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LOST HISTORIES: NARRATING THE TRAUMASCAPE IN KHALED HOUSSEINI'S  
THE KITE RUNNER

Dr. Ruheena S, Associate Professor of English, MSM College, Kayamkulam.

**Abstract:**

Traumascape are places marked by distressing legacies of violence, suffering and loss, where events are experienced and re-experienced across time. The geographical position of Afghanistan, which was a part of the erstwhile Soviet Union, coupled with the calamitous friction between the different ethnic communities rendered it a victim of international power politics. Decades of bloody history has caused the country to be identified as a terrorist hub. Contemporarily, the country has transformed into a *traumascape*, where trauma is continuously established as the collective memory of the land that it continues to have serious repercussions on successive generations. Khaled Hosseini, in *The Kite Runner*, explores the untold story of how the political dispensations engendered a tragic decline of his motherland's rich culture and relegated its heritage to ruin. This paper explores the way Hosseini's narrative documents the after-effects of war on the people, the land and its way of life. The book unravels a population forced out of its peaceful spatial existence as governance gets unruled with violence and bloodshed. The consequences of war, devastation and complete cultural decadence.

**Keywords:** body politic, traumascape, memory, collective trauma

The dismemberment of a body politic leads to the breakdown of a carefully secured unified state in which its inhabitants form an inherent part. The first Afghan novel to be written in English, *Khaled Hosseini's The Kite Runner* (2001) is fundamentally the representation of a populace ripped and torn apart by occupation, wars, fundamentalism and extremist forces. Maria Tumarkin, in her work *Traumascape: Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy*, points out how a geographical location transforms into a memorial site invested with meaning and establishes a deep, emotional bond between the survivors and sites of tragedy. She refers to "traumascape" as places marked by traumatic legacies of violence, war and loss, where events are experienced and re-experienced across time (12). Hosseini portrays Afghanistan as a nation where trauma becomes so imprinted in the collective memory of the land that it adversely affects subsequent generations.

*The Kite Runner* is a work where the role of place gains centrality. Place is both position in time and a location in space. Analysing the twin meanings of place, Yi-Fu Tuan, the cultural geographer comments thus: "Places are locatium in which people have long memories, reaching back beyond their indelible impressions of their own individual childhoods to the common lore of bygone generations." Hosseini's work explores the ramifications of suffering on the individual and the community in terms of their relation of the characters to place. The personal and cultural histories embedded in the land mould and shape the identity of the people. Hosseini takes upon himself the task of unearthing the lost history of the land and exposes the tale of the divergent political administrations that ruined the peaceful, stable, spatial world.

A country that had hitherto remained mostly out of the purview of international politics, Afghanistan gained worldwide attention following the coup of 1973, which overthrew the ruling monarchy. In 1979, the Soviets marked the start of an era of bloodletting and established their power over the land in another coup. The opposition to external Communist intervention took the form of a jihad or holy war, which appealed to the masses. The turbulence resulted in the Talibanization of Afghanistan that gained momentum from the 1990s. When the Northern Alliance took over Kabul between 1992 and 1996, different groups claimed control over various parts of the city. The infighting between these groups was so fierce that the whistle of falling shells, the rumble of gunfire and the sight of men digging bodies out of piles of rubble became commonplace. The crossing of adjacent towns and villages and passages between neighbour-

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REVISITING THE HISTORY OF SRI LANKAN CIVIL WAR AND THE  
TRAJECTORY OF THE AFFECTED IN NAYOMI MUNAWEERA'S  
*ISLAND OF A THOUSAND MIRRORS\**

BY

**B. Sajitha\***

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**Abstract:**

*Island of a Thousand Mirrors* depicts the ethnic violence and Xenophobic history of Sri Lanka. The hatred of the native Sinhalese for the ethnic community of Tamils settlers flared up into ethnic conflict as they felt a loss of their historic space. This paper attempts to make a political study of Sri Lanka, rereading the history of the civil war through Nayaomi Munaweera's *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* and has analysed how the work becomes a replica of the violent conflict and ethnic warfare on the island and the effects of war on the psyche of the people of Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Sri Lanka, Sinhalese, Tamils, Xenophobia, ethnic- conflict, violence, civil war.

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**INTRODUCTION**

War has been a constant theme in literature. In the case of Sri Lankan civil war internal colonization was the major concern as it resulted in the conflict between two races for the supremacy over land which resulted in the dissection of the community. Sri Lankan literature has witnessed the contextualization of the Sri Lankan Civil war, the internal conflict, violence, trauma, and uprooting of the self in fiction as well as poetry. Writers like Romesh Gunsekera, Syam Selvadurai, Nayomi Munaweera, Michael Ondaatje are some of the writers whose works reflect the socio-political conditions of the island nation. The paper discusses how the novel *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* becomes the replica of war and views how the people of Sri Lanka become the collective victims of violence in their urge for identity resulting in the emergence of ethnic conflict and analyses the survival strategies weaved by the victims.

The root of the civil war can be traced back to the tensions and power disputes even before the colonization. Later during the British colonization, the situations worsened as the Sinhalese were disappointed by the British favouritism towards the Tamils. Most of the English schools were placed in Tamil dominant areas and more occupational benefits were given to them. After Sri Lankan Independence situations changed drastically. The Sinhalese gained power and reached the upper echelons of government. The Citizenship Acts of 1948 disfranchised the Tamils of Indian origin,



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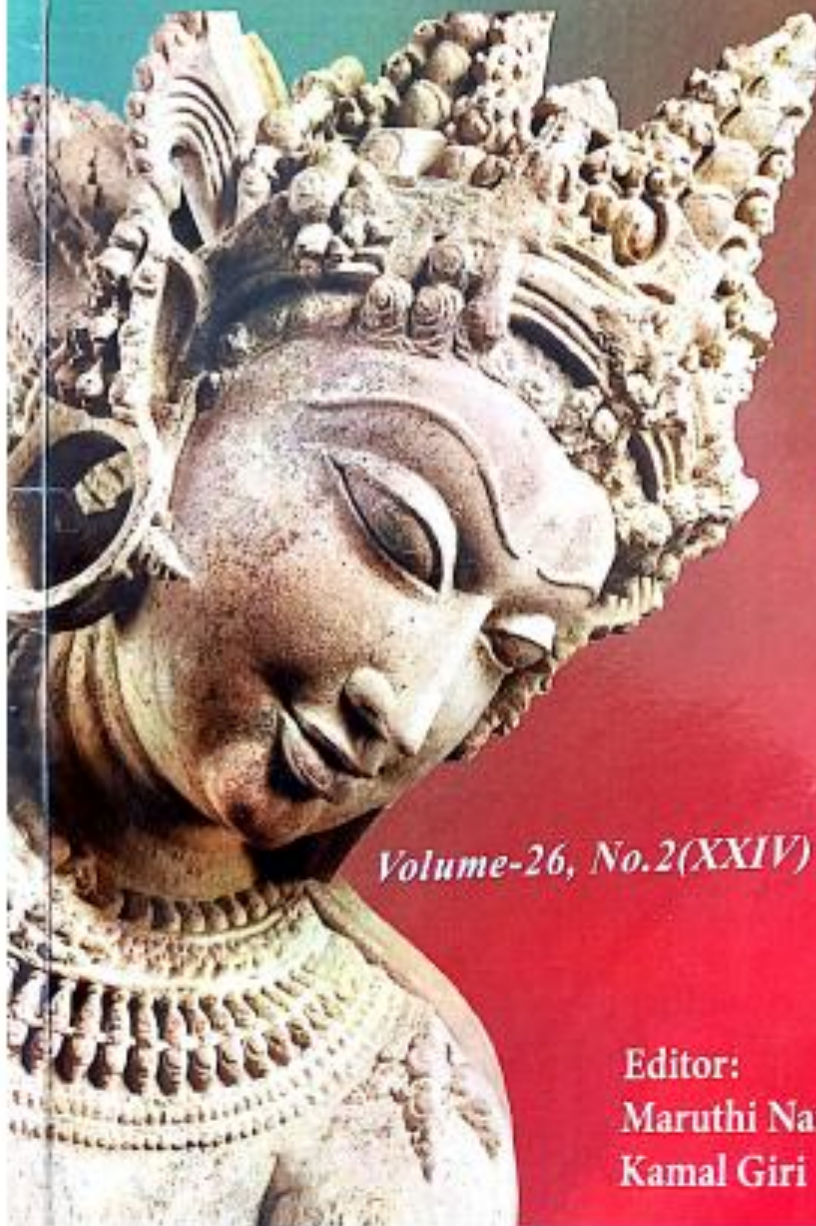
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**SUBJUGATION AND RESISTANCE IN KAINÉ AGARY'S YELLOW-YELLOW**

**Dr. Harsha Viswanath, Assistant Professor of English, MSM College, Kayamkulam, Kerala**

**Abstract:**

The exploration of oil in the Niger delta has posited grave socio-political, ecological, economical, and gender exploitations. The Niger delta is a region which has been in controversy due to the petroleum mining and environmental destruction. Kaine Agary's novel *Yellow-Yellow* presents the exploitative nature of the Westerners who evade the poorer countries for their own betterment and portrays the persistent oppression of Nigerian women and her environment, unmasking the patriarchal paradigms of power behind the petrodollar global capitalism. The paper will examine the debilitating position of women in the political ecology and will trace the physical, psychological history of resistance, exploitation, deprivation and its effect on the feminine psyche of the region.

**Keywords:** Niger Delta, Ecofeminism, resistance, ecological destruction.

The exploration of oil in the Niger delta has posited grave socio-political, ecological, economical, and gender exploitations. The predicament of the women and the environment are the same as both were robbed by the "white-lover", who oppressed the resistance by malice and fake dreams of prosperity. Agary brings out the exploitative nature of the Westerner who evades the poorer countries for their own betterment and portrays the persistent oppression of Nigerian women and her environment. Ecofeminism is a political and theoretical movement that addresses gender undercurrents of ecological discourse. Referring to social constructions, patriarchy violates woman and nature, and raises questions on how ecological consciousness relates the subjugation of women to the ruination of nature, leading to the exploitation of both.

Saro Wiwa fought for social justice and was able to draw international attention to the plight of his people who were deprived, marginalized and exploited. Agary drew her inspiration from this activist and her novel *Yellow-Yellow* is placed within the polemics of the women in Niger delta. The region witnessed untold violence of killing, gunrunning, vandalization of public property and kidnapping for ransom. Young women who were jobless or uneducated became easy baits for sexual exploitation. Agary exposes the socio-economic predicament as well as the debilitating effect of poverty on the feminine psyche in the delta region.

The Niger delta is located within the nine coastal Nigerian states of the Niger River on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean. It is a very densely populated area usually known as the Oil Rivers as it was a major producer of palm oil and was the British Oil Rivers Protectorate from 1885 to 1893. It is a petroleum-rich region and faced severe criticism over nature destruction and pollution. The place is populated with over 31 million people belonging to more than 40 ethnic groups speaking about 250 different dialects. It was during the colonial period that is, in 1951 that the core Niger delta came into being. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) was the ruling political party of the region and later western Cameroon decided to separate from Nigeria and became the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens. The Eastern Region was occupied by the three major indigenous ethnic groups – Igbo, Efik-Ibibio and Ijaw and it faced a major crisis due to the expulsion of Professor Eyo Ita, an Efik by the majority Igbo tribe. The minorities in the region who stayed along the south eastern coast demanded a separate state, the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers (COR) state and was a major topic of debate on Nigerian independence. Due to this crisis, Eyo Ita left the NCNC and formed the National Independence Party (NIP) which was one of the political parties, played an active part in the conferences on Nigerian Constitution and Independence.

Another major crisis was the separation of Cameroon and on the basis of the UN referendum held in British Cameroons in 1961, the Muslim-majority Northern Cameroons officially became part of Nigeria whereas the Christian-majority Southern Cameroons became part of Cameroon. The eastern region of Nigeria suffered severely during the Nigerian Civil War or Biafra War. Resistance

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**BEHIND THE WOUNDED MINDS: CHILDHOOD TRAUMA IN GABRIEL  
TALLENT'S *MY ABSOLUTE DARLING*\***

BY

**Dr Harsha Viswanath\****Assistant Professor of English  
MSM College, Kayankulam, Kerala, India.***Abstract:**

Trauma has woven itself into fiction, nonfiction and films and is depicted as a response to a deeply distressing event which overwhelms an individual's ability to cope as it narrates the history of repeated gaps and ruptures. The victims of childhood abuses, rapes and long-time traumatic experience suffer from dissociation which is a psychological process where the mind of the victim is disconnected from the bodily experience. The paper explores Gabriel Tallent's *My Absolute Darling* and the phenomenon of childhood trauma that results due to the abuses that the child encounters and how these repressions results in a life long struggle with the self.

**Keywords:** *Childhood Trauma, psyche, abuse, incest.*

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◆ Correspondence Author: Dr Harsha Viswanath

**INTRODUCTION**

Trauma, the Greek word for wound has departed from its real meaning and has acquired a place within the area of psychology, anthropology, medicine, and literary as well as cultural studies. Trauma has woven itself into fiction, nonfiction and films and is depicted as a response to a deeply distressing event which overwhelms an individual's ability to cope as it narrates the history of repeated gaps and ruptures. Trauma theory flourished with the works of Sigmund Freud and later it developed through theorists such as Joseph Breuer, Jean Martin Charcot and Pierre Janet. Charcot's investigation on trauma stretched it from the branch of medicine to the world of literature and politics. His lectures put forward findings on hysteria by explaining how young women found refuge from lives of violence, exploitation and rape. He identified that these symptoms were psychological and not physiological and occurred a result of extreme experiences. Freud and Breuer associated it with sexual abuse, which altered the victim's behaviour and personality development.

According to Judith Herman, trauma is a state of, "feeling of intense fear, helplessness, loss of control and threat of annihilation . . . traumatic events overwhelm the human ordinary adaptations to life, then adds, involve threats of life or bodily integrity or close encounter with violence and death" (*Trauma* 24). She classifies post-traumatic stress disorder into three layers – the first is the physical transformation and the sensitive state of the trauma victim, the second is the terrific experiences remains within victim's memory and the final is the method of surrender when the attempt of self-defence is paralyzed. The victim is weak to defend and suffers from enduring vigilance and sensitivity to environmental threat. PTSD is seen in the survivors of repeated and prolonged traumatic experiences and involves symptoms like personality change, anger, self-

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### Voice of the Vanquished: Duryodhana in Anand Neelakantan's *Ajaya*

Dr. Harsha Viswanath, Assistant Professor, Department of English, AISM College,  
Kizhankulam, Kerala. [harshaviswanath@aismcollege.com](mailto:harshaviswanath@aismcollege.com)

#### Abstract

Indian conscious is imbued with numerous myths and cultural suggestiveness that even the literary avenue too is intertwined with its representations. Mythofiction, a genre of literature inspired by legends, myths and folklores retells events from ancient mythological texts portraying the zeitgeist to the plot. Myths and mythologies have a profound influence on culture and in turn, get influenced by the culture as well. Anand Neelakantan's *Ajaya* is a re-narrativization of the Mahabharata from the perspective of the antagonist, Duryodhana. The paper attempts to examine the influence of the caste system and how the society discriminated the individual based on their caste. The concept of *dharma* itself is questioned and the voices of the marginalized silenced in history finds a vent through Anand's work.

**Keywords:** Mythofiction, re-narrativization, caste discrimination, marginalized.



The conscious Indian mind was preoccupied traditionally with myths which were rich and vibrant with ambivalent multi-layered suggestiveness of the philosophies of individuals' sense of responsibility along with their impact on the cultural, socio-political and religious scenarios. As a nation imbued with sentiments of religion and cultural roles of individuals, the literary avenue too is intertwined with representations of these numerous superstitions and rituals defining this Indian consciousness. Lawrence Coupe in introduction to *Ajaya* brings out the bond between literature and the presence of myths in them, in her view mythology is,

... the body of inherited myths in any culture – is an important element of literature, and that literature is a means of extending mythology. That is, literary works may be regarded as 'mythopoeic', tending to create or re-create

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## OCCIDENTAL/ORIENTAL/NEO-COLONIAL CONFLICT IN MARIO VARGAS LLOSA'S THE STORYTELLER

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### ABSTRACT

Postcolonial theories mainly relate the contradiction between oriental and occidental and view the colonized nations as the other. The conflict between the two and the latter's effort to gain a place in the mainstream forms the entire gist of majority of postcolonial fictions. To establish an identity of the third world nations a return to the native or ethnic past is conceived as the solution in theoretical premises. But how far such a return to the native past is possible in the globalized world is a question that puzzles contemporaneity. In the neo-colonial world can such a return to the native identity be successful is analysed in this paper. The conflict between the occidental/oriental put forward by Edward Said is also analysed from a critical perspective in the given paper.

**Keywords:** Occidental, Oriental, aboriginal, colonizer, colonized, identity, neo-colonialism

Postcolonial theory which originated in the US and UK academics in the 1980s deals with the economic, political, social and historical effects of colonialism and proposed that a story of the colonised nations can never be written without reference to imperial rule. Opposed to these in the twentieth century there came many African and Asian writers who wanted to establish an identity of their own giving significance to their ethnic identity and native past. Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, considered as the founding texts of postcolonial theory, advocates a return to the past as the only way to have an identity of the colonised nations. But how far such a return to the past can establish the identity of the colonised nation is a question which is elaborated in the paper with an analysis of Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Storyteller*.

Mario Vargas Llosa, Nobel laureate, Peruvian novelist, political philosopher, essayist, journalist and literary critic, is known for his innovative narrative technique spun around enigmatic reality confounded with illusions generated out of primitive belief systems and the forces of transnational material technology. A writer with a different genial perception among the Latin American boom writers, Llosa, explores the terror beneath the feeling of ethnic identity that has been fore-grounded by Franz Fanon as the potential resistance against the repressive impressions of Euro-colonial ethos drowned to the bottom of the third world existence. He was awarded the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat" ("The Nobel Prize in Literature 2010").

Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Storyteller* discusses the lost cultural identity and the diversity of Peru. The novel deals with the correlation between global, national and tribal societies. It also discusses the problems of the marginal and its relation to the center or the problems of the third and first world. The novel is narrated by three persons- Saul Zuratas, the narrator and the unidentified storyteller. Saul Zuratas is the friend of the narrator who becomes obsessed with the tribal life of Machiguengas in the Amazon region. He neglects his studies and one day he went missing. The rest of the novel is told in altering chapters. The narrator's reflections of his lost friend and the unidentified storyteller who keeps on propagating the myths and legends of his tribe and keeps on moving to defend the community from destruction. The chapters also reveal the hidden motives of the first world nations in the name of modernization and globalization.

*The Storyteller* examines the logic of ethnic identity, a postcolonial theme, as it narrates the story of Saul Zuratas, who leaves his hybrid identity and relocates to the indigenous tribal identity, where life is measured



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