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This is right time open and drag attention of small island whis is considered most disturbed land in the world since three decades of Sri Lankan history were steeped in the horror of a war between two factions of society. Ultimately, the war ended when the government killed the LTTE leader, but the ghosts of the war are imminent. How the war seeped into the very soil of the country and soul of its people. This firsthand account of a woman who became a part of the LTTE's first female contingent will give you goosebumps. From an ordinary life in a Sri Lankan middle class family, Niromi made her way from an educated mixed race girl to a militant. She now chronicles how the decision changed her, and the real life experiences she ensured. Apart from the horrors of war, starvation, hunting, a wild life, weaponry, illness and political tensions, she talks about the psychological wounds it left in its wake. What happens to the texture of life in a country that endures such bitter conflict? What happens to the country's soul? Middle-clas Sri Lankan family by joining the Tamil Tigers. Equipped with a rifle and cyanide capsule she was one of the rebels' first female soldiers—this is her story of her time as a guerrilla

Key words War, LTTE, Tamil Tigress, Faction of Society, Weaponry, Political tension, Bitter Conflict, , Psychological wound,

Introduction

Sri Lanka's present is haunted by memories of the island's decades-long civil war, which began in 1983 and ended just over 10 years ago. The war was mainly a clash between the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) insurgent group, the latter of which had hoped to establish a separate state for the Tamil minority. The mainstream narrative suggests that the civil war was derived from tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups**.** An Origin Story Sri Lanka is 74.9 percent Sinhalese and 11.2 percent Sri Lankan Tamil. Within these two groups, Sinhalese tend to be Buddhist and Tamils tend to be Hindu, displaying significance Some Tamils responded to these discriminatory policies with the idea of Tamil Eelam, a separate state for Tamils. While the idea appears to be

extreme, the two groups already lived in somewhat separate spheres of the country: the Sinhalese in Southern, Western, and Central Sri Lanka, and the Tamils in the Northern and Eastern parts of the island. Tamil Eelam aimed to formalize this existing geographic separation. The movement was built on the idea that Tamils and Sinhalese represented distinct ethnic groups in Sri Lanka. Linguistic and religious divisions. Tamils had mixed reactions to the concept of Eelam. While a handful of groups supported Tamil Eelam, only one prevailed: the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). LTTE destroyed other budding Eelam groups like the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) to become the "sole representative of the Tamils." The conflict then escalated into civil war. The war officially began after a day of riots targeting Tamils in Colombo in July 1983, a month which has since been dubbed "Black July." The fighting lasted just under three decades and ended in May 2009, when the Sri Lankan government announced that they killed the LTTE leader.

Migration

Shyam Selvadurai's novel *Funny Boy* presents the coming of age of Arjie, a young, gay, Tamil boy in Sri Lanka. Set against the backdrop of Sri Lankan social and cultural politics of the 1980s, the novel explores the barriers around love, marriage, gender expectations, and cultural tensions, specifically in the Sinhala and Tamil populations. The tension and change in Sri Lanka during the 1980s leading up to the events of Black July parallel the development of Arjie's own tumultuous realization of his homosexual identity.

From 1983 to 2009, Sri Lanka was in a state of civil war between the reigning government, representing the majority Sinhala population, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The LTTE advocated for a separate Tamil state due to the perceived cultural marginalization of Tamil citizens in Sri Lanka. The 26-year civil war began in July 1983 with a series of massacres and riots targeting Tamil citizens. The inception of this violence is known as Black July.

Despite the clear sides drawn by historical overviews, *Funny Boy* suggests that the conflict was not as clearly divided in Sri Lankan communities, with many Sinhala and Tamil Sri Lankans living as neighbours and friends. In the same way, Dennis Austin observes in his political overview of modern Sri Lanka that all history is made up, but the history of Sri Lanka is more made up than most.

Selvadurai uses the historical marginalization of the minority Tamil population in Sri Lanka as an analogue for Arjie's position as a young gay man. During this time, and continuing today, homosexuality is illegal in Sri Lanka. As Arjie realizes and explores his homosexuality against the backdrop of Black July, his personal comfort in his sexuality emerges as he prepares to move to Canada, a jurisdiction that offers both asylum for persecuted Tamil refugees, and by the 1980s, provided legal protection for LGBTQ individual

It was a constantly surprising conflict where Tamil Hindus – and occasionally even Christians – were the suicide bombers, Muslims tended to be non-violent onlookers and the Buddhist Singhalese majority operated a violent "gestapo", which succeeded in keeping the minority communities in a constant state of terror. The most fascinating part of the assignment was always trying to track down the Tamil Tigers. Hauled over at gunpoint at Tiger checkposts, I would always take the opportunity to chat to the severely doctrinaire and often very young cadres, and grew to be both fascinated and repelled by this most disciplined and ruthless of South Asian guerrilla forces, each of whom wore a cyanide phial around their necks in case they were captured. Later, he showed me the Tigers' video library. They had complete sets of *Rambo*, *Rocky* and James Bond; all the Schwarzeneggers, including *Conan the Barbarian*; most of the Vietnam films; and no less than three versions of *The Magnificent Seven*. It was wonderful: real freedom fighters earnestly studying Sylvester Stallone to see how it's done: from Hanoi to Sri Lanka via Hollywood; an entire civil war – tens of thousands killed, maimed and wounded – inspired by imported Hollywood heroics.

Yet there was nothing comical about what resulted from such attacks. The Tigers were capable of great brutality, carrying out many more suicide attacks in the 90s than any Muslim group, and assaulting rival Tamils as pitilessly as they attacked Singhalese institutions. "They ambushed soldiers and assassinated politicians," writes Samanth Subramanian in his brilliant memoir, "but they also killed monks and pilgrims in the majestic Buddhist shrine of Anuradhapura, shot up Sinhalese women and children across the country, and blew up aeroplanes and trains."

The Sri Lankan civil war dragged on for 26 years. Yet for such an important war, which at one point saw the Tigers drive out the might of the Indian army and then follow up by assassinating the person who sent them, Rajiv Gandhi, the conflict has generated remarkably little good writing or reportage. It has now, however, produced a remarkable book by one of India's most talented young writers of non-fiction.

The story in Colombo by telling of the Sinhalese majoritarianism that sparked the conflict. With 11 million Sinhalese and only 3 million Tamils, the advent of democracy led to the subjection of the minority: in 1956 Sinhala was made the state's official language and the Tamils found that their language was banned from government offices and road signs; to gain access to any serious jobs, Tamils now found they had to pass a Sinhala proficiency test. At the same time, prime land in the north was gradually parcelled out and colonised by Buddhists, at the expense of its Hindu owners. Early Tamil attempts at non-violent protest were brutally put down by the Special Task Force, a kind of Buddhist UVF, and massive anti-Tamil riots, leaving Hindu homes and restaurants smouldering across the island. It was at this time that Sinhala rioters pioneered "necklacing", burning alive with a rubber tyre, before the ANC perfected it.

Subramaniam ranges wide and far to find his witnesses: in West Harrow, north-west London, he finds Raghavan, one of the founders of the Tigers and follower of the group's charismatic but ruthlessly violent leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran. He fills in the early days of the Tigers, long before Prabhakaran became what Subramanian describes as "the despot of a banana republic which did not yet exist". In Toronto, home to a large Jaffna Tamil diaspora, and from where much of the Tigers' finance used to come, Subramanian tracks down senior Tamil officers who were squeezed out of the Sri Lankan army as sectarian divisions grew. Finally, he heads to Jaffna, the now wrecked would-be capital of the putative independent Tamil state, Eelam, to tell the chilling tale of the Tigers' last stand.

After 9/11, insurgent groups found fewer sympathisers and, realising that the Tigers were now isolated politically, the Sri Lankan government, backed by Iran and China, moved in for the kill. By 2009, the remaining Tigers and large numbers of civilians were trapped without shelter, at the far north of the Jaffna peninsula. Up to then, maybe as many as 50,000 had been killed over three decades. According to conservative UN figures, almost as many again – around 40,000 innocent civilians – died in the Sri Lankan army's final rain of phosphorus shells, many

of which seem to have been deliberately aimed at UN refugee camps. More died in the appalling tidal wave of extrajudicial killings and death squad murders that followed the Tigers' defeat, as much of the country's Tamil population was herded into internment camps accompanied by widespread torture, rape and abuse.

This Divided Island – balanced, observant, good-natured, discursive and frequently witty – is a searingly angry and deeply moving portrayal of the agonies of this conflict, especially by the innocent Tamils caught in the middle of two ruthless forces. The final section of the book talks about the attempts of the Sri Lankan military to erase all reminders of the war: houses, camps, villages and graveyards associated with the Tigers have all been bulldozed. This is a major work, containing oral testimonies from all sides of the conflict, and will stand as a fine literary monument against the government's attempt at imposed forgetfulness.

In Anil's Ghost the grim record of atrocities during the civil emergency in Sri Lanka that began in 1983 is interspersed with descriptions of Buddhist icons, fragments of the philosophy and references to one of the sacred texts of Sri Lankan Buddhism, the Culavamsa. Early in the novel, the narrative is framed with a description of temples in the Shanxi province of China, introducing the spiritual ambience and the philosophic structure of Buddhism: Cave 14 was once the most beautiful site in a series of Buddhist cave temples in Shanxi province. When you entered, it looked as if huge blocks of salt had been carted away. The panorama of Bodhishattvas — their twenty-four rebirths — were cut out of the walls with axes and saws, the edges red, suggesting the wound's incision. "Nothing lasts," Palipana told them. "It is an old dream. Art burns, dissolves. And to be loved with the irony of history — that isn't much." (12; emphasis in original)The epilogue describes statues of the Buddha and Boddhishattva (on the path to enlightenment) overlooking a "killing field" (301) of the Sri Lankan emergency: "These were the fields where Buddhism and its values met the harsh political events of the twentieth century" (300). As Linda Hutcheon suggests, Ondaatje has always trusted his readers to see how certain works might be "relevant to his story's form and content" ("The Empire" 23), and this paper will argue that, as a key intertext, the body of Buddhist thought deserves consideration for its relevance to the structure and themes of *Anil's Ghost*.

The narrative involves the attempt by the forensic scientist Anil Tissera, appointed by the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, and Sarath, the local archaeologist steeped in the religious

philosophy of his country, to establish the identity of a corpse they suspect to have been the victim of a political killing by the government. For Anil, herself a Sri Lankan who has returned to her home country after an education and career in the West, this soon becomes not just a forensic task, but an enlightenment project: the establishment of empirical truth will lay the foundations of a legal process through which a just social order can be established. It is in the conflict between Anil's enlightenment rationalism and Sarath's religio-philosophical apprehension of the significance of "Sailor," as the dead man comes to be known, that the novel's debate between mystic and rationalist, Buddhist and secular perceptions of the world is conducted

The different impulses in Ondaatje's work find expression in the public and private subject matter of *Anil's Ghost*. The atrocities committed in the civil emergency in Sri Lanka are tragic confirmation of the human cost of rivalries based on nationalism and race. The complexities of the religio-ethnic conflict — the sequence of killings followed by reprisals — resist comprehension and assume an aura of unreality as each group lays claim to its version of the truth, blurring the distinction between fact and fiction. As "the prodigal" returned, Anil herself exemplifies the position of the outsider. Her familiarity with contemporary America, films, songs, and bowling alleys sets up a series of juxtapositions with modern and ancient Sri Lankan customs and motifs, while the detailed account of her forensic investigation introduces a positivist scientific discourse into the situation of civil crisis and sets up a competing regime of truth with the traditional religious philosophy of Sri Lanka.

5 As will be seen, the Buddhist passages in the novel have a complex relationship to the thematic contexts outlined above.[1] In contrast to Anil's rationalism and empiricism, they work to undermine our conventional knowledge of the world, attributing to it a fundamental irrationality that answers to the civil crisis of Sri Lanka. Central to Buddhist thought is the doctrine that all existence is characterized by suffering, and that the cause of suffering is blind craving. Enlightenment, Nirvana, is achieved when the individual is able to eradicate blind cravings directed to the world through a proper grasp of reality — through a recognition that all objects of perception are based on emptiness in a world that is a web of fluxing, interdependent phenomena. This insight leads not to nihilism but to the knowledge of a transcendental reality, the unity of being beyond the discriminations of everyday consciousness, beyond the conceptual

categories normally applied to the external world. Enlightenment is also attained through a proper understanding of, and relation to, process — to historical process and the private processes of human lives. The Bodhishattva learns to disassociate the "true self" from the illusory empirical self who is tied to the cycle of death and rebirth (in Sanskrit *Samsara*). Sometimes referred to as the wheel of life, the cycle of death and rebirth is said to be founded on a particular form of causality known as "dependent origins"; all situations, psychological states, and motivations originate from a causal chain whose main determinants are desire and ignorance. The individual's state of being, *karma*, is dependent on a chain of reactions based on these factors, and he or she achieves freedom when able to liberate the self from the cycle of birth and rebirth. I will suggest that Buddhist concepts of time and causality provide narrative models in *Anil's Ghost*, which also has fictive approximations to the Buddhist ideal of Nirvana, when subjective delusion and unreason are transcended in an experience of cosmic unity, and the sage has an outpouring of compassion for the suffering world. Such experiences provide utopian moments of communion as an alternative to the alienated ego of the exile as well as to divisive formulations of identity based on nation and race. Buddhism's particular blend of detachment and compassion offers an alternative to the extremes of passion that fuel public and private violence. By arguing that the verities of the past and present have been based on illusion, Buddhism relativizes cultural truths, while it also promises the initiate insight into a higher order reality, into the "suchness" of things. Buddhist iconography provides religio-aesthetic images of a transcendental state of calm and compassion. Its presence in the novel allows Ondaatje to negotiate between postmodernist relativism and epiphanic insight into universal truths.

Anil's Ghost is at one level a detective story in which the heroine's forensic science leads to the exposure of a government crime and the revelation of a truth. The progressive linear plot with its revelatory conclusion is set against disconnected descriptions of killings and kidnappings, suggestive of a random sequence of horror. The Buddhist passages mediate between the enlightenment narrative and the spectre of incoherence, offering an alternative moral and emotional economy for dealing with civil and private trauma. In one of these passages Anil is taken by Sarath to consult an archaeologist, Palipana, about the identification of their suspected murder victim. Palipana, now blind, has withdrawn from nationalistic controversies[2] in a meditative retreat to the remains of an ancient monastery in the forest. Forest retreat has been a feature of Buddhist practice from the earliest times in Sri Lanka; the poet

Aryama in about 200 AD describes how the great-souled man "having abandoned all concern with material property and sense objects … lived in the middle of a forest, in a place delightful for its solitude, and beautiful like a lovely garden"

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