

## **1.28 "Post-Colonial "Ghosts" and the Sri Lankan Writer of Fiction"**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The ghost has been a recurrent figure in English literature from the time of Shakespeare to the present. The presence of the ghost in the new literatures in English, for instance that of Africa, India, Sri Lanka and the Caribbean is evident when examining texts in English from these former colonies. However, this study aims to look at a more abstract "haunting" ; that of the "post-colonial ghosts" found in institutions, politics and historiography as revealed in works of fiction by Sri Lankan writers.

Using the theories proposed by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1989) in "The Empire Writes Back" concerning post-colonial literature this study analyses the work of two writers of fiction. The study keeps in mind the importance for new literatures in English to Subvert its colonial past and to find its own "voice". The primary texts concerned are "Anil's Ghost" and "Running in the Family" by Michael Ondaatje and "Cinnamon Gardens" and "Funny Boy" by Shyam Selvadurai. The paper analyses the ways in which Sri Lanka has dealt with the "ghosts" of its past as revealed by the two writers who look at two specific eras of the political history of the country.

This research reveals how the writers have used the medium of fiction to deal with realities of the political environment of the country which has been sometimes attributed to the country's colonial heritage. In what ways do these "ghosts" manifest themselves? Can they be exorcised? These are some of the questions that the research aims to find answers to and to assess the possible impact of the texts on the local and the international readership of Sri Lankan fiction.