

紛争、正義、記憶と癒し

講演者：Sharanya JAYAWICKRAMA
(Hong Kong Shue Yan University)

The Fiction of Justice and the Craft of Healing : Literary Perspectives from Sri Lanka

The challenges to the practice and application of transitional justice in Sri Lanka, following the end of nearly thirty years of civil war in 2009, have been manifold and demand a rethinking of the intersections between conflict, justice, memory, and healing. Sri Lankan literature of the civil war has done the work of confronting, witnessing, and attending to the critical shifts wrought by conflict, both during and after the years of war. Aesthetic work and the aesthetic product, including literary fiction, can serve as a vital complement or counter to the representational and institutional discourses that shape post-conflict space and society. Such conceptualisations of the aesthetic emphasize the purchase that literary texts and the processes that constitute them may have, as they open up discursive space in the wake of political violence. As such, literature may become part of the set of processes and mechanisms used by a society in the transitional justice moment. Three notable Sri Lankan texts generate and maintain the imagination of justice in transition by representing justice as a fiction, a contrived form, something that is invented or false, but is often held to be true because it is expedient to do so. The representation of the dysfunctional quality of state-sanctioned or institutionalized justice is a common thread that binds otherwise dissimilar literary texts about the civil war together. In each of the texts, a self-reflexive focus on the craft of fiction, including form and language, is used by authors to suggest challenges and approaches to healing that have the capacity to both refresh and rupture discourses of justice and healing in post-conflict societies. Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* (2000) generates an unresolved narrative and ethical tension as it insistently relates the Sri Lankan experience to comparative spaces and times, thereby fashioning a commentary on war as a universal human condition, even as it strives to excavate localized context-sensitive understandings of truth, justice, and healing. The novel compulsively diverges into descriptions of the skills and crafts of the characters—forensic scientist, archaeologist, doctor and artisan—positioned in various fields of knowledge production and analysis that annotate the violence and loss that disfigure the Sri Lankan terrain. The only character in the novel who finds some degree of redemption is an artisan, traumatised by the disappearance of his wife, whose skills and knowledge of cultural methodologies of creative reconstruction become the focus of Ondaatje's imagining of rehabilitation and reconciliation for a fractured community. By the novel's end, Ondaatje has substituted a faith in the redemptive power of cultural work, symbolized by the artisan's self-healing vision, for the demand for a universal model of human rights and justice. *Gorilla* (2001) by Shobasakthi critiques the construction of victimhood through physical violence as well as through the disciplinary discursive registers of the instruments of international justice. Within the form of an asylum petition, Shobasakthi's protagonist tells a story of his wounds that exposes his vulnerability as a victim of physical violence and that yet refuses the discursive discipline imposed upon his experience that

would curtail his identity as a victim alone. Rather than focusing on the loss of language that is often perceived as a typical consequence of trauma, Shobasakthi draws attention to a superfluity of rhetorical rules and demands for authentication that contain and curtail experience when one is compelled to testify. Shobakathi's rehearsal of the asylum petition also reveals that form has implications for the language that a listener is capable of hearing. Moreover, for those who are located in a material world of borders and cells, the effort to draw pain into evidence and concretize it in language is a necessary act of survival. Rather than demonstrating that pain destroys language, the narrative confronts the corporeality of trauma, presenting pain in ever-increasing detail in order that it may be acknowledged and thereby legitimated. The post-war novel *A Little Dust on the Eyes* (2014) by Minoli Salgado presents the unsettling capacity of violence *as* healing in a context where judicial measures and solutions have faltered and failed. Situating her exploration of the Sri Lankan conflict at the crisis point of the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004, Salgado's novel explores what happens to an understanding of trauma and healing when a cataclysmic event, such as a natural disaster, collides with the new "normal" of protracted war which indexes violence, fear, displacement, and loss, as part of a pre-existing, prevailing and ongoing social condition. Like many other novels of its kind, it tries on the language of trauma, tests the currency of storytelling, rehearses the roles of testifier and listener and gauges the limits of empathy through the experiences, memories, conversations, and silences of the main characters. Strikingly, through the figure of a traumatised man who heals his psychosomatic symptoms through a brutally violent act, Salgado explores the notion of regenerative violence. Each of the authors discussed sheer away from universal concepts of justice and healing to approaches that are unorthodox, provisional, recalcitrant and disturbing. In different ways, these texts deal with the limits and capacity for transformation stemming from trauma, undermine the model of the idealized subject or actor required for justice and healing, and suggest that not all knowledge is redemptive and that truth and the search for it may be counterproductive. Underlying my analysis of these Sri Lankan texts is the basic question of what purchase literary and cultural work can have on discourses of justice and healing. Certainly, reading or hearing stories, fictional or otherwise, is a means of accessing memory and confronting the past, and thus confronting ourselves and our societies. But more than that, articulating a space for literary fiction within discourses of justice and healing involves using a new lexicon as well as reassessing the customary disciplinary knowledge and practices that shape our understanding and approaches to transitional moments.