadows English poetry and through his poetry, he creates norms in English poetry. “Norms do not exist in their own terms, but only as products of a monitoring knowledge system” (Fiske, 2016, p. 71). Milton’s poetic language and accent have defined normal in the imperialising power. The imperialising power has made use of Milton, as it has made use of every canonised poet and author in English poetry. Consequently, Harrison, as a working-class poet feels under pressure both socially and individually by the dominance of Milton over poetry. The poem begins:

Read and committed to the flames, I call
 these sixteen lines that go back to my roots
 my Cahier d'un retour au pays natal,
 my growing black enough to fit my boots. (1-4)

Harrison’s concern with identity is once more portrayed here. Unlike those dominant aristocratic poets who were born with the gift of geopolitical determinism in its literal sense, Harrison comes from a working-class family which serves him nothing but extreme difficulty to present a voice of his own, and his own class while every element of the imperialising power tends to subdue him. In this case, the poet is well-read and well-educated, yet, at the time of his creation and his experience with his poetry, he is obliged to “go back to his roots” (2). The poet seeks to present the voice of the working-class in his works and that is one reason why he tends to be distanced from Milton. The grand and fancy style of Milton and language has barely anything to do with the working-class identity. After becoming a well-studious poet and before creating any poetic works, he feels he must return to his working-class identity. “Cahier d'un retour au pays natal” (3), is a title of a book written by Aimé Césaire in 1939 meaning ‘Notebook of a Return to

My Native Land' deals with the issue of cultural identity. The last verse of this stanza "my growing black enough to fit my boots" (4), is assiduously "strengthened by referencing the blackness of coal as the main natural resource of the English North East" (Handley, 2016, pp. 279-280). References to localised identity are resisting the imperialising power. As it was earlier stated, localising power seeks to create a space to allow the subordinated people to exercise their individual and localised identity.

The stutter of the scold out of the branks
of condescension, class and counter-class
thickens with glottals to a lumpen mass
of Ludding morphemes closing up their ranks.
Each swung cast-iron Enoch of Leeds stress
clangs a forged music on the frames of Art,
the looms of owned language smashed apart! (5-11)

In this stanza, the poet displays more concern with the issue of identity. The concern with identity is represented through differences in accents. Brank means "an instrument consisting of an iron frame surrounding the head and a sharp metal bit or gag entering the mouth formerly used to punish scolds" (Entry, 2:2). The poet signifies a character who stands against the dominant imperialising power which is constantly in the process to subjugate and subdue its subject. The poet, however, will not be silenced and he keeps shouting this tyranny and prejudice over his working-class accent and identity. Exercise of accent is a bodily practise. The body is where the imperialising power and the localising power consistently confront one another. "For the body is the primary site of social experience. It is where social life is turned into lived experience" (Fiske, 2016, p. 55). Therefore, the poet's indication concerning "thickens with glottals to a lumpen mass" (7), signifies a bodily resistance of the subordinated people in its micro-level. "Controlling the body is a first step in the control of social relations" (Fiske, 2016, p. 56), and this is why the imperialising power vehemently reacts to the issue of accent. "Power works strategically to secure its boundaries and thus to exclude that which lies beyond its control" (Fiske, 2016, p. 63). RP is a unitary accent hence power is at much ease in controlling this accent. The rest of the British accents carry too much meaning and identity, they carry a multiplicity of meanings and as a result, they reach beyond power's

control. This is why the dominant imperilising power tends to marginalise the rest of British accents.

Three cheers for mute ingloriousness! (12)

This verse is dramatically controversial in relation to the rest of the poem. This “mute ingloriousness” (12) refers to John Milton, it is an allusion to Thomas Gray’s elegy *written in a country churchyard* (1750). “In his elegy, Gray sympathizes with the inglorious Milton from a distance and in a highly literary voice” (Handley, 2016, p. 280). From the beginning of the poem, we encountered heartbroken Harrison who endeavoured to be as distant as possible with Milton as the representation of the standard and normal imperialising poetry, and yet, he expresses his good wishes for him. These “three cheers” (12) are most probably concerned with the individual love-hate relationship between the poet and Milton as someone who is inseparable from Harrison and his works. This anxiety of influence, Harrison feels will always return to the poet unlike cultural barriers and power struggles. This poetic relationship is beyond the control of localising and the imperialising power. It belongs to a transcendent realm which is deeply personal and despite the numerous attempts to stain this relationship for the benefit of either imperialising or localising power, the relationship remains deeply rooted in the personal feelings of the poet rather than social circumstances.

Conclusion

Tony Harrison is one of the most significant contemporary British poets whose poetry is elegantly written and covers many national and international issues such as identity, war, culture, and class struggles. He makes examples of seemingly insignificant issues and he reconstructs a worldly subject. The prominence of this poet is not wholly due to his poetry, he is a well-studious graduate from Leeds University. His translations and his plays are highly remarkable. In this article, two of his notable poems from *School of Eloquence* (1987), were analysed. “On Not Being Milton” and “Them & [uz]”. The issue of identity has largely been explored in Harrison’s poetry. Much of his poetry is troubled with working-class identity and its marginalisation. Yet, this paper sheds light on a new aspect of his poetry, it explores the role of language in shaping identities and the role of two opposing forces, the imperialising power, and the localising power. The example that

Harrison sets in both of these poems is the issue of accent where RP is privileged and the rest of British accents, mainly Cockney, is vanquished.

The reason why both imperialising power and the localising power are concerned with the accent is that it takes place on a micro-level, the body. Controlling the body has been argued is considered the major site of struggle for both imperialising power and the localising power and these two forces are constantly struggling to win the body. Discourses concerning accent, therefore, become the most significant element of power in Harrison's poetry. The multiaccentuality of language is illustrated in his poetry where language can be in service of one sort of power and equally and simultaneously to the other one. Although language is usually not equally available to everyone and it is generally more available to the imperialising power, Harrison in his poetry, and especially in "Them & [uz]" presents more balance in confrontations between these two forces. In "On Not Being Milton", the issue of identity once more has been covered. Yet, another important subject is at work and that is the relationship of the poet with his predecessor, John Milton. It has been claimed that the reason why Harrison distance himself from Milton is because he is the representation of the dominant imperialising power and Harrison seeks to represent the localising power's voice, however, at the end of the poem, Harrison is reconciled with Milton and his poetry since his poetic relationship is beyond cultural barriers and thus it is transcendental.

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