

Chapter One

“The sweet touch from the world”:

Anil's Ghost and Violence and Terror of War in the Global Era

Anil's Ghost, Philip Michael Ondaatje's latest fiction of 2001, describes civil war in Sri Lanka from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s.¹ As a war fiction, *Anil's Ghost* addresses the engagement of civilians in warfare and a new sense of terror that need to be rethought and interpreted. The fiction begins with the home-returning of a forensic pathologist, Anil Tessira, who is commissioned to investigate massacres of civilians during the war period. Facing dead bodies of civilians that have been burned, reburied, or tortured, Anil and Sarath Diyasena, a local archaeologist, witness transformations of a war whose meanings and values have gradually been changed.

Through Anil and Sarath's communal investigation, *Anil's Ghost* addresses brutality of massacres and points out new challenges of war. In the novel, civil war is composed of robbery, lynching, murder, and massacre. Dead bodies turn up weekly, but most of them are those of civilians and students. Nobody can speak the truth of violence or defend themselves. It is difficult to represent or describe warfare by words because the alive are haunted by terror and fear. War therefore becomes an unspeakable issue. Based on global context, *Anil's Ghost* shows that terror of war is closely connected with global developments after the 1980s. Sri Lankan civil war which differs from previous warfare is related to changes in global age. Among others, these changes and challenges include illicit arms trade problem, changed war targets, tense political relationship between local government and the Human Rights

Organization in Geneva. Together they alter the mode of war to become more widespread, uncontrollable, and closer to life of local inhabitants. Because of these global changes, civil war in Sri Lanka turns to be a complicated issue and its transformations also challenge traditional war discourse.

This chapter aims to discuss and interpret war and its terror by analyzing representations of bodies in *Anil's Ghost*.² In the novel, bodies reveal transformations of war and a new sense of terror in global age. Various bodies, including wounded bodies of survivors, tortured corpses, skeletons, and stone statues in human form, indicate changes of the mode of war. War victims are mostly innocent civilians. Their bodies are targeted and ruined to make it difficult to identify their real identities. Such a war strategy not only makes civil war different from previous warfare but also turns bodies into a space displaying violence and terror. To be specific, bodies replace human language and words to be the only approach to the truth of war. War terror deprives victims of the ability to speak. Bodies become the only objects that can articulate brutality of violence and the truth of war.

Studying various forms of bodies in *Anil's Ghost*, this chapter is to investigate complexity of new civil war and new connection between warfare and people. The chapter is composed of four parts. The first two parts are to contemplate relationships between bodies and war in the fiction. In the fiction, civil war represents influences of developments in global age whose progress in transportation and communication complicates the crisis. Warfare is transformed into widespread localized conflicts and

is closer and more unpredictable to daily life of civilians. Bodies, including human bodies and non-human bodies like statues, represent unpredictability of warfare and its terror. They explain changes of the mode of war which becomes part of everyday life. Besides, sufferings of bodies indicate a sense of uncertainty which haunts and terrifies the survivors.

The third part is to discuss destructions and influences of warfare by investigating various representations of bodies in *Anil's Ghost*. Comparing and contrasting human and non-human bodies in the fiction, my discussion focuses on terror of war. In the novel, war not only deprives people of the ability to speak but also smashes meanings of human language. The sound and voice are therefore transformed into a new terror when they are connected to bodies. Bodies become the only objects to represent and describe the process of violence because they will *show* brutality of war rather *speak* it. Bodies address a desire to touch and such a desire shows itself in images of hands. By investigating significance of the touch, my discussion advances to point out the destroyed human relationships in warfare.

The fourth part is to study the reconstruction of bodies. In the fiction, the reconstruction is achieved in a ritual ceremony Netra Mangala at the end. By rebuilding the Buddhist statue, this ceremony presents a power of redemption seemingly bringing a transcendental hope for sufferings of mankind. However, the complete reconstruction of bodies is impossible because tortured human bodies in flesh will never be recovered. Only stone bodies in pieces can be constructed and

repaired. Differences between human flesh and stone body explain meanings of reconstruction in Netra Mangala. Repairing the Buddhist statue, this ceremony to some extent repair the painful situation of human beings whose bodies suffer from the same destructions in civil war.

Bodies in War

Being described as “the harsh political events of the twentieth century” in *Anil's Ghost*, Sri Lankan civil war is a notorious event because its war target is mostly civilians (300). The protagonist Sarath, a local archaeologist, describes brutality of civil war during the 1980s: “The bodies turn up weekly now. The height of the terror was ‘eighty-eight and ‘eighty-nine, but of course it was going on long before that” (17). A great number of bodies are sacrificed in war. Corpses are either burned in forests or thrown into rivers. Some of them are reburied in forbidden zones where nobody is allowed to enter in order to conceal evidences of lynching. Unrecognizable bodies are mostly civilians who disappear suddenly. Sarath tells Anil the process of civil war that “A couple of years ago people just started disappearing. Or bodies kept being found burned beyond recognition” (17). Civilians and students are carried away from their home, school, or on the street. Their dead bodies are deliberately ruined and thrown away like trashes. It is difficult for their families to identify corpses or find dead bodies for a funeral. As an atrocious event of the twentieth century, civil war in Sri Lanka shows its darkness through tortures of civilians, especially tortures of their bodies.

In addition to corpses, bodies of survivors are also intentionally attacked in civil war. Survivors are “tattooed” by soldiers or rebels who inscribe bodies of survivors with war wounds. In the fiction, a middle-aged man is nailed on the ground: “Someone had hammered a bridge nail into his left palm and another into his right, crucifying him to the tarmac” (111). By leaving wound on survivor’s body, this act of violence is meant to haunt victims and keep them silent. The man who is crucified to the tarmac never mentions any details about his suffering but only his name. His silence expresses the purpose of this punishment which not only delivers a threatening effect by displaying penalty but also numbs victim. This martyr-like crucifixion implies innocence of civilians who are tormented to fulfill the evil desire for some people or groups in the manner Jesus Christ had suffered under governance of the Romans.

In civil war, infants are victims of intentional violence as well . Sarath’s brother Gamini Diyasena, a doctor working in local hospital, memorizes his experience of witnessing war victims in the countryside.

They [the villagers] had brought him [Gamini] nine-month-old twins, each shot in the palms and one bullet each in their right legs—so it was no accident, a close-range job and intentional, left to die; the mother had been killed (242).

Like the middle-aged man on the tarmac, infants are also wounded. Instead of killing babies with their mother, rebels spare their lives and inscribe their bodies with war wounds. This act of tattooing implies a power of governance that labels innocent people as criminals or even animals.³ Tattoos of war wounds turn bodies of survivors

into a site displaying terror and war violence. More importantly, they indicate that how civilians are disdained in warfare and how their bodies are ravaged as if they are nothing.

In *Anil's Ghost*, stone bodies of the Buddhist statues are victims as well. In caves in Shanxi province, the Buddhist statues are cut out of walls: "The panorama of Bodhisattvas...were cut out of the walls with axes and saws, the edges red, suggesting the wound's incision" (12). Like civilians, bodies of statues are tormented. They are dismembered and sold to museums in the West: "Three torsos in a museum in California. A head lost in a river south of the Sind desert" (12). Dismembered statues are deliberately separated. Their torsos are placed in the West while their heads are in the East. Compared with valuable statues in Shanxi caves, statues in Sri Lanka also suffer from the same crisis. In the end of the fiction, a 120-foot-high statue is destroyed in the field of Sri Lanka. Thieves explode statue for finding treasures but find none of them. The ruined bodies are left on the ground and no one even try to look after them.

Compared with life of civilians, these non-human lives are regarded less valuable and less important to local inhabitants, especially to the thieves. In the novel, Ondaatje describes the avariciousness of thieves who do not feel sorry for their robbery of statues: "Still, this was broken stone. It was not a human life. This was for once not a political act or an act perpetrated by one belief against another. The men were trying to find a solution for hunger or a way to get out of their disintegrating

lives” (300). To thieves, the Buddhist statues are dismembered to satisfy their need of making a living. They are broken stones, not human lives. The destruction can not even be regarded as a political act that requires any attentions.

However, if we take a closer look at the narrative, these non-human lives in fact allegorize fate of human beings. As Sarath points out, “There were discoveries made during the worst political times, alongside a thousand dirty little acts of race and politics, gang madness and financial gain” (156). The archaeological discoveries parallel political crimes. Excavation of historical heritages and statues are often accompanied with discovery of corpses because these corpses are mostly buried in those historical ruins. This parallel implies connection between non-human lives and human lives. Both of them are bound to war crisis and required to be reinvestigated. Ondaatje even suggests that these non-human lives allegorize fate of human beings. For example, the smash of a statue with a bomb attack is similar to assassination of the president: “The statue buckled and the torso leapt towards the earth and the great expressive face of the Buddha fell forward and smashed into the ground” (300). Earlier in the novel, the president is prophesied to “be destroyed like a plate falling to the ground” (292). This allegory indicates the communal fate between human lives and non-human lives. Besides, their bodies represent their torments in war. In war, stone bodies foresee violence on human bodies. They are both sacrificed under war brutality and targeted with terror.

In *Anil's Ghost*, civil war is more about a crisis of civilians and the immortals.

Instead of a war between military groups, war in the fiction locks on the non-combatants who have no weapons and do not engage in warfare as what soldiers do.⁴ War ruins victims' corpses, survivors' bodies, and bodies of the Buddhist statues. Targeting at those bodies, warfare shows its uncontrollability and extensiveness. The uncontrollability and extensiveness of civil war are related to transformations of the mode of war in global era.

Transformations of the Mode of War

Changes of civil war, which mainly targets at the non-combatants, are brought about by globalization. The novel shows that civil war is concerned with arms trade problem in a global age. As the author relates:

The victims of 'intentional violence' had started appearing in March 1984. They were nearly all male, in their twenties, damaged by mines, grenades, mortar shells...During the first two years of the war more than three hundred casualties were brought in as a result of explosions. Then the weapons improved and the war in the north-central province got worse. The guerrillas had international weaponry smuggled into the country by arms dealers, and they also had homemade bombs (118).

Mortality of civilians is resulted from supplies of weaponry. When weapons improve and increase, the casualties of civilians will rise. In addition to homemade bombs, weapons include the international weaponry "smuggled into the country by arms dealers" (118). In other words, arms trade determines mortality of civilians and war condition. With weaponry supplies, any conflicts can be easily developed into a real battle if munitions are accessible. Arms dealers mostly come from countries in the West. Ondaatje describes civil war as "a Hundred Years' War with modern weaponry,

and backers on the sidelines in safe countries, a war sponsored by gun- and drug-runners” (43). Instead of a trade between one country and the other, arms trade is a global business that is concerned with the backers in many countries.⁵ Their sponsors make civil war a long-term warfare by turning it into a new version of a Hundred Years’ War. And their weaponry supplies sacrifice most of the civilians and make them main victims in war crisis.

Comparing civil war as a Hundred Year’s War, Ondaatje emphasizes relationships between arms trade and war. The Hundred Years’ War had been a long fighting between England and France from the fourteenth century to the fifteenth century. It underwent reformation of war strategies. Many new weapons were therefore invented and improved to continue the battle. Instead of a long-term feud, it was weaponry that supported the Hundred Years’ War to last for a whole century and then become the longest war in history. Sri Lankan civil war, which is allegorized as a “Hundred Years’ War with modern weaponry,” expresses the same connection between munitions and war. But compared with the Hundred Year’s War taking place six hundred years ago, this modern warfare in Sri Lanka is more concerned with arms trade problem than the arms itself. War relies on arms brokers who help to transport munitions from safe countries to war zones in need. War and arms brokers benefit each other. More wars make arms dealers merrier.

In the fiction, the intensive flow of munitions complicates political wrestling in Sri Lanka. Instead of a two-sided battle, civil war in Sri Lanka is a multi-lateral battle.

It is a war between governments and various groups of rebels. As Sarath describes about the situation of war:

This is an unofficial war, no one wants to alienate the foreign powers. So it's secret gangs and squads. Not like Central America. The government was not the only one doing the killing. You had, and still have, three camps of enemies—one in the north, two in the south—using weapons, propaganda, fear, sophisticated posters, censorship. Importing state-of-the-art weapons from the West, or manufacturing homemade weapons (17).

Sri Lankan civil war is ongoing in a new mode of war, a war composed of “secret gangs and squads” and local government. As Sarath says, civil war is an unofficial war. War is unofficial because it is no longer for state interests or for the loyalties to the royal reign.⁶ War is unofficial because it is also not a total war between countries that stimulates “a vast mobilization of national energies to fight and to support the fighting” anymore (Kaldor 25).⁷ The rise of secret gangs and squads indicates the privatization of military force. Government is no longer the only one in possession of the arms. Guerrillas and separatists also have the access to munitions to develop its ruling power. Besides, these gangs and squads in Sri Lanka differ from those in Central America. In Central America, most of the gangs and squads are like the Mafia which battles for their own financial profits. In Sri Lanka, those groups fight for political reasons and sovereignty. With the international weaponry supplies, wrestling in Sri Lanka becomes more complicated and difficult to cease.

Civilians are trapped into civil war. In the complicated fighting between various forces, civilians can hardly escape widespread battles. Sarath describes the dire

situation civilians face:

There had been continual emergency from 1983 onwards, racial attacks and political killings. The terrorism of the separatist guerrilla groups, who were fighting for a homeland in the north. The insurrection of the insurgents in the south, against the government. The counterterrorism of the special forces against both of them. The disposal of bodies by fire. The disposal of bodies in rivers or the sea. The hiding and then reburial of corpses (42-43).

Many different military groups occupy the island in various directions. Warfare is ongoing in localized but widespread violence, that is, in forms of lynching, murder, and homicide. Sarath's description shows that there is no safer place for civilians to run into or hide themselves. The northern and southern islands are occupied by rebels. In the forest are reburied corpses, and in the sea are disposed bodies. No matter where civilians enter, brutality of warfare seems to go with them as well.

Widespread battles make it difficult to distinguish an innocent civilian from a rebel. In the fiction, Ondaatje inserts many fragmentary descriptions of massacres to show their prevalence. One of them is an assassination on the train where the assassin disguises himself as a normal civilian.

There were police officers all over the train. The man got on carrying a bird cage with a mynah in it...He was wearing a sarong, sandals, a Galle Road T-shirt...The man moved quickly to where he remembered the government official was, beside the aisle. In the darkness he yanked him forward by his hair and wrapped the chain around his neck and began strangling him (31).

The assassin disguises himself to be a civilian who wears a sarong, sandals, a Galle Road T-shirt and brings a bird cage with him. Such a strategy is not only to make the assassination easier but also to blur the boundary between civilian and murderer by

turning civilian into rebel. A similar situation also happens in the market where Sarath witnesses kidnap of a civilian in sarong and shirt.

Two men, insurgents I suppose, had caught a man. I don't know what he had done...In those days the justice of death came in at any level...He was wearing a sarong, a white shirt, the long sleeves rolled up. His shirt hung outside the sarong (154).

The kidnap in the market parallels assassination on the train. These two incidents indicate that civilians are unwittingly involved in war. They also reveal the reasons why civil war is so chaotic. In civil war, anyone could be the killer and the killer could be anyone. To governmental soldiers, they will accidentally mistake the innocent for the guilty and arrest them. And to the rebels, they can successfully disguise themselves and escape the arrest. In such a thief-catching game, civilians will easily become victims rather than rebels.

The chaos of civil war in which government will fail to arrest rebels explain the impotence of the Human Rights Organization in Geneva. As a forensic pathologist commissioned by the Human Rights Organization, Anil admits frequent failures of the organization in the past. She mentions responses of her colleagues when they hear her new mission: "It was to be a seven-week project. Nobody at the Centre for Human Rights was very hopeful about it" (16). She also confesses incapability of war investigations which are always confiscated by local government at the airport. Anil's experiences reveal the impotence of the Human Rights Organization which is not only unable to finish its investigations but also incapable to comprehend the awkward situation of local government. Local government has difficulty to identify the rebels

and will accidentally involve the innocent into warfare. But to the organization in the overseas, such chaos seems to be neglected. Ignorance of the organization reveals itself in arguments between Sarath and Anil. In the fiction, Sarath and Anil argues for the significance of war investigations and Sarath says, “I want you to understand the archaeological surround of a fact. Or you’ll be like one of those journalists who file reports about files and scabs while staying at the Galle Face Hotel. That false empathy and blame” (44). The “archaeological surround of a fact” implies the awkward situation of local government which have troubles to deal with warfare but the troubles are never seriously put into consideration by the overseas organization.

The widespread battles not only result in chaos but also bring terror of the unpredictability which does not only haunt civilians but also victimize them. In the novel, Anil experiences such terror after she arrives in Sri Lanka: “The first body they brought in was very recently dead, the man killed since she had flown in. When she realized it must have happened during her early-evening walk in the Pettah market, she had to stop her hands from trembling” (13). What scares Anil is not dead body, but the unpredictability of murder that she can hardly detect or stop. The unpredictable massacre is horrible because the individual will be trapped into the crisis at any time and any place. It is difficult for the individual to avoid the disaster because he or she will never know when or where war, in its various forms, will happen. This unpredictability easily haunts civilians. For example, a schoolteacher encounters a village massacre on the bridge and her fears turn her into the next victim

in massacres:

She [a schoolteacher] is about ten yards from the bridge when she sees the heads of the two students on stakes, on either side of the bridge, facing each other...She would shrink down into herself, go back, but she cannot. **She feels something is behind her whatever is the cause of this...She does not even think of releasing them from this public gesture.** Cannot touch anything because everything feels alive...She begins running forward, past their eyes, her own shut dark until she is past them (174-175, emphasis added).

Unpredictable massacre scares the individual by depriving her of the ability to think or to react. Terrified with a sense of uncertainty, she is unable to develop her shock defense at that moment: “She feels something is behind her whatever is the cause of this...Cannot touch anything because everything feels alive” (175). Civilians become victims of war because they hardly have time to react to the atrocity in front of them.

Civil war in *Anil's Ghost* expresses a new mode of war. As “the harsh political events of the twentieth century,” civil war spreads its violence on the non-combatants instead of combatant in arms (300). Flows of the arms result in sufferings of the non-combatants who not only undergo widespread battles in their life but also suffer from incautious arrestments by the government. Unpredictable conflicts torment daily life of civilians and make them unable to think or make any responses. Instead of civil war between military groups, civil war in Sri Lanka is more like a war of civilians who are targeted and sacrificed for it.

Voice and War

Civil war which tortures civilians mostly accomplishes its purposes of harassments by detaching civilians from reality of war. In the fiction, civilians are

unable to get any information about warfare. As Ondaatje describes:

But here it was a more complicated world morally... Yet the darkest Greek tragedies were innocent compared with what was happening here. Heads on stakes. Skeletons dug out of a coca pit in Matale. At university Anil had translated lines from Archilochus—*In the hospitality of war we left them their dead to remember us by*. But here there was no such gesture to the families of the dead, not even the information of who the enemy was (11).

Dead bodies are dismembered and never left for their families to mourn: “Yet the darkest Greek tragedies were innocent compared with what was happening here” (11).

Brutality of Sri Lankan civil war partly lies in its denial of the possibility for the living to properly mourn for the dead. More importantly, its brutality shows in its intention to deprive civilians’ rights to know the reality. Families of victims are unable to identify who the enemy is and incapable to understand the condition of warfare. They are not allowed to speak or contemplate their loss and crisis in public. When warfare is ongoing in their daily life, they are completely impotent to get any information about the process.

In war, voice becomes a source of anxiety. Anyone who can speak about war will be punished or killed: “The warden of an orphanage who reported cases of annihilation was jailed. A human rights lawyer was shot and the body removed by army personnel” (42). No one can talk about war. War annihilates functions of language and logical thinking. Anil experiences the power of annihilation in her past investigations: “But she saw that those who were slammed and stained by violence lost the power of language and logic. It was the way to abandon emotion, a last

protection for the self” (55). People are forced to empty their emotions and keep silent for self-protection. By governing speech and thinking of civilians, war transforms itself to be unspeakable.

When voice becomes a crisis, voiceless objects turn to be a relief and a comfort in civil war. In the fiction, the protagonists show an unusual intimacy with mute skeletons and dead bodies. To Anil, dead bodies can bring more intimacy than the alive do: “Honey, I’m home, she would say, crouching beside a corpse to ascertain the hour of death” (19). The dead body which is unable to speak anymore removes Anil’s nervousness. She can require a sense of tranquility when she touches lifeless body. In addition to comfort, dead body can also release one’s emotions. When Gamini sees his brother Sarath’s corpse, he opens his mind to his dead brother: “But this was a pieta between brothers. And all Gamini knew in his slowed, scrambled state was that this would be the end or it could be the beginning of a permanent conversation with Sarath” (288). Voiceless dead bodies become a source of solace and turn to be a medium to feel and restore sorrow in war. By touching dead bodies, people can rebuild their connection with the dead and the world. In Anil’s war investigation, she examines the dead to trace process of violence and gain knowledge about the whole society. Anil can not only picture the life of the dead in her mind but also feel closer to the world that the dead had lived in. Likewise, by rebuilding skeletons, the artisan Ananda faces his trauma and shows his yearning for his dead wife.⁸

In addition to corpses, mute stone bodies provide a similar solace for the

protagonists. When Sarath touches stone hand of the statues, he feels like touching his wife's hand: "This stone hand could have been his wife's hand. It had a similar darkness and age to it, a familiar softness. And with ease he could have re-created her life, their years together, with the remaining fragments of her room" (279). The image of non-human body overlaps with human body. Stone hand transgresses the border between flesh and stone. When dead bodies are unable to be touched again, stone bodies fulfill the desire to touch. In the fiction, the protagonists seem to find consolation only in corpses and stone statues rather than in the alive. Indeed, When Anil visits her nanny in childhood, she embraces the old lady immediately but feels "stern eyes that were taking in this sentimental moment" from her nanny's granddaughter (22). And when she kisses her nanny, the old woman seems to be "stranded" after that (22). Warfare turns embrace and body contact into something uncomfortable in the interpersonal relationships. Such a detachment not only indicates the effects of war brutality but also shows the loss of warmth and emotions between the living people. In civil war, humanity is horribly destroyed.

Body contact becomes nostalgia or a fantasy that is only carried out in the dream. In the fiction, Anil dreams that Sarath comes to her room to draw the outline of her naked body.

She [Anil] could feel the pen move around her hands and alongside her waist, then down her legs, both sides, so he linked the blue lines at the base of her heels...There was a knocking and she roused herself. She hadn't moved. Sarath had taken off her clothes and traced her outline. Had he done that? (62).

Anil's dream is a sexual desire. It implies her yearning for physical body contact

when she is sick and weak. But such a desire can not be carried out in reality but in dream. The marker symbolizes a pathetic detachment between the living people. Instead of touching directly by hands, the marker represents a desire to touch that is fulfilled indirectly. By drawing the trace of body shape, the marker is so close to body, but it just moves around the flesh. Real body contact is unavailable. Body contact is maintained in an ambiguous distance, a distance similar to the dream that both are so real and illusionary.

Body contact between the living people is also an incomplete experience.

For example, Sarath's archaeology professor, Palipana, lives in the forest with his niece Lakma because he is blind and unable to travel anymore:

In the late afternoon the girl sat between his legs, and his hands were in her long hair searching for lice with those thin fingers and combing it while the girl rubbed his feet. When he walked she steered him away from any obstacle in his path with a slight tug of the sleeve (106).

The old man and the girl develop their friendship by hands. Palipana uses his fingers to comb the girl's hair, while Lakma massages feet of the old man. Their body languages suggest an intimacy. But Palipana's blindness makes their body contact and their emotional connection an incomplete experience: "She wore a sarong as a man would. Palipana would not see this, or her left hand on her pubis tugging the new hair or playing with it while he talked to her" (106). Palipana can not recognize what Lakma is doing. Though they live together and depend on each other, there are still something unable to be detected or be aware of through body contact.

Terror of civil war is related to changes of bodies. Lifeless bodies replace the

living people to bring a possible solace and tranquility to people in war. This replacement indicates the greatest terror of civil war, that is, the loss of communication. Communication becomes a one-way conversation rather than a two-sided talk. Dead bodies which will never talk again become the only ones that the person can have a conversation with. The living people who are either numbed with fear or threatened with violence learn to remain silent or conceal their thoughts. The loss of communication indicates dilemma of civilians who can neither solve war crisis nor find the outlet in the sufferings.

Bodies in Reconstruction

Dilemma of civilians, who show their emotions on voiceless objects rather than the alive, is redeemed through the body reconstruction of stone statues, especially in the ritual ceremony Netra Mangala. In the fiction, lifeless bodies replace the living bodies to be a site of hope. The Netra Mangala, which gives lifeless statue a new life, indicates a new outlet for civilians.

Instead of a realistic solution to war, the Netra Mangala redevelops a spiritual connection between civilians and war. Civilians in civil war are living in a detached world and they are unaware of their situation: “The general public first became aware of the assassination when phone calls started coming in from England and Australia, people saying they had heard Katugala was dead. And then the truth slipped across the city within an hour” (295). In the real living world, civilians can see nothing and have no information about warfare at all. But the Netra Mangala will enable the individual

to see: “Netra means ‘eyes.’ It is a ritual of the eyes” said by the archaeology professor Palipana (97). The ceremony is concerned with eyes, which stands for a new transcendental viewpoint about the whole world and war. In the end of the fiction, Ananda transcends the boundary between the mortal and the immortal to see the world clearly: “And now with human sight he was seeing all the fibres of natural history around him” (307). The ceremony represents the possibility for civilians to regain the power to look at the world again.

In addition to the new vision, the Netra Mangala helps people restore their emotions. As mentioned earlier, war forces civilians to keep silent by taking away the power of language and the logic. Civilians are pressed to abandon their emotions in silence. After losing the ability to speak, people also lose their sentiments. In addition to empowering civilians to talk, the Netra Mangala restores emotions of people in silence and in solemnity. In the fiction, the artisan Ananda hosts the ceremony: “He used a sash to tie himself to the ladder and then his nephew passed him the chisels and brushes. Below them the drumming stopped” (305). The ritual ceremony is ongoing in silence with no sounds or speech. When the ceremony is almost finished, Ananda feels a hand touching from his nephew: “He felt the boy’s concerned hand on his. This sweet touch from the world” (307). At that silent moment, the emotions are delivered by body contact between the living bodies. It is a “sweet” touch from the living world. The “sweet touch” means restoration of sentiments which are not necessarily concerned with the speaking ability. In silence, people can rediscover a mind in peace

and contemplate their sorrow and pain. And in silence, people can try to feel their heart to understand war and heal their traumas.

In *Anil's Ghost*, the Netra Mangala represents the spiritual outlet but it also exposes physical sufferings that human flesh tolerates. In warfare, dismembered human bodies are unable to be repaired. Only non-human bodies can be reconstructed and mended again. The only way to repair human flesh is to use non-human bodies to do the job. In the fiction, the use of prosthesis addresses incapability of human flesh. It also further points out poverty and destitution that local inhabitants suffer in war zone. Gamini mentions predicaments of war victims, who are seriously injured in bomb attacks and crimped:

There were mostly grenade injuries. An antipersonnel mine the size of an inkwell would destroy most of a person's feet... There was a need for rehabilitation programmes, and the making of what came to be known as the 'Jaipur Limb.' In Europe a new artificial foot cost 2,500 pounds. Here the Jaipur Limb was made for 30 pounds—cheaper because Asian victims could walk without a shoe (118).

According to Gamini's words, a Jaipur Limb in Sri Lankais is worth 30 pounds while it is worth 2,500 pounds in Europe. The cheaper price of prosthesis points out poverty of local civilians who have to tolerate impoverishments in daily life. More importantly, the cheap price shows that civilians who have neither money nor food supplies can not even prevent their bodies from despoilments. Living in war zone, victims are not only deprived of a happy life but also divested of the rights to protect and take care of their bodies in warfare.

Physical sufferings of the mortals are represented in the quilted face of the

Buddhist statue in the Netra Mangala. At the end of *Anil's Ghost*, Ananda decides to leave the quilted face of rock statue as it was: "They had planned to homogenize the stone, blend the face into a unit, but when he saw it this way Ananda decided to leave it as it was. He worked instead on the composure and the qualities of the face" (302). The quilted traces on rock face represent the war wounds on civilians' bodies which are as incomplete as rock statue is. Reconstructing the statue, the ceremony repairs the wounds of the living bodies in a symbolic way. Quilted stone face addresses unspeakable sorrow that is exhibited on body but hard to be spoken out. Through the ritual ceremony, physical tortures of human bodies can be comforted and healed again.

The Netra Mangala which symbolically repairs non-human body and human body suggests a dual role of the artisan in the novel. Artisan Ananda can transcend the border between the mortal world and the immortal one. In the solemn ceremony, he can see what the gods see with his naked eyes:

He [Ananda] could feel each current of wind, every lattice-like green shadow created by cloud. There was a girl moving in the forest. The rain miles away rolling like blue dust towards him... The birds dove towards gaps within the trees!... The tiniest of hearts in them beating exhausted and fast...(307).

The artisan is not only a human being but also a divine. His duality lies not only in his transcendence of two worlds but also his combination of two roles. Artisan symbolizes the pairing of two protagonists, the archaeologist and the forensic pathologist, in the fiction. Sarath says to Anil: "This pairing by your commission and the government was not my idea—a forensic pathologist, an archaeologist, odd pairing,

if you want my opinion” (18). Instead of oddity, the pairing points out combination of the art of history and the art of healing, both are represented by the character of the artisan. It explains meanings of the pairing that redevelops a connection between civilians and warfare through war investigation.

Conclusion

With analysis of bodies, this chapter investigates war violence and its redemption in *Anil's Ghost*. Appadurai says, “The human body is the site of the most horrifying acts of ethnic violence” (Appadurai, 229). Indeed, warfare is transformed at the end of the twentieth century and is more about a crisis of the non-combatants, especially on their bodies. Body becomes a space displaying war violence and terror. Both human bodies and non-human bodies are targeted and dismembered in war. In *Anil's Ghost*, bodies are ruined and reconstructed. The body reconstruction redeems connections between civilians and warfare. It helps people to re-contemplate their fear, terror, loss, and confusion in a poetic way.

With images of bodies, Ondaatje successfully represents torments of civilians in the global age and implies the impotence of the organization in the overseas. Representing civil war with various bodies, Ondaatje seems to use bodies to contrast the fiction's title “Anil's Ghost” to show incapability of war investigations which is unable to comprehend violence endured by civilians. In the fiction's title, ghost refers to war victims in Anil's war investigations. In opposition to body, ghost has no body and no one can touch it physically. The untouchable ghost to some extent exposes the

impotence of the overseas human rights organization which is haunted by sufferings of war victims but is impotent to comprehend torments of victims physically. In other words, the Human Rights Organization is driven to investigate warfare as if it is haunted by ghosts of war victims. But it is difficult for the organization to accomplish its investigation because ghost is untouchable.

Body is an important image in *Anil's Ghost*. When the flow of weaponry results in extensive and uncontrollable conflicts, bodies become the only space that can voice injuries and destructions of warfare. Besides, the reconstruction of bodies at the end of the fiction suggests a consolation to war wounds and mental traumas, though the ending here is considered “an odd reversal” by another critic.⁹ By representing civil war with bodies, Ondaatje not only refreshes our realization about new civil war but also helps us to comprehend the painful existence and hope of civilians.

Notes

¹ *Anil's Ghost* is Michael Ondaatje's second novel concerned with his home country Sri Lanka. Before *Anil's Ghost*, Ondaatje has written an auto-biographical novel *Running in the Family* on the basis of his visit in Sri Lanka during the 1980s to address his emotions and concern about this island. For more details, please see Douglas Barbout's *Michael Ondaatje*.

² Discussing civil war in terms of bodies, I try to study the seemingly apolitical representations of war crisis in *Anil's Ghost*. Most critics condemn the apolitical and ahistorical narrative in the novel and consider that Ondaatje avoids clarifying complicated ethnic problems and political wrestling in civil war (See <http://clwebjournal.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb04-3/goldman04.html>). But I suggest that the apolitical and ahistorical narrative in *Anil's Ghost* has its reasons. I would argue that Ondaatje represents violence and its terror through connections between bodies and warfare instead of describing politics of warfare directly. To discuss and interpret war in terms of bodies, this chapter is not only to investigate new warfare but also come up with a different reading of the fiction.

³ In Chinese history, the tattoos had been associated with criminals because criminals were often given a branding on their face as a warning to other people. And in the farms, the brandings are also placed on animals for identification.

⁴ In an interview with Ondaatje, he mentions that he decided to "write from the point of view of people who are not involved in the politics, not involved actively in the war." In the viewpoint of those "not involved actively in the war," Ondaatje writes sufferings of civilians who are involved *forcibly* in war rather than *actively*.

⁵ Gideon Burrows investigates its historical developments at the twentieth century and studies arms trade in global context. For more information about relationships between arms trade and globalization, please see *The No-nonsense Guide to the Arms Trade*.

⁶ Wars in the twentieth century ago are closely concerned with the feudal society. It is fought for the royal reign or the kings. Wars are always regarded as an official warfare and inaugurated in the name of justice. For more details, please see Mary Kaldor's *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*.

⁷ The "total war" refers mainly to the two World Wars and Cold War because they both require a vast mobilization of national engagement to join in the battle.

⁸ In the fiction, the artisan Ananda is hired to do the face construction of war victim but the face he restores is his dead wife's rather than the real victim's. By restoring the

face of his dead wife, Ananda forces himself to face the reality which is too cruel to bear for him and then kills himself after that.

⁹ “It may seem an odd reversal that Ondaatje elects to end his text with an expression of the importance of ‘the sweet touch (of) the world...’ (Derrickson 149).