



NEO-COLONIALISM IN JESSICA HAGEDORN DOGEATERS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine and analyze the forms of neo-colonialism depicted in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dog eaters*, which was first published in 1990. The novel was chosen because it explicitly depicts Western influence on the postcolonial Philippines, particularly in cultural and economic aspects. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method, with the text of the novel as the main data source. Additional data were obtained from secondary sources, such as literary theory books, scientific journal articles, as well as online and offline literature sources relevant to the topic of neo-colonialism and postcolonial studies. The data collection process was conducted through a thorough reading of the novel and noting important elements related to the issue of neo-colonialism. The findings were then categorized and analyzed using postcolonial literary theories, especially those related to the cultural domination and economic dependence of former colonized countries on former colonizers. The analysis shows that neocolonialism in *Dog eaters* is manifested in two main aspects: cultural and economic. The cultural aspect, American and Spanish influence is seen through the use of English and Spanish, the consumption of cultural products such as Hollywood movies, music, the worship of Western technology, Westernized lifestyles, and the shift in local art values. Economic aspects include the dominance of Spanish and American products in the local market and the dependence on these foreign products. Through a satirical and fragmentary writing style, Hagedorn sharply criticizes the global power structure that continues to prevail in the postcolonial era.

Keywords: Neo-colonialism, postcolonialism, cultural, economic, lifestyle.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, some parts of the world still face neo-colonialism, especially the countries that used to be former colonies. Susilo (2024) states that colonizers in the modern era come not only from countries that once colonized them, but also from other developed countries that now have great power in the economy, culture, and politics. Neo-colonialism no longer relies on physical or military colonization, but rather on subtle and systemic control of developing countries through trade, investment, and the spread of popular culture (Naduvath, 2023).

One of the concrete forms of neo-colonialism in everyday life can be seen in the dominance of foreign cultures that infiltrate the showbiz and people's lifestyles. Foreign culture is one element that easily enters and spreads to various countries, including Indonesia. This phenomenon is

visible in the showbiz, where society, especially the younger generation, is increasingly exposed to foreign popular culture. South Korean cultural products such as Korean Pop (K-pop), Korean dramas, and films are increasingly popular with Indonesians. In addition to K-pop, Western music also has a large following. Not a few of them are willing to do various things to buy concert tickets or merchandise of their idols (Lee, 2024). Based on data from the Otoritas Jasa Keuangan (OJK), young people use online loans (pinjol) to obtain consumer debt, such as buying Coldplay concert tickets, reaching more than 50% (Gading, 2023). The Center of Digital Economy and SMEs INDEF researcher Nailul Huda highlights the consumer lifestyle of young people buying K-pop idol photocards using paylater or online loans (pinjol). The average loan for borrowers under the age of 19 is IDR 2.3 million.



Meanwhile, loans for borrowers aged 20 to 34 years old are IDR 2.5 million (Pratama and Sari, 2023).

In addition, another trend that is no less detrimental and is currently rampant in Indonesia is flexing. Flexing is the habit of showing off a luxurious lifestyle on social media. Pakpahan and Yoegiantoro (2023) say that flexing is the act of showing off achievements, wealth, luxury goods, or other things that are considered of high value by someone. Flexing is often done on social media to attract others. Although it may seem glamorous, flexing can have a negative impact, especially for individuals who are easily influenced by the younger generation. Many of them are encouraged to imitate this lifestyle to be considered successful or cool, even though they have to go into debt or live beyond their financial means. Rahardjo in Khayati et al. (2022: 113) says that flexing behavior or actions are usually the opposite of wealthy people.

This phenomenon occurs both in terms of lifestyle and in the way people perceive themselves. The influence of foreign media not only encourages a consumptive lifestyle but also shapes uniform and often unrealistic beauty standards. Tirona (2023) states that beauty standards that were once diverse and reflected the richness of local cultures are now being replaced by global standards. As beauty standards have shifted to global standards such as white skin, straight hair, and a slim body, many women feel insecure about their natural appearance. As a result, many choose to buy foreign skincare and beauty products that are considered better and more effective, even though many local products are no less qualified. Mady et al. (2022) state that US and European-centered beauty standards have had a significant impact on the perception of female beauty worldwide, which is a result of the continued dominance of Western cultures and countries, as well as white skin.

Behind the desire to look attractive and accepted by others, many people are trapped by the pressure to conform to beauty standards that do not align with their

cultural norms. Various methods are used to look the same and gain recognition, including doing things that are quite risky, such as plastic surgery, nose filler injections, and lip fillers, all of which can harm one's health (Alodokter, 2024). In an article *Woman suffers malpractice, 12-hour seizure allegedly due to anesthesia drug overdose*, a woman claims to have experienced malpractice during surgery, which caused her to have convulsions for up to 12 hours. In a TikTok post uploaded on April 4, 2025, Mee Flome claims to be a victim of malpractice while undergoing a surgical procedure at a beauty clinic in Jakarta (Desideria, 2025).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cultural Aspects

In terms of culture, Nkrumah (1965) points out that neo-colonialism also works through the systematic domination of foreign values and ways of life, especially through education and the media. Many former colonies still use colonial education systems, which instill a Western worldview and alienate young people from local history and cultural values. The mass media, films, and advertising also play a role in shaping the perception that Western culture is superior, modern, and worthy of imitation, while local culture is considered old-fashioned or irrelevant.

According to Koentjaraningrat in his book *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi* (1959), cultural elements are classified into seven, namely language, knowledge systems, social systems, systems of living equipment (technology), religious systems (beliefs), lifestyles, and arts. However, this study will discuss only four cultural elements, namely language, systems of living equipment (technology), lifestyles, and arts.

2.1.1 Language

Language is one of the results of the culture. According to Koentjaraningrat (1959) states that language is the most crucial element of culture because it serves as the primary medium of communication in social life. Language not only functions as a



tool for speaking or conveying messages, but also reflects the mindset of a group of people. Through language, values, norms, and knowledge are passed down from generation to generation. Furthermore, language serves as a unique cultural symbol because each society has its own understanding, structure, and style of language that reflect its social and environmental experiences. Therefore, language is considered a symbol of thought and the core of culture, demonstrating how a community understands and interprets the world around it (Koentjaraningrat, 1959: 308).

2.1.2 Technology

Koentjaraningrat (1959) views technology as a reflection of humankind's ability to adapt and manage the environment to meet their needs. He called it a "system of living equipment and technology," which includes production tools, weapons, shelter, clothing, transportation, and household appliances. Evaluation of technology is not only based on physical progress, but also on how well the technology is suited to environmental conditions and its effectiveness in solving everyday problems.

2.1.3 Lifestyle

According to Koentjaraningrat (1959), lifestyle is the result of the interaction between social systems, sources of income, cultural values, and the environment in which a community lives. This encompasses various aspects of daily activities, such as clothing, food consumption, housing patterns, and work and social interaction habits. Lifestyle reflects the values and social norms held by a community group and serves as a cultural characteristic that distinguishes one group from another. He also observed that lifestyles change along with the influx of foreign cultural influences through the processes of globalization, modernization, and acculturation.

2.1.4 Art

In cultural anthropology studies, experts highlight the role of art not only as

an aesthetic expression but also as a reflection of social and spiritual values. Koentjaraningrat (1959) considers art a crucial element of culture because it expresses beauty, spirituality, and societal values. Art encompasses various aspects such as dance, music, visual arts, architecture, and oral literature, often closely linked to traditional rituals and religious activities. Art also serves as a medium for conveying moral messages, history, and the collective beliefs of a community.

2.2 Economic Aspects

One of the main aspects discussed by Kwame Nkrumah in criticizing neo-colonialism is how foreign domination is maintained through economic mechanisms that appear legal but are structurally detrimental to developing countries. Nkrumah (1965) highlights in his book that economic influence is one of the primary tools of neo-colonialism used to maintain domination over countries that have formally become independent. According to him, developing countries often remain dependent on foreign powers, whether in the form of loans, foreign aid, or investment. This dependence prevents these countries from implementing truly independent economic policies because their decisions are often influenced by foreign donors or investors. The conditions attached to economic aid are usually directed at opening up domestic markets, privatizing public assets, and providing broad access to multinational companies, thus benefiting outsiders more than the recipient country.

2.3 Postcolonial Theory

This study employs postcolonial theory to explicate the problems above. Postcolonial theory is a way of thinking or perspective that discusses how past colonization still influences the lives of countries that were once colonized. This theory understands how current ways of thinking, culture, and social systems are still influenced by the power of the colonizing country (Loomba, 2015). One of the main



figures in the study of postcolonial criticism is Homi K. Bhabha, in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), who offers important concepts to understand the dynamics in the postcolonial context. The main characteristic of postcolonial criticism that he puts forward is mimicry, namely the phenomenon when colonized people imitate the culture, language, or lifestyle of the colonizers to gain recognition or legitimacy in the colonial system. According to Bhabha (1994: 85-90), mimicry occurs when colonized people try to be like the colonizers, but the result is something that is “almost the same, but not quite.” In his view, colonized peoples are encouraged to imitate the culture of the colonizers to appear civilized, modern, and obedient, but are still placed in a lower position. Thus, mimicry creates an unequal and ambivalent relationship between the colonizers and the colonized.

3. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative research method. Creswell (2013), in his book entitled *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, states that qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to social or humanitarian problems.

4. Result and Discussion

Dog eaters, a novel tells the story of a teenage girl named Pucha Gonzaga, who is obsessed with Western culture and living a consumerist lifestyle watching Western movies, loving expensive imported food, going to the salon regularly, shopping, and partying, all fueled by her premature marriage to a wealthy man, Bom Bom Alarcan. Unlike Pucha, Lola Narcisa upholds local Filipino values, while Rio, Pucha's cousin, despite coming from a wealthy family, ponders more about his Filipino identity and sees value in a simple life. The story then shows Pucha's increasing immersion in Western culture, with Rio eventually moving to the United States and reminiscing about his childhood

in the Philippines, while Pucha remains in her homeland, living a glamorous Western life and seeking a divorce.

4.1 Neo-colonialism in Cultural Aspects

In *Dog eaters*, one of the most prominent forms of neo-colonialism is in the cultural aspect. Cultural colonization occurs when a foreign culture dominates and influences the way of life, way of thinking, and tastes of the people of a country, ultimately shifting the local culture. This phenomenon can be seen from the rampant consumption of foreign cultural products, such as language, technology, lifestyle, and art.

4.1.1 Language

Language is an important part of culture because it can show the identity of a nation and distinguish one nation from another. Language can also unite people to work together to achieve common goals. But after the colonial or post-colonial period, many people began to forget their native language. They preferred the colonizer's language, like Spanish or English, because it was considered more cool, modern, or classy. This continues today through neo-colonialism, which is when foreign countries no longer colonize directly, but still have a big influence through culture, media, and economy. Foreign languages become a status symbol, while local languages are considered unimportant. When this happens, people start to lose their identity. They no longer know who they really are because they follow foreign cultures more.

Language is one of the results of the culture and shows the identity of an ethnic group. However, with colonizers who came with their language, it became a means of communication in the country. The colonizer's language is then considered a higher degree of language. Thiong'o (1986) in his book *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, emphasizes that language is an important tool in the formation of cultural identity, and



the use of the colonizer's language can erode local culture and identity.

In this novel, the author introduces character, Pucha Gonzaga who reflects the current generation of young people who are heavily influenced by Western culture. She has a strong interest in English-language films shown in cinemas, including one entitled *English Movies Only*. The author describes the theater atmosphere that shows only sexual scenes from the West, which reflects cultural imperialism. Pucha also has difficulty distinguishing between the reality of the film and real life, even losing control when her idol, Rock Hudson, whom she considers very handsome, kisses her co-star in the film, Jane Wyman. She is angry because she should be the one kissed by her idol. Pucha is also willing to wait in line for a long time to see a Rock Hudson film; she is even willing to endure the smell and crowds. This shows the dominant influence of Western culture through media and entertainment as a form of neocolonialism that shapes the views of young people like Pucha. The situation is described:

Huddled with our chaperone Lorenza, my cousin Pucha Gonzaga and I sit enthralled in the upper section of the balcony in Manila's "Foremost! First Run! English Movie Only!" theatre, ignoring the furtive lovers stealing noisy kisses in the pitch-black darkness all around us (3).

The author uses Spanish names for the characters, such as Alacran. This represents that the Spanish influence is still strong in the Philippines. The Spanish colonization for more than 300 years (1565-1898) left a cultural legacy, including language that continues to shape the Philippine national identity. In addition, the author also uses Spanish words such as *señorita*, *prima*, *pobre también*, and many more, which indicate that Spanish elements have been integrated into the daily lives of Filipino people. The use of this vocabulary strengthens the image that Spanish has become part of the daily lives of Filipinos.

Señorita, Pucha," she murmurs to my cousin, who refuses to acknowledge her. "Don't you wanna eat something, prima? He's always joking you know how he is, is the life of the party, *pobre también!* (5-7).

The author portrays Freddie Gonzaga as a selfish figure. In his mind, he is truly a slave to Westerners. This is evident in his feeling like a guest in his own country. Although he lived in the Philippines from birth to adulthood, he does not feel like a Filipino. He considers himself Spanish. Freddie deeply devalues his culture, especially his language, and he refuses to even speak Filipino, because he thinks that speaking Filipino, listening to Filipino songs, or watching Filipino films will lower his self-esteem. Frantz Fanon's book, *Black Skin White Masks*, states that individuals from colonized nations often experience cultural inferiority, feeling inferior to their own culture and considering the colonizer's culture superior. In this case, Freddie rejects his Filipino identity even though he was born and raised in the Philippines. He identifies himself as Spanish, indicating a desire to erase his local imprint and replace it with a colonial identity. He also feels that the Filipino language and local cultural products, such as songs and films, are shameful and demeaning to his social status. As shown:

My father is a cautious man, and refers to himself as a "guest" in his own country (7).

According to my father, *Love Letters* appeals to the lowest common denominator. My Uncle ...the Gonzagas refuse to listen to Tagalog songs, or go to Tagalog movies. (11-12).

The author created the character of Soccoro, who is just like Freddie, who has a selfish personality. She was also born and raised in the Philippines. Her ancestors are also from the Philippines, but she is not at home in her own country. Even at such a young age, she still yearns to go to Spain. Her pride is so high, and her mind has been



colonized, that she believes that if she stays in the Philippines, she will be stupid, poor, and smelly. When she gathers with her children for meals, she almost always speaks Spanish and occasionally English. Soccoro's desire to move to Spain in her old age, despite having spent her entire life in the Philippines, is an extreme form of mimicry, a desire to be "one of them," while never being recognized as one. She lives in an illusion of identity, rejecting her own history and reality in favor of imitating a foreign culture she considers superior. However, because she remains Filipino in the eyes of the outside world, her efforts never truly make her part of the identity she desires.

My abuelita seldom speaks, and then almost always in the lisping Castilian Spanish Uncle Cristobal has to translate for us: this time she has spoken in English, and it sounds bizarre to us. My father pats her on the arm to reassure her. "Enjoy yourself, Mama—eat whatever you want," he says to her in Spanish (91).

4.1.2 Technology

Whitman Logan, Rio Gonzaga's maternal grandfather, is depicted as an elderly man who is very sick and very weak. The Gonzaga family chooses to treat him in an American hospital, despite its shabby and smelly conditions, rather than a local hospital. They do not consider the quality of the hospital's services; all they prioritize is prestige and social image. This decision reflects a colonial mindset, where the Gonzaga family believes in and worships everything Western, whether in education, beauty, or health services. It is shown in the following:

I try to blot from my mind the image of my grandfather Whitman sick in the hospital, the shabby American Hospital with its drab green walls, drab green smells, and the hovering presence of the hospital's supervising staff of melancholy American doctors".

"At first, the American doctors diagnosed malaria (13-14).

In addition, to watching *The Movie Only*, Pucha also watched the film *A Place in the Sun*, a film that had been banned by their religious leaders because it was considered vulgar and indecent. However, Pucha still insisted on watching it. This shows that her mind has been colonized by the influence of Western culture, so that she feels attracted and even fascinated by foreign cultural products that are considered more modern and liberating. Her decision to watch this banned film can be seen as a form of mimicry, namely an attempt to imitate or become like Westerners. However, this process is never truly complete because it always contains a contradiction between imitation and rejection.

It's another movie. *A Place in the Sun*—condemned by the Archdiocese of Manila as vile and obscene.... He wants to see Elizabeth Taylor naked. We are all bewildered by the movie, which is probably too American for us (15).

The author created Trinidad Gamboa, a woman who loves Western films. She is a girl who continues her studies in the city while working as a cashier at a cinema. However, influenced by the films she watches and the influence of Western culture, she chooses to live a single life with her lover, Romeo Rosales. In this case, the Western films she watches are not just entertainment, but rather a tool to promote a free lifestyle. Her decision to live a single life with her boyfriend without formal marriage is a result of absorbing Western values that conflict with local norms at the time. She even sacrifices herself to meet her needs and Romeo's by working various jobs because her parents no longer support her, and Romeo is still unemployed. It is narrated:

Your eyes are mysterious, deep, dark pools that never fail to hypnotize me." Romeo would whisper, taking the frail Trinidad in his arms. She would allow herself



to be led to the big round bed covered by a red satin sheet, the only piece of furniture in their regular meeting place, the mirrored Room #223 in the seedy and inexpensive Motel Tropicana (53).

4.1.3 Lifestyles

Lifestyle is a product of the interaction between society, economic resources, cultural values, and the environmental conditions in which a community exists. It encompasses various elements of daily life, such as clothing, food, housing, work patterns, and social relationships. Lifestyle reflects the social values and norms held by a community and serves as a cultural identity that distinguishes one group from another. Furthermore, lifestyles also appear to change due to external cultural influences through the processes of globalization, modernization, and acculturation.

The author creates a swimming pool setting depicting Pucha, who wears a bikini to show off her body despite not being able to swim. This is an example of a weak postcolonial identity. She imitates Western dress and behavior, a form of mimicry, in an attempt to appear modern and attract attention, especially from men like Boomboom and his friends. However, since she cannot swim, it is clear that her imitation is merely superficial, lacking any real understanding or skills. This shows that the influence of foreign culture not only makes someone lose their identity but can also endanger themselves, both in real and meaningful ways. It is shown:

Sometimes Pucha and I go swimming at the club...Pucha doesn't really know how to swim and thinks bathing suits have been created for the sole purpose of showing off her body. I jump in the pool and swim as far from them as I can, relieved that my job of keeping my ambitious cousin company is over (60- 61).

The author creates the character of the First Lady, who favors a Western lifestyle,

consumerism, and hedonism. The First Lady uses her power and influence to organize beauty contests and film festivals not as an appreciation of local culture, but rather to gain material gain and satisfy consumer desires for luxury goods such as Western shoes and clothing. She symbolizes a mentally colonized postcolonial elite class, prioritizing parties, a glamorous image, and Western luxury over the development and preservation of national culture. Her tendency to invite foreign celebrities to cultural activities reflects the binary opposition between Western and local culture, where the latter is positioned as superior, modern, advanced, glamorous, while local culture is considered inferior, outdated, and unattractive. By imitating the lifestyle of the Western elite through dance parties, luxurious clothing, and the worship of foreign figures, the First Lady reinforces this dichotomy and demonstrates how postcolonial societies are often trapped in a value system constructed by the colonizer. Ironically, the more she tries to become part of the world she admires, the more her alienation becomes apparent, as she is merely a reflection of a colonial identity she can never truly possess. "Along with other honored guests of the government, the German director is flown 30 in, first class, on Philippine Air Lines. He is housed in some big shot's three-story mansion in Forbes Park, right next door to the Alacran estate" (131).

Lolita Luna, a well-known actress, symbolizes the type of celebrity who is deeply entrenched in drug use. The author uses a metaphor to describe her addiction, referring to drugs as her "vitamins." When under the influence, she embraces her fantasies more openly, highlighting how the nightlife scene is closely tied to the world of celebrities. Lolita is portrayed as someone who is not only addicted to drugs but also uses her body to sustain her extravagant lifestyle. For her, drugs and money are essential needs. To satisfy this desire, she engages in prostitution, becoming the mistress of General Ledesma. It is narrated:



When she is high on her drugs, what she calls her "vitamins," Lolita Luna entertains her delusions more openly. She is convinced the General will help her fix her papers and pay for her passage out of Manila to a foreign country, some place where she can start all over again. Clothes, shoes, lingerie, cosmetics, chocolates, household appliances: it doesn't matter, Lolita always buys at least two of each (171).

Dolores fell in love and even had an affair with a Brazilian ambassador named Jaime Oliveira. Where infidelity is one of the Western cultures she emulates. She loved going to Monte Vista, not to play tennis, but just to relax, mainly to watch Jaime Oliveira play tennis on the court. Just like her niece Pucha, Dolores also likes to go to the swimming pool, but doesn't know how to swim. Other than that, she likes to spend a lot of money because she idolizes American actress Rita Hayworth so much that she goes to the salon every month to get manicures, pedicures, and color her black hair to look like her idol. In addition, she also collects wigs, perfumes, and clothes similar to those worn by Rita Hayworth. Dolores' character illustrates that she is also someone who loves Western culture more than her own. She idolizes people from the outside, wants to follow their styles, and prefers foreign products over local products. It is narrated:

My mother fell in love with the Brazilian ambassador, Jaime Oliveira (57).

My mother told us all about it she was sitting right there by the pool and would've jumped in herself except that like Pucha, my mother can't swim (61).

4.1.4 Art

Art plays a crucial role in culture because it conveys beauty, spiritual values, and social aspects. It encompasses various fields such as dance, music, fine arts, architectural design, and oral literature,

often closely linked to traditional ceremonies and religious activities. Art is emphasized not only as a source of entertainment but also as a means of strengthening cultural identity and fostering a sense of community. Furthermore, art serves as a means of conveying moral messages, history, and shared beliefs within a community.

In this novel, the author describes the Alacran family home, both interior and exterior, as filled with Baroque architecture, a style of grandiose architectural design and art that emerged in Italy in the 17th century. This suggests that the upper class in the Philippines not only consumed foreign goods but also adopted Western lifestyles and cultural tastes. They judged beauty, luxury, and social status by foreign standards, rather than local ones. This reflects a culture of imitation in which Filipinos began to lose faith in their own cultural values. They took greater pride in wearing, displaying, and living with European or American art and lifestyles. In this sense, grandiose architectural design and art styles were not only symbols of wealth, but also of "class" and "progress," often associated with Western culture.

...envisioning her ornate gold and white crib in all its baroque, overwrought splendor. A canopy of lace, organdy, and pink satin ribbons. Fat, Florentine cupids dance above her, their mischievous faces frozen in permanent glee (26).

4.2 Neo-colonialism in Economic Aspects

One of the key points raised by Kwame Nkrumah when criticizing neocolonialism was the way external domination was maintained through economic means that appeared legitimate but were detrimental to developing countries. Nkrumah (1965), in his writings, emphasized that economic influence was one of the primary means by which neo-colonialism maintains power over countries



that had already declared independence. In economics, the main elements are products.

Politically independent countries remain dependent on global markets and multinational corporations, particularly for imports of finished goods, while domestic elites and multinational corporations reinforce this pattern of dependency. This dependence often hinders the development of local industries due to a lack of investment in domestic production. As a result, these countries remain subordinate in the global economic system, with little control over the direction of their own economic development.

In this novel, the author creates character Pucha. After finishing watching English Movies Only, Pucha and Rio relax in a small popular restaurant called Café Espana, which is located across from the cinema where they watched it. The name of the cafe itself, Espana, which in Indonesian means Spain, seems to emphasize the taste that tends towards foreign products. "It is merienda time at the popular Café España, and the tiny restaurant is quickly filling up with more customers flocking out of the Avenue Theater across the street" (4).

The author creates the character Dolores Gonzaga, Rio's mother. She has smooth ivory-white skin. She loves French beauty products. Likewise, she loves luxurious clothes, and she even has her own designer to design the clothes she wants. The author also makes the setting at home when her daughter Rio's birthday is celebrated with great luxury and all the upper class. Even though her daughter did not recognize a single person invited by her mother. But she doesn't care about her daughter's feelings; the important thing is that she can meet the upper-class people and show off her luxurious clothes. It is narrated:

Usually Panchito the dressmaker comes along. He pores over my mother's fashion magazines for new ideas while Salvador soaks my mother's hands and feet in lukewarm water; they are massaged in scented oils, rinsed and dried

carefully by the fastidious Salvador before the actual manicure and pedicure begin (80).

From Rio's grandmother, Lola Narcisa, it also appears that Dolores is not happy with the local culture, and how she tries to keep the grandmother away from her family. Lola is not ashamed of her own culture. She made Lola invisible in her own home, even hoping that no one else would see her. She is very embarrassed by Lola Narcisa's presence. This is reinforced by the setting in the room, how Lola Narcisa's way of life is very traditional, lives in a big house but has a small room close to the maid, likes to listen to the radio in Tagalog, and still wears traditional clothes. The setting at the dining table also reinforces that Dolores dislikes Lola Narcisa's presence, deliberately not inviting Lola to the dining table. Even when guests ask about Lola's presence, she argues that Lola prefers to eat in her room so that people don't see her in traditional style, which she finds embarrassing. It is described:

...When his rowdy friends come over, Raul acts ashamed of her and avoids introducing her to them. She becomes invisible, some tiny woman who happens to be visiting, content to listen to her radio dramas in the back room. She prefers to eat what the servants cook for themselves, after everyone else in the house has been served their food (9).

The author presents the character Gonzaga to show how Western culture and products have trapped Filipino society in a consumerist lifestyle. Both young and old compete to get goods from abroad. The food and drinks they consume every day mostly come from Western countries such as Spain, the United States, and others. This dependence makes them increasingly distant from local culture. They begin to consider foreign products better and feel ashamed of things that come from their own country. It is shown:

After dinner we drag ourselves to the adjoining living room for



coffee, cigars, and Spanish brandy French cognac, Johnny Walker Black, Miguel, TruCola mixtures of rubbing alcohol and brown tea I brand-name bottles as imported liquor (63).

When the entire Gonzaga family gathered for dinner, her assistant prepared different kinds of food. But Pucha did not want to eat Pinakbet because she said that if she ate it, her mouth would stink. So, she asked her assistant to serve her Heinz Pork'n' Beans, a canned food that she liked, because they're gooey with molasses. The truth is that canned food has no nutrition, it's not tasty, it's disgusting, and it can cause digestive problems, which is not good for the body. But to Pucha, none of that matters; what matters is that she looks great, as all the canned food she consumes is expensive and imported. It is quoted:

Pucha won't eat pinakbet, she says it gives her bad breath. Neither will Uncle Agustin. They ask Pacita to open and heat up a can of Heinz Pork'n' Beans instead Pucha loves her canned beans because they're gooey with molasses, but most of all because they're expensive and imported (62).

Lola Narcisa likes to listen to the radio. The radio she uses was brought by Freddie from Hong Kong, and previously belonged to Rio's brother. Freddie deliberately chose a foreign-made radio because he wanted to look modern and believed that foreign goods were cooler and of better quality than local products. This attitude reflects the practice of mimicry, where individuals in postcolonial countries imitate the lifestyles and tastes of former colonizers or foreign cultures to gain higher social status. In this case, Freddie not only uses imported goods but also helps to instill the view that foreign cultures are superior and classy. This kind of mimicry reflects how colonial legacies continue to shape people's perspectives and behaviors, even in small things like choosing a radio. "The radio was once my brother Raul's, but he

now owns a sleek black transistor model my father brought from Hong Kong" (10).

Besides the radio, but even the swimsuit that Freddie gave to Uncle Panchito also came from Hong Kong. Freddie indeed prefers to bring and use goods from abroad because he feels that imported goods look cooler, more modern, and more valuable. He believes that foreign products are better than locally made products. This kind of attitude is an example of mimicry, which is when people in former colonies imitate the lifestyles and tastes of developed countries to appear more respectable or "upscale." However, by imitating foreign cultures, they lose their confidence in their own culture and products. They become like shadows of foreign cultures, imitating, but never truly becoming part of what they are imitating. "Salvador had absolutely no interest in wearing dresses or stilettos. He was horrified when my mother gave Uncle Panchito some of her bathing suits, the one-piece maillots in leopard, black, and purple my father brought her from Hong Kong" (81).

Alarcan collects fancy sports cars such as Ferary and Maserati to show off to girls and ladies. No wonder he has many mistresses and illegal sons, too, like Andres and Pedro, who are employed in some menial jobs in his businesses. It is described as the following:

Cora Camacho imagined riding in Alacran's expensive car: Maybe he drove himself to the studio today, in one of those fancy sports cars. A Maserati or Ferrari, something Italian and phallic. Cora Camacho loves the obvious, thinks she deserves to ride in an open sports car just once in her life, with the wind undoing her lacquered hair and one of the world's richest men driving beside her (22).

The author vividly illustrates the issue of drug abuse through the characters Rainer, Joey Sands, Uncle, and Lolita Luna. Rainer represents the introduction of drugs into the Philippines, while Joey Sands and Uncle



serve as both users and dealers. The main targets of this drug trade include celebrities, particularly the actress Lolita Luna. The CocoRico nightclub is used as a central setting to reflect the reality of drug circulation in such venues. This location is ideal for someone like Rainer, a well-known German film director, to supply drugs for Joey and Uncle to distribute. Nightclubs are targeted by drug dealers because it's incredibly easy to smuggle in substances; people can simply hide them in their pockets and walk through the entrance. Security tends to focus more on weapons than drugs, so small packets concealed in coats, wallets, purses, or even hidden within everyday items like cell phones, cigarette packs, lighters, or hollowed-out cigars often go unnoticed. As a DJ at the nightclub, Joey Sands regularly interacts with many individuals, including well-known celebrities, making him a central figure in this illicit network. Dancing elegantly, he is looking for the people who need drugs and sex at once, for he is also a whore guy. It is narrated:

I never keep what's given to me as a gift; I like to let them know how little their trinkets are really worth, what kind of dope I bought with their money. It's a warning, my philosophy of life-keeping things slightly off-balance. It's how I survive (37).

Joy Sands continues to sell his body, particularly to white men, and now he is involved with Rainer, a German director visiting Manila for the Manila Film Festival. He likes Joy and invites him to stay with him day and night for an entire week. However, Joy's true intention is not companionship, but rather to steal Rainer's wallet and his supply of drugs. "It's okay. I take out the packet of drugs and money and slip it into my jeans pocket, casually leaving the bag with Rainer's passport and airline ticket on the couch facing the registration desk. Maybe Rainer gets his stuff back, maybe not. This way, he has a chance" (150).

5. Conclusion

After analyzing the novel Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*, the following conclusion can be drawn. Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters* clearly shows that neo-colonialism in our world today is a result of the cultural and economic influence of developed countries that still dominate developing countries, despite their political independence. American and European cultures play an important role in controlling the minds of young people by promoting their products and lifestyles.

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