

**Envisioning The Realm Of Refugee History: An Analysis Of Viet
Thanh Nguyen's *The Refugees***

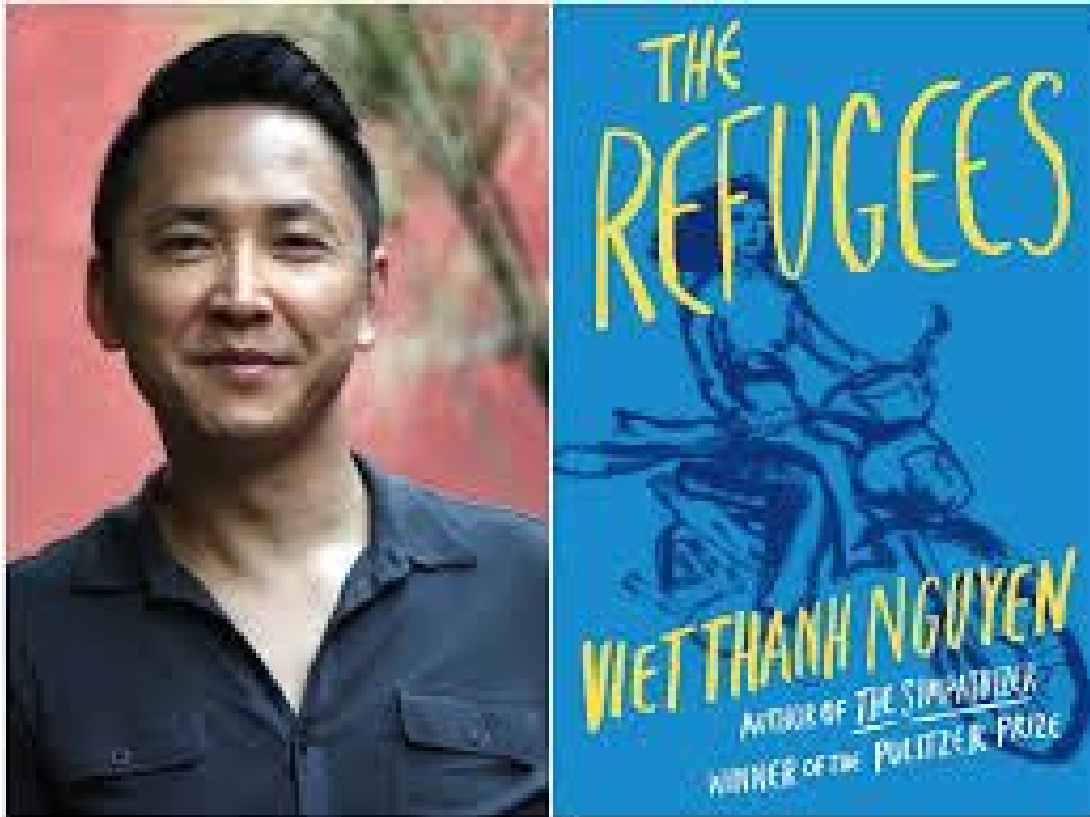
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Abstract

*History recon iterates and deciphers the bygone ages and events. The ethnicities, values and beliefs held by preceding generations mark an indelible impact. It also records despair, wretched experiences and traumas of underprivileged, colonized and marginalized sections. Present culture can obviously no longer be described as closed spheres or in terms of inner homogeneity. Ethnography moves from its conventional single site location, contextualized by macro constructions of a large social order. Migration signifies a sudden and alien incursion in to the ecology of arts in Europe. Refugee history can be outlined from pre-modern times onwards. Refugees are persecuted and retained in remote areas, have to lead a miserable life. Cultural history synchronizes the cultural imbrications of past and groups of individuals together across other provinces. It has been considered as a methodology which deliberates on the realm of representation and the struggle over meaning for discovering the pursuit of historical understandings. The paper seeks to analyze the paradigm of refugee studies in the two stories Black- Eyed Woman and War Years from the Short story collection *The Refugees*.*

Key Words: *History, Refugees, Memory, Culture, Vietnam War, Migration*



Transformations reformed the topographies of the former imperial peripheries, but those inhabitants reside on the fringes of borderland territories have been subjugated by physical violence. Migration have approximately always been associated with a sort of dramatic intervention in the social, cultural and political forms of particular locations. Behind the barricades of ethnicity where it is necessary to outline a picture of an alien identity. Memory not only function as a complex system of blocks for constructing identity, but also plays an vital role in collaborating with others since details of the past are employed in order to corroborate images that are deciphered.

Refugee's studies probes into the souvenerings, trauma and tussle for individual identity traces the reality and periphery of human existence. They are being tortured and confined in the wraps of agony. They were vanquished by rulers under hypocrisy and exploited by physical and mental torturing. They have to face deplorable situations and pains. Refugees lose their homeland without gaining anything and exist with diasporic notions, it's the unheleable rift forced between a human being and their notions of

homeland. It also focused on their emotional restraints, moral complexity, self - delusion. Refugee studies have come within the purview of historical and cultural stratas, offers an inimitable platform to recognize about literary histories defined along with national borders and grapple with notions of refugee and their encounter with border land.

Viet Thanh Nguyen who stands unsurpassed among the contemporary literary writers who create a vogue of impeccable form of writing through his literary oeuvres. Being a refugee writer, he epitomizes personal reminiscences and harsh realities of life in his works. He is a staunch diasporic Vietnamese- American writer. His notable works are *The Sympathizer* (2015), *The Refugees*(2017), *Nothing Ever Dies*(2016), *Chicken of the Sea*(2019), *Race and resistance: literature and politics in Asian America* (2002).

Nguyen's debut work is the novel *The Sympathizer* which won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, which describes about the racial and social ambivalence of the Vietnamese refugee community in the United States. *Nothing Ever Dies* is a work entwines historical criticism and ethical theory. Most of his works have a historical root espouses on the deplorable conditions of refugees and the devastated effects of Vietnam War on human psyche and society. Issues of race, identity, immigration, unpleasant memories of past, cultural reality and revolution, redemption, embrace and exclusion can be speculated in his incongruous writings.

Vietnam War marked as the water shed event in the history of world. A protracted fight propagated in Vietnam between communist North Vietnam and the government of Southern Vietnam during 1950s, 1960s and 1975 to halt communism. It started as a restraint during the Cold War, which intended to exclude communism through- out the world. With the fall of Saigon, the capital of Vietnam is grabbed by communist forces and the government of South Vietnam surrenders, thus the war ends during 1975. The war saw augmented physical and psychological deterioration, it ruined both North and South Vietnam. The most immediate effect was the stunning death toll. Vietnam refugees during 1975 were known as 'boat people' who absconded Vietnam by boat and ship, moved to U.S. Meanwhile faced danger from pirates, it wedged American- Vietnamese relation, which drastically affected the socio- economic domains of refugees, between 1975 to 1992, it has been estimated that a large group of

Vietnamese life were under jeopardy, which remarked as one of the largest mass migrations in modern history.

Nguyen has masterfully interweaved the short story collection *The Refugees* with a personal indictment and patrol upheavals, traumas and conflicting reliabilities. His body of work not only offers insight into the experiences of refugees past and present, but also depict heart -rending victims of other wars. *The Refugees* is a piercing short story collection, consist of eight poignant short stories such as *Black- Eyed woman*, *War Years*, *The transplant*, *The Americans*, *Someone else besides you*, *The Other man*, *Fatherland*, *I'd Love You to Want Me*. Most of the stories which suspects on the lives of Vietnamese refugees who have immigrated to America succeeding the Vietnam War. The major themes unravels through-out the stories are questions of home, family, immigration and American experience, also about the aspirations of immigrants and human relationships and desires. His fiction has been permeated by a shared intensity of vision. Nguyen's characters are Vietnamese immigrants and their children, and many of them fled Vietnam after the communist regime took power. It centers on the lives of Vietnamese refugees who have immigrated to America following the Vietnam War. Multiple perspectives and dimensions of refugees are presented through the stories. Nguyen illuminates the tormented effects of war, while adapting and assimilating new ways of culture in the host land. The refugees are treated as ostracized sections.

Black-Eyed Women and *War Years* are the prodigious stories which unravels through the stances of immigration and on the slaughts of Vietnam War. The story entitled *Black –Eyed Women* precast an engrossing tale of an unnamed ghostwriter who emanated to America on a refugee boat during her young age. Despite the fact that, her life was penetrated through unexpected circumstances. She was raped by pirates and her brother was killed while trying to protect her. Her life moves under the heaps of trauma and tragedy. Being a victim of rape, she has to endure this excruciating pain, death of her brother, also the haunting diasporic feelings, makes it difficult for her to lead a proper life in America.

The story encapsulates how the Vietnamese War had twisted her homeland into a ghost of a country, hence, anticipating the future trauma. Her isolated difficulties and unwillingness to confront the past

repercussions are relevant in the story. Memories of her escape from Vietnam, War and refugee escape, Cultural identity of family, Memory and ghost, intimacy and isolation are the major themes unravels through- out the story. She has become a kind of apparition herself. Nguyen demonstrates how the refugee body act as a pointer in depicting an orientation towards the past, how refugees are spatially and evacuated by portraying sexual violence endorsed on her and her family's loss of homeland in South Vietnam.

Another short story *War Years* accurately depicts the narrative with in the historical back ground of Vietnam War. The story channels the fissure between the individual and the collective refugee experience and narrated from the viewpoint of an unnamed young boy. This story centers on the new life that his parents and many other refugees have fabricated in a Vietnamese community in San Jose, California. The boy does not reminisce the war, it also shows an internalized predisposition against his own culture and for the predominant culture in America. War brought catastrophes to the family. There are some incidents of fire bombings, massacre, fleeing of refugees, Vietnamese people fled to America following the fall of Saigon in 1975 these instances demonstrate how this catastrophe obliged as a cultural rebellion.

Nguyen incorporated his personal experiences, being a refugee, an American, and a human being with profound intensity in his narration. The different characters in *The Refugees* serve as specimens of how these identities can be reunited. It is a collection of stories, encircling both the stories of the refugees themselves and of the people whose lives are touched by them with haunting emotional spark. This story prompt a real paradigm in the historical and cultural spectrum by excavating it indelibly. Most of the narration is filled with saga of memories. These stories ponders to contemplate about the horrible situation of refugees in the contemporary scenario.

As transformations induces rapid changes in the contours of reality. But the refugees are still treated in the spectacle of marginalized. The instances such as Rohingya refugees, Syrian and Afghanistan crisis, flooding in Somalia, South Sudan, Assam and Kerala etc have displaced massive people. On- going warfare, flooding and drought continue to worsen the human situation and underpin as a dangerous humanitarian

crisis. The natives seek the humanitarian help to meet their basic needs. These people dwells in desperately over crowded camps and communities. More than two decades of ongoing conflict and natural hazards such as prolonged drought and flooding have driven one million cross the globe. Refugees have to live in destitute camps in various regions. Influx of migration grows at a steady rate across the world in the contemporary time. Migrant experiences accentuate general aspects of the human condition. Refugees are going through global, systematic violence and persecutions. The emotional bereavement, agitations, frustrations, diasporic feelings, alienation haunts the refugees. As cultural history pervades in the present scenario .Cultures are not pure, authentic and locally bounded, they are syncretic products of transcultural stratas. Hence, it can be perceived that migrant or refugee bodies as they lead their lives in the border lands in between places, identities, moralities, by oscillating in the midst of self and the other.

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