



## “De-Territorialization” as Depicted by Shyam Selvadurai and Nayomi Munaweera

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### Abstract

Concerning Sri Lankan Literature in English, this paper examines the causes and effects of “de-territorialization” as depicted in *Funny Boy* (1994) by Shyam Selvadurai and *Island of A Thousand Mirrors* (2013) by Nayomi Munaweera with special reference to Homi K Bhabha s’ *Location of Culture* (1994). The study is primarily conducted based on a desk review of the two novels, supported by related theoretical and supplementary literature, and further sustained by an interview conducted with Prof. Maryse Jayasuriya. The study investigates the post-colonial de-territorialization that occurred in Sri Lanka according to Selvadurai, and Munaweera. According to the findings of the study political enigma, ethnic misunderstanding, and identity crisis are the main causes of de-territorialization. In line with it, the discussion is streamlined by means of interpretative tools of cultural studies and anthropology. Ultimately, the study strives to envisage the practicality of adapting to the requirement of coexistence, respecting the liminal identities and cultural differences of the other communities, and the unfeasibility of seeking territorial shift under the circumstance of social unrest.

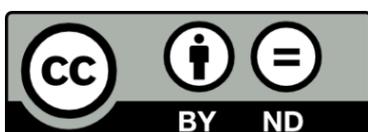
**Keywords:** Co-existence, De-territorialization, Identity Crisis, Liminal Spaces, Territorial Shift

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## Original Article

### INTRODUCTION

The study explores a historically significant post-colonial situation in Sri Lanka through the novel *Funny Boy* by Shyam Selvadurai. Selvadurai is a Tamil by ethnicity and represents a Tamil-Sinhalese mixed backlash in his upbringing. On the other hand *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* by Nayomi Munaweera reveal an unbiased portrayal of both profiles of the civil war. Munaweera is a Sinhalese by ethnicity and represents the dominant majority in the sample of the study. As realized in their novels, both seem to have gathered firsthand experience of the situation in question. They have been selected for the study due to the sincerity of their approach to the situation. Selvadurai's *Funny Boy* won the W.H Smith/ Lambda Literary Award for Gay Fiction in 1994; and Munaweera's *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* won the Commonwealth Book Prize in 2013. The researcher expects to utilize the theories of hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha in order to dig out these authors' representation of de-territorialization.

### Hypothesis

The selected works of Nayomi Munaweera (*Island of a Thousand Mirrors*) and Shyam Selvadurai (*Funny Boy*) in their literary works portray de-territorialization process that occurred in post-colonial Sri Lanka.

### Objectives

#### General objective

The general objective of the research is to seek an understanding of how the selected pieces of literature portray the concept of de-territorialization.

#### Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the research are threefold:

01. To analyze the reasons behind the de-territorialization which was detectable in post-colonial Sri Lanka.
02. To understand the nature of de-territorialization that happened within post-colonial Sri Lanka and to detect how far those who gained territorial shift are successful in adapting to the new circumstances.
03. To suggest possible solutions to the social and political scenario in question.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature portrays various theoretical approaches to examine the selected postcolonial literary pieces. As the aim of the study is to explore the authentic portrayal of de-territorialization as a noticeable phenomenon within postcolonial Sri Lanka, the study investigates relevant literature. Voluminous researchers in the field of Social Sciences utilized countless theoretical frameworks



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applicable to various fields when researching Sri Lankan postcolonial literary works. For example, the queer theory has been used to elaborate on masculinity and queer sexuality, neoliberal economic theories are utilized to analyze the betrayals of neoliberalism, conflict theories are used to elaborate on ethnic violence, and psychological theoretical approaches are articulated in elaborating the refugee and terrorist psychology within the selected literary pieces. Similarly, the chapter also emphasizes the importance of addressing the concept of de-territorialization with reference to Deleuze and Guattari, Appadurai, Bhabha, Michel Foucault, and Edward Soja.

### A historical overview of the postcolonial Sri Lankan situation with reference to the important events mentioned in the research sample

Giving consideration to the carefully chosen research sample (*Island of A Thousand Mirrors* by Nayomi Munaweera and *Funny Boy* by Shyam Selvadurai), the timeline they address is located within the brackets of the post-colonial Sri Lankan situation till the end of the separatist struggle in 2009.

The British-ruled colony of Ceylon achieved independence in 1948. Right after two years of independence, in 1949 the government disenfranchised the Indian Tamil plantation workers. Since they became a Stateless community, Tamils as a whole lost their

faith in politics.

In 1956 the Sinhala Only Act was passed by the government of Ceylon making Sinhala, the official language of the country. This was violently opposed by the Tamil-speaking minority in Ceylon. To pacify the Tamils, Bandaranaike made a pact with Chelvanayakam (The leader of the Tamil Federal party) allowing for the official use of Tamil in Tamil-speaking provinces. Yet, in 1958 under the pressure of Sinhalese extremists, Bandaranaike nullified this pact. This caused severe rioting and communal violence which paved a path to the internal migrations of Tamils and Sinhalese, and a state of emergency was declared.

*“...They brought the Sinhala only Act which was absolutely unnecessary when all ethnic groups in Sri Lanka were living peacefully... It has destroyed the security and the stability of our country and we suffered in a thirty-year war”* (Gunaratna, 2018).

During the colonial period, many Sri Lankan Tamils gained maximum benefits from education facilities established by missionaries. They gained the advantage of the British Policy of “divide and rule” which placed minorities in positions of power in civil service and other professions as well. When Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, a majority of government professions were held by Tamils. To reduce this, in 1956 the Official Language Act/ Sinhala Only



## Original Article

Act was introduced. As a result of this, the Tamils' intervention in government institutions was reduced.

Edmund Samarakkody in the "Workers Vanguard (New York)" report specified that,

*"The outbreak in mid-August (1977) of the anti-Tamil pogrom (the third such outbreak in two decades) has brought out the reality that the Tamil minority problem in Sri Lanka has.... As on previous occasions, what took place recently was not Sinhalese – Tamil riots, but an anti – Tamil pogrom. Although Sinhalese were among the casualties, the large majority of those killed, maimed, and seriously wounded are Tamils... And among those whose shops and houses were destroyed, the Tamils are the worst sufferers of the nearly 75000 refugees, the very large majority were Tamils, including Indian Tamil plantation workers."* (Alexander, 2001)

After this Tamils became the victim of racial violence and were forced to relocate to the areas of the North and East of Sri Lanka. And the pogrom radicalized Tamil youths due to the TULF's inability to assure the Tamils' safety.

Another significant event in postcolonial Sri Lanka was the experience of the market economy. Foreign investors were encouraged to establish within the Sri Lankan territory.

*"Further imports and exports were*

*liberalized and price controls and other administrative controls were removed with a view to enabling the market mechanism to operate."* (Towards an Open Economy 1977-2005)

The burning of the Jaffna library in 1981 was a significant black mark that recorded the violent ethnic biblioclasm of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The historical records stated that that was a counterattack on Tamils by the government-sponsored Para-militias.

*"The library has emotional significance for the island's Tamil minority as it serves the city usually regarded as their cultural capital..."* (Haviland, 2010)

In 1983 communal riots took place because of the killing of thirteen Sri Lankan army soldiers by the Tamil Tigers. As a reaction on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1983, an anti-Tamil pogrom started rioting from the capital city of Colombo and then blew out to the other portions of the country. From this, Tamils were slaughtered and more than 150 000 people became displaced. Under the circumstances, a wave of Sri Lankan Tamils fled to other countries while the rural Tamil youth joined militant groups. Black July can be marked as the start of the Sri Lankan Civil War.

### Empirical evidence of the research sample

The novel *Funny Boy* by Shyam Selvadurai emphasized how this traumatic situation affected their existence on the island as a minority.



## Original Article

On the other hand, Nayomi Munaweera in her novel *Island of A Thousand Mirrors* portrayed how the majority of Sinhalese were shocked by this violence.

Existing research works initially address the issues which are apparent at the tip of the iceberg, while the massive section is hidden underneath. They have addressed the profiles like identity as a minority and having a different gender preference by going against the existing hegemonic gender ideology, violence, masculinity, queer sexuality, and sense of homeland, consequences of neoliberalism, trauma, refugee and terrorist psychology, religious and ethical assimilations in Sri Lankan – Canadian writers.

Katherine Bell has published a research article “Breaking the Narrative Ties that Bind in Shyam Selvadurai” where she revolves around youth and children’s culture, with a specific focus on how youth are represented in coming-of-age literature, and how they negotiate their own coming-of-age experience in participatory culture. Bell deployed the developmental theory to bring out the true nature of the “Funny Boy” to be or not to be the true child. Bell’s argument is that “Funny Boy” should not be seen as a failure of traditional “Bildung” philosophy but as an eye-opening postponement towards a more pluralist ethos.

Rahul K. Gairola in his research article “Limp wrists, inflammatory punches: Violence, masculinity and queer

sexuality in Shyam Selvadurai’s “Funny Boy” portrays the novel as a “Counter-bildungsroman” narrative that weaves together Radha Aunty s’ transgressions of femininity with Arjie s’ queer awakening amidst the heteropatriarchal violence of 1983 anti Tamil pogrom in Colombo. He places the novel against the backdrop of domestic and institutional spaces that articulate exclusive identity formations and heteronormative ideals. In this article Gairola indicates the impact of the violent atmosphere in the context of the queerness of Arjie s’ sexuality.

“Because Pigs Can Fly: Sexuality, Race and the Geographies of difference in Shyam Selvadurai’s “Funny Boy” which was written by Tariq Jazeel elaborates on how the novel makes an important political intervention in contemporary Sri Lankan politics where devolution and federal solutions to recent civil unrest have produced territorialized geographies of difference that prescribe “places or race”.

*“...sex between consenting men is punishable by up to 12 years in jail under a penal code that has remained unchanged since 1883” (Jazeel, 2006).*

He further states that the novel highlights how Arjie is made to feel “funny”, “odd” and increasingly marginal as the narrative proceeds, because of his emergent same-sex desire.

Lois Lo s’ “Sexual/Textual Tendencies



## Original Article

in Shyam Selvadurai s' *Funny Boy* portrays how the novel's "critical funniness" negotiates such forces as imperialism and nationalism, seemingly stabilizing, but also violent and castrating through this paper the researcher explores how the text of Selvadurai s' novel battles the vital discourses implied in the country's territory and sexual ideologies.

"The Betrayals of Neoliberalism in Shyam Selvadurai s' *Funny Boy* written by Emily S. Davis exposes an inquiry into the penalties of neoliberalism as it is dominant in the representation of Arjie and his family in Shyam Selvadurai s' novel. Thereby she explores the association between neoliberal economic policies and the Sri Lankan Civil War. Further, the paper inspects the linking dots between the violent and homophobic masculinity Arjie resists and the neo-liberal system under whose auspices this violence operates.

There are two types of arguments among Sri Lankan Scholars who have conducted research. Scholar Regi Siriwardhena and Professor Arjuna Parakrama state that the novel *Funny Boy* is a homosexual coming-of-age novel while Manique Gunasekara states it is a moving criticism of the ethnic conflict (Wanninayake, 2013). (Wanninayake, 2013) "Narratives of Trauma: A Theoretical Insight into Refugee and Terrorist Psychology in *Funny Boy* and *Island of A Thousand Mirrors* emphasizes the psychological aspects of the novels by referring to

them with "Refugee Theory", "The Theory of Acculturation" and "The causes of terrorism introduced by John Berry in 2005 which is a recent development in the field of acculturation studies. Also, the researcher has utilized Carl Jung s' "Dream Theory" in studying the role and influence of dreams on the psyche of the refugee and terrorist characters in the novel "Island of A Thousand Mirrors".

The article "Writing Sri Lanka, Resistance, and the Politics Place" (Salgado, 2007) outlines the boundaries and identity of Sri Lankan writing in English. There she argues how the Sri Lankan canon of English Literature has not yet been fully formed, the literary works which address the "border dialogue" (Salgado, 2012) or the ethnic and political boundaries which define their work, and the discourses which they generate through their world.

Shamara Ransirini is another important figure who contributed to scrutinizing the "Power, Gender and Sexuality: A perspective on "Funny Boy". Through this paper, Ransirini exposes how the power arrangements exchange with gender and sexuality, and how the politics of power in the world of fiction challenge the condition of individual autonomy. Thus she argues that the young narrator's realization of power as establishing two polarities defies the work of power within the novel and ultimately how the narrators' realization of power unconsciously limits the portrayal of several vibrant



## Original Article

characters.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To obtain the primary and secondary objectives of the research paper the qualitative approach was deployed with an in-depth reading of cultural studies along with the research sample, and interviews. The Deleuzian concept of de-territorialization is an “anti-contextual relationship among the procedure of becoming and creativity with a view of identity as detached, mobile and nomadic” (Munch & Smelser, 1993) analyzed predominantly with reference to Homi K Bhabha’s “Theories of Hybridity” concentrating on the theoretical approach to the study while increasing its credibility by arbitrating Edward Soja’s “Theory of Third Space”.

Data collection of the study comprised of a pilot survey in which the researcher encountered an untouched gap that addresses the intact effects of the political crisis of post-colonial Sri Lanka which led to a detectable phenomenon called territorial shift. The two authors can be considered as direct representatives who experienced this whole transformation and struggled to survive within the emotional and physical battles of societal liminality. An interview conducted with Dr. Maryse Jaysuriya provided a credible foundation to prove the facts regarding the “third space enunciation” (Bhabha, 1994).

### RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai

Predominantly the characters like Arjie, Radha, Amma, and Jegan experience the process of de-territorialization. Each person has their own reality of being abnormal or going against the expected frame of the dominant structure. As a result of this, each of them has gone through the process of normalization in order to fit into the existing social and traditional norms. Most of them have accepted the process of normalization but Arjie is an exceptional case because he has shifted his gender location toward his desired destination ultimately. This can be realized in Bhabha’s (1994) terms that these “in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself”. (Bhabha, 1994).

Arjie’s flow of thoughts provided clearer evidence to his dislocated identity. To him, the exploration of his identity is the crest of his fantasy. His strong attraction to the fetish elements of the female world implies the key transformation of his gender which means his psychological condition is not willing to accept his biological orientation. Attributes of liminality are highly apparent within the character of Arjie. He becomes a “member of the marginalized, the displaced, and the diasporic” (Bhabha, 1994) within his



## Original Article

own family and his own country. From moving away from the domestic boundary to the wider society of Sri Lanka, he becomes a marginalized figure due to the classification of ethnicity as well. According to this interpretation, Arjie is a victim of victimization. His strong will to re-figure himself with the split of the dominant ideology is banned in this context. His internal struggle with his own identity creates the fundamental question of "who am I?". According to the gaze of the dominant other, Arjie is not an acceptable individual to the structure of the larger society. The psychological and biological mismatch makes it harder for him to feel comfortable within the frame of gender that society has given to him. Thus there exists the collision of the view of dominant other and liminal I. To overcome this dilemma he struggles and argues with the others but it was not possible to prove it because it is an invisible psychological transfiguration.

Whenever Arjie tries to consort with the dominant hegemonic gender extremes, he was excluded from each. No one was eager to accommodate him in their territory of gender. His own brother and his male cousins in the family are not accepting Arjie; they are not inclined to lodge him in their territory. Thus the facts mentioned above provide a solid ground to prove that Arjie does not belong to the dominant structure the society. As a result of the "disjunctive space" that he belongs to, he is unable to play his role

within society like others. Thus he becomes a marginal figure within society especially due to his strong propensity towards the feminine territory.

According to Freudian psychoanalysis, a male child should substitute the desire for his mother with the desire for another woman. Yet in Arjies' case he does not replace his desire and he shifts his "object-cause- of desire" (Evans, 1996) from one entity to another. For Arjie, the prohibition or the language arrives with a delay. When he reaches the awareness of that prohibited desire, he shifts his desire towards fetish entities of the female world because he has lost the coordinates of his desire. This is where Arjie becomes an anti-Oedipal character. There exist two distinctions between the so-called "dominant" and "marginal" psychological conditions. It lies in the child s' decision in selecting his substitution for his desired object. In Anti-Oedipus's situation, the child replaces and tries to acquire the elements of the female world (since this is a child, his premium epitome of the female world is "mother") through the elements, he can touch and see within his mothers' appearance. This can be her dresses, makeup that she uses, pieces of jewelry that she wears, etc. In this situation, he abandons the dominant gender ideology that society wanted to accommodate in him. Hence, gender-dis-located people try to seek their own identity within the in-between liminal space which is



## Original Article

something away from the hegemonic structure of the society. Thus, the Anti-Oedipus can be defined as the relationship between “pre-individual desire” and “social production”. (Appadurai, 2010). According to what Bhabha stated on the concept of “unhomely lives” are “[f]ar too aware of the dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the clarification of colonial cultures to recommend that ‘roots’ be struck in the celebratory romance of the past or by homogenizing the history of the present” (Bhabha, 1994).

A study “Women, men and Politeness” by Janet Holmes provided evidence of the conversations among the male gender. There she states and proves through her survey that rude expressions are very common among men and they use it as a strategy to indicate their friendship and intimacy (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). But when it comes to Arjie, the small comment on him “What do you know about it” he said “You’re just a boy” (Selvadurai, 1994) hurts him a lot. He gets disappointed with that comment. And finally, the way Jegan left him discomfords him even more. This direction of psychological deterritorialization is a result of the prevailing political crisis in the wider view.

The chapter “The Best School of All” opens up another avenue in Arjies’ world. To begin with Michel Foucault’s perspective on the institution of “School”,

*“Schools serve the same social functions as prisons and mental institutions- to define, classify, control, and regulate people.” (Foucault)*

The chapter demonstrates the institutions that were organized in order to accomplish the process of “normalization”. Arjies’ relationship with Shehan sheds light on his ultimate acceptance of the distinct identity of gender. According to Judith Butlers (1990), gender identity is socially constructed and biological sex does not determine gender.

*“If sex and gender are radically distinct, then it does not follow that to be given sex to become a given gender; in other words, “woman” need not be the cultural construction of the female body, and “man” need not interpreted male bodies” (Butler, 1999).*

Therefore gender is not as stable as sex and gender are socially constructed. Thus, according to her perspective, the norms of gender and sex are the models of the ones who are in power. On the other hand, gendered acts and gender identity do not exist without each other. This elaboration further explains how it is possible for a transsexual person to feel a mismatch between their body and the image they have in the mind of their own body.

*“In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is*



## Original Article

*disorienting.*" (Bhabha, 1994)

In the novel, "Funny Boy" Selvadurai elaborates on his scenario in a brilliant way. Arjie and Shehans' relationship portrays their attempt to match the image in their mind. Knowingly or unknowingly they are directed through their mind. Society accepts heterosexuality as the normal way of behaviour because of its power which lies in the acceptance of the majority. Therefore the minority of homosexuals become a powerless marginal and socially unaccepted group. Due to the immense pressure from the majority of society, the marginal identity holders have no space in the outer world. As a result Arjie and Shehan have quenched their thirst for desire from the very moment, they are hidden from the hegemonic world in the darkness of the garage. Even though this situation has been portrayed in a romantic and erotic manner it is a political act. This garage becomes a universal space for Arjie and Shehan to unite their souls. The accepted heterosexual relationships are being shattered in front of Arjie's eyes. His mother and Daryl Uncle, Radha Aunty and Anil had given up their heterosexual fantasies as a result of the huge pressure of the dominant ethnic crisis of the outer sphere. As a result of this, Arjie fears the widely accepted norms of heterosexuality, and they, according to their fantasy unite despite the ethnic crisis and homosexuality. The final riot epilogue creates the authentic context of the country during 1983. This brutal situation due to selfish

political motives is the reason for many people to move away from their native land. The brutality and the disturbance of the setting compelled them to move away from their native land. Thus, the prevailing quagmire of the country is a dominant reason for them to shift their location.

*"The most significant effect of this process is not the proliferation of 'alternative histories of the excluded' producing, as some would have it, pluralist anarchy."* (Bhabha, 1994)

Migrants are a part of the massive economic and political diaspora of the modern world and they are the best witnesses of the historical and cultural passage of cultural displacement and political discrimination.

### Island of A Thousand Mirrors by Nayomi Munaweera

The novel is a portrayal of a realistic Sri Lankan situation after the British fleets left the Sri Lankan shore in 1948. Bhabha in his demonstration in the book "The Location of Culture" (1994) states that,

*"It is a mode of 'negativity' that makes the enunciatory present of modernity disjunctive. It opens up a time lag at the point at which we speak of humanity through its differentiation in gender, race, and class – that marks an excessive marginality of modernity. It is the enigma of this form of temporality which emerges from what Du Bois also called the 'swift and low of human doing', to face Progress with some unanswerable questions, and*



## Original Article

*suggest some answers of its own"* (Bhabha, 1994).

De-territorialization is one such answer which has many countenances and Munaweera in her novel elaborates on features of physical de-territorialization. In Bhabha's "The Other Question" chapter he typifies the impact of *"the colonial power that demands an articulation of forms of difference - racial and sexual"* (Bhabha, 1994). Nayomi Munaweera employs racial variance as a cause for the physical de-territorialization while Shyam Selvadurai deploys sexual difference as a root cause for psychological de-territorialization.

The novel rotates around the same tragic case that Selvadurai reveals in his novel "Funny Boy", but provides two distinct profiles through two different perspectives of the dominant majority "Sinhalese" and liminal minority "Tamils". Bestowing to the way it has been revealed no one can accuse each narrator since it vindicates each verdict. Granting to Homi K. Bhabha the arts and literature of post-colonial post-modern contexts uphold *"a very specific political function to show the underlying structures of thoughts of the relationship between words, stories, images, and the world and to call for social solidarity"* (Bhabha, 1994). The ultimate aim of the research is not to *"merely change the narratives of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces, both human and historical"*. (Bhabha, 1994). According to Bhabha's statement, the

postcolonial setting is one in which there is still an oppositional relationship between previously "dominant cultures" and "the other". Further, the novel emphasizes what kind of options people have when it comes to their crucial situations in the wider society and the impact of the binary structure of power and identity. On the other hand, it can be declared that "de-territorialization" provides a wider space of choices to the dominant sphere while the liminal group has no eclectic amount of picks. Further, the novel dominantly aims at physical de-territorialization and what are the causes for an individual to decide about the option of de-territorialization. Bestowing the analysis to Bhabha's terms *"the apprehension of the social and psychic question of origin"* (Bhabha, 1994) and the emphatic ill-effects of pluralistic identities will be discussed extensively. The novel portrays de-territorialization as a path toward psychological solace and it provides a new beginning for a troubled individual within a brand-new context.

The novel distinguishes "implacable oppositionality" (Bhabha, 1994) of the class and caste boundaries within the Sri Lankan context. Within the sphere of the Sinhalese majority, minorities are looked down upon; especially the Tamils were not treated at least as human beings. They were ridiculed by the dominant Sinhalese majority. This was the very beginning of the civil war in independent Sri Lanka. The illustration about the first narrator,



## Original Article

Yasodharas' paternal grandparents provide the accurate status of the ethnic and class distinction. The very introduction of any individual has been portrayed with reference to their societal status. The hierarchical order of society is very apparent, especially when it comes to those high caste families. Very often this family pedigree is decorated when the individual was introduced. It is a memento for an individual to obtain a vibrant space within his societal terrain.

Another important fact is that Yasodharas' paternal grandfather (Hikkaduwa Ayurvedic Doctor) has escaped from societal marginalization by changing his name. This means he owns a territorial shift in order to acquire a prominent space within the dominant sphere of society. Because within the Sri Lankan context even though someone belongs to the Sinhalese ethnic group by birth, still there are other demarcations of caste within that ethnic group.

When the author reveals the story it is clearly evident that the two distinct behaviours of Beatrice and the Hikkaduwa Ayurvedic Doctor directly linked with the upbringing of each personality. Beatrice being a teacher still carries the attributes of the higher societal values with her, while her husband is closely attached to the marketplace odors and the simple lifestyle. It can be portrayed as his inability to assume the high caste personality though he changed his

name in order to achieve upward mobility.

Within the post-colonial context, the majority considered themselves as the 'self' and the minorities as the 'other'. As a result of this conscience of the dominant majority, those minorities felt discrimination. They were cut off from the social privileges that the majority experienced. In order to justify such behavior, the strategies like disenfranchisement of estate Tamils, the Sinhala Only Act, the Divide and Rule concept, the 'standardization' policy in 1971, and the District quota system in 1972 were utilized by the Sri Lankan majority Sinhalese. The chapter further elaborates on the class struggle as well. Those who are down to the utopian line of history were severely oppressed. Their profession is one such measurement that determines an individual's social class.

*"...in conversation with fishermen, toddy-tappers, servants, sometimes even the Tamil coolie who comes to empty the latrine buckets each down"*  
(Munaweera, 2013)

Yasodharas' maternal grandparents come from a refined family lineage. When we talk about the "Judge", the Oxford-educated individual depicts the nature of the de-territorialization. During the colonial period, some students from the colonies were sent to be educated at British universities as a privilege to the Sinhalese ruling class. Outwardly it is to civilize them and educate them, yet inwardly it is solely



## Original Article

to acquire another civil servant at a low price. Mr. Ranasinghe has been portrayed as such a victim. Strongly felt discrimination towards the marginal community is visible in the revelation.

*“...insists upon a painful formalism learned in undergraduate days when he was made to feel the unbearable shame of brownness”* (Munaweera, 2013).

This ‘unhomely’ atmosphere is a result of de-territorialization. The judge feels uncomfortable in his university because his skin colour marked him as a marginal figure within the white dominant territory. On the other hand, when he re-territorializes into his own homeland, again he becomes a strange figure within that territory as well. Because he had to transplant the foreign qualities and therefore, he moved away from the majority of his mother country.

Visaka’s brother Ananda has selected a Burgher girl to marry. Sylvia Sunethra’s reaction to this marriage exemplifies the inability to accommodate populism in the older generation. But Ananda portrays broad-mindedness by accepting the differences of other individuals. Ananda is a person who goes ahead beyond the marked territorial boundary.

The budding relationship of Visaka and Ravan is another example that showcases the gradual development of accommodating populism through coming generations. Silvia Sunethra

accepts the Tamils to accommodate them in her house. The next generation shows through her daughter Visaka, who tries to narrow down the existing huge gap between the two ethnicities, and Visakas’ children pass the borderlines and unite with a liminal identity holder regardless of the labels of ethnicity.

On the other hand, this union between two conflicting ethnicities happens within a universal space, a secret space that has no labels on the boundaries of the dominant society.

But due to the effects of society, they realize the impossibility of passing the socially constructed boundaries. It can be easily analyzed through the Lacanian triangle: symbolic, fantasy, and real. In the symbolic order, the two conflicting ethnicities can exist but society will not accept this. Ravan and Visakas’ relationship is a fantasy that is not affected by the wider circle of ethnic clash. Thus, the space that they have chosen to unite is a universal space that has no impact on the dominant ideologies. But when the “real” atmosphere of the wider society smashes them, they had to accept the dominant ideologies of the wider society.

Yasodhara and Shiva, the representatives of the new generation feel no disparity between the two ethnicities. They care for each other since childhood. They explore the so-called “gaps” between the ethnicities and find another human being inside the core of each boundary.



## Original Article

The novel portrays the nature of belongingness to one's territory. For example, the novel demonstrates the location of the Sinhalese culture which means the territory of Sinhalese culture in Sri Lanka. Therefore, according to their perspective protecting their territory will preserve their culture as well. The Shivalingam family gains a territorial shift from a Northern village to Colombo due to the disturbing atmosphere in that area. The novel touches on the ill effects of the 1958 anti-Tamil pogrom and riots in Ceylon. The tense atmosphere of the country led the Tamils to feel uncomfortable in their places. Increasing violence against those innocent Tamils paved the path for them to shift their existing location. Hence the Shivalingam family had to re-territorialize from Colombo as well. Jaffna: the cradle of Tamil civilization within Sri Lanka represents huge importance to Tamils. The burning of the Jaffna library is a mind-blowing concern for Tamils since there lies the whole history of their culture. These violent acts between Sinhalese and Tamils created a hostile atmosphere among innocent non-violent people as well.

In 1983 July (Black July) the anti-Tamil riots blowout towards Colombo and the novel portrays the pact of these violent activities. Amidst all this hullabaloo still, the domination of Sinhalese high cast and class had the ability to dominate the domestic atmosphere. Sylvia Sunethras' command and the refined name of her

family lineage made the mobs leave her household untouched even though there were Shivalingams. From another perspective, this situation sheds light on those Sinhalese people who willingly protected the innocent Tamils around them. These types of Sinhalese families are mentioned in Shayam Selvadurais' novels as well which signify the ability to accommodate unhomey lives.

America is portrayed as a land of freedom and as the melting pocket in the novel. Each and every immigrant carries their own native qualities which are innate to them. These innate unchangeable qualities uphold the gap between the self and the other. On the other hand, they had to accept Americanization, if not they will not be able to survive in that territory. Yasodhara and her family had a tough time adapting to the new circumstances. Different geographical landscapes, strange climates, different languages and accents, different lifestyles, and dress codes were there to be adopted. The main reason behind this is the difference or the gap between the "First and the Third worlds" (Bhabha 252). It is visualized in the novel through the difficulties faced by Yasodhara in her period of adaptation to the new culture. Bhabha in the introduction of the book "The Location of Culture" under the sub-heading of "Unhomey Lives" refers to Freud and Hannah Arendt in order to define the concept of 'unhomey'.

This new domestic territory of Shiva



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and Yasodhara resembles the extreme level of humanity. Through this novel, Munaweera deconstructs the boundaries created by society and she proves it is possible to unite despite the ethnic labels. Another important fact is the function of Bhabha states it as the 'in-between' reality.

*"These spheres of life are linked through an 'in-between' temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home while producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double edge... represents hybridity, a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality."*  
(Bhabha, 1994)

Munaweera portrays the authentic picture of the territory of the terrorists and the personal tragedies that shifted them to this territory. The devastating victimization of the victim of the Tamil female proves that this territorial shift is a matter of circumstances. These Tamil girls had no other option other than joining the terrorist group and quenching their thirst for hatred and the guilty of being the victim of victimization. Because by being born as a female Tamil child to accept the reality of war when they lose their purity. The female territory is always dominated by males. Here in the context of war, they were marginalized as Tamils and as females too. Thus, the Tamil girls became the victims of the Majority Sinhalese as well as the dominant ideologies of Tamil society.

This tragic entrapment did not give them any better option other than joining the LTTE.

In contrast with the situation in the Northern war compartment and the extreme racists in other areas, the neutral idea holders who value another living creature, protected the Tamils during this terrible period of riots. Poornam is one such example. Mala aunt adopted her while society rejected her. But ultimately it unveils that humanity is higher than all the ethnic labels. The author by utilizing the characters of Mala and Yasodhara to show up the worthlessness of the hegemonic ethnocentric margins. Repeating those ethnocentric ideals makes the minority "uncanny by displacing them in a number of culturally contradictory and discursively estranged locations". (Bhabha, 1994) Bhabha determines the importance of accepting populism rather than becoming a 'barred Nation' (Bhabha, 1994).

## CONCLUSION

The hypothesis that this study attempted to reach on was to detect the deployment of the concept of "de-territorialization" in the selected research sample. The most important of them is the fact that the majority of Sinhalese also severely affected by the post-colonial quagmire of the country. The general objective of the study was to understand the manner in which the selected works of literature portray the phenomena of de-territorialization



## Original Article

within the context. Through the theories taken into consideration within the scope of the study, it was revealed that there are many reasons behind an individual's decision to "de-territorialize". In addition to that, the study also detected many sub-categories of the "de-territorialization" which were neither physical nor psychological but intangible and really dominant within the sphere. Such cases can be interpreted as the "ideological shift of the location" or "ideological de-territorialization".

The secondary objectives of the dissertation were achieved mainly through content analysis and the authenticities of the findings were assured through an interview with Professor Maryse Jayasuriya from the University of Texas at El Paso. Within her interview, she brought out the fact that the decision of physical de-territorialization is out of the impact of external factors. And she further states that assimilation of foreign attributes is essential to survive in the host land.

With the gradual progress of the study, the researcher found untouched territories and opened up avenues that were not explored before under this topic. The concept of de-territorialization itself is not employed within Sri Lankan literature. Thus, it is possible to move forward with the concept by employing it in various Sri Lankan literary works.

On the other hand, apart from the discipline of "Literature", this concept

can be deployed in subject areas like Geography, Economics, Political science, Sociology, etc. However, future researchers who wish to explore the subject further should be mindful of the literary works that they select and the theories which will be utilized in order to investigate the study. It will definitely broaden the new horizons of the concept and the context.

On the concluding note, the researcher was able to analyze the grass-rooted issues faced by the liminal groups of society and to add value to those individuals who were ignored and aped by the dominant structure of the society. The main intention was to shed light on society to respect different personalities without any discrimination.

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