The anxieties of authorship in Malaysian and Singaporean writings in English: Locating the English language writer and the question of freedom in the postcolonial era
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Abstract
This essay focuses on the anxieties of authorship by assessing the English language writer's position in Malaysia and Singapore. Since writers are essentially subjected to a culture of censorship in both countries, this essay thus considers the psychological consequences of censorship on the writers through the varying concerns and views on freedom. The final part of the essay also analyzes some of the writers' ambivalence towards the liberal ideal of freedom, and the manner in which it is negotiated from an Asian and multi-racial context. Hence “the anxieties of authorship” also reflect the ambivalence and tension experienced by Malaysian and Singaporean writers who are themselves caught between two ideologically polarized worlds of the west and Asia.

Keywords
English language writer; Freedom

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We are so accustomed to thinking of English as an inseparable adjunct to the English people that we are likely to forget that it has been the language of England for a comparatively short period in the world’s history. Since its introduction into the island about the middle of the fifth century it has had a career extending through only 1,500 years. Yet this part of the world had been inhabited by humans for thousands of years: 50,000 according to more moderate estimates, 250,000 in the opinion of some. During this long stretch of time, most of it dimly visible through prehistoric mists, the p Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step toward political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers. I will come back to this presently, and I hope that by that time the meaning of what I have said here will have become clearer. Meanwhile, here are four specimens of the English langu... The writer either has a meaning and cannot express it, or he inadvertently says something else, or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not. He has affected the English language and its poetry on so many different levels. He was the first poet to write in English, making English a major literary language. Chaucer was the first to introduce the seven-line stanza in iambic pentameter. During his life he admired and was impacted by many famous poets, but even more famous poets later admired him, such as Shakespeare.