

## **RE-MEMBERING THE PERSONAL IN THE MOSAIC OF SRI LANKAN HISTORY THROUGH FEMALE MEMOIRS IN ENGLISH**

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The present study is an attempt to re-interpret the act of reembracing traumatic memories as a form of resistance to the hegemonic narratives of our pasts, not only in its power to remember multiple and alternative histories but also to remember individuals who are often eclipsed or wiped out in our memorialization of a nation's past. In light of that, this study critically interrogates the novels *Tamil Tigress: My Story as a Child Soldier in Sri Lanka's Bloody Civil War* (2011) by Niromi De Soyza and *Wave* (2013) by Sonali Deraniyagala, as attempts of remembering a traumatic past, a process through their women narrators' re-member their personal voices within the mosaic of Sri Lankan history which is saturated with hegemonic, and mostly male-centered accounts. By revisiting the early years of Sri Lankan civil war and the Tsunami catastrophe of 2004, these narratives set the turf to probe the wounds that history has inflicted over time through the slippery memories of two individual women. Through a critical analysis of the above two novels, this study argues that such memories are often contributive to unravel the cultural and political forces that construct our histories, allowing us to deconstruct and to reconstruct the cultural and historical truths that we consider unassailable. Thus, the study also points out how such a process may lead to an emancipatory reconstruction of our pasts, where certain communities in Sri Lanka are often villainised or marginalised over time due to their ethnic, cultural or gendered identities. What is most remarkable in this process is that the instigators of this reinscribing of values being the women whose voices are still less heard or acknowledged in the national conscience of the country. Ironically enough, the outpouring of the traumatic memories of these female narrators, and their resistance to the familial, political and gendered forces that tried to regulate their place in the above catastrophes, provide us the space for a different engagement with the still unresolved but often overlooked communal issues in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study concludes that revisiting these female memories through literature helps female narrators reclaim their epistemic agency as credible knowers and active members in the national fabric of the country, a position that is often denied to them by the cultural, historical and political forces in Sri Lanka and in most of the other postcolonial nations.

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