

ABSTRACT:

Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (2000) charts Anil Tissera's return to her homeland after 15 years in the West, reprises a trope prominent in the literature and cinema of diasporic experience: the return "home" of the estranged or alienated diasporic South Asian. Contextualizing Anil's story by framing it against Sri Lanka's traumatic triangulated war between government forces and two competing rebel factions, Ondaatje brings together the problematics of "trauma" and "nation" to frame the arc of Anil's self-discovery and simultaneously to explore the potential for a specific—ans psychoanalytically inflected--*postcolonial aesthetic* response to the trauma of the nation, both collectively and individually. This essay then is a case study that studies a fictional representation of real political events to argue for the continued relevance of the subdiscipline of postcolonial studies, against rumors of its obsolescence.

Keywords: *trauma, politics, aesthetics, postcolonial studies, psychoanalysis*