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Are We Carrying the Colonial Burden Called “Saree” into the 21st Century?

A. de Zoysa

Abstract

Sri Lanka enjoys over half a century of independence. Together with India, Sri Lanka has the longest history of decolonization, which is well documented also by Fashion Historians: Today the National Costume which evolved in the process is very much a ceremonial dress, which males appropriate when embarking on a political career. As formal and office they wear the pant and shirt, embellished with ties and blazers in keeping with the prestige of the event. It seems that the “Saree” which has a history of about of about only one hundred years in the Indian Subcontinent, on the other hand, enjoys a privilege of being able to project a National Identity. In the recent past there has been a conscious effort to impose the Saree as a dress code, because it symbolizes the female “modesty”. After a short linguistic research, on the translation of the word “modesty” into Sinhala, I question if such a category existed in the pre-colonial Sinhala literature, specially when referring to the woman’s dress. Using visual evidences from the Colonial Period and methodologies from Fashion History, I then trace the evolution of the “Saree” which is a mixture of western and Indian elements. Finally I question the legitimacy for males to impose the Saree on women, when they themselves move more than ever to represent the West in costume.

Keywords: Fashion History, Post – colonial Identity, Culture
Introduction

Recently, a colleague and professor at the University of Kelaniya complained that she was not allowed to enter the Ministry of Education to meet the official she had the appointment with, because her håttaya or “saree-blouse” did not have sleeves. Many leading national schools have imposed the rule that mothers entering school premises must be dressed “modestly”. In Sinhala the words used by the Security Guards in that case were “Harithatı àndla ennane wenawa”, which can be translated as “you will have to come properly dressed”, “in a fitting manner” or “modestly dressed”. This “modesty” the school principals feel, can be demonstrated by only wearing a saree, when mothers enter the school premises. The more practical “skirt and blouse” or “Shalwar Kameez”, which are usually permitted in Buddhist temples, Churches and Hindu Kovils are not permitted within the school premises. The reasons are not verbalized. In the case of the Sri Dalada Mâligawa wearing even a saree does not seem to satisfy the whims of the Security Guards implementing these unwritten rules, if the blouse does not have sleeves. These current developments incite me to question through this paper, why the saree enjoys a higher respect in the eyes of moralists? Using visual and textual evidence also to question, which kind of female/females’ costumes could ever reflect the “Sinhala Buddhist culture” that rejects all Western influence?

The visual and textual evidence presented here, may help the reader to understand, how the “Saree” in the 21st century enjoys a higher respect over other imported hybrid modes of dress such as “Skirt and Blouse” or “Shalwar Kameez”.

My research interest is from the point of view of a fashion historian. For this paper I base my observations on Diana Crane’s seminal study
‘Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing (2000)’, in which she demonstrates how identity, class and religious affiliation, occupation, regional origin, as well as moral values, gender ideals and gender roles have been constructed and expressed through clothing, concentrating on the period of late 19th century France, England and USA. Additionally, Udaya Kumar’s essay Self, Body and Inner Sense (1997), approaching the topic from a caste based differentiation and Himani Bannerji’s Textile Prison (1999), observing the clothing of “Gentlewomen” (Bhadra mahila) in Colonial Bengal based on the discourse of “shame” (lajja) have provided multiple viewpoints to contextualize the information I cite here, in a wider, Asian panorama.

Female costume in poetry of the Sandeshayas

Martin Wickramasinghe in his observations “Dress and Ornament in Ancient Ceylon” first published in Sinhala in 1935, brings many examples from the literature of the “Kotte Period” in the 16th and 18th centuries, to demonstrate that women of Sri Lanka did not cover the upper part of the body before the advent of the Europeans. Drawing information from independent literary sources, historian M B Ariyapala in 1956 too has come to similar conclusions in his study Society in Medieval Ceylon. The poets of the 16th to 18th centuries writing Sandesha Kavya did not fail to write poetry and prose that was overloaded with the erotic sentiment Sṛṅgāra Rasa. They used many metaphors like “Swan breasts” (Pīnapavodhara) when they described the beauty of the female breasts. Another most striking example is from the Yashodarāwata, which was written in late 18th century: Prince Siddhartha on leaving the palace on the Great Renunciation (Mahābhīnīskramanaya) falters to leave the palace, as he sees the “golden breasts” of his wife Yashodarā feeding the new born son.
Here Yashodara’s breasts are referred as Rankumbu - “Golden Pots” (Gamlath 1995:16).

Siri Tilakasiri in his analysis of the Sandesha Poems (Sandesha Kavya) shows that “women of the cities” (Puraganan), “women of the villages” (Gamiliyan), “women tending cattle” (Gopuliyapan), all wear very fine cloth below the waists. The more affluent the women, the more transparent seems to be the fine and soft cloth. In Moratuwa the “Tisara” bird observes some Gopuliyapan wearing a lower garment above the knee and in Uruwela, he observes women crossing a stream holding hands with their male partners. Flying over the river, the messenger bird (or the author) is very much fascinated by the visible female breasts. If the women were “modestly dressed” in verses 89 and 133 of the Thisara Sandeshaya, their breasts would not be visible through the very fine cloth to covering their upper body (Tilakasiri 2008: 283).

Tilakasiri also mentions that both men and women wear an Uturusaluwa, a cloth that is draped over their shoulders. On greeting somebody of higher social standing, the Uturusaluwa is made “Ekamsaka”, covering only one shoulder, as a mark of respect to a person encountered. He also brings in evidence, that Uturusaluwa at times, could also be wrapped around the waist (ibid. 284).

This manner of showing respect can clearly be seen in the images of the women entering the Temple of the Holy Tooth by the artist from Prag visiting Ceylon early last century. Tavik Simon’s paintings show that Uturusaluwa is worn loosely or does not cover the breasts (see images 1-4). I recently discovered this pre colonial practice in a temple mural in the Sallabimbaramaya in Dodanduwa (see images 5 and 6). The man on seeing the monks approaching with their begging bowls, takes off his upper garment, the Uturusaluwa, and worships
the monks. When worshipping the monks, the woman does not cover her breasts. Tilakasiri also notes that a Thañapataya (cloth tied around the breast) was worn by women in the cities. In the Giråsandeshaya (V 24) this garment is referred to as “Piyayurupata” (Rathnapala 2005: 61). The bird Salalihiniya notices even a clasp at the back of this upper garment of a woman in Jayawardene pura. In general, affluent women in the cities of Jaffna and Jayawardene pura seem to wear “Cloth from Benares” (Kātisalu) or silk (Patasalu) bought at market places (ibid. 281).

The poets never miss the chance to describe women trained to sing and dance performing in temples of gods, in royal palaces or in specially constructed dance halls to amuse the city dwellers during festivals. Even the movements of the shaking breasts are described then. The 18th century ivory combs on display at the National Museum and the wood carvings of the dancing hall of the Embakke Devālaya in Pili matalawa dated to mid 18th century, may give visual evidence to these earlier literary texts (see images 7 and 8). The perahera scenes in the temples of the Southern province show women dancing with no upper garment. I cite the well known example from the Mulgirigala Rajamahāvihāraya (see image 9).

That these women felt ashamed (lajja) or were anxious about the public opinion of their modesty (bhaya), when performing for the gods as Devadāstis, or when playing in the parks or in water, has yet to be discovered in the Sinhala poetry of pre-colonial times. The Girava bird mentions that women were not bothered to fasten their lower garment which had got loose, when they were running in an excited mood (Rathnapala 2005:124). Puritans may argue that these late medieval descriptions of women were just repetitions of “topoi from classical Indian literature”. Descriptions of women’s costume, as Tilakasiri demonstrates, are nuanced based on their social class and
functions in each society. Erudite Sri Lankan society readily accepts descriptions of places and events recorded in the *Sandesha* Literature as historical evidence. If so, why should they not take the comments made on the costumes of women as historical facts, which point to a society more tolerant pertaining to what women should wear in public space before the advent of colonial rulers to Sri Lanka? Such statements that the *Thisara* bird when flying over Payagala saw women, who were slightly intoxicated resting under coconut trees, cannot be just a fantasy of the poet-monk living in the 15th century.

A curious but very important quotation may point to some deviations. In an excerpt from a 15th century Sinhala poem, an erudite monk writes:

"Do not omit to tell your husband, and throw your cloth over your shoulder when you set foot outside your dwelling place: and go without hurried movements"

"Do not sit down in any place in company with another man (except he be old, or a doctor or a monk) and chatter of things connected to love"

"Do not uncover your navel but let your garment hang down to the ankle. Do not bare the curve of your breasts, and refrain from laughing to show off your teeth” (ASL 1970: 280)

This is the advice given to a daughter at her wedding by her father, as he gives his young and beautiful daughter in marriage to an old Brahmin. As would be expected, this young woman is not faithful to her old husband in the course of the story. This poem “*Kāvyashekhara*” (1449) is regarded as a juvenile work of the most erudite monk Ven. Thotagamuwe Sri Rahula. Ven. Rahula was residing in the west coast in the 15th century during the reign of King Parakamabahu VI. This monk has also left us with some of the most
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descriptive poetry like the Selalihini Sandesaya which I have quoted above.

Although Ven. Rahula composed many other poems, in which he praises the beauty of contemporary women, these moralizing verses seem to have had an impact on the prudish mind. In later colonial times these verses from the “Kāvyashekaraya” were sung at wedding ceremonies. Martin Wickramasinghe in his famous novel “Gamperaliya” (1944) parodies the wedding scene of the end of the 19th century mimicking the West and at the same time inventing new wedding traditions.

“Laisa’s bridal costume was a shabby white satin gown, yellowed gloves and a fan. She walked with some difficulty because the shoes she wore were too small for her, and she had only succeeded in thrusting her feet into them with a great deal of determination and effort [...]. In keeping with the English dress worn by the bride, the bridegroom wore a tweed cloth, a black coat, and a battered hat. After the registrar had recorded the marriage and written out the marriage certificate, both parties set out for the home of the bride groom. They alighted from their carriage to the sound of fire-crackers lit in welcome. The bridegroom and bride who had reached the veranda entered with slow and measured steps as four little girls sang the customary blessing in clear sweet voices. As the song ended the bride groom and bride neared a door of the room assigned to them, and an elderly man began to invoke blessings and prosperity on the couple. This man, celebrated as a pundit throughout the village, chanted the auspicious words in an erudite style and wound up by uttering the word of blessing ‘pura’ with a flourish” (De Silva and Wickramasinghe 2009: 198). In the Sinhala original one reads of “Jaya magul
"gr" sung by the girls and "halla/ sahalla" recited by the village pundit (Wickramasinghe 1944: 106).

In the course of other ceremonies pundit continues his function as the master of ceremonies:

"A man and wife, he said, were like two people who bear a heavy load together, if either does not shoulder the weight, the consequences are disastrous to both. He also quoted from Sri Rahula's Kavyasekara and adjured the bride to obey those injunctions to the letter. As the pundit recited the verse prohibiting the wife from conversing with other males save aged men, Baladasa shot a covert glance at the bride. He wondered, whether the precept 'if you do smile, do not display your teeth' would not give Laisa secret amusement. The smile that came to the corner of her lips often parted and widened them involuntarily, displaying teeth like white pearls: and Baladasa knew - as the learned gentleman did not - that the greatest efforts on her part would not help Laisa to avoid what naturally came to her" (De Silva and Wickramasinghe 2009: 198)

Although the chief protagonist Nanda in Gamperaliya gets married twice, Wickramasinghe does not go into such vivid descriptions of these two weddings. Laisa's social standing is much lower than that of Nanda. One can read many other wedding scenes in Wickramasingha's oeuvre, how the less affluent class celebrate weddings spending much money in a very humoristic way. The above cited wedding of Laisa stands out as a parody of a wedding ceremony which followed colonial bridal fashions. It also demonstrates how certain families were anxious to follow customs created by the Sinhala Buddhist society, such as singing "Jaya magul gr" and reciting
excerpts from the "Kāvyashekaraya". This most popular novel relating the story of the village in a turmoil under British influence was published in 1945. Wickramasinha in his introduction informs that he has located this novel in around 1904 (Wickramasinghe 1944: 3). With the affluent middle class moving from Galle and Matara to Colombo, it seems, certain new traditions were invented like the celebration of Wesak with Wesak greeting cards, illuminations with "buckets" and "pandals" and singing of "Wesak- carols". Not only Martin Wickramasinha, but W. A. De Silva includes many burlesque scenes to demonstrate how the Western educated Sinhala Buddhist was eager to invent "own traditions" in the new cities. On closer observation, one may notice that they are nothing but variations of customs of the British with a Sinhala twist.

The two words "laija" and "bhaya" as values to be cherished by Sinhala women makes its appearance in Piyadasa Sirisena’s first novel "Dingiri Mānika" (1918). Piyadasa Sirisena, the "Father of the Sinhala novel”, makes the following statement thorough his protagonist "Dingiri Mānika": "Laija and bhaya" are "Great Aryan ornament" (Maha Arvādhara)ā for "moral" (Silachara) women. "To wear a cloth extending from the navel (Nābhiya) to ankle (Bola), to wear a jacket (Hattaya) that will cover the upper body completely, and to cover the entire body most safely (surakshita lesa) would be most befitting. To Dingiri Mānika, who was fashioned as the role model of the female readers, the "osariya" is most suitable for the "women of noble birth" (Kula striya) and not the "transparent gown and short jacket" ("bāryu dālak vāni araksha rahiya sāyat hāttyayath") and wearing a short jacket (kota hattaya) exposing two thirds of their body” (Translation by author) (Sirisena 1918: 60).

The novel was a big success and later made into an even more popular film. In the popular novels, plays and poems and newspaper articles
written by these men, the 6-7 meter long “Osariya” they profess would be most befitting dress for the Sinhala women in order to demonstrate “lajja” and “bhaya” in society. The new women, who is advised to turn away from Western practices is branded as the “Arya Sinhala Women”. As Neloufer de Mel points: “Western attire provided the respectability and status that indigenous dress could not: the nationalists’ insistence of the sari – the osariya, Kandyen, or Indian – for their Arya Sinhala women was, then an instrument of resistance to colonial impositions on dress and habit. The sari became a signifier both of a subversion and conservatism” (De Mel 2001: 84). The fashion of wearing the Saree was first introduced about 100 years ago to the upcoming urban society eager to be dressed in a manner that opposed the colonial dress of Śāya and Ḥāṭṭaya.

**Is the word “Modesty” a white man’s burden?**

De Mel through her readings of Anagarika Dharmapala’s pamphlet “Gihi Vinaya” (1898) comments: “[... ] Dharmapala has no less than 30 rules on how women should wear saris and dress modestly, keep their households, personal belongings and bodies clean”. De Mel continues: “as Gombrich and Obeyskera note, what Dharmapala was formulating here were new values and modalities and behaviour for an emerging Sinhala elite which drew on western bourgeoisie notions of property” (De Mel 2001:105-106).

By the time of its 18th edition in 1958, about 50,000 copies of Gihi Vinaya were sold. Even today, some aspects of “codes of respectability” dictated to Buddhist women seem to have been appropriated from the formative years of building a national identity based on protestant Christian moral values. Today the word “modesty in dress” seems to be the moralist’s buzz word. The view that Nanda Pethiyagoda and many others uphold, that women’s attire “down the
ages was anything but immodest”, needs to be revisited. Informing
travellers to Sri Lanka in 2012, Nanda Pethiyagoda writes:

“Women’s attire down the ages was anything but immodest.
Women covered themselves from head to toe in a saree, the
mode typical and unique to Ceylon/Sri Lanka (...). Young girls
in Kandyana provinces - the hill country – wore a modification
of the Kandyana, the nod to being young and not too bustful
(sic!) being that the osariya was twisted and taken around the
waist. But modesty had to be retained. Hence the blouse a
young girl wore, had a long frill around it which covered
completely developing breasts, titillatingly (sic!) indicated
when the fill was of net or fine silk” (Pethiyagoda 2012 II-III).

The writer seems to be eager to proclaim the sari and osariya as the
“modest” dress for women.
Visual and literary evidences show that the statement “Women
covered themselves from head to toe in a saree, the mode typical and
unique to Ceylon/Sri Lanka” is a kind of projection of those writers,
who are eager to uphold the Sri Lankan woman branded as the “Arya
Sinhala Women”, as the most modest women of the world. Being
covered from “head to toe” the Sri Lankan women is supposed to
display her modesty. This notion based on the prudery of the Christian
missionaries, which was later appropriated by Anagarika Dharmapala
for his moralizing pamphlets and popularized by Piyadasa Sirisena in
his moralizing novels. We may note that most of the vanguards of the
Buddhist revival movement late 19th century were products of
missionary schools run by the British and Americans.

In her article how gendered forms of morality and constraint were
imposed on Sinhala society, Malathi de Alwis uses comments made
by Gananath Obeyesekere in 1984: “Gananath Obeyesekere in his
pioneering formulation of the Sinhala practice of *lajja-bhaya*, glossed as shame and fear, notes that the Sinhala females as well as males are socialized into practices in very early childhood. He goes on to observe however, that “in spite of the cultural view that females should be especially *lajja-bhaya*, it is the male child who becomes sensitive to the second part of the verbal set, *bhaya*, or ‘fear of ridicule’, as it is men who “have public roles and hence must be more sensitive to the reactions of others” (De Alwis 1997: 105).

Obeysekere’s division of the compound “*lajja-bhaya*” is interesting: He allocates “*lajja*” to females and “*bhaya*” to males. To me, this somewhat gendered division does not seem to be based on lexicographic evidence. As we shall see in the concluding passage of this observation, of the compound “*lajja-bhaya*”, only the word “*lajja*” emerges in the 13th century *Saddharmālakāraṇa*, referring to an uneasy state of mind, like “shame”.

Today many researchers translate the English word “modesty” with the Sanskrit/ Pali words “*lajja*” and “*bhaya*”. Equating the Sanskrit/ Pali words “*lajja*” and “*bhaya*” to “modesty” seem to be an innovation of Rev. B. Clough, who for the first time was able to publish comprehensive English-Sinhala and Sinhala- English dictionaries in the years and 1830 and 1887 respectively. In the “second new enlarged edition” of the Sinhala-English Dictionary by Clough in 1887, one finds the Sinhala word “*lajja*” translated as “shame, punctuation modesty and bashfulness” (Clough 1887: 556), in the 1892 edition as “shame, shamefaced, shamefaced-ness, modesty, bashfulness” (Clough 1892: 556). The Methodist Priest Charles Carter, known to be one of the earliest translators of the bible into Sinhala, who heavily depended on Clough’s lexicographic work, translates “*lajja karanaśa*” as “to put into shame” and the word “*lajjāva*” as “shame, modesty, bashfulness” (Cater 1923: 549). Cater
Sinhala-English Dictionary was first published in 1923. He associates the word “modesty” very closely with “lañja”. In the English-Sinhala dictionary printed in 1881 Cater equates “modest” with “nisi lañja bhaya atāvū, vilībhiya atāvū, lañja kola atīhi, lañji, vinīta, sādu śila, yatahāt, nirahamkāra”, the scale begins with “having appropriate “lañja bhaya” ending with meanings such as “servile” and “humble” (Cater 1881:301). From about the 1880s the meaning of the English adjective “modest” seems to be located in the realm of “having shame” and the noun “modesty” given the meaning “nisi lañjāva, hiriōtāp, vināya, vinītāva”.

Gunapala Malalasekara, who in 1958 published the more authoritative dictionary, the Ingrist-Sinhala Shabda Kōshaya equates “modest” as a noun with “nirahamkāra, vilībhiya atīhi, aprgalbha, vinīta, pramānava” (Malalasekara 1958: 587). The 4th edition of this most popular dictionary which was revised by a panel of scholars in 2000, “modest” means “tanpath, nirahamkāra, vinīta, vilībhiya atīhi, madhyastha, hikmuna, nihatamāni” (Malalasekara 2007: 644). The values for the word “modest” varies and not any more located prominently in the realm of “shame”. Translating the list given by the editors of the Malalasekara Ingrist-Sinhala Shabda Koshaya in the 2000 edition, one sees that the scale what “modest” could mean ranges from “controlled, not-proud, following a moral conduct, having a sense of shame, moderate, controlled by a set of rules, not-proud”. To me, only “Vilībhiya atī” points to a connotation of respectability as accepted by the community who regard themselves as “cultivated or civilized”, as ‘vili’ is a derivative of “val” which has the original connotation of “wild” (De Zoysa 1967: 2397).

The compound lañja-bhaya goes back to the pali-compound “hiri-otap”: according the Sinhala English Dictionary (1967) by AP de Zoysa, it means “fear of dishonour” (De Zoysa 1967: 2848). When
consulting the original usage of "hiri-otap", in the Pali-English Dictionary of the Pali Text Society, one discovers that it has another connotation: "fear of sin", or "shame of fear and sin", as it appears in the Tripitakaya pertaining to the behaviour of Buddhist monks (Rhys Davis 1959: 732). The original meaning of "hiri-otap" is linked to the practice of evil and harmful deeds. It is how a monk observes his own conscience to avoid all kinds of evil. As such, "hiri-otap" primarily governs the mind from harmful deeds, pointing to a self-controlling mechanism. A monk may not engage in evil and harmful deeds not because society may perceive as "a-lajjā". As seen in the Anguttara Nikāya, the two words appear in a list of powers: Saddhā (faith), sati (mindfulness), hiri and ottappa etc (Naynatiloka 1952: 83). As such, hiri and ottappa, that guard the behaviour of a Buddhist monk, have no moral connotation such as "modesty" in a Theravada Buddhist context. The Sigālovāda Sutta and the Vyaggapajja Sutta, discourses that set certain rules to the laymen, do not mention any rules how "modestly" women should be dressed. As such, according to the preaching of the Buddha, "hiri-otap" are rules to be observed by the ordained Bhikṣu.

Are We Carrying the Colonial Burden Called “Saree” into the 21st Century?

In the prose of Sinhala Literature one may very seldomly discover the compound lajjā-bhaya used to control the behaviour of women. I cite a few isolated examples here: In the 13th century Saddharma Ratanāvaliya one reads of the merchant Soreyya: When he was transformed into a woman, because he wished to be the wife of a good looking Arhat monk, he fled from the vehicle in the state of lajja (“Ú lajjā va vahānayan bāsa palā giyoya”) (Gnanawimala 1961: 340). Patāchāra in her distraught state of mind ran naked, without the “hiri otap garments” (hiri optap sathu noladin) and later on meeting the Buddha regains her “hiri-otap” (ibid. 637). The women of Vishaka’s retinue, who accompanied her when she went to visit the Buddha intoxicated after drinking toddy, behaved as if possessed by a demon without lajja bhaya. Here the compound lajja bhaya does denote a state of “shame” (ibid. 730). But one may notice that all the instances cited from the the 13th century Saddharma Ratanāvaliya denote an “extra-ordinary state”: A sex change, distraught state of mind and intoxication due to excessive consumption of alcohol.

However, an exception from the same literary source is unavoidable: The lady Rōhini, in the Rōhini bisovun gē vastava does not leave her inner chamber to greet a visiting monk because she was in a state of “lajja” (Lajjāven no-āväya). The reason for not greeting the monk is mentioned. Her upper body was covered with a skin disease (lajja vana taram kustha rogaṃek sīval sirva vasā ātivya) (ibid. 873). She however obeys the request of the monk and comes out. The author of the Saddharma Ratanāvaliya does not narrate, what she was wearing when she came out. But the original Pali source, the 5th century Dhammapadattakatha narrates, that she takes off the silk upper garment that covered her infected body and appeared in front of the monk (patta kanchuka paṭṭīmunchitva āgatam). This clearly shows that the old custom as reflected in the 5th century text was to take off the upper garment when showing respect to a person of higher status.
Queen Rohini is not ashamed to appear in front of the Buddhist monk with out covering her diseased upper body.

Ariyapala too cites the original Pali source (Ariyapala 1956: 320). Citing the Dampiyā Atuwā Gatapadaya, which is the commentary to the Pali work, Ariyapala notes that Rōhini, out of respect for the monk, removed the jacket she had worn to conceal her skin disease (ibid.). When showing respect, we see in the Pali-Buddhist literature, even women were expected not to wear an upper garment. The visual information seen in the paintings of Simon in the 1920s and Buddhist murals of the 19th century corroborate this evidence 2. The argument that women belonging to a lower caste had to take off the upper garment when entering a Buddhist temple or the house of a Sinhala chieftain of higher social rank, cannot be applied here because Rōhini was lady of high standing.

None other than Martin Wickramasinghe points to the prudery of the monk, who translating the Dampiyā Atuwā Gatapadaya into the Saddharmakathāvatthu, left out the passage of the pious lady appearing in front of the monk without an upper garment (Wickramasinghe 1935: 40). Judging by the cited examples, the idea of the “modest” woman as imagined by the moralists of today does not seem have its roots in neither the Pali-Theravada tradition, nor in the Sinhala literature but an invention of early 20th century. The exposure of the female body was not seen as sinful to evoke “lajja” in the mind of the woman.

The Pan-Indian style of representing the female in art

A certain uniformity in costume with regard to the upper body of females can be noticed all over the Indian subcontinent, which I call the “Pan Indian Style”. The early Buddhist sculptures and carvings
seen in regions that were influenced by artists commissioned by Maurya Rulers, examples cited by art historians as “Mathura” Art of the Kuśāṇa Rulers, the gate ways in Sāñchi commissioned by the Sunga Dynasty, and sculptures in Nāgarjunaṅgōḍa of the Ikṣvaku Dynasty all reveal that the upper part of the female body was not covered (see images 10 and 11). Dehijia has pinpointed that the sensuous figure of Sīrīma devatāvas was commissioned for the railing of the Bharut Stupa by a Buddhist nun. The Chanda Yakshi was donated by a Buddhist Monk called Buddhakrītita 100 BC (Dehijia 1999: 5) (see images 12 and 13). The stupas of Sangol, Bhārūṭ, Sāñchi and Nāgarjunaṅgōḍa display the highest mastery of classical Indian art. Undoubtedly they attracted many pilgrims since the first century before Christ. The nudity of the females (Yakṣīs) placed around the stupa it seems, was not a source of distraction for visitors over centuries. Even a Buddhist nun and a monk donated female figures revealing their beauty to embellish the stupa.

This “Pan Indian Style” seems to have engulfed Sri Lanka in the 5-6th century leaving examples from the Sigiriya Frescoes for the modern art historians to make assumptions. The images of the Goddess Tārā from 7th to 10th centuries provide evidence seen in Buddhist Art of Sri Lanka (see images 14 and 15). Pallava and Chōla Art of South India too show Goddesses of Indian origin clothed in a Dhōṭi kind of lower garment and only jewellery embellishing the necks, breasts and arms (see image 16). The Sri Lankan Tārās are unique: They being Aṣeṭics (Tapaśvins), are not adorned in Jewellery and do not wear any upper garment. This “Pan Indian Style” can be traced in the earliest murals of the mid 18th century Kandyan Period, were Aṣeṭics such as Mandri Devi from the Vessantara Jātakaya and the mother of the Aṣetic Sāma in the Sāma Jātakaya do not wear any upper garment (see image 17). In the murals of the Western and Southern Maritime regions, the fashion of wearing the cloth and shawl over the shoulders seems to
emerge around mid 19th century, then following the European Victorian fashion by switching to an ankle length gown and long sleeved blouse, displaying “modesty” as the westernized Sinhala society dictated. I cite two examples from the same scene of Māra’s daughters attempting to seduce the Buddha from Ranvella Navamuni Vihāraya from mid 19th century close to Kathaluwa (Galle) and from the Rānkoth Vehera, in Panadura painted about fifty years later (see images 18 and 19).

An unbroken tradition of women being able to display their beauty is recorded in the literature and arts right up to mid 19th century. As notions of “modesty” seem to seep into the Europeanized strata of the Sinhala elite, Women of higher strata begin to mimic the colonial masters, firstly by wearing ankle length gowns with long sleeved jackets, then draping a six meter cloth in order cover this, that was worn in India called “saree” ³. The women seen at the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy by the artist from Prague may have captured less Europeanized women wearing two unstitched cloths. If one may dismiss them as “rodiya women”, a common notion, that all women without upper garments captured by the colonial lens were “rodiyas”, then the paintings may have been done at the Temple of the Tooth on an open day for rodiyas ⁴.

The hybridity of what is called “Saree”

The “Kandyan Saree” today is a hybrid costume. To what extent this way of draping the osariya with an upper garment called “hättaya” can display the “true Sinhala identity” may have to be reconsidered. The stitched upper garment “hättaya” may have been invented in South India as the word has its origin in the Dravidian languages as “sättaya”. The “leg-o-mutton sleeve” which was in vogue in the West towards the end of the 19th century has been indigenized as “boricci
atha” of the Kandyian woman. This upper garment is never seen in the murals of the Kandyian school of art of the 18th and 19th centuries but in photographs of upper class ladies posing for the cameramen of the colonial masters.

The osariya since the early 20th century has been changing more to satisfy the requirements as dictated by the fashion industry of the West: How could the osariya ever exist without accessories such as a hand bag, an umbrella, handkerchiefs and shoes with heels? The osariya clad “Arya Sinhala women” is only able to keep up to the hallmark of “Sinhala-ness”, due to the osariya being draped over her skirt in a most complicated and innovative way. If one may unwrap the osariya, “Arya Sinhala Woman” immediately becomes a “western woman” in a skirt – a “Sāya”- and the very much Anglo-Indian blouse called “hāttaya” of with or without “leg-o-mutton sleeves”. Is the “saree” or “osariya” then only six meters of cloth wrapped around the body to cover up the “European-ness” worn closest to the skin?

Males too about one hundred years ago wore a tweed cloth over the trouser to cover the “European-ness” underneath the “Redda” becoming the “Redda asse Mahattaya” (the gentleman underneath the cloth). As such, is the saree clad lady a “Redda asse Nona”?

The length of the borrowed “leg-o-mutton sleeves” imported from Europe may vary, ending up in the forearm, which is then called “boricci atha” today (see image 20). This mode of dressing, is not older than a century. When creating the most suitable costume for freshly invented the “Arya Sinhala Woman”, she was advised to turn away from the western dress. In an effort to indigenize the costume of the upper class women, one seems to have “invented a tradition” of the “ohoriya” or Kandyan Sari, as the most befitting for the women of
the nation state being fashioned in the early years of the 20th century. However, Anagarika Dharmapala’s mother Mrs. Mallika Hewavitharana (nee Dharmagunawardhana) had been instructed to wear a sari on a pilgrimage to India in the late 19th century.

Judging by the different sources, it seems that the fashion to wear the “Kandyan Sari”, as we see it today, was imposed on women from the non-Kandyan, low country, upcoming maritime and urban families takes shape about the turn of the century, coming into full bloom in the 1920s. Anagarika Dharmapala’s mother, the daughter of Andiris Perera Dharmagunawardhana, a wealthy businessman from Colombo, may have worn a long skirt and blouse, which her son felt was not befitting to be worn on a trip to India.

Today the *osariya* too has undergone changes, evolving into a “Made Up Saree”, which is an assemblage of stitched fabrics and frills. Former presidents and first ladies seem to adopt the *osariya* when they are in power and reject it when the lime light on them fades. Seldom does a bride today wear the unstitched *osariya*. The “Made Up Saree” is seems is more practical and smarter than the original *osariya* from the times of Anagarika Dharmapala. Flight attendants’ *osariya* serving in the National Carrier Sri Lankan Air Lines even has pockets today. The reader of this article, as such, is free to question, if this hybrid costumes “śāriya” or “osariya” - which is not even as old as the Colombo Harbor - can claim to represent a “true Sinhala Buddhist Identity”. Insisting on *saree* as a dress code that reflects a national identity seems to be the projection of males, who never seem to realize, that they must also decolonize themselves by shedding their shirts, pants, ties, shoes and jacket to display a national identity.

Most costume historians of India are of the opinion that women of upper castes did not wear a stitched upper garment, as cutting of a
fabric according to Brahmanical custom makes it "unfit" for wearing. Even today one may notice that wives of Brahmins in Kerala do not wear any stitched upper garment underneath the saree covering the upper or lower body. Sinhala literature of the pre-colonial era very seldom describes a stitched upper garment. In the rare cases it was called "Kae/chukaya", which means "covering" in Pali.

Concluding comments

Based on the evidence in the dictionaries compiled by the western educationists, "modesty in dress" to me, is a burden the Buddhists inherited from protestant missionaries. Pre-colonial Sinhala literature describe the female body with all its beauty. Pre-colonial Buddhist Art stands evidence for a more open minded representation of the female figure that was inherited from India before colonization.

By providing linguistic evidence, this article has demonstrated that the notions of "modesty" as preached by Christian missionaries were happily taken over by the vanguards of the Nationalist Movement early in the 20th century. The saree was chosen to display the "modesty" of the Ärya Sinhala Kula Kantäva in the upcoming urban spaces, where Buddhism had to face critique from Christian Missionaries, as women traditionally did not cover their breasts with a stitched upper garment. The visual information from mid 18th century murals demonstrate that in the Kandy region only privileged women were allowed to wear an upper garment or jacket, called "Moja Hättaya" (see images 21 and 22). The privilege of wearing the "Moja Jacket" seem to have been enjoyed by both males and females (see images 23 and 24). The frill around the neck, for both males and females called Manthaya too is a ruff inherited from the West. When inventing a suitable costume for Buddhist girls, the
ruff was attached to the jacket of the “lamā saree” or “children’s saree”.

Falling in line with the Judo-Islamic tradition, which imposed face veils, veils and long gowns on females entering religious space, Sri Lankan Buddhists too adopted the veil and white gowns, handkerchiefs, fans, white gloves, bouquets, hand bags and shoes when brides were given in marriage. In the 1920s the white gown was replaced by a white saree. In some isolated cases the white veil and bouquet of white flowers still remains. Even if the bride chose the Kandyan Osariya, accessories of Western origin such as hand bag, heeled shoes, and flower bouquets are preserved.

At the conclusion, this article touched briefly on the hybrid nature of the saree. Those who argue that the saree is the only costume women should wear to display their cultural identity, will have to point out, which cultural identity such a hybrid saree is to represent.

Traditional Buddhism, we can clearly see, did not preach “modesty in dress” by covering the female body. If we are to regard Nanda Pethiyagoda’s claim that “women covered themselves from head to toe in a saree” more seriously, then at the conclusion of this article, I would question more provocatively: Has the saree now become the “Sinhala-Buddhist” equivalent to the “Abaya”, “Hijab”, and “Niquab” in a weird attempt to cover all Sri Lankan women “from head to foot” in a saree?
End notes

1. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence O Ranger in *The invention of tradition* (1983) have pointed out the connection between "traditions" which "appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented" and modern endeavours of building of a nation state. Cecily Morrison in her article "Invented Tradition and Imagined Communities" (2003) has showed how tradition was invented taking the example of the Scottish Dance, which was a product of Scottish nationalism. See also Himani Bannerji (1999) writing observing the clothing of Gentlewomen (*bhadrachala*) of mid 19th century Bengal.

2. For details please refer my article “Covering the Female Body: Transition seen in Buddhist murals from 18th to 20th century” published in the website of the National Heritage Trust. The text was read at the monthly lecture no. 38 on the 29th March 2012 at the HNB Auditorium Colombo 10, Sri Lanka and published in “Thuppahi’sBlog”.


4. In an academic paper titled “Gendering the Colonized and Dressing the De-Colonized Female Body” to be published in Nevedini, Journal of Gender Studies, I discuss the authenticity of the photographs in circulation as marketed as “Rodiya Women”.

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Three Women at the Temple of Kandy, Ceylon - Tavik Frantisek Šimon

Buddhist-Temple in Kandy - Tavik Frantisek Šimon

Stairways of Kandy Temple, Ceylon - Tavik Frantisek Šimon

The Buddhist Temple - Tavik Frantisek Šimon
Are We Carrying the Colonial Burden Called “Saree” into the 21st Century?

Image No 5

Pindapatha Scene from Sallabimbararamaya, Dodanduwa.

Image No 6

Detail from the Pindapatha Scene (Sallabimbararamaya, Dodanduwa). See how the upper garments are draped to pay respect to the monks.

Image No 7

Ivory comb from the National Museum, Colombo
Carving from the Embakke Devalaya, Pilimatalawa.

Dancer from the Telipatta Jatakaya in Mulgrigala Rajamahavihāra.

Yakshi with drinking vessel found at the Buddhist site Bhūeshwara in Mathura Museum.

Yakshi found in Didarganj – 3rd century BC in Patna Museum.
Image No 12

Sīrīma devatā on the railing of the Bharat Stupa Indian Museum Calcutta.

Image No 13

Chanda Yakshi on the railing of the Bharat Stupa in Indian Museum Calcutta.

Image No 14

The standing image of the Goddess Tāra from 9th-10th century found between Trinco and Batticaloa now in the British Museum.

Image No 15

Samādi Goddess found in Tālānpiṭiya near Kurupāgala from 7th-8th century in the National Museum, Colombo.
Mandrī Dévi from the Vessantara Jātākaya from the Mādawala Tampita Vihāra of Colombo.

Pārvatī as consort of Śiva from the Ālahana Pirivena, Polonnaruwa from the 11th century in the National Museum, Colombo.

Māra's daughters from Ranvella Navamuni Vihāra close to Kathaluwa.

Detail of Māra's daughters from Runkoth Vehera, Panadura.
Are We Carrying the Colonial Burden Called "Saree" into the 21st Century?

Image No 20
Leg-o-mutton sleeves. Infanta Eulalia in the 1890s

Image No 21
Uraga Jatakaya from the Madawala Viharaya. Note all women do not wear an upper garment in private space.

Image No 22
Mother of King Vessantara, Madewala Viharaya. Note the "Moja Jacket" worn by the queen.

Image No 23
Dunuvila Nilame from Medawala Viharaya Wearing "Moja Jacket"

Image No 24
The "Moja Jacket" is worn by both male and female devotees in the Murals of the Lewella Gangārāmaya
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Words from the ‘Margins’: Exploring Sri Lankan English Borrowings in the Classroom

D. Fernando

Abstract

The use of Sri Lankan English (SLE) vocabulary among Sri Lankans themselves has been the focus of some debate. While some studies have found that teachers of English tend to reject SLE vocabulary, particularly borrowings, in the classroom, other researchers observe that such avoidance is more prevalent among the so-called non-standard users of SLE. However, studies that focus on specific types of vocabulary, or on specific genres of writing, are rare in SLE studies. In particular, despite the current interest in the pedagogical implications of World Englishes, there are few studies that investigate SLE used in texts produced in the classroom. This study thus aims to investigate the use of SLE borrowings in written texts by learners of English who can be considered users of non-standard SLE. The study takes the theoretical position that the appropriate use of SLE vocabulary is part of the sociocultural competence, a significant learner competence, of the learner. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, this exploratory study attempts to analyse the nature and the extent of SLE borrowings found in 27 informal written samples on a culture specific topic by a group that tends to be marginalized in SLE studies, the adult language learner of English. The findings of the study revealed an unexpected extent of usages and identified two strategies of uses, explication and exemplification, indicating that the so-called non-standard users display a sociocultural competence that has significant implications for classroom practice. (238 words)

Keywords: Sri Lankan English, borrowings, sociocultural competence
Introduction and Literature Review

SLE borrowings

Among the many word formation processes of Sri Lankan English (SLE) vocabulary such as affixation, compounding, initialisms, clipping and semantic shift, borrowings have been the focus of extensive documentation (Passé 1955, Gunesekera 2005, Meyler 2007, Sivapalan et al 2010, Fernando 2012). Borrowings from Sinhala, Tamil, Pali, Sanskrit, Portuguese, Dutch, Malay and Arabic (Gunesekera 2005, and Meyler 2007, Fernando 2012) reflect the diverse linguistic influences on the variety. Gunesekera (2005) has identified three types of SLE borrowings (hereafter SLEBs): direct borrowings from local languages such as perahera and pooja; indirect borrowings (also called loan translations or calques) such as funeral house and milk rice; and hybrid compounds such as poya holiday and cholakam winds that combine words from local languages with English. As demonstrated by the examples above, SLEBs are not limited to single word units but can also consist of two, or three-word compounds (funeral house, milk rice; ground-breaking ceremony, Maha Siva Rathri) as well as multiword units that include idiomatic expressions such as hanging on the sari pota (Gunesekera 2005). SLEBs occur in several registers, from the ceremonial to the extremely informal, in both spoken and in written genres. According to Fernando (2012), hybrid compounds such as chena cultivation have appeared in English documents since the 19th century when British colonials borrowed words from local languages to describe local practices and beliefs.
Speakers of standard SLE and SLE vocabulary

Most of the research on SLE vocabulary, including borrowings, is based on the speakers of Standard SLE (SSLE), traditionally defined as the variety spoken by the members of the urban English speaking middle and upper classes for whom English is a first language (Kandiah 1981, Guneseckera 2005, Meyler 2007, Mendis and Rambukwella 2010). Having learnt it at home, this group habitually uses English in a range of personal, social and official functions. However, the majority of Sri Lankans speak it as a second or third language in more restricted contexts, often having learnt it formally in a classroom. The SLE spoken by this large and heterogeneous group can vary quite considerably, with its proficient members, who tend to be educated bilinguals, now part of the SSLE speaking community, and its less proficient members being considered speakers of non-standard SLE (NSSLE). This group has little access to English: they are infrequent users of the language who have not been able to acquire it in the classroom with much success, and their language is marked by deviations from SSLE. The language they produce is generally marked by deviations from SSLE.

While Guneseckera (2005) describes the phonological features of NSSLE, a description of the syntactic features of NSSLE writing can be found in Parakrama (1995), who describes features “that are unacceptable in elite Lankan usage” (1995: 125). These include deviations in subject/verb agreement, articles, prepositions, spelling, punctuation, and in the use of the continuous form that do not exist in formal, written SSLE. Here, Parakrama’s observations highlight the variation in spoken and written SSLE, in which some of the syntactic features listed here such as variations in the use of articles and prepositions are accepted in informal SSLE speech.
Although no studies that focus on the use of SLE vocabulary among NSSLE speakers exist, Gunasekera (2005) observes that borrowings are confidently used by speakers of SSLE, while they tend to be avoided by those who speak it as a second language. This was subsequently explored in a study by Medawattegedera and Devendra (2006) who, through a questionnaire survey, found that most teachers of English considered several widely used SLEBs to be unacceptable, and rejected them particularly in writing. The only type of borrowing that had some acceptance was hybrid compounds such as poruwa ceremony, bana preaching and pirith chanting, suggesting that the use of SLE vocabulary is discouraged in the language classroom. As the majority of Sri Lankans acquires English in such settings, this could perhaps indicate why borrowings tend to be avoided by those who learn English as a second language, particularly in the written form.

A survey of Sri Lankan fiction in English revealed that some contemporary creative writers use significantly more SLE vocabulary when compared with early writing in the 1960s (Fernando 2011). A considerable amount of SLE vocabulary belonging to several semantic categories such as food and edibles, clothing and ornaments, kinship terms, household items and furniture, titles, professions and terms of address was identified in the 20 short stories that were analysed in this study. The largest number of SLE vocabulary was found in references to culture-specific food and edibles, with 130 words used by four contemporary writers. The writers used previously codified SLE vocabulary as well as their own lexical innovations, in particular examples of code-mixing from other local languages.

**Sociocultural competence and SLEBS**

While previous research states that proficient speakers of SLE use SLEBs extensively, Parakrama (2010) makes a more direct connection
between the non-acknowledgements of SLE in the largely ineffective English language teaching (ELT) programmes in Sri Lanka. According to him, a part of the failure of ELT in the country is its "devalue(ing) of authentic Lankan experience, metaphor and idiom, and calls for an alien and alienating variety and world-view of English" (2010: 95). This argument affirms that English is a local language, with one of its significant functions being the communication between fellow Sri Lankans, a distinguishing feature of Outer Circle Englishes (Kachru 1995). The absence of SLE in the classroom and the enforcement of an "alien", exonormative variety that is inadequate for the expression of local experiences can inhibit a language learner’s ability to communicate in English in such a classroom.

As borrowings in particular convey local experience in a World Englishes (WE) context, the confident use of SLEBs can thus be considered a communicative competence that enables speakers using English in the country to give expression to local Sri Lankan experiences with authenticity and specificity, particularly when equivalents do not exist in the exonormative models. The communicative competence to use the language appropriate to the context in which it is used has been described as sociocultural competence in second language learning (Celce Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell 1995, Lee and McChesney 2000, Pawliskowska-Smith 2002, Celce Murcia 2007). While these studies do not define sociocultural competence from a World Englishes paradigm, Pawliskowska-Smith’s definition resonates closely with the use of WE vocabulary within a local context: "sensitivity to register, dialect and variety, stylistic appropriateness, a sensitivity to naturalness and the knowledge of cultural referents when using English" (2002:7). The appropriate use of SLE vocabulary can thus be considered a sociocultural competence in a local context of usage where a borrowing, for example, will
display a sensitivity to most, if not all, aspects listed in Pawliskowska-Smith's definition. Sociocultural competence can therefore be considered a significant learner competence in the English teaching and learning situations in Sri Lanka.

This paper thus takes the theoretical standpoint that the appropriate use of SLEBs in the local context is an indication of the sociocultural competence of the speaker. On the one hand, competent speakers of SLE will display a sensitivity to register, dialect and variety in their use of SLEBs, as well as a naturalness and the knowledge of cultural referents through their awareness and use of SLEBs, as demonstrated by skilled users of SLE such as creative writers who use SLEBs extensively in their writing. On the other hand, the avoidance of SLEBs can demonstrate a lack of sociocultural competence in a user.

**Criticisms and limitations of SLE vocabulary studies**

A study of SLEBs cannot be undertaken without considering some of the limitations in SLE studies. Despite research in the area spanning several decades, studies that address the complexity and diversity of contemporary usages of SLE vocabulary are still lacking: According to Fernando (2012), “SLE vocabulary has at present dynamically extended its numbers as well as the strategies of generating new vocabulary,” and thus recommends that, “in the 21st century, linguists need to research extensively in this field exploring the pressures and counter pressures giving rise to the future development of SLE vocabulary; and conducting research in specific areas of vocabulary in order to refine and redefine the nature of SLE vocabulary” (Fernando 2012: 177).

The lack of focus on the variation that exists in what is rejected as ‘non-standard’ SLE is still evident, despite Parakrama’s 1995 call to
include the usages of non-standard speakers in SLE descriptions. Thiruvarangan (2012) argues persuasively that the language of the so-called non-standard speakers of SLE needs to be taken into consideration for its functional as well as its ideological significance.

Descriptions of SLE have also been criticised for their inherent Sinhala bias (Sivapalan, Ramanan and Thiruvarangan 2010). Indeed, the features hitherto codified, including SLEBs, in Gunasekera (2005) and Meyler (2007) for example, are largely from Sinhala, suggesting that the majority language is the sole lexifier of SLE. Borrowings from Tamil are only minimally reflected in these descriptions, which the researchers themselves allude to with regret. Sivapalan et al (2010), presenting several unique phonological, syntactic and lexical features of Jaffna English, a variety informed by Tamil, that have hitherto been absent in SLE wordlists, call for a description of SLE with a greater representation of its regional variation.

According to Parakrama (1995), SLE studies tend to be "impressionistic" and "subjective", based on "random examples and personal observations" (1995: 34). This criticism, too, is still largely valid, because even in current descriptions (Gunasekera 2005 and Meyler 2007 for example), the inclusion of vocabulary items is mostly based on informed, but individual decisions of their acceptability. Parakrama’s view, "nothing like a large-scale study sociolinguistic study or a systematic study has been undertaken" (1995: 34), is reiterated in more recent writing as well (Mendis and Rambukwella 2010, Fernando 2012). These views underscore the dearth of SLE studies of vocabulary in specific contexts of use, particularly-by non-elite users. Despite the codification of many SLE vocabulary items, studies that focus on specific topics, types of speakers, genres, and registers are still largely absent in SLE studies.
Despite increasing interest in the pedagogical implications of WE research (Bhatt 2001, Canagarajah 2006, Kirkpatrick 2007), existing studies are rarely informed by SLE usages in the classroom. Canagarajah (2006), for example, examines the place of WEs in academic writing, affirming the need to consider teaching/learning practices: "The classroom is a powerful site of policy negotiation. The pedagogies practiced and the texts produced in the classroom can reconstruct policies ground up" (2006: 587). Despite the call to reject "monolingualist ideologies" and "linguistic hierarchies" even within academic writing, SLE research that examines any type of written texts produced in the classroom is largely non-existent.

Aim of the Study

Given the nature of SLE vocabulary studies hitherto described, and the gaps in the research identified, this study aims to focus on the use of SLEBs in the classroom by adult learners who can be identified as NSSLE speakers. Basing its exploration on the contention that such speakers are unwilling to use SLE vocabulary (Gunesekera 2005), and thus avoid its usage, the study explores the use of SLE borrowings by such a group in texts written on a specified topic in a classroom context. It is hoped that this study will enhance our understanding of SLEBs in classroom use by revealing to what extent, and how, SLEBs are used by this specific group when discussing a culture-specific topic that would necessitate the use of SLE vocabulary, based on the theoretical standpoint that the use of SLEBs to describe culture-specific subject matter displays the sociocultural competence of the users.

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Methodology

Methodological approaches

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

Quantitative content analysis

According to Dörnyei (2007: 245), quantitative content analysis "involves the counting words, phrases or grammatical structures" of "specific categories" which are often preconceived, and are useful to reveal a descriptive, surface level meaning of the data. This is also referred to as 'manifest level analysis' (Dörnyei 2007, Berg 2001). Thus, a quantitative content analysis was first conducted in order to identify the extent of usage of the three different types of SLEBs deductively -- direct borrowings, indirect borrowings and hybrid compounds -- which are predetermined categories from existing research discussed in the literature review. The SLEBs in the texts were identified based on the researcher's awareness. The results, presented through percentages and graphs, show the number of SLEBs of the three categories found in the samples, and the percentages of these SLEBs in each category.

Qualitative content analysis

A qualitative content analysis, which allows categories to emerge through a more interpretive analysis of the data (Dörnyei 2007), was then conducted. Also called 'latent level analysis' (Dörnyei 2007, Berg 2001), this allowed the researcher, through an inductive process, to first identify the semantic categories of the three types of SLEBs, and then to identify the strategies with which these SLEBs have been
incorporated into the texts. Thus, here, frequently occurring SLEBs in the results of the quantitative content analysis were selected and then analysed in context in order to identify patterns of use. The results of this analysis will be discussed using appropriate extracts of the written samples.

**Justification for a mixed method**

The analysis of SLEBs in this study thus includes an identification, a quantification and a classification of the SLEBs at word-level, as well as a sentence- and discourse-level analysis of how they were incorporated into the text. A mixed approach was deemed more appropriate for this study because a purely quantitative content analysis, while it will yield significant numerical data on the extent of SLEB use, will not reveal ways in which they can exist in the texts beyond the word-level.

**The participants**

The participants of the study comprised 27 adult learners of English who had achieved an intermediate level of proficiency after completing an English language learning course of 100 hours. The participants, of whom 26 spoke Sinhala as a first language while one spoke Tamil, were from Colombo, Jaffna, Kalutara, Kandy and Kurunegala districts. They can be considered speakers of non-standard SLE as the language they produce is generally marked by several features of non-standard grammar /syntax such as those described by Parakrama (1995), as well as their level of proficiency. At the same time, by the end of the course, the participants had gained confidence and fluency in writing and speech.
The writing samples

The 27 writing samples produced by the participants were responses to an informal letter writing task on a specific topic that required the use of SLEBs. The prompt was as follows: “Write a letter to a friend abroad describing a festival you celebrated recently. In the letter, you should describe how you prepared for the festival, for example the food you cooked and the things you bought, and the activities you engaged in.” They were written as timed essays in a classroom. The topic was selected on account of its popularity among teachers as an essay topic, as well as its frequent appearance in teaching materials and assessments.

Main Findings

The writing samples comprised 23 letters describing the Sinhala / Buddhist New Year, one describing the Tamil / Hindu New Year, and three describing Christmas. Twenty-four participants addressed their letters to a Sri Lankan friend who lives overseas, while three letters were written to an unseen non-Sri Lankan pen-pal. The majority of the texts were of a length appropriate to the prompt, of 150 words or more. Section 5.1 below discusses the results of the quantitative content analysis, while 5.2 presents the findings of the qualitative content analysis.

The use of SLEB at word level

The 24 writing samples that described the Sinhala and Tamil New Year revealed an extensive number of SLEBs, a total of 77 consisting of direct borrowings, indirect borrowings, and hybrid compounds. Among them, four semantic categories were also identified: food,
customs and beliefs, games and contests, and kinship terms. The main findings are presented in the two charts below:

**Chart 1: SLEBs used by the participants**

![Chart 1: SLEBs used by the participants]

**Chart 2: Categories of SLEBs**

![Chart 2: Categories of SLEBs]

According to Chart 1, the main type of SLEBs used by the participants by far was direct borrowings, with a total of 53, or 68% of all SLEBs. The 17 indirect borrowings amounted to only 22% of the sample.
There were eight hybrid compounds, amounting to 10%, in the sample. As Chart 2 demonstrates, the SLEBs in the sample comprised the semantic categories of food items, games and contests, customs and beliefs, and kinship. They consisted of single word, two-word and three-word units (see table in Annex 1 for the number of words, types of borrowings, and categories).

Some direct borrowings and indirect borrowings were used with some frequency: kevun and kokis occurred eight and 14 times respectively, milk rice occurred nine times, while nonagathaya and oil cakes occurred six times each.

The largest number of borrowings belonged to the category of food, with 28 different food items named by the participants (Chart 2). Specific borrowings from Sinhala and Tamil were widely used to name traditional food. With a total of 20 direct borrowings, they outnumbered the codified indirect borrowings such as milk rice and milk toffees; and hyponymous terms such as new year food, festival food items, and traditional sweets. Similarly, 20 direct borrowings referred to games and contests, while there was a significantly fewer indirect borrowings and hybrid compounds in this category. Kinship terms yielded only direct borrowings, and there were no hybrid compounds referring to food.

SLEBs used by the participants included the codified as well as the participants’ own lexical innovations. They included examples of code-mixing such as charithra and warithra instead of the English terms customs and taboos, and traditional games such as onchili, lissana gaha and kamba adeema for which English equivalents exist, suggesting that the participants used the Sinhala terms when they were unaware of the English equivalent. Other lexical innovations include the participants’ own translations: village foods from the Sinhala
gamey kema, and new year princess instead of the codified and widely used SLE direct borrowing Avurudu Kumari.

The lack of SLEB kinship terms was notable in the texts. Except for one occurrence each of periamma and periappa, the texts revealed an avoidance of frequently occurring SLE direct borrowings such as amma, thatha, appa, akka, aiya, preferring the often non-specific English equivalents such as brother and sister.

A few participants used hybrid compounds such as koha bird, Erabudu tree, Erabudu flowers, avurudu season, nekath time, vesak festival, and asala full moon day. Many of these are codified and widely used in written genres. At the same time, with a total of eight, the use of hybrid compounds was significantly low, particularly in comparison with the extensive use of direct borrowings. As previous research suggests that hybrid compounds have a little more acceptance among teachers of English when compared with direct borrowings and indirect borrowings (Medawattegedera and Devendra 2006), the paucity of this category of SLEBs is quite significant.

**Variant spelling**

Variant spelling, particularly of SLE direct borrowings, was also observed in the samples. One of the most frequently occurring food items had seven spelling variations: keun, kaum, kavm, kavum, kavan, kewun, kewum. Several others had at least two variants: kokis / kokiss / cokies, aurudu / avurudu, atirasa / athirasa, peni/pani, peni valalu / peni walalu, Ehela/Ahala. This reflects the lack of uniformity in the spelling of SLEBs found in written genres such as creative writing and newspapers (Meyler 2007). While it would be easy to dismiss some of these variations as learner ‘errors’, they reveal the complexities of SLEB orthography: in addition to the orthographic variation found in
published sources, they also the point to the inadequacies in English orthography that prevent the accurate reflection of Sinhala and Tamil phonology.

**SLEB at sentence and discourse level**

The qualitative content analysis of SLEBs at sentence and discourse level which was then undertaken revealed certain patterns in which SLEBS were incorporated into the texts. Two specific strategies, explication and exemplification, were identified, which are described below.

**Explication**

In some scripts, the SLE direct borrowing *nonagathaya*, a culture-specific term from Sinhala that refers to an astrologically-defined period of time before the New Year dawns, was often framed within an explanation of its meaning. Given below are five examples:

I  On this day is very special time. It Sinhala people called *nonagathaya*. In that time we do not any works. We are going to temple. And we not a cooking this time.  (WS 06)

II  Do you remember the “Nonagathaya. In that period we cant do any without worship. Only think that we do is go the temple and do the worship.”  (WS 10)

III  New year came we go to temple and did religes activites in that period. This is called Nonagathaya. Nonagathey mean we stoped work and doing religes activites. When the nonagathaya finised people light the crackers and rang the temple bell.  (WS 16)
IV Do you know Anne, there some ritual in our New Year festival. One is "Nonagatha". At the Nonagatha we can't do works. At that time we go to the temple and worship. (WS17)

V Firstly many of works finish before follow to time schedule. That period is means Nonagathaya. That period for worships. (WS 26)

In these extracts, the participants have used the term with an introduction and an explanation of the activities during this time, such as the avoidance of work and the engagement in religious activities. This effectively conveys the meaning of the term through its context. The extract below offers a more elaborate explication of the food item pongal:

VI "I think you know that sippy, murukku, vaday, ponkal. Sorry you do not know the ponkal. This is a Sri Lankan food. Most of Sinhalese are call kiripath. Tamil people are call chakkaraiponkal/venponkal ... Now I tell you Venponkal how to make it. First you want some rice, some milk, cooker. Secondly you start the cooker. Heat the pot and put the some rice and water. This rice is getting soft. After mix the milk. Two or three minutes you can off the cooker." (WS 27)

Here, the participant's explication of ponkal includes an introduction to the food item with a reference to its Sinhala name and its variation, as well as a description of its cooking process.

Exemplification

Another strategy used by participants to incorporate SLE vocabulary was exemplification, which consisted of listing SLEBs as examples,
usually introduced with a hyponym in the preceding statement. The examples below illustrate the use of this strategy to introduce SLE direct borrowings that refer to traditional food items and traditional games (my emphasis):

VII these days my mother too busy. She is cooking (making) some sweets for us. Like dodol, kevun, cokies, aluwa.” (WS 03)

VIII Before four or five days, we prepared number of sweets, like kaludodol, paniwalalu, kavum. The day before New year day we prepared other sweets like kakis, walithalapa. (WS 05)

IX On 11th and 12th April my mum and grand mother made lot of New year foods. They made oil cake, coconut cake, ‘Aluwa, Welithalapa, Asmi, kokis, Mun kevun. I called them New year foods, because we are only making them for New year. (WS 11)

X Usually we engage in so many games, like “porapol gaseema”, chakgudu, kanamutti bideema. (WS 05)

XI We started to play some traditional games. like olida keliya, eluwan kema with some kids in the village (WS 07)

XII We played many funny games with them. Pancha, kamba adima, Thacchi panima and ect... (WS 08)

In the extracts above, the participants have preceded their use of the SLEBs that refer to traditional sweetmeats with the hyponyms sweets and New year foods, and traditional games with the hyponyms games and traditional games, effectively introducing the SLEB to the reader.
Use of mechanics

In addition to explication and exemplification, the use of mechanics in the presentation of SLEBs was also examined. Several direct borrowings were capitalized, underlined, or used within single or double quotation marks. There were no such mechanics used with indirect borrowings. All the direct borrowings are capitalized in the WS11 above, while the indirect borrowings oil cake and coconut cake remain in lower case. The participants’ use of mechanics, similar to the variant spelling, also reflect the way in which SLE direct borrowings are often used in genres such as creative writing and newspapers.

Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that the marginal, so-called NSSLE speakers, contrary to previous opinion, not only use SLEBs fairly extensively, but also employ various strategies to incorporate them into their written texts. The participants’ use of direct and indirect borrowings as well as hybrid compounds in three semantic categories found in the study, with direct borrowings found to be the most widely used type of borrowings, was extensive. This demonstrates that the participants display a significant level of sociocultural competence as they have been able to display, through their use of SLEBs to describe local food, games and contests, and customs and beliefs of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year, a “sensitivity to naturalness and the knowledge of cultural referents when using English” (Pawlikowska-Smith 2002: 7).

The significant number of culture-specific SLEBs in this study also illustrates the link between the use of SLEBs and the specific genre and topic of the writing task, in this case, an informal written text.
describing a cultural event, in which the use of certain borrowings is unavoidable. This study thus highlights the often ignored aspect of SLE vocabulary studies: that their use is invariably underpinned by the specificities of topic, genre and register of the speech or writing event, and is, ultimately, unfixed and dynamic.

Examples of explication and exemplification that were identified in the texts indicate two consistent processes in which SLEBs are incorporated into the informal written texts produced in the classroom. This finding is significant in that it illustrates how even less proficient users of English are able to incorporate SLEBs effectively into their texts.

The nature of the participants’ use of SLEBs as demonstrated in this study highlights a significant area in which the sociocultural competence of English language learners in Sri Lanka needs to be addressed. While the study sheds light on how language learners, given the opportunity, use SLEBs extensively in their writing, it also demonstrates the need to acknowledge and even endorse this in classroom practice. As such, they suggest the need to acknowledge not only the need to use SLE vocabulary but also the systematic strategies which facilitate its incorporation into the texts produced in the classroom.

While this study reveals a fairly extensive use of direct borrowings from Sinhala as it was the first language of the majority of the participants, there is a marked paucity of borrowings from Tamil and other languages of the country as the sample lacked Tamil speakers. Studies that focus on the borrowings from other local languages are necessary to address the needs of the diverse pedagogical and cultural contexts in the country. In addition, as this study is limited to SLEBs in informal writing, further studies that investigate other types of
vocabulary, other registers, other areas of SLE such as syntax, and other topics and genres of texts will shed more light on SLE usage in the classroom. Finally, the need for a definition of sociocultural competence that takes into account language variation in the context of World Englishes is also highlighted by this study. (4,578 words)

References


Annex 1

Table: SLE borrowings used by the participants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Games and contests</th>
<th>Customs and beliefs</th>
<th>Kinship terms</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aggala, aluwa (f 07), asmi (f 05), athiraha / athirasa (f 03), chakkaraiponk al, dodol, hathmaluwa, kaludodol, kavum (f 08), kiribath (f 04), kokis (f 14), munkavum, muruku, pani walalu (f 02), ponkal, sippy, vaday, venponkal, walithalapa (f 02), munkavun</td>
<td>Andayata kiri kavima, Banis kema, Chakgudu, Elle, Eluwane kema, Kamba adima, Kana mutti bidima, Kathuru onchillawa, Kotta pora, lissana gaha nagima, onchilli, / onchilla, pancha, pancha dameema, pancha keliya, porapol gaseema, Sagaunu amutha sevima, Sigithi avurudu kumariya, Olida keliya, Thacchi panima, “avurudu uthsava”</td>
<td>aurudu udawa, avurudu uthsava, charithra and varithra, lipa gini melavima, mesha, mina, nonagathaya (f 06), Punya Kalaya, rathinga</td>
<td>periamma, periappa (Total: 02)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Direct borrowings

(Total: 20)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect borrowings</th>
<th>New year princess (Total: 01)</th>
<th>Auspicious time (03), crackers, hearth, festival season, festival food items, New Year festival, old year, cuckoo bird (Total: 08)</th>
<th>(Total: 00)</th>
<th>17 22%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid compounds</td>
<td>Avurudu games (f03) (Total: 00)</td>
<td>Nekath time / traditional nekath time, Aurudu season, kohé bird (f02), Wesak festival, Asala full moon day, Erabadhu flowers Erabadhu tree (Total: 07)</td>
<td>(Total: 00)</td>
<td>8 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>02</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“f” denotes frequency, or the total number of occurrences in all the scripts.
A Study on the Relationship among Culture, Language and Literary Translation (with Reference to Selected Literary Works Translated from English to Sinhala and Vice Versa)

T. Fernando

Abstract

The research brings to light the nature of the relationship between culture, language and literary translations. Culture is a broad, extensive and complex phenomenon which strongly influences the lifestyle of human beings. Language is one definite component in culture. Most of the linguists point out that learning a language means learning a new culture. Since, each and every translation deals with two languages, it exactly has a relationship with culture, because it is language. The difficulties encountered by translators such as "untranslatability" has been understood in two types, namely "linguistic" and "cultural". Moreover it is a well-known fact that almost all the literary works reflect the culture because literature is culture bound. Thus the attempt of this research is to find out the degree of coherence and the indissolubility of the relationship between these three entities.

Since, this particular inter-relationship is a non-empirical entity it is difficult to carry out an empirical experiment based on it. Therefore, the research has been developed by collecting data through a literature review on selected translated texts and with their original texts and then illustrating and comparing the nature of the relationship between them vividly and in depth.
The methodology used in this research is analyzing the way in which the culture bound concepts, rituals, habits, in other words cultural dynamics and un-translatables found in selected translated literary texts juxtaposing with their source texts representing prose, poetry and drama. Also, the research measures and weighs the effectiveness of translating these cultural dynamics while bringing to light the particular strategies used by the translator so as to convey it effectively, comprehensively and vividly enabling the reader of the target language to enjoy and feel it in the very same way that the source language reader does.

This research will be useful for translators and second language teachers and learners because the act of translation is also embedded in second language learning and teaching.

Keywords: Culture, Literary Translations, Linguistics

Culture is a complex and intricate phenomenon which differs from each and every community. It can be defined in many ways and one such definition is "Culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts".

The definition conveys that culture is a predominant phenomenon which can be experienced and witnessed through the community. In other words culture is a part and parcel of the community and the culture communicates the identity of one community to another community which holds a different culture, and then the identity or the uniqueness is communicated across. For an example the dog cry is articulated as "bow, bow" in most of the English speaking countries where as it is "buh, buh" for Sri Lankans and "wan wan" for Japanese, "gav-gav; guf-guf" for Russians, "wuff-wuff" for Germans; "mung-
mung; wang-wang" for Koreans and "kong kong" for Belinese. This contrast has occurred not because of the problem with dogs, but because of culture. So, the translator has to be aware of the culture of both source and the target languages. In literature, these words generate one of the effective literary techniques called "alliteration". Suppose that an English literary work is being translated into Japanese where the alliterative sound of dog bark has to be translated, if the translator is not aware of the culture of Japan, he or she might translate it literally, which is deprived of the alliterative effect, subsequently abolishes the amusement of the reader resulting a poor translation. Here the crucial issue is that the reader is unable to readily comprehend the ideas along with the alliterative effect, therefore, the real delight or the amusement of the source text will not be felt and enjoyed by the reader of the target language text. Also, it can be defined as a communicative defect. That's why most scholars define culture as "Culture is communication, communication is culture".

Anuradha Dingwancy describes it as "The processes of translation involved in making another culture comprehensible entail varying degrees of violence, especially when the culture being translated is constituted as that of the other"

Therefore Savory says translation is an art and Eric Jacobsen says it is a craft (Bassnet Susan, (2002). Translation Studies). Learning an art and a craft means it has to be experienced by the learner, if you are to learn dancing; you have to dance. Thus the translator first has to experience the original text written in source language and reproduce that particular experience in the exact way that he or she has experienced in target language. Literature mostly reflects culture, so it means that the translator has to experience the cultures of the both source and the target readers. The question is, is it practically possible? This happens because of the undeniable inter-relationship
between culture and literary translation, since in any literary document which is recorded in a language, all these three elements; literary translation, language and culture are interconnected.

The book titled "An anthology of Sinhalese Literature up to 1815" edited by Christopher Reynolds and in which selected ancient literary masterpieces of Sinhala literature have been translated into English by a panel of translators constituting native speakers of both Sinhala English. For an example, in that book, selected poems of Sigiri Graffiti have been translated into English as a joint contribution of two translators; where one's mother tongue is Sinhala and the other one's mother tongue is English; namely; S.Paranavitana whose mother tongue is Sinhala and W.G.Archer whose mother tongue is English. In another example the selected stories of "Pujavaliya" were translated by H.Peiris and L.C.Van Geyzel where Sinhala and English respectively are their mother tongues. This is one the feasible solutions for the above issue. Actually in my point of view, it produces a perfect translation; the reason is that the combination of culture, language and literature is kept intact in the translation because the native speakers of both the languages have jointly played the role as translators. Thus it is clear how tight the combination between language, culture and literature is and it cannot be neglected by the translator.

But, E.F.C. Ludowyk mentions in the preface of the above book (An anthology of Sinhalese Literature up to 1815) "On the other hand it is possible; however, that the cultivated reader, aware of the culture of the original, will be ready to go half-way of meet the translator" for which the great translations such as "Manuthapaya" by I.M.I.A Iriyagolla (Source Text: Les Miserables by Victor Hugo), Baddegama translated by Gunarathne (Source text: Village in the Jungle by Leonard Wolf), Mahalla saha Muhuda by Cyril C.Perera (Source
Text: Old Man and the Sea by Earnest Hemingway), Modol Doova by Ashley Halpe (Source text: Modal Doova by Martin Wickramasinghe), Muhuda Godagala by Ariyadasa Somathilake (Source Text: The Things Fall Apart by Chenua Achebe) bear witness.

Chinua Achebe is a novelist, poet, professor and critic born in Nigeria. His first novel and magnum opus, “Things Fall Apart” (1958), unveiled the intricate African culture to the world. The novel focuses on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences, and the clash of Western and traditional African values during and after the colonial era. Though the translator has not experienced Nigerian culture for sure, his profound readings on various cultures, knowledge in linguistics and practice in translation had enough potential to produce a successful translation.

Ariyadasa Somathilake being the translator of the book has translated the following proper names in the source text into the target language as follows:

**Ikemefuna** – අිකේමේෆුන
**Umuofia** – අමුළුෆිය
**Nwakibe** – නෑකිබේ
**Ogbefi Ezeugo** – එළාබී එොෂේගොෂි

As Achebe belongs to the Igbo clan, most probably as the scholars guess, his mother tongue would be one of the African languages called "Igbo" or "Ibo" which belongs to Niger-Congo languages whereas Sinhala belongs to Satam group of the Indo-European Family. Therefore both the languages carry two different phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic systems which can never be compatible with each other.
When analyzing phonologically, in the first two proper names, /f/ - the Voiceless Labio – Dental Fricative sound in the source language has been transliterated into orthographic symbol "m" in target language which is, in phonetic, a Voiceless bilabial stop /p/. Thus we can witness a sound change. As the phylogenic changes of Sinhala language reveals, Sinhala language underwent the phonemic change due to borrowing during the dawn of the era of the Modern Sinhala language. So the sound /f/ in the later period is not familiar to the elder generation. Therefore, the translator uses the sound /p/ which is more familiar with his target audience.

Transliterations of Nwakibie (නѡකිඩි) and Ogbefi Ezeugo (ඔඹී අජෙඩුගෝ) have also been transliterated into the target language in such a way that the target readers' tongue could be easily curved to pronounce it, by just disregarding the phonology of the source language. The initial two consonants in “Nwakibie” do not occur in the proper names of Sinhala Language which is the nature of Sinhala language or the culture of Sri Lankans. So the translator takes only the second consonant (w) and omits the first consonant (n), because he himself being a Sri Lankan with Sinhala as his mother tongue reckons that Wakibie is better in flavor in the Sri Lankan context than the Nakibie. In the case of Ogbefi Ezeugo also the translator is aware that it should be transliterated in such a way that the target reader is enabled to read smoothly without a hindrance to the continuous flow of reading. This predominantly brings to light the undeniable interrelationship between language and literary translation.

May be, that’s why Horst Frenz even goes as far as to opt for "art" but with qualifications, claiming that "translation is neither a creative art not an imitative art, but stands somewhere between the two".
Let us analyze the examples below as well.

"That was many years ago, twenty years or more, and during this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush fire in the *harmattan.*"

"පෙම්පහු නිෂ්පාදන අදහස් අපවාම්ප නෙමෝවට පිළිතුල සැකිල්ලට. එකින් මෙම්පහු නිෂ්පාදන අදහස් අපවාම්ප නෙමෝවට පිළිතුල සැකිල්ලට පිළිතුල සැකිල්ලට.

The word "harmattan" has been translated into Sinhala as "ර්‍යෝදුරඹම්* (distrikkayeh)*" because the word "harmattan" indicates the area which is covered by the dry and dusty West African trade wind. The African trade wind blows south from the Sahara into the Gulf of Guinea between the end of November and the middle of March (Winter Season). So it is typical to African people but not to the Sinhalese, therefore the translator has deftly used a word familiar to his target reader which deteriorates neither the meaning of source text nor the continuous concentration of the target reader.

"Sometimes another village would ask Unoka's band and their dancing *egwugwu* to come and stay with them and teach them their tunes."

"දේවන්ඹ සිට සමාවිතයට ආරශ්ඨඳ කියොම්කුම් පිවිසින් විකාසක් සිටියේ. නිදසුන් මේ මේයිමේ සිටි කියොම්කුම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම් කියොම්.

Here, we notice that the word "*egwugwu*" has been omitted by the translator in the translation because it is a cultural dance in the Igbo nations of whom this story is woven around and the translator is well aware that it cannot be readily understood by his target reader since the translator himself is a Sinhalese. So, as a translator he understands
that it is better to omit the word without hindering the understanding of the reader.

"Unoka went into an inner room and soon returned with a small wooden disc containing a kola nut, some alligator pepper and a lump of white chalk"

"I have kola" he announced when he sat down, and passed the disk over to his guest.

"Alligator pepper is known as grains of paradise, hepper pepper or mbongo spice. It is a North African spice and is used in Africa not only in food preparation but also in cultural practices, as medicine and as an accompaniment to kola nut. Most of the major Sinhala – English dictionaries do not carry an equivalent for "alligator pepper" as it is not available in Sri Lanka and it has been never in the acquaintance of Sri Lankans. Thus the translator uses the technique of omitting the word "Alligator" and translates the word "pepper" only.

The influence of culture is predominantly reiterated by the translation of "I have kola" into Sinhala as "මෙම උම්ම ඉතිස් (witak)", ඉතිස් (witak) is solely cultural to Sri Lankans and though there is no word which stands for the word "witak" in the source text, the translator adds it as an equivalent which is compatible with the situation depicted in the source text making the African culture familiar to Sri Lankans. When things are familiar, it is easy to understand it, get closer to it, feel and enjoy it. Thus it is realized that the influence of the culture cannot be denied in the literary translation and it is linked
A Study on the Relationship Among Culture, Language and Literary Translation

together by the language, in deeper reality, because the story is expressed in the medium of "language" and it is translated to another "language".

"As he broke the kola, Unoka prayed to their ancestors for life and health ........."

"කුල මැදි අති ත්‍රාමා, අති දිය මුළු සැදුම නැතා, දිය විශේෂ" (Madhura Dictionary), "මාලාසේකර ඉංගිරියන් ලැබේ විශේෂ, දිය නැතිවුරු" (Malalasekara Sinhala – English Dictionary, 2010 edition), none of the major dictionaries supply the equivalent to "මිලා පැරණි" and also the word "ancestors" carries the equivalents in Sinhala as "මිලා පැරණි" (Madhura Dictionary), "මාලාසේකර ඉංගිරියන් පැරණි සැදුම", "මාලාසේකර ඉංගිරියන්, පැරණි", "මාලාසේකර ඉංගිරියන් පැරණි" (Malalasekara Sinhala – English Dictionary, 2010 edition) not the equivalent "මිලා පැරණි සැදුම". However, the translator uses them, thus poignantly reiterating the fact that translator is not merely replacing the words given in dictionary from source language to target language, but he is "..... a creative artist who ensures the survival of writing across time and space, an intercultural mediator and interpreter, a figure whose importance to the continuity and diffusion of culture is immeasurable" (Page 05,Bassnet Susan, (2002). Translation Studies)

The ability of synchronizing between the two cultures in the translator has prominently been brought to light by the example below where the translator replaces "ekwe", "udu" and "ogene" which are traditional music instruments of Igbo people with the traditional music instrument of the target audience in the chunk below.
"He could hear in his mind's ear the blood-stirring and intricate rhythms of the *ekwe* and the *udu* and the *ogene* and he could hear his own flute weaving in and out of them, decorating them with a colourful and plaintive tune."

"සුනිස්‍යතියේ  ගොර මොට දුරාන්තවන්‍ය කරළ මෙන්, මොටු ආශ්‍රය මේවත් විකලු දැයි මකු හා මායිම් ອොප්කාවේ කුරු කාරණ සිය හා මායිම් ශිෂ්‍යට මුළු පැවසීබා මේවත්ය.

The interference of culture in literary translation is vividly brought out by the quotation below from "Things Fall Apart" by Chenna Achebe and its Sinhala Translation "Muhuda Godagala".

"Okonkwo had just blown out the palm-oil lamp and stretched himself on his bamboo bed ...."

"ඉශ්‍රන්ත මායිම් මායිම් වැඩි අද නැති ඉතිහාසික අනිකදා.

"Worshippers and those who came to seek knowledge from the god crawled on their belly through the hole and found themselves in a dark, endless space in the presence of Agbala. No one had ever beheld Agbala, except his priestess. But no one had ever crawled into his awful shrine had come out without the fear of his power. His priestess stood by the sacred fire which she built in the heart of the cave."

"මායිම් මායිම් උශ් වැඩි අද අහෝමන්න මුල්කාල අද නැති ඉශ්‍රන්ත මායිම් ආවි‍‍රන්ත අද මායිම් මායිම් මායිම් වැඩි අද අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න වැඩි අද අපේ වැඩි අපේ වැඩි අපේ වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි. මායිම් මායිම් උශ් වැඩි අද අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න අහෝමන්න වැඩි අද අපේ වැඩි අපේ වැඩි අපේ වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි වැඩි.
"Every year", he said sadly, "before I put any crop in the earth, I sacrifice a cock to Ani, the owner of all land. It is the law of our fathers.

"කුලා දැරියේ 3 විස්තර විශේෂය අවසන් ගැනීමේ කොටස කාරා ගැනීම අතර ගාරා වූ විශේෂය අවසන් විශේෂයේ මුලින්. මෙම කීර්ති පිලිබඳින් මාදු සොයේ අති දියයි."

"He took a pot of palm – wine and a cock to Nwakibie."

"බෙක්මාල්සි අපාර්ම් මුලින් අතර ගැනීම අතර දාන්තේ ගැනීම මාදු සොයේ අති දියයි."

Now let's refer the culture bound terms and their translations once they were detached from where they were planted as showed in above examples.

palm-oil - මොළුමිල්

priestess - සිස්මුතා සෑං සිස්

Worshippers and those who came - මාදු සොයේ අතර ගැනීම

- to seek knowledge from the god

shrine - අංගමණු

his power - සිංහ සොයේ

sacred fire - ව්‍යුහාවෙන්නේ සහිත කොඩන්

palm – wine - මොළුමිල්

Ani, the owner of all land - මුලින් අවසන්

law - අමොළුමිල්

Being a Sinhalese by descent, the translator is aware that the Sri Lankan culture is part of a Sri Lankan's life, so, we understand that the
above equivalents are not the dictionary entries. The translator replaces words from the Sri Lankan culture making it convenient for the target reader to understand. Bridging across two different cultures is necessary in translation because of the unbreakable relationship between culture and literary translation.

In the translation of the novel "Madame Bovari" written by "Gustave Flaubert" into Sinhala as "ලෝප් මොවරී" by Cyril C. Perera, the author translated the meaning given by the word "church calendar" in the source text as "ලෝප" not as "දෙළියන්නටේ ජාන ඔළුම" or "දෙළියන්නටේ ඔළුම" because those words do not create a familiar meaning or a clear picture in our mind about the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the literary translator being familiar with the culture of the target audience, picks the word "ලෝප" which is absolutely the most suitable, because was not solely concerned about the literal meaning but the cultural meaning. It is the task of the translator to liberate such words from the confines of their source language and allow them to live again in the language into which they are translated.

One of the greatest literary masterpieces in the entire world of fiction, "Les Miserables" written by the outstanding laureate "Victor Hugo" has been translated into Sinhala as "Manutapaya" by I.M.I.A Iriyagolla. The translator mentions in his preface reiterating the importance of meaning and conveying it as it is. The name of the main character of the original text is "Shawalsha (ʃəˈwəlʃə)" in French and he was named as "Jean Valjean (ʒɛ̃ vaʁ.lɛ̃)" in the English translation. This person was rejected or condemned by the

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public at the very beginning of the plot of the story. The words which convey meaning of the "rejected" or "condemned" and "public" in Sinhala are "Warjana" (සාර්යනට - waːrjana) and "Jana" (ජන - jana) respectively. Consequently the translator has coined the word as "Janawarjana" (ජනවාර්යනට - janaːwarːjana) which is incorporated with the situational meaning and resembles the English phonetic "Jean Valjean (jiːn vælˈdʒiːn)" as well.

"Yashodarawatha" is an elegy in quatrains vowed in a highly religious and cultural context. The author is anonymous and it is believed to be written in "Senkadagala Era" following the "Chula" tradition and employing the meter called "Samuduru Goth" available in Sinhala literature. Thus, according to these facts, it is clearly understood the translator has to use techniques in the process of translation, since there is an influence of culture and religion in the source text.

For four uncountables times one hundred thousand enos he resolved to fulfill the Perfections

For four times four uncountables times one hundred thousand eons he made that firm resolve

For twenty-four uncountables times one hundred thousand eons he made that same resolve

Then as a flower bud matures and comes to bloom, he became a Supreme Buddha
In the above example, the translator has violated the poetic form, meter and the rhythm, I reckon that she had to do it, because the cultural dynamics in the poem are so complicated and intricate, thus the translator has adhered to the theory of reproducing the meaning neglecting the poetic features. However, most importantly, she has preserved the meaning. "කොහොමද මෙ කොහොමද" is a very typical religious term confined to Buddhism which even a Buddhist him/herself can’t clearly imagine and feel the length of time described in that phrase. Here, the translator has tried her level best to re-create the real meaning of “කොහොමද මෙ කොහොමද”, මෙහෙදන් මෙහෙද මෙ කොහොමද" and "මෙහෙද මෙහෙද මෙ කොහොමද" into English and make the Western reader aware about it. Though it is tiresome to read such long lines, as a quatrain, she achieves the task of depicting the real picture of the source text in the mind’s eye of the target reader which is a key feature of a successful translation.

All in all, the selected literary texts; namely, "Things Fall Apart", "Les Miserables", "Yashodarawatha", “Ema Bovari” and their translations which were vividly analyzed in the research bring to light that the relationship among culture, language and literary translations are inter-related and harmonious where each entity is being sacrificed at the expense of other most of the time because they are interconnected. For example literary notion (from of the poem) of a quatrain has been compensated to secure the meaning of “කොහොමද මෙ කොහොමද” because English language is deprived of shorter term to determine the meaning of the original term. The real pronunciation of the names found in the source text of “Things Fell Apart” such as Nwakibie (නෙකිබි) and Ogbefi Ezeugo (ඉංග්‍රීසි අංග්‍රීසි) was sacrificed at the expense of the phonology of target language by dropping the consonant lies at the second position. Moreover, in comparing between the phonology of both the languages and the contextual meaning of the literary text "Jean Valjean" in English, it has become
"Janawarjana" (කෙට්ටුමා - janwa:ri:jana) in the translated text. Because of the cultural unfamiliarity, the language suffers; where "Alligator pepper" becomes only "pepper", "Church Calendar" becomes "almanac - අමානක", "palm oil" becomes "Coconut oil" and many other examples as described above; which means each entity influences each other. Accordingly, the research again proves along with the vivid examples that the harmonious inter-relationship among literary translation, culture and language is static and cannot be ignored by the translator.

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Epigenetic Modifications in Human Disease

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Abstract

Epigenetics is one of the most rapidly expanding fields in science. Growing interest in epigenetics is due to recent advances in understanding the underlying mechanisms in epigenetic phenomena and the prevalence of epigenetic contributions to human disease. This review focuses on the epigenetic mechanisms that control gene expression in a potentially heritable way and their role in health and disease. Among the epigenetic modifications of interest are DNA methylation, histone modifications, and related transcription inactivation associated with chromatin architecture. Granted epigenetic changes are required for normal development and health, disruption to any one of these systems can cause abnormal activation or silencing of genes. Such disruptions have been associated with cancers, intellectual disability, immune, neuropsychiatric and pediatric disorders. As a result, epigenetic therapy has become an interesting phenomenon to counteract the epigenetic modifications that lead to various human disorders.

Keywords: epigenetics, epigenetic modifications, DNA methylation, histone modifications, small non-coding RNA, chromatin architecture, epigenetic disorders, epigenetic therapy

Introduction

Epigenetics is the study of heritable chemical modifications of specific genes or gene-associated proteins, their activity and expression that do not involve a change in the underlying DNA sequence – a change in the phenotype without a change in the
genotype. These modifications include histone modifications, like methylation and acetylation as well as DNA methylation. Epigenetic changes occur naturally and are affected by several factors such as age, disease state or environmental stimuli (e.g. nutrition, lifestyle, toxin exposure).

The field of epigenetics evolved in the early 1940s as a result of the work of a group of scientists including the British embryologist Conrad H. Waddington and Swiss developmental biologist Ernst Hadorn. The term epigenetics, which was coined by Waddington in 1942, was derived from the Greek word “epigenesis” which originally described the influence of the genetic processes on development (Waddington, 1942).

The experimental findings of Conrad Waddington using Drosophila fruit flies led to the discovery of “genetic assimilation” (a process by which a phenotype originally produced in response to an environmental condition, later becomes genetically encoded) as a new evolutionary process (Piclucci and Murren, 2003). His studies were based on crossveinless trait (a trait that occurs at high frequency in heat-treated flies) of Drosophila. After a few generations, the trait was found in the population, without the application of heat, based on hidden genetic variation that has been assimilated in the organism’s genome (Slack and Waddington, 2002). Since then, research efforts have been focused on unraveling the epigenetic mechanisms involved in these types of changes.

Today, epigenetics has become one of the fastest-growing areas of genetics and a central issue in studies of development and disease. In recent years, there have been rapid advances in the understanding of the epigenetic mechanisms. These mechanisms, in addition to other regulatory events involved in transcriptional, ultimately regulate gene activity and expression during development and differentiation of cells.
Histone Modifications

Histones are the primary protein component of chromatin around which DNA winds. They undergo post-translational modifications that influence the chromatin arrangement (Figure 1a, Figure 1b), which in turn determine whether the associated chromosomal DNA will be transcribed or not. If chromatin is in a lightly packed form, it is active (euchromatin), and will be transcribed. The relaxed state of nucleosome arrangement in euchromatin makes the DNA accessible in these regions. Conversely, if chromatin is condensed, then it is inactive (heterochromatin), because of the inaccessibility to the transcription factors or chromatin-assisted proteins and will not be transcribed (Rando and Chang, 2009).

Function of chromatin is currently extended beyond the simple packaging of DNA and regulation of genetic information. It is also a dynamically adjusted entity that reflects the regulatory cues necessary to program appropriate cellular pathways. One possible way this programming take place is via histone post-translational modifications (Margueron and Reinberg, 2010). Core histones, in the form of an octamer consisting of two copies of H2A, H2B, H3 and H4, are wrapped by 147 bp DNA to form the nucleosome. Each core histone has an amino terminal tail that protrudes from the nucleosome. These amino terminals of the core histones are subjected to several types of multivalent modifications, including acetylation, methylation, phosphorylation, ubiquitination, SUMOylation and ADP-ribosylation (Rando and Chang, 2009). Such epigenetic modifications to histone proteins can alter the structure of chromatin resulting in transcriptional activation or repression (Margueron and Reinberg, 2010).
Acetylation of Histones

The acetylation/deacetylation of histones was the first epigenetic modification connected to biological activity (Feinberg and Vogelstein, 1983). It involves the enzymatic addition/removal of an acetyl group (COCH₃) from acetyl coenzyme A, to/from the amino acid residues (mainly lysine) at the N-terminus of histone tails. Two types of enzymes, histone acetyltransferase enzymes (HATs), and histone deacetylases (HDACs) take part in acetylation and deacetylation reactions respectively (Bhaumik et. al., 2007).

Positively charged lysine residues can bind tightly to the negatively charged DNA and condense nucleosomes, forming a closed chromatin structure, which is inaccessible to transcription factors (Feinberg and Vogelstein, 1983). Acetylation removes positive charges and reduces the affinity between histones and DNA, thereby opening the
condensed chromatin structure to allow easier access to promoter regions by the transcriptional machines (Bhaumik et. al., 2007).

In most species, histone H3 is primarily acetylated at Lys 9, 14, 18, 23, and 56, methylated at Arg 2 and Lys 4, 9, 27, 36, and 79, and phosphorylated at Ser 10 and 28, Thr 3 and Thr 11. Histone H4 is primarily acetylated at Lys 5, 8, 12 and 16, methylated at Arg 3 and Lys 20, and phosphorylated at Ser 1 (Bhaumik et. al., 2007). An imbalance in these modifications has been shown to associate with tumorigenesis and cancer progression (Bhaumik et. al., 2007). Thus, quantitative detection of various histone modifications would provide useful information for a better understanding of epigenetic regulation in cellular processes and support the development of HAT-targeted drugs as well HDAC inhibitors as anticancer agents.

**Methylation of Histones**

Histone methylation involves the transfer of one, two, or three methyl groups from S-adenosyl-L-methionine to lysine or arginine residues of histone proteins by histone methyltransferases (HMTs) (Figure 1a). It is associated with transcriptional activation, repression or silencing of specific genomic regions (Jenuwein and Allis, 2001). Generally, an enrichment of histone methylation is observed at H3K4, H3K36, or H3K79, and these epigenetic markers are associated with transcriptional activation. In contrast, the enrichment of histone methylation at H3K9, H3K20, or H4K27 is implicated in gene inactivation or silencing (Kouzarides, 2007).

The effect of histone methylation on gene function and chromatin state is dependent not only on the specific lysine residue modified, but also on the degree of methylation. Recent studies have shown trimethylation of H3K9, H3K27, and K4K20 are associated with
transcriptional inactivation or heterochromatin formation while mono-
methylation at these residues are distributed mostly in euchromatic
regions and are linked with gene activation (Barski et. al., 2007). For
example, a group of HMTs called protein arginine methyltransferases
(PRMTs) is involved in mediating mono or dimethylation of arginine
residues and have been found strongly implicated in diseases like
cancer. PRMT5 has been shown to play a role in the repression of
certain tumor suppressor genes such as retinoblastoma protein (RB)
tumor suppressors while PRMT7 overexpression has been observed in
breast cancer (Chen et. al., 1999). Thus, detection of activity and
inhibition of type II PRMTs as well as other HMTs would be
important in elucidating mechanisms of epigenetic regulation of gene
activation and silencing, as well as cancer diagnostics and
therapeutics.

Additionally, short non-coding RNAs have been shown to induce
heterochromatin formation via an RNA-induced transcriptional
silencing (RITS) complex, which when bound to short non-coding
RNA promotes H3K9 methylation and chromatin condensation
together with other epigenetic modifications (Carthew and
Sontheimer, 2009). In fact, the three major classes of short non-coding
RNAs; microRNAs (miRNAs), short interfering RNAs (siRNAs), and
piwi-interacting RNAs (piRNAs) have been shown to participate in
histone modifications, DNA methylation mediated heterochromatin
formation and gene silencing (Phillips, 2008). The long non-coding
RNAs (lncRNA), a major group of non-coding RNA, also participate
in targeted gene silencing through chromatin remodeling, nuclear
reorganization, formation of silencing domains and controlling the
entry of genes into silent compartments in modulating epigenetic
regulation (Mercer and Mattick, 2013).
DNA methylation

DNA methylation was the first recognized and most well-characterized epigenetic modification that is linked to transcriptional silencing, and is important for gene regulation in, development, and tumorigenesis. DNA methylation occurs by the covalent addition of a methyl group (CH$_3$) at the 5’- carbon of the cytosine ring, resulting in 5-methylcytosine (5-mC) (Figure 1b). In human DNA, 5-mC is found in approximately 1.5% of genomic DNA (Lister, 2009). In somatic cells, 5-mC occurs almost exclusively in the context of paired symmetrical methylation, a CpG site, in which a cytosine nucleotide is located next to a guanidine nucleotide.

Methylation of DNA is controlled by DNA methyltransferases (DNMTs), including DNMT1, DNMT3a, and DNMT3b. DNMT1 is responsible for the maintenance of established patterns of DNA methylation, by copying DNA methylation patterns from parental to daughter strands. DNMT3a and DNMT3b on the other hand mediate establishment of de novo DNA methylation patterns in early embryonic stem cells or cancer cells (Esteller, 2008).

As DNA methylation is predominantly found in regions of CpG clusters of the mammalian genome, these sites tend to cluster in regions of large repetitive sequences such as centromeric repeats or at the 5’ ends of many genes, called CpG Islands (CpGIs). In humans, 50-70% of all CpGs are methylated, mostly in heterochromatic regions. In contrast, euchromatic CpGIs remain largely unmethylated (Esteller, 2008). Thus, distribution patterns of CpG methylation are believed to control the gene silencing and protect chromosomal integrity by preventing reactivation of sequences that causes chromosomal instability, translocations and gene disruption.
Aberrant patterns of DNA methylation influence disease processes, especially those of human tumors. In cancers, global hypomethylation at repetitive sequences promotes chromosomal instability, translocations, gene disruption and reactivation of endoparasitic sequences leading to alterations in chromatin architecture, whereas local hypermethylation of CpGIs at the promoter region of tumor suppressor genes (TSGs) prevents activation of these genes. This epigenetic alteration can contribute to tumorigenesis.

Therefore, while epigenetic changes are required for normal development and health, they can also be responsible for some disease states. Disrupting any of the epigenetic regulatory systems can cause abnormal activation or silencing of genes. Such disruptions have been associated with various diseases.

**Epigenetics and diseases**

**Cancer**

The first human disease to be linked to epigenetics was cancer (Simmons, 2008). Researchers found that diseased tissue from patients with colorectal cancer had less DNA methylation than normal tissue from the same patients (Feinberg and Vogelstein, 1983). Since methylated genes are typically turned off, loss of DNA methylation can cause abnormally high gene activation by altering the arrangement of chromatin. On the other hand, too much methylation can undo the work of protective tumor suppressor genes.

Majority of the cytosines on CpG sites are methylated in mammals. However, there are stretches of DNA near promoter regions that have higher concentrations of CpG sites (CpGIs) that are free of methylation in normal cells (Simmons, 2008). These CpGIs become
excessively methylated (hypermethylated) in cancer cells, thereby causing genes that should not be silenced to turn off (Simmons, 2008). This abnormality is the trademark epigenetic change that occurs in tumors and happens early in the development of cancer (Egger, 2002). Hypermethylation of CpGIs can cause tumors by shutting off tumor-suppressor genes (Egger, 2002; Jones and Baylin 2002; Franklin and Mansuy, 2011). In fact, these types of changes may be more common in human cancers than in DNA sequence mutations (Simmons, 2008).

Furthermore, although epigenetic changes do not alter the sequence of DNA, they can cause mutations. About half of the genes that cause familial or inherited forms of cancer are turned off by methylation. Most of these genes, including O6-methylguanine-DNA methyltransferase (MGMT), MLH1, cyclin-dependent kinase inhibitor 2B (CDKN2B), and RASSF1A, which are tumor suppressor genes regulated by epigenetic modifications, normally suppress tumor formation and help repair DNA.

Hypermethylation can also lead to instability of microsatellites, which are repeated sequences of DNA. Microsatellites are common in normal individuals, and they usually consist of repeats of the dinucleotide CA. Too much methylation of the promoter of the DNA repair gene MLH1 can make a microsatellite unstable and lengthen or shorten it. Microsatellite instability has been linked to many cancers, including colorectal, endometrial, ovarian, and gastric cancers (Franklin and Mansuy, 2011).

**Intellectual disability**

Intellectual disability (ID) is characterized by impairment of intellectual abilities and by deficits in the capacity to adapt to the environment and the social milieu (Gropman and Batshaw, 2010).
Distribution of these diseases in the world is 2.5 % (Gropman and Batshaw, 2010). Mental retardation is a symptom of several neurodevelopmental disorders such as Rett, Prader-Willi, and Fragile X syndrome.

**Rett Syndrome**

Rett syndrome (RTT) is an X-linked neurodegenerative disorder. This disease is caused by a mutation in the methyl CpG binding protein 2 (MeCP2) gene that encodes a nuclear protein which attaches to methylated DNA and acts as a transcriptional repressor (Figure 2). Studies on MeCP2 have yielded surprising results in terms of the diversity of its functions with enormous potential for epigenetic regulation of target gene expression. MeCP2 was initially identified as a methyl-binding protein (Meehan, Lewis and Bird, 1992). Further investigations on MeCP2 function led to the discovery of its role as a transcriptional repressor and association with corepressor complexes such as mSin3A and HDACs (Nan, Ng and Johnson, 1998; Jones, Veenstra and Wade, 1998). Although this de novo mutation is possible in genes from both parents, it is more prominent in paternal gametes (Simmons, 2008). With this kind of situation, half of the females with classic RTT have mutation in MeCP2 gene while the males normally do not survive. Neonatal demise in males can be caused by a severe neonatal encephalopathy due to germline MeCP2 mutation. Milder X-linked intellectual disability syndrome in females is also caused due to the same reason.
Figure 2 Nucleus of female cell in Rett Syndrome. A: Both X-chromosomes are detected, by FISH. B: The same nucleus stained with a DNA stain (DAPI). The Barr body is indicated by the arrow, it identifies the inactive X (Xi) (Simmon, 2008).

Prader-Willi Syndrome

Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) is the first human imprinting disorder that has been discovered. Many of the imprinted genes are preferentially expressed mono-allelically in the brain (Gropman and Batshaw, 2010). PWS is characterized by severe hypotonia and feeding difficulties in early childhood. Insatiable appetite and obesity can be observed at later childhood. Severe behavioral problems and significant growth and language delays are also prominent symptoms of this disease (Simmons, 2008). PWS is caused by a paternal deletion in chromosome 15, maternal uniparental disomy (UPD) or imprinting mutation as illustrated in figure 3. During UPD both chromosome 15s come from the mother (Simmons, 2008). Hypomethylation of paternally inherited allele is also involved in small proportion of patients.
The preferred method of diagnosis is a “methylation analysis,” which detects >99% of cases, including all of the major genetic subtypes of PWS (deletion, uniparental disomy, or imprinting mutation). A “FISH” (fluorescent in-situ hybridization) test will identify those patients with PWS due to a deletion, but it will not identify those who have Prader-Willi syndrome by “UPD” (uniparental disomy) or an imprinting error.

Figure 3 Schematic diagram showing the deletion of 15q13 gene from paternal and maternal chromosomes in Prader-Willi Syndrome.
Fragile X Syndrome

Fragile X syndrome is the most frequently inherited mental disability, particularly in males. Both sexes can be affected by this condition, but because males only have one X chromosome, one fragile X will impact them more severely. Indeed, fragile X syndrome occurs in approximately 1 in 4,000 males and 1 in 8,000 females (Plazas-Mayorca and Vrana, 2011).

Fragile X arises from increasing the number of CGG triplet repeats within the initial 5' untranslated region of fragile X mental retardation protein (FMR1) gene. Numbers of CGG repeats are $6 \sim 40$ approximately. This value can be increased to 50-200, at premutation state and to $>200$ for full mutation state (Simmons, 2008). The reason for expansion of these repeats is hypermethylation of the promoter region of FMR1 gene that results in repression of FMR1 expression.
and subsequent loss of FMR1 protein. Normally methylation of CpGIs in the promoter region of gene prevents the gene expression by preventing transcription and translation (Simmons, 2008).

A specific genetic test (polymerase chain reaction [PCR]) can be performed to diagnose fragile X syndrome. This test looks for the expanded mutation (the triplet repeat) in the FMR1 gene. DNA testing detects more than 99 percent of individuals (both males and females) with Fragile X, as well as Fragile X carriers. (National Fragile X Foundation, 2012)

*Figure 5* Schematic diagram showing the normal and mutated FMR1 gene related to Fragile X syndrome.
Epigenetic Modifications in Human Disease

Figure 6 Illustration showing the symptoms related to the Fragile X Syndrome (A) and patients with the disease (B) (Fragile X syndrome, 2014).

Immunity & related disorders

Autoimmune diseases are a complex group of diseases that do not have the same epidemiology, pathology, or symptoms but do have a common origin. All autoimmune diseases share immunogenetic mechanisms mediated in part by several pleiotropic genes which produce apparently unrelated phenotypic effects (Anaya, 2010). Many studies over the years have shown that alterations in many loci and genes in the human genome cause these diseases. Therefore, it is important to underline the fact that autoimmune diseases may be generated by several alterations in the same epigenetic mechanism. Also, it is essential to understand that epigenetics is not the only mechanism that may cause autoimmunity. In fact, there are intrinsic
and extrinsic components (mutations, polymorphisms, and environmental factors) that predispose to autoimmunity.

As mentioned before, DNA methylation is the most widely studied mechanism in autoimmune diseases. Several studies have found global hypomethylation on the promoter regions in the cells targeted by diseases such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

**Systemic Lupus Erythematosus**

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) is a systemic multi-organ autoimmune disease characterized by autoantibody response to nuclear and/or cytoplasmic antigens. Several studies have shown that there is a global hypomethylation on the promoter regions such as ITGAL, CD40LG, PRF1, CD70, IFGNR2, MMP14, LCN2, and in the ribosomal RNA gene promoter (18S and 28S) that are overexpressed in the disease (Lei et. al., 2009). The DNA hypomethylation may also affect the chromatin structure of T-cells thus enhancing the overexpression of those genes (Lei et. al., 2009). This gene overexpression will cause cell hyperactivity, perpetuation of the immune response and consequently, the perpetuation of inflammatory response (Lei et. al., 2009).

**Rheumatoid Arthritis**

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a disease characterized by the progressive destruction of joints by invasive synovial fibroblasts. The RA synovial fibroblasts (RASFs) play a major role in the initiation and perpetuation of the disease, which is the reason why several epigenetic studies of RA are focused on these synovial cells. Researchers have found a global hypomethylation of these cells,
which could be responsible for the overexpression of inflammatory cytokines in synovial fluid. Some examples of hypomethylation in RA are in CpGIs upstream of an L1 open-reading frame and the Interleukin-6 (IL-6) promoter gene in monocytes (Neidhart et al., 2000). L1 is one of the major classes of repetitive elements that are spread throughout the genome. They are used as markers because they are methylated in normal synovial tissue. In synovial tissue from patients with RA, L1 is hypomethylated as a consequence of reduced expression of DNMTs (Bull et al., 2008). This reduction of methylation in inflammatory response promoter genes causes an overexpression of growth factors and receptors, adhesion molecules, and cytokines. In the end, these will cause irreversible phenotypic changes in synovial fibroblasts (Neidhart et al., 2000). The other example is the hypomethylation in CpG islands within the IL-6 promoter gene in monocytes. IL-6 is a proinflammatory cytokine that participates in B cell response. When this promoter is hypomethylated, there is an overexpression of IL-6 that will cause an overexpression of pro-inflammatory cytokines at the same time. This will be associated with a local hyperactivation of the inflammation circuit. There is also evidence that we can also find a hypermethylation mechanism in monocytes such as in the case of the CpG islands within the promoter of death receptor 3 (DR-3). DR-3 is a protein that causes apoptosis and activation of transcription factor NF-kappa-B (NF-κB). Down regulation of this protein due to hypermethylation of its promoter, results in resistance of RA synovial cells to apoptosis (Bull et al., 2008).

**Multiple Sclerosis**

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic inflammatory disease characterized by myelin destruction and is followed by a progressive degree of neurodegeneration. Recent studies have shown that the
promoter region of peptidylarginine deiminase type II (PAD2) is hypomethylated (Musse et al., 2006). PAD2 plays a key role in the citrullination process of myelin basic protein (MBP). Citrullination promotes protein autocleavage, which increases the probability of creating new epitopes and also modulates the immune response. In MS, PAD2 promoter region was found to be hypomethylation due to increased demethylase activity (Portela and Esteller, 2010). Hypomethylation of the PAD2 promoter, results in overexpression of PAD2 and an increase in the MBP citrullination process with a subsequent increase in the production of immunodominant peptides (Portela and Esteller, 2010).

Neuropsychiatric disorders

Psychiatric symptoms caused by neurobiological brain disorders are called neuropsychiatric disorders. Majority of these neuropsychiatric disorders have unknown, underlying causes. Recent discoveries provide evidences for the epigenetic regulation of diseases marked by neuropsychiatric symptoms such as depression, schizophrenia, and drug addiction. Epigenetics involved in here are linked to genetics, environmental factors and behavior (Portela and Esteller, 2010). Gene transcription of neurons in the brain is also regulated by the epigenetic modifications.

Depression

Depression is a common, chronic and debilitating disease, which affects someone’s strength or ability to carry on regular activities. Long lasting nature and delayed response to the anti-depressant treatment of depression is evidence for its involvement with epigenetic regulation. In accordance with the studies done with animal
models (rat, hippocampus), depression involves the methylation of *Bdnf* promoter (Schroeder et. al., 2010).

**Schizophrenia**

Epigenetic regulators of gene expression including DNA cytosine methylation and post-translational histone modifications could play a role for some of the molecular alterations associated with schizophrenia. For example, in prefrontal cortex of subjects with schizophrenia, abnormal DNA or histone methylation at sites of specific genes and promoters is associated with changes in RNA expression (Akbarian, 2010).

**Drug addiction**

Cocaine and nicotine are two drugs that humans get addicted. This is a psychiatric disorder that affects the mesolimbic dopamine system. Many studies have been carried out in relation to drug addiction. However, several problems like (the reason for the persistence of addictive behaviors long after drug abstinence) remain unresolved (Anaya, 2010).

**Pediatric Syndromes**

In addition to epigenetic alterations, certain mutations that affect components in the epigenetic pathway that are responsible for several syndromes have been identified: DNMT3b in ICF (immunodeficiency, centromeric instability and facial anomalies) syndrome, MeCP2 in Rett syndrome, ATRX in ATR-X syndrome (α-thalassemia/mental retardation syndrome, X-linked), and DNA repeats in facioscapulohumeral muscular dystrophy (Portela and Esteller, 2010).
Rett syndrome

In Rett syndrome, mutations in MECP2 protein cause abnormal gene expression patterns within the first year of life. Girls with Rett syndrome display reduced brain growth, loss of developmental milestones and profound mental disabilities (Simmons, 2008; Portela and Esteller, 2010).

ATR-X syndrome

ATR-X syndrome also includes severe developmental deficiencies due to loss of ATRX, a protein involved in maintaining the condensed, inactive state of DNA. This pediatric syndrome is associated with alterations in genes and chromosomal regions necessary for proper neurological and physical development.

The diversified knowledge and technologies in epigenetics over the last ten years have given a better understanding of the interplay between epigenetic modifications, gene regulation and human diseases. This has provoked interest in development of new approaches for molecular diagnosis and disease treatments — epigenetic therapy (Simmons, 2008; Portela and Esteller, 2010).

Epigenetic therapy

As discussed above, there are many diseases involving epigenetic changes. Therefore, it seems reasonable to attempt to counteract these modifications as a therapeutic approach. Unlike DNA sequence mutations, epigenetic modifications are reversible by nature. Thus, these changes seem an ideal target for therapy. The most popular of these treatments aim to alter either DNA methylation or histone acetylation.
One approach in epigenetic therapy is the reactivation of genes that have been silenced due to epigenetic modifications. Several drugs aimed at inhibiting DNA methylation have been designed which include 5-azacytidine, 5-aza-2'-deoxycytidine, etc (Egger, 2002). These drugs are mistaken for cytosine residues and thus get incorporated into DNA during replication. After incorporation into DNA, these drugs are able to block DNMT enzymes thus inhibiting DNA methylation.

Several drugs aimed at histone modifications have also been designed and are referred to as histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors. The function of HDACs is to remove acetyl groups from DNA, which condenses chromatin and thereby stops transcription. Inhibition of this process using HDAC inhibitors will turn on transcription. The most commonly used HDAC inhibitors are phenylbutyric acid, SAHA, depsipeptide and valproic acid (Egger, 2002).

Epigenetic processes and changes are so widespread, which require careful handling and caution. Non-selective activation of gene transcription in normal cells could make them cancerous, where the treatments could cause the very disorders they are trying to counteract. Thus, successful epigenetic treatments require selectivity towards abnormal cells. Despite this possible drawback, epigenetic therapy is beginning to look increasingly promising. In fact, the researchers are finding ways to specifically target abnormal cells with minimal damage to normal cells.

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Changes in the Economic Role of Women of the Sinhalese Society in Sri Lanka from the 17th Century up to the 19th Century

D.T. Koggalage

Abstract
The aim of this article is to look into the economic role of Sinhalese women both in the Kandyen and Maritime Provinces during the period from the 17th century to the 19th century in which one region was under the indigenous rule and the other was under colonial rule. The article discusses the economic conditions of the Sinhalese women during the pre-colonial era referring especially to primary sources and also how changes took place in her economic role due to colonial impact. It can be concluded that in the Kandyen era, women played a secondary role in the economy and were dependent upon the male members of the family. However, in order to safeguard her economic well-being there was a specific mechanism which functioned through traditions ensured by the law. And with regard to the women of the Maritime Provinces it can be assumed that under the colonial rule the economic role of Sinhalese women of the Maritime areas changed and they were not given a more progressive role. In fact they were ignored altogether and left to fend for themselves in whatever manner the new system allowed them to.

Keywords: Economy, Sinhalese women, Colonial rule

The aim of this paper is to look into the economic role of the Sinhalese women both in the Kandyen and Maritime Provinces during the period from the 17th century to the 19th century in which one region was under the indigenous rule and the other was under colonial rule.
At the dawn of the 17th century, there were two distinct administrative regions in Sri Lanka; the base for such a division is the colonial experience. The first region was the Maritime Provinces which were under the Portuguese rule by the turn of the century (Abeyasinghe, 1966; de Silva, 1972). By early 17th century the Dutch displayed interested in establishing trading contacts with Sri Lanka. They have established their power in the Maritime areas after the Portuguese in the middle of the 17th century (Goonewardena, 1958; Arasaratnam, 1958). During the last decade of the 18th century, this region was seized by the British (Mendis, 1971; Colvin R. de Silva, 1953). The second region was the Kandyan Kingdom. This was an independent, indigenous state until its fall to the British in 1815. The Kingdom of Kotte began to fall into the manipulative hands of the Portuguese during the 16th century. Parallel to this political turmoil, the Kandyan Kingdom gradually became the major indigenous state. This process gathered momentum especially after the fall of the Sitavaka Kingdom in late 16th century (Dewaraja, 1972). Thus by the 17th century the Maritime Provinces of Sri Lanka were under Western colonial powers and the Kandyan Kingdom, a somewhat ‘land locked’ territory to the world outside, remained the indigenous state of the country.

An understanding of this territorial division, which incidentally was a political one, is vital for the study of the economic history of post-colonial Sri Lanka. The economy of the Kandyan Kingdom can be called an ‘indigenous economic system’ which was basically a closed and a primarily subsistence economy. In the Maritime Provinces the situation was somewhat different. By the dawn of the 17th century it had already experienced the colonial impact for nearly a century. The economy was ‘open’ in the sense that it was utilized by colonial powers for their international trading activities. The indigenous communities were sometimes given opportunities to participate in such activities although it exploited them more than providing them
with opportunities. However, the region became more economically accessible to the outer world by the 17th century. But one could not overlook the fact that even before the coming of the Portuguese the Maritime areas were open to the rest of the world through various economic activities via ports such as Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee. However, the region was ‘partially closed’ for the reason that, the socio-economic structure of the indigenous community was not adequately transformed or equipped enough to grasp the change of the new economic scenario. They were not allowed to or prepared to discard the existing indigenous system altogether while at the same time they had to face the challenges of a new system. In the situation of the cinnamon peelers for instance, peeling cinnamon was the rajakariya or the compulsory service to the government which had been assigned to a group of people in a particular caste for generations. Thus, it was a part of a tradition for which the Western powers had no greater regard. But since the international demand for Sri Lankan cinnamon was on the rise the colonial rulers retained the existing rajakariya for cinnamon peeling by not letting them find their livelihood elsewhere under the new rulers. This dichotomy, it can be said, is a result of a pre-modern economic system coming into contact with a modern economic system. This situation creates a dualism where the indigenous system becomes complex with the simultaneous functioning of two systems, i.e. the indigenous system and the system created by the colonial rule (‘The concept of dualism implies a concept of a “whole” within which there are two discernible parts....The emergence of a dualism in history of specific communities and in specific parts of the globe has been broadly explained by various writers as being the result of a sudden cultural-contact between what are called “traditional societies” and the emerging post “industrial revolution” capitalist societies of the Western world.’, Kurukulasuriya, 1983: 165).
The aim of this essay is to study the change of the economic role of women of the Sinhalese society of the Kandyan and Maritime areas of Sri Lanka during the period under review.

In gender studies, one of the key theories regarding history of mankind is that, civilization intensified the definition of socio-economic roles based on gender. Peter N. Stearns, a modern historian who has done extensive research on gender and history points out: ‘While civilization developed, amid contacts but also the limitations of exchange, gender systems – relations between men and women – had been taking shape as well. Indeed, the biggest change affecting gender – the rise of agriculture – predated civilization itself’ (Stearns, 200: 13). It could be said that by the 17th century the economic role of men and women in Sri Lankan Sinhalese society were well defined. This was more pronounced in the Kandyan setting.

The first part of this paper would investigate the nature of the economic role of the Kandyan women during the period under review. The following view of Boserup, a modern scholar, on various stages of a primarily agricultural societies in general and the role played by males and females is of immense importance in this context: ‘...where population is sparse and swidden (shifting cultivation) is the basis of the economy, women perform most of the work; with greater density of population and plough agriculture, men do more work than women, and where land is irrigated and intensely formed, both put in a great deal of hard work’ (Whyte and Whyte, 1982:18-19). If one is to define the role of the Sinhalese women of the Kandyan society in its agricultural setting at the time, it could be said that she was in the second stage of the process which Boserup has described.

At the time the Kandyan Kingdom was a politically matured unit and with a well defined socio-economic structure. It had a moderate
population density and the inhabitants used plough agricultural method for cultivation (Knox, 1681(1981): 105-110). Thus, as Boserup pointed out in general, in Kandyan economy too, men’s role was more prominent in agricultural activities. In gaining information about the Kandyan economic system the description given by Robert Knox (Robert Knox lived in the Kandyan Kingdom during the reign of Rajasimha II as a captive of the King and wrote a vivid account of the country and its inhabitants.) is of immense value. Although there are certain lapses and inaccuracies in his accounts regarding specific persons or events (Goonewardena, January 1958: 39-52).

Knox clearly indicates that there were separate and well defined roles for men and women in agriculture in Kandyan society. According to Knox a man’s role in agriculture was to attend to major tasks such as ploughing the land, sowing seeds and reaping the harvest (Knox: 108-110). According to him, women did the weeding, transplanting and bringing the harvest to the threshing floor and they were responsible for reaping crops such as kurakkun or tana (Knox:108-110 and 112). These were not regarded as her chorus at domestic sphere since she earned a payment (although not in money but in kind) by working in other villagers’ fields too. Knox describes this earning as warapol (Knox, 110). Kapila Vimaladharma, a modern researcher who looked into the economic conditions of Kandyan women is of the opinion that this was not a payment in kind but just a custom or tradition prevalent in Kandyan agriculture (Vimaladharma, 2003: 145). However, since the agricultural system and economy of the Kingdom were ruled by the traditional customs, warapol can be regarded as an earning of sorts for the women’s labour in an agricultural system where collective labour was valued immensely.

Thus it is clear that the women had a specific role in agricultural activities. However, it can be defined as a secondary role since the
main activities seem to have centered on men. What is important here is that although it appears to be a secondary role, the women's role in agriculture was considered equally important. This was evident from the fact that, be it in the domestic sphere or in the public sphere (such as in collective agricultural work), men did not interfere with women's work or duties. Knox notes this by saying: ‘...it is accounted a disgrace for the man to meddler or make with those affairs, that properly do belong unto the Women’ (Knox: 244). What was the ‘work’ he refers to? It was threshing paddy to get rice, to supply water and fuel, to prepare vegetable for cooking and to keep a fire at the foot of the beddings of the members of the family throughout the night, at home; and in the public sphere she was responsible for above mentioned agricultural work along with animal husbandry which again was a collective work. What is the basis of this definition of the separation of roles? Professor Tilaka Mettananda is of the opinion that the base for such separation of roles was not the laborious nature of the work or the women's level of strength. She elaborates on this point by pointing out that although women were given lighter tasks such as weeding in the field she was used to do much heavier work at home (Mettananda, 1994: 130). This is evident from Knox's words that she was responsible for supplying water and fuel and threshing paddy. Thus it can be assumed that the base for such defining of roles was not labour but authority. Since the man was regarded as the breadwinner of the household, it was quite important for the woman to have a secondary role in economic activities. This helped the family to maintain the stratification of the levels of authority of the members of the household. According to Max Weber, in a patriarchal society (Although there is no unanimity in this regard, Kandyan society is generally considered as a patriarchal society with exceptional characteristics such as the Binna marriage system where the generally accepted role of women of most of the pre-modern patriarchal societies in Asia is different to some extent.), the authority of the head
of the household would be retained through the physical and mental dependency of the wife on him (Weber's concept is summarized in, Bendix, 1977: 330). This was extremely vital that it was maintained as an accepted custom for men and women to have their separate roles in the socio-economic sphere. It can be assumed that similar rule is applied when defining the roles of men and women of the Kandyan agricultural economy.

What should be emphasized here is that it was a separation of roles but not a degradation of women. In present criterion it can be assumed that this was discrimination based on gender. However, in a situation where even the man who was supposed to be the breadwinner of the family was not in a fully independent economic status in a system based on land tenure for service duties, one has to accept the fact that this was not sexual discrimination but a defining of roles with a purpose. The purpose, as mentioned before was to retain the levels of authority. Moreover, in a pre-modern society where labour was supplied from the family itself every person in the family mattered. Therefore, whatever their traditional role was, it was inappropriate for a person whether male or female to meddle with the other's work: simply it was against the custom.

Trade was not a money-based, income generating economic activity in the Kandyan society (Trade was carried out with the outside world by the state. Kandyans, as individuals were seldom involved in trade. When they did partake in trade it was in small scale and in the manner of exchanging goods or the barter system. Most of the trading activities were carried out by the Muslims or the Moors.). Thus, apart from agriculture, the other prominent economic activity was "skilled services based on the caste system which determined the land tenure, social and economic activities and the social status of the Kandyans (see, Pieris, 1956). In general there were two kinds of services in
which women were involved i.e. the traditional customary services which had specific importance and those which can be regarded as means of livelihood. However, in some instances, the two services intermingled each other. One example is the work of washerwomen. Their livelihood which was defined by the caste system was washing cloth. But at the same time these women were a part of the annual Dalada Perahera (Procession of the Tooth Relic) where they would walk with the Karanduva (Casket of the Tooth Relic) as members of the castes which served the Karanduva (Knox: 224). Besides, there were female dancers who were called Digge Dancers and Aalatti Ammavaru who served the Tooth Relic. These women seem to have served in a ceremonial capacity (Vimaladharma: 127-133). Their work cannot be defined as a means of livelihood: it was merely a continuation of the tradition. However, even for these services sometimes they were granted with land and other properties. However, it is clear that most of these land grants were not actual payments for services but grants made in appreciation of the services with a view of the well being of the family and ensuring the continuance of particular services for generations to come.

There were women who served the Monarchs as well. One such group was the female cooks who worked at the Royal Palace (Knox: 154). The records of various land grants refer to these women as Mulutengei Mahatmayo, a phrase which indicates honorary status (Vimaladharma: 124). Another instance was the three Ilangam or categories for Palace entertainment, i.e. Neitoon, Pichchamal and Vahala. It was reported that Sinhalese women along with Malabar and Moor women danced in these troops (Vimaladharma: 124). Another important service was the Kiri Mahage position which required women from aristocratic families to look after the children of the royal family (Vimaladharma: 124-125). There were women who assisted the queens and ladies of the royal family who were also from aristocratic families (Knox: 54).
What is difficult here is to identify the fine line between the livelihood and the continuation of tradition, especially regarding the women of the higher levels of the social stratum.

But in lower levels of the caste hierarchy, the services although ceremonial and traditional when it comes to instances such as Dalada Perahera, were also the livelihood of the families concerned. The important fact here is that in this instance there is a difference between the roles of the Kandyan women based on their social status. Women from higher castes usually carried out specific ceremonial task or service to the royal family. Although they were rewarded for their services, that was not their livelihood. But women from lower levels of the hierarchy although acted sometimes in ceremonial capacity, contributed their services to the industry which was the livelihood of their families. These contributions are evident in folksongs of the Kandyan society. These songs clearly indicate that women contributed directly to some industries such as weaving. This is apparent from Pannan Kavi or Kapu Yantare Kavi or the singing which involved the caste duties such as weaving baskets or weaving clothes. However, there are other instances where this direct involvement is not evident. One example is the Sakaporuwe Kavi or singing involved with the potters industry, where women’s contribution is not mentioned (Vimaladharm: 134-136). It can be concluded that in those instances women may have contributed as mere assistants since they were required to help out in all the activities of the family. Skills such as Pottery may have come from generation to generation through the male line. This can be assumed by a description of the artisans by Knox: ‘No Artificers even change their Trade from Generation to Generation; but the Son is the same as was his Father, and the Daughter marries only to those of the same Craft: and her Portion is such Tools as are of use, and do belong unto the Trade...’ (Knox: 206). Thus, it is clear that even in these industries women played a
secondary role. Again this was the division based not on labour but on authority. These roles were continuously maintained through generations where a father shall grant his son the skill he gained from his own father while for the daughter he will grant a portion of tools required by her husband to carry forward the industry of the caste.

With reference to the women’s status in ancient China, Dr. Kumari Jayewardena points out that when doing research on women’s status one cannot ignore the fact that even in a same society there would be diversification of women’s status according to the class stratification of that society (Jayewardena, 1986: 171). This idea cannot be ignored when studying the Kandyan society since there was a strict stratification of the society not based on class but on caste.

It seems that women from the highest strata of the society have played specific roles which were not directly involved with their livelihood. Even in the domestic sphere, it could be assumed they had less work. However, Knox points out that even the women who belonged to aristocratic families were involved in household chores although there were servants (Knox: 202). Although this confirms the assumption that they worked in the domestic sphere it also implies that they did it only to continue the tradition of being a good house-wife. But it seems that they had the option either to work or to supervise the work of the servants. This may be the case with the public sphere too i.e. they performed caste duties and services to the royals not as a livelihood but as a tradition. In reality the economic burdens were borne by the women of lesser privileged castes.

Another point which should be emphasized here is that there were women who earned their living through means which seemed to have been regarded as low or shameful. Referring to prostitutes, Knox mentions that prostitution was not allowed by the King (Knox: 70).
This indicates that it was an unlawful and unethical livelihood which must have been taken up by a few Sinhalese women. Slavery was not regarded as a livelihood. In fact it was an institution in the social system, where the slaves were allowed to lead a normal life and were given land and cattle. The only difference Knox saw in them was that they themselves were not allowed to keep slaves (Knox: 208). What is important here is that the slave woman must have contributed to her family's livelihood as any other woman of the society.

However, in general, as mentioned before, it is clear that the Kandyan woman played an economic role which was secondary to that of a man. But, the role was as vital as the main role played by the man in maintaining the pre-modern economic structure of the Kandyan society. In the Kandyan context the society had traditionally accepted the women's economic role as a dependent one. But what was unique in this system was how the society took responsibility for this dependent status of women. This is evident from the customary law of the Kingdom. The law, being very progressive in some aspects when compared to similar conditions elsewhere in the world, had given Kandyan women the economic security they needed in a secondary economic role. In the first place, they had the right to inherit, acquire and dispense property with a considerable amount of freedom. Incidentally, in marriage their property was not amalgamated to that of the husband or the property which can be defined as acquired jointly. This, according to Hayley, a compiler of the aspects of traditional Kandyan Law, is a very progressive aspect of the law when compared to the laws in Europe at that time (Hayley, 1923: 285). Secondly, the law assured that the women of the society would not be left in a destitute state due to the negligence of male members of the family who had the economic power (Koggalage, 2006). It is important to note here that a lapse on the part of the male members was remedied through courts and there are plenty of instances where
such cases were recorded (Reports of the Judicial Commissioner, lot no. 23 of the National Archives, refer to such cases which came before the law courts as late as in the 1930s.). For example, a husband cannot leave his wife without ensuring her maintenance and his obligation ends only after when she entered into marriage again (Knox: 248).

Thus, it can be concluded that in the Kandyan era, women played a secondary role in the economy which led them to an economically dependent state upon the male members of the family. However, in order to safeguard her economic well being there was a specific mechanism which functioned through tradition and ensured by the law.

The second part of this paper would focus on the general scenario of the women's economic role prior to the colonial experience in the Sinhalese society of the Maritime Provinces.

In the Kotte Kingdom the economic condition in general was primarily a subsistence agricultural one. Apart from agriculture, trade was an important aspect of the economy – both internal and external (de Silva, 1995: 37-60). The social hierarchy was again based on a caste system which was not altogether identical with the Kandyan caste system. By the 15th century there were some twenty-six castes which were given specific livelihood by the tradition. However, Professor C.R. de Silva points out that by the sixteenth century there are reports indicating that although the castes were there, the specific livelihood given to them in the Janavamsa had changed (de Silva, 1995: 47-48). However, it can be assumed, although the role of some castes may have undergone change still a specific service or services were assigned to each caste. The land tenure system in the Maritime Provinces was also much more complicated than that in the Kandyan
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system although some characteristics are common to both regions. Basically aristocratic families had nindagam – villages given to them by the King and in those villages their direct share was muttetu. The other lands of the village were given to villagers based on their services and they were called pangu. Again there were other various tenure systems such as otu and ande (de Silva, 1995: 37-60).

In this economic system too, it seems that the women played a less prominent role. In agriculture, they were given secondary roles such as taking care of the crops. The Parevi Sandesaya mentions women who were chasing away the birds from the paddy fields (Parevi Sandesaya, 1958: verse 111). Both Selalihini Sandesaya (Selalihini Sandesaya, 1990: verse 38) and Gira Sandesaya (Gira Sandesaya, :verse 76) refer to El Geviliyo whom G. S. B. Senanayake identifies as women who stayed at paddy fields to protect the crop (Selalihini Sandesaya: verse 121). Apart from this, the women were also responsible for animal husbandry. There is reference to Gopalu Liyo or women who looked after cattle in Tisara Sandesaya (Tisara Sandesaya, 1985: verse 87) and Gira Sandesaya (Gira Sandesaya: verse 75). Another important aspect was trade. Tisara Sandesaya (Tisara Sandesaya: verse 76) and Gira Sandesaya (Gira Sandesaya: verse 60) both refer to women who were involved in trade. Commenting on the description of Gira Sandesaya, Professor Indrani Munasinghe says that it is evident that the women at the time were involved in trading at market places or open spaces under shady trees (Munasinghe, 2005: 80). According to Professor Munasinghe, there is evidence to indicate that women were involved in making cotton thread even before 14th century A.D. She also points out that there were women who worked in the pottery industry. She further states that these women may have helped the family trade (Munasinghe: 83-84). Another occupation was working as maids. There were two categories i.e. maids who worked in the temples and those who
worked in houses. They were paid in money (kahavamu) or rice (Munasinghe: 90). *Hamsa Sandesaya* refers to such maids called desi who carried things on their heads at Kotte (*Hamsa Sandesaya*, 1985: verse 125).

According to all instances mentioned above, it can be assumed that the women of the Maritime area had a secondary role in agricultural activities. There were women who contributed to the family industry and some also worked as maids. The marked difference from the Kandyan scene is the involvement of women in trade. This indicates that the Maritime area which was more open to trade had given access to women at least in domestic trading activities. What we can see here is a more open economic role for women although again it is limited to several specific areas and it was also a secondary role. This leads us to conclude that in this region too the male community was regarded as main bread-winners and key economic players. However, it could also be assumed that the women’s economic role in the littoral was little more dynamic when it is compared with that of the Kandyan society. The reason for this may be that the Maritime region was more open to the world. This flexibility and openness are evident when we compare the women’s attire depicted in temple murals of the Maritime and Kandyan regions during the same period. At Totagamuva Raja Maha Vihara, a temple in Galle district, the women in the murals are portrayed with clothes printed in colours regardless of their social status (Totagamuva murals in, Chutiwongs et al, 1990). These clothes which may have been imported were common in Galle area where export-import trade was a part of the economic activities. Whilst in murals of Sooriyagoda or Madavela Viharas of the Kandyan Kingdom which belongs to the same period had depicted women in pure white clothes most of the time (Sooriyagoda and Madavela murals in, Chutiwongs et al, 1990). There are occasions where women such as Amittatapa, who was regarded as an evil woman in Buddhist literature
wearing colourful clothes (murals at Degaldoruva Raja Maha Viharaya, Kandy.). This may also indicate the attitude of the Kandyan community towards the opening up of the Maritime society to the external world (Koggalage, 2007). Thus, it can be said that the slight difference in women's economic role may be due to the more dynamic nature of the general economy of the Maritime area.

There were other occupations too. One was dancing. But, it is not clear whether this was regarded as a tradition or a livelihood of this group of women. In the *Tisara Sandesaya* (*Tisara Sandesaya*: verses 165-179) there is a separate part which describes the dancers. The important fact here is that these dancers were related to entertainment and not to religious activities. In the *Selalihini Sandesaya* there is reference to women who danced in the shrine (*Selalihini Sandesaya*: verses 72-76). This is more in line with tradition than a sheer livelihood. Another noted feature in *Sandesa Kavya* (messenger poems) is the description of prostitutes known as *Vaishya or Bisaru Liya* (*Tisara Sandesaya*: verses 11 and 27; *Hamsa Sandesaya*: verse 17; *Selalihini Sandesaya*: verse 23). Since the beauty of these women were appreciated by the authors of these poems, incidentally some of whom were monks, it could be assumed that it was not an illegal trade at the time. Nevertheless, it may have had a reputation as a corrupt trade. Again these factors indicate that the strictly traditional demarcation of women’s economic role in the Kandyan Kingdom could not be seen in the Maritime areas.

However, even in these areas women’s role was basically confined to the household chorus. According to Professor Munasinghe, a woman’s talent for cooking was much appreciated and regarded as a special quality in her (Munasinghe: 85-87). In *Sandesa Kavya* the woman’s obligation to her family, her duty towards the husband and her ability to attend to the household chorus and also her thriftiness
were very much appreciated (for a description of an 'ideal Buddhist woman' see, *Kavyashekharaya*, 1966: 184, 186 and 189).

Thus, it could be assumed that she was assigned an economic role of secondary nature. How the society valued this contribution was not very clear as in the Kandyan context. It can be said that women of the Maritime areas may not have experienced the well kept economic security in its strict sense from the traditional law at the time. At the same time they may have got the opportunity to earn their living in more unconventional ways since the society which they were a part of was also open to constant change when compared to the Kandyan society.

The third part of this paper would focus on the question whether colonial experience had changed these roles of the Sinhalese women.

At the outset it can be said that, during the two centuries under review the conditions of the Kandyan economic structure has not undergone any drastic change. The economic activities were disturbed during the Portuguese attacks in early 17th century but such onslaughts did not fundamentally change the existing system. Nor the social conditions which facilitated the functioning of the economic system changed notably (Dewaraja, 1995). The changes started to trickle in after the British conquest of the Kandyan Kingdom in 1815. Even then, drastic social changes were not brought about by the British during the initial years of their rule (Kulasekera, 1984). Thus, it can be said that it took some time even after early 19th century to change the economic conditions and role of the Kandyan women.

However, in the Maritime Provinces the conditions changed earlier. According to Professor S. Arasaratnam, during the Portuguese rule the indigenous administrative system did not change drastically. He
points out that the Portuguese undertook to retain the existing system by the Malvana Convention of 1597. He further says that although there were sufferings to the people due to the mishandling of the system by the Portuguese there were no notable changes in the existing administrative framework (Arasaratnam: 120). However, he further states that, since the system was governed by a set of unwritten customs and usages it was ‘impossible for an outsider to study the system in theory and master its working without years of actual experience in its administration’ (Arasaratnam: 120-121). Professor K.W. Goonewardena offers a similar explanation regarding the Portuguese administration. He also stresses the fact that although the Portuguese promised to retain the existing system in 1597, it was manipulated by the Portuguese officials for their own needs (Goonewardena, 1958: 153). What these two scholars point out is that although the Portuguese retained the existing administrative system it began to undergo changes due to the alien nature of a foreign rule (Abayasinghe, 1995: 123-137).

It seems that the case was the same with the Dutch, Dr. U.C. Wickramaratne describes the Dutch as ‘continuators not innovators’ (Wickremeratne, 1996: 27). Again they wanted to retain the existing system. Especially in the economy, the main system of the Dutch was to get maximum profit through minimum expenditure. To achieve this goal they manipulated the traditional institutions to the utmost (Arasaratnam: 121). However, changes were inevitable. For example, although the Dutch retained the service tenure system in principle, it was changed in spirit when they used it in large scale works (Arasaratnam: 136). Furthermore, they have used the existing system of law in the Maritime areas if they were only ‘clear and reasonable’ (Nadaraja, 1973: 10).
Where do all these observations lead us to? They imply that indeed the existing system has started to undergo changes in the hands of the foreign powers. This includes the economy. What has happened to the women in such a changing situation?

In order to solve the problem, it is important to look into the colonial attitude towards indigenous societies. Simply they did not like the general picture – whether it was the Portuguese, the Dutch or the British – they did not understand the prevailing social conditions and labeled the latter as unacceptable. This is evident from the observations made by Ribeiro (Ribeiro, 1999: 50), a Portuguese writer who criticized the Sinhalese marriage system: ‘Their marriages are a ridiculous matter. A Girl Makes a contract to Marry a man of her own caste...and if the relatives are agreeable they give a banquet and unite the betrothed couple. The next day a brother of her husband takes his place, and if there are seven brothers she is the wife of all of them....She can refuse herself to none of them.’ Another example is the comments made by W.C. McReady, a British officer, on the divorce system of the Kandyans: ‘...a man should be obliged to keep and support a wife whom he has grown tired, or who is not a hewer of wood and a drawer of water to the extent that he considered necessary’ (Sessional Paper III/1869).

Moral issues such as this were instrumental in appeasing the mind of the colonizer since the colonial policy was contradictory to the liberal ideas of the West at the time (‘Colonial policy in general was not compatible with egalitarian ideas accepted by rationalists at the time...Therefore the colonialists sought moral grounds to defend colonial rules....’, Kulasekera, 1998: 104). Thus, the colonizers bend on a policy of ‘civilizing’ the indigenous communities. Fr. de Queyroz, a Portuguese writer, had extensively stressed the fact that it was the duty of the Portuguese to civilize the Sri Lankans (de
Queyroz, 1930). Similarly, the British were of the opinion that they were duty bound to ‘civilize’ the Kandyans (‘...it is our Will and Pleasure, that you should wholly abolish these forms of Trial and Punishment which Humanity condemn and experience has shown to be less efficacious in the prevention of Crimes.’, G.C. Mendis, 1956: 73).

What is important here is that one objective of these civilizing missions, it seems, was to improve the conditions of women. This is evident from ideas of British officers expressed as late as in the 1860s. One officer commenting on the Marriage Law introduced by the colonial government paid his compliments to the British rule: ‘The excellent Marriage Law, though not so fully appreciated as might have been wished, has yet done much good, and will, I have no doubt, shortly raise the mothers of the people to the station which they ought to occupy’ (Sessional Paper III/1869).

As mentioned earlier, the Maritime areas were somewhat open to the outside world even before the period under review. Even after the coming of the Portuguese and Dutch the existing system has not undergone structural changes. Both the Portuguese and the Dutch retained the existing system. But changes were inevitable. Most changes were introduced in the guise of fairness, rightfulness or upliftment of conditions, whereas they were actually more beneficial to the colonial powers in their pursuit of more profit through less expenditure.

In such an atmosphere women became vulnerable, because the new system was full of contradictory situations. For example one can again take the woman’s attire. As mentioned above, the quality of the attire of every woman regardless of their social status was the same in the murals of the Maritime region. But in reality, the women still had to
abide by the caste law. According to Ribeiro, one cannot hide her caste since her attire reveals her social status. A low caste person should wear a cloth that reaches only up to the knee (Ribeiro: 90). According to Fr. de Queyroiz women of ordinary status were not allowed to wear a jacket but they sometimes covered their breasts and head with a part of the garment which they wore around their hips (de Queyroiz: 83). These customs slightly changed or became less rigorous, but nevertheless they still existed, especially in the minds of the indigenous communities. For example, as late as the 19th Century a foreigner when walking about in the Western Province saw some men of a higher caste scolding a women of padu caste, which was regarded as a low caste in the hierarchy, for covering her breasts and thereby forgetting her real social status (J.W. Bennet cited in L.A. Wickremeratne, 1973: 171). This is an ample example of the change and the attitude towards change in the minds of ordinary people in the Maritime society. Even the Dutch did not interfere with the existing system. They allowed women of the seven highest castes to wear jackets but women who were from the castes which served the goyigama caste were asked to limit their liberty in wearing such garments.

Thus, it is important to note here that although the women seem to have changed, that change was not totally approved. The changes were especially evident in women of the higher strata of the society. They started wearing Portuguese jackets, the shawl and the petticoat (de Queyroiz: 83; de Silva, 1995: 163-181). But as Dr. Jayewardene points out this kind of changes apparent among women of higher classes of the society cannot be applied to the whole society in general. Even in the higher classes the change was not wholly welcomed. In 1741, two spinsters from an aristocratic family refrained from giving the right of inheritance of their property to a male relation of theirs due to his imitation of European attire and life-style. These
situations indicate that the changes in the Maritime society under the colonial powers were more of a chaos than a change. In fact, it raised a contradiction between the tradition and what was imposed by the foreign rule.

This situation was very much evident in the social scene. Since the Sinhalese social system had very much to do with the economic system, this situation changed the economy as well. The property rights were defined and registered; land transactions were organized and given new legal status. These were positive aspects. However, the service tenure system was exploited and thereby the lower strata of the caste hierarchy suffered and ‘...by the end of the 18th Century [the condition of] the service tenure holders had become worse because their ability to free themselves was considerably reduced’ (de Silva, 1995: 417-451). Thus, it can be assumed that the economic role of even the male community was changed inconsistently to suit the interests of the colonial powers.

In this situation, women who were already played a secondary and/or dependant role in economy faced grave consequences. The main reason for this is that although the colonial powers were bent on ‘correcting what was unfair’ in indigenous systems they were in reality exploiting these systems to maximize their profits. In this process, women who were already playing a secondary role in the economy would be displaced and disoriented. This was the case with the Sinhalese women of the Maritime Provinces during the period under review.

In a changing economic condition, they lost a specific role which was to be performed in the system and provisions were not given in the law, especially regarding the land rights in a society where the population was growing fast (Risseeuw, 1991: 75-79), to protect them
from being destitute. This was totally different from the well kept traditional system in the Kandyan Kingdom. Thus, the Maritime women had lost the protection offered by the traditional system which at least gave them a specific role and at the same time they were not given a new role in the colonial economic system. This led them into a more serious economic crisis.

They began to search for new means of earning a living under the colonial rule. Johann Von Der Behr, a German officer in Dutch force at Negambo describes ladies who were talented dancers and able acrobats. He also comments on their ability to cook delicious dishes especially the chicken curry (Raven-Hart: 76-77). Christopher Schweitzer another German sailor describes how he was boarded at a house of an old Sinhalese woman and that her livelihood was to cook for the Dutch sailors. This woman who lived in Colombo was able to speak a little Dutch and at times there were as much as twenty to thirty sailors around her dining table (Raven-Hart: 42). Schweitzer describes women who came to entertain them with dancing and acrobatics and who were very willing to make acquaintance with the foreign sailors (Raven-Hart: 65). These are testimonies to the desperate state of some of the women at that time in an economic system where women were not given due consideration.

Even under the new system, women of higher strata of the society enjoyed much better conditions. In fact, in some instances, they were given the 'rightful status' as depicted by the West. For example, in the newly started Dutch school system, girls were given the opportunity for education. But these girls were only from families of petty government officers or the teachers of the schools (Jayewardena: 116-117).
However, the general picture was that women found it difficult to survive economically under the new system. Sometimes it seems that she took drastic steps. In 1751, a woman who stole slaves was put into death by cutting off her head in public at Colombo.

Another answer to the problem of survival seems to be the marriage to a Dutch. But at times the marrying of indigenous women by Dutch sailors had posed problems for the Dutch administration. Therefore, they took measures to limit these marriages. If a girl wants to marry a Dutch, a missionary priest must certify that she was a good Christian. If the women did not attend mass after marriage their husbands were deprived of their wages. These are clear indications that women had to change their whole lifestyle for their survival. It also appears that these marriages were tactics of survival. Schweitzer's description confirms this assumption. He reveals how women tend to show more affection to Dutch Christians since they needed the security of the people who had power. But they had extra marital affairs with indigenous men and had even given birth to children from them (Raven-Hart: 76-77).

It is worth mentioning here that it seems that in this new mode of survival the women seemed to have trapped in another new set of rules. By an Ordinance of 1760, if a Christian woman had intercourse with a non-Christian man, she would be given lashes (kasa pahara) unto bleeding and put into slavery and her property be confiscated (Raven-Hart: 58-59). Since according to the Dutch, the women who married Dutch men led a corrupt life after coming to Colombo, the former gave the Church the power to supervise the good character and the lifestyle of these women (Arasaratnam: 210). Thus, even these tactics of survival were not easy. Women who climbed in the new social ladder through marriage may have had economic benefits but they had to pay a price for their survival under the new system.
There was evidence of women being more independent under the new system. But these were rare and exceptional occasions. Schewitzen describes a place where he had his meals after returning from Sitavaka. The landlady was one Branco de Costa. Her father was a Portuguese and the mother was a widowed Sinhalese woman. Branco had married a rich merchant who owned a ship. At the time the husband was missing owing to an accident at the sea. But Branco lived comfortably with twenty slaves from Bengal, wearing jackets made out of a see-through material with golden buttons and garbed in colourful silk. She spoke Portuguese, Sinhala, Malabar and Maldivian languages (Raven-Hart, 74). Branco was not a classic example but she was an exceptional case. She was very lonely and was most willing to marry Schewitzen although he refused the prospect. She was a cruel lady who victimized her slaves, used to smoke cigar and had a temperament which can be described as promiscuous. Cases such as this lead us to think that how vulnerable the state of women under the new system was.

Thus, it can be assumed that under the colonial rule the economic role of Sinhalese women of the Maritime areas changed in such a way that they were left with neither here nor there situation. They lost the accepted economic role and they were not given a more progressive new role. In fact they were ignored altogether and left out to fend for themselves in whatever manner the new system allowed them to. The economic policies of the colonial rule focused more on male labour and women were not given equal access to job opportunities (For example: the census report of 1871 shows that, the male-female workers’ ratio in industry was 91.77% to 8.23% and in agriculture 93.49% to 6.51%). This clearly indicates that although the colonial rule had shattered the smooth functioning of the existing economic system it was unable to absorb the women into a more progressive, organized and specific economic role. Such a measure would have
given them the credit for transforming the women's economic conditions from that of a secondary role to a more active and powerful role. However, apparently what really has happened was that women of the Maritime Provinces lost even the existing security of their economic role under the indigenous system. This is apparent when one compares it with the more sheltered and well secured but somewhat limited economic role of the Kandyan women at the time.

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The First Demagogue of the western world as represented in Old Comedy: Portrayal of Cleon in Aristophanes

U. Weerakoon

Abstract

Attic Old Comedy which alluded to contemporary socio-political events generated humour through caricature, parody, derision and exaggeration of the leading personalities and institutions of the society. Aristophanes’ plays, which are the only intact Attic Old comedies, contain caricature and ridicule of most of the leading public figures in Athens. Cleon, an Athenian politician from 465-422 BCE is subjected to severe contempt and ridicule in most of Aristophanes’ plays. Cleon was the earliest known Athenian politician to be recognized as a demagogue: ‘the leader of the people’, who came into prominence in the 5th century BCE. Attic Old Comedy plays of Aristophanes provide contemporary literary evidence on the demagogue. Cleon is portrayed by the dramatist, in the caricatures and the allusions, as a corrupt and a manipulative politician with self-serving and pro-war policies. Aristophanes’ depiction of Cleon indicates prejudice and distortion of the politician in certain spheres. Biographical details suggest Cleon to be less deprave and more attentive in securing Athenian democratic and imperial interests than he is depicted in Aristophanes. This article examines the nature of Attic Old Comedy to identify the influence of the genre of Comedy in Aristophanes’ caricature of Cleon. It will also discuss the extent to which the personal and the class prejudice of Aristophanes and the different political ideologies of the poet and the politician had resulted in the distortions of Cleon in the plays of Aristophanes.

Keywords: Attic Old Comedy, Aristophanes, Cleon, Demagogue
Introduction

The nature of Attic Old Comedy

Athenian Comedy is categorized in scholarship as Old and New Comedy. The beginning of Old Comedy is dated to early 5th century BCE and lasted to the end of 400 BCE. As mentioned in Aristotle (Poetics: 1449a) Attic Old Comedy had originated from the Phallic songs in the Dionysiac festivals. The acts of mimicking, dancing and obscene jokes associated with fertility and religious rites of Phallic songs in the Dionysiac festival as well as the license, drunkenness and merrymaking exercised in this festival are identified as the characteristic roots from which Attic Old Comedy had emerged (Cornford, 1914:35-7). Attic Old Comedy followed the general structure of 'prologue' which is the entry of the chorus and 'agon' in which the conflict or the debate of the themes and the actions of the play are acted out. 'Agon' is followed by 'parabasis' in which the action of the play is suspended and the chorus directly addressed the audience with praise of the poet, with attacks on the fellow competitors and with flattery of the judges and the audience (Cornford, 1914:2-3, 8-15). The end of the Attic Old Comedy: 'exode' is marked by revelry and triumph. As Greek tragedy, Old Comedy was also written and enacted as part of the drama competitions. City Dionysia and Lenaia were the two most popular drama competitions of the 5th century BCE Athens (Ehrenberg, 1962:17). The judges of the drama competitions were a few elected citizens. The Athenian citizens, 'demos', the sovereign body of the democracy of Athens, constituted the majority of the audience with the presence of a limited number of 'metics' and foreigners. It was essential for the Comedy

1 The resident aliens of Athens were known as 'metics'.

2 Only Athenian citizens were allowed in the festival of Lenaia.
dramatists to evoke humour and laughter in the audience to win the drama competition. The subject matter and the themes of Old Comedy were drawn from the contemporary social and political events and persons in Athens. The dramatists evoked humour in language, action and costume by the use of caricature, parody, exaggeration, obscenity and derision which alluded to contemporary socio-political events and individuals connected with them. The caricature and derision of the current events and personalities had resulted Old Comedy to be identified as a 'representation of socio-political realities blended with absurdity' (Ehrenberg, 1962:27-8). The freedom of speech in the direct democracy of Athens provided the dramatists with a great amount of liberty in presenting socio-political satire. However, Old Comedy was subjected to censorship. Pericles\(^3\) established the censorship law applicable to dramas in 440 BCE by which a poet who had offended public interest of Athens could be prosecuted and brought to trial (Scholion, Acharnians line 67 as cited in Ehrenberg, 1962:19). Cleon's prosecution of Aristophanes in 424 BCE is an inference on the limits of liberty of Old Comedy\(^4\). It can be observed that the Old Comedy writers considered their role as the 'teachers' or the 'critics' of society. The Old Comedy writers brought the reality before the audience and attempted to educate the citizens through their socio-political satire.

Kratanis (455-423 BCE), Eupolis (430-431 BCE) and Aristophanes (427-386 BCE) were three leading Attic Old Comedy writers who were victorious in the drama competitions (Ehrenberg, 1962:19). The plays of Aristophanes are the only fully surviving Attic Old comedies. The works of the other Old Comedy writers are either lost or survive\(^5\) 

\(^3\) Pericles was an Athenian politician from 460-429 BCE

\(^4\) Cleon's prosecution of Aristophanes will be discussed in the article
only in fragments. Eleven of Aristophanes’ plays survive in manuscript form. It can be observed in the plays of Aristophanes that the dramatist had dealt with a variety of socio-political themes, such as war, law-courts, the teachings of the Sophists, the position of drama and women, in his plays. Aristophanes’ parody and derision of Athenian democracy, the Peloponnesian War, public institutions and the caricature of the men of all classes provide instances for the laughter evoked through current events. Aristophanes’ use of his plays as the vehicle to express his consciousness on contemporary social and political events had led the dramatist to be identified in scholarship as a socio-political critic. Aristophanes makes reference to the instances in which he had saved his audience from the deceptive oratory of the politicians (Acharnians, lines 628) and emphasizes the need to stand for what is accepted as just (Acharnians, lines, 658,644). Aristophanes’ consciousness of the role of the comic poet as a socio-political critic who brings the reality before the audience is suggested by the above instances. Moreover, Aristophanes’ plays Acharnians, Knights and Frogs which won the first prize, Birds and Wasps which won the second prize are evidence of the broad appeal for socio-political Comedy in the Athenian audience. The leading public figures were often mocked and ridiculed in the comedies of Aristophanes. The dramatists such as Aeschylus (Frogs), Euripides (Frogs, Thesmophoria), philosophers such as Socrates (Clouds) and politicians such as Pericles (Acharnians) are subjected to derision and parody in Aristophanes’ plays. It can be observed that Cleon, an Athenian politician from 465-422 BCE, is the target of ridicule in most of the surviving plays of Aristophanes. Relentless attacks on Cleon can be identified specially in Babylonians presented in 426 BCE, Acharnians presented in 425 BCE, Knights presented in 424 BCE, Clouds presented in 423 BCE, Wasps presented in 422 BCE and
Pease presented in 421 BCE. Cleon is considered in scholarship as a pioneer of the ‘new group of politicians’ known as demagogues\(^5\) who came into prominence in late 5\(^{th}\) century Athens. Reference to Cleon in the plays of Aristophanes provides contemporary literary evidence on the ‘new group of politicians’ in the Classical period. Apart from Aristophanes, the Comedy writers such as Eupolis and Plato, the comic poet, make reference to Cleon. However Aristophanes’ plays are the only intact comedies in which denunciation of Cleon can be found as the plays of Eupolis and Plato survive only in fragments. Hence this article on the portrayal of Cleon in Attic Old Comedy will be limited to the plays of Aristophanes.

Cleon’s genealogy, his education and culture, character, his oratory, associates, his feud with the Knights as well as Cleon’s political and military career are ridiculed by Aristophanes. This article will evaluate Aristophanes’ portrayal of Cleon within the context of Attic Old Comedy as a genre which highlighted socio-political satire and exercised liberty in caricature and derision. Aristophanes’ representation of Cleon will be assessed with the existing historical sources on the latter’s biographical details which will facilitate in identifying distortions resulting from prejudice against the demagogue. The extent to which the personal feud of the dramatist with the politician had influenced the distortions of Cleon, which can be identified in Aristophanes’ caricature and allusions, will be discussed. It will be observed that the ‘new model of politics’ established by Cleon and the hostility against the popular leaders among aristocratic writers had contributed to derision and contempt of the demagogues in Attic Old Comedy.

\(^5\) Demagogues is a Greek term used to define the ‘leaders of the people’ in the 5\(^{th}\) century BCE Athens
Methodology

Information for this qualitative study is collected by the critical analysis of the plays of Aristophanes and by the examination of the existing epigraphic and other literary evidence on Cleon. The contradictory views in scholarship are evaluated to gain an impartial understanding of the portrayal of the politician in the plays of Aristophanes.

Results

Ancestry of Cleon

Aristophanes often portrays Cleon as a descendent of an impoverished non-Athenian family who was engaged in leather tannery (Knights lines 44/45,208, Wasps line30, Acharnians line 38, and Peace line 752). ‘Paphlagonian’ in the Knights (line 44/45) is identified as the caricature of Cleon;

“Well last New Moon’s day he went and
brought a new slave, a tanner from
Paphlagonea, and a greater swine of
A stool-pigeon never walked this earth.”

The above lines which refer to ‘Paphlagonian’ as a slave from ‘Paphlagonea’ who was once a leather-tanner is one distinguished instance of representing Cleon as an impoverished non-Athenian. However the epigraphic and other literary sources suggest contradictory evidence. An Attic inscription (IG II², 2318, line34) refers to a person known as Cleainetus who owned a leather factory and was a ‘choregus’ in 460/59 BCE, a person who finances a chorus
at a public festival. Thucydides (III.36) in the account on the Mytilenean debate introduces Cleon as the son of Cleainetus. It is generally recognized in scholarship (Connor, 1992: 151) that Cleainetus mentioned in the inscription is the same Cleainetus mentioned by Thucydides as the father of Cleon. Thus Cleon’s father was a wealthy Athenian. The scholion on Aristophanes’ *Knights* line 44 which indicates Cleainetus as an Athenian refutes the non-Attic origin of Cleon. The above historical and literary evidence which indicate Cleon to be an Athenian who was accustomed to wealth refute the portrayal of him as an impoverished non-Athenian in Old Comedy.

Moreover ‘Paphlagonian’ in the *Knights* (lines 445-446) is insulted by the ‘Sausage- Seller’ who accused ‘Paphlagonian’s’ grandfather as having been a bodyguard of the wife of Hippias. Though the above reference implies Cleon to be a descendent of the bodyguards of Hippias’ wife, the scholion refutes it. According to the scholion, Aristophanes had replaced the name “Myrrhina”, the wife of Peisistratus and the mother of Hippias and Hipparchus as “Brysina” in the *Knights*. “Brysa” being the Greek word for hind, Aristophanes’ use of “Brysina” was to strike Cleon as a leather-seller (Fornara, 1977:32-33). Aristophanes’ representation of Cleon as base-born and of foreign origin is identified by Connor (1992:170) as an attempt of the dramatist to imply that Cleon was disqualified to be a politician in Athens. The people’s leaders of Athens from Cleisthenes to Pericles were from the traditional aristocracy. Cleon and his successors, though they were Athenians, were non-aristocrats from the class of

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6 Hippias and Hipparchus were Athenian tyrants in the 6th century BCE who succeeded their father Peisistratus, the first tyrant of Athens.

7 Cleisthenes was an Athenian statesman (570-508 BCE)
manufactures and tradesmen. Aristophanes’ *Knights* lines 180, 38, 294) reference to Cleon and other demagogues as men of the ‘Market Square’ was an attack on them being from the class of ‘agorario’. ‘Agorario’ referred to the men of ‘agora’, market place, were a segment of the Athenian society who had acquired wealth from manufacturing/trading activity rather than from traditional agriculture. But it can be observed that ‘agorario’ had not produced many distinguished politicians before Cleon. It is apparent that wealth was a necessity for politics in the Athenian democracy as it provided leisure to indulge in political activity. It is reasonable to argue that these demagogues would not have been successful in their careers if they were impoverished as Attic Old Comedy represented them to be. Therefore, by representing Cleon as an impoverished leather-tanner, Aristophanes would be able to place Cleon with the level of leather-sellers, lamp-makers, sausage-sellers of the market place. Thus Aristophanes’ attributing an inferior social position to the caricatures of Cleon was to imply that the latter was not qualified to be an Athenian politician who was always from the respectable classes before Cleon. The prejudice against the newly rich and the ‘new group of politicians’ among aristocratic writers in the 5th century BCE would have also intensified Aristophanes’ base-born depiction of Cleon in the caricatures. It is undoubted that the audience was aware of the affluent social position of Cleon. However, the attribution of inferior social status to the caricatures of Cleon by Aristophanes would have contributed to evoke humour in the audience.

8 Demagogues were from the class of manufacturers and tradesmen known as ‘agoraroi’.

9 The payments for jury in the 5th century BCE and the payments for attending the assembly in the 4th century BCE were measures used in Athenian democracy to increase the citizen participation in politics.
Education and culture

Cleon is depicted as ignorant and uncultured by Aristophanes. ‘Sausage Seller’ in the *Knights* (lines 188-192) was amazed when he was told that he would be the greatest man though he knew only the alphabet. These lines are an implication of ignorance and lack of culture of Cleon and the ‘new group of politicians’. Lack of cultural and intellectual refinement and the distrust of the intellect were common among most of the politicians of the late fifth century BCE. As Connor (1992:167-168) argues, most of those politicians, being newly rich and non-aristocrats, intellectual and cultural refinement was seen as superfluous attributes of the aristocracy. The lack of education and culture of Cleon is further suggested by the comment of ‘Demosthenes’ in the *Knights* (line 192) who mentions that “politics is for the uneducated, illiterate scum”. Cleon’s oratory and his common sense suggest him to be more intelligent and knowledgeable than he is given credit for by Aristophanes (Connor, 1992:168). However the speeches of Cleon recorded in Thucydides asserts his brilliant oratory. His oratorical skills had made Cleon the most effective and persuasive speaker in the public assembly in the 5th century Athens which was accustomed to the oratory of Pericles (Thucydides, III.36). Representation of Cleon as utterly ignorant and uncultured would have provided the opportunity for the dramatist to further reduce the social position of Cleon while distinguishing the difference between Cleon and his predecessors. Aristophanes’ (*Knights* line 1325, *Wasps* line 1060, *Frogs* lines 1013-1017) appreciation of the aristocratic leaders of the democracy and his wish for reviving the glory of the past provide implication on his partiality to the aristocracy.10

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10 *Frogs* lines 1013-1017 are appreciations of the well-born heroes of Aeschylus’ drama in contrast to the men from the market place.
Character

Aristophanes represents Cleon as a violent, vicious, impudent as well as a dishonest person. In the *Knights* (lines 132,303) ‘Paphlagonian’ is referred to as a ‘robber’, ‘villain’ and ‘monster’. The image of Cleon as a ‘monster’ reappears in *Wasps* and *Peace* (lines 752-759):

“Chorus- took on the greatest monster in the land. 
Jag-toothed it was, and from its staring eyes shot 
rays more terrible than those of Cynna.”
(*Wasps* lines 1030-1035) (tr. Barrett, 1964)

The violent and fierce character of Cleon is brought out through the metaphor which refers to Cleon as the ‘greatest monster in the land’. ‘Jag-toothed’ and ‘staring eyes’ which are the attributes of ‘Cerberus’ enhance the brutality and the ferocity of Cleon.11 ‘Cynna’ being the Dog-star, its harmful radiation is an implication of Cleon’s viciousness on the ‘demos’. Moreover, Cleon is called a ‘rapacious looking creature’ (*Wasps* line 35), for his greed for power and money whereas his dishonesty and corruption are implied by the terms ‘twister’ and ‘liar’ (*Knights* line 250).12 Greek literature (Thucydides, II. 36, Plutarch, *Nicias* 2.3) and modern scholarship (Grote, 1907:394-395) generally recognize Cleon as having been violent and brutal. Thus it is reasonable to assume that Aristophanes’ characterization of Cleon, in the caricatures and allusions, is in keeping with Cleon’s generally accepted character to a greater extent. However, certain exaggeration in relation to Cleon’s corruption in politics can also be detected.

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11 Cerberus is the three-headed mythical dog guarding Hades who was captured by Heracles

12 Cleon’s corruptions will be discussed in relation to his political career.
Oratory

The powerful invective and gestures introduced by Cleon into Athenian public oratory was subjected to ridicule by Aristophanes. The terms such as ‘shrieker’ (*Knights* line 136) and the comparison of Cleon’s voice to an ‘overloaded sewer (*Knights* line 137), ‘a roar of mighty flood descending from hills’ (*Wasps* line 1035, *Peace* line 758) and ‘the voice of a scalded sow’ (*Wasps* line 35) can be identified as Aristophanes’ exaggerated criticism of Cleon’s crude and boisterous manner of public speaking. Though there is no mention of Cleon as the most effective speaker in the Athenian assembly in Aristophanes, abundant references to Cleon’s persuasive oratory can be found. For instance, ‘Sausage Seller’ in the *Knights* provides a description of the ‘demos’ completely won over by ‘Paphlagonian’s’ oratory;

“Sausage Seller- I fahn’dim ‘urling great big thunderbolts o’ words and crushing them... And there was swallowing it all, listening all intently...
And when I saw ‘ow they was being all taken in by ‘is lies and trickery.”

(*Knights* lines 630-635) (tr. Sommerstein, 1978)

The above lines refer to the flattering language of Cleon and his false promises appealing to the interest of the ‘demos’ in order to gain their loyalty. The people, won over by the speeches of Cleon mentioned by ‘Anti-Cleon’ in *Wasps* (line 668), provide further reference to Cleon’s persuasive oratory. Thus Aristophanes portrays Cleon as a ‘liar’ who influences the opinions of the ‘demos’ by his flattering words.
However, fifth century Athens being a direct democracy in which every citizen had a vote and privilege to speak in the assembly, only a persuasive and a manipulative speaker could secure his leadership by molding the opinions of the ‘demos’. Therefore, the demagogues in the 5th century BCE Athens were necessarily rhetoricians as they could only attain the highest offices in the democracy by winning the partiality of the majority of the ‘demos’ by their persuasive speech. The fact which distinguished the oratory of the demagogues from the traditional politicians was their style accompanied by persuasive gestures. It is believed that Cleon introduced persuasive gestures into the oratory of the period (Aristotle, *Ath.Pol.*, 28.3, Plutarch, *Nicias*, 8.3). Though Aristophanes is critical of Cleon’s oratory, like many of the ancient writers (Thucydides, III, 36, Aristotle, *Ath.Pol.* 28.3, Plutarch, *Nicias* 8.3) he had given more weight to Cleon’s style of public speaking which was a distinctive attribute of the man.

**Cleon’s associates**

Plutarch (*Moralia* 807,a) mentions that Cleon’s repudiating of his influential friends ‘hetaeoi’ and affiliating with the ‘demos’ led Cleon to be surrounded by obnoxious associates. Reference to Cleon’s associates in politics can be found in Aristophanes. ‘Servile flatterers’ around the head of the ‘jag-toothed monster’ in the *Peace* (line 756) and the ‘battalion of young tanners’, ‘honey and cheese merchants’ of ‘Paphlagonian’ in the *Knights* (lines 852-857) are the followers and friends of Cleon according to Aristophanes. It can be noted in Aristophanes’ representation of Cleon’s associates that they were depicted as having been inferior in social positions and being corrupt personalities. Moreover, Theorus, Aeschines, Phanos and Acester are named as allies of Cleon in the *Wasps* (lines 1220-1221). The historical evidence on these men is rare and fragmentary. However, Theorus who is condemned in Comedy as a ‘flatterer’, ‘a profligate’
and a 'man of no principle' is identified as an ambassador from Thrace and a commander of a fleet (Connor, 1992:130\textsuperscript{76}).\textsuperscript{13} Aeschines is mocked for his boasting of wealth which he did not possess (Wasps line 1244). Phanor is mentioned as Cleon's singer of accusations (Knights line 1256) while Acestor is slandered as a non-Athenian (Scholion on Wasps line 1221). It is reasonable to agree with Connor's assumption (1992:130\textsuperscript{80}) that Aristophanes' mention of the above four men as Cleon's allies was to denounce Cleon by associating him with such men with corrupt personalities. Moreover, TheouAddippus who proposed the increase of the tribute in 425 BCE (IG I\textsuperscript{2} 63-65) and Theophanes who was an undersecretary of a project (Knights line 1103, IG I\textsuperscript{2} 344) are also recognized as friends of Cleon. Thus Theophanes, TheouAddippus and Theorus being friends of Cleon can be regarded as inference on Cleon's associates being important persons in politics (Connor, 1992:131) though they are represented as being immoral by Aristophanes.

**Cleon's feud with the Knights**

In the Knights Aristophanes represents the Knights as the enemies of Cleon who composed the chorus in this anti-Cleon play;

> “But there are the Knights, a thousand brave men,  
> who hate him and who will come to your aid.”

(*Knights* line 225)(tr. Sommerstein, 1978)

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\textsuperscript{13}Connor highlights that a Theorus listed as a commander of a fleet on a casualty inscription about 409 BCE could possibly be the same Theorus mentioned in Comedy.
These lines which imply the hostility of the hippéis\(^\text{14}\) to Cleon provide reference to the feud between Cleon and the Knights. In the *Acharnians* (line 6), Cleon vomits five talents. The scholion on the *Acharnians* line 6 provides a historical account on Cleon’s antagonism towards the Knights. According to the scholion (Rutherford, 1896:258) Cleon had received five talents from the allies to persuade the Athenians to relieve them of their tribute. The Knights, who discovered the transaction, opposed it and required Cleon to return the money. As affirmed by the scholion (Fornara, 1977:147-148), according to Theopompus in either the 10\(^\text{th}\) or the 11\(^\text{th}\) book of *Philippica*, Cleon was fined five talents for insulting the Knights. Moreover the scholion on the *Knights* line 425 mentions that the hostility between the Knights and Cleon had grown into a rage which led Cleon to attack the ‘constitution’ of the hippéis. As suggested by Fornara (1977:147-148), Cleon had actually attacked the payments for the equipment of the Knights;

“Since the word for cavalry equipment-money (*katastasis*) also means ‘constitution’, the scholiast had understood the word in latter sense and replaced it with its synonym ‘politeia’.”
(Fornara, 1977:147-148)

Thus it is apparent that Aristophanes had parodied the hostility between the Knights and Cleon in the *Knights*. By portraying this existence of an anti-Cleon faction in the society, the Knights as the chorus, Aristophanes (*Knights* lines 260-265,300-310,330-335) exposed the corruption of Cleon. Moreover, the animosity shared by

\(^\text{14}\) ‘Hippéis’ was the second highest property class in ancient Athens who were considered as Knights. The cavalry of the Athenian army were from this class.
the aristocracy and the middle class against each other in politics is highlighted in the feud between the Knights and Cleon (Knights lines 280,336, Ehrenberg, 1943:74-75).

Political and military career

Cleon’s military achievements and his political activities are subjected to the severe criticism of Aristophanes. The Knights (lines 54-57, 75, 355, 796, 1058, 1167, 702, 742, 844, 1201) which was performed just after Cleon’s victory at Pylos\(^{15}\) is abundant with mockery on his military achievements. ‘Demosthenes’ in the Knights grumbles over ‘Paphlagonian’s’ claiming of the victory at Pylos;

“Demosthenes- I’d baked a lovely Spartan cake down in Pylos and round
he sneaks and grabs it and serves up my cake as if it was all his work!”
(Knights line 56)(tr. Sommerstein, 1978)

These lines are a reference to Demosthenes being the associate in command with Cleon at Pylos. Though Cleon was able to defeat the Spartans within twenty days (Thucydides, IV, 27, Plutarch, Nicias, 7.3), there was a feeling among the Athenians that it was the military ability of Demosthenes which brought the Athenians victory. Thus it can be noted that Aristophanes reflects this feeling of the Athenian people and denies Cleon of his success at Pylos. Aristophanes further implies that Cleon was using the above success as a means for gaining popularity with the ‘demos’ which he could not actually claim.

\(^{15}\) The battle of Pylos in 425 BCE between Athens and Sparta in the Peloponnesian War
‘Sausage Seller’s (Knights lines 572-574) reporting of ‘Paphlagonian’s’ activity in the council chamber carries reference to the latter’s pro-war policy. According to the ‘Sausage Seller’ in the Knights (lines 572-574), ‘Paphlagonian’ rejected the peace proposal brought by the ‘Spartan Ambassador’. This is an allusion to the Athenian rejection of the Spartan peace proposal due to the persuasions of Cleon\textsuperscript{16}. ‘Sausage Seller’s’ (Knights lines 794-796) accusations on the ‘demos’ for chasing the Spartan envoys who came begging for peace is another instance of reference to Cleon’s pro-war policy. Thus it is apparent that Aristophanes also shared the judgment of Thucydides (IV, 21) of Cleon being wrong in opposing the Spartan offer of peace.

‘Paphlagonian’s’ “licking clean every island” (Knights, line 1040), “his filling of the treasury full” (Knights, line 780) and “spying on the approach of the tribute” (Knights, line 310) in the Knights can be identified as Aristophanes’ ridicule on Cleon’s increase of tribute payment in 425 BCE\textsuperscript{17}. Extortion of tribute from the subject allies by Cleon using threats and intimidation is indicated in ‘Anti-Cleon’s’ mention of demagogues threatening to ruin the allies which had provoked the subjects to bribe the politicians (Wasps lines 670). Thus Aristophanes considers Cleon’s increase in tribute payment as an act of imperialism which had aggravated the grievances of the allies. Cleon’s increase of jury payment into three obols\textsuperscript{18} and his dominance over the jury courts are also mocked at by the dramatist (Knights lines

\textsuperscript{16} Athenian rejection of the Spartan peace proposal in 425 BCE

\textsuperscript{17} The increase of the tribute of the allies in 425 BCE following the victory at the battle of Pylos is attributed to Cleon (IG I\textsuperscript{3} 63 (I\textsuperscript{3} 71)

\textsuperscript{18} Cleon increased the jury pay in 425 BCE by one obol and made it three instead of two obols.
50,255,797, *Wasps* lines 300, 525, 661, 682, 90, 100, *Birds* lines 1541, 1694). ‘Pro-Cleon’s’ obsession to attend jury duty and the chorus of *Wasps* (line 230) composed exclusively of old men who represented the jurors are implications of the attraction of the old men to jury courts due to the dicastic pay. Aristophanes (*Wasps* lines 570, 580, 610, *Knights* line 255) is critical of the absence of accountability and the corruptions in the jury courts as the verdicts of the jurors were influenced by their personal grudges and pressing poverty. It is indicated that Cleon had used the increase of the jury pay as a bid for popularity;

“Sausage Seller- ...then you’ll realize just ‘ow much e’s been Cheating youah’ of while ‘e’s been fobbing you off with that three obols of jury pay”.

(*Knights* lines 705)(tr. Sommerstein, 1978)

The above lines suggest that Cleon had used the three obols as a bribe to make the people blind towards his corruptions. As seen by Aristophanes, Cleon ensured the loyalty of the ‘demos’ by increasing the jury pay. Moreover, Cleon is represented as a prosecutor and a dishonest politician. Cleon’s asking of the jurors to attend the case of Laches, and cast the vote against him in the *Wasps* (line 240) is an implication of Cleon’s manipulating of the verdicts of the jurors and bringing accusations on his enemies. The accusations brought against the dog Labes of Aexone for embezzlement in Sicily by dog Cyon of Cydatheneaum in the *Wasps* (lines 890-990) is identified as an allusion to Cleon’s bringing charges against the general Laches in 425.

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19 Cleon is held responsible for accusing general Laches (425 BCE) for embezzlement during the latter’s missions in Sicily two years earlier. The general was acquitted.
BCE. Aristophanes’ implication of Cleon as a prosecutor is further evident in ‘Paphlagonian’s’ *(Knights* line 480) threats to strike ‘Sausage Seller’ as an anti-Athenian conspirator. ‘People’s watchdog’ which is attributed to Cleon in Old Comedy is an instance of Aristophanes (*Knights* lines 425, 1066) being critical of Cleon as the representative of the ‘demos’. As portrayed by the dramatist, instead of furthering the interests of the ‘demos’, Cleon manipulates the people for his own advancement. Thus for Aristophanes (*Knights* lines 61,679,728,733), the people who make the assembly, the sovereign office in the democracy is reduced to the level of a tool in the hands of Cleon. The dramatist makes constant references to Cleon’s taking bribes (*Knights* lines 65,448, *Acharnians* line 6) and his illegal use of state revenues (*Knights* lines 71,259). Therefore, according to Aristophanes, Cleon is neither a good politician nor a competent general nor a good leader of the people. Cleon is depicted in the caricatures and allusions as an incompetent general with the attributes of a tyrant such as a prosecutor, a manipulator etc.

**Discussion**

The assessment of Aristophanes’ portrayal of Cleon with the latter’s biographical details indicates distortions and contradictions in certain spheres. Cleon is denied of being wealthy and of Athenian origin in Aristophanes’ caricatures and allusions. The oratorical skill of Cleon is depreciated and his style of delivery is severely ridiculed. The military achievements of Cleon are undermined even though his capture of Pylos was a decisive victory for Athens and it was the battle of Amphipolis which brought death to Athens’ most formidable enemy, Brasidas. There is no sense of appreciation of Cleon in the comedies of Aristophanes either as a politician, a general or as a person. It could be interpreted that the depiction of Cleon as being utterly brutal, corrupt, ignorant and uncultured in the plays of
Aristophanes was a result of Comedy being a genre which takes pleasure in exaggeration, ridicule and satire of the contemporary political personalities. Thus it can be assumed that Aristophanes’ caricature of Cleon, the leading politician of contemporary Athens, evoked humour in the audience who was accustomed to political satire in Comedy. However modern scholarship (Connor, 1992: 168-169; Grote, 1907:398-400; Henderson, 2003: 160; St. Croix, 1972: 363) identifies the distortion in Aristophanes’ portrayal of Cleon and views it as due to a personal grudge between the dramatist and the politician. The scholion on Acharnians line 378 provides evidence on the feud between Cleon and Aristophanes. According to the scholion (Rutherford, 1896: 305-306), Aristophanes had ridiculed and abused the magistrates and Cleon in the play Babylonians. Babylonians was enacted at the City Dionysia, where subject allies and outsiders were present. The scholion further mentions that Cleon, who was provoked, indicted Aristophanes as a public offender for slandering the magistrates in the presence of strangers. Aristophanes was forced to face a trial for usurping the rights of an Athenian citizen. Aristophanes’ (Knights lines 514-517, Wasps lines 1285-1290) reference to poets being charged by Cleon in the chorus of his plays can be regarded as inference on Cleon’s prosecution of the Comedy writer. ‘Dieacopolis’ in Acharnians (lines 502-505) mentions that the poet is safe from the attack of Cleon this time as the play is enacted at the festival of Lenaia where no strangers were present. The above reference as well as Aristophanes’ plays Wasps and Knights being performed at the Lenaia instead of the Dionysia suggests that Aristophanes had felt the justice of Cleon’s warning (Grote, 1907:399).

20 Cleon prosecuted Aristophanes in 426 BCE
It is assumed by scholars such as Grote, St. Croix, Henderson and Starkie that Aristophanes’ personal enmity with Cleon and his prejudice against the ‘new group of politicians’ were responsible for his distortion of the image of Cleon. Grote (1907: 393) regards the assumption of Cleon as a brutal, corrupt and impudent politician based on Aristophanes’ portrayal in the Knights as unfair and unjust. The scholar supports his view by referring to Aristophanes’ representation of Socrates in the Clouds. The portrayal of Socrates by Aristophanes is generally accepted as a distorted picture of the philosopher. Therefore, judging Cleon on Aristophanes’ depiction is argued by Grote as unreasonable. Thus the scholar asserts that Aristophanes’ partiality to the leaders from the traditional aristocracy and his personal feud with Cleon had intensified his exaggeration of Cleon’s corruption and the attribution of inferior character and social position to the latter.

St. Croix (1972: 357) identifies Aristophanes’ satire on Cleon as a part of contempt of the dramatist for the politicians who were not from the traditional aristocracy (Knights lines 181, 186, 336, 387, 193, 218). MacDowell (1995: 356), Edmunds (1987: p66), Starkie (1909: XIII, VI) as well as Henderson (1998: 11) share St.Croix’s view on Aristophanes’ partiality to the leaders from the traditional aristocracy. Both Starkie and St. Croix assume Aristophanes as a supporter of peace. According to St. Croix Aristophanes was against war as he upheld a Pan-Hellenism or the joint hegemony of Athens and Sparta. Therefore, Aristophanes’ severe criticism on Cleon’s opposing of the Spartan peace proposal, his war policies and condemnation of his military achievements are recognized by St. Croix (1972: 363) as resulting from the anti-war attitudes of the dramatist. As pointed out by Henderson, Aristophanes regards the demagogues, specially Cleon, as responsible for the mistakes of the people who were ridiculed by the dramatist for their foolishness, voracity and misgovern.
(Henderson, 2003: 161). Hence the Comedy writer implies that the people’s choice of leaders had led to the degradation of Athenian politics (Henderson, 2003: 165). Thus the above arguments in scholarship suggest that Aristophanes’ distortion of Cleon in the caricatures would have been influenced by the resentment towards the ‘new group of politicians’ among aristocratic writers for their breaking of the political monopoly of the aristocracy.

However, Connor refutes the view that Aristophanes’ attack on Cleon was resulted from the personal grudge between the dramatist and the politician. As stated by Connor (1992: 161), most of the demagogues were subjected to the ridicule of the Comedy writers. Hyperbolus is slandered as a foreigner and a lamp-maker (Plato Comicus fr.166, Eupolis fr.190, Polyzelus fr.5, as cited in Connor: 133) whereas Cleophon whose mother is condemned in Old Comedy is called a non-Athenian and a lyre-maker (Plato, Cleophon fr.60, Frogs lines 681, as cited in Connor: 133). Similar criticism on Cleon can be detected in the fragments of the poets such as Eupolis (fr.308, 456, as cited in Connor, 133) and Plato the comic poet (Comicus fr.107, as cited in Connor: 133). Thus Connor argues that it is irrational to assume the attack of demagogues in Old Comedy as resulted from a personal feud between Cleon and Aristophanes. Moreover, Connor refutes the argument that the class prejudice in Aristophanes had led to his resentment of Cleon. As pointed out by Connor (1992: 171), if it was the dislike of the newly rich, Aristophanes would have portrayed Cleon as a wealthy, haughty and a vulgar politician. On the other hand Nicias who gained wealth from mining instead of traditional agriculture would not be spared from Aristophanes’ ridicule (Connor, 1992: 172).^21 Thus Connor (1992: 173-175)

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^21 Nicias’ wealth was from slaves in the mines and there is no evidence on Nicias’ genealogy before his father. Plutarch, Nicias, 4
identifies the ‘new model of politics’ established with Cleon as the factor which had led to the ridicule and attack on Cleon and the other demagogues in the plays of Aristophanes and in Old Comedy. Cleon created a political re-direction by going against the long established system of Athenian politics. Cleon came to political prominence with no distinguished genealogy. He was without any prior military achievements. Thus Cleon was first a politician and later became a general. He relied on the alliance of the people by repudiating the influential friendship groups and introduced a new style and gestures to public oratory. With all the above novelty in politics that Cleon was a popular politician in the 5th century BCE Athens is indisputable as suggested in the historical and literary evidence.\textsuperscript{22} That Cleon was the pioneer of this ‘new model of politics’ is evident from the followers of his style who came to be known as demagogues. Thus Cleon’s style of politics would have been considered by many traditional Athenians as a threat to the established order (Connor, 1992: 174). Therefore Connor mentions that the portrayal of Cleon in Old Comedy is the image of Cleon which is literally suggested by the latter’s’ own words. For instance, as Cleon emphasized him being a politician not from the traditional aristocracy and without any influential friends of the ‘hetairio’, he is caricatured in Comedy as a base-born, illiterate man with obnoxious associates (Connor, 1992: 175). Thus according to Connor, it was neither the feud with Cleon nor the class prejudice against non-aristocrats that had influenced Aristophanes’ portrayal of Cleon, but the ‘new model of politics’ established with Cleon. Connor’s view is supported by Murray who denies Aristophanes as a conservative aristocrat or an oligarch. For Murray (1919: 7-8, 18, 38, 28), Aristophanes was a moderate poet who is critical of Cleon’s policies and the demagogic practices.

\textsuperscript{22} Cleon was elected general in 425,424 & 422 BCE
The arguments of Connor and Murray, which can be supported with Aristophanes' treatment of other leading public figures in his plays, appear to be convincing and reasonable. The evidence from the fragments of the other Old Comedy writers establishes that not only Cleon but the demagogues in general were a target of derision in Attic Old Comedy. Therefore the contempt for Cleon implied in Aristophanes' plays cannot be identified as arisen from a personal antagonism. It is also unreasonable to accept the ridicule of the demagogues in Old Comedy as resulted from prejudice against the leaders who were not from the traditional aristocracy. It is evident from the above discussion that Nicias who was not from the traditional aristocracy was spared from criticism in the plays of Aristophanes. However, Pericles who was a traditional aristocrat and is considered as the ideal statesman in Thucydides (II. 65) is subjected to severe satire in the comedies of Aristophanes. Pericles is criticized in the *Acharnians* (lines, 515, 522) as responsible for bringing the Peloponnesian War by the Megarian decree\(^23\). Therefore, it can be argued that more than the class disparity, Aristophanes' anti-war attitudes had led him to be critical of the war- policies of the statesmen irrespective of their class.

Euripides, a tragedy writer who was a contemporary of Aristophanes, was a frequent target of derision in the comedies of the latter. Euripides is ridiculed, in the caricatures and allusions, for his depiction of amoral characters with over-indulged emotions, invention

\(^{23}\)Megarian decree was a law passed in 432/3 BCE by the Athenian assembly which excluded the people of Megara from the Attic market and the harbours of the Athenian empire. It is believed that Pericles proposed the decree (Plutarch, *Pericles* 29-3). It is an accepted view that the Megarian decree was a significant event which led to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.
of new deities and for his use of rhetorical and sophisticated style of
language (Wasps, lines 58, 1400, Frogs, lines 560, 820, 830, 850, 940,
Thesmophoria, lines 330, 400-430, 540). Thus Aristophanes is
satirical of the novelties in the tragedies of Euripides in contrast to the
depiction of traditional, patriotic and heroic characters and plots in
Aeschylus’ and Sophocles’ dramas. Moreover, the caricature of
Socrates in the Clouds is another striking instance of Aristophanes’
satire on the philosophers of his era. Aristophanes’ caricature of
Socrates as a Sophist is generally accepted in scholarship as a
distorted image of the philosopher. However the close examination of
Aristophanes’ portrayal of Socrates suggests that the dramatist is
critical of Socrates not as an individual but as a philosopher who
embodies the traits of the Sophists. It is the methods of Socrates, such
as his use of dialect form, questioning of the traditional and
conventional views and his criticizing of the old religion, that are
ridiculed by the Comedy writer. Thus it can be argued that
Aristophanes’ satire was directed at the novelty in Socrates’ methods
of unraveling the truth which were in close affinity to the methods of
the Sophists. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Aristophanes’
anti-war attitudes and his contempt for the new direction of politics
and demagogy established with Cleon had led to the distortions of the
politician in the caricatures and allusions of the comedies.

However, it is interesting to observe that Knights which includes the
severest ridicule and contempt for Cleon won the first prize for
Aristophanes at the Lenaia (424 BCE). ‘Paphlagonian’s’ claiming of
his victory at Pylos from the front seats of the theatre (Knights,
line702) can be considered as an implication of the presence of Cleon
among the audience when Knights was enacted. The awarding of the
first prize to Knights provides inference on the wide appeal for
Aristophanes’ plays and the liberal and humourous spirit in which the
Athenians accepted socio-political satire in Old Comedy. Thus it can
of new deities and for his use of rhetorical and sophisticated style of language (*Wasps*, lines 58, 1400, *Frogs*, lines 560, 820, 830, 850, 940, *Thesmophoria*, lines 330, 400-430, 540). Thus Aristophanes is satirical of the novelties in the tragedies of Euripides in contrast to the depiction of traditional, patriotic and heroic characters and plots in Aeschylus' and Sophocles' dramas. Moreover, the caricature of Socrates in the *Clouds* is another striking instance of Aristophanes' satire on the philosophers of his era. Aristophanes' caricature of Socrates as a Sophist is generally accepted in scholarship as a distorted image of the philosopher. However the close examination of Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates suggests that the dramatist is critical of Socrates not as an individual but as a philosopher who embodies the traits of the Sophists. It is the methods of Socrates, such as his use of dialect form, questioning of the traditional and conventional views and his criticizing of the old religion, that are ridiculed by the Comedy writer. Thus it can be argued that Aristophanes' satire was directed at the novelty in Socrates' methods of unraveling the truth which were in close affinity to the methods of the Sophists. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Aristophanes' anti-war attitudes and his contempt for the new direction of politics and demagogy established with Cleon had led to the distortions of the politician in the caricatures and allusions of the comedies.

However, it is interesting to observe that *Knights* which includes the severest ridicule and contempt for Cleon won the first prize for Aristophanes at the Lenaia (424 BCE). 'Paphlagonian's' claiming of his victory at Pylos from the front seats of the theatre (*Knights*, line 702) can be considered as an implication of the presence of Cleon among the audience when *Knights* was enacted. The awarding of the first prize to *Knights* provides inference on the wide appeal for Aristophanes' plays and the liberal and humourous spirit in which the Athenians accepted socio-political satire in Old Comedy. Thus it can
be assumed that the broad appeal in the Athenian audience for laughter evoked by political satire would also have encouraged Aristophanes’ selection of Cleon, the most popular politician of that era, as the target of ridicule and derision in Old Comedy.

Conclusion

It is apparent that there are distortions in Aristophanes’ caricatures and allusions to Cleon. Certain scholars identify the distortions as resulted either from a personal feud between the dramatist and the politician or due to class prejudice. Other scholars assume that ridicule of the demagogues, especially Cleon in Attic Old Comedy is directed at the ‘new model of politics’ established by him. However, it can be argued that more than the personal feud, the resentment of Cleon was due to his policies and the ideals he established in Athenian politics. However, Aristophanes’ portrayal of Cleon cannot be denied entirely as falsification. The above discussion and the nature of Old Comedy suggest the possibility of Aristophanes’ portrayal of Cleon as a result of exaggeration and parody of the generally accepted character of the politician to evoke humour and derision. However, it is unreasonable and unhistorical to judge Cleon entirely based on Aristophanes’ depiction in his comedies. The historical truth in Old Comedy lies in the socio-political events and personalities that provided the ground for allusion in the plots and the characters of the comedies. Hence it is irrational to accept dramatic accounts, especially in Comedy, as history without cross checking the facts with other historical evidence, though drama is a historical source. Thus it is reasonable to mention that Cleon and the Athenian demagogues were ridiculed in Attic Old Comedy as corrupt, vulgar and manipulative while their policies were despised as self-serving and covetous.
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