DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF THE SINHALESE ELITE

IN THE AGE OF NATIONALISM


Volume 1


MALLIKARACHCHIGE NISHAN RASANGA WIJETUNGE


A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the

requirements of Nottingham Trent University

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy


March 2012

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# Contents

# Abstract

Domestic architecture of the Sinhalese elites in Sri Lanka remained as unchartered territory until recently. Having focused on the period of nationalism, which indeed is an area in oblivion (both historically and architecturally), this research established that the elite are in a position to better represent/evoke the shifting political/social/cultural forces (i.e. periodic changes) through their architecture within the Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) society. This was the foremost research question tackled. Moreover, the works of the architects Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara were singled-out for being two most varying trajectories aimed at the elite; the background study of post-independence architecture having led the way. How they represented the aspirations of two differing elite groups – the 'governing elite' and the 'political-class' – was then confirmed having placed them against the extant elitist theories. Moreover, the cultural strands of the Ceylonese elite to survive from pre-colonial and colonial situations were identified, and how the articulations became evident in their domestic architectures was assessed through case studies. On the other hand, as broader aims, the applicability of the outcome of the main research question to contexts other than Sri Lanka, communities other than the Sinhalese, or time periods that draw their meanings for being historically/architecturally significant, were established.

Other than the foregoing unique contributions to knowledge, the enquiry into the area of elitism was significant. While Western theories on elitism were considered to determine the most apposite, the under-studied sphere of Eastern elitism was tackled in its pre-modern and modern conditions in order to assess social stratifications for the periods in question – Kandyan, Dutch, British and post-independence. Based on social structures of these periods, their elitist positions were envisaged and domestic architectures identified for the results to be presented as a structural analysis. Within this process, more delicate differences such as typologies and phases were revealed, and included in a supplementary catalogue with a repository of new knowledge for future research to dwell on. Moreover, narration of the entire historical spectrum of the island's elite domestic architecture is noteworthy as an original exploration. Optimistically, the imperative findings of this study would open up paths for future researchers in the field.

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## Chapter 1

**Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House**

# Chapter 7

# Chapter 1  Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the Thesis; a Personal Journey

Since childhood, I have always been fascinated by old houses. This may have been prompted by spending all of my childhood and adolescence in the Colombo suburb of *Moratuwa* that is historically associated with the British colonial period. In *Moratuwa*, I first experienced as a child, the civic buildings of imposing scale,[1] not to mention the grand houses of the 19th century bourgeoisie and philanthropists; all from an era when *Moratuwa* was a thriving colonial town on the coast; according to my father. I was particularly fascinated by his stories on the famous de Soysa clan, and their lavish life-style that was articulated through pretentious mansions they owned in *Moratuwa* and Colombo. I myself spent the formative years of my life, in a British colonial period house in *Katubedda* – one of the villages in *Salpiti Korale* – of smaller scale and less pretension. I have always wondered how those houses ended up being so massive and ostentatious than our own.

My interest in the colonial period architecture grew even more when I joined in 1991, Royal College, Colombo; a British grammar-school type academic institution established in 1835, with an ensemble of 19th century buildings. The glamorous British period neighbourhood of *Kurunduwatta* (in Colombo 07, where this school is located), has always been the most sought-after of all neighbourhoods in Colombo. The area is home to many houses similar to the ones of my interest. In my relentless observations,[2] I encountered something rather distressing. Some of these houses had experienced considerable changes that were noticeable even to my amateur eyes. Some of them disappeared right before me, and new ones sprung up in popular styles of the time. Such transformations that caught my eye in the mid-1990s triggered an interest in me as a teenager, to learn about them, and draw them up in their original conditions. When I joined the University of *Moratuwa* in year 2000 to pursue an architectural education, I encountered the impressive body of literature available in the Department of Architecture reading room on the subject of colonial architecture in Ceylon. Consequently, I started spending more and more time reading, improving my knowledge on the area.[3]  I was also privileged enough to work part-time for the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka as a 1st year trainee, and it was at this point that I was exposed to the fascinating area of medieval Kandyan architecture.[4]  This newly aroused interest provoked me to travel to Kandy and *Matale* to visit traditional Kandyan manor houses during the university holidays.

For my training year out, I chose the individual practice of Archt. Sumangala Jayatillake. He is well-respected in the contemporary architectural scene in Sri Lanka for his affluent portfolio of works, and is considered a leading figure amongst the architects who trained under the famous Geoffrey Bawa. During my working stint, I was privileged to read quite a bit from the office book collection. By reading, and via frequent conversations with my employer/mentor, the new sphere of post-independence architecture appeared as a whole new fascinating area. The most striking for me, was to learn how the rich building traditions of the island were synthesized within a modernist discourse by Ceylonese architects such as Geoffrey Bawa and Minnette de Silva, during the post-independence period. The official visits to the *Lunuganga* Trust (at 33rd Lane, *Kolpetty*) in Colombo (the residence/office of Geoffrey Bawa) and trips of leisure to other creations by Geoffrey Bawa in Colombo – Gallery Café, Ena de Silva house, *Seema malakaya* of *Gangarama* temple etc. – and outstations – *Lunuganga* in *Bentota* (Bawa's private estate), Light house Hotel at *Galle*, Blue waters Hotel at *Wadduwa* etc. – were the first intimate encounters of mine with the so-called 'Neo-Regionalism'. During the same time, I also read about the alternative approach championed by Valentine Gunasekara. His rich portfolio containing some remarkable projects got me thinking why his work was less-celebrated in comparison to Geoffrey Bawa's.

When I had the opportunity to produce a dissertation for my M.A. in Architecture and interior Design for London Metropolitan University, U.K., in 2005, I enthusiastically chose to explore the post-independence period domestic architecture of the elite. The output entitled 'Evolution of Elite Domestic Architecture in Maritime-Ceylon from the British Takeover up to the Immediate Era of Post Independence' was the stepping stone for my M.Sc. thesis 'Evolution of Elite Domestic Architecture from British to Decolonization with Special Reference to Maritime Provinces of Sri Lanka' that I submitted to University of *Moratuwa*, Sri Lanka, in 2007. In this manner, I had made myself conversant with the pre-modern to modern trajectory of the island's elite domestic architecture.

Having completed my charter (Part III qualification) in Architecture in 2008/2009, I decided to read for a research qualification in the area of my interest, in order to look at more serious questions I hitherto not had the opportunity to explore. Consequently, I embarked on the long journey of looking for opportunities available in the U.K. and elsewhere for research, which was not easy by any means. I first came to know Prof. Soumyen Bandyopadhyay in 2007 when he was teaching at University of Liverpool, U.K. I had made an enquiry into his area of interests as I though it converged with mine, and I was overwhelmed by the positive response received. I am truly indebted to him for his great enthusiasm on Sri Lankan architecture, which I had not received from most other universities I previously applied to. He rescued me from

the brink of giving up my research interest that had been triggered by the constant rejections I had previously suffered at the hands of ignorance towards the realm of Sri Lankan Architecture. Following Prof. Bandyopadhyay's move to Nottingham Trent University in 2008, I also applied for a place and also funding opportunities. The application paid-off later in the year, when I was awarded a School bursary that ensured funding for the coming three years (January, 2009 to January, 2012). So, I began my PhD expedition in January 2009 that resulted in this thesis. The bumpy course leading to this final outcome has been both tough, and at the same time fascinating. I believe the outcome of my research has convincingly answered all my questions scientifically; to my heart's content.

## 1.2 Nationalism in Sri Lanka

**An Inimitable Situation**

As this study focuses on the domestic architecture of elites in Sri Lanka in the age of 'nationalism', at the outset, it is imperative to examine the concept, and then address how it pertains to the island historically. Nationalism is often explained in terms of nationalist thought, or an impulse of nationalist consciousness (Dharmadasa in Gamage, 2009: 17). Analogous to similar insular situations such as Britain that Law (2005: 267-277) narrates, the term applies to Sri Lanka in a more rigorous manner, in comparison to continental nations.[5] The fervent nationalist sentiment pertaining to the island is often neglected by modern literature, both Western and Eastern alike, largely corrupted with orientalist thought. On the other hand, Sri Lanka's history is often compared with that of the Indian sub-continent, and convenient conclusions and analogies are erroneously drawn upon out of ignorance. This section aims to rectify such misgivings.

The concept of a 'single' and 'unified' Sinhalese Buddhist political entity – *Sinhala Deshaya* [translated to 'nation' in English] – pre-dates the modern 'inter-state system' and the 'nation state'; invented, and dispersed around the world by West European colonial powers from the 18th century (Perera, 1994: 332). The perfect epitome for a Western-created nation state from the South Asian region is Sri Lanka's neighbour 'India', formed by the British in the 19th century (Jayasumana, 2009: 17). India was created by unifying an ensemble of kingdoms into a single central political entity, where the concept, as a unified state (not entirely though), emerged only twice in history (Gunaratna, 1993: 473).[6] India indeed, is conterminous with both Gellner and Anderson's notions of a nation; an 'ideological construction' seeking to forge a link between (self-defined) culture group and state, and that they create 'abstract communities' of a different order from those dynastic states or kingship-based

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communities which pre-dated them (in Eriksen, 2002: 99). Thus, for the duo, although many nations tend to imagine themselves as old, they are modern (in Eriksen, 2002: 100).[7]

> *"Nationalism, which is frequently a traditionalistic ideology, may glorify and recodify an ostensibly ancient tradition shared by the ancestors of the members of the nation, but it does not thereby re-create that tradition.* Instead, *[…] it reifies It […]"*.

In Dharmadasa's (2003: 26) terms, the ancient glories revived, find provenance in certain resources of value – legends, religious beliefs/rituals, classical literature, language, architectural ruins, inscriptions/texts etc. In this sense, it has to be clarified here that the point of concern is not on the modern nation, but the pre-modern sentiment shared fervently by the Sinhalese; rootedness manifested through their prolonged living in a unified state as the politically and culturally dominant ethnicity with a unique identity. The common belief (at least in the West) that nationalism, based on nationalist thought, was absent in the pre-modern world [that Gamage (2009: 17) points to] is dubious; owing to the pervasiveness of such resources of value throughout the Lankan history. Chatterjee (1985, 1992) and Uyangoda (2011: 40) in fact, point out to the euro-centric nature of this view. 'Sri Lanka' on the other hand, is the reified 'modern' version of this sentiment – prompted by the anti-colonial nationalist sentiments of the elite under a foreign rule (Nairn, 1975: 11). N. de Silva (in Gamage, 2009: 14) agrees to the foregoing notion, and discusses how former colonial repression became an instrument to envisage the nationalist thought instinctively. This particular phase of nationalism indeed, finds its provenance in situations comparative to that of the western-type industrial societies, thus, assumes a modern connotation. The propagation of the idea is in fact, attributed to the French and Industrial Revolutions (Gamage, 2009: 17).[8] However, Gamage (2009: 18) questions that if this modern phenomenon was only a reaction to colonisation, on what basis did the colonizers (the Western capitalist nations) assume the same sentiment? Smith (1994: 375-398) strengthens this argument by confirming that proponents of the foregoing notions had failed to address the spiritual dimensions of the phenomenon.[9] In this light, Gamage (2009: 18) points to the rare reference to the idea of 'National Thought' in the Western academia, but other versions of 'Nationalism', 'Nation State' and 'National History'. When these notions sprung up in Europe with the demise of religious and kingship prerogatives that previously unified society, in the absence of radical measures such as the renaissance, reformations and enlightenment in the extra-European world (especially, in south Asia), the prior generalisation of them as modern phenomena becomes refutable. Although prior religious beliefs were shattered and feudal/royal dominations challenged in West Europe during these events as Gamage (2009: 18-19) reveals, nothing as such ever materialised in the sub-continental context (especially in Ancient Lanka) in order for a new form of solidarity such as 'imagined communities' in Anderson's (in Gamage,

2009: 18) terms, to bridge this gap. All such reasons make the western theorizing ever more doubtful.

According to Jayasumana (2009: 45) and N. de Silva (2006b), a notable difference exists between the polities of the sub-continent and pre-colonial Lanka (*Lanka Dweepa* or *Lak Diva*). Jayasumana (2009: 45) reiterates that in the former, various monarchies – both indigenous and foreign (mostly outside invading forces that entered the subcontinent over the millennia) – ruled from time to time, vast territories that incorporated within them, diverse groups (arguably, 'tribes' later defined as 'ethnicities'). The 'ruler' and the 'ruled' were not necessarily from the same ethnicity or faith, and compromises were often made in weighing of power relations. More importantly, it has to be clarified that the British were the architects of the modern Indian states that were created mainly along the line of spoken languages.[10] This notion was strengthened and certain boundaries re-worked in the 1950s, to arrive at the present system of Indian states (Jayasumana, 2009: 17; N. de Silva, 2008). Conversely, the boundaries of earlier kingdoms were not contiguous, thus prone to periodic changes, based on the growth and decline of their respective powers (Abu-Lughod in Perera, 1994: 35).[11] Therefore, Immanuel Wallerstein (in Eriksen, 2002: 116) questions, rhetorically, *"does India exist?"*, to answer *"no"*. He then directs the same question to many other postcolonial states the world over.[12]

In contrast, as confirmed by *Mahavamsa* (in mahavamsa.org, 2007) ['Great Chronicle' in Sinhalese (also referred to as *Mahavansa*), which is the longest continuing historic chronicle to be found in Asia as attested by K. N. O. Dharmadasa in Dissanayaka (2009: 71)],[13] 'a unified Sinhalese kingdom' was constructed in the 4th century B.C. during the reign of King *Pandukabhaya* who formed *Anuradhapura* as his capital. In Sarath's (1999: 48) opinion, a 'national thought' was established by harnessing the regional tropes of the sentiment prolific amongst tribes in their respective village settings. Being an island, its boundaries were clearly-demarcated and fixed. It is after this historical moment of political reconciliation that the immigrant Aryans (i.e. *'Sinha'* tribe) from the sub-continent, gradually intermingled with the indigenous non-Aryan groups such as *Yaksha, Naga* and *Deva,* to form the *Sinhala* race (Mahavmsa, 2007; N. de Silva, 2006b; 2008).[14] It has to be stressed here that in the present-day Sri Lanka, no direct descendants from the foregoing groups could be traced, except for certain Sinhalese castes claiming such descent (Hussein, 2001).[15] The largely 'pagan' Sinhalese kingdom received Buddhism in the 3rd century B.C. with the arrival of *Arhath Mahinda*[16] from the sub-continent, and the Sinhalese culture was nourished with Buddhistic teachings (Lewcock, Sansoni and Senanayake, 2002: 1). For Amarasekere (in Gamage, 2009: 11), bulk of these teachings underpinned the initial nationalist thought in the island, where Sarath (1999: 48) links this phenomenon to the reign of King *Devanampiya Tissa*.[17] It now assumed revitalization as 'Sinhalese Buddhist'

culture (N. de Silva, 2006b). Historians claim that no society has lasted over three generations without associating its *raison d'être* to religion, and Sinhalese culture indeed survived because of Buddhism (De Votta, 2007: 39). In spite of 17 recorded invasions throughout history coming from the Indian mainland as Gunarathna (1993: 473) confirms,[18] Sinhalese seat of power survived for a millennium and half, where the subsequent threats from the 12th century A.D. shifted it through a series of locations to *Kanda Uda Rata* (i.e. Kandy).[19] Up to the point when the Kingdom of Kandy was ceded to the British Empire in 1815 as the last Sinhalese kingdom,[20] the Sinhalese Buddhist culture, and the thought/consciousness of a Sinhalese Buddhist kingdom that once spanned the entire island, had survived unscratched from major external influences (N. de Silva, 2006b).[21] The above state of affairs crystallises the fact that in the Lankan rhetoric, nationalist thought is not merely conceivable as a theory, but carries a practical value (Amarasekara in Gamage, 2009: 14). *'Jathi'* in Sinhalese in fact, connote 'birth', analogous to ancient *Pali* and *Sanskrit* languages – conveying the idea that the membership of the Sinhalese race is granted automatically by birth (Gamage, 2009: 16).[22]

Consequently, the Sinhalese Buddhists share the view that Sri Lanka is the only country in the world with a 'Sinhalese Buddhist' populace that forms a majority – the 'most authentic cultural form extant'[23] that has been, from the beginning, nourished by Buddhistic teachings, and the only culture to 'fiercely preserve'[24] the *Theravada* philosophy in its most unhindered and original form (N. de Silva, 2008). This sense of originality arises out of the island possessing the oldest associations with the Buddha, outside the land of his birth (Dissanayaka, 2009: 70).[25] Supported by Lord Buddha's own predilection that is revealed by De Votta (2007: 6),[26] the foregoing affairs makes Sinhalese the legitimate guardians of the religion and culture that encapsulates it, and thus, of the land where it is deep-rooted.[27] In other words, the religion, people and land are bound together in an indissoluble unity (Jayawardhana, 1987). The foregoing ideas frame the belief that the island has been 'preserved' for Sinhalese Buddhists, and the minorities live there because of Buddhists' sufferance,[28] which is reproached by Western commentators such as (De Votta, 2007) without sufficient grounds.[29] Thus, undeniably *"there is no Buddhism* [in Sri Lanka or anywhere else in the world] *without the Sinhalese and no Sinhalese without Buddhism"* (Cyril Mathew in De Votta, 2007:30-31),[30] as it was Sinhalese Buddhism that spread towards South-East Asia to result in the five *Theravada* Buddhist countries in the region after the setback suffered by the faith in the sub-continent, and the alternative epistemology – opposed to Western epistemology – it furnishes (N. de Silva, 2008).[31] Apart from the fact that the Sinhalese civilization started on the day of Buddha's demise, and that he visited the island thrice within his life time, the Sinhalese venerate his corporeal relics enshrined in sacred sites. They also believe that Buddha entrusted to gods, the safety of the Sinhalese civilization (Dissanayaka, 2009: 71). In this light, analogous to *Hindutva*

and *saffron movement* in India, Sinhalese Buddhists' push towards a 'Sinhalese Buddhist identity' for Sri Lanka that is refuted by certain orientalists as 'extremist' , 'supremacist' and 'fundamentalist' (De Votta, 2007).[32] However, not all orientalists agree (Manor, 1994).[33] The heritage of Buddhist monks' involvement in the nation's politics – from advising kings to legitimising rulers, and thereby, influencing policy (Valpola Rahula[34] in De Votta, 2007: 2) – is frequently viewed as 'political Buddhism' (De Votta, 2007:2).[35] This is largely an orientalist perspective that disregards the act's historic legitimacy while pointlessly comparing Lanka's circumstances with one of West Europe.[36]

As Ernest Renan (1996: 52) tells us,

> *"[…] the nation is a soul, a spiritual principal. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principal. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the values of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form".*

For Sinhalese, the *Mahavansa*[37] helps link past with present, enabling the Sinhalese Buddhist nation to coalesce as a *"spiritual principal"* (De Votta, 2007: 5). Although the Sinhalese Buddhist belief in the chronicle is queried by orientalists as 'mytho-history', certain exaggerations put aside, its basic historical content is indisputable (Jayasumana, 2009).[38] For orientalists, just as any other ethnicity, the Sinhalese Buddhist one too is an 'imagined community', or a 'cult' (Hobsbawn in De Votta, 2007: 6, 7).[39] Despite his claim to it as a recent phenomena related to modernisation and industrialisation, Ernest Gellner (1983: 1) tells us that *"Nationalism is primarily a political principal, which holds that the political and the national units should be congruent"*. In a quintessentially orientalist angle, De Votta (2007: 3) baselessly queries the Sinhalese claim to the two millennia-old harmonies of political and nationalist units – a pre-modern political and cultural system is repudiated on the grounds of modern western politico-cultural lines.[40] As N. de Silva (2008) confirms,[41] for a 'Nationality' [*Jathiya*] to exist, there is a criteria to be met.

- a considerable population
- a land extent or extents adjacent (free from geographical constraints) with clear boundaries (in a way people can easily interact)
- a common life-style
- a common culture and world view; a national consciousness (national thought)
- an archaic Kingdom

N. de Silva assures that if any of these conditions are not met, there can only be an ethnicity. For him, the Sinhalese nationality in 'multi-ethnic Sri Lanka' meets these criteria, and leaves other social groups as 'ethnicities'.[42] In line with Eriksen's (2002: 7) idea that ethnicities who consider themselves 'distinctive' are formed as ranks in a hierarchy; in Sri Lanka, the order of things is/has been 'Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and others'.[43] Perera (1994: 91) tells us that *"Historically, the Lankan kingdoms had been organised as self-sufficient, self-contained entities, of which the seat of*

*government was located within the territory, as the center of the society"*. In this light, both Michael Roberts and Christopher Bayly (in Roberts, 2004a) tell us that Sinhalese consciousness has existed in the pre-colonial period, and is very much evident in their folklore and war poetry etc., especially, the ones of Kandyan kingdom.[44] According to Perera (1994: 94-95), unifying the island into a 'single political-territory' under their own kingdom had always been a social and spatial conception of all the Sinhalese monarchs. Sinhalese history in fact, makes reference to a few occasions when the island was brought under a 'single flag'.[45] Arguably, protection by the Indian Ocean and the island being a small territory to defend would have complimented the above fete.[46]  The concept of unification is best discernible through the Sinhalese drive to keep the South Indian kingdoms at bay; fiercely defending their territory from invasion, and at times, aligning with certain kingdoms (from both South and East of the sub-continent) to ensure own security (Paranavithana, 2001: 28-29). History of the island assures that this policy has enabled Sinhalese Buddhist culture to survive more or less in its 'original state', in the face of at least a millennium of external political interference.  The following map (Fig. 1) illustrates the island's centuries of endurance as a Buddhist and Aryan language-speaking political entity, encircled by Dravidian language groups of the sub-continent who are predominantly Hindu in faith. Even the Muslim influence after 13-14th centuries did not make a major impact on the island as it did on the sub-continent and South-East Asia, owing to the formidable Sinhalese 'defence mechanism' (Jayasumana, 2009: 43).



Fig. 1

Location of Sri Lanka in relation to the sub-continent, and the spread of Dravidian and Indo-Aryan Languages in the region.

Even under such circumstances, the 'foremost place' given to Buddhism (without repudiating other religions or making Buddhism the state religion), in the Sri Lankan constitution – as the faith is adhered to, by 69.3% of the country's population – and the Sinhalese identity that naturally emerges at the fore – despite the state's desperate attempt to give equal cultural representations to minorities[47] – are questioned by orientalists, as a Western-type 'secular state' where 'absence'/'neutrality' of religion, and  'equal cultural representation' are anticipated (De Votta, 2007: 5, 77). These humanist reproaches are directed against an overwhelming corpus of anomalies evident in the policies of the US and West-Europe in the same spheres (De Votta, 2007: 20-21; Eriksen, 2002: 118).[48] In the South-Asian context, secularism may be defined as *"equal respect for all religions (and those*

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*who choose not to follow any religion)"* (Aiyar, 2004: 5). Consequently, this justifies the Sinhalese nationalist view that *"Hindus control India, Muslims the Middle East, and Christians the West, whereas Buddhists have only tiny Sri Lanka"* (De Votta, 2007: 23).[49]

In relation to the language issue, when 74% of the country permanently speak Sinhalese [not to forget almost all Indian Tamils (5.52%), half of all Tamils (Approximately 7%) who live in the Colombo district, and almost all Muslims (7.05 %) and others[50] (0.58%) who also speak the language part-time, it becoming the national language is reasonable. It is after all, the Sinhalese language that frames the ethnic/cultural unity within the multi-caste (thus multi-racial) and multi-religious Sinhalese population. However, the constitution gives equal priority to Tamil and English, where the former is used as the language of instruction in schools and as the official level in the Tamil and Muslim dominated areas (N. de Silva, 2006b). This also should not be considered an issue of marginalisation when other Asian and especially, Western nations have no intention what so ever of changing the historic majority languages their countries and governments function on.[51] In the light of double standards of orientalists and humanists towards the rest of the world, such demands become nothing but duplicitous (N. de Silva, 2008).

Banks (1996: 154-59) nevertheless, is dubious towards the notion of self-proclaimed 'non-ethnic' nations, which 'bypass any local ethnicities'. Ethnicity entails classification of people and group relationships.[52] It establishes both Us-Them contrasts (dichotomisation),[53] a shared field for inter-ethnic discourse, and also interaction (complementarisation).[54] It is an 'aspect of relationship',[55] but a 'cultural property' of a group (Erikson, 2002: 4, 29, 34).[56] Moreover, according to Manning Nash (in Erikson, 2002: 35), there is a common denominator for all ethnic groups; 'bed, blood and cult'.[57] Bank's (1996: 154-59) perspective is that all nationalisms everywhere, once state control is achieved, actively seek to both enhance and reify the specific ethnic identities of the deviant [stereotyped [58] and stigmatised[59]] others within the nation state, and at the same time to efface the idea of ethnic particularism within the national identity. Hence, the situation in Sri Lanka is arguably not a peculiar one, and its conflicts could be interpreted as ethnic, but 'racial'.[60]

**Dwelling on Evidence**

Max Weber once held that 'primordial phenomena' such as ethnicity and nationalism would diminish as a result of modernisation, industrialisation and individualism that did not materialise (in Eriksen, 2002: 2).[61] On the contrary; ethnicity, nationalism and similar forms of identity politics grew in political importance in the world throughout the twentieth century (Eriksen, 2002: 2).[62] Huntington's (1996) theory on the other

hand, explains that post Cold-War geo-political conflicts will take place largely in 'the faultlines' between 'civilisations'.

In this light, Michael Roberts (2004b:108) tells us that,

> "[…] the contention that the Northern and Eastern Provinces are 'traditional homelands' of the Sri Lanka Tamils is sustained by TN [Tamil Nationalism] by a thin veneer of evidence, the naturalisation of bureaucratic categories and a measure of historical manipulation".

Robert's statement is indeed in line with Ernest Gellner (1964: 169) who writes, *"Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist".* The above views provide the answer to the dilemma of the two camps; who argue against and in favour of historical existence of a 'Tamil home land' in the island. While neither of the evidence – historical, archaeological, linguistic and anthropological – from ancient Lanka nor the sub-continent can clarify such a claim by a small faction of Tamils with separatist intentions [as illustrated by Jayasumana (2009)], an overwhelming amount of evidence from Sri Lankan as well as colonial sources  suggests its precariousness.[63] Some Sri Lankan scholars such as N. de Silva (2006b: 2008), and Jayasumana (2009) in fact, adopt a rather new position by vindicating the two West European colonizers for fabricating and manipulating island's recent history.[64] When a vast majority of material on Sinhalese and Tamil nationalisms by western orientalist commentators justify the latter while vilifying of the former, having resorted to historical manipulations and superficial analysis, it is imperative to discuss more accurate facts. However, for social commentators such as K. T. Silva (2005: 113) and Hettige (1998), conflicts in Sri Lanka – be it the ethnic conflict or its inter-caste counterpart – could partly be attributed to Neo-liberalism. Post 1977's globalisation onslaught, and its anomalies, in its swerved interest from the 'welfare state' to 'market mechanisms', removed the emphasis from class struggle and reinvigorated ethnic skirmish, and similarly, stressed on nationalism instead of globalism.


***British Colonial Era Nationalism***


It is commonly perceived that Sinhalese nationalism was largely extinguished after Ceylon was ceded to the British Empire in 1815, and following the respective freedom struggles in 1818 and 1848 that were both crushed. According to the extant literature (focusing on political and socio-cultural issues of the British colonial era), the 19th century saw two religious revivals by the two most numerous minorities of Ceylon (K. M. de Silva, 1981: 354-355). Mid 19th century Hindu revival and Islam revival, spearheaded by religious leaders[65] both, pre-dated Buddhist revival that followed later in the century.[66] In a time when a majority of local schools were run by Christian institutions with state patronage, a campaign for educating the common man on local

cultures under the threat of westernization was conceived to be a timely necessity. Hindu revivalism especially, advocated that the Tamil elites should eschew Anglicisation, drawing on the Hindu cultural resources of the mainland (Silva, K. M. 1981: 416, 346-352). Buddhist revival's intentions were to curb the fleeting Christian proselytizing and anglicising of Buddhists (De Votta, 2007: 40), The Buddhist leaders especially showed discontent towards colonial state's Christian favouritism, and thus mobilised to counter it along with the bourgeoning minority revivals (Malalgoda, 1976; Tambiah, 1992).[67] Prominent figures behind the Buddhist revival were Sinhalese radical leaders such as Anagharika Dharmapala, as well as foreign nationals; Lady Helena Blavatsky (the Russian philanthropist) and Henri Steel Olcott (American civil war veteran) etc., who had developed a sudden interest towards Buddhism and theosophy (see Ivan, 2006; De Votta, 2007: 14).[68] Jayawardhana (1987) assumes that the Sinhalese Buddhist consciousness was counterpoised by its ideologues against British imperial state, which was seen as a 'foreign and Christian', thus making their revival was more 'anti-western and anti-imperialist' more than anything else.

It is believed that such cultural nationalisms took a political turn in the early 20th century by overtly resisting British colonial rule (Perera, 1994: 340). This in fact, was in line with the Saidean claim that the *"nationalist anti-imperialism"* was replaced by *"liberationist anti-imperialism"* (Said, 1990: 87). When movements such as A. E. Gunasinghe's *Young Lanka League* (YLL) (1915) followed the militant Indian nationalist example, prominent nationalist figures[69] preached the concept of *"Swaraj"* that dwelt on the notion of an 'insular brand of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism' (Jayewardene, 1984:14).[70] The underlying reasons behind the latter were the threat caused by cultural revivals of minorities, minority-favouring policy of the colonial government (De Votta (2007: vii), and especially, the Western cultural inclination of the Sinhalese Buddhists (K. T. Silva, 2005: 129-49). Trotskyite policies on the other hand, were pursued by political parties such as the *Lanka Sama Samaja Patry* (LSSP), since 1935, in the guise of the 'Trade Union'; conceivable as a small fraction of the intelligentsia dwelling on the support of the working classes (V. K. Jayawardena, 1972: 240). The *LSSP* leaders who formed tenuous links with the peasantry had no drive to facilitate mass agitation to reinforce their political initiatives (V. K. Jayawardena in K. T. Silva 2005: 99; Perera, 1994: 248).[71] As Perera (1994: 341) tells us,

> " *[in] contrast to the struggles up to the mid nineteenth century that strove to repel European invasions and restore the legitimacy of Lankan kingdoms, these independence movements which had been born within the colonies, saw colonial society and its territory as orthogenetic, i.e., natural or given".*

The main reason for this could be argued as the people behind this movement being not only intellectuals who were exposed to radical European ideas during their time studying in the core, they also belonged to the elite class – either in the form of

different indigenous ethnicities or even of Eurasian origin (K. Jayawardena, 2009). For Eriksen (1993: 8), *"Although nationalisms tend to be ethnic in character, this is not necessarily the case…"*. Sustaining this view, alongside of isolated nationalist attempts by minority groups, a unified nationalism was once in place in Ceylon; articulated via Ceylon National Congress (CNC)[72] that incorporated members from all ethnicities (V. K. Jayawardena in K. T. Silva, 2005).[73]  In contrast to the radical liberation attempts of the YLL, CNC only lobbied for gradual reforms (Perera, 1994: 248).[74]  However, G. J. Lerski (1968: 50) believes that such reforms were *"progressive forces"* that brought about new benefits to the island's populace.[75] Although the formation of *Sinhala Maha Sabha* [The Great Council of the Sinhalese] (SMS) in 1937 by S.W.R.D Bandaranaike is vindicated as an act that inclined towards the Sinhalese nationalist camp, the balanced prior political binaries, commentators tend to overlook the incident that provoked this act – the Tamil politicians leaving the CNC in 1921, to form *Dravida Mahajana Sabha* (DMS). DMS was a political party exclusively representing Tamil separatist interests according to Ivan (2006: 53),[76] and it proved to be the point of reference to many similar ethno-centric parties to follow suit.[77] Despite the revival of ethno nationalism, all political parties forged an accommodation with the 'mainstream polity' focusing on socio-economic issues and 'multi-party democracy' (Perera, 1994: 353).

There is a subtle relationship between ethnicity and nationalism. Eriksen (2002: 7) tells us that analogous to ethnic ideologies, *"…nationalism stresses the cultural similarity of its adherents, and, by implication, it draws boundaries vis-à-vis others, who thereby become outsiders"*. The distinguishing mark of nationalism is by definition, its relationship to the state. *"A nationalist holds that political boundaries should be coterminous with cultural boundaries…"* (Eriksen, 2002: 7). Therefore, it is a theory of political legitimacy. Ernest Gellner's (1978: 134) argument is that nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can be defined in terms of this principle. For him, nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. Under such circumstances, Eriksen (2002: 7) tells us

> *"[that] many ethnic groups do not demand command over a state. When the political leaders of an ethnic movement make demands to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore by definition becomes a nationalist movement".*[78]

The ideology of nationalism dictates that ethnic groups should dominate a state for themselves (Gellner in Eriksen, 2002: 98).[79] A nation for Anderson (1991: 6) is *"… an imagined political community – an imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".*[80] The 'nation state' is thus a state dominated by an ethnic group, whose markers of identity are frequently embedded in its official symbolism and legislation. The fact that people are willing to die for their nation is suggestive of its extraordinary

force (Eriksen, 2002: 98). Accordingly, as seen by many, formation of DMS marks the beginning of Tamil Nationalism's mainstay in the island, in the modern-era (N. de Silva, 2008b).[81] The nationalist turn taken by Tamils in 1921 in fact, frames an anxiety towards an undeniable and bitter future reckoning; the universal adult franchise.[82] When each ethnicity had to contest and win votes in the newly-introduced electorates, the prior equal or over-proportional representations that Tamils (and other minorities) had received against the Sinhalese majority (since 1883) had now been threatened.[83] This enabled for the first time, a fair representation for the Sinhalese in the democratic political arena. This marks the inception of inter-ethnic conflicts (of interests) in Ceylon, which Park's theory explains (in Erikson, 2002: 21). He stresses that inter-ethnic strife is caused by threats – real or imaginary – to what he calls an existing 'ecological pattern' of mutual adjustment. In elaboration, social mobility (down or upwards) of any ethnic group would lead to tension in relation to other groups. The colonial-created ecological pattern was soon to be further threatened by the incidents following independence.

### Post-Independence Nationalism

On Course to 1956 Culmination Point:

Ceylon's independence from the British Metropole took place on the 4th February 1948, hence making the ensuing timeframe its post-independence (post-colonial) period. Immediate Post-independent Ceylon's politics kept on taking inspiration from European political culture. People's faith towards western-democracy and their common goal of nationalism is illustrated by Perera (1994: 352).[84] For the political elite represented initially through the CNC and later through the United National Party (UNP), independence was

> *"[…] merely a peaceful transfer of power and did not imply significant changes in the economic, administrative, ideological, and spatial structures. The first decade after independence, until the mid 1950s, was marked by a matching of interests, intentions, and desires of the ruling national elite with the "post-colonial" political, economic, and cultural system constructed by the British in consultation with them. Hence, independent Ceylon was a constituent element of British post-imperial space as well as the larger world-wide system of states […]"* (Perera, 1994: 255).[85]

As Perera (1994: 346) tells us, the Ceylonese elites taking over the political power following independence provided the opportunity for Socialist and Communist parties formed during World War II to enter the parliament. The socialists' questioning of the capitalist system and ambivalence to 'armed struggle', drew them more closely into the political process driven by their election successes. The 1936 elections saw two of LSSP's candidates being elected to the State Council, and from then onwards saw the council as a principal platform for anti-colonial struggle. As Perera (1994: 347)

elaborates, *"[the] hope of winning a future election was booted by the LSSP coming closer to forming a government in the elections for the first parliament of independent Ceylon".* The two major political forces at independence in Ceylon were the LSSP – with the support of a largely marginalized fraction of the population – and the UNP – predominantly supported by the nation's traditional elites, bourgeoisie and mainly the non-marginalized populace. It is notable however, that the party leaders were essentially from either traditional elite or bourgeoisie backgrounds. Both parties were evenly poised in terms of public support as Perera (1994: 348) affirms, and never attempted to use extensive force of any sort against each other or strived to extinguish its rival.[86] However, it did not take much time for the vote to become a vital 'political weapon' in politics.[87]

A breakthrough came in 1956 when a faction of local-elite – without altering the leadership class allegiance – under the banner of *Mahajana Eksath Peramuna's* [literally – people's united front (MEP)][88]*,* came into power having been equipped with a strong nationalist agenda. As a reactionary force against bitter memories of colonialism, this coalition of forces – *Pancha Maha Balavega* (five great forces)[89] as De Votta (2007: 17) elaborates – adopted left-wing socialist slogans. Almost all the extant literature point to the fact that the Sinhalese Buddhist Nationalism (SBN) – 'Nationalism proper', in Ceylon – began here. N. de Silva (2006b) mentions that despite the incompatibility of socialism and nationalism, the weak and power-hungry socialist forces having realised the nationalist fervour in the post-independent nation, took advantage of the situation by backing the subsequent pro-nationalist governments that were willing to compromise their capitalist and imperialist stances. It could be argued here that post-independence SBN manifested itself between 1956 and 1977; a window dominated by a series of pro-socialist SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom party)-led governments, except for the UNP run between 1965 and 1970. The subsequent alliance between the SLFP and the main leftist parties [in 1959 to form the MEP] pushed the Federal Party (FP) sphere-headed by a Tamil separatist convergence into an alliance with the UNP; significantly polarizing Ceylonese polity for the first time; with lasting consequences. The Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist policies of successive governments initially concentrated on achieving a distinct break with the former colonizer, and then concentrated on consolidating the newly-gained position.[90] Consolidation was carried out through 'Sinhala only' policy (1956)[91] [accompanied by promoting Buddhism as the national religion (Perera, 1994: 380-382)], nationalization programs [of certain industries and services] (1971), 'five year plan' to curb unemployment (1971), import restrictions (1970-77), land reforms (1972), rent control (1972), imposing a ceiling on private property (1973), to culminate with more rigorous acts at the international level such as becoming a forerunner in the non-alignment movement (1954)[92] as Matthews (1978: 84-87) points out, and especially,

renaming of the country 'Sri Lanka' (in 1972) with implementation of a new constitution (Perera, 1994: 354).

This period is also criticized as the one where the Buddhist clergy's involvement in politics intensified (De Votta, 2007: 12). In Obeyesekere's (1970: 46-47) view, *Theravada* Buddhism by this time, was experiencing what he calls a condition of *"Protestant Buddhism",* provided that *"…many of its norms and organizational forms are historical derivatives from Protestant Christianity"* and that *"…it is a protest against Christianity and its associated Western political dominance prior to independence".* For him, the *Sangha*'s (order of the Buddhist monks) bourgeoning political involvement was underscored by the constant challenges by the modern milieu that was confronting it. More importantly, the era's bourgeoning Tamil nationalist demands should not be ignored as it was a foremost stimulant of the upheaval by Buddhist monks (N. de Silva, 2006b). They who had historically been hospitable to other religions – to Hindus and Christians – did not elicit gratitude, and thus, had finally learnt from prior errors (De Votta, 2007: 14).[93]

Without realising the underlying historical dimensions behind Sinhalese nationalism, some commentators wrongly bracket it to economic and cultural reasons.  V. K. Jayawardena (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 103) is the only scholar to advocate the former. Repudiation of this will be taken up later with supporting evidence. In relation to cultural reasons, critiques by many [from Jayawardhana (1987) to Jayewardene (1984: 17-18) and A. Pieris (2007: 151)] via their reproaches on Sinhala Buddhist ethos that is claimed to had subverted the potential for a 'secular multicultural' state, omit three vital issues.  Steeped in orientalist inclinations, firstly, they are ignorant towards the plight of Sinhalese majority that was long-disadvantaged by the British,[94] and secondly, overlook bourgeoning minority cultural revivals in operation from the mid 19th century (De Votta, 2007: 13). Most seminally, they dismiss the legitimate right of the Sinhalese majority, backed by an archaic ideology and tradition, to win back what they had lost to European colonisation; the unified Sinhalese Buddhist kingdom and the alternative epistemology to the ubiquitous and complacent Western counterpart.

### *1977; End of Nationalism?*

Based on incidents in the political and economic arenas covered by extant literature, and relying on common public opinion, some might argue that that SBN lost its vigour in the late 1970s (Matthews, 1978: 87-91).  The UNP regime's policy to curb the age-old role played by the Buddhist monk in the political arena that Wijesooriya (2011: 28-29) attests to, frames a strand of this argument.[95] This especially, became evident following UNP's victory in 1977 that introduced neo-liberal economic reforms to Sri

Lanka and thus, stepped-up globalisation following a supposedly notorious seven-year spell of economic mismanagement and hardship by the United Front (UF) government (Wijesooriya, 2011: 17-18).[96] Perhaps, the capitalist, westernised, and elite-oriented reputation of the political party that Matthews (1978: 93) discloses must have caused this common misconception. However, it is imperative to establish that it was certainly not the case. Some outside observers such as Vale (1992) have in fact, speculated that the post-1977 Sri Lankan state was 'nationalist', just as its predecessors. For local commentators such as Jayawardhana (1987), UNP adjustments to Sinhalese nationalist currant had been ensued since 1948.[97] In this light, the fact that SBN preceding 1977 could be elucidated on many grounds.

UNP Agendas:

It could be argued that under the guise of a rapid modernisation program, the capitalist UNP state concealed its nationalist inclination. The government in fact, carried out an array of activities that hint at nationalist intentions. First and foremost, soon after his victory in 1976, President J. R. Jayewardene declared *Sri Jayewardenepura*[98] in *Kotte*, as the official capital of Sri Lanka as against the colonial-constructed capital Colombo.[99] *Kotte* is considered to be the metro political center of a pre-colonial Sinhalese Kingdom that had unified the entire island under it in the 15th century (Perera, 1994: 487). For M. Prematilleke (in Jayewardene, 1984: 214), it was the seat of government when the economic and cultural prosperity of the nation reached its zenith.[100] Although this selection was biased by President Jayewardene's own belief that the city was a resonance of his name as Robson (2004: 146-47) reveals, the underlying intention was to reconstruct the once 'powerful kingdom of *Kotte*', by the master plan developed to portray it as a 'Sinhalese Buddhist centre' with political edifices surrounded by Buddhist *stupas*. Having observed this, Vale (in Perera, 1994: 487) concludes (superficially) that it was the metaphoric outcome of Sinhalese desire to subject the Tamils,[101] and was a direct provocation to that community. However, the most pertinent factor here is that although the decision was announced in 1977 when the UNP came into power, the decision itself according to Perera (1994: 487-488) was perhaps made earlier.[102] He further argues that although the neo-vernacular architecture of certain edifices – i.e. the parliament complex by Bawa – created equivalence between cultures, the master plan hindered its prospects.

Moreover, J. R. Jayewardene's own comments at the local level and declarations at the international level [103] in the 1970s and 80s, within the backdrop of bourgeoning Tamil separatism, and growing Indian intervention attest to the intention of the Sri Lankan state to remain a unified and discrete political entity (Gunaratna, 1993). Consequently, a new role was assigned to Colombo that once was a trading town within *Sri Jayewardenepura*'s limits, as the Central Business District (CBD);

complimentary to the cultural capital (Perera, 1994: 446-447). On par with President Jayewardene's promise in 1977 to create a *dharmishta* (righteous) society – analogous to the one of King *Asoka* in India (Kemper, 1991: 24) – Colombo was promoted as the new 'Buddhist centre' of the nation as against the traditional option of Kandy where Temple of the tooth is located. This is well-manifested by Prime Minister Premadasa's patronage to not-so-archaic *Gangarama* Temple in Colombo; leading to a series of associated 'invented traditions', in Hobsbawn's terms (in Perera, 1994: 459-460).[104] The merging of Sinhalese political and Buddhist centres goes back as far as the 4th century A.D., when the Tooth Relic of Buddha was brought to the island as Manawadu (2005) narrates, to be enshrined near the royal palace (Gunawardane, 1979: 172, 179, 210-211).[105]

Second, UNP government's bid for rapid industrialisation and 'development' becoming unsuccessful could be attributed to ever-present Sinhalese Nationalism. In Perera's (1994: 425) view, the expansion of the East Asian economies towards South Asia and reorganization itself as a South Asian region were beneficial to Sri Lanka, where the Asian Newly Industrialised Countries (NICs) by the 1970s had provided new models of emulation towards 'development', and opportunities.[106] In this backdrop, although the UNP government was inclined towards the USA, and invested heavily on infrastructure to appeal to Western investors, the nationalist fervour prevented them from investing on 'blue chip' industries the government desired, but less lucrative garments and smaller manufacturing sectors (Perera, 1994: 453). The potential investors would have been weary of a state that not-so-long-ago nationalized British plantations and commercial asserts.

Even the small-scale western inputs accompanied hidden consequences. The results emerged shortly in the new forms of economic, political and cultural relegation and manipulation. Economic subordination to Western buyers of local products arose where they were exalted to a position of influence to even threaten Sri Lanka's sovereignty. Further, the island, analogous to many other developing countries, was made one of the many suppliers of cheap goods and services for the West, to be placed stagnantly at the margins of global economy (Bottomore, 1993: 119). Political subjection on the other hand, was felt through the neo-colonial policies of the super powers (Yew, 2002).[107] The best manifestation; the country's three decade-long civil war in fact, was exacerbated as a means of political manipulation by the 'capitalist forces' (N. de Silva, 2006b, 2008). Such radical changes brought about a new threat to national consciousness in the form of cultural subordination that in turn, proliferated the process of Sri Lankans becoming consumerist and culturally hybrid (K. T. Silva, 2005: 112-13).[108]

Third, the actions of certain key figures of the UNP government could be considered, apart from President Jayewardene's own polemic remarks at the international level, as suggesting Sri Lanka's right to sovereignty (in Gunarathna, 1993). Evoking historical sentiments via 'mega projects' was the foremost UNP policy that *Mahaveli* Minister of the Jayewardene government, Gamini Dissanayake*,* took up. Kemper (in Perera, 1994: 460) in fact, accuses him of attempting to evoke Sinhalese historical sentiments in association with the project. The progressive personality that he was (with presidential ambitions), is vindicated as an individual with a Sinhalese supremacist mindset, based on his public speeches (De Votta, 2007: 30). On the other hand, during Ranasingha Premadasa's tenure in office as the housing minister in the same government, or as the president himself later, the *'Gam Udava'* (village awakening) program manifested a tendency to target areas with Sinhalese historical associations (Perera, 1994). Moreover, former UNP government minister of Industries, Cyril Mathew, is vindicated for openly sympathizing with 1983 anti-Tamil rioters (De Votta, 2007: 32). The UNP government's policy to crush insurrections as the state did so, would have been approved by the government representatives as well as the parliamentary majority.

Fourthly, the Changing of the British-given democratic system with an alternative could be pointed out as a symbolic repudiation of former coloniser's political judgement. The parliamentary system headed by a prime minister was transformed into a presidential system in 1978; with an executive presidency and a legislative council[109] (Matthews, 1978: 96). Fifth could be posited as assuring Sinhalese political Hegemony within a democratic framework by rearranging British-imparted spatial structures. Tamils took advantage of the Sinhalese partisanship and won just enough seats to become the opposition in the 1976 election.[110] Then In May 1976, they demanded a separate state in the North and East of Sri Lanka named 'Tamil Eelam' (Matthews, 1978: 89-90). This separatist move was refuted, and future provisions for such actions jettisoned. Consequently, the UNP criticized the electoral system that gave minorities a disproportional number of seats irrespective of the overall number of votes received in 1970 election, and was thus remedied.[111] Perera (1994: 448) believes that reforms framed the construction of a centralized and single national political system that diluted local identities.

Sixth, assuring higher education for Sinhalese youth is noteworthy, where the lack of tertiary education opportunities had been one of the foremost causes behind 1971 *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* (JVP) insurrection (K. T. Silva, 2005: 93-171). By the 1970s, majority of youth who were being admitted to the handful of local universities were disproportionately Tamil in ethnicity, analogous to their public sector employment domination (Matthews, 1978: 96). Sinhalese conceived this as a result of prior colonial favouritism.[112] The UNP government's answer was introducing a 'quota

system' for each district (countrystudies.us, 2011).[113] Although commonly misrepresented as a deliberate disadvantage on the part of Tamils, this policy since the early 1980s, has mainly affected Sinhalese youth from the competitive urban areas.[114]

Seventh, it could be posited that a forthright outcome of Sinhalese Nationalism was the emphasis given to 'Sinhalese identity' that in the age of 1970s jet-travel, had suddenly become a marketable commodity. In Sri Lanka, the concern over identity was promoted by the economic concern of tourism that had by the time emerged as a high foreign exchange-earner (Perera, 1994: 514). Since 1965, subsequent governments invested huge sums on resort-style hotel developments aiming for budget tourists (Robson, 2004: 59-60). The idea was to market Sri Lanka as an 'exotic' destination, and its peculiar Sinhalese identity – only to be found in the island nation – was the best logical choice. By the 1970s, this had become the second largest foreign exchange earner, and this income was vital for economic survival (srilanka-botschaft.de, 2011).[115] Hence, an economic imperative had been crated to perpetuate nationalism in the face of threats towards it.

It is pertinent to stress here that Tamil nationalism (TN) followed SBN into the 1990s. The best evidence to prove this statement is the Tamil opposition to every single one of the foregoing actions on the UNP agenda. Despite the UNP government consisted of many Tamil cabinet ministers who were democratically-elected to represent Tamil majority areas (thondaman.org, 2011), a faction of the Tamil community remained somewhat unsatisfied.[116] However, judging by the overwhelming public backing that the UNP received in carrying out successfully the foregoing exercises, it could be argued that the fleeting westernization of the Sinhalese did not completely hamper their nationalist ethos. The political milieu from the late 1970s enables a better understanding of the respective roles played by SBN, and accompanying TN, under the UNP government.

Incidents from the Political Arena:

Perera (1994: 425-426) argues that although the late 19th century religious movements – especially, Buddhist and Hindu revivals – and the 1920s ethno-political parties did not challenge the integrity of unified Ceylon (and also of Colombo as its capital), the JVP-led rebellions of 1971 and late 1980s[117] as well as the Tamil separatists struggles since late 1970s[118], have been comparatively effective. These movements in his perspective, not only undermined Colombo's locus position in political, economic and ideological arenas, they further went on to challenge Sri Lanka's integrity as a single state. The continuing hegemony of Euro-US ideas is made evident by the fact that the notion of the 'modern state' is far from dead in the post-

independence era, and perhaps, arguably, the emphasis is not on the modern state but the pre-modern one (Perera, 1994: 504). This is clearly evident in Sri Lanka where there has been a vested interest in maintaining this within the dilemma of the non-conventional struggles waged by the JVP, and especially, LTTE (Perera, 1994: 504). The UNP government not only crushed the 1980s general strikes to break the backbone of the proletariat as Perera (1994: 444-446) reveals, the JVP insurrection between 1989-90 was brutally contained, and Tamil separatism effectively countered (Ivan, 2006: 83-84). Although socialism promised a lasting solution to the above, the doctrine that subverts the ideas of culture and religion by advocating for a rigorous materialist sense of communality, is incompatible with ethno-centric nationalism (N. de Silva, 1993). Therefore, retaining socialism, yet within a nationalist ethos was a clear articulation of nationalist perpetuation desire. On the other hand, K.T. Silva (2005: 151-55) believes that JVP struggle had not only an economic, but an underlying caste agenda.[119] Therefore, its crushing upholds how the governing elite who still hailed from high caste backgrounds perhaps desired posterity for an age-old system. Under such circumstances, safeguarding of archaic Sinhalese culture against homogenizing socialist tendencies was arguably, a nationalist move.

On the other hand, the demands on federal-lines by the so-called 'moderate' Tamil elites[120] lost out to 'extremist' youth by the early 1970s (De Votta, 2007: 77).[121] Bourgeoning Tamil separatism and accompanying terrorism (with the LTTE in the lead)[122] since 1983, as De Votta (2007: vii) confirms, was contained for three decades, until 2009 when it was finally extinguished (defence.lk, 2010). Although Tamil separatism in the form of political lobbying was taken to the next level in the late 1970s when a handful of competing militant groups waged war against the state, the Civil War proper, began in 1983 when the LTTE attacked a Sri Lanka army convoy in Jaffna (Gunaratna, 1993: xi-xii). This was followed by LTTE attacking and expelling Sinhalese from the Northern and Eastern villages, and consequent Sinhalese-led riots against Tamils in the South overlooked by the government (Ivan, 2006: 74). Tamil separatism had finally risen as a threat to the Sinhalese Buddhist state. Therefore, containing it sternly, irrespective of the overwhelming international (mainly Western) assistance it received [and relative shortage of it yielded by the Sri Lankan state], is a clear manifestation of the resilience of SBN (Gunaratne, 1993).[123]

The UNP government not only waged a full-scaled war against the LTTE and other Tamil groups, it also refuted political intervention by the Indian state; prompted by its own concerns of similar Tamil separatist movements in *Tamil Nadu*. When war against the LTTE reached a decisive level in favour of the Sri Lankan state, India urged president Jayewardene to cease the offensive and engage in dialogue. The political solution offered was to delegate political authorities to provincial councils (i.e. the 13th amendment), which was initially rejected by the Jayewardene administration.

Aggressive interventions[124] by its powerful neighbour prompted the Sri Lankan government to withdraw from its war effort and settle for a peace treaty on the 29th of July 1987, which was signed between Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime minister, and Sri Lankan president Jayewardene (Gunaratne, 1993: xiv). In order to assure peace in the country until a stable political solution was reached, an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) (that reached approximately 80,000 in strength at its peak) was sent to the North and East. Despite UNP efforts to compromise, the political solution was rejected and ceasefire unilaterally ended by the LTTE determined to carve-out a separate state (Gunaratna, 1993: 230).[125] Consequently, the IPKF by 1988, engaged in operations against the LTTE while Sri Lankan army remained in barracks. The unsuccessful IPKF campaign that lasted approximately for two years suffered considerable losses (Gunaratna, 1993: xvi).[126]

This saga brings to the fore, the mass-discontent among the Sinhalese over the foregoing proceedings that was backed by party organizations, and especially, the Buddhist clergy (Gunaratna, 1993: 222-223).[127] Firstly, the IPKF was urged to withdraw in 1990 from Sri Lanka by the newly-elected president from the same party; Ranasinghe Premadasa (Gunaratna, 1993: xv).[128] The Sinhalese public reaction against the Indian intervention was articulated between 1987-1990, in the form of mass-boycotting of Indian products (thaindian.com, 2008). One of the most articulate moments of Sinhalese resistance in fact, was a Sri Lankan navy soldier assaulting the Indian premiere during a routine salutation in 1987 (Gunaratna, 1993: xiv, 214). In parallel, the JVP supported by the rural Sinhalese youth expressed its disgust by engaging in the second rebellion against the Sri Lankan state in 1989 (Ivan, 2001: 87). After all, both Rajiv Gandhi and R. Premadasa being assassinated by the LTTE (in 1991 and 1993 respectively), illustrate LTTE's frustration, and suggest that TN had accompanied its Sinhalese counterpart into the 1990s. The forced Indian withdrawal and political turmoil the whole scenario caused, is believed to have created a distance in Indian foreign policy towards Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis, which was welcomed by the Sri Lankan state. The Ronald Regan administration's refusal to extend direct military support to suppress the Tamil insurgency that Gunaratne (1993: 14) reveals, could be argued as their repudiation to outright Sinhalese nationalism. The Indian intervention prompted the previously US and Western-inclined Sri Lankan state to now align with Pakistan and China, and to later extend its allegiance towards Israel for political and military backing (Gunaratna, 1993: 11-14). [129]

It is commonly perceived in Sri Lanka that the victory of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaranathunga (CBK)[130] through the revitalized SLFP known as *Podu Peramuna* or People's Alliance (PA) in 1994, was a 'conspiracy'[131] by certain imperialist Western forces, striving to carve-out a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka (N. de Silva, 2008; lankarising.com, 2008). Her fleeting ascent to presidency is blamed on the *Vikalpa*

(alternative) media actions, spearheaded by locally-appointed agents[132] of Anglo-Nordic countries, framing the indirect Western prejudice towards SBN. Bandaranaike championed the stance that the 'miserable and endless war that can never be won' had to be settled in an 'alternative' manner (lankarising.com, 2008) – alluding to the federal solution. Sinhalese Buddhists' 'deep-seated sense of insecurity' had resulted in a 'minority complex' (De Votta, 2007: 11); prompted by the 850 million Hindus in the close proximity of India (with majority of 60 million Tamils supporting the separatist cause in the island), millions of Muslims in the nearby states, and also the distant Christian West (The Island, 2006a). In a world stage where "*…ideological universality of violence*" had a "*ubiquitous presence*", the Sinhalese Buddhists were forced to jettison their 'just war' (in the eyes of Buddhism) (Wickremeratne, 2006: 126),[133] It was conveyed that the naturally "*nonviolent*" Buddhists who practice a doctrine that "*does not emphasize a monopoly of truth*" (De Votta, 2007: 1), "*should not fight*" (N. de Silva, 2006b).[134] The point overlooked however, was that although Buddhism emphasizes on non-violence, it "*considers conflict as an unavoidable evil in society*" (Premasiri, 2006: 82).[135]

Consequently, from the outset, president CBK – the leading 'comprador politician' – along with the support of only a small fraction of her government,[136] dwelt on power devolution based on federalism, and carried out mass-awareness programs to advocate the concept among the Sinhalese populace.[137] The intention was to eventually push forward, a federal Constitution to the parliament to satisfy her Western allies (lankarising.com, 2008).[138] However, the LTTE intransigence caused the fragile peace process to shortly collapse (De Votta, 2007: vii).[139] CBK's presidency in 2001 suffered a setback, when the United National Front (UNF)[140] with Ranil Wickramasinghe as prime minister assumed governmental power. His victory marked a unilateral ceasefire with the LTTE and peace negotiations in February 2002 (De Votta, 2007: 77).[141] It is notable how Norway became the chief facilitator of the process, which is attributed to their interests in the oil deposits in the North-Western Sea as well as neo-colonial ambitions of the West as a whole.[142] The convenor was often found to be biased towards the separatists, and consequently cast off by Sri Lankans along with accompanying NGOs and INGOs[143] (Dayasiri in Lankaweb, 2011).[144] The ceasefire saw LTTE's regrouping and wholesale violation of the Memorandum of Understanding, which put the Sri Lankan government in a predicament.[145] The rounds of talks despite United National Front's willingness for a federal solution were again thwarted by LTTE reluctance (de Votta, 2007: 35; peaceinsrilanka.org, 2011).[146] When UNF lost in the 2004 elections, where a UNFPA government was re-formed with CBK's leadership, things came back to square one. The post-Tsunami concession made to the LTTE, acknowledging its interim self-governing authority proposals, further made the CBK government unpopular among

the Sinhalese populace, invoking the danger of another Sinhalese youth uprising (De Votta, 2007: 25).[147]

The foregoing state of affairs suggest that CBK and RW's stints in power were arguably the lowest ebbs suffered by SBN that would soon recuperate, once Mahinda Rajapaksha[148] – who had once belligerently kept away from the federal move at the expense of his own political interests – swept into power in November 2005.[149] His victory – with the aid of JVP and especially, pro-nationalist *Jathika Hela Urumaya* (JHU)[150] each yielding conspicuous electorates (De Votta, 2007: 29) – marks the larger Sri Lankan public's disenchantment with federal solutions, amidst exacerbating LTTE terrorism.[151] Federalism was feared as it might lead to the country's dismemberment (De Votta, 2007: 78).[152] As revealed by *Center for Policy alternatives* 2007 survey (in De Votta, 2007: 51), nearly 60% of the Sinhalese supported a military solution instead.  MR right after his presidency, following a brief spell of failed negotiations with the intransigent LTTE,[153] and having witnessed their disruptions to the ceasefire,[154] submitted to public preference, and decided to go on the offensive. The war hitherto mediated as 'unwinnable' by pro-separatist elements that J. F. R. Perera (2011: 47) elaborates, eventually came to an end in May 2009 with victory to the Sri Lankan state (defence.lk, 2010). This was realised having overcome successfully, the attempts by certain western powers to interfere (J. F. R. Perera, 2011: 41).[155]

By weighing of the above evidence, it could be concluded that during the course of island's colonial and postcolonial history, as Arsanayagam laments (in Roberts, 2004b: 19), SBN and TN *"fed each other"*. However, based on the overwhelming amount of foregoing evidence, it could be argued that the dominance of the former has continuously contained the latter. It is notable that this subversion was constantly welcomed by the Muslims who were also threatened by aggressive TN, as well as a faction of Tamils who loath the LTTE for various reasons (De Votta, 2007: 36, 78).[156]

Perpetuating Nationalist Ideology:

The UNP nationalist intentions in the 1980s and 90s subsided with the Sinhalese Buddhist national agendas at the ideological level. According to Perera (1994: 94-95), unifying the island into a single political-territory under their own kingdom had always been a social and spatial conception of the Sinhalese monarchs. On the other hand, the world view constructed by the Sinhalese ideological leaders over the centuries, see the community as the guardians of 'Sinhalese *Theravada* Buddhism' (N. de Silva, 2007).  Epistemologically, it is conceived as an 'alternative path' to western science and capitalist modernity that has to be preserved. These two ideologies are imbued in the Sinhalese Buddhist psyche that cannot be easily extinguished (N. de Silva, 2008).

The perpetuation indeed had its price, as De Votta (2007: 79) illustrates the potential for the country in 1948 that was never realised.

> *"At the time of independence, Sri Lanka's high literacy rate, experience with universal franchise, and relatively high socio-economic indices led many to predict that it was the most likely of the newly independent states to become a peaceful, liberal democracy".*

This makes evident, the Western humanist expectation of the 'pluralist state' [that Erikson (2002: 115) enquires], levelled at independent Ceylon. Having turned to restoring the archaic Sinhalese Buddhist state lost to Western colonization, it could be argued that the Sinhalese took up a journey of resilience, accompanied by chronic suffering. Max Weber among others,[157] believed that modernisation would 'level-out' eventually, ethnic distinctions; a view that has proved to be erroneous (in Eriksen, 2002: 33).[158] Similarly, multiculturalism within capitalist modernity is believed to ultimately result in the diminishing of all ethnic cultures via homogenisation, and for Friedman (1990: 311), it is a currant 'global reality'.[159] On the other hand, in Anderson's (1991: 3) view, 'end of the era of nationalism', as was long-prophesised, is not remotely in sight.[160] Therefore, a modern pluralist state such as Mauritius becomes unrealistic for the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists who strive to nurture and recuperate a pre-modern doctrine, epistemology and world-view.[161] In the Sinhalese Buddhist world view, they are doing humanity a favour (Paranavithana, 2001: 16). Moreover, unlike many other modern nationalisms, SBN did not have to resort to what Eriksen (2002: 101) calls 'indebtedness' to give it legitimacy.[162]  In this light, it is justifiable to consider the domestic architecture of the dominant culture of the island as it is likely to produce more effective results.


## 1.3 Island's Pre-modern Domestic Architecture

Having set the cultural limitation to observe domestic architecture of the Sinhalese elite within nationalism, it is imperative here, to carry out a brief theoretical enquiry into areas of tradition, culture and identity. Once the inter-relationships between them are comprehended, the examination of various traditions that frame distinct identities within the considered sphere would become plausible.

**Interplay of Tradition, Culture and Identity**

The word *"tradition"* originates from the Latin verb *"trado-transdo",* which means is *"to pass on to another"*, or *"to transmit possession".* Tradition is thus seen as a dual process of preservation as well as transmission (Beng, 1994: 21). According to T. S Eliot (in Beng, 1994: 21), a true sense of tradition is a sense of the timeless and the temporal together.

> *"Tradition…cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves in the first place, a historical sense, which…involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence…"*.

Although the definition of tradition is commonly perceived to be a set of fixed attributes, many repudiate this view, and believe it to be a series of layers transformed over time (Lim and Beng, 1998: 54). Hobsbawn postulates the notion of *"invented tradition"*, which includes both traditions that are gradually invented, constructed and formally instituted, as well as the ones to emerge in a less easily-defined manner within a short time frame. He defines tradition as

> *"[…] taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past"* (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983: 1).

Throughout history, discontinuities in architectural traditions have been prolific.[163] In traditional societies, cultural processes and external forces take a long time to be considered as 'established'. Once this is completed, they sustain for extended periods of time (Lim and Beng, 1998: 55). Williams (1980: 39) however, disseminates that what may pass-off as 'cultural traditions' or the 'significant past' is actually selective traditions.[164] Hence, it could be perceived that traditions are always contested, transformed, resisted and invented over time. It could be affirmed with a great number of examples from around the world that in traditional societies, age-old architectural forms have reached high sophistication. Albeit their slow denigration, they remain more expressive and sympathetic to the aspirations of the people than any contemporary contender. The expressions of these surviving traditions attain vigour and conviction through their local craftsmen practices, which truly celebrate their devotion, contemplation and commemoration (Lim and Beng, 1998: 54).

Culture is generally conceived as 'the way of life'*.* It can be best-defined through its specific characteristics; namely, "*the accepted way of doing things, the socially unacceptable ways* and the *implicit ideals"* (Rapoport, 1969: 47). It plays a seminal role in the construction of society; which could either be culturally homogeneous or heterogeneous. Both these situations could possibly find an enhanced degree of sophistication owing to the existence of sub-cultures within a given culture, owing to factors such as the caste system. Culture imbues various traditions relating to the assorted functions of human life. In other words, culture ensures that its citizens abide by different sets of rules fixed by tradition, in relation to the performance of these functions respectively. Such rules ensure that whatever underlying factors[165] behind them are preserved, and then transferred for posterity, while manifesting a unique identity in relation to a given function. The notion of 'identity' has always been intricately-related to traditions; as lingering on to traditions is what gives a society its own identity. Douglas and d' Harnoncourt (in Lim and Beng, 1998: 54) postulate that,

*"[to] rob a people of its tradition is to rob it of inborn strength and identity".* Since making buildings is a basic necessity of the human repertoire, different cultures from around the world have historically developed their very own built traditions. Since every society essentially entails a 'high' culture that influences 'other levels' of cultures as suggested by Bottomore (1993: 116),[166] in terms of building traditions, this distinction could be further elaborated – high culture chooses 'grand design tradition' whilst other cultural levels are relegated to 'vernacular tradition'. Hence, Vernacular becomes a *modus operandi*, with a unique identity of its own (Wijetunge, 2012b).

**Grand and Vernacular Design Traditions**

Within the field of world architectural history, a dichotomy exists in the form of *'grand design tradition'* and, its antithesis, the *'folk tradition'. Rapoport* postulates that the *monument-buildings* belong to the *grand design tradition,* and are erected to impress either the populace in terms of the power of the patron, or peer-group of designers and cognoscenti with the cleverness of designer and good taste of patron. The *'folk tradition'* in contrast, is said to be the direct unselfconscious translation into physical form of a culture; its needs and values, as well as desires, dreams and passions.

> *"The folk tradition is much more closely related to the culture of the majority and life as it is really lived than the grand design tradition, which represents the culture of the elites"[167]* (Rapoport, 1969: 2).

Folk tradition articulates itself through the vernacular.

> *"Implicit in the term 'vernacular' is the notion of building as an organic process, involving society as a whole"* (Lim and Beng, 1998: 10).

Perceived as *"architecture without architects"* as suggested by Beng (1994: 19); edifices of vernacular are not merely perceived to be the brainchild of any individual architect, but the product of an entire community as a whole; working through its history (Lim and Beng, 1998: 10). Vernacular structures are invariably built by local craftsmen of anonymity with local techniques and materials, reflecting society's accumulated wisdom and collective images. They are imbued with cosmological and religious values, social and political structures, sensibility and attitude towards time and space. Moreover, their forms and proportions, craftsmanship and decorations manifest symbolic propensities and hence, are meaningful (Beng, 1994: 19). As Lim and Beng (1998: 11) suggests,

> *"[there] is hardly any need or scope for "improvement" in the various vernacular languages of housing generated indigenously around the world […]".*

**Legacy of Traditions**

Grand and vernacular design traditions having been established, it is pertinent to address their respective applications in the island's architectural legacy. Although archaeological evidence could be adduced for places of human habitation such as caves,[168] the only architectural finding in the form of a stone foundation of a house (dating back to 13,000 years) has been found from *Ratnapura* district.[169] However, a plenty of evidence could be accrued for monument building from the Proto Historic period (Mendis, 2011: 1; Perera, 2010).[170]

The earliest Proto Historic architectural remnants on the other hand, can be traced back to the 8th century B.C. *Anuradhapura* inner citadel area (Coningham, 1999),[171] which is attributed to early emigrant Aryan groups that had been arriving at least since 9th century B.C. (Deraniyagala, 2010). It is commonly-acknowledged that when *Anuradhapura* became the Sinhalese capital in the 4th century B.C., it was fortified with entrances in cardinal directions, protected by a surrounding outer circle of villages belonging to different caste groups.[172] These villages that supplied the needs of towns had their specific functions (Ashley De Vos, 1977: 42).[173] The majority of population from the *Govi* (farmer) caste, who engaged in paddy cultivation, lived in villages adjacent to paddy fields that were fed by a network of irrigation channels emanating from man-made reservoirs (tanks); outside of such confinements.[174] Buddhist monasteries were located intermittently between the tanks and village settings, while the forest monasteries were located in surrounding forests (Nimal de Silva, 1996: 2-10). Robson et al (1984: 17) tell us that *Anuradhapura* was a compact town, surrounded by five very large monasteries. Within this arrangement, some believe that a highly-urbanised situation occurred within the citadel where houses were placed in lines to be separated by courtyards. Since Buddhism was introduced to the island in the 3rd century B.C., it is believed that the Sinhalese received North Indian civilization (Ellawala, 2002: 141). This leads to the inference that domestic architecture from the same region was also introduced at the same time (more or less), although there is no evidence to substantiate this view. All surviving architectural remnants from the 'classical period' (*Anuradhapura* and *Polonnaruwa* periods that spanned 1500 years) are either edifices associated with the Royals or the Buddhist religious order/clergy (Nimal de Silva, 1996). In Paranavithana's (2001: 21) view, while structures belonging to above categories were built in either rock, stone or brick with roofs of timber, the houses of the noteworthy conversely, were entirely timber constructions.[175] Lewcock et al (2002: 1) agree to this view by conveying ambiguity towards indigenous vernacular made of permanent materials, owing to the lack of evidence. With no evidence to conceive the buildings where the elites and masses lived in,[176] Ashley De Vos (1977) infers that the vernacular houses from the rural 'dry zone' still occupied by Sinhalese peasants, provides the key to draw an

analogy with the latter category. Village houses were constructed in mud and wattle (*wattle and daub* construction) and roofed with straw or palm leaves on jungle timber frames. *"Once abandoned these houses disintegrated and returned to the earth"*, wiping out traces of its existence (Robson et al., 1984: 17). Ashley De Vos (1977) and Perera (1991) both illustrate pictographically, their respective views on how the simple peasant house saw a metamorphosis into the courtyard form that was used in urban situations in classical cities, before being displaced to survive as rural Kandyan elite dwellings elsewhere. Ashley De Vos (1977), Dayaratne (2010), Perera (1991) and Palliyaguru (2002), all examine the placement of such, within the village's structure of places (Fig. 2). In the Sinhalese villages, houses were clustered into homesteads, where lack of privacy was not considered a liability. Instead, the sense of communality was valued (Dayaratne, 2010: 389).[177] As he elaborates,

> *"[this] settlement pattern, by its very sensitive and careful approach to living, makes for a habitat well adapted to the generation and sustenance of systems of livelihood, a biophysical environment, and consumption and production".*

According to Ashley De Vos (2010), these houses have remained more or less unchanged until the early 1980s when he last documented them.[178] As the Sinhalese seat of power shifted to different parts of the island, it could be argued that this domestic form developed regional differences as illustrated by Nimal de Silva (1987). In relation to elite housing, the closest remaining examples are to be found from the Kandyan period (Ashley De Vos, 1977: 41),[179] and it could be inferred that they could possibly be considered an evolutionary residue of the elite houses from the classical times. The evolution of the vernacular house from the simplest form, into the more sophisticated courtyard type is illustrated by Ashley de Vos (1977) and A. Perera (1991) (Fig. 3, 4). Figures 5-12 illustrate the quintessential vernacular house from the *Anuradhapura* district.
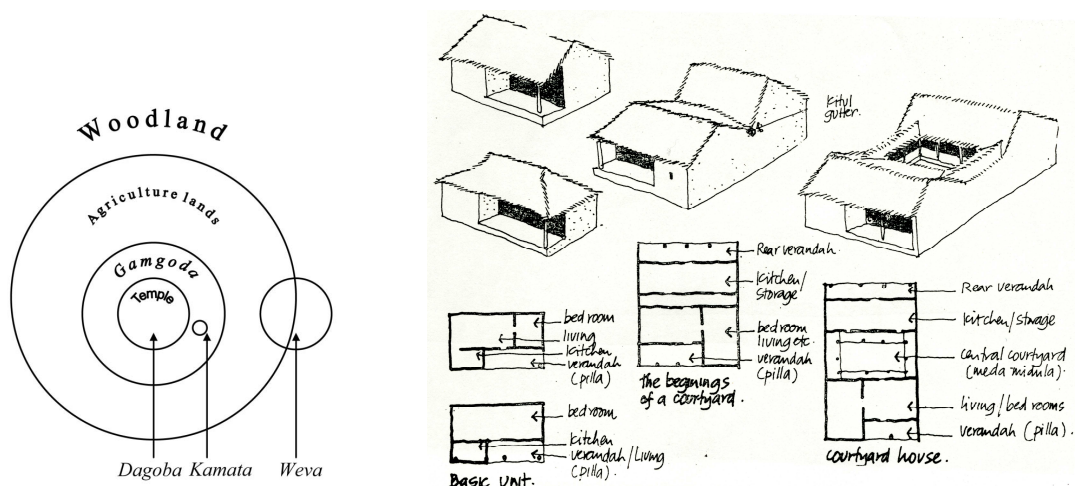


Fig. 2    Traditional Sinhalese village Layout.

Fig. 3    Evolution of the vernacular house form into the courtyard type – depiction by Ashley De Vos.

| Simplest Generic form | Two room | Courtyard |
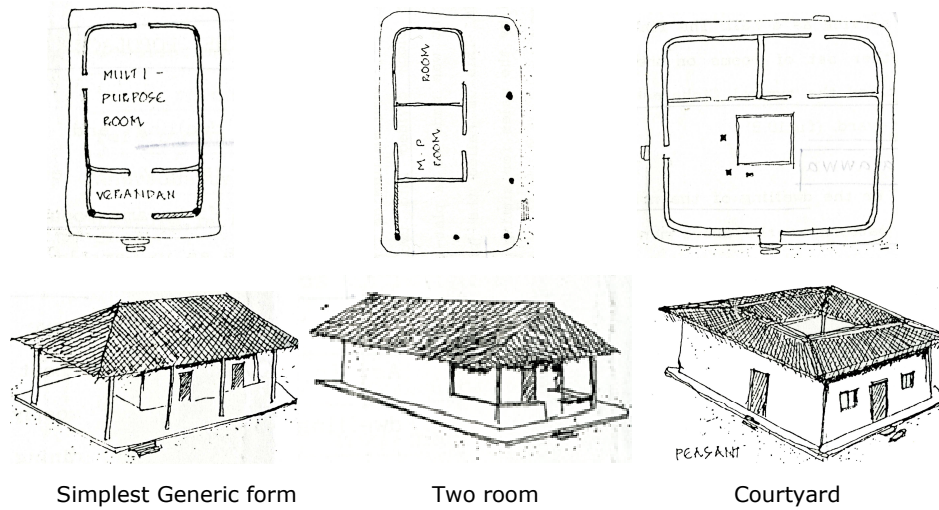
Fig. 4  Evolution of the vernacular house form into the courtyard type – depiction by A. Perera.
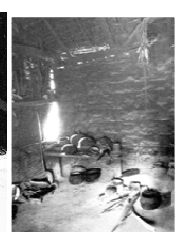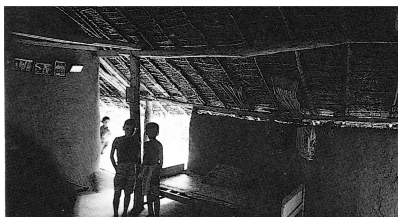


| Fig. 5 | Fig. 6 | Fig. 7 | Fig. 8 |



| Fig. 9 | Fig. 10 | Fig. 11 |
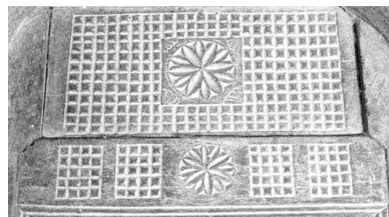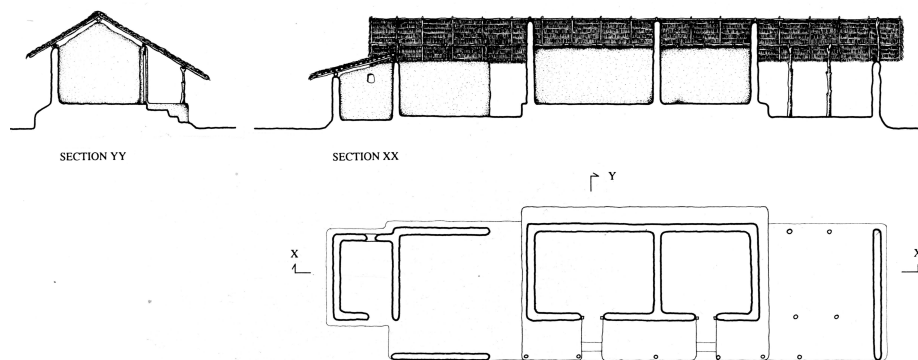


Fig. 12

Vernacular house from *Anuradhapura* district.

Fig. 5    External verandas that protect walls of the elongated plan, covered by a paddy husk roof.
Fig. 6    Airy Living space.
Fig. 7    *Pila* (external veranda) with raised floors.
Fig. 8    Corner of the house used as the Kitchen where the hearth is placed.
Fig. 9    Airy and dark sleeping space.
Fig. 10   Decorated fanlight over door. The embellishment is extremely rare in such houses.
Fig. 11   Arrangement of houses in a village around a central courtyard-like space.
Fig. 12   Plan and Sections.

However, "[it] is interesting to note that the houses of noblemen were built of the same materials as those of the poor: they were simply bigger in area and more complex in plan" (Robson et al., 1984: 18). Although this suggestion is rather simplistic, it sums up the differences between the elite and non-elite domestic domains, which will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

From classical times, the use of grand design tradition within Sinhalese kingdoms was the domain of mainly Royals and Buddhist religious order, and to a certain extent, of public (civic) buildings (Robson et al., 1984: 17) (Fig. 13-18), while the masses relied on the vernacular of folk design tradition (Lewcock et al., 2002).[180] The underlying reasons behind this situation will be elaborated in Chapter 3. This had become an accepted rule, closely monitored by the state that was perpetuated into the Kandyan times (Nimal de Silva, 2010). Its implications will be elaborated in Chapter 5. Ananda Coomaraswamy's corpus of work [i.e. Medieval Sinhalese Art (1908)] on the other hand, is instrumental for identifying the established differences within the island's architectural varieties. His lengthy extracts especially, on aspects such as 'Mayamatha'[181] (an early 19th century translation of a much earlier 'Astrological Handbook for Architects', written originally in Sanskrit slokas) provides the vital ammunition for differentiating between modern and pre-modern architectures. However, he sadly devotes very little space for domestic architecture. Although Scholars such as Lewcock et al (2002: 1-18) who took up the challenge of categorizing for the first time, pre-modern and modern era architectural remnants of Sri Lanka under the name 'Architecture of an Island: the Living Heritage of Sri Lanka' have acknowledged this historical fact, their manifestation labels the peasant architecture as 'primitive', in an orientalist perspective.

Classical periods' royal and religious edifices of grand design tradition.



Fig. 13

*Sandakada Pahana* (moon stone) at the entrance to the *Polonnaruwa Vatadage* from 12th c. A.D.

Fig. 14
*Ruwanweli Maha Seya* in *Anuradhapura* by King *Gemunu* built in the 2nd c. B.C.

Fig. 13                                    Fig. 14

Fig. 15


Fig. 16

Fig. 15
*Pollonnaruwa Gal Viharaya* is a rock-cult series of Buddha statues from the 12<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.

Fig. 16
*Pollonnaruwa Vatadage* is a masonry image house for Buddha from the 12<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.


Fig. 17


Fig. 18

Fig. 17
King *Parakramabahu* (the great) Palace in *Polonnaruwa* is a multi-storey masonry structure from the 12<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.

Fig. 18
*Kuttam Pokuna* in *Anuradhapura* is a 8-10<sup>th</sup> c. A.D. bathing pool for queens.

## 1.4 Time Line; Background & Foreground

As this study focuses on the domestic architecture of the Sinhalese elites in the island, firstly, the availability of examples has to be considered. The review of extant literature, and the fieldwork conducted, both confirmed that the oldest elitist houses in the country that have survived more or less in their original form, are only to be found in the regions of the former Kingdom of Kandy. Then again, plenty of examples are to be found from the formerly Dutch-occupied Maritime Provinces, paralleling the Kandyan period. Dutch period domestic architecture is a fairly well-documented area, and most of the buildings the Dutch were responsible for were in fact, houses. However, although more examples are extant from the more recent British period, not a great deal of literature covers its domestic architecture, but the civic realm. These Dutch and British period elitist houses are to be found throughout the island.

Taking these factors into consideration, a historical window has to be determined based on the evidence at hand. As the study takes up Eastern elitism, Kandyan domestic examples from pre-modern (medieval) times make the only available choice of articulation. As for Western elitism, plenty of Dutch and British period houses are usable to convey modern-era trends. The logic behind inclusion of Kandyan examples is as a point of reference to the last pre-modern elite domestic architecture of the island, to compare with the modern counterparts. Consequently, late 18<sup>th</sup> century (just after 1796) could be justified as the last point when all three of the above situation and their architectures would have coincided; and hence makes up one end of the time line. It was established in the foregoing section that postcolonial period nationalism flowed beyond neo-liberal reforms of 1977, and perpetuated into the early

1990s. On the other hand, as architectural historians confirm, 1980s and 90s marked the culmination of the architecture by the Ceylonese pioneers. By the late 1990s, almost all of them had either demised or withdrawn from practice. Consequently, as the other end of the time-line, early 1990s is considered. Within this wider timeline, the 'background' and 'foreground' have to be clarified. The literature review in fact, elucidates the vitality of this considered timeline.

The fieldwork carried out covered elite domestic architectures of Sri Lanka from the Kandyan period, down to independence. The extensive focus directed at the discourse enabled an identification of different established house 'types' based on the social stratification of the occupant. This insight became instrumental for developing a structural breakdown for elite domestic architecture of the island – for the considered historical window – supported by relevant examples (please refer to Appendix 1).

Commencing the study, late 18$^{th}$ century (1796) was justified in the foregoing section. Further, the earlier section established that 'nationalism proper', kick-started in 1956; almost a decade after 1948 independence. Consequently, the background of the study could be identified as the window between late 18$^{th}$ century (1796) and 1956. On the other hand, it was established earlier that 1956 nationalism survived the neo-liberal economic reforms and perpetuated into the early 1990s. The western-educated Ceylonese architects happened to arrive only by the mid 1950s as confirmed by the narrators of the island's architectural trajectory such as Jayewardene (1984), Pieris (2007) and Robson (2004). Following the handful of local predecessors before them, the three most respected figures in Ceylon's postcolonial architectural scene – i.e. Minnette de Silva, Geoffrey Bawa and valentine Gunasekara etc. – all started working in the 1950s, and practiced into the early 1990s. Consequently, their project dates fall well within the period between 1956 and early 1990s that can be identified as the foreground.

## 1.5 Pertinence of the Foreground (1956 to early 1990s)

The foreground becomes pertinent on a number of grounds. Firstly, in comparison to the background, the literature on foreground is relatively scarce. Even the extant works suffer from the shortcomings of either being uncritical or romantic. This will be elaborated in the forthcoming literature review. Secondly, the considered foreground also makes sense in relation to elitist definitions to be found in elitist theories, which will be discussed under Chapter 3. Despite Ceylon winning independence in 1948, British nationals occupied high offices in political and administrative realms until 1956. Hence, it could be argued that since the pre-modern era (Kandyan period), post-independence period was the first time the highest elitist ranks (governing elite/political-class) were occupied by indigenous groups. Hence, this becomes an

opportunity to conceive how the modern local elite reflected the changes of external forces through their houses. Further, this becomes the only period when the political status (thus, elite status) of patrons of domestic architecture (clients) could be clearly obtained through research. The availability of such information in literature, some of the clients and post-independence architects still being alive, as well as the still-practicing older generation of knowledgeable architects are all instrumental in making this enquiry successful.

On the other hand, the window spans the carriers of almost all new generation Ceylonese architects. Arguably, it is safe to say that in this period, all governing elites of the island for the first time employed either architects or qualified technicians to have their houses designed. On the other hand, more examples exist in unaltered conditions from the more recent post-independence period than from the other two periods in consideration.  Consequently, within the considered timeline, a significant number of examples could be adduced, and attributed to many of such pioneers. The abundance of examples even makes plausible, identification of changes (breakthroughs) and phases within architects' careers.  Moreover, in the light of rich information about clients' backgrounds, and architects' social inclinations and clients' contribution on stylistic propagation could also be established.

The contemporary Architectural profession guarded by bastions such as RIBA, has a Western provenance (Ateshin, 1988: 507). The modern 'Architect' could indeed be compared against the 'master-craftsman' (*Naide* in pre-modern Ceylon) – the Eastern counterpart of the architect – in their respective roles. In relation to the architect's involvement, the Kandyan situation could be exempted from consideration, as in medieval Kandy, master-craftsmen were not involved in domestic architecture, and limited their services to the royal and religious realms. In relation to the Dutch situations on the other hand, there is no evidence to support that architects were involved in Dutch building activities, but engineers (Lewcock et al., 2002: 171-175). The British too relied on the same until the formation of the Public Works Department (PWD) in 1865 that contained in-house architects (Jayewardene, 1984: 43). Hence, the study is left with no choice but to make the best of extant examples designed by both architects and non-architects alike.

There is an intention behind the emphasis given to architect-designed buildings. Arguably, they reflect more intimately, the lifestyles of clients that are prone to external forces. This is based on the pre-condition that western architects are trained to understand their clients as intimately as possible, and are bound ethically, to provide what clients 'need', instead of what they 'want' as Frank Lloyd Wright once proclaimed (John Lloyd Wright, 1992). Even when architects (later qualified technicians) employed by the colonial state  (the British) to produce, what is known as

'set-plans' for expatriate and local civil servants, their design actions would have acknowledged the foregoing considerations, and at least, the needs of pre-conceived generic groups. When western-trained civil engineers fulfilled the same task (for Dutch and early British), their actions would at any rate have been based upon rationalism. Since the study only focuses on indigenous elites, the expatriate factions could be omitted from consideration. Conversely, when the designs were for local elites under colonial control (Dutch and British), the local craftsmen (*Bas unnahe)* would have not only designed rationally, but cultural considerations would have been given equal priority. Although the architectural profession was introduced to Ceylon in second half of the 19th century by the British, Ceylonese involvement in it did not materialise until the 1940s-50s (this history will be taken up in chapter 5). Therefore, now, for the very first time, local architects better-conversant with local knowledge (historical, cultural, climatic, and material etc.) were designing for a local clientele directly under study's purview. Moreover, it could be argued that the local clients, as permanent residents, are more grounded in island's affairs than the expatriates who temporarily reside in an alien setting. Consequently, it could be assumed that the former faction is more prone to the changing external forces. Hence, inferably, locals designing for locals should convey such changes via domestic built environment better, than foreigners designing for locals (and foreigners).

## 1.6 Research Questions and Broader Aims (Scope)

Having set definite boundaries for the study, it is imperative to illustrate the research questions and broader aims that are presented below in point form for the convenience of understanding. Answers to the research questions will pave way to the subsequent realization of the broader aims.

**Questions Tackled**

- To what extent the elite are in a position to better represent/evoke the shifting political/social/cultural forces (i.e. their periodic changes) through their architecture within the Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) society?

- How does the work of the architects Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara represent the aspirations of two differing elite groups; the 'governing elite' and the emerging 'sub-elite' (i.e. the middle-class) respectively?

- What cultural strands of the Ceylonese elite have survived from pre-colonial and colonial situations, and have been articulated through their domestic architecture?

**Aims**

- To determine and demonstrate how domestic architecture of the elites reflects more immediately the impacts of political/social/cultural forces as their physical manifestations.

- To explore the impact of political/social/cultural forces on elite domestic architecture in Sri Lanka, during the periods considered to be *historically* and *architecturally* significant.

## 1.7 Justifying Limitations

This research is conducted under a number of justifiable limitations, the most salient being the focus on the Sinhalese population within the window of nationalism, reliance on objective theories on social stratification, limitations of western elitist theories, having to derive eastern elitism (owing to the lack of theoretical/historical material), taking up only certain aspects to determine architectural evolution, refraining from typological elaboration in relation to examples, concentrating on architect's work (especially, the second generation to practice in Ceylon – with emphasis on Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara), encompassing on the local elite domestic sphere for a local clientele, and the meanings derived within the considered contexts. These limitations along with others, reveal where the focus of the research lies, and the grounds behind their exclusions are explained in Appendix 2.

## 1.8 Elite Domestic Architecture Articulating Periodic Changes in the Sri Lankan Context

It was stressed before that exploring whether domestic architecture of the elite articulate periodic changes constitutes the main focus of this research. This will be carried out by exploring three historical periods, which are all considered to be architecturally significant. However, the focus lies on the post-independence period (as the foreground), where a conspicuous event such as nationalism occurred. Hence, a confirmation of the above point, at a specific level as this (i.e. the Sri Lankan nationalist scenario), will contribute to similar enquiries in other historical contexts and, also elsewhere. If the same could be affirmed at the macro-level, this argument has the potential to be reformed as a theory. Elite domestic architecture's significance within Sri Lanka could be declared owing to one vital observation. That is, from ancient times into the post independence, only elite domestic architecture of the island experienced a metamorphosis while housing of the masses remained more or less static (Jayewardene, 1984: 37). This statement could be confirmed through statistics.

In 1948 when Ceylon was granted independence, its population was approximately seven million, and by 1970, it had almost doubled (Robson, 2004: 49). According to 1953 census of *Sri Lanka population Information Centre*, the recorded population was approximately 8,098,000, out of which, only 15.3% were urban, while 80.95% rural. By western standards, the population was suffering from landlessness as well as rural unemployment. A rapid urban expansion was also extant, resulting in inflating of the urban poor, and since the 1960s, also attracting the new middle-class to the cities (Robson, 2004: 49). In terms of domestic architecture, even at the eve of independence in 1947, 46% of all housing had mud walls, and 40% thatched roofs, possessing quintessentially vernacular characteristics (Samarasekera, 1977: 4). It was following 1980s, through the 100,000 (*Nivasa Lakshaya* – one hundred thousand hosing program) and 1000,000 (*Nivasa Dasa Lakshaya* – A million housing program) housing projects by UNP government (Perera, 1994: 464), the vernacular of Sri Lanka was brought to a virtual extinction. In fact, scholars such as Ashley De Vos (2010) direct their reproach at the government that wrongly conceived the country's age-old vernacular to be 'primitive', and strived *"too rigorously to modernise"* the rural populace by replacing their houses with more 'modern' counterparts, designed by foreign consultants. Prototypes designed for locals by foreign individual architects such as Ulrik Plesner, and contingents such as Robson, Gormley and Sonawane in the early 1980s, by incorporating modern space divisions and materials with traditional form constituents and certain materials – to assure climatic suitability and cultural familiarity – subsequently influenced rural housing stock, and transformed traditional vernacular beyond recognition. Some in fact, identify a haphazard trend in these hybrid versions (Pieris, 2007). However, the point of consideration is, prior to these changes, the island remained largely rural, predominantly agricultural, and hardly modern. This statement requires further clarification.

Sri Lanka is the subject of a census at ten yearly intervals. According to the 1971 census, Sri Lanka's urban population accounted for 17% of the country's total (2.2 million), and rural 83%. Out of the urban population, 74% was living within the Colombo Metropolitan Region (Robson et al., 1984: 8). The population of Sri Lanka in 1982 was 14.85 million with a population density of 226 per $Km^2$ (equivalent to almost 1 person in every acre of land) (Robson et al., 1984: 7). However, a percentage cannot be worked out for urban-rural populations in 1982 as the census was not yet ready. Therefore, even by the early 1980s, it could be argued that Sri Lanka displayed

> *"[…] a low level of urbanization and the urban population is concentrated heavily within a single metropolitan region. The 1981 census reveals that population of the CMR has been growing at a similar rate to that of the country as a whole. In other words there are no indications of any marked rural-urban migration pattern, and the level of urbanization has held fairly constant during the past decade"* (Robson et al., 1984: 8).

Even by the early 1980s, Colombo Metropolitan Region (CMR) was the *"only large urban centre in Sri Lanka"* (Robson et al., 1984: 8).[182] In 1960, 40% of the island was forested, and by 1980, the proportion had dropped to 25%. Forest cover had been reduced by 37.5% within a space of 20 years (Robson et al., 1984: 14). By the early 1980s,*"Sri Lanka remains essentially an agriculture based society, and the small amount of manufacturing industry which does exist is relatively dispersed"* (Robson et al., 1984: 8). Sri Lanka's Gross National Product (GNP) per head of population was estimated US $170 in 1978, and Agriculture accounted for 32% of GNP and of this about 75% was domestic production.

> *"[The island's] wealth is derived from its plantation industries. Half of the nation's employed work in agriculture and this accounts for 32% of the GNP. Plantation products account for about 75% of the value of all exports (tea 50%, rubber 15% and coconut 10%). This heavy dependence on a very narrow band of export items is one of the main weaknesses of Sri Lankan economy"* (Robson et al., 1984: 14).

In terms of the country's income, in addition to the plantation products, there were two other sources of foreign exchange earnings that were assuming a growing importance. They were tourism and the remitted earnings of migrant workers. Foreign aid in the form of loans and outright grants was an important element of the economy, and financed about one third of current public investment plan (Robson et al., 1984: 14). Although the British occupation modernised the urban population in varying degrees, the majority of rural areas were relatively unscathed by the colonial polity, economy and modernity at large. Even by the end of 1970s and early 1980s, only a feeble modern influence was felt in rural Sri Lanka. For instance, in 1970, above 80% of the people over the age of 14 were literate (Robson et al., 1984: 8), yet not owing to modern education the urban youth received, but by temple-based vernacular programs of education (Wijetunge, 2003). According to Robson et al (1984: 14) who asses a non-modern situation with the criteria set by modern West, suggest that 'unemployment' and 'underemployment' represent a serious problem during the period, particularly amongst the young. Unemployment levels are highest in the Colombo Region, while underemployment is a serious problem in rural areas. Youth employment by the informal sector would have not been considered.

> *"There are no up-to-date figures available on family incomes, and many of the quoted figures probably err on the low side. Income is hard to quantify…"* (Robson et al., 1984: 15).

Based on these observations, a seminal conclusion is made that "…*many people live partly outside of the money economy…",* and the open economy however, suggests prospects of modernisation and the betterment of present living conditions (Robson et al., 1984: 15).

SRI LANKA TOTALS   (all figures from 1971 Census Report)

| Non Urban | 10,411 | 83% |
| Urban | 2,197 | 17% |
| Total | 12,608 | |
| Land Area | 65,608 km² | |
| Density | 192 / km² | |

Note:
All population figures denote thousands.
The map shows towns with populations
greater than 20,000.

JAFFNA DISTRICT

| Non Urban | 590 | 85% |
| Urban | 107 | 15% |
| Total | 697 | |
| Area | 2,587 km² | |
| Density | 269 / km² | |

DRY-ZONE (EXCLUDING JAFFNA)

| Non Urban | 3,543 | 95% |
| Urban | 173 | 5% |
| Total | 3,716 | |
| Area | 47,925 km² | |
| Density | 77 / km² | |

CMB

| Non Urban | 1,767 | 48% |
| Urban | 1,635 | 52% |
| Total | 3,402 | |
| Area | 3,708 km² | |
| Density | 917 / km² | |

WET-ZONE (EXCLUDING CMB)

| Non Urban | 4,531 | 95% |
| Urban | 262 | 5% |
| Total | 4,793 | |
| Area | 11,380 km² | |
| Density | 421 / km² | |

KEY
Colombo Metropolitan Region
Jaffna District
Wet-Zone
Dry-Zone

Fig. 19    Population distribution in Sri Lanka by 1971.
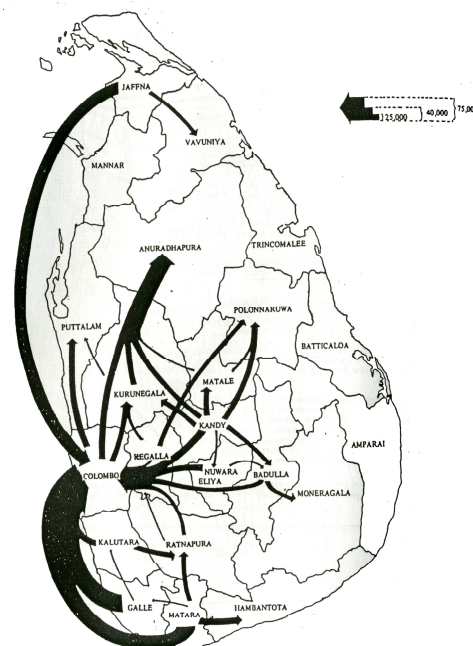


Fig. 20    Migration patterns in Sri Lanka by 1971.

Figures 19 and 20 show the trends leading up to liberalisation of the economy, and since then, globalisation's onslaught amplified. Colonialism once altered the indigenous world views and attitudes, where in the face of globalisation, these processes consolidated – now, even the rural villages were not spared (Dayaratne, 2010: 383). As J. B. Dissanayake (1993) notes (in the early 1990s) that today, there is no single village left that can be said to continue all elements of a 'traditional' vernacular settlement.[183] Instead, as Barrie et al (1979) show, modernisation, swelling of population, cash-crop agriculture (and accompanying monetary economy) and especially, politicization, have dislocated the core understanding of a community that once derived social status from rice cultivation.[184] As Dayaratne (2010: 384) posits, this was the activity that once generated a raft of ritual practices that helped peasants to conceptualise their world with reference to space, and places of cultivation. Therefore, it is pertinent to mention here that even by 1977, consumerism had not touched the greater rural population (Ashley De Vos, 1977: 42). However, since neo-liberalism,

> "[unlike] the traditional village, which was only loosely connected to the outside world and more connected within itself, the modern village has multiple links to the outside world. Values and systems from across the world more related to market than temple have come to dominate popular perceptions" (Dayaratne, 2010: 393).[185]

Dayaratne (2010: 393) in fact, goes on to conclude that effectively, the traditional agriculture-dependant settlement and its coherent, self-sustaining, land-to-people system is in terminal decline.[186] Robson et al (1984: 15) on the other hand, elaborate on the fleeting physical changes taking place in the traditional village.

> *"There has been a dramatic expansion of construction activity during the past five years, and this has led to a serious shortage of skilled construction labour. The shortage has been made worse by the large scale migration of workers to the Middle East (though this migration has brought benefits in the form of foreign exchange remittances"*.

In relation to the level of income, generally, it is higher for urban occupations than for rural, but the difference is less-marked than in many other countries. Incomes have been rising quickly during recent years, but inflation too has been high (around 25-30%) (Robson et al., 1984: 15). The liberal policies of the present government have *"…led to an increase of imports of consumer goods, and the ownership of items like radios, bicycles. Clocks etc. has increased dramatically"* (Robson et al., 1984: 15). For Dayaratne (2010: 395), exhibitionism, duplicity, and self-promotion have become rampant within the changing spheres of perception that he in fact, lists out and compares.

It is within this backdrop that the real focus of this research should be tackled. The domestic building is a basic human necessity, which articulates lifestyle of its dwellers. Then again, life style is a reflection of various traditions imbued in a given culture. As Rapoport (1969: 46) elaborates,

> *"[the] house is an institution, not just a structure, created for a complex set of purposes. Because building a house is a cultural phenomenon, its form and organization are greatly influenced by the cultural milieu to which it belongs…"*.

Hence, changes in culture are expressed in behaviour, and articulated in the physical form of buildings (Rapoport, 1969: 16). Inferably, since elites are the most sensitive to the society's economic and cultural spheres, it could be suggested that the forgoing spheres in a given society are best-manifested in the unique built traditions of its elites. In the pre-modern Lankan context, it was aforementioned that the elites were, by decree, allowed to live in finer houses, where these houses endured periodic changes while the non-elite counterparts were in stasis. On the other hand, in the modern-era, elitist built tradition exposes itself best though a degree of great intimacy in physical form, as it could be derived through Rybczynski's (1988) discourse on the notion of 'home'. Since the Dutch domesticity movement, the fact that elites are the pioneers to have historically developed a degree of intimacy with their houses than any other social stratum, at least in the 17-18th century Europe, further-contributes to the concretization of the above assertion. It could be argued that West-European colonialism propagated this notion in its colonies such as Ceylon, to survive to the present-day. Owing to the foregoing reasons, domestic architecture of the elite is significant in the Sri Lankan context for assessing its ability to articulate periodic changes.

## Conclusion

The history of Lanka/Ceylon/Sri Lanka, analogous to other insular situations around the world, is inimitable, and should not be considered conterminous with the sub-continental counterpart owing to its unique cultural ensemble, and historical circumstances. In the process of this elucidation, the dubious claims by the racist/separatist elements, and certain orientalist views – some sympathetic towards the former causes – have to be repudiated; based on a fresh historical perspective grounded on solid evidence, and scientific inquiry. The uniqueness of the Sinhalese cultural ensemble that encapsulates the Buddhist doctrine (in association with the alternative epistemology it furnishes) is taken up against the prolific western contender. This justifies the study's focus on the majority's domestic architecture, which in fact, is an articulation of it. An array of other justifications too legitimises this stance.

Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism pre-dates its modern western counterpart, and it is the latter that recognized Sri Lanka as a modern nation state. Various phases of nationalism is evident from pre-modern to modern periods of the island's history, and arguably, the minority nationalisms induced by the manipulative British colonial policies in particular, reinvigorated the Sinhalese Buddhist counterpart. This particular nationalism saw a culmination in 1956, following the island's political independence, and the phenomenon could be posited as a restoration of legitimate dominance of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority. Although it is commonly perceived that after neoliberal economic reforms of 1977 SBN waned, certain deeds by the UNP government (some overt and others more implicit) during its 1977-1994 tenure suggest that under a veneer of modernist masquerade, the phenomenon was deliberately perpetuated. Within this timeframe, Sinhalese Buddhist, and Tamil nationalisms (latter as the former's main contender) fed on each other, as they had done for centuries.

As a provision to inquire the islands' pre-modern domestic architecture, the interplay of tradition, culture and identity are key, and together, form grand and vernacular design identities in the architectural sphere. In the Lankan context, the extant legacy posits that while the former historically had been Royal and religious domain, the latter found use in the domestic realm of elites, sub-elites, and the masses. From the outset of Sinhalese Buddhist history, the Kandyan period remains the closest pre-modern period, where its domestic architectural legacy is still intact within the kingdom's former territories. This becomes a point of comparison with the modern architectural legacy that stems from the parallel Dutch period, and also the British episode to follow. Although the British stint ended in 1948, its colonial architectural legacy continued into the 1950s. Owing to the foregoing reasons, the study draws the line between the background and foreground in 1956 when Sinhalese Buddhist

nationalism culminated, and the foreground is marked by 1994, believed to be the lowest ebb of the nationalist phenomenon. While the fact that the practicing stints of the post-independence period architects coincided with this particular window provides grounds for the consideration, an array of other reasons justify the pertinence of the foreground.

This chapter also establishes the research questions and the accompanying broader aims, while positing a corpus of limitations that define the boundaries of the study. In terms of deducting elite domestic architecture's capacity to articulate periodic changes in the Sri Lankan context, one point in particular, becomes key. The historical narration affirms that in the island, while the domestic architecture of the elite underwent a conspicuous evolution having been exposed to periodic changes, the architecture of the masses remained largely unaltered until the 1980s state intervention.   Hence, this tendency applies to the entire historical span of the Lankan domestic architectural realm. In relation to the modern period, it could be argued that the elite sensitivity to periodic changes apparent in the European scenario – based on elite contiguity to domesticity, and the notion of home than any other social stratum – pertained to Ceylon/Sri Lanka too, analogous circumstances having been that those were created by the colonisers.


## Notes

1 such as the Prince of Wales College and the Holy Emmanuel church.

2 In my teenage years, I developed the habit of striding down the shady *Rajakeeya Mawatha* (Royal Avenue) after school, towards the Flower Road Junction to catch my ride home.

3 When the time came for the 3rd year essay – required for partial fulfillment of the B.Sc. in Built Environment – my tutors pushed me to take up school architecture of British Ceylon as against my very own area of interest. The reason; many before me had focused on 'domestic architecture'. I took up the challenge and produced a good dissertation titled 'School architecture of British Ceylon with Special Reference to Revivalist Wave of Nationalist Buddhism', that helped to earn me a first Class Honours degree.

4 The six months spent in the Archaeological Department, helping to put together survey drawings of *Gampola* and Kandyan period *Tampita Viharas* (Image houses on pillars) for a book that was to be published, particularly improved my knowledge on Kandyan architecture.

5 Law (2005: 267) elaborates that *"[perhaps] even more so than continental nations, island nations are caught up in an open tension between the strong centripetal pull of settlement and rootedness and the centrifugal push of mobility and migration. Boundaries both express and define the inside and outside of the island nation as a cohesive social unit"*.

6 Once during Emperor Asoka's time and then, during and after the British occupation.

7 For them, nationalist ideology was first developed in Europe and dispersed by the European Diaspora (particularly in the new world) in the period around the French revolution.

8 John H. Kautsky and Ernest Gellner are two of the many commentators of this propagation.

9 Smith questions why people are willing to sacrifice wealth, energy, family and life for the nation; having embraced the nationalist thought.

10 The areas in Ceylon that the British took over from the Dutch were governed initially by the British East India Company (BEIC) from its Madras Presidency.  The island could have become a part of the British creation of 'India' at one point. However, a settlement was made between BEIC and crown authorities in

London and Calcutta and it was decided that Ceylon should be governed as a separate territory. Ceylon consequently became a crown colony in 1802. This was mainly driven by its strategic location (Perera, 1994: 89). Independent Kandyan kingdom's belligerent existence too would have been a seminal reason for this decision.

[11] Abu-Lughod argues that in the Indian Ocean region (with the focus on sub-continent), kings were ceremoniously recognized as legitimate, but lacked imperial reach as centralized control over large areas was not achieved. Kingships thus co-existed with a high degree of local autonomy and semi autonomy.

[12] Eriksen points out that for instance, particularly in Africa, for many modern states, there were no pre-modern counterparts to be revived. Most were in fact, poly-ethnic states dominated by a single ethnic group.

[13] *Mahavansa* goes back to the 6th century A.D. and has been updated during 13th, 14th and 18th centuries (De Votta, 2007: 5).

[14] *Mahabharatha*, *Ramayana* as well as Buddhist literature all point to the fact that the island of Lanka was occupied by tribal groups prior to Aryan advents. Especially, the former two suggest that the *Yakshas* with whom the Aryans warred with had been an advanced and prosperous society. Somadeva (1998) and Deraniyagala (1992, 1998, 2010) on the other hand, affirm through the carbon dating carried out on the bone remains of the *Veddas*, considered as the oldest inhabitants of the island, confirm that they run back 28,000 years, whereas the oldest found in the sub-continent runs back to 35,000 years.

According to N. de Silva (2006b), the earlier inhabitants of Lanka were antagonistic towards the newly arrived groups from the sub-continent. Deraniyagala's excavations (2010) in *Anuradhapura* have revealed that Aryan groups have been arriving since the 9th century B.C. They were continuously resisted by the indigenous groups. N. de Silva (2006b) believes that it was the 5th century B.C. arrival of Prince *Vijaya* that was the decisive point that marked dominance for the new-comers. *Vijaya* acted tactfully to counter resistance by marrying *Kuvanna*, the princess of the *Yakshas*; the most numerous and powerful tribe. Subsequently, *Vijaya* abandoned *Kuvanna* and embarked on a rapid expansion policy by suppressing the *Yakshas*. *Yakshas* had to flee to North Western Lanka to take refuge in the North central plains. It was during the reign of King *Pandukabhaya* (the grandson of Viyaya's nephew *Panduvasudeva* who ascended the throne after Vijaya's demise) who embarked on a unification policy that reconciliation was realized. Brought up by the *Yakshas* who had aided him to ascend to the Lankan throne, he gave the recognition to them and other tribal groups. This marks the beginning of the Sinhalese race (in mahavamsa.org, 2007). Apart from the reference to activities during Buddha's visits to the island and the ambiguous reference to *Yakshas* in *Mahiyangana* who sided with *Elara* against King *Dutu Gamunu* in the 2nd century B.C., documented history does not refer to the *Yaksha* group again. The *Nagas* conversely, appear in 14th century A.D. literature from *Dambadeniya-Kotte* period (N. de Silva, 2006b). Some of the Sinhalese caste groups such as *Durava*, in fact trace their ancestry to *Nagas*.

[15] This intermingling beyond recognition concretizes the Sinhalese claim as 'sons of the soil' and repudiates attempts by some commentators to reduce them to an immigrant group who established their power over the original inhabitants (i.e. De Votta, 2007).

[16] son of Emperor Asoka.

[17] Sarath in fact, claims that the Sinhalese Buddhist rulers of the island not always yielded to all teachings of the Buddhist faith. In his opinion, the doctrine that underpinned the nationalist thought prevailed in a particular way among the royals and in another way amongst the masses.

[18] *Anuradha Pura* (i.e. *Anuradhapura*) received its first invasion the 2nd century B.C., when two sons of a horse merchant – believed to be from the *Sind* region of modern-day India – called *Sena* and *Guththika*, toppled the kingdom by expelling king *Suratissa* (in mahavamsa.org, 2007). N. de Silva (2006b) believes that this invasion was made a success with no resistance whatsoever from the Sinhalese side. He infers that the Sinhalese population being newly converted Buddhists, were neither aggressive or defence conscious and consequently suffered for their misgiving. In his view, they appropriated the consciousness to defend their Sinhalese Buddhist kingdom from this point onwards. The invaders were subsequently expelled by prince *Asela*, the brother of *Suratissa* (Jayasumana, 2009: 69). King *Asela* was then replaced by another invader known as *Elara*. Although there are beliefs about *Elara* being of Tamil origin, as the Dravidian languages did not diverge into different families until the 4-5th c. A.D. [as affirmed by Jayasumana (2009: 69) who dwells on an array of convincing evidence from Bernard (1997), Clide Winter (1979), Himendroff (19- ) and Sastri (1958) that support his view], this claim becomes dubious. N. de Silva (2006b) believes that Elara was from Persia and presents evidence (in Jayasumana, 2009). The invader called *Kalinga Magha* on the other hand is said to had arrived from the *Kalinga* region in the sub-continent, where *Chandra Bhanu* is believed to have had a *Malayan* origin (N. de Silva, 2008). Apart from the foregoing invasions, the island received Dravidian invasions from groups ranging from the Pandyas to Cholas (Jayasumana, 2009).

[19] From *Anuradhapura*, the Sinhalese kingdom shifted from *Pollonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Gampola, Kotte* and finally, to Kandy.

[20] It is commonly misunderstood that Kandy was conquered by the British. Most commentators tend to overlook the fact that the invasions in 1803 and 1812 by the British were both unsuccessful. When the monarchy was replaced with the help of a faction of Kandyan feudalists who aided the British to do so, by the 'Kandyan convention', the island was ceded. The British later on, cunningly deviated from the terms of

the convention to ensure a fully-fledged colonization, having brutally crushed two freedom struggles by the Sinhalese.

[21] It was this culture that continued down until the end of Kandyan era in 1815 (Kandy being the last Sinhalese kingdom), having survived continuous Dravidian and South-East Asian invasions since 9th c. A.D. (Paranavithana, 2001: 28).

[22] Gamage argues that this sentiment is similar to that of the Germans, Bismarck having compelled them to think *"in blood"*. Under these circumstances Amarasekara (1998) inconclusively attempts to import an archaic sentiment into the modern milieu via this analogy.

[23] N. de Silva elaborates that when *Arhath Mahinda* brought Buddhism to Lanka, his conversation with King *Devam Piya Tissa* is the best testament for the Sinhalese culture's epistemological compatibility with the religion. Buddhism, just as the ancient pre-Aryan cultures of the sub-continent, was not based on the binary logic and epistemology characteristic to Western cultures, but a more refiner logic and knowledge based on the *Chathuskhotika*. Having realized this compatibility, *Arhath Mahinda* decided to propagate Buddhism in the land.

[24] When threatened by disruptive Dravidian (especially) and European invasions, Sinhalese Buddhists with the blessing of Buddhist clergy, just as any other threatened cultural setting in the world throughout its history, defended its culture. This is viewed as political Buddhism in operation. The first documented affair was King *Dutu Gamunu* taking monks to the battle fields to legitimize the war (as a just war) between an invading army in the 2nd Century B.C. (N. de Silva, 2006b). This could on one hand, be argued as an act of nationalism and also resorting to violence in order to safeguard the kingdom's interest.

In this light, the analyst Jayadeva Uyangoda (1996: 129, n.5) argues that *"Sinhalese Buddhism has made no significant contribution to the evolution of a non-violent social ideology. On the contrary, the Sinhalese Buddhist historiographical tradition and ideology inherent in it supports ethnic political violence"*.

De Votta (2007: 1-2) who posits Uyangoda's argument – that alludes to the fact that only Sinhalese Buddhist throughout world history resorted to such violent means – to make Sinhalese Buddhists look like villains, contradicts himself by revealing that *"[indeed,] globally and in Sri Lanka, individual Buddhists, Buddhist clergy, and Theravada Buddhist kingdoms were among the most accommodating of people of other faiths"*.

[25] These strong associations are articulated by the Sinhalese Buddhists out of respect, who often refer to Buddha as *apē budun* (our Buddha), as if he was a son of their own soil (Dissanayaka, 2009: 70).

[26] Jayawardhana (1987) points out the Sinhalese Buddhist claim that – in their folklore – Lord Buddha in his infinite wisdom saw that his doctrine would be preserved for 5000 years in the island – which is a repository for *Theravadha* Buddhism. This explanation sums up his visits. Further, it is also believed that Buddha on his deathbed, instructed *Sakra* (the chief of gods) to protect *Vijaya* in his endowment.

According to *Mahavansa*, Lord Buddha visited the island thrice; first, to the Southeast where *Yakshas* (demon tribe) were forced into submission in *Mahiyangana*; second, to the North (*Nagadeepa*) to settle a dispute between two *Naga* (an ancient tribe – snake beings) groups; and third, to the South and elsewhere to consecrate the island into a Buddhist sanctuary. *Mahavansa* also claims that *Vijaya* arrived in the island on the same day of Lord Buddha's passing in 543 B.C. (despite certain disagreements that attribute this incident to a period between 486 and 483 B.C.) (De Votta, 2007: 6). Vijaya's arrival on the same day of Buddha's passing (K. Jayawardhana, 1987), thus marks a symbolic representation in the Sinhalese Buddhist culture for entrusting the land to a raise genealogically connected to Lord Buddha. On the other hand, there is a view that the island is referred to as the *Dhamma dīpa* because of the fact that the Buddhist doctrine would last there for five thousand years.

[27] Sinhalese Buddhists believe that survival of the Buddhist religion depends on the survival of the Sinhalese race, where the people survive as long as they espoused the doctrine and control the land consecrated to the religion (K. Jayawardhana, 1987).

[28] This notion finds credible proof from the island's history.

[29] The first documented and historically analyzed Tamil settlements in Sri Lanka are found from 12-13th century A.D. (Indrapala, 1965). Indrapalan's PhD thesis submitted to University of London is a convincing scientific research in comparison to a number of superficial deductions by others. De Votta's (2004b, 25) assumes that just because Sri Lanka is twenty miles across the shallow Polk straits, Tamils would have known about and investigated the island. South-East Asians traveling to Australia 35-40000 years ago is his analogy. Ponnambalam's (1983: 20) on the other hand declares without credible evidence that Tamils were ever-present in the island and all of the islanders were Tamils before Buddhism. In his theory, Buddhism and its *Pali* scriptures created an *"ascriptive cleavage"* among Dravidians and thereby divided islanders into Sinhalese and Tamils.

Their views can be repudiated on many grounds. First, they tend to ignore (deliberately as it appears) the other non-Aryan groups such as *Yakshas, Nagas* and *Devas* and especially *Veddas* in the island who had been there long before anyone else. The oldest, the *Veddas*, are said to have been there for 28,000 years (Deraniyagala, 2010). Second, they also oversee the numerous extant theories on Tamil migration to the sub-continent during 7-9th century B.C. from Africa. This theory has been elaborated with its proponents

elsewhere. On the other hand, if the Tamils were the majority in the island prior to Buddhism, Ponnambalam fails to explain how the Tamil majority was reduced when the island had over centuries been affected by Dravidian attacks over a millennium, as it is practically next to the Dravidian cultural triangle of the sub-continent. Commentators such as them also emphasize on the Tamil crossovers to the Sinhalese while downplaying vice-versa (De Votta, 2007: 9). This point too is taken up in detail elsewhere. Since the island has faced many invasions by Dravidians prior to, and after this benchmark up to the 15th century European invasions, and all of them were expelled at some point, the allowing of Tamil communities sporadically distributed in the North of the island (Eastern Tamil settlements were recent by European colonists) to perpetuate their culture is arguably, an act of tolerance on the part of Sinhalese. It is documented in colonial records that the port cities around the island had many Tamils operating within them. In relation to Muslims, when they were threatened by the Portuguese who took over the monopoly of trade in the South-Western quadrant of the island in the 16th century, it was the Sinhalese king *Senarath* who re-settled Muslims in the Eastern coast and even in the Kandyan kingdom. These areas today have vibrant Muslim communities.

[30] For K. M. de Silva (1986: 35), in the Sinhala language *"…the word for nation, race and people are practically synonymous, and multi ethnic and multi-communal nation or state is incomprehensible…"*.

This affirms the fact that since its 3rd century B.C. beginning, Sinhala Buddhism had been the dominant culture of the island, where the multi-ethnic notion is relatively a new phenomenon prompted by the advent of Tamils and Muslims.

[31] When Buddhism was on the decline around 4-5th century A.D. in its birth place India – when *'Shunyathavada'* doctrine spearheading a campaign of repudiation – it was the Sinhalese who safeguarded it with royal patronage. The *Shunyathavada* campaign kicked off and brought into existence a *Mahayana* sect. It was this concept that eventually resulted, during the time of *Shankaracharya*, in the doctrine of *'Nirgun Brahman'* that eventually turned *Mahayana* Buddhists into Hindus. In ancient *Anuradhapura* too, this clash became evident with the establishment of *Abhayagiri* monastery, as a rival monastery of the first ever monastery, *Mahavihara*. Although certain Sinhalese kings supported the *Mahayana* doctrine, with the objection of *Mahavihara* monks backed by the general public, *Theravada*'s prominence was restored and Mahayana was extinguished. In Lanka, the most original teachings of Buddha that had been handed-down by wisdom of the word (*Theravada* Buddhist cannon), was consequently documented in *Matale Aluvihara* around 1st century B. C., by Buddhist monks – from both India (mostly from *Andra Pradesh*) and Lanka (Dissanayaka, 2009: 70-71). The idea behind documenting in ancient *Pali* – the language spoken in the time of Buddha – was to preserve it in its original state, allowing the most limited chance of potential manipulation. It was this Sinhalese Buddhist tradition that eventually spread to South East Asian countries; namely, Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Cambodia and Thailand (N. de Silva, 2008).

[32] An analogy is drawn between White Supremacists who emphasize on being pro-white, but not anti-black or anti-Jewish and similarly, *Hindutva* forces who pose not to be anti-Muslim, but pro-Hindu, with Sinhalese Buddhists, who have adopted a more palatable rhetoric of being pro-Sinhala Buddhist but anti-Tamil (De Votta, 2007: 37). De Votta neglects the fact that Western countries have no intention of changing their accepted languages and religions – considered as national languages and religions – irrespective of the growing number of immigrants who adhere to other faiths (Roman Catholic, Muslim and Hindu etc.) and speak other languages (Spanish, Urdu, Hindi etc.) . According to N. de Silva (2009), Britain's national anthem still reads, *"god save the queen"*, although a considerable faction of its population consists of immigrants after the 1950s and 60s.

[33] Matty and Appleby (1991: 819-21) maintain that fundamentalist movements, divergent cultures notwithstanding, tend to include certain common characteristics: they are dependant on religion for legitimating purposes; they operate within a clear sense of who does and does not belong to the group; they espouse a belief in radical eschatologies; and they dramatize and mythologize their enemies. Although Buddhist movements assume some of these qualities, not all agree that 'fundamentalism' is the best label to describe and comprehend the Sri Lankan case (De Votta, 2007: 12).

[34] Venerable scholar monk Valpola Rahula's claim is based on 1946 book *Bhikshuvage Urumaya* (later translated as The Heritage of the *Bhikku*). The book argues that the Buddhist monk is given the mandate to perform social services, is in a legitimate position to participate in political activities. This has happened since Buddha's time.

[35] Political Buddhism is said to emphasize politics over Buddhist values. Political Buddhism and Sinhalese nationalism 'feed each other' (De Votta, 2007: 3).

[36] The fruitless nature of this comparison will be further elaborated in chapter 3.

[37] also at times, spelled as *Mahavamsa*.

[38] As it is frequently referenced to determine grey areas in both Indian and Greek histories.

[39] In Renan's view, all ethnic identities are constructed and *"getting its history wrong is part of being a nation"* (De Votta, 2007: 6). Renan (1996: 52) also observes that *"of all cults, that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A historic past, great men, glory…this is the social capitol upon which one bases a national idea"*. Orientalists use this kind of material to generalize and simplify the entire world history – Western and Eastern alike – with no scientific grounds as proof. It is

erroneous and unethical to use such theories formulated not on scientific research, to criticize histories of countries – especially Eastern ones.

[40] For De Votta, Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism does not fall within Gellner's theory. He ignores that Gellner's theory was made to explain recent Western nationalisms, but ancient Asiatic nationalisms. Therefore, his analysis is weak and lacks objectivity. In his view, just because an Eastern (or elsewhere) situation does not fall within a theory formulated by a westerner, based on Western society, it is wrong.

[41] in a historically all-encompassing perspective.

[42] N. de Silva (2008) believes based on this criteria that Tamils have never in world history, anywhere, have ever been a nationality, but an ethnicity. For him, the former kingdoms in Southern part of sub-continent such as *Chola*, Pandya, *Vijayanagar* etc. were represented by Tamil populations. They were a representative group, along with other Dravidian groups. These were never Tamil kingdoms with a Tamil consciousness.

[43] In Sri Lanka, these are neither language nor religious categories, but an ethnic one and it is the ethnicity that gives them their respective identities. It has to be stressed that all statistical figures from the British times, to the most recent by the Sri Lankan Government, suggest that this is the official categorization in Sri Lanka. These ethnic groups are proud of their respective identities and calling one a 'Sinhalese', a 'Tamil' or a 'Muslim' is by no means derogatory, but customary. However, all of these groups are considered as 'Sri Lankans'. This fact is acknowledged by the ones who have studied the Sri Lankan society such as Roberts (1995), K. T. Silva (2005) and De Votta (2007) etc.

The Sinhalese are the faction that speaks the Sinhalese language and adheres to Sinhalese culture. Apart from the majority that possesses the genuine Sinhalese culture for being Buddhist, the Christian Sinhalese furnish a hybrid version that is poised between the East and West. Genealogically, Sinhalese do not share the same ancestors and could be of varying origins – from Aryan (mostly quasi-Aryan), Dravidian to quasi-European.

Tamils speak Tamil language and when a majority adhere to Hinduism, a faction are Christians; hence, making the former group authentic and the latter, more hybrid in cultural terms. They too have varying ancestry – mainly Dravidian, quasi-Aryan, to Sinhalese and quasi-European.

Muslims on the other hand, mostly speak Tamil and always adhere to the Islamic faith. Although they claim to have come from the Middle-east, their migration lines are said to have fallen through the Dravidian South India. Further, their intermingling with the Sinhalese and Tamils is well-established.

[44] For Bayly, Sinhala consciousness is neither a product of late-colonial intervention nor a discourse of nationhood merely derivative of forms developed in Western Europe (in Roberts, 2004a: vii).

[45] One of such incidents took place in the 12th century when King *Parakramabahu I* (*Parakramabahu*, the great) of *Polonnaruwa*, suppressed all uprisings against his power (*Paranavithana,* 2001: 41-42). He is best known for his expeditions to *Chola* country in aid of *Pandyas* and to Burma. On the other hand, *Parakramabahu II* of *Pollonnaruwa* successfully overcame two invasions – first by *Kalinga Magha* and secondly from *Chandrabhanu* – to hold on to the strong central polity of his predecessor (Jayasumana, 2009: 116-117). The most recent incident was general *Alakeshwara* who assumed the throne as *Parakrama Bahu VI* of *Kotte* sending Prince *Sapumal* and defeating in the 15th century, *Arya chakravarthis* of the Jaffna Kingdom to bring the entire island under a single polity. This policy was perpetuated by Prince *Sapumal* who subsequently assumed the Sinhalese throne until his demise. Afterwards, Kotte kingdom waned in power and the *Aryachakrawarthis* made a come back (Jayasumana, 2009: 128-129).

[46] whereas in the sub-continent's case, it was much easier to penetrate and its vast multicultural territory impossible to unify.

[47] The Sri Lankan constitution gives equal weightage to all cultures, manifested in all state festivities and commemorations.  School children are instructed in their respective mother tongues and media organizations operate in the languages of Sinhalese, Tamil and English.  Even the Sri Lankan Airlines which is frequently used by the majority Sinhalese is given the same treatment. N. de Silva (2008c) points out to this peculiar situation where all announcements are made in Sinhalese, Tamil and English, when in Air India, it is just Hindi and English, even when one is flying to and from Chennai.

[48]  The pretention of Western states as secular polities with cultural equality for all is often refuted. Although US's 'Establishment Clause' claims to be the first secular move, this has always been contested (see Sandel in De Votta, 2007: 20). On the other hand, De Votta (2007: 20) recognizes various compromises towards religion (none other than Anglican Christianity). In the U.K. non-protestants cannot ascend to the throne and in Norway, the head of state and a third of House of Representatives must be Lutherans. Moreover, religious preference has been continued in regional organizations too; for instance the proposed EU constitution can seek to adopt a Christian identity.

[49] In *Anagharika Dharmapala*'s view, Buddhism was the only reason that *"the Sinhalese have not met with the fate of the Tasmanian, the African savage, or the North American India"* (Guruge, 1965: 207).

[50] Burghers, Eurasians and Malays.

[51] United States in 2006 amended its constitution to make English the national language in the face of the threat caused by increasing Spanish-speakers.

[52] In everyday language, the term ethnicity refers to 'minority issues' and 'race relations'. However, majorities are no less ethnic than minorities. In social anthropology, it refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves and are regarded by others as being 'culturally distinctive' (Eriksen, 2002: 4).With other groups, they have a 'minimum of regular interaction' (Eriksen, 2002: 12).

Eriksen (2002: 11) further elaborates that the concept bridges two important gaps in social anthropology. Firstly, it entails a focus of dynamics rather than statics. Secondly, it relativizes boundaries between us and them as well as moderns and tribals.

[53] "*It takes at least two some things to create a difference…Clearly each alone is – for the mind and perception – a non-entity, a non-being. Not different from being, and not different from non-being. An unknowable, a* Ding an sich*, a sound from one hand clapping"* (G. Bateson, 1979: 78).

[54] As Eriksen (2002: 4,10,29.34) tells us, although ethnic groups remain more or less discrete, they are aware of, and in contact with, members of other ethnic groups. He further elaborates that ethnicity matters where cultural differences make a difference. Ethnic memberships can secure one with livelihoods, spouses, friends and religion; what in his view, things of value. On the other hand, it provides a sense of continuity with the past and personal dignity. At times, ethnic identities are assigned from outside forcefully, by dominant groups on groups who do not want membership in what they are assigned.

[55] Ethnicity emerges and is made relevant through situations and encounters and through people's way of coping with the demands and challenges of life (Eriksen, 2002: 1).

[56] For a long time, 'ethnic' and 'cultural' groups had become synonymous, where any group of people who had a 'shared culture' was considered an ethnic group. This is a difficult position to justify as sharing of cultural traits frequently crosses group boundaries, and moreover, people do not always share all their 'cultural traits' with the same people. For instance, one may have the same language as some people, the same religion as some of those as well as some others, and the same economic strategy as an altogether different category of people. Therefore, cultural boundaries are not clear-cut, nor do they necessarily correspond with ethnic boundaries. For Bertha (in Eriksen, 2002: 35), ethnic identity sticks to the individual and one cannot entirely rid oneself of it.

[57] All ethnic groups consider themselves as biologically self-perpetuating and endogamous; as they have an ideology of shared ancestry and shared religion. It is the common ancestry that justifies their unity. The only discrepancies are to be found within and outside the group and that how many generations does a group have to go back?

When some overtly use notions of 'race' and 'blood', others use criteria of cultural competence. Some do not allow outsiders to assimilate while others do. However, they all have notions of shared culture in common. In this sense, ethnic group is different from classes.

[58] For Eriksen (2002: 23-25), ethnic stereotyping is a form of 'cultural knowledge' of a group that once formed, regularly and more or less predictably guide their relationship with other groups. It is like a 'map' of the social world. Groups adjust their behaviors towards other groups accordingly. The practice is common both to dominant and dominating groups. It is widespread in societies with significant power differentiations and also in ones where a rough power equilibrium exists. However, La Piere's (1934) findings have proved that people necessarily do not do what they say. That is, although a certain group is stereotyped, one might associate with them, although ideally he or she thinks it is out of the question. Folk taxonomies are at times used for social distance, within ethnic groups. However, they are relevant within groups who consider them.

However, there is a connection between ethnic stereotyping with racism and discrimination. It is more or less a pejorative, but not necessarily. For example, white Americans justify their discrimination of blacks by stereotyping them as 'lazy' and having 'erratic ways'. The inter-ethnic stereotyping in Mauritius is another good example. Many Europeans have positive stereotypes of 'primitive peoples', arguing that their quality of life is higher than their own.

[59] An identity of an ethnicity becomes 'stereotyped' when it is under-communicated as it might be considered inferior to other groups. The inferior sentiments may be shared by the stereotyped faction. This sort of self-contempt is characteristic to powerless groups in poly-ethnic settings.

[60] The term 'race' is dubiously descriptive in value. For some time, it was fashionable to divide humanity into four main races. However, modern genetic tends to ignore it owing to many reasons. First, the ever-present inter-breeding between human populations has eliminated fixed boundaries between races. Second, distribution of hereditary physical traits does not follow clear boundaries (Cavalli-Sforza in Eriksen, 2002: 5). For Eriksen, there is greater variation within a racial group than there is systematic variation between two groups. Third, serious scholars today, repudiate the fact that hereditary characteristics explain cultural variations. On the other hand, contemporary Neo-Darwinist views in social science of the subject lump together under the heading 'evolutionary psychology', with few (if any) exceptions strongly Universalist. They argue that people everywhere have the same inborn abilities. Race concepts can nevertheless be relevant to the extent that they inform people's actions. Thus, at this level, race exists as a 'cultural construct', whether it has a biological reality or not (Jenkins, 1997: 22).

*"Racism, obviously, builds on the assumption that personality is somehow linked with hereditary characteristics which differs systematically between 'races', and in this way race may assume sociological importance even if it has no 'objective' existence"* (Eriksen, 2002: 5).

Some scholars stress on the importance of distinguishing between 'race' and 'ethnicity' (see Banton, 1967). For Banton (in Eriksen, 2002: 6-7), race refers to the 'negative' categorization of people, where ethnicity has to do with 'positive' group identification. He argues that ethnicity is generally preoccupied with identification of 'us', where racism identifies 'them'. This makes race a negative term of exclusion and ethnicity a positive term of inclusion. However, the distinction between the two is sometimes problematic. As Eriksen elaborates, no one would see that the conflicts in Yugoslavia and Rwanda were racial, but ethnic. This suggests that ethnicity is not less harmful than race.

The boundary blurs since ethnic groups have common myths of origin that relates it to descent, making it a kindred concept to race. Some racial groups are at times ethnified; the blacks of America have gradually come to be known as 'African Americans'. On the other hand, some ethnic groups are racialised; the lumping together the 'European Muslims' irrespective of their racial origin.

[61] On the other hand, the end of history of a world directed towards a liberalist stance predicted by Fukuyama was challenged by Huntington who dwelt on the notion of clash of civilizations (Gamage, 2009: 13).

[62] This has been the case particularly since the Second World War, where all internal conflicts from Sri Lanka to Fiji, Bosnia and Rwanda have been ethnic conflicts. Ethnic struggles for recognition, power and autonomy could take either violent or non-violent turns. When the foregoing cases have been violent, Quebecois independence struggle has been non-violent. Conversely in the West, economic, political and cultural integrations have been ensued via organizations such as the European Union. Many fear that their ethnic and cultural identities will be threatened by such standardization – manifesting their fear via slogans such as 'I want a country to be European in' – while others push for a 'Pan-European' identity, envisioning European sports teams to military forces (Eriksen, 2002: 2,3).

[63] None of the existing evidence could substantiate Tamil nationalist claims. For instance, neither Indrapala's study on Tamil settlements in Sri Lanka (1965), the genealogical origins of Lankan Tamils by (Jayasumana, 2009), the origins of the only monarchy attributed to Tamils (*Arya Chakrawarthy*) being Aryan but Dravidian, nor the separatists' reliance on British-created provincial boundaries based on spoken-languages pointed out by N. de Silva (2008) help the Tamil nationalist cause.

[64] which was instrumental for their (especially of the British) policy of 'divide-and-rule'.

[65] Arumugar Navalar led the Tamil cause and Arabi Pasha one of the Muslims.

[66] Many Western commentators to superficially judge the British colonial window of the island's history wrongly reiterate that Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism was the first to emerge and minority nationalisms followed as reactions.

[67] Both scholars vindicate the British policy of divide-and-rule to latter aggression by Sinhalese Buddhists and especially, the clergy.

[68] Anagharika Dharmapala (the Homeless Guardian of the Doctrine) – the father of modern Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism – was in his mid-twenties when he took to the 'Theosophists'. In his view, Sinhalese were *"…the sweet, tender, gentle Aryan children of an ancient, historic race ..."* who were now being *"sacrificed at the alter of the whiskey-drinking, beef-eating, belly-god of heathenism"* (Guruge, 1965: 484). The British were vindicated by him for giving *"…Aryan Sinhalese poisons of opium and alcohol which are destructive for the continuance of the Sinhalese race"* (Guruge, 1965: 530). The young Buddhists were encouraged to *"believe not the alien who is giving you arrack, whiskey, toddy, sausages"*, but to *"enter into the realms of King Dutugemunu in spirit and try to identify yourself with the thoughts of that great king who rescued Buddhism and our nationalism from oblivion"* (Guruge, 1965: 530).

He even went into the extents of ridiculing the Westernized Sinhalese by proclaiming that *"[fancy] the descendents of Vijaya having names like Pereras, Silvas, Almeidas, Diases, Liveras"* (Dharmadasa, 1992a, 231). Dharmapala was responsible for thousands dropping their English names to autochthonous ones and adopting the native dresses instead of European ones. He also laid down 200 rules for the laity, to assure that they live by Buddhistic teachings. His sentiments were publicized mainly through the Buddhist periodical called *Sinhala Bauddhaya* (the Sinhalese Buddhist) that he implemented (De Votta, 2007: 15-16). Senevirathna (1999) tells us that Dharmapala's agenda encompassed both economic and cultural aspects. He argues that it was these two aspects that were separately adopted by two factions of *Sangha*; the monks of *Vidyodaya* and *Vidyalankara Pirivenas* (schools for Buddhist monks). In his view, the latter ignored the moral-economic aspect and instead concentrated on anti-colonialism. The articulation of this victory was Walpola Rahula Thero's canonical publication *Bhikshuwage Urumaya*.

Dharmapala being stereotyped as a racist by mainly Western and minority viewpoints has to be considered in the light of a repressive rhetoric towards Buddhists in colonial Ceylon. He was aided by the theosophists. The American Henry steel Olcott and Russian Madam Helena Blavatsky, both arrived in 1880 and boosted the Buddhist revival. They openly criticized the British mistreating of Sinhalese Buddhists. Olcott who had fought in the American civil war is not a renowned name in America. His organizational skills led to the

creation of numerous Buddhist schools as contenders to their Christian counterparts. They, in a short time, were training petty-bourgeoisie men and women essential for SBN (De Votta, 2007: 14).

[69] Such as Anagharika Dharmapala.

[70] The newly formed Socialist movement took over the leadership of Ceylonese independence struggle in the 1930s. The active leadership was taken up by the *Suriya Mal* (sun flower) movement organized in 1933 to consolidate into a political party in the name of *Lanka Sama Samaja Party* (LSSP) in 1935 – the party for social equality – with two primary objectives; independence and socialism (Perera, 1994: 340).

LSSP concentrated largely on plantations and outlying areas, drawing the marginalized subjects into the national arena. Chandra (1980: 282) argues that such movements were not difficult to organize and even from the early moderate phase, put forward the demands of power sharing. LSSP inherently had an international orientation as was manifested through its reliance on Marxist slogan that attempted to unify the working class against capitalism that transcended national frontiers and criticized Stalinist notion of socialism. However, analogous to the sporadic occurrences of alliances in certain revolutionary movements from around the world, LSSP also cultivated relationships with leftist anti-colonial groups in India; however, never realized the potential of forming a broad-based world-wide anti-colonial movement by amalgamation of core-based working classes (Perera, 1994: 342).

*"In Ceylon, the socialists organized the masses across ethnic, religious, and caste boundaries and had a special appeal for the marginalized"* (Perera, 1994: 343).

As Perera believes, two forms of social consciousness were produced among these groups. Firstly, consciousness of discrimination among social and cultural groups – especially in the form of Sinhalese 'low castes' as well as the 'low caste' plantation Tamils – supporting the LSSP provided them the means to engage in caste and other conflicts. As Jupp (in Perera, 1994: 343) points out in relation to democratic politics, political parties and trade unions have always been the major agencies that brought the people into the political process and the evidence for their effective participation manifests through their extremely high voter turnout at national and local elections. Second was the consciousness of being a part of the same society, and not outside of it; manifested through their gaining confidence of the Ceylon Tamils and more ardently, of the plantation Tamils. The latter group patronage especially, made LSSP a formidable political force in the 1940s. In overall, the intention of the party was not only to spread anti-colonial sentiments, but also to propagate the perception of Ceylon as a 'nation' (Perera, 1994: 345).

[71] As a reactionary force against the bitter memories of capitalist-driven colonialism that had introduced a self-conscious democracy to the island, the new elite faction also adopted left-wing socialist slogans. This appeal towards Communism in the period had the underlying reason of Marxism's promise, with an effective 'political formula' or a doctrine, which states clearly the ends to be pursued as well as supplying a moral justification of the governing elite and their actions. Further, it was presented as a progressive, modern view of the world, irreconcilably opposed to ancient superstitions. It was portrayed as an egalitarian creed that possessed the power to enthuse individuals everywhere and most of all in those countries where immense economic disparities existed. Moreover, the theory of rapid industrialization that incites people to activity and labour, looked promising as the USSR prior to 1939 and during post-war reconstruction had become the ideal model of emulation. As Bottomore (1993: 79) argues, *"Marxism, from this aspect, might be thought of as the 'Protestant ethic' of the twentieth-century industrial revolutions"*. Another reason for the socialist appeal according to him was the opposition to foreign business interests that the new leaders were seeking to jettison.

[72] that had been formed in 1919.

[73] Its leader, *Ponnambalam Arunachalam* of minority Tamil origin, saw the CNC as a symbol of *"national unity"* and *"racial harmony"*.

[74] Perera argues that the local elites of the CNC were reluctant to attain political independence from the British metropole, of which, the existence in the island benefited them.

[75] The social benefits were the 1930s preventive rural health scheme, and 1940s educational reforms, while Trade Union Ordinance and universal suffrage of 1931 were political advancements.

[76] In the 1920 reforms, 11 provincial electorates were created. In a new system that followed the lines of a proportional system based on populations, Sinhalese were given 13 seats and Tamils received 3. Tamils were discontent with this measure as they were previously given an equal number of seats as the Sinhalese. This created disputes within the CNC and compelled the Tamils to walk out (Ivan, 2006: 53).

[77] These groups included the Burgher Political Association (BPA) in 1938, the Ceylon Indian Congress (CIC) in 1939 and the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) in 1944 (mongabay.com, 1988).

[78] Although nationalism tends to be ethnic in character, it is not necessarily the case.

[79] Nationalism is a peculiar link between ethnicity and state.

[80] 'Imagined' does not necessarily mean 'invented', but rather that people who define themselves as members of a nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear them. Yet, in the minds of each individual, lives the image of their 'communion'.

[81] Perera (1994: 353) states that the late 1940s and early 1950s saw the formation of new ethno-based political parties such as the Sri Lankan Tamil-based Sri Lanka Federal Party (FP) and consequently, the Sinhalese-based Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). However, provided that Tamils had never enjoyed conterminous political and cultural boundaries in Sri Lanka over the course of its history, the legitimacy of Tamil Nationalist sentiment could be questioned. The historical details were elaborated earlier.

[82] By the early decades of the 20th century, the British had realized Ceylon's eventual self-rule to come. In their humanist viewpoint, Western democracy was the perfect political mechanism for Ceylon. Consequently, they resorted to gradual constitutional reforms to familiarize Ceylonese with this new form of governance.

In 1927 a Royal commission under the Earl of Donoughmore visited Sri Lanka. The commission was to inquire why representative government as chartered by the constitution in 1924 had failed, as well as to suggest constitutional changes necessary anew. The commission proclaimed that the prior constitution had authorized a government marked by the *"divorce of power from responsibility"* that at times was *"rather like holy matrimony at its worst"*. Thus, for the commission, the 1924 constitution was *"an unqualified failure"* that failed to provide a strong, credible executive body of representatives. To remedy these shortcomings, the commission proposed 'universal adult franchise' and an 'experimental system of government' to be run by respective executive committees. The resulting Donoughmore Constitution in 1931, advised to accommodate its new proposals in the government.

The constitution however, reserved the highest level of responsibility to the British governor, whose content was needed for all legislation. The legislative branch of the government (the State Council) functioned in both executive and legislative capacities; where seven committees performed executive duties. Each committee carried designated members of the State Council, and was chaired by an elected Ceylonese, who was addressed as the 'minister'. Three British officers of ministerial ranks, along with the seven Sri Lankan ministers, formed what was termed a 'Board of Ministers'. It is notable how the British ministers collectively handled responsibility for defense, external affairs, finance and judicial matters. The reforms did not achieve all its intended outcomes. The system of 'executive committees' did not lead to the anticipated development of 'national political parties', but, a number of splinter political groups. They evolved around influential elite personalities with ethnic-based expectations, resulting in numerous ethno-based party organizations (mongabay.com, 1988).

[83] N. de Silva (2008) believes that despite the British colonial intention to perpetuate a neo-colonial rule, democratic reforms was a *"miscalculation on their part"*.

[84] *"[The] reason why both political leaders and the people believed in the 'parliamentary system' lay in the early beginning of that system, the timely transfer of political power by the British, the balance of political forces at the time of transfer, the relative absence of corruption in the electoral process, the relatively 'healthy' economy, and the lack of direct external manipulation. All these factors contributed towards the process of people with various regional, ethnic, religious, and communal identities and affiliations being transformed into 'nationals', principally concerned with economic and social rather than ethnic issues"*.

[85] Representatives from their electorates were sent to the House of Representatives in Colombo to govern the 'nation' as well as to negotiate issues concerning each individual electorate. As Perera (1994: 346) tells us, with the Ceylonese taking over the political power following independence, provided the opportunity for Socialist and Communist parties – formed in 1942 during World War 2 – to enter parliament.

It was for the political elite represented initially through the Ceylon National Congress and later through the United National Party that independence was merely a peaceful transfer of power.

[86] This situation is correctly contrasted by him with the Indian situation where the dominant Indian National Congress (INC) in the 1937 elections came to power in all eight provinces against the Muslim League that only managed 40 out of 119 seats.

[87] It is notable in a Ceylonese situation where in the 1960s, 80% of registered voters cast their vote that all elections taken place between 1952 and 1982 had resulted in government change. It is also notable that in a context where new political parties were being formed frequently, all the ones to have represent parliament being participated in the government at some point. It is notable however that electoral identities were more complex than party loyalties in Ceylon, since most successful candidates as Perera (1994: 350) affirms, *"…particularly the elite, have, from 1931, drawn on the support of villagers, through village level leaders – religious, caste, business, or otherwise – who delivered them blocs of vote"*.

[88] MEP, created by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike consisted of Philip Gunawardene's *Viplavakari Lanka Sama Samaja Party* (VLSSP) and Dahanayake's newly-formed 'Sri Lanka Language front' (SLLF) (Jayewardene, 1984: 17).

[89] Buddhist monks (*Sangha*), Ayurveda/indegenious physicians (*Veda*), teachers (*Guru*), farmers (*Govi*) and laborers (*Kamkaru*).

[90] SLPF-led camp believed that the 1948 independence was incomplete. Hence, their 1956 government negotiated the withdrawal of British military and closing down of its bases. On the other hand, when the United Front (UF) government – made of SLFP, LSSP and CP – came into power in 1970, they completed the political decolonization of Ceylon by taking over all constitutional and judiciary authority retained in British

hands when they replaced Queen's representative – the Governor General – with a president and also the highest court of appeal – Privy Council of London – with a Sri Lankan appeals court.

[91] This is better known as 'Sinhala only in twenty four hours' (by which, Singhalese language replaced English as the official language of the country) that coincided with the 2500th anniversary of Lord Buddha's passing, making it the foremost talking point of the day.  As some commentators observe, this policy gave MEP the edge over its contender, the UNP (G. P. Malalasekera in De Votta, 2007: 18). It is notable how Buddhist monks went on campaigning from house to house, in favor of the MEP. When the UNP realized this, they also adopted the same policy, but a little too late (De Votta, 2007: 17). For some commentators, linguistic nationalism was the main theme of the election (see Kearney, 1967). De Votta (2007: 18) argues that the language policy subsumed the religious difference within the Sinhalese community and united it. Prime Minister Bandaranaike's bid to undermine his election promise by agreeing with Chelvanayagam to allow Tamils to carry out certain activities in Tamil was abrogated by the pressure applied by the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists.

[92] Since its proposition by Nehru in 1954 at the meeting of so-called Colombo Powers held in Colombo,  non-alignment became central to post-colonial Sri Lankan identity during the cold-war period as they did not want to be identified with either of the groups making up the bi-polar world order. The island became active in this movement with the push of nationalists and socialists, providing a principal component of the country's identity within the large world polity between the 1950s and 1970s (Perera, 1994: 354-355). He argues that the pro-British foreign policy of the UNP and pro-Moscow one of SLFP had to be balanced in this manner; keeping both the 'right' and 'left' of the island's politics at a safe distance from both the USA and USSR. Although the USA vetoed Ceylon's application for the United Nations membership until 1955, USSR supported it. However, the traditional ruling elite of Ceylon, irrespective of their political party allegiance, *"… would not shelter under the umbrella of the USSR"* (Perera, 1994: 355).

[93] De Votta elaborates on how Buddhist kingdoms had tolerated Hinduism where Buddhists and Hindus co-existed. He especially frames the lack of gratitude portrayed especially, by late Christian missionaries (during the British era) (De Votta, 2007: 14). N. de Silva (2006b) shares the same view on Muslims (this point has been elaborated elsewhere). Despite Buddhists going to the extent of hosting proselytizers and provide venues to preach gospel, the missionaries soon characterized Buddhist monks as *"careless, indifferent, illiterate…imbeciles"* (De Votta, 2007: 14).

This compelled in his view, monks retaliating, who mobilized to *"beat the missionaries at their own game"*. The monks soon created associations (for instance, The Society for the Propagation of Buddhism in 1862 in *Kotahena*), established presses (i.e. *Lankopakara* press in Gall in 1862), and furnished public debates to disabuse Buddhist of Christian teachings, against missionaries. The most notable were the ones in *Baddegama* (1865), *Udanwita* (1866), *Gampola* (1871), and especially, *Panadura* (1873). *Panaduravadaya* (*Panadura* debate) made the victorious Buddhist representative Ven. *Miggetuvatte Gunananda* the leading figure of Buddhist revival (De Votta, 2007:14).

[94] De Votta (2007: 14) confirms that the British disproportionately provided government employment opportunities to minority Tamils and Christians by discriminating against the Buddhists.

[95] Labuduve Siridhamma and Walpola Rahula were two renowned monks who suffered abuse by the regime. He in fact, vindicates the UNP acts that reduced the monks' role to symbolic purpose, to their subsequent contestations in the parliamentary elections to win seats (Wijesooriya, 2011: 28-29).

[96] Matthews (1978: 91) elaborates that when the issues that framed all elections since 1956 up to the 1970s were cultural – mainly ethnic, religious and linguistic – 1977 election's concern was *"entirely economic"*.

[97] For her, the disenfranchising of Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin who had enjoyed universal franchise since 1931 was a clear manifestation. Later in the early 1950s, the party broke the prior pledge to make Sinhala and Tamil both official languages and inclined towards the 'Sinhala only' policy its opposition was harbouring for political advantage.

[98] translated from Sinhalese, the resplendent city.

[99] Colombo, had always *"represented Empire for the Ceylonese, Ceylon for the metropole, but its own locus for the colonial state"* (Perera, 1994: 93).

[100] Contenders from South India with the help of Jaffna Kingdom waged war against *Kotte.*
*"The reign of Parakramabahu VI is considered the last glorious period of the Sinhalese Monarchy. For the first time in three centuries, the island was brought under the rule of one monarch and administered so, for twenty years, 1411-1466"* (Somaratne, 1975: 129).

During the rule of *Parakramabahu* the VI, Jaffna kingdom was made to pay annual tribute to Kotte, establishing its subordinate status.

[101] It could be argued here that just because a Sinhalese kingdom that had been there physically was attempted to be re-constructed, it does not construct a brand new position, but one that had existed before.

[102] Judging by the nationalist milieu of the previous decades.

[103] In November 1983, at a meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of State in New Delhi, Jayewardene had the following to say.

*"If I have the strength and life, I will not let my people be subject to anybody. Fifteen million people will die if an atomic bomb is exploded on Sri Lanka, fifteen million people can decide to die if they are invaded by someone else and decide never to give in"* (Gunaratna, 1993: xii).

Gunarathna confirms that this was a reproach directed at the Indian state for secretly aiding separatist Tamil militants via its Research Analysis Wing (RAW), and a hint passed off as a result of its growing influence in Colombo's political affairs.

[104] The temple subsequently adopted a fully-fledged possession and other ritualistic attributes on par with its Kandyan counterpart. 'Invented tradition' legitimized the new cultural capital.

[105] Through this act, a historical alliance between the religion and monarchy was formed in which, each was independent and interdependent. As Geiger (in Gunawardane, 1979: 172) – who translated the great chronicle *Mahawansa* – noted, the relics of Buddha had gradually come to constitute the 'national palladium'; the symbol of legitimate kingship. The *"… position of the King was legitimized and strengthened by the support of sangha. In practice, the King was the chief patron of sangha"*. In turn, *sangha* represented the King as a *Bodhisatva*, together comprising a politico-ideological institution of the system. This ensured that the Temple was always placed adjacent to the Palace and the notion was sustained down to the last Sinhalese kingdom of Kandy (Gunawardane, 1979: 79, 211). The importance of the relic was proven when the Sinhalese appropriated it during their freedom struggle in 1817-18 that proved fatal for the British (Perera, 1994: 123-24).

[106] Perera (1994: 419) states that by the 1970s the political and economic order organized by the US started to disintegrate. This needs to be elaborated. The decades following the war was marked by revolutions in China, Vietnam and Algeria, and Eastern Europe, not to mention the defiance of bi-polar political arrangements and the place assigned for them in Yalta agreement, what became the Islamic states. On the other hand, the 1960s saw worldwide protests against the status quo that manifested from the 'May of France' to the 'Prague spring' and 'Naxallite rebellion' in India. Wallerstein's 'world revolution of 1968' not only undermined US hegemony – as it faced 'unruliness' of the civil society – but also the USSR's communist model – as the sole capitalist alternative (Perera, 1994: 419-420).

Following World War II, US pledged aid to Western Europe and Japan under what is known as the Marshall Plan to prevent possible Communist revolutions in the war-ravaged states that in turn, developed them economically. Their economic development in fact, reached strong levels to the extent that they posed a threat to their donor's economy. The emergence of the 'Eurodollar market' helped West Europe to overcome the obstacle of a lack of convertible currency, more or less materializing the idea of an international monetary order projected in the 'Bretton Woods Agreement'. This created balance of payment problem for the US in the 1970s that led to its collapse. The Nixon administration ceased the system unilaterally. Moreover, the growing power of the Organization of Petroliam Exporting Countries (OPEC), the growing impact of newly industrialized countries (NICs) of East Asia as well as exacerbating US/West European budget deficits, had largely altered the world economy by the 1970s. On the other hand, three major economic blocks were formed – East Asia, Western Europe and North America – and in turn, undermined the command of hegemonic powers. Thus, a major economic center of capitalist accumulation has been formed outside of Europe, for the first time in history (Perera, 1994: 419-421). However, 'flexible accumulation' in Harvey's (in Perera, 1994: 422) terms facilitated an international division of labor, where raw materials inputs come from the periphery while the manufacturing, corporate-related services, financial markets are internationally spread, to be controlled by global cities of New York, London and Tokyo via advanced communication means.

[107] The West, since World War II, has dwelt on political and economic World-wide organization to legitimize their stronghold over the former colonies in such ways.

[108] For K. T. Silva, a' new urban middle-class' has been created following open economy's globalization and trans-national spaces. They are either executives of trans-national corporations, the high bureaucrats of government projects run with foreign grants, bureaucrats of NGO, INGO and international organizations or ones engaged in high-level foreign employments. This multi-ethnic, multi-caste and multi-religious class finds solidarity in its common needs, actions and life-style.

[109] following the model set by France.

[110] Although the post-independence political arena is described as one where 'ethnic outbidding' was common practice (De Votta, 2007: 17), this view is baseless as it appears from electoral history from 1940 to date in Sri Lanka that ethno-centric minority parties have supported both the UNP and UNFA, SLFP governments and held ministerial portfolios. This falsifies the claim by De Votta's (2007: 17) that an insidious practice was continued where parties representing the majority community [tried] to outdo each other to provide the best deal for ethnic kin, usually at the expense of minorities.

[111] According to new reforms, the president was to be elected by an island-wide vote, hypothetically guarantied the presidency to the UNP; where a single national electorate was superimposed over the island's electoral system. This government eliminated former 150 electorates and replaced them with 22 administrative districts, and instead of a single member of parliament, each district elects a number of them from nomination lists submitted by competing political parties and independent groups, proportional to the

votes each list receives. Similarly, the local authorities were transformed into single electorates. The seminal change this system imparted was the abolishing of the relationship between the electorate and their representatives developed from the 1930s, by the election of five or more representatives sometimes to reach twenty from a large electorate.

[112] Many believe that Tamil students have been favored in examinations marking, enabling them to yield better results than Sinhalese students.

[113] During the first fifteen years after independence, students sought a university degree to qualify for government service, which was in fact, the major employer at the administrative level. Such jobs were in vogue for the petty-bourgeoisie. Liberal arts that led to Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, was the most preferred area of study as a preparation for this. Because the university exams were in English (the language of the elite) the potential faction aiming for university admission was relatively small, and 30% of applicants were admitted. By the mid 1960s, the examinations were conducted in Sinhala and Tamil languages too. This opened the universities to a larger faction of applicants. Many of them had been trained in the vernacular languages in state-run secondary schools. The university expansion was eventually stunted owing to the lack of funds and it became impossible for the state to admit the increasing numbers of qualified candidates – by 1965 only 20% of applicants were admitted and by 1969 only 11%. Out of those who managed to enter university to be awarded with bachelor's degrees, only a faction was absorbed by government and private enterprises. This resulted by the late 1960s, in two issues; the growing difficulty of university admissions and the irrelevance of a liberal arts education to available employment. The biggest losers were the Sinhalese community that resulted in the 1971 JVP insurrection (countrystudies.us, 2011).

In the colonial period and the two decades following independence, the Tamil community belonging to both Hindu and Christian faiths outnumbered the Sinhalese in the percentage of students in secondary schools as well as university science degree programs. As the government fell into the hands of the majority Sinhalese, possibilities for government service naturally declined for Tamils. Their secondary schools then resorted to their strength in science curriculums to equip students for science and medicine and by the 1960s, came to dominate the student bodies in those fields. Therefore, more or less at the same period when Sinhalese BA students and graduates found their careers hindered by changes in the job market, Tamil science students were faring well. Consequently, Sinhalese demanded to reduce the numbers of Tamil students, making it a major political issue. When political intervention did not eliminate the dominance of well-trained Tamil students until 1974, the government introduced the 'district quota system' for science admissions.

[114] When each district in the country was allocated a number of reserved slots for students, the Sinhalese benefited as it dominated a majority of districts. It is notable how Tamil admission ratios remained higher than the percentage of Tamils in the population. However, the numbers plummeted in comparison to previous levels. In the 1980s, 60% of university admissions were allocated according to district quotas. It is notable how even this system guaranteed opportunity for all ethnic groups in approximation to their populations, which is often overlooked (countrystudies.us, 2011).

Based on author's personal experience, for majority of Sinhalese students who sit for the Advanced Level examinations from urban areas such as Colombo, the cut-off marks to gain university admissions is considerably higher than for students from outstations. Majority of students who gain university admissions are from rural areas and they come with considerably lower marks. Most of Tamil students who enter universities come from rural areas. Commentators when raising this issue to justify Tamil agitation, overlook this simple fact.

[115] Tourism by 2011 was the 6th highest income earner for Sri Lanka (srilanka-botschaft.de, 2011).

[116] More than their dissatisfaction, Western manipulation was central to this bourgeoning rift (N. de Silva, 2009).

[117] JVP first came into prominence by attempting to topple Sirimavo Bandaranaike's government in 1971. The Sri Lankan state with India's assistance crushed the rebellion that resulted in approximately 10,000 deaths. Although the JVP joined the mainstream in the late 1970s, it became one of the three parties to be banned by the UNP claiming that a 'naxalite conspiracy' was behind the anti-Tamil riots in 1983. Although JVP initially sympathized with Tamil rebels for waging war against the corrupt oppressive regime, it later changed its stance to the nationalist rhetoric. This tendency was manifested in its fierce resistance to 1987 Indo-Lanka pact that saw JVP going on a murderous campaign against the UNP government. The movement was eventually contained by R. Premadasa's government by 1990, having relied on paramilitary forces. JVP came again to mainstream politics in 1994, in support of CBK (De Votta, 2007: 25). Ever since, it has been oscillating between Nationalism and Socialism as it deemed fit (N. de Silva, 2006b).

[118] LTTE eliminated its contender Tamil guerrilla organizations and emerged as the leading rival of the Sri Lankan state (De Votta, 2007: 77).

[119] As K. T. Silva elaborates, according to the material obtained by government sources, almost all the leadership of the JVP who were held responsible as the main perpetrators of the rebellion, were from lower caste groups. Besides, a majority of the youth who took part in the arms struggle, especially from outstation towns, were from lower castes.

[120] N. de Silva (2000) argues that they were not.

[121] Although Kearny (1967), Tambiah (1986), Harris (1990), Swamy (1995), Wilson (2000), De Votta (2004, 2007), Sahadevan and De Votta (2006) all attempt to convey that Tamil nationalism was a reactionary phenomena, many more disagree. It is notable how some of the Tamils who have participated in these publications are renowned for their LTTE allegiance. N. de Silva (2006b, 2008, 2009, 2011), Gunarathna (1993) and Jayasumana (2009), all believe that repudiation to Sinhala Buddhist ideology by neo-colonial powers underlie Tamil nationalism. Tamil separatists, according to them, are a vehicle for the neo-colonial powers to realize their intentions.

[122] For De Votta (2007: 77), LTTE's claim as the sole representative of Tamils is dubious. This claim is refuted by the Sri Lankan government – Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe speaking to the UN (Daily News, 2011) – by intellectuals – University Teachers for Human Rights UTHR founded in 1988 in Jaffna University, whose one of the key founding members, Dr. Rajani Thiranagama, was assassinated in 1989 by the LTTE – as well as opposing Tamil political organizations – Douglas Devananda's EPDP (Jeyaraj in the sundayleader.lk, 2001).

[123] Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups were nourished initially by the Tamil political movements in South India (mainly DMK and ADMK leaders and partisans with public backing). When these activities got out of hand, the Indian state (led by Indira Gandhi) took control of the situation by becoming the chief patron. This was its way of containing the deteriorating situation in South India (Gunarathna, 1993). Indian state's initial support for the LTTE is confirmed by Gunarathna. The Western support for the organization is also a well-known fact (N. de Silva: 2008). The support of the UK, Norway, Canada, France, Australia and the United States etc. initially started with moral-looking practices of giving refugee status and citizenship to conflict-fleeing Tamils, allowing pro-LTTE organizations to lobby, collect money to fund its separatist struggle as well as turning a blind eye on their methods of collection – extortion and blackmail etc. – and especially, on the way most of the money is generated – via practices of drugs and weapons trafficking. These criminal activities by the LTTE have been confirmed by the FBI (fbi.gov., 2008). Norway in fact, admits openly its pro-LTTE position under the guise of 'freedom of expression' and to fight in whatever cause important for a given individual, within the country's laws. Norway law does not consider whether the cause is justified (Janz, F. in Sinhaya.com/Norway, 2011).

The implicit prior Western stance was made explicit during the 2002-2006 peace process and the last years of the Eelam war. Certain Western governments (especially, Norway), Western-funded INGOs and NGOs (TRO etc.) and International Organizations (UNICEF and UN), all were found with credible evidence, as perpetrators, for funding and aiding the LTTE war effort (defence.lk, 2009). Peace process saw the LTTE rebuilding its arsenal with the aid of Western nations such as Norway. Norway, as in Sudan, has been accused in Sri Lanka of delivering military hardware, communications equipment and other forms of aid to the LTTE as well as training carders in Thailand, under the guise of Norwegian People's Aid (non-governmental organization) (Walter Jayawardhana in asiantribune.com, 2008). At the culmination point of the war in 2009, British foreign minister David Miliband came to Sri Lanka to compel the government to call off the offensive, which is viewed by the Sri Lankan public as a direct foreign interference – an act of neo-colonialism – and an attempt to bail out the remaining LTTE leadership. The latter point was confirmed by WikiLeaks (Gordon Rayner in telegraph.co.uk, 2010) that revealed his underlying intention of attracting Tamil votes in the UK for his party.

[124] When the boats with food supplies for its people was sent to Jaffna peninsula (under besiege) by the Indian government were turned back by the Sri Lankan navy on 2nd of June, 1987, India violated Sri Lankan airspace and airdropped supplies (Ivan, 2006: 82-83). India also acted promptly to bail out the LTTE leader trapped in the peninsula to be kept under house arrest in India. Such acts were regarded by a majority of Sinhalese as an outright violation of its sovereignty, and developed a subsequent animosity and suspicion towards India (Gunaratna, 1993: 473). Indian Intervention was prompted by many concerns. On one hand, India saw the post 1977 military buildup of Sri Lanka – the US ally – as a threat to its regional dominance and security. At the time, American support to Pakistan had antagonized India who strived to become the regional power. On the other, economic destabilization of Sri Lanka also assured their regional economic dominance. Moreover, India was vary of the potential of a new Tamil state forming in North and East of Sri Lanka with the backing of Tamil Nadu that it considered to be a threat to its own sovereignty. Since 1962, Tamils in the Southern state had been harbouring separatist sentiments as was made evident through *Anna Dravida Munnerta Kazhagam* (AIADMK) and *Dravida Munnerta Kazhagam* (DMK) vociferous agendas. It was such campaigns that led to the introduction of what is known as the 6th Amendment by Nehru, where all of those running for political office had to take an oath to uphold sovereignty and integrity of India.

It is notable that the leaders of the above Tamil Nadu based political partied M. G. *Ramachandran* (MGR) and *Karunanidhi* respectively, were the main patrons behind the LTTE and other separatist organizations at the outset. Upon the advice by RAW (India's main intelligence organization), premiere *Indira Gandhi* secretly took over as the main patron of these militants, as an attempt to regulate their growth and power. She was compelled to do so, as M. G. Ramachandran who was her Tamil Nadu political ally was already supporting the LTTE and jettisoning support for them would have favored the second best LTTE patron *Karunanidhi* from the opposition. This policy was perpetuated in to Rajiv Gandhi administration when he decided to put a permanent end to military aid and concentrated on an enduring political solution in Sri Lanka. Such a solution as he conceived was to make Indian Tamils content and at the same time, assure India's unity as a whole (Gunaratna, 1993)

[125] For the LTTE itself, the accord was thwarting their freedom struggle (Gunaratna, 1993: 230).

[126] a loss of 1555 lives, 2987 casualties and Indian Rs. 1000 crore expenditure.

[127] The political opposition came from a faction of the ruling UNP itself, the JVP and most other parties constituting the opposition.

The JVP had now resorted to Sinhalese nationalism to win mass support (Gunaratna, 1993).

[128] This had been a seminal pre-election promise that was welcomed by his supporters who helped him to a formidable victory in 1989 (unp.lk, 2011; Gunaratna, 1993).

[129] According to Gunaratna, the Israeli support was a result of feeble US backing that unsettled India.

[130] the daughter of former Prime ministers S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and Sirima Bandaranaike.

[131] Do Votta (2007: 45) affirms the ambivalent view of the Christian West by Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists. In his words, they *"…admire its lifestyle and affluence even as they loath its promiscuousness and general latitudinarianism; they envy its economic and military power even as they decry its hypocritical foreign policies"*. Western hypocrisy and its insecurity about the alternative epistemology authentic Sinhalese Buddhism can furnish, assures to them that there is a conspiracy to undermine their faith. The best evidence is that since the 1950s, all *Theravada* Buddhist countries in the world (except Thailand) has been tangled in either wars or conflicts (N. de Silva, 2008). The manipulation of Thailand on the other hand, is fulfilled on cultural and economic lines.

[132] Victor Ivan [journalist (editor of *'Ravaya'*, a leftist newspaper)] and Sunanda Deshapriya [the former convener of the Free Media Movement of Sri Lanka, and the Media Spokesman for CPA (Center for Policy Alternatives) leader of movement of free media)] were considered the foremost 'king-makers' in Sri Lankan politics (lankarising.com, 2008).

[133] For Wickremeratne, the state's resorting to violence was not unique to Sri Lanka as most commentators attempt to portray.

[134] For N. de Silva (2006b) only Sinhalese Buddhists were asked to give up war and not its opposition.

[135] De Votta (2007: 1) states that *"[although] Buddhism, like other religions, historically has been associated with violent episodes, these do not compare with the carnage perpetrated by adherents of the world's other faiths – Especially, Asia's three monotheistic religions"*. For him, the explanation is the Buddhist policy of proselytizing vigorously and Buddhism, like other Indic faiths such as Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism, does not emphasize a monopoly on truth. A strong 'just war' doctrine exists within *Theravada* Buddhism, as an unavoidable evil (Premasiri, 2006: 82). The ground of justification of conflict is perpetuation of the doctrine. The Orientalist commentators such as Kapferer (1988), Sabaratnam (1997) and De Votta (2004b, 2007) all fail to understand the simple fact that it is because of this concept that Sri Lanka today has a Buddhist majority and some South East Asian countries are still *Theravada* Buddhists, but adherents of other religions

[136] namely, Minister Mangala Samaraweera and S. B. Dissanayaka, with the help of Mp-Deputy Minister Dilan Perera. It is perceived that the former two were hand-picked for the purpose. They rallied Bandaranaike successfully, to the post of Western province Chief Minister in no time, then to the positions of the SLFP head and Sri Lanka president respectively. The more senior members of the government such as Mahinda Rajapaksha, Mithreepala Sirisena and Rathnasiri Wickramanayaka are known to have refuted this movement. This pushed Samaraweera and Dissanayaka to the two most influential positions of the party (lankarising.com, 2008).

[137] The island-wide campaigns were named *'Sudu Nelums'* (white lotus) and *'Thavalama'* (caravan). A media mafia was established by Samaraweera, where Vasantha Raja was appointed as the head. Raja later fled Sri Lanka owing to accusations for having links with the LTTE (lankarising.com, 2008).

[138] Lankarising.com (2008) accuses Bandaranaike for selling-out the remaining governing asserts (following UPFA's victory against the UNP in 1994) to her politico-business partners, prior to the push for federalism.

[139] The LTTE was not prepared to settle for anything short of their desired separate state. Consequently, the peace process started in November 1994 and only lasted until April 1995.

[140] Formed with UNP and smaller collision parties.

[141] A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the two parties in February 2002 (De Votta, 2007: 77).

[142] This point could be confirmed by Norway's carrying out a reconnaissance survey and feasibility report for oil exploration with the Sri Lankan government. Their proposals were later turned down by Rajapaksha's government (According to a Ceylon Petroleum Corporation [CEYPETCO] source).

[143] It is commonly-accepted in Sri Lanka that NGO is a fifth column for the LTTE, based on their past records on supporting the organization. They have over the years, adopted the stance of directing its criticism at the Sri Lankan government and turning the blind-eye on LTTE activities. The acronym in fact, has been termed *"…one of the dirtiest four-letter words in the political vocabulary"* (Mahindapala in De Votta, 2007: 33-35). NGOs are regarded as Western (mainly American) funded instrument of neo-colonialism undermining the country's sovereignty, and locals, who have found working for them as lucrative ventures, as traitors (Lanka

Academic, 2005). De Votta (2007: 34) admits to the corrupt practices of the NGOs operating in Sri Lanka since the 2004 Tsunami. He confirms that the majority of international relief funds entrusted to NGOs (in the fear of state fraud) was misallocated and mismanaged for personal gain. This resulted in all UN agencies and NGOs not connected with the Red Cross from being banned, and compelling the working ones to register with the Sri Lanka Ministry of Defense (De Votta, 2007: 35).

[144] Norwegian reputation as an 'ex-Nazi Lutheran Viking nation' that marginalize its indigenous Sami population was doubted for their impartiality in the light of capitalist and neo-colonial intentions of theirs (Lanka web.com, 2004). Norway's partiality in Sudan's conflict was queried by Sri Lankans. When the LTTE was breaking the ceasefire between 2002 and 2006, Norwegians turned a blind eye. An Eelam state would have guaranteed them the monopoly of oil exploration rights in the North-Western seas. Consequently, they were labeled as villains (i.e. *"salmon eating busy bodies"*) (De Votta, 2007: 33-34).

[145] Within five years, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission found the LTTE guilty of 3,830 violations, while holding the Government responsible for only 351. Moreover, the LTTE took advantage of the Ceasefire Agreement to eliminate its Tamil opponents; namely former militant groups such as the EPDP, PLOTE and the Perumal-wing of the EPRLF. The TULF was, by the time, very much under LTTE influence after its last independent leader *Neelan Tiruchelvam* having been killed by the LTTE in 1999. In 2005, *Lakshman Kadirgamar*, President Kumaratunga's Foreign Minister, became LTTE's latest victim (peaceinsrilanka.org, 2011).

[146] LTTE Jaffna leadership's transience caused its Eastern commander to break-away and collaborate with the government. This weakened the LTTE immensely (De Votta, 2007: 78).

Karuna Amman's leaving of the organization to embrace democracy is attributed to discrimination suffered by Eastern leadership and cadres. He formed *Tamileela Makkal Viduthalaip Pulikal* (Tamil People's Liberation Tigers) (De Votta, 2007: 35).

[147] JVP who resisted this move warned of another uprising by the discontented Sinhalese youth, analogous to the ones in 1971 and 1988-90.

[148] Rajapaksha is considered a 'true son of the soil', in contrast to CBK, Ranil Wickramasinghe or even late J. R. Jayewardene, who are all considered as to have been excessively Anglicized (De Votta, 2007: 51).

[149] Rajapaksha became the UNPA leader after CBK's term ended in late 2005.

[150] JHU's precursor was *Sihala Urumaya* (SU), which was organized in April 2000 on the grounds that economic and political fortunes of the Sinhalese people were endangered. It was on the other hand, a reaction against the ethno-based political parties by the minorities and vowed to safeguard aspirations of the majority Sinhalese (The Island, 2000). Since its inception, JHU has been fiercely nationalist and anti-LTTE. Currently, it collaborates with UFPA government with a government minister and many MPs. Some of its MPs are Buddhist clergymen.

[151] The reign of CBK marked the most horrible loses for the Sri Lanka army, despite some initial gains through offensives such as '*Rivirasa*' that captured Jaffna town – the long-time strong-hold and de-facto capital of the LTTE.

Between 1994 and 2005, the LTTE carried out a number of brutal attacks. Out of the lot, attacks on Colombo International Airport, Petroleum Corporation storage facility in *Sapugaskanda* and Colombo Central Bank were the most brutal and destructive. Especially, attacking of *Sri Dalada Maligava* (Temple of the Tooth) in Kandy – the most venerable place of worship for Buddhists – was the most resented by the Sri Lankan Sinhalese Buddhist majority.

[152] The Sinhalese have a perfect precedent to justify their fear. In the 1977 elections, the Sinhalese partisanship created a winning UNP and a Tamil opposition. The TULF having swept into power in the North and East opportunistically declared a separate state in the regions called Eelam with Vardharajaperumal as the leader. This move was defeated in the parliament and the UNP having learned from its mistake, altered the constitution so that a similar situation would never arise. In October 2006, the North and East provinces that had been merged in 1987, was reversed by the Supreme Court that saw it as invalid (De Votta, 2007: 45). This was the initial step taken to continue the unitary structure of the nation.

[153] Rajapaksha government's proposal for power devolution was to re-divide the existing 25 districts into 30 and devolving power to these miniaturized units (De Votta, 2007: 51).

[154] The LTTE provocatively started attacking Sri Lankan army convoys. Before the Sri Lankan state took to war, 100 odd Sri Lankan army personnel were killed in claymore mine explosions.

[155] As the wikiLeaks revealed, David Milliband of the U.K., Hillary Clinton of the U.S., Spindeleger of Austria, Kouchner of France and Solheim of Norvey were well-known LTTE sympathisers (J. F. R. Perera, 2011: 41).

[156] The large Muslim population in the Eastern province undermine LTTE's goal for a separate state for Tamils. The uni-ethnic Eelam would expel them from the regions where they are the majority.

In 1990, Muslims were given 24 hours to leave Jaffna peninsula by the LTTE. Over the years, it had carried out numerous acts of hostilities towards Muslims in the East. De Votta (2007: 39-40) reveals the LTTE's

ethnic cleansing ambitions by positing their expulsion of Sinhalese and Muslims from the Northern and Eastern (especially *Batticaloa*) provinces.

[157] Godfrey Wilson talked about 'detribalization', Philip Mayer in his South African study, stressed on 'trade unions transcend tribes' concept, and Parks, described the 'melting-pot' process.

[158] For Weber, in modern, individualistic and bureaucratic societies, ethnic allegiance would not prove profitable.

[159] In Friedman's view, ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogenization are not two arguments or two opposing views of what is happening in the world today, but two constitutive trends of global reality (Eriksen, 2002: 9).

[160] According to Marxist and liberal social theories of modernization, nationalism should not have been viable in an 'individualist' and 'post-enlightenment' world. In these theories, nationalism is primordial loyalties' and solidarity based on common origin and culture (Eriksen, 2002: 99).

[161] As Eriksen (2002) points out, Mauritius too has its share of inter-ethnic strife underneath.

[162] Eriksen elaborates on how Norwegian national identity was constructed by its urban middle-class in the 19th century. In their search for 'authentic Norwegian culture', they had to travel to remote valleys to borrow dialects as national language; folk tales as legend, customs as traditions etc.

[163] Architectural forms hence have not remained stagnant as a 'pure' culture anywhere; as there have always been hybrids of indigenous and imported synthesis completing creative processes of cross-fertilizations. They have been diffused, hybridized and in the process, synergized. Hence, each type in its form at a given time is a potential model for even more similar transformations.

[164] *"From a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded ... Some of these meanings and practices are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture"* (Williams, 1980: 39).

[165] such as religious, symbolic, biological and environmental etc.

[166] In every society which is complex, there is a number of *'levels of culture'* to be found, and it is utmost vital for the health of the society that these levels of culture inter-relate to each other. Yet, the manner and the taste of society as a whole should be influenced by the society's *'highest culture'* (Bottomore, 1993: 116).

[167] The authentic meaning behind *folk tradition* could be discerned as, *"…the world view writs small, the 'ideal' environment of a people expressed in buildings and settlements, with no designer, artist, or architect with an axe to grind (although to what extent the designer is really a form giver is a moot point)"*. Folk design tradition represents itself in the form of vernacular; which again could be classified as primitive and other forms, where the latter could again be divided into pre-industrial and industrial (Rapoport, 1969: 2).

[168] It is believed that the basic human species evolved 5 million years ago in Africa and migrated out 2 million years ago (Samaratunga, 2011: 24). The oldest remains of this particular species found in Sri Lanka were found in *Iranamadu* (125,000 years old) (Perera, 2010: 7-8). Although Deraniyagala (1992) posits evidence to affirm human existence in the island as far as the Middle Paleolithic age (between 74,000-125,000 years ago), the oldest piece of evidence for human habitation in the form of architecture can be found within the Mesolithic age (40,000 years ago) (Samaratunga, 2011: 24). *Homo-sapiens Balangodensis* – the renowned *Balangoda Manawaya* (over 6000 years ago) – for instance, dwelled in rock caves (Attanayake, 2006: 350). When older findings in fact, came from *Fa Hien Gala* cave in *Kalutara* (34,000 years old), *Batadomba Lena* (cave) in *Kuruwita* (28,000), *Kithulgala Beli lena* (cave) in *Kithulgala* (27,000), the most archaic settlement was found at *Bundala* (125,000) on the south-eastern coast of the island (Deraniyagala in Samaratunga, 2011: 24).

[169] Mendis (2011: 1) points out to excavations by Deraniyagala inside *Kithulgala Beli Lena* (a primeval cave located in *Kithulgala*, in the *Ratnapura* District) that revealed a foundation of a house made of rough stone. This was discovered within a layer of soil that was dated to be 13,000 years old.

[170] Evidence could be found from *Ranchamadama* (from 1359 B.C.), *Anuradhapura* (1000 B.C.), *Ali Gala* (1000. B.C.), *Ibbankatuwa* (700 B. C.), *Yapahuwa* (700 B. C.), *Kadurugoda* [*Kantharodei*] (350 B.C.) and *Tissamaharama* (350. B.C.).

[171] Coningham (in Mendis, 2011: 1) discovered in his Structural Period findings from the excavation ASW 2 circular house plans, post holes used to erect columns and wattle and daub construction. Consequently, it was inferred that the houses might have had compacted clay floors finished with a layer of cow dung and conical roofs. Coningham further discovered a remnant of a clay pot that contained an engraving of a house plan. This is a vital piece of evidence that further clarified the foregoing suggestion.

[172] The idea of fortification was brought down from early villages, where it had become a necessity to protect the settlement from human invaders and wild animals. The city centre was occupied by the leader

(later came to be known as the 'king'), his immediate family, various ministers and artisans (Ashley de Vos, 1977: 42).

[173] At times, people engaging in different functions were to be found in the same village. Some villages owing to their locations satisfied certain specialist functions. At a convenient point between various villages, market villages called *'niyamgam'* were developed as first commercial centres (Ashley de Vos, 1977: 42)

[174] Ashley De Vos (1977: 39-40) points out that the earliest Sinhalese settlements called *'gamas'* were located in areas where water was readily available; the river basins. They later underwent a natural expansion inland in various directions, where present-day northern, western and north-central provinces saw the first inland colonizations. The lack of water and seasonal availability in these areas compelled them to conserve water. Their constant experimentations led to first inland tanks. With the combination of a series of *gamas* to form a self-sufficient communities, the first foundation for *'nagara'* (towns) were made. These subsequently developed into cities or *'Puras'*. The classical cities of *Anuradhapura* and *Pollonnaruwa* would have been developed from such tank-fed settlements.

[175] He adduces timber-based domestic architecture of Burma and India from the period as examples. In India, even much later, the same trend was continued.

[176] According to Robson et al (1984: 17), there is no archaeological remains from the classical period to show how the majority of ordinary people lived. Moreover, the historic records such as *Mahavamsa* (Geiger, 1964) that make constant reference to building matters, mentions nothing about the houses of the common man.

[177] Dayaratne reiterates that most activities in the village in fact, are communal, and make use of shared resources.

[178] As Ashley De Vos (1977: 61) laments, *"[today,] due to infiltration of vested knowledge, industrialization, urbanization and education mostly based on foreign norms, are breaking down the rural communities. In the past, the traditional rural house influenced most buildings. Today, however, the cycle is reversed. The village is copying the cities. Building practices that are suitable to the country are being substituted in the name of progress for new imported styles and methods. It is a pity that this wealth of traditional experience has not so far been utilized in our contemporary architecture to produce environments suitable to our country".*

[179] As Ashley De Vos (1977: 41) explained, *"[due] to lack of detailed information, I shall not venture to spell out what these dwellings were like prior to the Kandyan period, but judging from the various writings of the Kandyan period a reasonably clear picture could be acquired".*

[180] For Ashley De Vos (1977: 41), the ancient architectural legacy of the island is twofold; the public (civic) and private realms. The latter could be sub-divided into buildings for the king with palaces and buildings of pleasure, as well as monastic complexes for the *Sangha* and other monuments for the faith. While the kings commissioned, populace contributed by direct labor or way of taxes. The former too could be sub-divided into dwellings of the ordinary folk and those of elites (individuals who were given elevated status for their special standing or relationship with the king, in Ashley De Vos's own definition).

[181] One of such *Slokas* read, *"O master builders, this is an incomparable book, written in the common tongue, which if any one regard with the eye of wisdom, were for the bettering of this world…How to build houses aright, what site and month are meet, how beams should be cut, to explain I shall unfold the virtues of the Mayamatha" (*in Robson et al., 1984: 18). Robson et al (1984: 18) in fact, attribute above to *"a sort of latter-day Sinhalese Vitruvius!".*

[182] According to 1981 estimate, Colombo municipality (considered here to correspond to combined districts of Colombo, *Gampaha* and *Kalutara*) of 36Km$^2$ had an approximate population of 650,000.

[183] However, there is a general consensus on what these elements comprised, and some of them can be seen in almost every village despite centuries of modern Western influence (Dayaratne, 2010: 384).

[184] They argue that power has now shifted from the landlord class, village elders, teachers, village physician and priest to traders and politicians (Dayaratne, 2010: 384). Dayaratne (2010: 394) in fact, argues that the 1971 JVP youth insurrection (known as the 'JVP uprising') politicized the country side.

[185] *"Unsurprisingly, both monks and peasants have been changed by these factors. The religious orientation of the peasants, and hence the relationship between them and the monks, has diminished, and the sacred and profane places have become somewhat alienated from one other. No longer is the temple the most significant central space of the village, nor does the village derive its system of values and perceptions from association with the temple alone"* (Dayaratne, 2010: 393).

[186] The disassociation that has developed between the temple and the peasants is a seminal change Dayaratne observes, in relation to villages of the contemporary day. As he elaborates, respect for the sanctity of the temple has diminished.

# Chapter 2   Orientations

This orientation chapter begins with a critical discussion on the present state of knowledge pertaining to various topics undertaken in the thesis. By weighing up the existing body of material, their problems and gaps are revealed. Then a discussion on the methodologies follows, uncovering the adopted approach of the research for collection of data (elaborating on the fieldwork), their analysis as well as interpretation. The remedial measures taken for problems and gaps identified in relation to the materials and methodologies are then discussed to conclude the chapter with the original contributions made by the research.

## 2.1 Present State of Knowledge in the Field

### Introduction

This section has looked into various informative and theoretical material that contribute to the research at different levels, which are presented in the order of issues tackled in the thesis structure. Within this process, the advice of Phillips and Pugh (1994) on successfully completing a PhD is carefully considered.

### Inimitable Sri Lankan History

The common error by historians of comparing and equating Lankan history to that of the sub-continent is attempted to be rectified here. The unique circumstance of the island's history that makes it inimitable is mainly based on its insularity, where Law (2005) and Jones (1998) engage in discursive discussions of it in relation to similar situations such as Britain. The great historic chronicles [such as *Mahavansa* (in Mahavamsa.org, 2007), Thupawansaya (by Hettiarachchi, ed, 1947) and *Deepawanshaya* (by Gnanawimala, 1956)], the written material by eminent historians [such as P. E. Pieris (1992)], Paranavithana (1986, 2001), Coomaraswamy (1956), and K. M. de Silva (1981), renowned archaeologists [such as  Deraniyagala (1992, 1998) and Somadeva (1998)], political commentators [such as Gunarathna (1993)], and architectural historians [such as Lewcock, Sansoni and  Senanayake (2002), Nimal de Silva (1990, 1996b)  and Ashley De Vos (1977)], all confirm the uniqueness of the Sinhalese Buddhist history.[1] N. de Silva in particular, with his books (1991, 1996, 1997, 2006a), lectures (2003, 2006b, 2007, 2008a/b, 2009) and newspaper articles (1998a/b/c, 2003, 2008) makes a conspicuous contribution in terms of a new view on Sri Lankan history, unprejudiced by Orientalism.[2] The publications by

*Chinthana Parshadhaya* (found in kalaya.org, 2006), are instrumental as a new school of thought for the historical narration undertaken.[3]

Establishing the peculiarity of Sri Lankan history underlies the repudiation of superficial historic claims by certain racist/separatist elements and their sympathizing orientalists. Apart from the body of literature already mentioned, the historic findings by Sastri (1929, 1938, 1939, 1956, 1956, 1958, 1962, 1995); linguistic findings by Bernard (1997) and Himendroff (in Jayasumana, 2009); and scientific observations by Winter (1979) are vital in debunking such claims, and substantiating the extant facts. On the other hand, the Sinhalese culture's bond with the *Theravada* Buddhist cannon is cemented by Dissanayake (2009), J. F. R. Perera (2011), Valpola Rahula (in De Votta, 2007), Jayawardhana (1987) and N. de Silva (2005; 2007; 2008).[4]

## Pertinence of Nationalist Theories to the Island

Meanwhile, when Wallerstein (1989, 1990), Gellner (1964, 1983), Gellner and Anderson (in Eriksen, 2002), Aiyar (2004), Lerskey (1968), Renan (1996), Huntington (1996), Banks (1996), Hobsbawn (1990) and Eriksen (2002), all posit material for the study of nationalism and its constituting principles largely from a Western viewpoint, the literature by Eastern scholars such as Gamage (2009), Uyangoda (2011), and Chattergee (1985, 1992) express more apposite views for the Sri Lankan scenario.[5] Moreover, to comprehend the notions of nationalism in a world-wide context, the works of Anderson (1991), Nairn (1977) and Hagel (1910) are useful.

## Island's Nationalist Phases

In the process of exploring the two prominent and opposing nationalisms in the island (i.e. Sinhalese and Tamil), their underlying causes and claims of historic legitimacy, Michael Roberts (1995, 2004a/b), Jayasumana (2009) and especially, N. de Silva (2006b, 2007, 2008a/b, 2009) are invaluable.[6] This ensemble, together with the aforementioned faction establishing the uniqueness of the island's history, address pre-colonial nationalism. The British colonial period nationalisms by the Ceylonese on the other hand, are tackled by K. M. de Silva (1981), Malalgoda (1976), Tambiah (1992), Ivan (2006), V. K. Jayawardena (1972, 1983) and K. T. Silva (2005).[7] H. R. Perera (2007) in fact, narrates Buddhism's history from its advent, to the subsequent consolidations. In political and socio-cultural terms, the post-independence period nationalism is predominantly tackled by K. T. Silva (2005); and to a lesser extent, by Obeyesekere (1970), Jayawardhana (1987), Matthews (1978) and Jupp (1978). Perera (1994), Robson (2004), Pieris (2007) and Jayewardene (1984) alternatively, address nationalism in architectural terms.

On the other hand, K. T. Silva (2005), Gunawardane (1984), Gunarathna (1993), Kemper (1991), Matthews (1978), Wickremeratne (2006), Premasiri (2006), Jayewardene (1984), Roberts (2004a/b) and Tambiah (1992) adduce evidence to substantiate that the 1977-94 stint of the UNP government was also underscored by nationalism.[8] Perera (1994), Jayewardene (1984), Robson (2004) and Vale (1992) in fact, provide architectural substantiations. Yew (2002) and Bottomore (1993) in this backdrop, posit to the neo-colonial policies of the West that has consequently intensified the island's nationalist sentiments; leading to exacerbated resentments between its polarised major ethnicities. A number of selected websites on the other hand, are useful sources that furnish current issues that are vital indicators of the lowest ebb of nationalism in the first half of the 1990s.[9]

**Culture, Tradition, Identity and the Built Form**

Rapoport (1969) establishes the criticality of culture over numerous physical factors in the making of the domestic form.[10] Lim (1998), Lim and Beng (1998) and Williams (1980) contribute on the other hand, to the establishment of relationships between culture and architectural traditions (i.e. folk, vernacular). Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) based on these concepts, discuss the continuation of 'selective traditions' that in fact, result in 'architectural identity'. Assimilating such notions, Rapoport (1969) differentiates between 'grand design tradition' and 'folk design tradition', which appeal respectively to 'high' and 'other levels' of cultures of a given society [which is a convincing cultural division by Bottomore (1993)]. Wijetunge (2012b) relevantly draws these connections with local examples. The notions of Rybczynski (1988) on the concept of 'home', its development in the West and elite contiguity are complimented by Evans's (2003) revealing of the essential traits of pre-modern and modern European elite domestic buildings.

**Extant Domestic Architectural Legacy of Sri Lanka**

Most of the publications that undertake the island's architectural legacy belong to the 'coffee-table' category and de Costa's (2011) comprehensive coverage of pre-modern Royal cities is a good example. While Deraniyagala (1992, 2010), Coningham (1999), Ashley De Vos (1977) and Mendis (2011), all narrate the domestic architectural history of the island from the ancient times, Paranavithana (2001) remains the only source that has specifically discussed of the practices during the classical times. On the other hand, Attanayaka (2006), Nimal de Silva (1987, 1996b, 2010), A. Perera (1991), Lewcock et al (2002) and especially, Wijetunge (2011b; 2012a) contribute to the differentiation between grand and folk design traditions; and elite and non-elite domestic architectures.[11] In this light, Ashley De Vos (1977; 2010) makes seminal observations in relation to the evolution of the island's domestic realm, where Robson

et al (1984) posits statistical figures vital for the substantiation of certain key arguments made.[12]  It is this glimpse of the island's architectural legacy that enables the drawing of a line between the background and foreground concerning the research. The pertinence of the foreground discussed next is complimented by Kurukulasuriya (2007), Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (2011), Ratnavibhushana (2009), Lewcock et al (2002), Robson (2004, 2007) and Jayewardene (1984), in relation to their discussions of involvements of architects (and engineers) in the profession.

In terms of elite domestic architecture articulating contextual changes & its significance within Sri Lanka, Robson et al (1984), Robson (2004, 2007), S. Jayewardene (1984), Samarasekera (1977), Perera (1994), Ashley De Vos (1978, 2010) and Peiris (2007) who base their observations on statistical figures are instrumental. Moreover, Dissanayaka (1993) and Dayaratne (2010) provide useful evidence for tangible/intangible changes of traditional settings after open economy. The cannons of Rybczynski (1988) and Rapoport (1969) already addressed, are vital for confirming that domestic architecture of the elite is significant in the Sri Lankan context

**Elitism; the Western and Eastern Counterparts**

The literature addressing the condition of elitism, which provides the key theoretical thrust of this research, is examined next. Bottomore (1993) is the foremost figure this study relies on theoretically, as he condenses into his thesis, canons by many prominent theorists of elitism. The narration of Western elitism from the pre-modern times is made possible by the findings of many – Aristotle (in Bottomore, 1993), Bottomore (1993), Wittforgel (1957) and Schumpeter (1942). The modern condition is revealed mainly by Bottomore (1993) and Horton (1964),[13] to confirm the time periods and their historical changes. In terms of the contemporary state, K. T. Silva (2005) and N. de Silva (2008) are imperative. It is K. T. Silva (2005) who explores the objective approach by Marx (1844)/Marx and Engels (1998), as against the subjective approach by Max Weber (2010), to reveal that the extant elitist theories are reliant on the former. N. de Silva (1993, 2008), Bottomore (1993), Kolabinska (1912), Michels (1911), Aron (1950), Comte (in Knowles,2008) and K. T. Silva (2005), all engage in a critical discussion of the Marxist discourse to determine that at the heart of elitist theories lies a Marxist repudiation.[14]  Further, the internet sources that introduce briefly, the Marxist discourse are complementary sources for this inquiry.[15] On the other hand, Bottomore (1993) determines that homage to democracy is also at the centre of elitist theories; based on the arguments by Mosca (1939), Friedrich (1950), Schumpeter (1942), Mannheim (1956), Aron (1950) and Williams (1958). Then, Bottomore (1993) directs his attention to respective elitist theories. The notion of

'Power Elites' by Mills (1956) is discussed with complimentary arguments by Friedrich (1950) and Sampson (1962). 'Political Elites' is introduced by Lasswell, Lerner and Rothwell (1952) and Aron (1950). On the other hand, the theory of 'Intellectuals, managers, and bureaucrats' is revealed by Bottomore (1993) himself with contributions by many others.[16] Furthermore, 'political-class' and the 'governing-elite' is derived by Bottomore (1993) in association with Pareto (1896-7, 1963) and Mosca (1939). This combined-doctrine takes into account the idea of 'middle-class'; a notion that K. T. Silva (2005) and V. K. Jayawardena (1972) both acknowledge. Moreover, the ideas on elite circulation by Pareto (1915-19) and Kolabinska (1912) are also incorporated into this.[17] It is notable that while the foregoing elitist theories all have a critical undertone, Henry (1994) remains to be the only extant defence of it.[18]

In terms of the Eastern situation, in the absence of theories, the only means of conceiving its elitism is to dwell into historical means of social stratification. In order to do so, the Indian princely states examined by Dwiwedi (2008), *Maharajas* by Robinson (1988) and Ottoman Turkey by Greenblatt (2002) – as comparable pre-modern Asiatic contexts to the pre-colonial situation in Ceylon – are constructive. The study however, selects only the most relevant sub-continental context[19] and in the process, one has to be weary of orientalist viewpoints such as of Wittfogel (1957). The orientalist prejudice is tackled by relying on historical and anthropological works by sub-continental and especially, Sri Lankan scholars. In terms of sub-continental history, Bottomore (1993), Barber (1968), Ellawala (2002), K. T. Silva (2005), Roberts (1995), Obeyesekere (2007), Cohen (in Roberts, 1995), Louis Dumont (in Roberts, 1995) and Srinivas (in Roberts, 1995), all contribute to the narration; and in the process, determine cultural-determinacy of the system.

In relation to pre-Buddhist Sri Lanka, the *Mahavansa* (in Mahawamsa.org, 2011), Obeyesekere (2007), Ellawala (2002), Ariyapala (1962), Karunathilake (1990), K. T. Silva (2005), Deraniyagala (2010), Roberts (1995, 2004a) and N. de Silva (sources elaborated earlier) are the foremost historical sources. With regard to the Buddhist period, Ellawala (2002), Obeyesekera (2007), Roberts (1995), Ashley De Vos (1977) and Paranavithana (2001) are imperative. The Dravidian influence on Buddhist Sri Lanka is narrated by Paranavithana (1962), Gunaratna (1993), N. de Silva (2006b), Obeyesekera (2007), Seneviratna (2008), N. Gunasinghe (1975), Leach (1959/61), Deraniagala (2010) and Nimal de Silva (2010), where it is then extended into the 'up' and 'low' country divisions.[20] On the other hand, N. de Silva (2006a), Nimal de Silva (2010), Perera (1994), Dayaratne (2010), V. J. Baker (in Dayaratne, 2010), Morrison and Moore (1979), K. Jayawardena (2009), Robson (2004), and Jayasumana (2009), all furnish evidence to confirm that Sinhalese were undeterred by economics, but cultural reasons.

The views by K. T. Silva (2005), Béteille (in K. T. Silva, 2005) and Ryan (2004) in particular, are instrumental to conceive the operations of caste and class system in the colonial periods. This is vital for making a framework for envisaging social stratifications. In this backdrop, Obeyesekere (2007), K. T. Silva (2005), Roberts (1995) and K. Jayawardena (2007) discuss the role of the perpetuating caste system in the island under colonialism.  K. T. Silva (2005) in fact, is vital for deriving a criterion to assess the modern situation in question. One of the expected outcomes is to determine by comparison, that the historical social stratification of the island is a culturally-determinant one, as against its Western counterpart often bracketed to economics.[21]

**Pre-colonial and Colonial Periods**

The Kandyan situation is examined based on literature – historical, anthropological and sociological – ranging from Coomaraswami (1956), Seneviratna (2008), Ralph Peiris (1956, 1977, 1986), K. M. de Silva (1981), K. T. Silva, Perera (1994), A. Perera (1991), Madugalle (2005), Roberts (1995), Hemapala (2004), Thalawatta (2009), de Costa (2011), Dayaratne (2010) to Wijetunge (2011b/2012a). The foregoing literature enables a closer understanding about the conditions of the period. On the other hand, the lectures by N. de Silva (2006b, 2008) and the interviews with Nimal de Silva (2009, 2010), de Saram (2010) and Ashley De Vos (2010) are also imperative to fill-in the gaps of Kandyan political, economic and socio-cultural spheres, and thus, elitism.[22] Moreover, orientalist views of colonial period commentators such as Cordiner (1807), Cave (1894, 1908), Heydt (in Lewcock et al., 2002) and Davy (1969) are utilised to extract vital information, along with the more recent works by Mills (1964) and Pakeman (1970). In this light, the observations by Lewcock et al (2002), A. Perera (1984), Robson et al (1984), Attanayake (2006), Munasinghe (1992), Jayewardene (1984), Nimal de Silva (1990), V. Basnayaka (1980) and Wijetunge (2011b/2012a), are useful to gain an insight on Kandyan elite domestic architecture.  Additionally, unpublished B.Sc. dissertations by Hewage (2005), Jayarathne (2006), Bandara (2009) and especially, A. Perera (1991) are supportive for this exercise.

On the other hand, when N. de Silva (2006a, 2008), Kohen and Kennedy (2000), Giddens (in Knowles, 2008) and Knowles (2008) discuss implications of modernity,[23] Kennedy (1989), Arrighi (1990) and Perera (1994) reveal how the colonial encounter happened and the West-European construction of the 'inter-state system'. Within the 'core-periphery' perspective introduced by Wallerstein (1988), Arrighi (1990) and Perera (1994), the Portuguese and Dutch situations are skimmed-through as a provision to the hegemonic British colonial situation that Arrighi, Terence, and

Wallerstein (1989) discuss. The British colonial period as the main comparison to the Kandyan counterpart is then discussed after a short introduction of Portuguese and Dutch architectures for which, Lewcocok et al (2002), Wijesuriya (1996), Nimal de Silva (1996a), de Soysa (1996), Navarathna and Amarasekara (1996) are crucial.[24] Apart from the unpublished dissertations by Hasanthi (2004) and Hewawasam (2005), J. P. Lewis (1908) and Fonseka (1978) on the other hand, are useful non-expert opinions.[25]

While Lawson's (1998) discursive account on the East India Company is a useful advent, C. R. de Silva (1995) is an accurate account of the early years of British occupation. The core-oriented political construction of Ceylon by the British is undertaken by Perera (1994), Wallerstein (1989) as well as Kennedy (1989) and its unification by Knighton (in Perera, 1994), Mills (1966) and Gunder Frank (1979). The centralization of Ceylon is studied by Perera (1994) with the theoretical backing by Chandra (1980) and historical evidence by Pakeman (1971) along with K. Jayawardena (2007). The political evolution is tackled again by Perera (1994); with the aid of K. Jayawardena (2009), Obeyesekere (2007), Mills (1965), Pakeman (1970), G. L. Mendis (1952), Tennent (1859), K. M. de Silva (1989), Panday (1980), Tinker (1966), Weerawardana (1951), Roberts (1995), Halcli and Webster (2000), Ivan (2006) and N. de Silva (2000). Perera (1994), Farmer (1957), Pakeman (1970), Tennent (1859), Mills (1965), Ferguson (1903), Gunder Frank (in Perera, 1994), Bandarage (1983), Pim (1946) and K. M. de Silva (1981) on the other hand, all contribute to the idea of a newly-constructed economic-centrality for Ceylon. Then, the Ceylonese interaction in the new system is taken up by Mills (1965), Roberts (1995), K. Jayawardena (2007), K. M. de Silva (1981), Wright (2005), Perera (1994) and K. T. Silva (2005).

Perera (1994), Jayasuriya (2000), Wijesuriya (1996), Nimal de Silva (1996a), Munasinghe (1992), K. Jayawardena (2009) and Roberts (1995) all assess Portuguese and Dutch modernity in Ceylon, with the statistics coming from Ramerini (in lankalibrary.com, 2011) and colonialvoyage.com (2011), as well as an important report by the Department of Census and Statistics (1976). The detailed historical narrations of P. E. Pieris (1992), Anthonisz (1929), Boxter (1969), Brohier (1957) and Amarasinghe (1997) are useful in this endeavour. Conversely, British modernity is assessed by Perera (1994), where N. de Silva (2005, 2006a, 2008), Goonatilake (1984, 1998) and Franz Fanon (in Perera, 1994) examine the epistemological change that accompanied the political and economic transformations. The creation of an urban-oriented intelligentsia is then to be tackled with inputs from Corbridge (1993), Mills (1965), Mendis (1946) and Perera (1994).[26] Within the British modernisation program, Perera (1994), Singer (1964), Tambiah (1958, 1986) and Tinker (1989)

assess its first beneficiaries. The cultural transformation of Lankans to Ceylonese and its articulations are   studied based on the discussions by Perera (1994), Ferguson (1903), Boxer (1969), Peebles (1981), Duncan (1989), Weaver (1988) and Wilson (1959). When Said (2004) discusses the humanist facet of colonialism, K. Jayawardena (2009) adduces examples from the British colonial period.  The above findings pave way to an economically-based social stratification, confirmed by V. K. Jayawardena (1972, 1983), with contributions by Roberts (1995) and K. T. Silva (2005).[27]

Descriptions by Wright (2005) and Brohier (in Hevavasam, 2002) are useful for comprehending this situation and  they also make way for studying of evolving British elite domestic architecture in Ceylon. Its genesis is taken up with a discussion of prior Portuguese and Dutch influences with contributions by Perera (1994), Lewcock et al (2002), Ashley De Vos (1996, 2010), Fonseka (1978), Lewis (1902), Wijesuriya (1996), Nimal de Silva (1996a), de Soysa (1996), and Gerlach (in peter.gerlach.eu, 2011). Rapoport (1969) and King (1984) contribute to this discussion theoretically. The assemblage of interviews already revealed in relation to the Kandyan realm is also useful in this section.

The above body of knowledge is compared with the pre-modern situations with the compliments of Evans (2003) who discusses the pre-modern/modern European spatial configurations; and Rybczynski (1988), the notion of home. Pallasmaa (2005) on the other hand, compare the sensory properties of traditional and modern architectures.

The phases evident in British architecture is exposed by relying on a corpus of commentators – Nimal de Silva (1996a), Ashley De Vos (1996), de Saram (2010), Metcalf (1984), Percival (1990), Lewis (1902), Jayewardene (1984), Cave (1908), Navarathne and Amarasekera (1996), Pieirs (2007), Robson (2004) and King (1984, 1976) – while Lewcock et al (2002), Perera (1994) and Wijetunge (2005, 2007, 2011b) are imperative. The unpublished B.Sc. dissertations by Wanigasingha (1997), Jayasekara (2009), Somiruwan (2007), Sanjeewa (1997), Hitibandara (2007) and Jagoda (2007) are also useful in this endeavour. While Bhabha (1983) contributes to this discussion theoretically, Ashton and Hudson (1997), French (1998), Parry (1998) supply useful information about global events that had implications on colonial architecture. This body of materials particularly, feeds the catalogue assembled.  On the other hand, other extant materials that have undertaken colonial architectures in a general sort of way – Daswatte and Sansoni (2006),[28] Alwis (2000),[29] S. Jayewardene-Pillai (2006)[30], Scriver and Prakash (2007)[31] – have also been acknowledged as secondary sources without direct referencing. The foregoing findings and discussions,

allow a typological structuring of the Kandyan/Dutch/British period elite house in Ceylon (based on elite patronage).

## Post-independence Period

Ceylon's Independence as a modern 'nation state' is assessed using the material by Perera (1994), Clapham (1985), Young (2003) and Gellner (1992). Within this context, the Perpetuation of Western hegemony is evaluated by Perera (1994), Jackson (1990) and Arrighi (in Perera, 1994). Then, Perera (1994) turns his attention to Ceylon's new place in a fragmented world, with the assistance of Karunadasa (1999).[32] This leads to addressing of State of Architecture in independent Ceylon, which begins with a peak into the core-oriented architectural education of the time, discussed by Goonathilaka (1984, 1998) and Perera (1994), in the presence of historical evidence furnished by Mendis (1946) and N. de Silva (2008). The resulting implications of Western architecture education is discussed by Evenson (1989) and Perera (1994), with compliments of official websites of RIBA (architecture.com, 2011) and SLIA (slia.org,2011). Architectural Training and the state of Profession at the outset is discussed by slia.org (2011), along with Pieris (2007), Jayewardene (1984), Perera (1994) and Robson (2004). The foregoing discussions lead to the addressing of British architectural residues at independence, which is undertaken by the same lot and also Gonsal (in Pieris, 2007). In this backdrop, Jayewardene (1984) reveals the condition of the architect and the profession in Ceylon with supporting material coming from Wynne-Jones (1956), Plesner (1965-1966), Robson (2004), Munasinghe (1956), Gunasekara (2011, 2012), Aditya (1983), Jayewardene (1984) and Weerasinghe (1982); as well as by the useful links of uda.lk and slia.lk (2011). This will be followed by fresh challenges to the profession, discussed by Robson et al (1984), Ashley De Vos (2010), Plesner (1986) and Jayewardene (1984).

The stimuli received by the Ceylonese architects on the other hand, are discussed by Jayewardene (1984), where the growth of arts historiography and parallel movements[33] are in fact, undertaken by a corpus of materials ranging from, K. M. de Silva (1981), Gunasinghe (1956), Manjusri (1977), Dhanapala (1962), Dharmadasa and Halpe (1979), Weragama (1994), Uswatte Arachchi (in K.T. Silva, 2005), Goonatilleke (1971), C. Perera (2012), Salgado (1998, 2012), R. Obeyesekere (2012), Edirisinghe (2010), Dharmasiri (2001, 2009, 2010), to Bandaranayake (1974), with the aid of some key websites such as  artsrilanka.org, trulysrilanka.com (2012), kalaava.com (2012), martinwickramasinghe.org (2011) and lesternsumithra.com (2011) etc.  The direct effect of the foregoing on architecture on the other hand, is acknowledged by Pieris (2007), Perera (1994) and Jayatillaka (2011). Within the theoretical undertaking by Naipaul (1990) who assesses the postcolonial secular state and its precariousness, Pieris (2007) adduces evidence for failed projects from the

region and Wijetunge (2010), the possible underlying reasons. The limited Asian success on the other hand, is discussed by Pieris (2007), where Jayewardene (1984) illustrates the first modern examples from Ceylon. Robson (2004) and Jayewardene (1984) also contribute with more examples. Perera (1994) and Evenson (1989) discuss the Indian examples, while the Brazilian projects are taken up by Holston (1989).

In addressing the question of realizing a national identity through architecture, Piotrowsky (2009) explores the phenomenon theoretically, with the help of literature by Ruskin (1989, 2008). Bottomore (1993) on the other hand, criticises the idea. When Perera (1994) discusses its implications for the Sinhalese [substantiated by the historic evidence of Paranavithana (2001), K. M. Silva (1981), N. de Silva (2000) etc., as well as for the body of similar literature taken up before]; Pieris (2007) and Jayewardene (1984) direct their reproach at it.[34] The first nationalist articulations in Ceylon's architecture are discussed by Jayewardene (1984), Pieris (2007), Perera (1994), Robson (2004), Tennekoon (2008), Wynne-Jones (1956) and Samarasekera (1981). The justification for the phenomenon was supplied by the historical and architectural explorations (formed as a repository of history) by Coomaraswamy (1908) [and later Bandaranayake (1974)].[35] Potential Contribution by elite domestic architecture is assessed in the backdrop of a fresh social stratification examined by K. T. Silva (2005), with the compliments of V. K. Jayawardena (1972), Gunawardene (1984) and Pieris (2007).

In studying of the Domestic Architectural discourses during the post-independence period and Practitioners' Patronages, there is a scarcity of written materials. Consequently, the study relies on primary material collected through informal interviews elaborated under Appendix 3. When Sarath Chandra (1956) and B. Bawa (1985) establish a tussle between the elite and non-elite, Jayewardene (1984) posits the elite affinity to architecture of the time. In terms of architects who catered to elites, the information furnished by Peiris (2007), S. Jayewardene (1984) and Robson (2004, 2007) are vital. In terms of addressing Tropical-modernists, writings of Fry and Drew (1982), S. Jayewardene (1984) and Tennakoon (2008) are imperative. When Hollamby (1962) introduces Andrew Boyd,[36] slia.lk (2011), Kurukulasuriya (2007), de Silva, Siriwardene and Ashley De Vos (2004) and Robson (2004) reveal of other prominent figures. Along with the information supplied by Rajakaruna (2011) and [a]rchitectonics.lk (2011), interviews with Valentine Gunasekara (2011, 2012) in association with the afore-mentioned primary information are vital in differentiating between the generations of local architects after independence.

On the other hand, the regionalists are introduced by Pieris (2007), Tzonis and Lefaivre (2001), Jayewardene (1984), Robson (2004) and Plesner (1959).[37] In terms of Architects who catered to the political-class/middle-class, Pieris (2007) remains the only available source, thus, making the first-hand information by Gunasekara (2011, 2012), de Saram (2010), Peramune (2010) and Jayatillaka (2011) imperative. In terms of non-architects who catered to the middle-class, Perera (1994), Pieris (2007) and Wijetunge (2011a/c) supply key information, and in terms of the alternative stylistic orientations, they are still valuable. In the discussion of the Anonymous American Style, they, in association with Budds (2011) who introduces parallel American phenomenon and Ssenyonga (2006) who takes up Americanisation are instrumental. In terms of post neo-liberalism's architecture, Widyalankara (2011), Tillakaratne (1983) and Jayewardene (1984) are the only available sources, where Dayaratne (2010) and Weragama (1994) establish its possible underlying factors. While Pieris (2007), Jayewardene (1984) and Tillakaratne (1983) conduct a brief discussion about prominent figures of the discourse, Kalubovila's (2011) primary information is critical.

**Bawa and Gunasekara**

As the two most prominent architectural approaches taken by the post-independence period architects, Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara are selected. On the former, there is a considerable body of literature; both by academics and non-academics alike. While the non-academic materials in the form of coffee-table books, non-refereed magazine articles and newspaper articles are plenty, serious academic materials in the form of PhD theses, academic papers and conference proceedings are rare. However, there have been a number of exhibitions of Bawa's work that literature has covered.  A comprehensive assemblage coving materials to date on him and his works is put together in Appendix 4. On Gunasekara conversely, only a handful of literature remains in both academic and non-academic spheres and there have not been any exhibitions of his work. A list is also assembled under Appendix 5 on his behalf. In addition, Perera (1994) and V. de Silva (1995) discuss whether Bawa's works had any relations with the discourse of architectural post-modernism.[38]

**Contemporary Architecture of the Region**

In terms of the region's contemporary architecture, the study dwells on a corpus of material. The literature by Powell (1996, 1998, 2005), Lim (1998), Lim and Beng (1998) and Khan (1995) addressing elite housing in the larger tropical Asian region, from post-independence period to the contemporary, are useful in collecting historical facts as well as illustrations. Appendix 6 supplies an assemblage of related magazine

articles. These enable contextualization of Sri Lankan elite domestic architecture within the region.[39]

## Intellectual Content

The epistemological contribution to the research is by the following sources that deliver at different levels.

The study employs a qualitative approach to collect information, which involves case studies and in-depth interviews. Yin (2008) in fact, provides valuable guidance on this behalf. The architectural analysis of case studies draw on approaches similar to Baker (1996) and Unwin (1997). In placing these buildings with their political and socio-cultural backgrounds, the material from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods already mentioned are used. In terms of interpretation, the literature by architectural phenomenologists and theorists are crucial. The discussion will appropriate similar approaches to Evans (2003), Rykwert (1982), Temple (2007), Leatherbarrow (2002), Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993), Menin and Samuel (2003), Bandyopadhyay (in Frascari, Hale and Starkkey eds., 2007), Bandyopadhyay and Garma-Montiel (in press), Bandyapadhyay and Jackson (2007) and Jackson (2007), who attempt to reveal the underlying factors of architectural works by scrutinizing their drawings and photography.[40]

Moreover, Said's Orientalism (2003) that discusses the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings, formation of Eastern stereotypes and concomitantly, the consolidation of colonial hegemony with a sense of obliviousness towards Eastern epistemology is used to determine the orientalist undertone of the literature on Ceylon/Sri Lanka by westerners. Such notions in turn, strengthen the distinction between Eastern and Western elitisms.[41] On the other hand, Levi-Staraus's structuralism (1966/1996) reveals the method of analysis that attributes the meaning of social institutions such as language, rituals, and other forms of social interactions to underlying systematic structures. Structuralism is imperative for putting into order, social organisations and their respective architectures.[42]

## Feeding the Case Studies

For introducing Geoffrey Bawa, his auto-biographer Robson (2004, 2007, 2008), Jayewardene (1984), Sansoni (1986), and K. Jayewardene (2009) are vital. A. Deraniyagala (2010) and Jayatillaka (2010) in fact, provide important personal information. In relation to Valentine Gunasekara, his auto biographer Pieris (2007) is the only source that supplies a good preamble and Gunasekara's own interviews (2011, 2012) compensate for the shortage of literate about his works. The

contributions by de Saram (2010) too, is highly complementary.[43] The case studies also draw information from the corpus of material discussed under the foregoing sections. In the process, political commentators such as Mathews (1978) and Jupp (1978) especially, are useful.[44] The secondary information about the houses by Bawa is provided by Robson (2004). As Ena de Silva's (2010) interview did not yield successful results,[45] her autobiography by Wijesinha (2002) was compensation. The fruitful interviews with Chloe de Soysa (2010, 2011) however, reduced the material by Robson (2004) to secondary information.[46] On the other hand, in terms of Gunasekara's two houses, Pieris (2007) provides useful secondary material, in addition to primary information supplied by the clients themselves – Sunethra Illangakoon (2010) and Asitha de Silva (2011a/b).[47] Moreover, certain web-based sources are useful for accruing information (current events from the relevant periods) for substantiation of certain key arguments.[48] Web sources such as wespeakarchitecture.com (2011), on the other hand, provide useful academic material on certain architectural theories; family tree.com (2011) lists useful genealogical connections to prove close elite affiliations. The material listed in Appendix 4, 5 and 6 too, are useful in this exercise.

## 2.2 Problems/Gaps and Remedies/Justifications

The literature review revealed a number of deficiencies in the areas observed.

Firstly, the superficial comparison of Sri Lankan history to the sub-continental situation and baseless historic claims by nationalist (arguably racist) elements and their sympathizing orientalists are countered. It is by relying on ground-breaking historical perspectives objectively based on both tangible (i.e. archaeological findings, documentations) and intangible (i.e. folklore, traditions) findings and especially, scientific discoveries (i.e. DNA, Carbon dating), as against mostly conjecturally formed versions of the colonial-taught history (to fall in place with their own Western historical structure) that certain former Lankan historians had reproduced with complacency, repudiations are carried out. Chapter 1 elaborates on the points on which (such as the true inception of the Sinhalese race, the dawn and perseverance of Sinhalese nationalism, myths on the inception of certain factions, biased/prejudiced colonial historical reporting etc.), the repudiations are carried out.

Secondly, the feebly-addressed area of nationalism in Ceylon is taken up here, with theoretical backing. The fallacy that the island's nationalism was at its peak between 1956 and 1977 is challenged, based on a body of evidence to establish that it, in fact, continued into the early 1990s. Moreover, the fact that Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism

pre-dates the modern notion of the phenomenon is emphasised. Thirdly, the problem of lack of theoretical material on Eastern elitism while Western elitism has been widely-covered, is countered by relying on historical, sociological and anthropological findings on the area. In doing so, the study relies on trustworthy local knowledge as against orientalist views that are considered only where there are gaps in the former. A number of key interviews of experts in the above areas especially, compensate for the gaps in literature. Fourthly, during the course of this research, it was discovered that the extant body of literature addressing Ceylon's post-independence period (1956 to date) is feeble. In relation to the period, there is in fact, no comprehensive undertaking to date, where the state of the architectural profession is discussed along with the stimuli it received to arrive at disparate architectural styles identifiable. In this backdrop, the PWD and American styles remain largely unaddressed. It is following such a discussion that the revelation of various architectural approaches of the time (along with their underlying factors and client patronages) becomes plausible. The study relies on a scattered body of literature to accomplish this assemblage. Fifth, in terms of the post-independence period architectural approaches, only the regionalist discourse by architects is given prominence, where an array of other styles followed by architects and non-architects are relegated by the available literature. In this light, each area is given due emphasis, relying mainly on informal interviews with a number of key practitioners and academics from both post-independence and contemporary periods. Further, the architectural material that is available, suffers from the deficiencies of being descriptive and uncritical in nature. This was the reason for deciding against the original and more ambitious research plan (to concentrate on the period beyond 1956 to date), to focus on the nationalist period itself as the foreground of the study.[49] By gaining an insight into this background, the research will gain grounds to throw some much-needed light into the wider post 1977 to date period.

In terms of deficiencies, the illustrations of elite domestic buildings in most of the publications are presented in a romantic manner; where drawings of plans, sections and elevations are less-descriptive, but attractive. Even their interiors are presented in a similar fashion, where photographs have been heavily-edited, where they do not reflect the true experiential quality of the buildings studied. In overall, the descriptions and illustrations found in such literature hark back to an elite-favouring colonial past, which is distant from the social realities of the era of nationalism. Furthermore, most of the available written materials glorify, rather than critically analyze, the works of the two main post-colonial period architects in consideration, which is another significant problem.[50]

In order to tackle romantic representations in available literature, the following remedies are carried out. The architectural drawings used in the study are re-drawn to reveal more architectural and experiential aspects of the selected case studies. Even the photographs are re-taken where possible, in a manner that they reveal their true states as they are being used and experienced. If the photographs presented in such literature are to be used, their respective analysis and interpretations will take into account their possible degree of artificiality. The glorification of certain architects is remedied by relying on own information, collected by interviewing conspicuous figures in the country's post-independence architectural/academic fields[51] and certain clients (of the houses in question), to obtain primary/secondary information. This body of information also helps to unearth certain concealed and possibly neglected information in the available sources of literature in the process of feeding the case studies.

The study's preferred distance from postcolonial theory (Poco) also needs to be clarified. The initial phase of Poco was formed by Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak in relation to the Indian sub-continental context they were both conversant with. It was discussed under Chapter 1 that the Sri Lankan situation is inimitable and dissimilar to the Indian counterpart. Moreover, the Sri Lankan colonial encounters, as well as its postcolonial political, economic and socio-cultural arenas, were considerably different to that of India. Consequently, Bhaba and Spivak's theories cannot be directly applied to the Sri Lankan condition. Bhabha's 'hybridity' is useful for understanding of the cultural condition of the postcolonial elite. However, owing to the study's focus on the elite, Spivak's 'subaltern theory' is not the most suitable – as neither the elite (governing elite and political-class) nor the sub-elite (middle-class) could be considered as subalterns. On the other hand, Edward Said's cannon of Orientalism according to Fry (2009), belong to the second phase of the Poco evolution and is grounded on his cultural understanding of the middle-East. Hence, its direct application too, is problematic.

Bhabha's and Spivak's theories are generic theories that address the broader context of the postcolonial period. However, this study is interested in a particular window – the nationalist period – within the postcolonial period in Ceylon/Sri Lanka. In elaboration, the study considers the time-frame between 1956 and the early 1990s. Since the main focus of the research is on the period of 'nationalism' and not 'post-colonialism', nationalist theories are pertinent to determine the levels of nationalism portrayed by social stratums in question, within the considered window. The foremost idea of this study is to explore, to what extent nationalism was reflected in their architecture (and how). Nationalism, according to the hypothesis of the study, was manifested in terms of political, economic and socio-cultural realms of the island that in turn, was reflected in architecture. Therefore, gaining a deeper philosophical

understanding of the socio-cultural condition of the postcolonial period elite – which is only one aspect of what is inquired – is not a direct consideration of this research. Most importantly, it is problematic to apply generic theories to architecture, and when attempted, architecture loses its opportunity as a cultural reader. Architecture thus, gets reduced to a set of rules having lost its full-potential. As this study uses architecture as a cultural reader, reliance on generic theories is unnecessary. After all, this is predominantly an architectural research and not a philosophical one.

Also, the study's stance on globalisation too needs to be clarified. The general introductions of the discourse by Kirkbridge (2006), Steger (2003) and MacGillivray (2002) were studied, as well as for globalization's implications on the South Asian context by Indraratna (1999), and the Sri Lankan context by Karunadasa (1999). This lead to the revelation that globalization's connotation pertains to its quantum leap in the 1970s with advancements of technology and mass-telecommunication, but the century-old historical process. Hence, within nationalism as the focus of this study, the importance of globalization loses currency.

## 2.3 Methodologies

**Adopted Approach**

*Collecting Data*

This study employs qualitative methods of research in the form of case studies and in-depth interviews to collect information. The apposite case studies and information to be collected via in-depth interviews (on the case studies and other related topics tackled by the theses) was identified via the hypotheses that were derived through the initial work leading to this PhD thesis (i.e. prior dissertations/theses/publications etc. done that are presented in the bibliography), the reviewed literature (discussed prior) and trial field-work (discussed in the coming section).

In terms of in-depth interviews, semi-structured sets of questions were employed, subject to the agreement of clients/occupants/architects/academics interviewed to cooperate. The conducted interviews are listed in Appendix 3. Out of the structure of selected interviews, the ones involving architects/practitioners from the post-colonial period and academics did not yield good results as most of the supplied information was general and too vague. Although such information was useful for introduction chapters (i.e. chapter 5 that introduces the state of post-colonial architecture in Ceylon), in terms of the material needed for the case studies, they were not useful. As out of the two architects' work undertaken as case studies only Valentine Gunasekara

is alive, the expectation on the parts of the clients of the houses in consideration was high to supply valuable information. Hence, compensation for Geoffrey Bawa who passed away in 2003 was mostly on the part of his domestic clients. Since some of them were reluctant to open up, Bawa's former friends/work colleagues conversant with the projects in question were instrumental as well as the available publications on him and his work. Since Gunasekara's work has seldom featured in publications, he compensated by affording firsthand information encompassing a number of spheres – architectural, historical and political-economic/socio-cultural – when clients/practitioners only did so pertaining to selected areas they were more comfortable with. Most of them in fact, refrained from making strong statements (owing to numerous inferable reasons such as not wanting to alter their own academically untested idealisms, create controversy by conveying radical ideas or developing rifts by criticizing individuals/organizations) as against Gunasekara who confidently and generously conveyed his opinions/beliefs with no prejudice whatsoever. The invaluable information that he supplied were instrumental for the two case studies on his work.

The bigger questions that paved way to the main research questions tackled by the study were addressed via groups of smaller questions. These questions in fact, enabled testing of the hypotheses and the findings were utilised in the writing of case studies.

The most relevant questions directed at the interviewees (at the few more important interviews) covered a range of areas from the general information about them and their family members – family names, occupations, financial information (asserts), academic qualifications etc. – personal family details – family backgrounds, family histories, anecdotes, significant incidents, old lifestyle practices, family relations etc. – to the information on their houses in question – site location (context at the time of construction and changes afterwards), whether the land was acquired/inherited, why/how the architect was approached, the way the architect handled the problems at hand (if he was receptive to clients' needs in the process), building costs, material availabilities at the time, if the project fulfilled their lifestyle practices/aspirations, experiences of living in such houses, the level of satisfaction, climatic suitability etc.

The interviews involving clients of the houses in consideration (except for Ena de Silva) generously obliged by supplying the above information that was reflected in the case studies. The general/personal family information was instrumental in conceiving the criteria that form their social standing (elite positions) in relation to the theories on elitism. The house information on the other hand, was instrumental for identifying certain key incidents of the periods and how the two architects responded to them

instinctively or owing to clients' pressures. The confirmation of placement within the elite sphere and illustration of their domestic architecture reflecting periodic changes fulfilled the answering of the first and foremost research question of the thesis. More personal family details discussed above in fact, cemented the position of these families within the elite sphere – standing whether as governing-elite or sub-elite – as a response to the second research question, following a careful analysis that resulted in the two tables presented in chapters 6 and 7. In relation to Gunasekara's case in particular, the additional contribution of his clients' placement within the political-class could be yielded via such information. In addition, the fact of whether the client allegiances remained in stasis or altered as the careers of the architects in question progressed, was also established through the same information.

Although the aforementioned body of information was useful to determine the cultural strands of the Ceylonese elite to have survived from pre-colonial and colonial situations and have been articulated through their domestic architectures, the ambiguity (not remembering clearly) and contradictions (some information not being congruent with written history) the supplied information was plagued by rendered the body to be unsatisfactory. This was compensated by the available literature that traces such information in responding to the last research question. Moreover, the questions pertaining to social connections of such families that suggested elite alliances were not very useful for the research questions the study undertakes. Such findings would perhaps, be useful for a future study that would trace how such connections were instrumental in the architects receiving commissions at the extra-domestic level to receive more public receptivity.

Within the interview process, the idea behind utilization of semi-structured sets of questions was to break-down the formal barrier between the interviewer and interviewee, in order to extract as much useful information as possible. The ethnographic research by Sarin (1986) on Indian urban contexts was used as a precedent in this exercise.

The collecting of general information was carried out employing strategies analogous to the ones used by scholars such as King (1984) and Peiris (2007) on similar subjects. Making annotated sketches, taking photographs, locating related drawings/maps/literature etc. are their techniques that were in turn illustrated in the case studies to ensure clarity.

### *Fieldwork Documentation*

The field-work commenced in India by investigating various domestic and civic architectural realms.

The aim behind examining Portuguese elite domestic architecture in *Goa* was to get an idea about its Ceylonese counterpart that has gone into extinction. The comparison of Portuguese period examples in *Anjuna* (Fig. 21) [and also in *Panaji*] with the so-called 'Dutch' architecture found in Sri Lanka made clear the notable differences in basic plan/form configuration and building elements used. However, the trickled-down building traditions and practices from the Portuguese era evident in Dutch architecture that have been superficially discussed by others, was confirmed within this exercise and included in the discussion in Chapter 4 to the extent of relevance to the main arguments framed.

The study on elite domestic architecture in *Kerala* attempted to make a connection with its Kandyan counterpart in Ceylon, aiming to establish the latter's possible parentage. Although certain parallels were distinguished in terms of the plan configuration and form constituents such as the roof, the *Nālukettu* and *Ettukettu* from *Trivandrum (Thiruvananthapuram)* (Fig. 22) [and also in *Cochin* (*Kochi)*] were assessed to be considerably different from the austere Kandyan domestic building from the level of decoration to the method of construction. Hence, Chapter 4 that assesses the Kandyan domestic building refrains from discussing the counterparts from *Kerala.*

Civic architecture in *Chennai* by the British (Fig. 23) on the other hand, made possible a comparison with their architectural practices in Ceylon's own public realm. Since differences in the two locations could primarily be attributed to the scale of implementation (Ceylon's public buildings being scaled-down versions of the Indian versions), Chapter 4 limits its discussion to the relevant local versions.



|            |            |            |
| :--------: | :--------: | :--------: |
| Fig. 21    | Fig. 22    | Fig. 23    |

Indian Fieldwork (2009)

Fig. 21    House near *Anjuna* in *Goa*
Fig. 22    House in *Paliam, Trivandrum* in *Kerala*
Fig. 23    Ripon Building in *Chennai*

These could be stated as the trial field-work that made clear the more accurate sphere of field work to carry out in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan field-work started by examining Kandyan elite and sub-elite domestic buildings from the pre-colonial period to proceed to Dutch and British period elite domestic buildings in the Maritime. The last two

sessions concentrated on the post-colonial Ceylon's elite domestic architecture and also public buildings (as secondary material).

In terms of collecting information to analyse the considered buildings during fieldwork, apart from making annotated sketches, taking detailed photographs, locating related drawings/maps/literature, in certain vital buildings, measurements were taken and scaled sets of drawings done. Further, some buildings (less important ones) were subjected to photographic surveys, where vital pieces of information were recorded through written/voice notes and short sketches. All these were instrumental to justify their aforementioned inclusions and exclusions into the study's main point of discussion.

### *Analysis and Interpretation*

The analysis is through contextualization of the case studies within their respective political, economic and socio-cultural backgrounds. The literature discussed under the literature review and especially, the interviews (mentioned prior), enables this task. The case study interpretation reflects the analysis carried out.

The interpretation uses structuralism and phenomenology as its intellectual underpinning. Structuralism enables an analysis of social structures (stratifications) of the addressed periods, to determine the elite positions within them, to be exemplified by elite domestic buildings. The typological arrangement of elite houses based on elite patronage is also a structuralist approach. Further, the spatial structures of the case studies are analysed from a structuralist point of view, examining the relationship between space arrangements to occupants' activity patterns. The architectural analysis would draw on the approaches of Baker (1996) and Unwin (1997). The structuralist approach taken assures clarity within the case studies as well as throughout the thesis in general.

In terms of phenomenological interpretation, how Evans (2003), Rykwert (1982), Temple (2007), Leatherbarrow (1993, 2002), Menin and Samuel (2003), Bandyopadhyay (in Frascari, Hale and Starkkey eds., 2007), Jackson (2007), Bandyapadhyay (in press), and Bandyapadhyay and Jackson (2007) etc. address architectural works elsewhere are examined, and a similar approach adopted to expose the underlying factors of the case studies analysed.[52] Phenomenological interpretation enables a subtle addressing of periodic events during the era of nationalism as they expressed themselves through the domestic architecture of the elites/sub-elites, without having to introduce the same in sequence as a leading section to case studies. This avoids unneeded repetition of material. The case studies

are to reflect within the process of interpretation, the earlier mentioned body of collected information via referencing to the relevant sources.

## 2.4 Original Contributions

The original contributions envisaged at the outset of the study are revealed here, whereas the final conclusion to come is to reveal further outcomes.

First, this research tackles the naivety of certain Sri Lankan historians[53] and unsubstantiated historic claims by orientalist and certain nationalist (arguably racist) elements alike, by relying on a faction of more revolutionary historians who dwell on solid archaeological and scientific evidence and objective grounds. Since the study extends this particular historical stance into architecture, this indeed, is a unique contribution. Second, within a backdrop of Orientalism, elitism as a theory has been historically-derived largely by a Western academic discourse, which has been oblivious towards the Eastern situation. Hence, throwing some light into the Eastern conception is novel. Third, although a clear line has been drawn between the elite and masses, no academic undertaking to date, has differentiated the elite from sub-elite. This study aims to manifest this in relation to Sri Lanka, by studying the built environments of these respective groups, as a new contribution to knowledge. Drawing on this, a similar approach could be employed elsewhere to make the same distinction. Fourth, Sri Lankan scholars over the years have generally identified the domestic architectural 'types' for pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in Ceylon.  This classification is feeble, on the grounds that they have not considered elite domestic architecture as a category, for failing to consider certain domestic type/sub-types, and also for not differentiating phases within the considered periods.  Moreover, they have never attempted to classify houses in line with their occupiers' socio-cultural status in the hierarchy. Hence, structuring these types based the foregoing lines helps to make the distinctions between the elites, sub-elites and masses respectively. Through this new contribution, misinterpretations and misconceptions that prevail within the local academia in terms of these 'types' could be remedied. Fifth, the era of nationalism in Sri Lankan architectural history – especially, its elite domestic architecture – has not been academically-explored in a comprehensive manner. Hence, the study aims to tackle this conspicuous period of the country's architectural history, within which, a national (flagship) architectural style was in fact, realised. Redefinition of the naively accepted nationalist window based on historical facts is intrinsic to this exercise. This comprehensive narration is indeed, a unique contribution to knowledge. Sixth, the question of why Ceylonese architects during nationalism were compelled to follow the different routes they did, in order to form a handful of unique architectural rubrics – with some succeeding and others failing – has not been considered before. Hence, through analyzing architects' works from a phenomenological perspective, their

underlying factors could be revealed as novel knowledge. Seventh, the neglected area of non-architect championed styles during nationalism that is taken up by the study is also a unique contribution. Eighth, exploration of the island's pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence period elitisms and thus, elite domestic architectures respectively, will eventually throw some light into their future states. Finally, the collection of drawings (some produced anew) and photographs this research produces (presented as a catalogue) are also a significant contribution to Sri Lankan architecture. Along with the ensemble of interviews – involving post-independence period architects, their clients and academics, for the first time in Sri Lankan academic history, which is an original contribution in its own right – the above corpus of material will be invaluable for future researchers of this unique area of interest.

## Conclusion

The chapter establishes the present state of knowledge in the area under the study's purview and follows the order of the thesis chapter breakdown. It covers respectively, literature related to the inimitable Sri Lankan history, island's nationalist phases, elitism's Western and Eastern counterparts, architectures of the pre-colonial, colonial and the post independence periods, to proceed with the material on Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara (selected for being the most widely-acclaimed figures of post-independence period architectural sphere of Ceylon, with opposing architectural ideologies and approaches). The inquiry ends with an analysis of literature covering the contemporary architecture of the region, the intellectual context pertaining to the research, and sources that provide inspiration/information for the writing of cases studied. The review recognises various problems and gaps in the available literature and also provides grounds for the exclusion of certain theories as well as ideas. Consequently, the remedies are discussed and also justified. The methodology section elaborates on how data is collected through field work, how it is analysed and then interpreted. Finally, the original contribution to knowledge is discussed in detail.

## Notes

[1] Moreover, T. Mendis (2011) and Samaratunga (2011) provide useful information and these sources find direct referencing in the thesis. On the other hand, H. A. I. Goonatilleke supplies useful history in his bibliography of published writings of Paranawithana (in H. A. I. Goonatilleke, 1971) and in his own bibliography of Ceylon (1983). R. A. L. H. Gunewardene (1984) is a similar approach. Sirisena (1978) provides a useful historical comparison of the Lankan and Southeast Asian context although not directly relevant here. These do not find direct referencing, but contribute to a better historical understanding.

[2] or naivety over colonial-taught versions.

[3] Jayasumana (2009) is a good example for a product of this school. He finds frequent referencing here.

[4] In the process of establishing the above point, certain orientalist claims and at times, inaccurate information from the same [i.e. De Votta (2007) and Robson (2004, 2007, 2009)] are to be repudiated.

[5] All of them refute the Western-centric nationalist theories to point to the pre-modern origins of the phenomenon in the sub-continental context.

[6] Indrapala's (1965) polemic thesis on Tamil settlements in the island in particular, is vital in debunking most claims, although not referred to directly.

[7] In this process S. Jayewardene (1984), Perera (1994) and De Votta (2007) are also useful.

[8] Wijesooriya (2011) conversely, directs his reproach at certain UNP policies.

[9] such as countrystudies.us (2011), srilanka-botschaft.de (2011), thondaman.org (2011), unp.lk (2011), thaindian.com (2008), lankarising.com (2008), ipsnews.net (2002), Lankaweb.lk (2011), peaceinsrilanka.org (2011) and defence.lk (2010).

[10] His theories are widely-applicable to contexts around the world as they are supported by world-wide examples. His other publications on this area are complimentary to the main idea, although not referred to in the research – Rapoport (2000; 2008).

[11] Further, the publications by Sansoni (1978), Sansoni and Bon (2007) in particular, are also useful in this exercise. Palliyaguru (2002) and Dayaratne (2010) in fact, discuss the larger settings where, and conditions under which, such examples were realized.

[12] S. Jayewardene (1984) also supplies more useful figures.

[13] with the help of Perera (1994).

[14] Mandel (1982) in this backdrop is useful for conceiving of the political evolution of the mankind from pre-history to date and especially, the Marxist discourse.

[15] They are reflect7 (2009), ktownpoet (2008) and the communard (2010), as well as lectures/interviews involving Noam Chomskey [in vktrsx (2009) and TheReasonParty (2010)].

[16] While the idea of intellectuals is derived based on observations by to Le Goff (1957) and Mannheim (1956); the notion of managers is grounded on theories by Burnham (1943) and Veblen (1921). On the other hand, Djilas (1957) is the brainchild of the idea of bureaucrats, where Kelsall (1955) and Bottomore (1952) adduce examples for confirmation. Singer's (1964) addressing of the merging elite is also useful.

[17] Comskey's (in philosopherSeed, 2009) propagations on elites carry a similar undertone.

[18] However, his argument suffers from its excessive reliance on America for examples. This source does not find direct reference in the main argument.

[19] based on a number of reasons addressed in the main text.

[20] In the process, Hussein (2001), Karava.org (2011) and genealogytoday.com [a valuable source for *Durava* genealogy] are also useful sources.

[21] Weber's (2010) addressing of the protestant ethic cements this point although not directly used in the argument. On the other hand, the addressing by Coomaraswamy (1976) of the Buddhist ideals becomes a good point of comparison.

[22] Especially, Obeyesekere's (2006) catalogue of the Kandyan feudal families is useful to differentiate between the period's elite and sub-elite.

[23] The inputs by Perera (1994), King (1984) and Nairn (1981) are more indirect.

[24] Wijetunge (2005, 2007, 2011b) supplies some useful sources.

[25] Amareswaran (1980) is a useful comparison with the courtyard house in Jaffna , although not directly used for the argument.

[26] Knowles (2008) and Carib (1997) too, contribute to this argument.

[27] In the discussion about the bourgeoisie, V. K. Jayawardena (in K. T. Silva, 2005), Roberts (1995), Nimal de Silva (2010), de Saram (2010), Tennent (in Perera, 1994) and Mills (1965) are instrumental, while Karava.org (2011) is also useful in this exercise. Chandra (1980), King (1984) and Jupp (1978) on the other hand, contribute at the theoretical level. The petty-bourgeoisie and working classes are similarly addressed by K. T. Silva (2005), V. K. Jayewardene (1972) and S. Jayewardene (1984).

[28] whose examination of Maritime colonial Ceylon's architectural styles from the Dutch and British periods.

[29] who addresses the domestic and civic architectures of British Ceylon.

[30] who addresses the social mobility in imperial India and Ceylon.

[31] who study the underlying political meanings of British colonial architectural discourses in India/Ceylon.

[32] Young (2003) and Bottomore (1993) are useful at the international level.

[33] in literature, visual arts, drama, cinema and literature etc.

[34] Also Keneuman (1982), Vale (1992) and De Votta (2007).

[35] The latter especially, produced other useful sources on traditional Sri Lankan culture, arts and architecture – Bandaranayake (1977, 1980a/b, 1983).

[36] This is the only available piece of literature apart from Kurukulasuriya (2007) who also mentions of him.

[37] Appendix 6 also contains discussions of this area.

[38] These are the only available sources where the implications of architectural post-modernism in the Sri Lankan context have been discussed. Moreover, although directly irrelevant, the works by Venturi (1977a/b) and French (1998) pay attention to the world of post-modern architecture that overlapped with Bawa's and Gunasekara's stints in practice.

[39] These sources provide historical facts, descriptive information, drawings and photographic illustrations of domestic examples, for a structural analysis to be carried out, just as was done for the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

[40] The works of Pallasma (2005) on the other hand, helps the inquiry of sensory properties in buildings where appropriate, although his approach is not the main concern of this study. Moreover, the theoretical works of Corbusier (in Jenger, 1993), Aalto (in Lahti, 2004) as well as Vidler (1989) and Samuel (2003) are also considered. The theoretical discussions of Alexander (1977) on different architectural spaces and places are also important.

[41] With this advent of Orientalism, the Post-colonial discourse is introduced by Young (2003) and critically explored by Gandhi (1998). Moreover, its various constituent discourses such as Bhaba's propagations of 'Hybridity' (1994), stereotypes and colonial discourse (1983); and Spivac's notions on the 'Subaltern' (in Williams and Chrisman, 1993; UCtelevision, 2009) are also critically examined and utilized as appropriate in the understanding of colonial and postcolonial Ceylonese elite. On the other hand, addressing of the meanings of imperialism, hybrid nature of the ruled populaces and their architectures by S. Jayawardene-Pillai (2006) completes the postcolonial architectural study taken up here. These areas do not fall in line with the main concern of this study.

[42] This approach becomes invaluable to understand Ceylon's social structures during different historical periods and to determine the positions of elites and sub-elites within them via social stratifications. This enables the structuring of their domestic architecture and also conceiving spatial structures of the buildings considered as well as their typologies.

[43] Weeramuni (2010) is also useful.

[44] This is irrespective of their orientalist undertones. The usefulness arises from the accurate information they supply.

[45] owing to her reluctance to discuss certain matters.

[46] into secondary material.

[47] on the Illangakoon and de Silva houses respectively.

[48] commonlii.org (2011), country-data.com (2011), sundaytime.lk (2011), dailynews.lk (2009), japanesecartrade.com (2011), uda.lk (2011), rockefellerfoundation.org (2011), nativeweb.org (2011), hindustantimes.com (2011), mountlaviniahotel.lk (2011), srilankaguardian (2007), christianaggression.org (2011), asianews.it (2009), solofeminity.blogs.com (2009), jhu.lk (2011).

[49] Both the *Project Approval* and *Transfer from MPhil to PhD Reports* concluded that not enough justice has been done for the post-independence/nationalist period architectures to discuss the contemporary scenario.

[50] especially, Geoffrey Bawa.

[51] some to have worked with the architects in consideration.

[52] In terms of addressing sensory properties of buildings, the writings of Pallasma (2005) are helpful, although this is not a main part of the approach.

[53] who continue to follow colonial-taught history.

# Chapter 3    A Discourse of Elitism

Over the centuries, exploring 'elitism' has been the sole domain of Western scholars who targeted largely, a Western audience. Consequently, they have been responsible for the formation of numerous elitist theories that are applicable to Western societies. Eastern elitism conversely, has continuously experienced oblivion to date, and even the extant studies by Westerners arguably possess an 'orientalist' bias. The literature review carried out in chapter 2 is testament to this. 'Pre-modern' Western elitism that was more or less analogous to its Eastern counterpart, suffered a paradigm shift at the outset of the 'modern' era. Along with the condition of 'modernity', Western notions of elitism have been propagated all over the 'modern world' with the aid of Iberian and West European colonial practices since the 15th century (McGillivray, 2006: 15-19). In the Lankan scenario, the Portuguese and Dutch colonisations resulted in quasi-modernization of a faction of its citizens, whereas the latter British counterpart found more success. A fully-fledged Westernization for the elites the island over and quasi-westernization for the urban populations were consequently secured. However, a majority of rural communities survived in their more or less 'pre-modern' conditions, down into the 1980s, as asserted by Ashley De Vos (1977, 2010) and Jayewardene (1984). In such a background, for the elites of 'colonial' Ceylon[1] and of 'nationalist' Sri Lanka who experienced varying degrees of westernization; Western elitist theories are applicable. Conversely, for the Kandyan kingdom that remained independent from Western interventions until 1815, in its unaltered pre-modern state, this application becomes baseless. Hence, in the absence of convincing elitist theories on Eastern elitism, the Ceylonese (Kandyan) situation has to be examined analogous to the neighbouring sub-continental context, as the next best alternative. For the convenience of analysis, Western and Eastern elitisms will be taken up separately, as a narration that will extend from pre-modern to the modern era.

## 3.1 Elitism in the Western Context

Elitist definitions and theories are modern Western phenomena. Defining elitism was the first occurrence that was later followed by the formation of theories on the subject. Therefore, first, the historical narration of the term 'elite' is to be followed by the evolution of its connotation over the years. By doing so, an insight can be gained into the transformations suffered by the condition of 'elitism' as Fig. 24 illustrates. Since elitist theories only came into being in the wake of 20th century, up to this point, only such a narration is plausible. When it comes to elitist theories on the other hand,

it is commonly accepted that they are not impeccable; where some are in fact, referred to as half-baked ideas (Bottomore, 1993). In this light, their comparison will reason-out the most convincing to be used as a framework; for the analysis of modern periods that come under the purview of this research. It is also pertinent to mention here that the 'pre-modern' condition covered under this section will dwell on European history, while the 'modern' condition will take into account the history of the Western world at large in the contemporary sense.
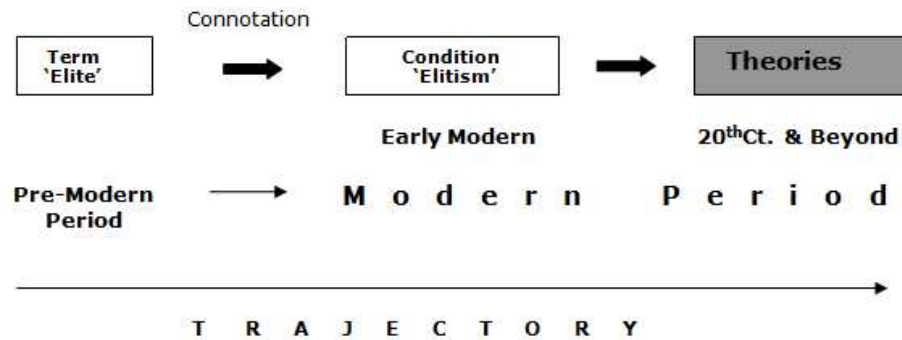


Fig. 24    Trajectory of the condition of Elitism; the possible means of conceiving the condition

## Historical Progression

### *Pre-Modern Condition*

No direct reference to the word 'elite' can be found in literature from the pre-modern era. However, written accounts that resemble the idea are adducible from as far back as Classical Greece. Rousseau, based on the world-renowned Politics of Aristotle reads, *"[from] the hours of their birth some are marked out for subjection and some for command"* (in Bottomore, 1993: 101). This illustrates the fundamental differences among human beings that the Greeks had recognized. Such differences, as Rousseau agrees, could be conceived as 'levels of inequalities'.[2] Based on such age-old ideas, the notion of elitism gradually took hold. According to Wittforgel (1957), pre-modern Europe was largely ruled by the feudalists who were distributed over its entirety. In this context, single centralized powers or absolute monarchies were rare occurrences. The feudalists, as Bottomore (1993: 17) explains, were once families and individuals who used to fulfil military leadership and they became landlords after the definitive conquest of new territories.[3] In such a scenario, it could be assumed that the bulk of European ruling stratum were in fact, feudalists, where the less numerous and powerful royals on the other hand, also belonged to the same social layer. Subsequently, as the royals gradually established their power over extensive territories via amalgamating feudal domains by force, the prior decentralization was overcome. Hence, we could infer that the feudalists and royals made the uppermost social layer of the time. On the other hand, Christian religion played a vital part in this period insofar being able to influence feudal and royal powers. As these groups needed

the backing of the Christian church for public legitimacy, the head clergymen opportunistically became extremely powerful and wealthy, placing them also within the same social layer (Bottomore, 1993: 19). The more recent notion by Pareto (1963: 1429-1430) on how the upper stratum of society is constituted, makes perfect sense in the above historical setting. In his view, the upper stratum of society or the 'elite' nominally contains certain groups of people, not always very sharply-defined. They are called 'aristocracies' – military, religious and commercial in nature – as well as 'plutocracies'. Such aristocracies could be considered largely as a pre-modern idea that has continued into the modern day.

### *Modern Condition*

The most of extant definitions for the term 'elite' are to be found in modern period literature and thus, carry modern connotations.[4] In this backdrop, the enquiry commences from an early-modern outset and narrates the path of term's connotation down into the 20th century, allowing an understanding of changes suffered by the condition. The condition's changes beyond 20th century could be conceived via extant elitist theories.

An Early Modern Appearance:

The earliest identifiable account that dwells on the idea of elitism runs only as far back as the late 17th century.

> "*The word 'elite' was … to describe commodities of particular excellence; and the usage was later extended to refer to superior social groups, such as prestigious military units or the higher ranks of the nobility*" (Bottomore, 1993: 101)*.*

Hence, even by then, the term had a loose connotation and the underlying idea was vague. The earliest known usage of the term in the English language could be traced back to the *Oxford English Dictionary* of 1823, at which time it was already applied to various social groups, probably to denote their higher quality. However, the term did not come into wide use until the late 19th century in Europe; and early 20th century in Britain and the US (Bottomore, 1993: 1). Thus, by the 19th century, in most of the Western world, the term 'elite' had graduated as a more selective word used to denote certain social groups of higher status. Horton (1984) follows the course of the term's connotation into the 19th century Industrial Revolution and reveals how it then suffered a paradigm shift. When the feudal system was shattered by the advent of an industrial bourgeoisie, the term's meaning was changed from a high quality/status social condition that was only attainable through inheritance, to one 'acquirable' in Horton's (1964: 294) terms.[5] Mannheim (in Bottomore, 1993: 31) elaborates on the new roles of merit and achievement in attaining this status.[6] This rather positive attitude aided by enlightenment-rationality and humanism, proliferated throughout the world via

European-colonialism, which culminated by the 19th century (Perera, 1994: 422). This idea, in conjunction with the inherent human inequalities perpetuating from the pre-modern period, provided grounds for elitist theories formed in the 20th century.

Contemporary State:

20th century and beyond will be considered as the contemporary state under which, the different means of social stratifications and the basis of elitist theories were formed. These areas will be tackled here.

**Means of Social Stratification**

Every society is believed to be consisted of a hierarchy of 'social layers' in the form of 'social strata'. K. T. Silva (2005: 1-3) in fact, draws an analogy between geo-layers of the earth that determines its stability, with that of society.[7] As he elaborates, even in the modern societies created with human equality in mind, with time, social stratification has emerged,[8] and for him, there are two ways of conducting social stratification in a given society. Firstly, there is the 'objective' side that is determined on tangible factors and on the other hand, there are 'subjective' factors that are intangible. This notion is based on the measures of how a given society conceives 'high' and 'low' positions for a given individual. K. T. Silva believes that although there is a certain degree of convergence between objective and subjective factors in determining social stratification,[9] this however, is not always true. In order to determine the causalities of social inequalities and their social implications, theories on social stratification have emerged; and the most convincing in his view are by Carl Marx, Max Webber and Vilfrado Pareto. While the former two are more to do with social stratification, the latter is largely an elitist theory (K. T. Silva, 2005: 3).

*Marx's Objective Approach*

In Marx and Engel's (1998: 8-14) view, in relation to the nature of 'means of production' in different ages of human history, varying degrees of private ownerships of it emerged.[10] The notion of 'class' pertaining to each period was the result of anomalies evident in terms of distribution of the above factor (Fig. 25). This gives 'class' in Marx's sense, an economic-determinism (K. T. Silva, 2005: 4). At the same time, the tangible nature of the cause of this social stratification, gives it an objective provenance. How this historical development took place is explained in the table below. Marx not only studied the class formation in society, he also considered how social revolutions happen (N. de Silva, 2008). Marx and Engels (1998: 19-25) in fact, bracketed-down such revolutions to the antagonism between classes – the owners and non-owners of means of production.[11] In other words, the latter who are conceived to be the 'repressed', step up to cause social change via revolutions. For example, the tension between the 'master' and 'slave' resulted in the revolutionary

change of ending the period of slavery to result in the period of feudalism, and the tension with 'feudal overlord' and the 'serf', resulted in the revolutionary shift to the capitalist era. Each revolution was framed by reorganisation of the class system that is based on relations to instruments of production (N. de Silva, 2008).

| Period | Class system | |
|---|---|---|
| | Means of production | |
| | Owners | Non-owners |
| 1. Primitive | Classless Society | |
| 2. Slavery | Master | Slave |
| 3. Feudal | Feudal overlord | Serf |
| 4. Capitalist | Bourgeoisie | Laborers |
| 5. Communist | Classless Society | |

As Marx (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 5) tells us, within the process of production the classes that are at parallel levels gather gradually, around their common needs. However, he also mentioned that being included in the same class does not necessarily assure 'class consciousness' while differentiating between 'class-in-itself' – consisted of people included in the same class without class consciousness – and 'class for itself' – consisted of one with class consciousness.

Fig. 25
A historical interpretation of Social stratification in an Economic point of view.

N. de Silva (2008) who repudiates the latter idea claims that such a 'class-for-itself' has not come in to existence naturally in the world, where 'class consciousness' was brought 'artificially' into the working-class by the political party.[12] He illustrates how Lenin successfully implemented this in Communist Russia.[13] More of Marxism will be taken up later.

### Weber's Subjective Approach

Although Max Weber (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 6-7) agreed to a certain extent with Marx, he repudiated Marx's economic-determinism. Alternatively, Weber devised a 'subjective' criteria of social stratification of his own. For him, social stratification is based on 'class', 'social honour' and 'power'. Class in Weber's terms was an ensemble of people who share similar 'life chances' under various circumstances. The term 'life chances' denotes the ability of a particular social group to sustain a certain condition of life. Social honour is the level of acceptance a person receives from society. While noting that social acceptance is proportional to social honour, Weber further stated that people with similar social honour form cohesive groups that he termed as 'status groups'. Another seminal observation by him was that the cohesion of people with similar status happens easily than between people belonging to the same class. Just as 'life chances' is instrumental in identifying a class, 'style of life' fulfils the same in relation to status groups. Status groups as K. T. Silva (2005: 132) affirms, tend to be protective about their social acceptance and hence, are reluctant to blend-in with other groups.  On the other hand, Weber (in Bendix, 1949) elaborates that society consists of various status groups that are engaged in competition with one another for

social honour. However, K. T. Silva (2005: 7) argues that at times, the boundary between life chances and lifestyles is a blurred one. For example, he states that if speaking fluent English (in the Sri Lankan context) is an aspect of one's social honour articulated in his life-style, if it is also complimentary to his gaining of better employment opportunities, it then becomes a determiner of his life chances and thus, class. Power, in Weber's terms is the ability of one to take decisions and implementing them, in a manner they determine other people's lives, which he defines as the *ability to impose one's will on others*" (K. T. Silva, 2005: 8). However, K. T. Silva correctly notes that Weber did not explain how people with and without power arrange themselves as stratums leaving his theory inconclusive.

Although Weber conceived these three determinants of social stratification to be working independently, K. T. Silva (2005: 8) debunks this idea by noting that they are complimentary to one another. For example, when one is of high class, they tend to yield more social honour as well as power and *vice versa*. In relation to the Sri Lankan condition, he states that for example, a strong supporter of a provincial governing politician might yield significant power despite hailing from a lower class and lacking in social honour. Conversely, a traditional elite – a feudalist for instance – who has endured decline in wealth, resulting in a decline of life chances and thus, in class, might still posses a certain degree of traditionally-inherited social status and power. Further, he correctly assumes that the people who have made it to the upper levels in any of these three spheres, constantly strive to upgrade the other two.

As affirmed by K. T. Silva, Weber's 'subjective' interpretation works best when it is utilized to distinguish anomalies between individuals rather than being able to identify differences, relationships and conflicts among social groups. Hence, in comparison, Marx's doctrine explains better with tangible evidence, what Weber fails to address intangibly. A convergence of the two doctrines is also problematic owing to the contradictory nature of the two approaches. This study deals with entire social groups rather than individuals. Consequently, the research will focus on elitist theories derived on the objective analysis.

**Basis of Elitist Theories**

It should be made clear at the outset that the extant elitist theories of the 20th century are all based on a form of objective social analysis. While all being grounded on the notion of 'economic class', some theories have been developed in opposition to Marx's 'classless society' (Bottomore, 1993: 103). Elitist theories submit to the fact that there are inherent inequalities among human beings, where Bottomore (1993: 8) indicates that some theories even go as far as attempting to review undemocratic historical ideas. However, other theories pay homage to democratic notions in their creation. Hence, it is pertinent to note here that such theories carry an underlying contradiction,

which arises by the uneasy conjunction of two opposing ideas – 'elites' and 'democracy'. This section will first establish Marx's conception of economic classes, and then explore how its repudiation contributes to the making of elitist theories. Similarly, the concept of 'modern democracy' will be taken up along with its implications on elitist theories.

### *Marxist Repudiation*

In the past, the term 'class' carried a lose connotation and had been synonymous with 'strata'. However, Marx (2009) through his theory on the classes and class conflict gave it largely an economic-determinism.[14] His theory drew inspiration from a number of decisive points in European history such as the violent social revolution in France and industrial revolution in Britain. As Marx and Engels (1998: 8-9) tell us, in every society beyond the most primitive, two categories of people exist in the form of a 'ruling class' and one or more 'subject classes'.[15] The dominant position of the ruling class could be explained by its possession of the major instruments of economic production. Based on this possession, its political dominance arises from the hold it establishes over the military and production of ideas. Marx affirms that there is a perpetual conflict between the ruling class and subject classes. The nature and course of such conflicts are influenced primarily by the development of productive forces such as the changes in technology. This class conflict is most sharply drawn in the 'modern capitalist societies', where the divergence of economic interests appears clearer. This divergence is unhindered by any personal bonds such as those that existed in feudal societies, as the industrial revolution gave way from feudalism to capitalism. The feudalists were thus replaced by the bourgeoisie. Further adding to this point, the development of capitalism brings about a more radical and hitherto unforeseen polarization of classes. This will articulate through an unrivalled concentration of wealth on one extreme of society and poverty at the other. Gradual elimination of the intermediate and transitional social strata is intrinsic to this development and brings about two polarised classes; a 'ruling class' and also a 'working class' (Marx and Engels, 1998: 19).[16] The class struggle within such capitalist societies according to Marx, will end with the victory to the working class, which will be proceeded by the formation of a 'classless' socialist society (N. de Silva, 1993).

As Bottomore (1993; 15-16) explains, the classless society will entail the below characteristics. Firstly, the modern capitalism carries the tendency to crate a 'homogeneous working class' from which, it is unlikely that new social divisions will spring up in future. It is from here that the 'stable' classless society will spawn. Secondly, the revolutionary struggle of the workers itself, engenders corporation and a sentiment of community. This solidarity is strengthened by the moral and social doctrines which the revolutionary movement produces, and which have been absorbed

into Marx's own thought. Thirdly, capitalism creates the material and cultural conditions for a classless society. The material condition is ensued by its immense productivity that renders possible the satisfaction of the basic human needs for all human beings and removes them from the struggle of physical survival. Further, the cultural condition it enables will ensure the elimination of *"idiocy of rural life"*, by promoting literacy, diffusing scientific knowledge and especially, engaging the mass of the people in political life.

Despite Marx not deriving a blueprint for his desired outcome, his sketch for the classless society incorporated moral, sociological and historical schemes. In relation to the moral aspect, classless society is defined as one in which individuals will exercise a much greater and more equal control over their destinies. They would be liberated from the tyranny of their own creations – such as the state and bureaucracy as well as capital and technology – that would be productive rather than acquisitive. They would find pleasure and support in their social cooperation with others rather than being antagonist and bitter aroused by competition. According to Marx, self-determination for the individual was achievable in numerous ways. Firstly, the individual had to be freed from determination by his 'class or occupation' as Bottomore (1993: 103) illustrates. Secondly, he had to be freed from domination by a remote, inaccessible and unaccountable government/administration. Further, he should be put in a position to be able to participate, as fully as possible, in deciding issues of general social importance.

The sociological conception of Marx is found in his assertion that the principal of inequality is embodied in the institutions of social class – the division between owners of means of production and non-owners – and more fundamentally, the division of labour in society – especially between the division of manual and intellectual work. He believed that this arrangement will eventually result in the suppression of the labour and equality could be achieved by the abolishing of classes, which will entail the suppression of division of labour. The desired outcome of this labour suppression is 'the fully developed individual' capable of performing so many alternative modes of activity. He will be a result of technical and agricultural schools. Such schools will equip the progeny of workers with instructions in technology and practical handling of the various labour implements; both theoretical and practical elements of it (Marx and Engles, 1998: 33; Bottomore, 1993: 105).

Marx's presentation of a historical scheme is only applicable to the Western civilization's economically-determinant forms of domination and servitude. It constitutes a series distinguished by an increasing awareness of the contrast between person's qualities as an individual (personal life of the individual as it is), and as a member of a social category (his life as determined by some branch of labour and the

conditions pertaining to it). Owing to this contradiction, his labour becomes evident to himself as he is sacrificed since his youth and sees no opportunity of achieving within his own class the conditions which would place him in another class (Bottomore, 1993: 105-106). Marx's doctrine mediated that through class-less society, all individuals would be able to develop their faculties to the fullest extent and experience limitations only *"as natural beings who are obliged to produce their material means of existence and are mortal"* (Bottomore, 1993: 106). Another seminal thought of his was that there will be a transition period from capitalism to socialism in the form of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' that would eventually lead way for the 'higher phase of communist society'.

Marxism over the years has experienced major repudiations ranging from theoretical to practical issues. N. de Silva (1993) in questioning theoretical bankruptcy of Marxism, illustrates of a lack of dialectic in a situation where the capitalist class is completely overthrown by the proletariat – former, as the thesis and latter, the antithesis – to result in a total control by the proletariat itself. He sees no synthesis in this outcome.[17] Bottomore also notes that Marxist thought could be discredited in a number of ways.[18] Consequently, as also agreed by K. T. Silva (2005: 108-113), the extreme contrast anticipated by Marx has been modified by the growth of the 'middle classes', within which, complex occupational differentiations prevail. Further, the notion of animosity between different classes is questionable in the light of the more contemporary views. The relationship between different classes in the contemporary world context is said to be determined on varying degrees of emulation, competition, assistance, lobbying and conflict (K. T. Silva, 2005: 6).

Moreover, Bottomore (1993: 119-132) illustrates the milder and less-repressive nature of contemporary world polity; at least since 1945. Another damaging notion to Marxist theory is the 20th century enabled universal adult suffrage, which in principle, separates economic and political powers. Ironically, Marx himself contradictorily acknowledged this idea as a *"revolutionary step"*. On the other hand, although Marx's doctrine was based on the idea of economic classes that dwelt on occupation as affirmed in *The German Ideology* (Marx and Engles, 2011: 6), it was later repudiated by Pareto, Weber and Michels (in Bottomore, 1993: 10). They illustrated, based on the theory of 'circulation of elites' that in most societies – especially in modern industrial ones – there cannot be a *"stable and closed"* ruling class. Moreover, they also stress that Marx's 'classless society' is impossible, since in every society there is, and must be, a minority which actually rules. By weighing such arguments, it could be concluded that the notion of a distinct and self-perpetuating ruling class is questionable. Theorists, as Bottomore (1993: 10) examines, have in a more general way opposed socialist doctrines by substituting, for the notion of a class which rules by virtue of economic or military power, the notion of an elite. This group rules *"because of the*

*superior qualities of its members".* Kolabinska (1912: 5) affirms this view by stating that *"the principal notion conveyed by the term 'elite' is that of superiority".* As Meisel (1958:10) comments,

> "[in Marxist theory] *the proletariat is to be the ultimate class which will usher in the classless society. Not so. Rather, the history of all societies, past and future, is the history of the ruling classes. [There] will always be a ruling class, and therefore exploitation".*

This is the anti-socialist, specifically, anti-Marxist bent of the elitist theory as it unfolds in the last decade of the 19th century. As Mosca tells us (in Bottomore, 1993: 11), in the social sciences, it is easier to foresee what is never going to happen than to predict exactly what will happen. Consequently, elite theorists have confidently excluded the classless society as the former. Elite theorists, especially Pareto, claim that one type of political society is universal and necessary, and the Marxists deny the universal validity of this 'law of elites and masses'. They also assert liberty for humans to imagine and create new forms of society.

As Michels (1911) correctly pointed out, a great weakness in Marxist thought was the fact that he failed to foresee the formation of a new enduring ruling class that might emerge within the society that succeeds capitalism. The tyrannical regimes or in other words, 'dictatorship' of the proletariat such as the USSR and Eastern Europe under Stalin's control, as well as some Eastern European regimes themselves, are some adducible evidence from world history. In such situations, the tyrants are more powerful than political leaders in democratic nations as both political and economic powers concentrate in their hands (Bottomore, 1993: 107). Supporting the above point, Aron (1950) affirms the impracticality of a classless society by noting that every society requires vital decision-making, which demands a certain degree of command. His answer to overcome this situation is decentralization, which he sees as unrealistic. Aron's view of the classless society in the USSR and Mills's on the mass society in the US, enables an analogy between the two situations. The decline or disappearance of intermediate organizations that enable individuals an effective say in their activities, and the increasing distance between the leaders and masses in all types of associations, have ensued in both situations (Bottomore, 1993: 109). Max Weber (in Bottomore, 1993: 63) on the other hand, believed that socialism will result in the loss of individual freedom and more or less total regimentalization of social life.

Marx's theory as Bottomore (1993: 17) alludes to, had an intrinsic economic-determinism to it. Marx stated that principal types of society within the area of European civilization could be historically distinguished in terms of their economic systems, and the major social changes from one type of society to another, could best be explained by changes in economic activity which brought into being new social groups with new economic interests. However, Schumpeter (1942: 12-13) and Weber

(2010) disagree to this generalization. Schumpeter's disagreement is expressed through his example of medieval Europe's military leadership turning feudal to exercise decentralized power, which was a political creation. Weber's negation is directed as an ideological change. He adduces the example of how a radical change of attitude towards work and accumulation of wealth followed the Protestant reformations marking the dawn of modern capitalism (Weber, 2010). Bottomore (1993: 19) compliments this point by sighting examples from the 1990s and before, in the form of Marxism imparting rapid industrial changes in the USSR, the totalitarianism of its Stalinist version and the retarding influence on the traditional societies of some pre-industrial situations around the world. Finally, K. T. Silva (2005: 1-3) notes that economic-determinism apparent to Marxism cannot be a universal truth in the presence of other historic factors of culture (such as religion and caste system) – a view sustained by August Comte (in Knowles, 2008: 4).[19] Hence, this doctrine cannot be generalized for all locations in the world and historical periods.

### Homage to a Self-conscious Democracy

> "Democracy, in one of its established meanings, implies that there should be a substantial degree of equality among human beings …" (Bottomore, 1993: 101).

In this light, Mosca's (1939: 404) observation of elitism articulates a hint of democracy. He notes that the elite does not merely rule by force and fraud. Instead, he 'represents' in some sense, at least the common interests and purposes of important and influential groups in society. Further, Mosca (1939: 411) in his thorough examination of the elite group itself (especially in modern democratic societies) refers to *the various party organizations into which the political class is divided"*, and which should compete for the votes of more numerous classes.

> "[It] cannot be denied that the representative system [of government] *provides the way for many different social forces to participate in the political system and, therefore, to balance and limit the influence of other social forces and the influence of bureaucracy in particular"* (Mosca, 1939: 258).

However, modern-day elitist theories with a democratic backing are not spared from attack. Friedrich (1950) [as illustrated by Bottomore (1993: 8)], drawing on the 19th century elite doctrine of rule by superior individuals (that encompasses the notions of Carlyle, Nietzsche, Mosca, Pareto and Burckhardt) states that "*all offspring of a society [contains] as yet many feudal remnants"*. According to Bottomore (1993: 8) "*[these] doctrines represented so many different attempts to revive ancient ideas of social hierarchy and to erect obstacles to the spread of democratic notions"*.

The convergence of the disparate ideas of elitism and democracy proves to be difficult and once achieved, their relationship becomes uneasy. Firstly, the " *… insistence in*

*the elite theories upon the inequality of individual endowment runs counter to a fundamental strand in democratic political thought, which is inclined rather to emphasize an underlying equality of individuals"*. Secondly, *"the notion of a governing minority contradicts the democratic theory of majority rule"* (Bottomore, 1993: 8). If democracy is regarded as being primarily a 'political system' as Bottomore (1993: 8-9) labels it, it may be argued that the so-called 'government by the people' or 'the effective rule of the majority' is impossible in practice. The significance of political democracy however, is that the positions of power in society are open in principal to *"everyone"*, and there exists a *"competition for power".* Further, the holders of power at a given time are in fact, accountable to the electorate. Schumpeter (1942) with influences from Max Weber presented a view on democracy that has been widely-received. He defines the democratic method as an institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which, individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote (in Bottomore, 1993: 9). Mannheim (1956) on the other hand, states that,

> *"[…] the actual shaping of policy is in the hands of the elites; but this does not mean to say that the society is not democratic. For it is sufficient for democracy that the individual citizens, though prevented from taking a direct part in government all the time, have at least the possibility of making their aspirations felt at certain intervals […]* (in Bottomore, 1993: 9)*.*

In this context, it could be argued that democracy still finds compatibility with elitist theories. This is due to the fact that the idea of 'equality' that democracy as a 'form of society' yields, can easily be reinterpreted as *"equality of opportunity"*. Democracy will then be treated as a type of society in which the elite positions – economic, cultural as well as political – are 'open' in principle, and the elites are recruited from different social strata on the basis of individual merit. The theory on the circulation of elites is instrumental to the above notion. However, it is pertinent to mention here that the forgoing political competition and equality of opportunity can be presented as corollaries of liberal, or in other words *laissez-faire* economic theory as Williams (1958) affirmed by stating that *"the theory of elites is, essentially, only a refinement of social laissez-faire"*. Moreover, the realistic sciences Pareto, Weber, Michels and others, in their different ways, helped to establish, was intended above all, to refute Marx's theory, and the unrealistic nature of its class patronage. Bottomore (1993: 10) states that,

> *"[elite] was originally a middle class notion …* [In Marxist theory] *the proletariat is to be the ultimate class which will usher in the classless society. Not so. Rather, the history of all societies, past and future, is the history of its ruling classes … there will always be a ruling class, and therefore exploitation … this is the anti-socialist, specifically anti-Marxist, bent of the elitist theory as it unfolds in the last decade of the nineteenth century".*

On the other hand, the conception of democracy could be seen as a political system in which, political parties compete for a vote by an electorate of the masses. It further implies that the elites are relatively open and recruited on the basis of merit in the light of presuming a continuous and extensive circulation of the elite. Additionally, the whole adult population is believed to participate in the ruling of society at least in the sense that it can exercise a choice between the rival elites. Manheim (1956: 200) contributes to this discussion by stating that democracy is characterized not by the absence of the elite strata, but through a new mode of the elite selection and their new self-interpretation. However, he also goes on to assert through his own research that the reconciliation between the notions of 'elites' and 'democratic government', has grown apace in the 20th century. His verdicts are the circumstances of large-scale warfare (arising from unprecedented international rivalry in economic growth), rise and growth of new nations, contrast between the consequences of elite rule in 'one-party' states and also the experiences of democratic societies where several political parties compete for power. In Manheim's view, the above reasons enhanced the *"importance of leadership"* (in Bottomore, 1993: 88). Schumpeter directs his reproach at the democratic system and praises the minority doctrines of Pareto and Mosca. He argues that *"modern democracy arose with the capitalist economic system and is casually connected with it"* (Schumpeter, 1942: 296-297). It should be taken into account that the elite theorists themselves – Schumpeter for instance – have had an important influence in producing the new definitions of democracy, which are then held up as being compatible with the notion of elites. Such developments of social thought have affected the modern perception of both democracy and socialism.

Despite certain allowances to equal rule, some scholars believe that the above concepts formed a political doctrine, which opposed, or was critical towards modern democracy, and still more opposed to modern socialism. Fridrich (1950) in fact, believes that the new society contains feudal remnants and through such doctrines, these ancient ideas were unearthed to hinder democratic notions. While elitist theories of Pareto and Mosca together, attempt to reconcile the notion of elites and democracy, the hint of democracy apparent in theories of the latter counters this argument (Bottomore, 1993: 87-88). It is assumed that the existence of governing elite is imperative. However, in a democratic situation, it permits elites to form freely, and establish a regulated competition between themselves for positions of power.[20] As Mannheim (1956: 179) stressed, although the masses are not allowed to participate directly in government, they make their intentions felt at certain intervals to choose their preferred elites in their precariousness. Most importantly, these notions only become applicable if the theory of 'circulation of the elites' is continuous and extensive. Only when such conditions persist, the elite prevails. On the other hand, Mannheim (1956) listed certain criteria that enhance the appeal of elite in the 20th century as crucial to society. Where the competition model democracy has been

enhanced through the contrast between one-party and more democratic societies, it has also found scientific appeal with an analogy to free enterprise system. Further, Aron (1950: 10) tells us that through the 'plurality of elites' in the democratic world – in contrast to the more unified elites in the socialist world – general checks and balances of the system is maintained. Within this scenario, it is worth taking up the available theories on elitism.

**Theories on Elitism**

Numerous theories have been formulated in relation to defining elites in a manner pertinent to the 20th century. An Analysis of such theories can lead to the identification of the most appropriate one/ones for the periods that come under the purview of this research. While the age-old ideas of physical and moral inequalities in men have been instrumental in the making of elitist theories, they also rely intimately on the notion of economic 'class'. Although the 'class' bias is symptomatic to elitist theories, some are more democratically-oriented. Under circumstances where democracy has been in common practice the world over (at least from the 20th century), such theories appear to be more palatable than undemocratic others (i.e. Ruling Class[21]; Power Elite[22]; Political Elite[23]). On the other hand, certain theories that pay homage to above ideas (i.e. theory on Intellectuals, Managers and Bureaucrats[24]) fail in their many under-assumptions and historical validity. The shortcomings of such theories have been overcome through the notions of Pareto and Mosca, addressed next as the theory of the Political-class and the governing-elite.

*Political Class and the Governing Elite*

Pareto's Notions:

The feeble explanations derived on elitism over the years, were taken to a level of complexity by Vilfredo Pareto (1963: 1422-1423) who defined 'elite' in two distinct ways. Firstly, he assumed that in every branch of human activity each individual could be given an index. This index stands as a sign of capacity in a similar way that grades are given for various subjects at school examinations. The class of people who possess the highest indices in their respective branch of activity is referred to as the elite. Consequently, there are two strata in a population; a lower stratum (the 'non-elite') and a higher stratum (the 'elite'). However, Pareto does not make any further use of this concept as it serves merely to emphasize on the inequality of individual endowments in every sphere of social life. This also becomes the starting point for his foremost subject matter; the 'governing-elite'. Pareto's early writings – especially, *Cours d' économie politique* (1896-7) – make explicit how he arrived at the above conception. He propounds the idea of a normal curve of distribution of wealth in a given society and argues that if individuals were arranged according to other criteria,

such as their level of *"intelligence, aptitude for mathematics, music talent, moral character* etc."*, there would probably result distribution curves similar to that of wealth. Secondly, he affirms that if individuals were arranged according to their political and social power (or influence), in most societies, the same individuals would occupy the same position in this hierarchy as in the hierarchy of wealth.

Consequently, as Pareto (in Bottomore, 1993: 2) concludes, it could be conceived that the upper classes possessing such indices are usually the richest and represent themselves as the elite in society. This conclusion confirms the pre-eminence of the factor of economics in the constitution of elitism. Additionally, Pareto (1963: 1429-1430) further observed that the upper stratum of society – the elite – nominally contains certain groups of people (not always very sharply-defined) called aristocracies; military, religious and commercial in nature, as well as plutocracies – a doctrine that was later clarified by Marie Kolabinska. Bottomore (1993: 4) states that Kolabinska, a pupil of Pareto, sharpened the above point in her reading on the elites of France (largely prior to the industrial revolution) by discussing the 'movement of individuals' between the different sub-groups of the governing-elite. She examined in-detail, the history of four of such prominent sub-groups; the rich, nobles, armed aristocracy and clergy. Despite the fact that such groups may have been more prevalent prior to the industrial revolution, they still exist less numerously. However, this should not be confused with the main argument on the governing-elite. Pareto's theory of the governing-elite explains that in the study of the social equilibrium, it is advantageous to divide the elite class into two; namely, 'governing-elite' and 'non-governing-elite' (Pareto, 1963: 1423-1424). As Pareto (in Bottomore, 1993: 2) further elaborates, the governing-elite *"directly or indirectly play some considerable part in government"* while the non governing-elite make up the rest.

Mosca's Notions:

Pareto's conceptions may well have owed some acknowledgment to Gaetano Mosca's (1939: 50). Analogous somewhat to Marx's ideology, he expressed the notion of two classes of people in all forms of societies; both primitive and the most advanced. Namely they are, 'a class that rules' and 'a class that is ruled'. According to him, the first class is always the less-numerous, performs *"all political functions, monopolizes power and enjoys the advantages that power brings"*, whereas the latter being more numerous, is *"directed and controlled by the first"*, in a manner that is more or less legal (in the contemporary scenario) or arbitrary and violent. This inevitable rule of the minority over the majority is facilitated by the fact that the minority is always 'organized'. It is also said to possess 'superior individuals' who have certain attributes that are real or apparent, which is being highly-esteemed and exceptionally influential in the society in which they live. The power of this organized minority group is

irresistible as against each single individual in the unorganized majority. Such majority individuals stand alone before the totality of the organized-minority. As Mosca (1939: 53) further adds, the very reason for the organized nature of the ruled is sparked by its minority nature itself.

Combined Doctrine:

Both Pareto and Mosca's ideas are condensed by Bottomore (1993) into a few easily conceivable concepts that are very much applicable to the 20th century scenario. Despite the fact that their conceptions diverge – Pareto dwelling on the psychological notion of 'residues (sentiments)' and Mosca having based his ideas on both psychology and sociologically – they are both equally concerned by the problem of political power. The conceptions of the 'political-class', the 'governing-elite' and the 'middle-class' that have come out of their doctrines could be noted as the most convincing theories to date. They have over the decades, survived relentless interrogations without experiencing wide repudiation. Although Mosca in particular, acknowledges the need for democracy in his doctrine, both of them together, criticize the idealism behind democratic theories of politics through the simple observation that, *"in every society there is a minority which effectively rules"* (Bottomore, 1993: 87). It is believed that

> *"[the] term 'elite (s') is now generally applied, in fact, to fictional, mainly occupational, groups which have high status (for whatever reasons) in a society"* (Bottomore, 1993: 7).

Pareto and Mosca's combined ideology inculcates this view. According to them, in every society, the elites could either be found in the form of various 'functional groups' or as a 'political-class'. Dwelling on this concept, Bottomore (1993: 123) believes that the term 'elite' has now become redundant, or fallen into disuse. He illustrates that in the modern industrial countries, there are numerous groups of important 'functional elites' in the form of *"[…] scientists, technologists, managers, administrators, teachers and so on […]"*. Through their 'artists and intellectuals', these countries are supposed to be creating a 'civilization' rather than a mere 'commercialized mass consumption society'. However, this particular group lacks in political power and yields a feeble degree of influence over economic and cultural arenas their respective spheres cover. Instead, their influence is delimited to the extent that their occupational functions can influence the above factors. Further, such groups also overlap with the so-called 'middle-class' as Bottomore (1993: 123) tells us, which will be discussed in detail later. Consequently, he concludes that *"… there is no particular reason for referring to them as 'elites' at all"* (Bottomore, 1993: 123). Hence, they could be seen simply as 'functional' and largely 'occupational' groups *"within the social division of labour"*, whose members differ greatly in ability and achievement.

*"If the general term 'elite' is to be applied to these functional groups, we shall need another term for the minority which rules a society, which is not a functional group in the same sense, and is in any case of such great social importance that it deserves to be given a distinctive name. I shall use here Mosca's term, the 'political class', to refer to all those groups which exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged in struggles for political leadership […]"* (Bottomore, 1993: 7).

The more conspicuous and loosely-defined 'political-class' consists of those who occupy the posts of political command as well as those who can in certain ways, exert influence on political decisions. This class undergoes changes in its membership over a period of time, ordinarily by the recruitment of new individual members from the lower strata of society, sometimes by the incorporation of new social groups. Occasionally, these established elites are replaced completely by a 'counter elite' in situations such as revolutions, in a process referred to as the 'circulation of elites' (Bottomore, 1993: 36-40). Within the political-class itself, there exists a smaller group, the 'political-elite' or 'governing-elite'; consisting of the individuals who actually exercise political power in a given society, at a given time. This includes members of the government/of the high administration, military leaders, and in some cases, politically influential families of an aristocracy/royal house as well as the leaders of powerful economic enterprises. However, paradoxically, Bottomore does not elaborate enough on the intellectual role fulfilled by this group and leaves it to be later addressed under the 20th century elites who are said to have assumed the role of earlier ruling classes.

It is less convenient to set boundaries for the political class as it might include the 'political/governing-elite' as well as the 'counter-elites'. The latter may comprise according to Bottomore, of leaders of political parties who are out of office and representatives of new social interests or classes such as trade union leaders, groups of businessmen, as well as intellectuals who are active in politics. Politically influential aristocratic families and royal house are no exemptions either. It is pertinent to argue here that such groups are pushed outside the governing-elite circle owing to their opposing or alternative political ideologies, irrespective of their economic, political or socio-cultural background. Some in fact, might be individual groups who had failed to make the 'governing-elite' ranks, despite sharing the same political vision. However, it is inevitable that the aristocratic families and royal house will always exert some political influence at least, although it might have a feeble political participation; that could either go in the way of the governing-elite or the counter-elite. The political-class therefore, comprises of a number of groups that may be engaged in varying degree of cooperation, competition or conflict with one another (Bottomore, 1993: 8).

Commenting on the political influence of elite on their respective societies, Bottomore confirms that, although the composition of governing-elite may be progressively altered, the relative importance of the various groups within the elite stratum may not

change. He believes that a society can only survive and prosper if there is true collaboration between these groups in terms of unity of opinion and action. The biggest downside of this combined doctrine however, is its acknowledgement to the fact that those who play a role in government constitute a coherent group. This indeed, is against the true notion of democracy.

Elites and Sub-elites:

As for Mosca, the elite are not simply raised high above the rest of society. They are in fact, intimately connected with the masses through the 'sub-elite'. This much-larger group represents all intents and purposes of society and are known as the new 'middle-class' in the 20th century. This particular group does not only supply recruits to the governing-elite class, it is a vital element in the government of society. Within the middle-class, we may find 'higher' and 'lower' strata, according to Bottomore (1993: 53). The former group comprises of those in *"professional, technical and [relatively] higher managerial occupations"*. The lower conversely, will extend to the ones in the *"more routine clerical and administrative jobs".* The middle-class could also be placed on par with the idea of 'intelligentsia'. This was a term derived in the 19th century Russia to address those who had acquired a university education, which qualified them for professional occupations. As illustrated by Bottomore (1993: 53), such occupations have been described by many as 'non-manual occupations'. The 'middle-class' engaged in the above occupational spheres is essentially a part of the 'working-class'. Therefore, it could be argued that manual work is the domain of rest of the working-class (in Marx's sense), which is the great majority.

As Mosca (1939: 404) clarifies, the stability of a given political organism after all, depends on the levels of morality, intelligence and activity that this particular stratum attains. Bottomore (1993: 75) believes that the middle-class as a whole, influences economic development not only by contributing through their special skills, but by a *"general commitment to modern ways of living".* This is characteristic in developing countries where the former colonists fashioned such a class through their educational and administrative mechanisms as K. T. Silva (2005) and V. K. Jayawardena (1972) point out. Bottomore's (1993: 70) belief is that the lower levels of the middle-class overlaps with the lower level of intellectuals (out of the 20th century intellectuals, manager and bureaucrats). On the other hand, Bottomore (1993: 21) upholds that numerously, and in terms of the range that their occupations encompass on, the middle-class has grown in the latter part of the 20th century. This growth in fact, hinders the Marxist prediction of the possibility of a homogeneous working-class overthrowing the ruling-class.

Taking the discussed points and other elitist theories into consideration, it could be argued that in their true state, the middle-class is not in a position to yield a strong political influence on society. Their political influence can go as far as influencing by vote, democratic elections, or physically taking part in social revolutions (Bottomore, 1993: 36-40).

Circulation of the Elites:

According to Pareto (1915-19: 1430), history is a graveyard of aristocracies. Based on this notion, Pareto introduces one of the fundamental ideas of his political theory; 'the circulation of elites'. He believes that this process happens in two ways; one within the elite-class itself and the other between different classes (Fig. 26). Pareto when discussing the decay and renewal of aristocracies observes that the governing class is restored not only in number, but more importantly in quality – as their residues and vigour gradually lose strength over time – by families rising from lower classes. As Bottomore (1993: 35) sums up the process,

> *"[...] slowing down of this circulation* [of individuals] *may result in a considerable increase of the degenerate elements in the class which still hold power, and on the other hand, in an increase of elements of superior quality in the subject classes. In such a case, the social equilibrium becomes unstable... and the slightest shock will destroy it. A conquest or a revolution produces an upheaval, brings a new elite to power, and establishes a new equilibrium".*

Based on such ideas, Pareto derived that revolution occurs when rate of circulation of individuals is slow, while others concluded that this theory is applicable to entire social groups (in Bottomore, 1993: 48). On the other hand, he argues that, at times, elites represent certain interests in society and circulation of elites hence results from a decline of established interests and rise of new ones. He adduces examples in the form of respective elite constitution in early Europe in the form of military/religious/commercial aristocracies and their plutocracies that saw a significant transformation by the 19th century, to result in a 'Trade Union Elite', especially in England. This is more clearly exemplified by Kolabinska (in Bottomore, 1993: 36) in her seminal study on France's elite circulation, where she discusses rising elite groups in different periods of its history;[25] commercial classes, industrial classes, bourgeoisie, lawyers and financiers. On the other hand, Kolabinska (1912) takes Pareto's theory a step further by claiming that the former type of circulation – one within the elite themselves – postulated by Pareto in fact, applies to the 'governing elite' alone. Her real addition to the theory however, pertains to the latter form of circulation framed by Pareto, where either lower strata individuals succeed in entering the elite class; or alternatively, form new elite groups altogether that in turn, engage in the struggle for power.

Power Triangle showing 'Circulation of the Elites'.

Fig. 26
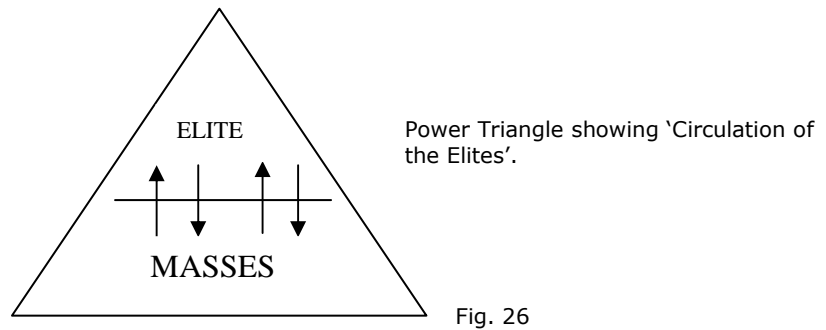
Some scholars such as Mosca (in Bottomore, 1993: 43) believed that laws and conditions – imposed by the ruling elite themselves or perpetuated by tradition – that keep this circulation at bay, should go. As he noted, this is why the antagonistic elite groups that are made from the lower classes, attempt to seize power from the ruling elite. Based on this argument, he assumes the existence of 'mobile' and 'immobile' societies. The notion of mobile societies converges with democracy. As Mosca (1884: 30-31) elaborates,

> *"[…] the ranks of the ruling classes have been held open. The barriers that kept individuals of the lower classes from entering the higher have been either removed or lowered, and the development of the old absolutist state into the modern representative state has made it possible for almost all political forces, almost all social values, to participate in the management of society".*

Moreover, Bottomore (1993: 43) tells us that the circulation of individuals is less important in conceiving the above theory. For him, the theory is more suitable to comprehend the circulation of whole groups or classes. The combined ideas of Mosca, Pirenne and Schumpeter on the other hand, convey the notion that economic and cultural changes in society, may result in new social groups (Bottomore, 1993: 43). This is a convincing explanation that is biased towards the notion of 'class' than that of 'elite', which manifests an overt Marxist tendency. Although, the 'circulation of elites' is a convincing theory that takes social mobility into consideration, it too suffers from certain deficiencies. Firstly, it dwells mainly on historical illustration; thus, exaggeration and generalization is made inevitable. Secondly, it lacks a proper investigation method, systematic comparison and means of measurement etc.

**Most Convincing Elitist Theory/Theories**

The elitist theories examined above, all possess certain weaknesses. These weaknesses were discussed respectively under each theory. In order for one theory to be chosen as a framework for this study, it has to fulfil a number of requirements. Firstly, it should not be considered academically, a social or romantic myth. Secondly, it should be least repudiated. Thirdly, it should pay homage to the notion of 'modern

democracy'; conceived today as the most 'ideal' form of government. Finally, it should be applicable to the two modern periods (the colonial and post-independence) that come under the purview of this study.

In this context, the theory of the 'Political Class and Governing Elite' is arguably the most apposite, as it meets the above criteria. Firstly, the theory is derived by repudiating the now disenchanted idea of 'classless society'. The extreme polarization of economic classes into two main classes that Marxism predicted has become unrealistic in the light of the 'middle-class' that has inflated by the present-day. The theory accommodates essentially, the conception of this middle-class. Secondly, it takes into account the idea of 'functional elite' in its formation, which is then discarded owing to the lack of an objective (political or economic) grounding. Finally, the theory pays patronage to the political idea of 'modern democracy'. Despite being based on the notion of 'human inequality' that in turn, results in a minority that rules, the theory attempts to accommodate democracy to the best possible extent. This homage is articulated by ideas such as the 'circulation of elites' that the theory encompasses on.

## 3.2 Elitism in the Eastern Context

### Historical Evolution

There is a clear shortage of literature on the condition of Eastern elitism and even the available literature tends to be suffering from chronic orientalism. In order to counter this problem, the study is extra-cautious about Western views on the orient, while being heavily-reliant on the works by Asian authors; from the wider Indian sub-continent and from Sri Lanka itself.[26] The pertinent point that needs to be established here is that there are no theories on Eastern elitism as there is for its Western counterpart. These points were established under the literature review.

In order to grasp the condition of pre-modern Eastern elitism, the best resort is to dwell on the ancient sub-continental history of social stratification. This history suggests that the 'caste system' has always been the most dominant social stratification means based on which, certain theories have been developed. Relying on the sub-continental caste system, its implication on the Lankan scenario (that was in fact, nourished by the former) could be established as both these were culturally-determinant phenomena. Having colonized and brought under the control of modern Western political, economic and socio-cultural spheres, the condition of elitism in the modern Asiatic context could be explained in terms of economically-determinant Western elitist theories (addressed in the foregoing section). Since the pre-modern

and modern means of social stratifications overlapped during this period, the period owes a similar explanation from the caste system's point of view. By synthesizing the two, the true nature of modern Eastern elitism could be envisaged. This section attempts firstly, to derive pre-modern Lankan elitism out of a similar pre-modern Asiatic context with undeniable cultural similarities (i.e. the Indian sub-continental milieu). Then, the focus is narrowed-down into exploring modern colonial period elitism in Ceylon/Sri Lanka.

### Pre-Modern Condition; Social Stratification

The tropical climates in the far-orient could at times be inhospitable and unforgiving. This resulted in a periodic scarcity of water and its management became crucial for paddy cultivation; the most dominant form of livelihood and economic activity of the region. Hence, from the dawn of ancient civilizations, the Eastern peoples learnt, through trial and error, to construct systems of irrigation for water management (Ashley De Vos, 1977: 39-40). As Karl Wittfogel (1957) explains, in his rather orientalist vision on the ancient Eastern civilizations, it is in such a context that 'tyrannical' forms of polity and hence, oriental despotism, came into being. In relation to the Indian sub-continental situation, he believes that the caste system was the culprit for the above predicament. Wittfogel infers that the underlying reason for such a condition was the control appropriated by a small faction in society, of the most valuable natural resource; water. Although his view of such situations being tyrannical could be repudiated,[27] his explanation of the political and economic factors at work, is convincing. However, he falls short of giving enough emphasis on the operation of cultural factors in the historical situations he encounters. The economic-determinism apparent in Wittforgel's modern Western cultural perspective hinders the more dominant role of culture (and religion) in the pre-modern Asiatic contexts, especially in the sub-continental one. The coming section overcomes this shortcoming by considering the instrumentality of culture in the construction of elitism in such contexts.

Caste-based Sub-continental Context:

Both modern-day India and China can boast of two of the most archaic civilizations in the Far-East. Bottomore (1993: 29) states that in situations such as China, the intellectual social class of *literati*, and in India, the so-called superior caste of *Brahmins*, wielded supreme power. Although both these groups were traditional land-owners, the control over irrigation was central for their political dominance (Wittforgel, 1959: 23-27).[28] This section examines how culture preceded economic and political spheres historically in the far-orient, and dwells on available sociological definitions and theories on arguably, the most dominant pre-modern means of social

stratification; the 'caste system'. Here, the Northern Indian situation is taken up as it is the most contiguous to the ancient Lankan situation. It was this particular civilizational social structures (especially, social stratification), family system, world view and traditions that spread into ancient Lanka (Ellawala, 2002: 11). The 'caste system' is only evident within the sub-continental and Lankan situations in present-day South Asia (Hawaii.edu, 2012). The absence of this particular social stratification determiner renders scenarios such as that of ancient China irrelevant. There is in fact, a corpus of historical material to be found in ancient Lanka in relation to its own history, since the first recorded migrations.[29] This body of knowledge constantly overlaps with sub-continental history and makes cross-references to one another.

Definitions and Criteria

According to Roberts (1995: 35), *"[castes] is a social and cultural category. It is an identity, a label. But it is also more than that".* As Edmund Leach (in Roberts, 1995: 35) has stressed, a caste does not exist by itself, where it can only be recognised in contrast to other castes with which, its members are closely involved in a network of relationships. These relationships extend to economic, religious and political spheres, and only kingship is excluded. Caste is also a quality that resides in the blood, where blood is graded from very pure to extremely defiling (Roberts, 1995: 35). After all, as Dubos (in Rapoport, 1969: 48) notes, man has a great *"propensity to symbolize everything that happens to him and then react to the symbols as if they were the actual environmental stimuli".*[30] Obeyesekera (2007: 12) acknowledging this idea, states that the caste system is a 'symbol of differentiation' more than anything else.[31] Thus, it could be argued that the social structure established by culture (underlying religion), in its operation, kept each caste group in constant check. They were only allowed to engage in the culturally laid-down economic activities, and the stability of the society as a whole, depended on this arrangement. Over the years, many have attempted to classify the levels and underlying factors behind the Indian caste system. Cohen has drawn distinctions between the *Jāti* (the endogamous caste), *Jat* (caste cluster) and *Varna* (skin colour) levels, where Bailey on the other hand, has argued that 'caste as a *Jāti*' is the main sociological referent of the word 'caste', and that this unit has much greater 'groupness' than 'caste categories' or *'caste as varna'* (in Roberts, 1995: 40). Encompassing such views, Richard Fox (in Roberts, 1995: 40) identifies five major 'intermediary levels' between *Jāti and varna as "ideological links between the local caste groups (based on interaction)".*[32]

Anderé Bé teille (in Roberts, 1995: 40) sees a major problem in this method and claims that *"the word Jāti does not have the one single meaning[33] … but a plurality of meanings, including one which equates with varna".* To counter this problem, he brings in Evans-Pritchard and describes the caste system as a segmentary system.

This means that each Indian is a member of *"an expanding series of groups (or categories)"* and that *"the caste system has a property which enables people to shift easily … from one referent to another, and to apply the same term Jāti to all of them"* (Roberts, 1995: 40-41). Therefore, the same man could describe himself as belonging to different sub groups, when the reason to do so arises. Evans-Pritchard explains this with the *Nuer* (Fig. 27).



Fig. 27    *The Nuer.*

'When Z¹ fights Z² no other section is involved. When Z¹ fights Y¹, Z¹ and Z² unite as Y². When Y¹ fights X¹, Y¹ and Y² unite, and so do X¹ and X². When X¹ fights A, X¹, X², Y¹ and Y² all unite as B.'
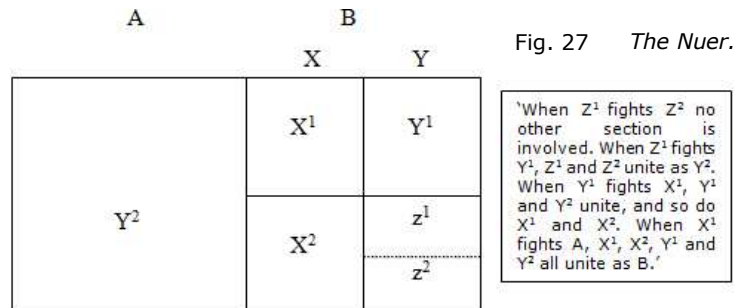
Dominant caste

For a caste to be considered 'dominant', there are certain criteria to be met. Firstly, a caste has to occupy a high place in the local caste hierarchy while serving as a reference group to other castes in the area. Secondly, it has to possess control of the most important economic resource of the area; the land. Control over a sizable amount of arable land means local dominance. As Srinivas (in Roberts, 1995: 43) tells us, *"the existence of a congruence between land ownership and high rank in the caste hierarchy has been widely observed"*, though he adds the proviso that this generalisation admits of exceptions. In many cases the dominance derived by the control of goods and services is seconded by numerical strength, which could hence be considered as the third criteria. The degrees of dominance must be allowed for as one can speak of 'decisive dominance', mere 'dominance' or even refer to 'shared dominance' (where two castes share power and status in a village or locality) (Roberts, 1995: 43). Srinivas (in Roberts, 1995: 43) even notes that the *"influence of the dominant caste seems to extend to all areas of social life"*. However, Roberts (1995: 43) notes that the reading of this statement must be modified by observations elsewhere, which recognise the unresolved duality between the religious and the politico-economic dimensions.[34]

Historical Narration

The traditional Hindu Indian society was one based on the primeval four-fold caste system; *Brahmana, Kshatriya (Kshātriya), Waishya (Vaishya)* and *Sudra* (Ellawala, 2002: 11). The basis of castes system was *varna* (skin colour) as Roberts (1995: 43) tells us and it runs as far back as the Aryan advent to India (N. de Silva, 2006b). Apart from the aforementioned 'twice born' groups, the 'untouchables' (known as *Harijans* or *Dalits*) fall outside of the system all together (beyondbooks.com, 2012) (Fig. 28).[35] Obeyesekere (2007: 12) points out that this millennia-old caste system

was a religious construct,[36] and delimited different economic functions for different social groups that became castes.

Fig. 28



The Caste System

**Twice Born Groups & Others.**

Hindus consider people in the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas, "twice born." This separate of reincarnation (according to Hinduism, everyone gets reincarnated). A person who is "twice born" is born once as a baby, and then goes through a ritual to become an adult. A person who has passed through this coming-of-age ceremony, called an *upanaya,* receives a sacred thread that he wears looped over one shoulder and across the torso. Neither the Sudras nor the untouchables are twice-born.

The Brahmins on the apex of the hierarchy were the learned and religious faction who considered themselves to be the convenors between *Maha Brahma* (the divine creator) and the worldly beings. As Ellawala (2002: 11-12) tells us, propagation by the Brahmins that the gods do not accept *Yāgas* (offerings)[37] by the kings without their intervention, attributed an indispensable state of teacher/adviser [at times, *Purohitha* (the prime minister)] position to them.[38] Ellawala (2002: 12-13) believes that inheritance of the role as a learned cleric established a contiguity with the god-fearing royals, assuring a strong degree of political influence for the Brahmin caste. The *Kshatriyas* who occupied the second stratum were the worriers who exercised political power as kings, royals and other lesser levels of ruling ranks. In Ellawala's (2002: 17) view, at times, it is recorded that this particular group even rivalled the dominance of Brahmins.[39] Both these castes being substantial landowners, were closely allied during the imperial and feudal periods of sub-continental history (Bottomore, 1993: 29). Property ownership and yielding services from the lower castes were in fact, the most crucial benefits received by Brahmins owing to this alliance. On the other hand, on certain occasions, the Brahmins themselves founded ruling or noble houses (Ellawala, 2002: 12).[40] Further, there seem to have been, at times, an amount of movement of individuals and families between the Brahmin and Kshatriya castes, which the doctrines of caste exclusiveness expounded in the classical texts do not indicate (Bottomore, 1993: 29). The *Waishyas*, making up the majority, were predominantly farmers and traders, and also engaged in other livelihoods such as being artisans to a lesser extent. As Ellawala (2002: 26) confirms,[41] at times, the traders through their economic ventures became extremely affluent. Some of them known as *Situ waru* also yielded a considerable degree of prestige and influence in society as Buddhist literature affirm. Some theories even suggest that this group also took over the political power at times (asianhistory.about.com, 2012).[42] According to *Dharma Sutras*;[43] the *Sudras* were channelled into inferior professions, as they were meant to be employed as servants for the higher stratums in the caste hierarchy.[44] Some of them were channelled into to more independent service-based occupations, as confirmed by *Kautilya* (in Ellawala, 2002: 51). Hence, not only the domestic workers

and slaves, bulk of the labourers and artisans (weavers, carpenters, potters, painters, smiths, dancers etc.), were also drawn from this particular caste according to Ellawala (2002: 51). He further believes that racially, this caste may have consisted of original inhabitant tribes of the sub-continent.

In relation to the first two elite groups, it could be argued that they yielded unrivalled economic, political as well as social influence. The Brahmins were also privileged as intellectuals of religious learning, to possess ideological power. By appropriating the control over water, the *Kshatriyas* with the ideological backing of Brahmins, rose to supreme levels of power to make up some of the most 'unscrupulous' tyrannies the world history has even seen, according to Orientalists such as Wittfogel (1957:39-40).[45] The third elite group *Waishyas* on the other hand, also manifested a certain degree of social influence attained through their economic power. The *Sudras* in comparison, possessed no political or economic power whatsoever, and thus yielded zero social influence, while the untouchable groups on the other hand, were the most repressed (Hawaii.edu, 2012).

Cultural Determinacy

The pertinent point here is that the caste-based social hierarchy of the sub-continent was a stagnant one as illustrated, underpinned on its religious grounding. Alternatively, some Eastern scholars, having followed their Western counterparts, have appropriated an economic-determinism to the notion of 'caste'. Sastri (in Obeyesekera, 2007: 20) for instance, notes that caste is the basis of Indian social organization. As he elaborates, it has been instrumental as an active organization, in the perpetual process of clinging on to the social and economic well-being of certain groups. Sastri also states that every caste is more or less a 'professional group'. Obeyesekere (2007: 11) on the other hand, believes that all humans belonged to one family at the dawn of humanity and as it developed, different tasks were delegated to different groups of people paving the way for a caste system that could also be conceived as a 'class system' in the economic sense. Moreover, Béteille (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 15), notes that prior to Western interventions, the 'caste' (in the cultural sense) and 'class' (in the economic sense) systems converged and operated in a parallel manner in the sub-continental context. However, all such views are oblivious to the possibility that the social organization they are referring to in the economic sense, might have been caused by culture (religious beliefs) in the first place. Louis Dumont's attempt to provide a synthesizing analysis of the Indian caste system, throws some light into the unresolved duality between the Brahmin and *Kshatriya* groups, and more importantly, reveals the instrumentality of religion in its formation. Dumont sees the two dimensions epitomised respectively in the two caste groups as interdependent.[46] Analysing his ideas, Roberts (1995: 42) comments that,

> *"[in] the last resort, however, Dumont insists that in the world view of Indians the Kshātriya is dependant upon the Brahmin, and remains his inferior. The religious dimension is primary. It encompasses the political and economic dimension – the secondary and encompassed dimension".*

This statement cements that the 'dominant caste' phenomenon in the sub-continental caste system was underpinned by the religious prerogative and thus, assumes a cultural-determinacy.

### Caste-inspired Lankan Context

Pre-Buddhist Period; Aryan Influence:

The *Mahavamsa* (in mahavamsa.org, 2007) tells us of four *'cultural groups' – Yaksha, Naga, Deva, Gandhabba* – who are said to be the original inhabitants of the island of Lanka.[47] Obeyesekara, based on his own studies on pre-historic Lanka (and also of Munidasa Kumarathunga's) notes that irrespective of their cultural differences the names suggest, all these groups commonly worshipped the sun, hence had possibly united as a 'single caste' (Obeyesekera, 2007: 18). Although written accounts on the caste system in Lankan history is extremely rare, the ancient manuscript known as *Yogarathnakaraya* makes certain useful references to it (Obeyesekera, 2007: 18). Ancient Lanka may have received the fourfold Indian cast system with waves of Indian migrants the island received over the centuries; both from North and South of the sub-continent. Ellawala (2002) and Ariyapala (1962) share the view that this four caste system experienced a gradual metamorphosis to arrive at its latter states. Karunathilake (1990) on the other hand, is of the belief that this change was an independent one, based on the island's political and socio-economic arenas that were considerably discrete from the sub-continents'.

N. de Silva (2006b) states that the first documented waves of Aryan immigrations may have occurred predominantly from Eastern and South-Eastern parts, and to a certain extent, from Western India. He in fact, believes that the peoples who migrated may have been the progeny of an intermingling that had happened with the invading Aryans, and original inhabitants of these parts. N. de Silva uses the term *Ardha Vaidika* (quasi-Vedic) to best describe their 'hybrid' culture that he infers to had possessed cultural traits of both the groups.[48] Deraniyagala (2010) on the other hand, conducted excavations in pre-Buddhist *Anuradhapura* to find evidence of such a quasi-Aryan culture. He further reiterated based on his own excavations in the ancient city that these immigrations have occurred as far back as the 9th century B.C., and perhaps before. The most documented of such migrations took place in the 5th century B.C. as the arrival from *Vanga Deshaya* (present-day Eastern India)[49] of Prince

*Vijaya*[50] of the *Sinha* (Lion) tribe, along with a contingent of seven hundred followers (N. de Silva, 2006b). As he further elaborates, the invading Aryan tribes over the years, intermingled with the natural inhabitants of the island (especially, with the most numerous and resistant *Yakshas*), to make up the hybrid Sinhalese ethnicity.[51] N. de Silva (2006b) in fact believes that it was King *Panduka Abhaya* that realized the unification of these antagonistic tribal groups into a single race, establishing a new 'race-consciousness'.

Documented caste history in the island runs as far back as the advent of Prince *Vijaya*, as Ellawala (2002: 11) and Obeyesekera (2007: 14) both confirm, although there is not much evidence to be adduced. It is believed that some of Vijaya's compatriots were in fact, from the Brahmin caste and the most well-known is *Upatissa*[52] (Ellawala, 2002: 11). The special reference to this and other Brahmins suggest that they received a similar social honor in Vijaya's Lanka, analogous to their position in the sub-continent. Even the first documented affair that conveys evidence of the caste system involves the prince. Upon his request to the King of *Pandu* (in South-Eastern India – present-day *Madurai*), to send (for him and his fellow settlers) *'suitable'* maidens for his coronation, a contingent of a thousand people was sent that consisted of 18 'stratums' (*Sreni*/śreṇī) (Ellawala, 2002: 26). The word *'suitable'* here according to Ellawala, implies from the same caste, and the word *Sreni*, also stands as a caste referent. Moreover, following *Vijaya*'s passing, *Panduvasudeva*,[53] his nephew from *Sinhapura* (Lion City),[54] was brought down to assume the Sinhalese throne. It is well-established that his queen *Bhaddakachchayana* was a *Kshatriya*, of *Sakya* origin, according to *Mahawamsa* (mahavamsa.org, 2007)[55] who also crossed the sea from the sub-continent.[56] Apart from such tribal and caste references in the Sinhalese history, it is undeniable that all such prominent individuals were always accompanied by family members as well as servants/attendants from the lower castes (Obeyesekere, 2007). The only other evidence for this phenomenon is to be found in Sinhalese folklore as far as the 2nd century B.C. The story Prince *Saliya*, the son of King *Dutu Gamunu*[57] who renounced his throne to marry a low caste – *'Sadol'*/*'Gâdi'*/*'Chandala'* – maiden is recorded.[58] On the other hand, Karunathilake (1990) reiterates that the terms such as *Aya, Parumaka, Gamika, Ganapathi* to be found in pre-Buddhist period Brahmin stone inscriptions that denote social distinctions, is the first reference to caste implications in Ceylon (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 23). On the other hand, based on the observation that from the classical *Anuradhapura* period, a majority of Sinhalese engaged in agricultural activities, Ellawala (2002: 26) infers that bulk of the migrants to Lanka may have been of the *Waishya* caste.

Buddhist Period:

With the advent during *Anuradhapura* period of Buddhism that subverts the concept of caste, Sinhalese consequently developed their unique equivalent to the Indian caste system. In the *Agganya Sutra*[59], Lord Buddha's sermon to a Brahmin called *Vashishta*, the negation of the caste concept in Buddhism could best be articulated.

> *Najajja wasalo hothi – najajja hothi Brahmano*
> *Kammana vasalo hothi – kammana hothi Brahmano*
> (One is not made either a Brahmin or a *Wasala* (*Sudra*) from birth, but upon his actions).

> - Lord Buddha (in Obeyesekera, 2007: 12, 64).

When the sapling of *Sri Maha Bodhi* – the *Bodhi* tress under which lord Buddha attained enlightenment – was brought in the 3rd century B.C. to Lanka during the reign of King *Devanam Piya Tissa* of *Anuradhapura*, by *Sanghamitta Theraniya,*[60] people from 18 'stratums' (*Sreni*) are said to have arrived in the island along with 8 Brahmin families. They had arrived to assume the elaborate ritualistic functions associated with the sapling as well as other artisan functions of the kingdom. According to *Mahavansa* (in Ellawala, 2002: 16, 19, 52), the contingent consisted of both *Waishya* and *Sudra* castes too. This advent is commonly believed to have imparted a strong sense of Indian civilization on Lanka. In this light, Obeyesekera (2007: 12) believes that a certain degree of the Indian caste consciousness was established in a hitherto unforeseen manner within the Sinhalese community; to the extent that it became a burden on the lower castes. This he sees, as the Sinhalese culture appropriating two opposing religious views at the same time. Ellawala (2002: 14) believes that when other religious views such as *Upanishad, Jainism* and *Buddhism* emerged in India to find mass-following,[61] subsequently, the role of Brahmins, and thus the caste system the Hindu religion (in its ancient form) supported, experienced a gradual decline. He infers that this waning may have also affected the caste ideology in Lanka, following the advent of Buddhism, with the intervention of Emperor Asoka. *Mahavamsa* (in mahavamsa.org, 2007) in fact, makes references to the feeble class distinction between aristocrats and masses in king *Dutugemunu*'s *Anuradhapura* in the 2nd century B.C. – considered as a period of great prosperity that saw the culmination of Buddhism. When Ellawala (2002: 14-15) reiterates that certain Brahmins in Lanka at first, were antagonistic towards Buddhism, Obeyesekera (2007: 12) maintains that most in fact, converted to the faith later on. However, it could be inferred that even as Buddhists, they desired to continue their class exclusiveness and went into great lengths to articulate their caste bias (Ellawala, 2002: 26-27).[62] At times, manifesting their caste influence, certain Brahmins even went to extents of rebelling against the central power (Ellawala, 2002: 14).[63] In addition, special references to the castes of Sinhalese Kings are key evidence to affirm that the factor was very much operational

at the top-most level of Lankan polity as it is narrated by Obeyesekera (2007: 14) and Paranavithana (2001: 11).[64]

One could draw an analogy between the systematized water control for regulating of an agricultural economy by an absolute centralized power, in the sub-continental and Lankan contexts. In the Lankan context (especially after Buddhism), the power had clearly centralized in the hands of the royals. The reasons will be elaborated later. In fact, especially in the centuries after the advent of Buddhism, there is no evidence to show that *Brahmins* reached influential levels in politics or became substantial land owners as they did in the sub-continent. When the *Kshatriyas* and *Brahmins* occupied the apex of Sinhalese social hierarchy (as royals, aristocrats and feudalists) analogous to the sub-continental situation, one could infer that a majority of the populace were of *Waishya* origin who engaged in paddy cultivation as their foremost means of livelihood. Many believe that from the classical period itself, trading as a livelihood was rare amongst the Sinhalese population that was predominantly agricultural and self-sufficient (islamawareness.net, 2011).[65] Traders never had a place in the Sinhalese caste system and the activity was not central to the division of labor that constituted the social order (Perera, 1994: 52). On the other hand, one could infer that even the artisans that immigrated with prince *Vijaya*, and the ones to have done afterwards in latter periods, were all placed more or less at the same level in the social strata as the *Goviyas* (farmers). This is best affirmed by the fact that the word *Sudra* is nowhere to be found in the Sinhalese historic literature (Ellawala, 2002: 52).

On the other hand, history records of the island receiving two Northern sub-continental invasions. These invaders may have brought with them the cast systems from their respective periods. For instance, *Sena* and *Guththika* who are believed to have been merchants took over the throne in *Anuradhapura* in the 1st century B.C., were followed by *Kalinga Magha* who is said to have arrived with an army from *Kalinga* (present-day Orissa), to rule the island between 1213-1232. By weighing the available evidence, it could be argued that the caste system was in fact, functional to a certain degree in classical *Anuradhapura,* among the top ruling echelons of society. However, its articulation was rather feeble amongst the majority, belonging to lesser caste groups. However, it is pertinent to recall Louis Dumont's suggestion that Sinhalese caste was only a 'quasi-caste' export from India (in Roberts, 1995: 4). This conclusion was reached on the ground that the Sinhalese state was 'markedly bureaucratic' in nature. Because there was *"an extremely fully worked out 'liturgy' centred upon the king"*, the Sinhalese monarch was central to both the 'group religion' and to 'political and economic life' (Roberts, 1995: 4-5).

Roberts (1995: 4-5) believe that under these circumstances, an understanding of the Sinhalese kingship ideology is pertinent to the analysis of interrelations between

individuals, castes and the state, and to the socio-political symbolism which was an important part of these interrelations. In his view, the Sinhalese state was influenced by the Asian conceptions of kingship. These ideas centred upon the nation of a '*dēvarāja*' (god king), or '*dhammarāja*' (righteous ruler) or a syncretist combination of the two. Ashley De Vos (1977: 42) confirms the all-powerful nature of earlier Sinhalese kings, where only customs and traditions were there to contain their actions.[66] In the latter Buddhist polities however, the notions of kingship were predisposed by the Buddhist teaching and '*Jātaka*' stories. What is striking about this corpus of religious literature is the centrality of the *dhammarāja* or *cakkavatti* for the pursuit and prevalence of the *Dhamma* (the Buddhist doctrine). Having achieved transcendence (*nibbāna*), Buddha was not available as an intercessionary power within this world. The Buddhist scheme therefore, *"raised up the magnificent cakkavatti world ruler as the sovereign regulator and the ground of society"*. The Buddhist teaching also used rich imagery to depict the force of morality and the weight of royal power (Roberts, 1995: 5). As Tambiah (in Roberts, 1995: 4) notes, *"…the rhetoric of kingship reached a high point in the early Buddhist kingdoms"*. However, scholars are united in the view that the latter Sinhalese states(s),

> *"[…] regulated the caste system and upheld castes principles. It served as a font of legitimation, and its resources entered into the calculations of ambitious individuals and social groups"* (Roberts, 19895: 4-5).

These circumstances could be vindicated on the latter Dravidian influences addressed next.


Dravidian Influence:

The strong socio-cultural, political and economic structures that were ensued during *Anuradhapura* period perpetuated for a millennium or so, until Southern Indian invasions prompted the Sinhalese seat of power to shift periodically.[67] Schumpeter's (1942: 12-13) propagation that, *"[social] structures, types and attitudes are coins that do not readily melt. Once they are formed they persist, possibly for centuries…,"*[68] which indeed, is affirmative in relation to ancient Ceylon. The essence of the basic structures that developed during the *Anuradhapura* period was sustained down into the Kandyan era, having survived continuous South Indian and European interventions for nearly another millennium. Although the caste system was contained to a certain extent by Buddhism, the ever-present South Indian fervour in the backdrop, gradually reviewed its operation by the 14th century (Wijetunge, 2011b: 34-35).

The operation of the South Indian influence was twofold. Firstly, one could consider the numerous waves of invasions – 17 in number to be more precise (Gunaratna, 1993: 4) – the Sinhalese Buddhist civilization had received from the Dravidian South Indian Kingdoms of *Pandya* and *Chola*, at least from the 5th century A.D.

(Paranavithana, 1962). From time to time, whenever the power of these kingdoms grew, it resulted in attempting to conquer their neighbouring kingdoms, and the Sinhalese Buddhist seat of power was not spared. Although they were always expelled by the Sinhalese, N. de Silva (2006b) argues that owing to the time-lag between invasion and expulsion, not all cultural influences of invaders disappeared completely. He speculates with the aid of anthropological research findings that the extended reigns of South Indian powers resulted in the intermingling of peoples and also cultures to a certain extent. He reiterates that the Dravidian groups (the ordinary peoples and surrendered armies) who were left behind by the conquerors, largely submitted to the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist culture and subsequently Sinhalised in a matter of generations. Secondly, the migrations of numerous social groups over the centuries to the island could be considered. At times, the migrants were South Indian royals who crossed the sea to ascend the Sinhalese throne and family members that accompanied them. As Obyesekera (2007: 13) tells us,  certain kings of Lanka such as *Sengabba Perumal* (a prince possibly of *Malayali* origin) who reigned as *Sapumal* of *Kotte* Kingdom in the 15th century; *Arishtaki Vendu Perumal* [a Brahmin possibly of *Malayali* origin who used to be the prime minister (*Purohitha*) of King *Rajasinghe* of *Seethavaka*] who claimed the Sinhalese throne after King's death in 1594; and the *Nayakkar* dynasty (from the *Vijayanagar* Empire in Southern India who were mainly *Telingu* and *Kannada* in origin) that reined in Kandy from 1739 to 1815, were not of Sinhalese blood. On the other hand, there were royal marital alliances. Obeyesekera makes references to the practice of getting queens from the Indian subcontinent for Sinhalese Kings, who were joined by their relatives and attendants; during the span of Lankan history from *Vijaya,* the first king, to *Sri Vickrama Raja Sinha*, the last. Moreover, Obeyesekera's noting of noble Brahmins from South Indian Kingdoms coming into the island (especially in the *Gampola* Period)[69] to settle-down and marry local women in the 18th century Kandy, is also avowed by Nimal de Silva (2010). The best evidence for such propagations is the *Kadaim Poth* and *Viththi Poth* (official census documentation from the medieval period).[70] Consequently, Obeyesekera (2007: 16) believes that about 95% of the Kandyan noble families have direct South Indian descent.[71]

On the other hand, there were other migrant groups who made the journey either voluntarily or involuntarily. For instance, according to *Mahavansa,* when the Sinhalese king *Gajaba I* (A.D. 108-130) invaded the *Chola* kingdom (somewhere between 112-134 A.D.)[72], he brought 16,000 prisoners and settled them down in the island (Paranavithana, 2001: 11).[73] Moreover, *Vijayabahu I* (A.D. 1051-1106) brought from South India, a group of mercenaries (possibly from *Kerala*) known as *Angampodi Velakkara Heva Pannaya,* and for his *Mavlumangalya* (coronation), seven noble South Indian Brahmins, all of whom were settled down in the island (Obeyesekera, 2007: 15). There are other similar stories in the Sinhalese folklore that has received

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relatively less attention. The most notable migrations from South India is said to have occurred between 13th-18th centuries. As Roberts (1995: 15-16) tells us, most of such migrants were organised into *Karava, Salagama* and *Durava* groups and absorbed into the periphery of the 'low country' Sinhalese community. However, in contrast, the migrant groups to the up-country were absorbed into the religious ritualistic frame work of the region. In addition to the foregoing, Obeyesekera (2007: 15)[74] and Seneviratna (2008: 18)[75] make references to other lesser known migrations to have taken place.

The pertinent point to establish here is that out of such South Indian migrants, the groups that settled among the Sinhalese communities submitted to Sinhalese culture and state religion of Buddhism. Two of the low country caste groups to settle around the island's Southern coast are the perfect examples for this phenomenon. For instance, Deraniyagala (2010) tells us that *Salagama* caste arrived from Kerala for trading activities. The *Karava* community on the other hand, claim that they came from Rajasthan (Karava.org, 2011), either as mercenaries or traders.[76] Conversely, there are reasons to believe that the contingents of the same caste groups to settle in the Jaffna Kingdom in the North became Tamilized (S. Deraniyagala, 2010).[77] Although Hussein (2001) acknowledges the *Durava* community's claim to the *Naga* group, for Roberts (1995), they too have a Dravidian origin, as most other 'lower' castes to be found in the island. These South Indian migrant groups may have certainly brought along the caste influences and other forms of inequalities from the respective regions of their origin in the sub-continent, consequently, altering the relatively feeble caste distinction evident in the classical periods. This resulted in a more complex caste structure in the Lankan case, as the new-comers had to be accommodated within the Sinhalese community.

Up-country – Low-country Division:

Other than the caste division within the Sinhalese ethnicity, there also exists another conspicuous division. Obeyesekere (2007: 21) affirms that the division of Sinhalese population into 'up' and 'low' country contingents was established by the *Nayakkar* kings in the 18th century as a political strategy,[78] where they constructed a superiority complex for their subject indigene in the Kandyan provinces. This group arrived at the assumption that they were virtually uncorrupted by the Portuguese and Dutch influences over their low country counterparts who had been long-subjugated to centuries of European colonialism, and thus, racial mixing. This fallacy could be repudiated on many grounds.[79] Obeyesekere (2007: 38-40) correctly stresses that this division along racial and cultural lines was baseless as up-country consists of many noble (also non-noble) families who had moved there from the low-country and *vice versa*. However, this division by the late 18th century formed two different caste

hierarchies in the central highlands or the Kadyan regions known as the 'up-country', and the maritime belt that surrounded it known as the 'low-country'.

A valid point to note here is that migrant groups were absorbed into the Sinhalese culture as different castes with the intervention of the monarchy, as a process of secularization, according to Ralph Pieris (in Roberts, 1995: 48). Assigning ritual status for them was in fact, the privilege of the king (K. T. Silva, 2005: 23). Ralph Pieris (in K. T. Silva 2005: 23) posits that these ritual services (the *Badda)* kept the royal house, the kingdom and the Buddhist monastery functioning, and the caste system saw a culmination during the Kandyan period. Leach's (1959) term 'caste feudalism' in fact, explains best the concept of feudalism in the Lankan context, as against the term's connotation in relation to Europe (K. T. Silva, 2005: 24). The older non-*Govigama* (non-farmer) castes (also known as 'service castes') such as *Navandanna, Badahäla, Berava, Rajaka* etc., according to Ralph Pieris (in Roberts, 1995: 49), had duel functions. Firstly, there were rituals built upon *"the idea of service due to the 'good people' [the Govigamas]"*. Secondly, there were essential economic activities to engage in. Roberts (1995: 48) stresses that although they fulfilled ritual functions, cultivation was their primary activity, identified as their economic input in which, the *Govigama* bureaucracy played a pivotal role. The newest migrant groups such as *Karava, Salagama* and *Durava* only to be found in the low-country alternatively, simply received economic duties. As Roberts (1995) examines in his study on the caste conflict and elite formation in the island, between 13th and 18th centuries (perhaps even before) certain groups of people believed to be Dravidian in origin had arrived from South India for numerous reasons ranging from being merchant explorers, mercenaries for Sinhalese kings, to artisans. However, some of these groups attempted to propagate that they were in fact, of North Indian Aryan origin or alternatively, the descendants of the island's long-lost indigenous groups. For instance, *Karava* through their famous 19th century pamphlets sponsored by their bourgeoisie patrons, claim a *Rajastani Kshatriya* ancestry with compelling evidence.[80] However Roberts (1995: 19-20) adduces proof that their migrant lines, may have fallen through South India. *Salagama* on the other hand, claim that their founding fathers could be traced back to *pēsakārayō* (weavers) from either *'Chale'* or *'Damba Diewa'* on the Malabar Coast (Roberts, 1995: 23-24). *Durava* tie their ancestry either to royal attendants of *Pandyan* princesses from Madurai as Roberts (1995: 24) tells us, or alternatively, to long-lost indigenous *'Naga'* ancestry, as well as North Indian *Kshatriya* ancestry (Hussein, 2001). In a way, it could be argued that such attempted propagations exacerbated inter-caste rifts in the 19th century. However, the pertinent factor as affirmed by Roberts (1995: 49) is that these groups did not assume a 'ritual status' in the caste hierarchy as did the other possible groups of Dravidian origin from the low country and Kandyan regions. The professions these caste groups had to perform were disapproved by Buddhism and resulted in their stigmatization within the

Sinhalese society. For instance, *Karava* over the centuries has been labelled as 'fisher folk', *Durava* as 'toddy trappers' and *Salagama* as 'cinnamon peelers', although there are claims on their part that they were compelled to take up those occupations either by losing their former royal patronage – in the case of *Karava* and *Durava* – or being forcefully channelled into demeaning professions by colonial rulers – in the case of *Salagama* (Roberts, 1995: 19, 51). Thus, Parks's (in Erikson, 2002: 20) 'melting pot' idea where diverse populations merge, acculture and eventually assimilate at different rates and in varying ways, is valid for the pre-modern Sinhalese society too, based on their assumed places in the political and economic systems.[81] However, 'stereotyping' and 'stigmatisation' of assimilated groups was customary in the modern sense.

Newton Gunasinghe (1975) carried out a comprehensive research on the medieval Kandyan social stratification. He in fact, declared that for Kandyans, the caste played a vital role when class was practically unimportant (Newton Gunasinghe in K. T. Silva, 2005: 98). This conclusion is well in line with the argument formed by this section. Moreover, from medieval times the omni-competence of the Sinhalese king, as well as his pivotal and integrative roles, were exemplified in the annual politico-religious pageant known as the *Äsala* festival at which, the tooth relic of Buddha – the palladium of Sinhalese monarchs – was carried in procession (the *Äsala Perahära*) around the streets of Kandy. The detailed description by H. L. Seneviratne (in Roberts, 1995: 6-7) of this series of events reveals the rich symbolism which graphically conveyed a multiplicity of messages.[82] He also shows that the *perahära* was *"a microcosmic representation of all the salient features of Kandyan society"*. As such, it was a *"pre-eminent representation of the caste system"*, and *"a validation of the existing hierarchical order"*. In its careful allocations of space, moreover, those sections representing the provinces were hemmed in and 'engulfed by, the sections representative of the central government'. Hence, in short, the spectacle was undoubtedly one articulating an overwhelmingly strong state power.[83] Herein, too, one finds the embodiment of what Clifford Geertz (in Roberts, 1995: 6-7) has identified as the *"Doctrine of Exemplary Centre"*, and the *"Doctrine of the Theatre State"*. Reflecting upon these facts, it could be argued that such a level of symbolic propensity places the Kandyan situation in contiguity to the Hindu situations in the South Indian Dravidian kingdoms of the period.

Relying on the above evidence and the point of view of K. T. Silva (2005: 23), it could be stated that Sinhala caste system was in line with the administrative structure that was regulated by the Sinhalese monarchy. He is confident that just as the Brahmin ideology, Vedic philosophy and Hindu rituals determined the Hindu caste system, Sinhalese caste system too was a cultural-construct that partially relied on Buddhism for legitimacy. However, since Buddhism in theory rejects any system of castes, the Sinhalese version was much less prone to 'exclusivity' (Robson et al., 1984: 7). Its

cultural grounding could be established through two key arguments. Firstly, in the island, most castes were assigned a ritual status with the aim of fulfilling the vital functions of a kingdom of which, the existence was meant to assure posterity for Buddhism (Fig. 29). Secondly, the Sinhalese system did not seek to generate an economic growth or an excessive surplus, as Nimal de Silva (2010) posits. Based on Buddhist teachings, the system was continued as a rather static mechanism, to ensure an austere and self-sufficient existence for a majority of the populace within an environmentally-sustainable existence (Wijetunge, 2011b: 35). After all, in Mandel's (1982: 21) analysis, a surplus is essential for a faction of society to engage in contemplative work, without the hindrance of having to participate in the economic process of surplus-making. In the Lankan case, the Buddhist monks indeed assumed this position, where they were expected to escape from the *sansara* cycle, and at the same time, enlighten the populace on the faith. In the opinion of K. T. Silva (2005: 31), every caste enjoyed a certain *"pride"* over the unique professions that were traditionally handed down from generation to generation, and this resulted in power negotiations within the hierarchy when a higher caste had to submit to the knowhow as well as manipulation of the lower, when an exclusive service had to be yielded. Brow and Weeramunda (1992) in fact, argue that a certain degree of control was accrued through intermarriage within the castes and also via other socio-political mechanisms, to safeguard complexities of the land tenure systems. Leach (in Dayaratne, 2010: 384) too, demonstrates how land tenure and kinship together, with agrarian practices, are intertwined to an intricate degree.

Under these circumstances, it could be argued that the Lankan caste system was analogous to the sub-continental counterpart owing to its cultural-determinism. The 'dominant caste' criteria that framed the Indian caste system applied to the Lankan scenario in a similar way. The Lankan case of cultural-determinacy deserves further clarification.

Fig. 29

**A Unified Caste structure of the Sinhalese society as it stands today, and classification along functions and rituals.**

| State | Rank | In English | In Sinhalese | Duty/Tax | Rituals | Livelihood | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | | | Farmer Castes | | | | |
| | 1 | Farmers | *Radala* | Civil Administration | Temple Administration | Land Lords | 0.001 |
| | | | *Govi* | Military Service | As Buddist Monks | Farming | 49.0 |
| | | | *Patti* | Military Service | Ritual performaers in Hindu Temples(*Kapuwa*) | Raising Live Stock | 0.001 |
| 2nd | | | Coastal Castes | | | | |
| | 2 | Fishers | *Karava* | Services related to Transport/(*Madige Badda*) | | Fishing | 5.0 |
| | 3 | Chalias | *Salagama* | (*Maha Badda*) | | Cinnamon Peeling | 3.0 |
| | 4 | Chandoes | *Durava* | | | Toddy Tapping | 2.0 |
| | 5 | Chunam Burners | *Hunu* | (*Hunu Badda*) | | Lime Stone Industry | 0.002 |
| 3rd | | | *Service Castes* | | | | |
| | 6 | Smiths | *Achari/Galladu/Navan danna* | (*Kottal Badda*) | Painting in Temples | Casting with metals | 0.5 |
| | 7 | Washers | *Hena/Rada* | (*Rada Badda*) | Rituals in Weddings and Funerals and other Ceremonies | Washing | 3.0 |
| | 8 | Jaggerairoos | *Wahumpura/Hakuru* | | Taking | Making Jaggery | 12.5 |
| | 9 | Potters | *Kumbal/Badahala* | (*Badahala Badda*) | Supplying clay lamps to Temples | Pottery | 2.5 |
| | 10 | | *Dura* | | | | 0.001 |
| | | | *Velladura/Bodhi* | | Protecting the Secret Buddhist Tree-*Sri Maha Bodhiya* | | |
| | | | *Pannadura* | (*Kuruwe Badda*) | | Taking care of Elephants | |
| | 11 | Drum Beaters | *Nakathi/Berawa* | (*Berawa Badda*) | Drum Beating in Temples and special occasions | Dancing/Horoscope | 3.0 |
| | 12 | Patchies | *Bathgama/Padu* | Military Service/Carrying 'Dolas' | | Servants/ Carrying things | 18.0 |
| 4th | | | *Considered as Lowest Castes* | | | | |
| | 13 | | *Gahala* | | Drum Beating at Funerals | Cleaning services | 0.001 |
| | 14 | | *Kinnara* | (*Kinnara Badda*) | | Weaving Matts | 0.3 |
| | 15 | | *Rodi/Hulavali* | | Doing Wodoos | Begging/Making Brooms and | 0.001 |
| | | Others* | | | | | 1.493 |

Note: Caste groups such as *Porowa, Kara, Oli, Pali, Hinna*. Babar and *Gattara* come under Other*.

**Sinhalese Undeterred by Economics?**

A significant body of evidence could be adduced from history to posit that the Sinhalese, since their inception, were not bounded by economics. Emperor *Asoka*, as an extension of his good will to King *Devanam Piya Tissa* (of *Anuradhapura*), in the 3rd century B.C., introduced Buddhism to the Sinhalese. Although some might argue that this may have paved way, or would have been carried out with economic motives – as an economic expansion parallel to cultural expansion – no historical evidence exist to elucidate this point. Although the Sinhalese did have certain economic interactions with certain geographically-accessible kingdoms in the sub-continent, there is no evidence to suggest that either the distant *Maurya* Empire or any other kingdom under its control were in direct economic ties with the island. However, an overwhelming amount of historical evidence could be adduced both from Sri Lanka and India to suggest that this was predominantly a cultural impartation (*Mahavansa, Dweepavansa* etc. from Sri Lanka and Asoka inscriptions from India).

As a result of Buddhistic teachings, Sinhalese were accustomed to living austere and subsistent lives (N. de Silva, 2006a). After Buddhism, a system of polity was created where the king was equated to a *Bodhisatva* whose main role was to safeguard the faith and its followers. A resilient bond was created between the state and religion that survived centuries of foreign cultural influences. Even in the more recent times, when the first Sinhalese prime minister after independence – D. S. Senanayaka – attempted to separate the two as illustrated by Robson (2004: 49), he failed miserably, to be succeeded by similar aborted attempts on part of subsequent rulers.[84] The Sinhalese 'caste system' was used to make the above system function, where a tenure-based non-monetary arrangement was successfully implemented for centuries (Wijetunge, 2011: 34-35), with no clear system of taxation functioning from the grass-root level (Nimal de Silva, 2010). Thus, money, profit or surplus were not imperative, but services to the state, to the kingdom and Buddhist establishment. Within this arrangement, only the king and a faction of elite indulged to a certain extent, where masses lived lives of austerity in contiguity to Mother Nature (Wijetunge, 2011b: 34-35). Sinhalese attitude to money and wealth could best be conceived through the writings of Westerners; at times, in an orientalist bias. For Ronald Dore (in Perera, 1994: 274), Western notions of 'progress' and 'primacy-of-the-economy' are *"not everyone's cup of tea, certainly not of the large majority of Sri Lankan villagers' "*. Further, based on E. R. Leach's notions, Perera (1994: 274) expresses that *"Sri Lankan villagers largely believe that wealth is unstable and a fluke of 'luck' that is not likely to last long";* discernible on the ground that they coped with constant uncertainties of life;[85] both enduring and ephemeral (V. J. Baker in Dayaratne, 2010: 384). Barrie, Morrison and Moore (1979) in fact, confirm that traditional Lankan villages rested upon ideas of co-operation and interdependence. This articulated from

the central activity of paddy cultivation to building of both secular and non-secular edifices, where *attam Kramaya* (a form of co-operative participation) became instrumental (N. de Silva, 2008b). The sense of collective spirit was in fact, mirrored in the collective spatial ownership of vital spaces for village life; reifying the notion that *"the resources of the earth are for everyone's benefit"*. Definitive, but invisible boundaries mapped out the spatial entities of a traditional Sinhalese village (Dayaratne, 2010: 389).[86]

Sinhalese architectural legacy points to the fact that bulk of the available resources was invested in religious monuments and operations assuring agricultural subsistence, and not on surplus-making exercises (Nimal de Silva, 2010). Consequently, there were no great treasures in the form of valuables or commodities – as associated with various other groups in world history that attracted invaders – that invading forces could extract or reap. Although the Sinhalese received numerous invasions from both Dravidian and non-Dravidian groups from the subcontinent and South-East Asia, all of them were arguably, attempts of cultural subjugations. Although the invaders may have had economic agendas of their own, there is no historical evidence to support this view. Since all invaders were from, more or less, the same Eastern cultures, economic-determinism on their part could be repudiated based on numerous grounds. For Abu-Lagud (in Perera, 1994: 38) who identifies the operation of trading 'circuits' within the Indian ocean region by the 14th century A.D., there were three instances where powerful kingdoms forfeited their economic advantages by withdrawal, prompted by other interests.[87] Unlike the latter European colonisers of the East who were, to a certain degree, tolerant towards the cultures of the colonized, their pre-modern counterparts did not do the same in the island.[88] The best indication in favour of this point is the persistent antagonism by one after another of Dravidian invaders (of Hindu faith) towards the Sinhalese Buddhist culture (N. de Silva, 2006b; 2008a/c).[89] This enmity was manifested in the destruction of all Buddhist monuments they encountered as narrated by the *Mahavansa* (mahawamsa.org, 2007).[90] Jayasumana (2009) and N. de Silva (2006b) strengthen this view by noting how Sinhalese who lived under Dravidian rule and *vice versa*, eventually became either Dravidian (Tamil in Sri Lanka's case) and Sinhalese respectively, and not conspicous 'hybrids', as it happened with European colonialisms.

Robson (2004: 36) tells us that trading from the pre-colonial period, in the island's 'port cities', was a profitable venture. Plenty of archaeological and literary evidence have survived both in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, to reveal of a thriving maritime trade from Prince Vijaya's times (in the 5th century B.C.). Arabs had been arriving in the Lankan coast since 1000 A.D. and Chinese, South East Asian as well as Greeks had engaged in the trade circuits as Abhu-Leghud (in Perera, 1994: 33-34) illustrates. On the other hand, Robson (2004: 36) as well as Perera (1994: 35) share the view that

although the Sinhalese seat of power did have a certain influence over such port cities, they are believed to have had a semi-autonomous control.[91] However, they both are in consensus on the fact that Lanka never became a 'maritime nation'. As Robson (2004: 36) elaborates, all major towns were located away from the coast in the hinterland, where people engaged predominantly in agriculture. The ancient ports were never *"substantial"* for the Sinhalese economy (Robson, 2004: 36), and were 'multi-ethnic' [at times 'cosmopolitan'] in character (Perera, 1994: 36,288). This state of economic indifference can be explained best, if the above is compared along with analogous Asian situations, with the European circumstances from the same period. For instance, although the Portuguese had the perfect opportunity to engage in peaceful trade in the East, Perera (1994: 37) promulgates that they deliberately resorted to violence.[92] Their act could be contrasted with that of Indian and Chinese powers, which *"[had] more technological capacity than the Europeans, but not the spatial (and social) conception* (Perera, 1994: 38).[93] For Abu-Lughod (in Perera, 1994: 38),

> *"[…] the more these powers were drawn into the world-system of trade, the less active they became and withdrew from the sea, from time to time, concentrating on rebuilding the agrarian base, "domestic" production systems, and markets".*

The underlying reasons behind Portuguese aggression on one hand, was the drive for economic dominance in the orient, and on the other, the desperateness caused by the Hundred Years War in Europe that had drained the region's resources. Moreover, as explained before, the new self-indulgence the reformations and renaissance had brought about needed economic resources to implement and sustain, compelling Iberians to take a colonial stance. Colonialism was the only logical way of wielding the economic resources required, with minimal effort and great efficiency. However, it has to be noted that religious conversions and intermingling of races followed economic benefits as K. Jayawardena's (2009) study on the Euro-Asian establishes. On the other hand, it was the Christian missionaries who followed the colonisers, and not the other way around as often misunderstood (Perera, 1994: 41-66). Besides, mixing of races had more economic weight than cultural as K. Jayawardena (2009) confirms.[94]

It was the Portuguese and Dutch, following their conquests, encouraged monetization of Ceylon's maritime. Firstly, they made the Sinhalese tenure-based taxation efficient as an attempt to reap as much profit as possible (Perera, 1994: 145-47). However, arguably, when only the indigenous populations who were living inside fort cities and immediate surroundings were directly affected by their economic policies, a vast majority living in the distant villages remained unscathed. In fact, even after the British conquest, the Kandyan regions did not experience monetization until the mid 19th century, when taxes had to be paid in the form of money. Even after the inception of plantation economy by the mid 19th century, Sinhalese were reluctant to work for wages, resulting in the advent of Tamil agricultural workers from South India (Perera, 1994: 156). As N. de Silva (2006b) affirms, for the Sinhalese it was a question of

honour than potential opportunity for wealth. Even during the British times, it was only the maritime population that largely grasped the economic franchise to become affluent as explained by Perera (1994), K. Jayawardena (2007), Roberts (1995) and K. T. Silva (2005). In fact, when the British introduced taxation from 1796 that was consolidated after 1833 with the advent of plantation economy, the rural Sinhalese majority resorted to growing their own small-scale cash crops (rather than making an industrial labour force). Cash crops paid-off taxes and their traditional agricultural practices were continued (Perera, 1994: 155-156).[95] These circumstances in fact, lasted in the island up to the modernisation programs of the 1980s (Ashley De Vos, 2010).

**Modern Ceylonese Condition; Social Stratifications**

As stated earlier, prior to Western colonization, the caste and class systems converged and operated in a parallel manner in the sub-continental context (Béteille in K. T. Silva, 2005: 14). K. T. Silva (2005: 14) on the other hand, states that the two systems diverged and started to work on their own under the British colonial heal. In this light, the concept of social 'class' without doubt, is applicable to the two modern contexts under the purview of this study. The role of caste during the same periods should also be studied separately, as it has survived into the present-day. However, for the pre-modern context (pre-colonial period), where a class structure did not operate in the economic sense, the notion of class was preceded by caste. Thus, it is not logical to conceive a culturally determinant condition with an economically-determinant structure.

*Advent and Role of the 'Economic Class'*

A 'circulation' of the indigenous elite took place in Ceylon only with European conquests and it was discussed in the foregoing section that the notion of 'class' in society, as Marx pointed out, is synonymous with 'economic class'. The advent of this notion to Ceylon followed the introduction of modernity and capitalism (K. T. Silva, 2005). Although the Portuguese and Dutch introduced modern cultural trends and capitalist economic practices to a faction of Ceylonese, it was the British who consolidated their effect to accomplish a much wider local participation. By unifying and centralizing Ceylon, they not only created a capitalist economy, Western political ideologies were also propagated among its populace. These processes resulted in a Western-type social stratification and thus, a class structure in Ceylon; at least among its urbanites. This view is shared by both Jayewardene (1984) and K. T. Silva (2005). The respective contributions by each colonial power in the foregoing spheres, and British colonial period class structure will be addressed in depth under Chapter 4.

### *New Role of the Perpetuating 'Caste'*

Despite early 19th century abolition of the feudal system by the British, Ceylonese as Obesekara (2007) and K. T. Silva (2005) both confirm, did not let the caste system fall into obsolescence. The Portuguese colonialists having realized the functionality of the existing system on their arrival did not attempt to change it.[96] They believed that if this system so integral to the Sinhalese culture was to change, it would result in great anarchy (Roberts, 1995: 68). As Roberts (1995: 7) elaborates,

> "[…] in bending the Rājakāriya  system [the feudal system] to their own purposes, the colonial powers emphasized the patronage power of the state and added values to the nodal administrative position held by indigenous intermediaries, the headmen".

By bending the feudal system, Portuguese and Dutch colonists made it their policy to franchise certain groups – some *Govigamas* and especially, the lower castes who were politically and economically beneficial for them – to move up the 'low-country' class stratum (Roberts, 1995: 7). This move in fact, created intense competition between these groups.  The foregoing policy was perpetuated by the British, and consequently, a 'quasi elite-structure' saw a culmination during their administration (Roberts, 1995). The British in fact, went a step further and modified these positions to articulate additional power and prestige. The establishment of new ranks – such as *Maha Mudaliar, Gate Mudaliar* – is the best manifestation of this trend.  Subsequently, this practice was extended into lower administrative ranks by constructing new positions such as *Police Vidane* against original positions in the Sinhalese system. On the other hand, the quest for political power within limited allocations turned this competition into a caste rift, which in turn, manifested in Ceylon's political arena (Ivan, 2006: 43-48). Obeyesekere (2007: 38-40) believes that through some election results in British Ceylon – the up/low country division and caste division preceded later ethnic divisions.[97] The foregoing evidence suggests that caste implications were very much alive in British Ceylon. These issues will also be tackled in detail in Chapter 4.

Within the fixed caste system, potential for upward social mobility is limited. It is within one's own caste that an individual or a group can suffer mobility, as no tangible or intangible means would win a lower caste the acceptance and legitimacy by a higher (Fig. 30). Conversely, the class system carries a better potential for upward social mobility. What makes it more palatable is owing to the fact that this can occur without a social revolution (K. T. Silva, 2005: 17).[98] Alternatively, over the centuries in a Lankan/Ceylonese/Sri Lanka context, in the light of a fixed caste system and lack of opportunities for economic uplifting, people have found their way around the caste barrier. They have adopted means such as changing names to ones that conceal caste origin, marriage to higher castes and appropriating high caste lifestyles etc. (K. T. Silva, 2005: 16). This in fact, is contiguous to the theory of 'Sanskritisation' that M. N.

Srinivas (in Roberts, 1995: 27) has formulated, in relation to the various South Indian caste groups of 'low status' that have closely emulated the Brahmins to rise to higher positions of the hierarchy .[99]
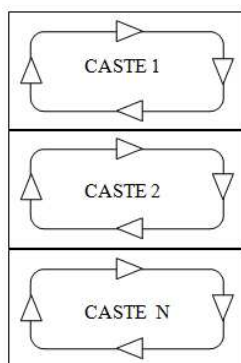


As K. T. Silva (2005: 157) assumes, the socialist tendencies from 1935 contributed to the forgoing processes by stressing for an equal society for the first time; negating all social inequalities.

Fig. 30
Limited upward social mobility within a fixed caste system.

Obeyesekere (2007: 21) on the other hand, believes that the progressive political reformations by the British[100] made the caste conflict feeble to a state of oblivion by the present day,[101] on which K. T. Silva (2005: 46) is in agreement. Although underlying caste rifts never disappeared completely, the pro-socialist and nationalist political change in 1956 could be assumed to have been the occasion where Sinhalese were united under single ethnic banner to oppose the bourgeoning minority political influences. Within a system of social stratification, the enabled provisions for upward social mobility results in the expansion of its 'middle-class' (K. T. Silva, 2005: 17). This saw according to him, after 1956 political change, the rural areas being politically empowered and youth locally-educated. As Obesekara (2007) avows, caste ideology has lasted down in to post 1977 period of neo-liberal economic reforms. However, caste discrimination since then has only been able to raise its head predominantly in matrimonial affairs (K. Jayawardena, 2007: 355). Conversely, in the island's political, economic and socio-cultural spheres since the 1970s, individuals from all caste groups have equally prevailed (Obeyesekera, 2007: 65-96).[102] However, after the neo-liberal economic reforms opened up opportunities for the lower caste groups and classes to engage in foreign employment, especially in the Middle-East, their economic standing was improved, further liquidating the caste factor (K. T. Silva, 2005: 17). By 1983, with a looming civil war that would eventually go on for almost three decades, the ever-prevailing ethnic strife had finally culminated and succeeded the caste rift (K. T. Silva, 2005: 149-179). K. T. Silva is of the belief that the formidable threat directed at the dominant Sinhalese culture by the Tamil minority is what finally united the Sinhalese as a single community.

## 3.3 Deriving a Criteria for Modern Sri Lankan (Ceylonese) Elites

As K. T. Silva (2005: 10-11) is convinced of the difficulty of appropriating Western-derived theories on social stratifications to the Lankan situation, he derives a remedial criteria. Based on the island's history, he believes that social stratification in Sri Lanka can be determined by the below factors.

1. Gender    2. Age    3. Caste    4. Ethnicity    5. Class  (in the economic sense)

As he tells us, the first four of these factors are 'ascribed statuses' and the last one is an 'achieved status'. First, although the physical and biological differences between males and females should not result in ascribing either 'high' or 'low' levels for the two genders, socially, a world-wide 'gender inequality' prevails. In K. T. Silva's view, although this in the Sri Lankan context is relatively feeble in comparison to most other South Asian situations, women still face a degree of relegation.[103] On the other hand, in every society, as one matures with age, his or her social acceptance, power and privilege cultivate. Although this is the normal practice, this may work in reverse-effect in some situations; especially among the working classes who do not possess an accumulated capital. In the Lankan situation, one is considered to be a 'matured' individual only when he or she is married and settled-down. Even in terms of occupation, the validity of the factor remains intact. In some occasions, 'age grades' are formed and they pave way for 'gerontocracy'. Then, 'caste' is a social construct that is only to be found in the South Asian region of the world. The caste system attributes a 'social rank' for one from birth. This is based on subjective aspects of the nature of birth, purity of blood and kinship (Roberts, 1995). The same applies for ethnicity that is determinant on divisions along language, religion and cultural lines that create a social stratification among ethnic groups.  Finally, 'class' in the Lankan context could be explained in terms of anomalies in capitol and life chances. However, for convenience of analysis, the study will concentrate on the objective criteria, thus relying on class in the economic sense (K. T. Silva, 2005: 11-12, 14-15).

K. T. Silva (2005: 14) here, makes a seminal observation. He notes that gender, age and ethnicity are 'horizontal' divisions while caste and class create a division 'vertically'. He affirms that 'class' (in the economic sense) operates at 'macro level' while 'caste' follows suit at the 'micro level'. From this juncture, this study will only focus on the vertical divisions, having excluded the horizontal divisions under 'limitations'. It was proven earlier that the theories on elitism dwell on the idea of social class. Hence, 'class' here could be replaced with the particular elitist theory/theories confirmed to be the most convincing. Consequently, the study from hereon will utilize the above along with the factor of 'caste', as the applicable criteria for all modern Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) situations, in order to conceive society's elites in relation to the historical periods in question.

## 3.4 Elite Sensitivity to Economic and Cultural Changes in Society

The foregoing inquiry into Western and Eastern historical situations confirmed that in the former, economics is the foremost underlying factor behind elitism while culture is either secondary or complimentary. In the Eastern situation – especially, in the Sri Lankan scenario – it is the reverse. Consequently, when both Eastern and Western conditions converge, it could be argued that economic and cultural factors both contribute in varying degrees in the making of elites. Moreover, it was verified earlier that it is the political influence that attributes an 'elite' status on people (weather in the East or West), and the term's literal meaning that suggests someone is the 'best' in a particular sphere of human activity is irrelevant in this sense. Hence, arguably, since economic and cultural forces are the constituting reasons behind the elite – the position/stratum charged with a degree of political power – elitism (the condition) is naturally prone to their changes. The intention behind this study is to utilize the domestic architecture of the elite as tangible evidence in order to prove the above deduction.  This fete will be taken up in the coming chapters.

## Conclusion

Elitist definitions and theories are largely modern Western phenomena, where the evolution – from pre-modern to modern – undergone by the term, articulates the periodically shifting nature of the condition. Out of the objective and subjective means of social stratification, the tangible former is more scientific and hence, convincing. The extant elitist theories in fact, are grounded on the objective means, and social class in the economic sense is imperative for their respective formations; attributing an economic determinacy to the discourse. This economic determinacy manifests itself within the historical narration of Western social metamorphoses.

Marxist repudiation as well as homage to a self-conscious democracy is at the heart of formations of elitist theories. Out of the several theories at hand, the 'political-class and the governing-elite' is the least-repudiated, and on the grounds of its acknowledgement of progressive notions – the sub-elites and elite circulation – remains the most convincing.

On the other hand, in the light of an oblivion suffered by Eastern elitism, the pre-modern Lankan situation needs to be considered, through the studies by local scholars with their intimate knowledge of the area – having repudiated orientalist view points. The historical narrations of the sub-continental and the resultant local situations respectively, frame the dominance of caste, within a culturally-determinant social stratification. The in-depth analysis of the pre-modern Lankan situation reveals that

the Sinhalese were undeterred by economics. However, with the advent of modern European influence of the colonial encounter, the notion of the social class was imparted – at least on a small section of the populace – to co-exist with the archaic culturally-determinant system. Thus, the caste assumed a new role within its perpetuation into the contemporary period.

In the light of a criterion derived to be applied to the hybrid colonial/post-colonial societies of the island for their stratifications, only vertical divisions become relevant. While the caste operates at the micro level, the class follows suit at the macro-level. Based on these observations, it could be asserted that since economic and cultural factors are the *raison d'être* of the elite condition that is characterised by political influence, elites are sensitive to their periodic changes.

## Notes

[1] Dutch and British colonial as well as the immediate postcolonial periods.

[2] As Rousseau (in Bottomore, 1993: 102) elaborates, *"[there] are two kinds of inequality among human species; one … natural or physical, because it is established by nature, and consists in a difference of age, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind or of the soul: and another … moral or political inequality, because it depends upon a kind of convention, and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. This latter consists of the different privileges, which some men enjoy to the prejudice of others … being more rich, more honoured, more powerful or even in a position to exact obedience".*

[3] According to Schumpeter (1942: 12-13), this happened in 6-7th centuries in the kingdom of the Franks.

[4] The 'modern' here, refers to the post 15th century 'modern-era' that imparted the condition known as 'modernity' that sparked a series of *"quantum leaps"* in world history (Steger, 2003). These were the 15th century 'Renaissance', 16th century religious 'Reformations', and the 18-19th century 'Enlightenment'. The latter, led to the 19th century 'Industrial Revolution' and especially, West European colonialism that ensued a single world-wide capitalist polity (Perera, 1994).

[5] Horton (1964: 294) elaborated this new meaning by stating that the membership of an elite group is often inherited, but in some societies, acquired.

[6] According to Mannheim (in Bottomore, 1993: 31), *"[…] the development of industrial societies can properly be depicted, from a social hierarchy based upon the inheritance of property to one based upon merit and achievement".*

[7] However, a differentiation is also made between the two, in line with the former being a natural phenomena while the latter, a man-made one.

[8] political creations of Communist Russia/China and ethnic-based creations such as Israel for instance.

[9] for example, the rich yield 'high' while the poor yield 'low' social statuses.

[10] Marx (in Knowles, 2008: 6) argued that in order to make history, we have to understand history.

[11] For them, *"[the] history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles".* As they elaborate, *"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in contrast opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes".*

[12] For George Lucas (in N. de Silva, 2008), Marxism's stance on class consciousness is a vague one. In the analysis of N. de Silva (2008) of Marxist notions, class-consciousness is not an immediate phenomenon. Marx predicted a time lapse between the victory of the working class and development of a class consciousness of solidarity. The only consciousness the class gains at the outset, according to N. de Silva, is a 'trade union mentality', and that modern instruments such as machines – the resultant of advancement of science and technology – are detrimental to it, and thus, their destruction is desired.

[13] Lenin's addition to Marxism was that a class-less intellectual faction will bring class-consciousness to the working class. However, Antonio Gramsci later reiterated that this is done instead, by intellectuals from the working class itself. They are not proletariat in vocation, but in consciousness (N. de Silva, 2008).

[14] in 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844'.

[15] Mandel (1982) in fact, narrates the gradual development from the Neolithic Revolution.

[16] The lower strata of the middle-class – the small trades people, shop keepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants – all sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capitol does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus, the proletariat is recruited from all classes (Marx and Engels, 1998: 19).

[17] He also questions the synthesis where the conflict between feudalist (thesis) and serf (anti-thesis) resulting in the bourgeoisie's – a third party's – appropriation of power.

[18] Firstly, he believes that the bourgeoisie of a considerably open and mobile society was not a cohesive class than the feudal nobility once were; in their less open and stagnant societies. Hence, conflicts of interests arise among the bourgeoisie in the ideological sphere, especially, with the development of secular intellectual occupations. Secondly, as Marx postulated, two principal classes and their struggle did not happen in the advanced capitalist societies. Further, the different spheres of power in these societies have become more numerous and varied.

[19] Comte saw religion as a means of securing a cohesive society, with language also playing a pivotal role. Without religion he argued, societies would be ravaged by violence and chaos. Emile Durkheim too, towards the end of the 19th century shared this view.

[20] In other words, in such a system, political parties compete for the votes of a mass electorate implies that elite positions are relatively 'open' and are recruited on the basis of merit. Further, the whole adult population is able to participate in ruling of the society – at least in the sense that it can make a choice between the rival elites.

[21] As Marx's theory unfolds, in every society beyond the most primitive, two categories of people exist – 'ruling class' and one or more 'subject classes'. The dominant position of the ruling class could be explained by its possession of the major instruments of economic production. Based on this economic possession, its political dominance arises from the hold it establishes over the military and production of ideas. Bottomore (1993: 19) states that the ruling class may also originate from military power and the power of a political party (in modern times), in addition to the ownership of means of production. It may still be maintained however, that the consolidation of a ruling class requires the concentration of the various types of power – economic, military and political (Bottomore, 1993: 19). As Bottomore reveals further, as a matter of fact, in most modern societies, the formation of this class has begun with the acquisition of 'economic power'. This he affirms through that of bourgeoisie of early capitalism.

> *"Its development as an important social class can well be established by economic changes, and its rise in the economic sphere was accompanied by the acquisition of other positions of power and prestige in society – in politics, administration, the armed forces and the educational system"* (Bottomore, 1993: 19).

This statement could be clarified by illustrating England's Reform Act of 1832, the reforms of civil services in 1855 and also the development of public school system (Bottomore, 1993: 19). Since power of a ruling class arises from its ownership of property, and since this property can easily be transmitted from one generation to another, this class assumes an enduring character. However, this class is not immutable as new families may enter it and old ones may decline, but a greater part may perpetuate. Only when there are rapid changes in the system of production and property ownership does this ruling class composition significantly change; by new ruling classes replacing ones in existence. As Bottomore (1993: 31) elaborates,

> *"If, however, we were to find, in a particular society, that the movement of individuals and families between the different social levels was so continuous and so extensive that no group of families was able to maintain itself for any length of time in a situation of economic and political pre-eminence, then we should have to say that in such a society there was no ruling class".*

Hence, he concludes that the notion of a distinct and self-perpetuating 'ruling class' is questionable. This conclusion becomes affirmative in world history (especially in the last two centuries) that witnessed significant world-wide social mobilization. On the other hand, the more developed theory by Mills (1956) of a 'Power Elite' that is to be addressed next, brings the notion of a solitary 'ruling class' into repudiation. In addition, the 'ruling class' theory lacks any democratic orientation. Owing to such reasons, this theory is excluded from this study's consideration.

[22] Mills (1956: 277) in his study of elites shows, on one hand, the influence of Marx and on the other, of Pareto and Mosca. He explains his preference for the term 'power elites' instead of the 'ruling class'.

> *" 'Ruling class' is a badly loaded phrase. 'Class' is an economic term; 'rule' a political one. The phrase 'ruling class' thus contains the theory that an economic class rules politically. That short-cut theory may or may not at times be true, but we do not want to carry that one rather simple theory about in*

*the terms that we use to define our problems […] Specifically, the phrase 'ruling class', in its common political connotations, does not allow enough autonomy to the political order and its agents, and it says nothing about the military as such… We hold that such a simple view of 'economic determinism' must be elaborated by 'political determinism' and 'military determinism'; that the higher agents of each of these three domains now often have a noticeable degree of autonomy; and that only in the often intricate ways of coalition do they make up and carry through the most important decisions".*

Mills (1956: 23) defines the power elite *"in terms of the means of power – as those who occupy the commanding posts [in the theory of governing elite]".* Mills distinguishes three major elites in the USA in the form of corporate heads, political leaders and military chiefs and explores whether they together form a single power elite. The answer was that they do form a single elite because *"they are representatives of an upper class, which has to be regarded, consequently, as a ruling class"* (Bottomore, 1993: 23). Moreover, they possess close personal and family relationships and there exists a frequency of interchange of personnel between the three spheres.

However, it could be argued that Mills never seriously discusses the question of whether such a class rules through its elites, the unity of their power as a single group and the basis for power. He further rejects the view that there is a control mechanism of the power elite through voting and other means, and emphasizes on their unity as well as homogeneity of social origins; all of which points towards a ruling class. On the other hand, Friedrich (1950: 259-260) discerns that one of the most problematic parts of all elite doctrines is the assumption that the men of power constitute a cohesive group. This view is affirmed by Sampson (1962: 624) who has to say about the rulers that,

> *"[they] are not a single establishment but a ring of establishments, with slender connexions. The friction and balances between the different circles are the supreme safeguard of democracy. No one man can stand in the centre, for there is no centre".*

However, like Pareto and Mosca, Mills also seems to be alluding to the fact that the modern societies – however democratic their constitution – are in fact, ruled by an elite. Even in a society that was so favourably placed as was the USA in its origin – without a feudal system of ranks, with considerable equality of economic and social conditions among citizens and a strong democratic ideology – the forces of events has produced a " *'governing' elite of unprecedented power and unaccountability"* (Bottomore, 1993: 25).

The power positions of these three principal elites are further elaborated separately by Mills (in Bottomore, 1993: 22-26); business executives could be understood in terms of the growth in size and complexity of their business corporations; military chiefs, by the growing scale and expense of the weapons of war (determined by technology and the state of international conflicts); national political leaders by the decline of legislature of local politics and voluntary organizations. Bottomore is not convinced by this *"uneasy coincidence of economic, political and military power"*. According to him, that Mills attempted to explain by the pressure of the international conflicts that in which the USA has taken part in. An analogy could be drawn between Wittforgel's (1957) 'despotic' situations – Chinese *literati*, Indian *Brahmins* and the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe – and Mill's above examples of the power elites. All of them show a certain convergence of political, economic and military powers in different degrees. However, Max Webber argues that the possession of administration is an alternative to possession of principal means of production. Hence, Bottomore assumes that what existed in the Communist countries was a *"pure type of 'power elites' "*, in comparison to the two ancient examples where a combination of 'ruling class' and 'power elite' was evident. Thus, Power elites have prevailed not only in the form of party leaderships (i.e. Communist regimes), but also as military regimes; especially, in the so-called 'Third World' (Bottomore, 1993: 124).

Owing to the non-tested and less-developed nature of ideas formed by Mills, the theory of power elite is less convincing. This theory on the other hand, suits best, the situations of communist and military regimes. Since such circumstances are absent from the contexts and specific periods in Sri Lanka that fall under the study's purview, this theory could be excluded from further consideration.

[23] According to Lasswell (in Bottomore, 1993: 6),

> *"[the] political elite comprises the power holders of a body politic. The power holders include the leadership and the social formations from which leaders typically come, and to which accountability is maintained, during a given period".*

Lasswell distinguishes the political elites from other elites who are less closely associated with the exercising of power; although the latter group may yield a considerable social influence (Bottomore, 1993: 6). The idea of 'social formations' (including social classes) from which, the elites are typically recruited has also been considered here. A similar idea by Aron (1950, 1960) is illustrated by Bottomore (1993: 7) who was also chiefly concerned with the elite in the same sense of a governing minority. However, he attempted to establish a relation between the elite and social classes, and at the same time emphasized their plurality in modern societies. Examining the social influence of the intellectual elite who does not ordinarily form part of the system of political power was also intrinsic to his exercise. Owing to the impractical nature of this doctrine of a political elite who effectively exclude all other elites without being checked by them, it could be excluded as a 'social myth' (Bottomore, 1993: 6). Since many other scholars have felt the same way about the theory, it will be excluded from the study's consideration.

[24]Derived from the elitist theories encompassed in the foregoing sections, the intellectuals, managers and high government officials (bureaucrats) have been singled out as the present inheritors of the functions by

the earlier ruling classes. The tremendous socio-political changes the world has undergone within the 20th century have brought these groups in to prominence. As for Bottomore (1993: 53), now they act as 'agents' in the formation of new forms of society. Out of the three groups, intellectuals are the most difficult to define thus, making their social influence, the most hard to determine. At the outset, it is pertinent to establish the separation between the 'intellectuals' and the 'intelligentsia', which was explained earlier. The intellectuals are generally considered as the much smaller group,

> " [that contributes] to the creation, transmission, and criticism of cultural products and ideas; they include writers, artists, scientists and technologists, philosophers, religious thinkers, social theorists, political commentators [and so forth]".

It is believed that the boundaries of the group are difficult to determine with precision, and its lowest levels according to Bottomore (1993: 53), merge with the middle-class occupations such as teaching and journalism. On the other hand, it could be argued that they overlap really, with the 'higher' middle class stratum. The most striking feature of these groups is its concern with culture of a society. Bottomore explains that intellectuals are to be found in the most primitive to the most advanced societies. The closest they have come to being the governing-elites was in the Asiatic contexts in the forms of Chinese *literati* and Indian *Brahmins*. Conversely, in feudal Europe, the clerics occupied less dominant positions and it was after the breakdown of feudalism that the intellectuals assumed a more important role. It was universities in medieval Europe where humanistic learning was disseminated that the 'modern intellectuals' found their origin according to Le Goff (1957) and Mannheim (1956). The intellectuals in the past have produced major ideologies for socio-cultural change as did the thinkers of reformations and enlightenment; mostly against the ruling class and also the church. Owing to the qualities of rationality, impartiality and other-worldliness vital to the modern intellectual life, they have always been associated with revolutions, especially socialist movements of the 20th century. However, the role of their social background on respective political ideologies is unavoidable. In medieval Europe, they were recruited, for the first time, from various social milieus in order to form a group of scholars who were not the 'clergy' (Bottomore, 1993: 53). In a contemporary 20th century context where they are fragmented in terms of internal differentiations, intellectual elites engage in solving specific problems arising out of complex activities of their industrial societies than being the 'radical critics' they had historically been. Hence, based on their lack of distinctive group organization and collective ideology, Mosca concludes that they are less-suited politically, for the position of elites who rule.

As Bottomore (1993: 59) illustrates, for a time, the rise of the managers in modern society became a focal point of sociological controversy, especially by the theory of Burnham (1943) of the 'managerial revolution' [that was originally stated by Veblen (1921)]. Contrary to the victory of the working class as propagated by Marx, they believed that capitalism cannot last owing to its inefficient use of industrial resources and its rescue depends on the technological specialists or the engineers. As Veblen in Bottomore (1993: 59) notes,

> "[they are] by force of circumstance, the keepers of the community's material welfare; although they have hitherto been acting, in effect, as keepers and providers of free income for the kept classes".

The term 'kept classes' here, could be argued as the class that owns the means of production. Managers' newly assumed role is explained as follows.

> "They are thrown in to the position of responsible directors of the industrial system, and by the same move they are in a position to become arbiters of the community's material welfare. They are becoming class-conscious, and they are no longer driven by a commercial interest, in any such degree as will make them a vested interest in that commercial sense in which the syndicated owners and the federated workmen are vested interests. They are, at the same time, numerically and by habitual outlook, no such heterogeneous and unwieldy body as the federated workmen, whose numbers and scattering interest has left al their endeavours substantially nugatory" (Bottomore, 1993: 59).

Burnham on the other hand, argued that we are living in a period of transition from one type to another type of society; from 'capitalist' society – characterised by a particular mode of production, by the dominance of industrialists and bankers and by specific systems of beliefs and ideologies – to a 'managerial' one. He defined managers as the scientists and technologists, the directors and coordinators of the process of production. The latter, he believes are the managers of *par excellence* and distinguishes them from engineers in Veblen's sense although most of them might have scientific and technical qualifications. As Bottomore (1993: 60) elaborates Burnham's concept, "*[they] are, in fact, the top executives or company directors of business corporations".* Then Burnham, based on the widely-accepted notion that a radical separation has been ensued in industrial societies between the ownership and control, moves on to describe how the group is becoming the ruling elite of society. He states that this distinction is already in operation by adducing the example of modern giant corporations.

Thus, summing up the above ideas tells us that the managers are a cohesive group well aware of its group interests, who are engaged in constant struggle for power. It is believed that once they acquire the economic control from the capitalist owners of industries, they will find themselves in a position to be able to shape the whole social system as the new 'ruling elite'. The evidence Bottomore relies on to prove that this process had already occurred in the world, are the German and Italian fascists corporate states, Communist regime of the USSR and a certain degree of state planning evident in the post-war Western capitalist states. However, there are many factors that hinder the above stated view. To begin with, the former two situations of his examples did not survive and even the latter is on the decline. Then, there are many under-assumptions in the theory. Firstly, most managers themselves are rich and hail from wealthy

industrialist backgrounds. Secondly, corporate managers are largely recruited from a pool of wealthy families.  Thirdly, the wealthy, still owns and controls much of the corporate wealth. Consequently, as it stands today, the validity of a possible nascent managerial society's rule has become a disenchanted theory.

High government officials have appealed to scholarly opinion – Max Weber being central to the argument – as constituting an increasingly-powerful elite in modern societies. Weber predicted that if the power concentration on the administrative stratum would reach its apogee in the socialist society as Marx propagated, the individual will clearly endure a state of suffering. He elaborated on how private life would be lost and warned of regimentalization of social life. In a way, he drew an analogy between the socialist and capitalist states, in terms of control over the total means of political organization. Strangely, Weber did not believe that bureaucratic power could be checked by political authorities; even within a democratic system. This theory dwelt largely on the Prussian bureaucracy in Germany, the increasing bureaucratic power in 20th century Europe (in the light of conspicuous historical events) and the Socialist revolution in Russia. However, Weber's notion has concurrently become unrealistic in most parts of the democratic world where the political power prevails over bureaucratic power (Bottomore, 1993: 53-69).

Bureaucratic power in fact, is a phenomenon that is more suitable for the so-called 'socialist states', where the bureaucrats are in fact, the political power. This idea was affirmed by Djilas (1957) in his theory of 'political bureaucracy'. Political bureaucracy he articulates, have all characteristics of earlier ruling classes. They have *"special privileges and economic preference because of the administrative monopoly they hold"* (Bottomore, 1993: 65). However, Djilas states, through a more detailed analysis, that only a special stratum of bureaucrats make up the core of governing bureaucracy (also known as the 'new class') and they are not administrative officials by any means. This is actually *"the party or political bureaucracy",* as he explains (in Bottomore, 1993: 65) and *"other officials are only the apparatus under the control of the new class".*

Hence, *"the party makes the class"* and the class grows stronger while the party gets weaker. The political bureaucracy only – in Communist situations – *"[…] uses, enjoys and disposes of nationalized property".* The bureaucrats ultimately are controlled directly by political authorities, *"[…] either by a single party in various forms of totalitarian regime* [Communist regimes]*, or by several alternating parties in the democratic countries"* (Bottomore, 1993: 70). Bottomore believes that the three groups restrict to some extent, the power of the rulers, despite competitions and conflicts among themselves. On the other hand, he tells us that they also make up *'elements'* of the sub-elite (in Mosca's terms). These elements that overlap with the sub-elite is arguably the lower levels of the three spheres.

There are a number of reasons to renounce the idea of Intellectuals, Managers and Bureaucrats and their operation in the 20th century as elites. Firstly, the divisions apparent within each group are notable. Intellectuals are the most divided among themselves (Bottomore, 1993: 69-70). However, the managers and bureaucrats as Kelsall (1955) and Bottomore (1952, 1993) avow with plenty of examples, are closely-associated with the 'upper class' society, insofar *"[…] they do directly influence public policy".*  This influence is more a 'class' interest than one being in relation to their respective groups interests (Bottomore, 1993: 68). In Britain and France for example, highest civil servants have mostly been educated in prestigious and socially exclusive schools and institutions of higher education. In doing so, the social opinions and political outlook of the upper class has been perpetuated and reinforced. In the US conversely, the upper class has not bothered to place themselves in high administrative posts owing to the absence of a comprehensive carrier civil service. Having taken into consideration the above points, the theory of intellectuals, managers and bureaucrats will be excluded from further consideration.

[25] between 11-18th centuries.

[26] Such literatures embody research works that address indigenous societies and at times, are translations or interpretations of ancient religious and historical texts. Similar translation works by Western authors, in comparison to Western interpretations of Asiatic situations, are arguably less biased, and therefore, more suitable.

[27] which will be done later in this study.

[28] Bottomore (1993: 29) too is complimentary to Wittforgel's economic-determinism.

[29] There are two forms of documentation called '*Mulasra*' that carry either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history. Examples for the former could be adduced as *Deepawansa*, *Mahawansa*, *Wamsathathpapakasini*, *Pāli Tripitaka, Pāli Atuwa, Seehala Wathathupapakarana, Sahassawathathu, Rasavahini* and finally, the written descriptions of foreigners who visited the island before European advents (Ellawala, 2002: 1-9). Ellawala (2002: 1) affirms that Sri Lanka can boast of a continuous documented history in the form of *Mahawansa* that narrates the history of Sinhalese civilization from the arrival of Prince Vijaya in the 5th century B.C., down into the British colonial period. The origins of this narration run back to *Maha Vihara* Buddhist monastery in 5/6th century A.D. *Anuradhapura*. It believed that this is the most useful and reliable out of all available sources. Its usefulness arrives out of its comprehensive descriptions of all conspicuous historic events and reliability from the fact that it has been used by Indian and Greek historians to determine grey areas in their own histories. On the other hand, there is a formidable degree of archaeological evidence in the form of stone inscriptions (from the 3rd century B.C. onwards), coins and monuments etc. (Ellawala, 2002: 9-10).

[30] Mumford (in Rapoport, 1969: 43) in support, posits that man was a 'symbol-making animal' before he was a 'tool-making' one, and reached specialization in myth, religion and ritual before he achieved such a level in material aspects of culture, and that ritual exactitude came before exactitude in work.

[31] His view encompasses on religious teachings of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam; all subverting the existence of the caste system.

[32] Five major intermediary levels between *Jāti and varna* are as follows.
   1. Local caste or *Jāti* group
   2. Supra-local caste clusters or caste categories
   3. Sub-regional *varna* categories
   4. regional *varna* schemes
   5. the all India *varna* scheme

[33] given to it by Bailey.

[34] Srinivas (in Roberts, 1995: 43-44) is among those who have emphasised the prevalence of several contexts of interaction in any locality, so that a Brahmin may occupy a low position in the *"non-ritual context' and nevertheless carry prestige and receive respect in 'ritual and pollution contexts"*.

[35] Ones who violated social norms could be punished by being made *"untouchables"*.

[36] According to Hindu religious beliefs, the so-called 'higher' caste groups were formed from *Maha Brahma*'s (the creator's) upper body – Brahmins from the mouth, Kshatriya's from belly and Waishya from calves – while the lower stock emerged from the bottom of his soles (Obeyesekera, 2007: 12).

[37] Such *Yagas* were necessary for blessing and especially, to keep away misfortune.

[38] Ellawala relies on *Aithereya Brahmana* (an ancient Sanskrit religious text) and *Jathaka Katha* [the Buddhist stories on 550 prior reincarnations of *Bodhisatva* (previous lives of Lord Buddha) written in *Pali*] in order to support his idea.

[39] As illustrated in Buddhist history.

[40] Ellawala relies on certain examples in ancient Bharat and Lanka. He cites the examples of *Upatissa Brahmana* taking over control of *Anuradhapura* following the death of King *Vijaya* in the 5th c. B.C, until *Panduwasa Deva* ascended the throne. Further, from *Ramayana*, he adduces the example from Ancient Bharat of how a Brahmin known as *Washishta* ruled on behalf of *Rama*.

[41] based on written accounts by ancient sub-continental scholars such as *Manu* and *Kautilya*.

[42] For instance, the renowned *Gupta* Dynasty, which ruled from 320 to 550 CE, were from the *Vaishya* caste rather than the *Kshatriya*.

[43] several manuals of human conduct that form the earliest source of *Hindu* law that is known in Sanskrit as 'righteousness thread'.

[44] This idea is propagated with reference to the *Gauthama Dharma Sutra* (the oldest of the *Dharma Sutras*).

[45] As he tells us in conformity of this view, the economic surplus that was accumulated through taxation was not only used for the upkeep of the irrigation system that needed periodic maintenance, the clergy who were essential for the process of legitimizing the royals were made content by building great religious monuments. Seminally, manifesting their state of supreme power, the so-called 'Asiatic tyrants' commissioned great palaces and pleasure gardens to indulge in, and at the same time, ensured that their political position was safeguarded by building great fortresses and fort cities etc.

[46] *"In theory, the king has lost his religious prerogatives; he does not sacrifice, he has sacrifices performed. In theory, power is ultimately subordinate to priesthood whereas the fact priesthood submits to power"* (Dumont in Roberts 1984: 42).

[47] However, whether this reference is to castes or ethnicities is vague.

[48] He also infers, acknowledging the famous 'Aryan Invasion theory' and the series of great battles described in the *Maha Bharatha* that, as the Aryans entered the vast expanse of the Indian sub-continent around 1000-1500 B.C. from the North-West, by the 5th century B.C., their culture would not have been fully-established in the East and South East.

[49] Present-day Bengal region (West Bengal and Bangladesh) (De Votta, 2007: 6).

[50] According to *Mahavansa*, the daughter of the king of *Vanga* (present-day West Bengal and Bangladesh), as prophesized, was abducted by a lion and forced into cohabit with it. She conceived a boy and a girl; *Sinhabahu* and *Sinhaseevali*. *Sinhabahu* eventually killed his father and became the king of *Sinhapura* (ware bouts of which, is disputed, but believed to be somewhere in the present-day Orissa region of India). Having married his sister, they gave birth to twin sons of whom, *Vijaya* was the eldest [De Votta (2007: 6) based on the *Mahavansa*]. Consequently, the Sinhalese people call themselves 'people of the lion' (De Votta,

2007:6). Thus, the story provides the *'mythomoteur'* or in other words, the constitutive myth of the Sinhalese ethnic polity (A. Smith, 1986: 15).

This historical origin is ridiculed by many Orientalists – who tend to overlook the mythohistoric origins of their own cultures – as well as certain Sinhalese skeptics. Gananath Obeyesekera (1970: 45) derogatively attributes 'bestiality' (owing to princess cohabiting with a lion), 'patricide' (due to *Sinhabahu*'s slaying of his father), and 'incest' (for siblings marrying). Ironically, they neglect symbolic possibilities that are universal phenomena in cultures all over the globe, evident throughout history. For instance, the Lion would have been a human being whose tribe was named after a lion, or alternatively, a man who possessed a lion's strength, feared by people. Killing of one's father and incest on the other hand, have happened almost everywhere.

[51] *Vijaya* is believed to have married a *Yaksha* princess called *Kuveni*. N. de Silva (2006b) believes that it was her dark skin that compelled the fair-skinned Aryan new-comers to call her *Ku-Vanna* (person with black skin) with *Kuveni* being the shortened form. *Vijaya* having established his dominance with *Kuveni*'s help by eradicating his *Yaksha* contenders is said to have driven her and the two children to the forest to bring over a princess from *Madurai* in Southern India for his coronation. N. de Silva (2006b) views this as quintessential Aryan brutality towards original inhabitants in the island, an act analogous to one carried out by the invading Aryans in the sub-continent.

Some attempt to attribute this marriage from South India to legitimise Tamil claims as *"not only kin folk but also cofounders of the nation"* (Obeyesekere in De Votta, 2007: 7). This is historically and genealogically inaccurate. First, in the 5th century B.C., there was neither a Tamil ethnicity nor ethnic consciousness, but a Dravidian one (Jayasumana, 2009). Secondly, all South Indian monarchies have North Indian Aryan origins; a practice perpetuated even after the Tamil identity was established not before the 4-5th centuries (N. de Silva, 2006b). The princess from *Madura* (*Madurai* is the latter Tamilized version) would have been a *Kshatriya* of Aryan ancestry. Obeyesekera (2007: 14) believes that the seven hundred young men who arrived with *Vijaya* married maidens belonging to the *Siv Hela* – four castes of *Yaksha, Naga, Deva* and *Gandhabba.*

[52] who established a village known as *Upatissa Gama* (village), 12 Km North of *Anuradhapura*.

[53] *Sinhabahu*'s grandson/*Summita*'s son.

[54] The Lion City was established by King *Sinhabahu* and its location in the sub-continent is undetermined.

[55] Chapter 08.

[56] Her being the daughter of *Sakka Pandu* (A son of the *Sakka Amitodana*, who took his followers and went to another tract of land on the further side of the *Ganges* and founded a city there and ruled there as king, after hearing the prophecy that the *Sakyas* would shortly be destroyed by a prince called *Vibudhamba*) is believed to be a direct descendant of Lord Buddha's clan (N. de Silva, 2008). She set sail along with thirty two women friends in a ship on the Ganges as her father feared six powerful kings who sought to marry her, proclaiming that *"whosoever can, let him take my daughter"*. She eventually landed in *Gonagamaka* in the North-Western coast of Lanka, and was accepted and made his queen by *Panduvasudeva* (*Panduwasa Deva*) (Chapter 08, *Mahawansa* in mahavamsa.org, 2007).

[57] who reined in the 2nd century B.C.

[58] This particular caste group is said to have been excluded from the Sinhala noble society owing to their social eccentricities (Obeyesekera, 2007: 13).

[59] A sermon of *Deegha Nikaya* (a section of *Tripitaka*, the sacred book of Buddhism).

[60] *Sanghamitta* is believed to be a daughter of Emperor Asoka.

[61] Especially, Buddhism during the reign of Emperor Asoka.

[62] Firstly, they made explicit through written descriptions (mainly stone inscriptions), their devotion and patronage to certain Buddhist establishments comprising only of monks belonging to the high-castes. *Vessagiriya* in *Anuradhapura* was dominated by Waishyas and *Issara*, by *Brahmana* and *Kshatriya*.

[63] In 1st century B.C., a Brahmin called *Tissa* led a rebellion against King *Watta Gamini Abhaya (Walagamba)* in *Rohana* (Southern Lanka). He was so powerful that the king hesitated at first to go to battle with him (Ellawala, 2001: 14).

[64] Lankan royals from *Panduka Abhaya* down to *Mahasena* (who all reigned in *Anuradhapura*) were essentially of warrior (*Kshatriya*) origin, always directly traceable to Northern Indian Aryan royal bloodlines. Obeyesekera (2007: 14) in fact, believes that the monarchy established by king *Pandhukabhaya* (437-367 B.C.) was the longest reigning one in the island's history and belonged to the *Murunda* (Maurya) stock. From King *Vasamba* in 65 A.D., a new monarchy of the *Lambakarnas* from the *Waishya* stock came into power (Paranavithana, 2001: 11). Paranavithana (2001: 11) in fact, refers to the first dynasty of Sinhalese kings as *Grāmaneya*. For him the dynasty created some of the most outstanding monarchs in the island's history such as *Dēvanampiya Tissa*, *Dutthagāmini (Dutugamunu)* and *Bhātika Abhaya*.

[65] *"The Sinhalese were not interested in trade and were content in tilling the soil and growing cattle. Trade was thus wide open to the Muslims".*

[66] Ashley De Vos (1977: 42) points out that the villagers during this period enjoyed a certain freedom in managing their own affairs, where the headmen or village elders were only consulted when taxes were due.

[67] via *Pollonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Gampola, Kurunegala* and *Kotte,* respectively, until *Kandy* became the concluding destination in the 14th century (Wijetunge, 2011b: 24).

[68] *"A related case is of more ominous significance. Consider the emergence of the feudal type of landlordism in the kingdom of the Franks during the sixth and seventh centuries. This was certainly a most important event that shaped the structure of society for many ages and also influenced conditions of production, wants and technology included. But its simplest explanation is to be found in the function of military leadership previously filled by the families and individuals who (retaining the function however) became feudal landlords after the definitive conquest of the new territory."*

This is indeed what took place in the Lankan frontier, when people migrated from the Northern parts of the subcontinent two and a half millennia ago.

[69] the seat of power before Kandy.

[70] For example, *Sri Rama Brahmana Rala* [who is said to have come from *Rama Deshaya* of India] settled in *Aluvihare, Sri Vishnu Brahmana Rala* in *Rathwatte* and *Vaande Brahmana Rala* in *Vekada* etc. (Obeyesekera, 2007: 15). The famous early 18th century monk Ven. *Morathota Dhammakkhanda* of Siam sect, according to the book *Morathota Vatha* (in Obeyesekera, 2007: 16), is supposedly a grandson of *Bala Krishna Brahmana Rala*.

[71] He adduces the examples of certain prominent noble families in contemporary Sri Lanka. He illustrates, for examples, the famous *Senanayaka* clan descending from *Kulawardana Senanayaka Brahmana* – having considered C. E. C. Bulathsinghala's findings – and *Bandaranaike* clan from *Neelapperumal* – in Haris Hulugalle's view.

[72] as retaliation to the attack suffered during the reign of his father *Vankanasika Tissa*.

[73] During his father's reign, *Chola* king *Karikala* made a descent on Ceylon and took away 12,000 captives to provide labour in the flood protection works he had undertaken. It was this act that was retaliated by the Sinhalese king.

This historical fact is confirmed by K. T. Silva (2005: 34) who mentions of a group of people referred to as *korale Aththo* residing in the Kandyan territories, who are believed to be the direct descendants of this contingent.

[74] Obeyesekera (2007: 15) makes references to the group of people called *Kuruve* from the subcontinent, making up the *Kuruve* department – in charge of catching elephants for the king – who are found mainly in *Matara* and the larger *Ruhuna* area (on the Southern coast). He also adds to this list another seven South Indian Brahmins who had arrived for the coronation of King *Vathhimi Buvanekaba*.

[75] Seneviratna (2008: 18) mentions of *Vaduga* (*Nayakkar*) mercenaries settled in Kandy by *Raja Sinha II*.

[76] Roberts (1995) alternatively, supposes a *Koromandal* connection for them.

[77] However, whether Tamil culture was the dominant culture in the North of Lanka prior to the Dutch colonial era is problematic on many historical grounds as N. de Silva (2008) points out.

[78] They had realized the strategic importance of having such a division in the light of political threats to their existence having come from the so-called 'low-country'.

[79] They failed to notice the Dravidian intermingling that had possibly taken place in their region as the foregoing evidence affirmed, supported by the fact that there is no evidence to state any of such groups mentioned prior, ever left the island (Obeyesekera, 2007). On the other hand, the European prisoners – prisoners of war, spies etc. – who were imprisoned within the Kandyan territories from 17th to 19th centuries are believed to have kept Sinhalese wives. Madugalle (2007) even makes reference to the approximate number of two thousands of them that king *Raja Sinha* II himself held in the region. He even traces certain European names in their Sinhalese progeny as late as the early 20th century.

[80] They are said to have been brought down to the island from time to time as mercenaries by a number of Sinhalese kings to guard the coast from South Indian invasions.

[81] Ironically, this did not materialize in Western contexts. Although in places such as Chicago, the ethnicity was predicted to melt-away, diverse ethnic groups never merged, but accentuated; even after two generations or more of mutual adaptation (Erikson, 2002: 20).

[82] For instance, the festival is inaugurated by the *kap* ceremony where a *kapa* (or pole) is planted in the premises of each *devala* (*dēvala*). The *kapa* has multi-vocal meanings and is associated with a centre performance, fertility and prosperity. At the four *Devalas,* a ritual functionary acting on behalf of the king

circumbulates the *kapa* in a proper manner – thereby proclaiming symbolically the king's encompassing influence of the kingdom (Roberts, 1995: 6-7).

[83] In the *Äsala* festival, therefore, one sees the ceremonial festival functioning in the centripetal manner as highlighted by Paul Wheatley (in Roberts, 1995: 6-7).

[84] such as S. W. R. D. and Sirima(vo) Bandaranaike – all of them representatives of certain status groups steeped in Western modernity, unlike the masses they governed.

[85] They faced constant wars with invaders as well as natural calamities and epidemics.

[86] As Dayaratne (2010: 389) elaborates, *"[the] agricultural fields, for example, although owned by separate individual families, exist physically as a single expanse. Neither the wilderness that provides vegetables and fruits, nor the homestead comprising individual dwellings, is physically divided, although ownership differences exist".*

*"One place in the village signifies this spirit particularly. Kamata is a circular patch of land cleared twice a year to process the bi-annual rice crop. Located at the edge of the paddy fields on slightly higher ground, it is reconstructed as a sacred space at the end of each season of cultivation (yala and maha). Between these two periods it reverts to ordinary space. A sacred place within profane lands, its sanctity however is not derived from the blessing of the temple but from the peasants' perceptions about cultivation, processing and consumption, which in their view are activities intricately linked to a supernatural cosmology".*

[87] Three major withdrawals are referred to by Abu-Lughod. They are by the empires of *Chola and Vijayanagar* in the 13th and 14th centuries respectively and by China in the 15th century.

[88] Free intermingling was to assure cultural dominance by the disbursement of it. Western-controlled intermingling in Ceylon had an economic agenda.

[89] J. F. R. Perera (2011) in fact, points out towards a long-standing enmity extended towards the Sinhalese by various Dravidian groups across the Palk Strait, for racially and culturally being contiguous to Aryan groups from the Northern part of the sub-continent.

[90] Historians such as Nandadeva Wijesekara (in J. F. R. Perera, 2011: 29) also agree.

[91] This semi-autonomy should not be mistaken with semi-autonomous kingdoms, but cities. Even these cities were dominated by Sinhalese presence. Consequently, prior to their restoration by the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka, all Buddhist monuments from the classical periods that were exposed to invading armies had experienced significant damage.

[92] As Perera (1994: 38) explains the situation, *"[most] trading port cities, not being autonomous political entities themselves, did not maintain naval forces; even empires engaged in trade perhaps did not require to maintain naval forces as such, except during particular times, for particular purposes. In this context, the Portuguese expansion seems to be an unexpected (and unprecedented) development for the traders in the Indian Ocean and rulers of Asian kingdoms, for which they were not prepared".*

[93] According to Chaudhri (in Perera, 1994: 38), Chinese junks were as large and powerful as the European shipping in the 16th century. They could have navigated the Atlantic and were capable of transporting a large number of armed men.

[94] K. Jayawardena notes that the intention behind intermingling was to create a population that was climatically more accustomed for the tropical conditions and Western culture. Especially, the Portuguese and also the Dutch to a certain extent encouraged the practice resulting in a Portuguese and Dutch Burgher population in Ceylon.

[95] This issue too will be elaborated in Chapter 4.

[96] as the written accounts of Portuguese writers such as Queyroz and Ribeiro bare testimony.

[97] The best example for this rift could be sighted as the *Govigama* elite faction's push to elect Ponnambalam Ramanathan (a leader of the Tamil minority that soon after became a political threat to Sinhalese political power as a whole), against Dr. Marcus Fernando (a Sinhalese from the *Karava* caste) as the leader of Ceylon National Congress in 1931. On the other hand, the Kandyan feudalists lobbied in favour of a federal control for the Kandyan provinces in the early 20th century (Ivan, 2006: 43-48).

[98] One of the simplest ways of examining social mobility is to compare educational, employment, economic (income) and social honour within a single family, between generations (Silva, 2005: 17).

[99] This formulation has been elaborated and refined. Not only the Brahmins, Kshatriya, Waishya and Sudra could also become the reference groups in the process of emulation (Roberts, 1995: 27).

[100] he particularly praises Colebrooke and Cameron commission of 1833 and ones to follow, the 1948 independence and especially, the 1956 pro-nationalist and pro-socialist political change.

101 Obeyesekera notes that the commission reformed the appointing of village headmen (*Gammuladani*) based on academic merit rather than on their castes. However, this was never applied to the higher appointments of *Rate Mahattayas, Dissaves* and *Vanniyars* that largely depended on their caste and family names than academic merit (Obeyesekere, 2007: 53-54).

102 The peak of Sri Lanka's caste repudiation was the election of *Ranasinghe Premadasa* – an individual said to be from one of the lowest caste groups of the hierarchy (*Dobi*) – in 1991 as the second executive president in the new Democratic Socialist republic of Sri Lanka (Obeyesekere, 2007: 58).

103 This is evident especially, in the fields of education, corporate and political fields. A few of the characteristic points of inequality in relation to the Sri Lankan case range from the male demanding virginity and dowry from the female counterpart on marriage, to delegating most of the domestic tasks to her.

# Chapter 4     Elitism and Elite Domestic Architecture in Colonial Ceylon;

between 1796 and 1948

This chapter examines elitisms and resulting elite domestic architectures from pre-modern to modern periods in Sri Lanka. The Kandyan situation will serve as the last pre-modern period, which will allow a comparison with the subsequent modern periods that accompanied the colonial encounter.

## 4.1 Pre-Colonial Context; the Last Sinhalese Kingdom

This section will take up economic, political and socio-cultural aspects of the last Sinhalese seat of power, to discuss how the condition of elitism pertained to it. Such an inquiry is imperative to conceive its social stratification that in turn, paves way for envisaging its elite domestic architecture.

### Historical Provision

Although the Dutch *V.O.C* [1] managed to oust the Portuguese to acquire their maritime territories, they failed to penetrate the interior of Ceylon (Perera, 1994: 68). This was owing to the belligerence of Kandyans taking refuge in a Kingdom, located in the hostile geographic region of central hill-country.[2] The King *Rajasinghe II* of Kandy collaborated with the Dutch to successfully annihilate the Portuguese from maritime Ceylon by 1658 (K. M. de Silva, 1981: 133-134).[3] The conflicts of interests of the two parties however, resulted in numerous wars subsequently, and toward the closing years of Dutch occupation (by 1766), the Kandyans had lost all their maritime territories. Their land-locked status resulted in unprecedented austerity (Pakeman, 1970: 68-69).[4] The last time that a Sinhalese monarchy faced such conditions would have probably been before the 15th century, during the Dravidian invasions.[5] James Cordiner (1807: 103), a British national, described in his writings the kingdom's pre-modern condition at British advent.[6] When Kandy was enjoying a spell of economic and military successes in the mid 17th century, its economic, political and administrative structures would have also been at their heights. In this historic context, Kandyan elitism could be conceived by looking into its economic, political and socio-cultural arenas.

## Non-exertive Economic System

The Western historical situation (especially, the period of 'modernity') was driven by an economic-determinacy as Marx propagated. In this light, it is imperative to establish here, that the pre-modern Lankan situation was contrary to the above scenario.



In relation to the Kandyan economic frame-work, Nimal de Silva (2010) notes that a surplus was never an imperative and taxation was not a rigid practice. Such accumulation was merely, a means to sustain a political system that safeguarded Buddhism, and the culture that encapsulated it.[7] The system appears to be facile and unjust on the surface (especially to the orientalist eye), as it compelled people to remain within their castes while allowing certain privileges to the governing-elites.

Fig. 31    Map showing the land-locked status of the Kandyan regions by 1796.

However, it was more or less static on the long-run and also safeguarded Mother Nature (Wijetunge, 2011b: 34-35).[8] The Westerners consequently, discerned Kandyan structures to possess no potential for *"further exertion"*, and confirmed it to be an existence of *"easy apathy"* (Cordiner, 1807: 105).[9] For Perera (1994: 147), the self-sufficient Kandyan society *"… did not depend on external trade".*[10]

## Culturally-Determinant Social Stratification & Kandyan Elitism

In 1796, at the point where the British acquired Dutch-held maritime regions, Kandyan kingdom still possessed bulk of the island's land-mass, which had been sub-divided into twenty one grand divisions (Perera, 1991: 47-48) (Fig. 31). The contiguity between the state and religion traditionally peculiar to the Sinhalese also pertained to the Kandyan situation.[11] The Kandyan socio-cultural arena derived meaning from the Sinhalese caste-system, where the administrative functions accrued by it were the key to Kandyan elitism. Hence, Kandyan elitism was socio-culturally dependent.

Within the Kandyan social hierarchy, the cultivator caste as the majority was second only to the Royal caste, to which, the King and his immediate family-circle belonged.

The cultivators, referred to as *'Govigamas'* that relegated all 'service castes' (artisans) to the periphery of society, was then divided into *'Radala'* (chiefs), *'Sitanos'* (nobles) and ordinary peasants (Perera, 1991: 57).[12] The positions delegated to cultivator caste and tasks allocated to each caste group, formed a functional hierarchy that was accompanied by a parallel social hierarchy.[13] It was this particular arrangement that continued into the British take-over in 1815.

If elitism is interpreted as possessing a degree of political power, it could be argued that Kandyan elitism was the domain of Royals and the cultivator caste. In relation to the administrative structure, the king was considered the supreme ruler who had to assure protection for Buddhism and the Sinhalese-Buddhist culture (N. de Silva, 2006a).[14] Under the king, the administrative structure contained the first *Adigar* (the prime minister) and also other *Adigar*s,[15] exercising great power and influence (Madugalle, 2005: 28).[16] Out of the twenty one grand divisions, nine smaller provinces (Districs) of the Kingdom's interior were termed *Ratas*, and administered by *Rate Mahattayas*, while twelve of the more extensive regions that surrounded them were referred to as *Disas* (or *Disavanes*), administered by *Dissaves* or provincial governors (Perera, 1991: 47-48).[17] Nimal de Silva (2010) tells us that *Muhandirams* were appointed as heads of various departments in the king's court and shared more or less the same privileges as the powerful *Dissaves* and *Rate Mahattayas*. On the other hand, there were officials of the palace establishment, revenue administration and chief temple authorities known as *'Nilames'*, who were also influential in the Kingdom's affairs (Madugalle, 2005: 26-31).

Under the *Dissaves* and *Rate Mahattayas*, were minor officials such as *Koralas*, *Vidanes*, and *Arachchis.*[18] Apart from such positions, there were *Maha Mohottalas* and *Mohottalas*; free-yeomen with their privately-owned land, which they cultivated having been exempt from taxes (Nimal de Silva, 2010).[19] Nimal de Silva (2010) also states that a step above the ordinary cultivator-caste peasant were the *'Ralas'*, a social position accompanied by relative wealth and respect.[20] *Ratē Adikarams* were also a group who held provincial judiciary positions. On the other hand, various secretary positions in the palace establishment, certain positions in the military establishment (such as chief, commander, captain), and chiefs (assistants) of district offices were given the name *'Lekam'* (Madugalle, 2005: 29). It has to be noted that all these were minor positions in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy. In this pre-modern context, a single group of people in power controlled the Kingdom's socio-economic aspects as a homogeneous political entity.[21] The administrative machinery functioned on a primordial land-tenure system referred to as the *'Raja Kāriya'.*[22] The peasants worked the lands allocated to them where,

> *"[…] a fixed share of their produce had to be yielded to their feudal over-lord – generally a land owning chieftain or a Buddhist monastery"* (Pakeman, 1970: 127)*.*

The extent of land allocations to incumbents was proportional to their respective administrative ranks (Perera, 1991: 50).[23] Most of the land was cultivated by the *Govigama* peasants and the service-castes provided their essential services as artisans in the self-sufficient kingdom. The latter were also allocated lands to live on and cultivate. They lived as communities in villages and specialized in the manufacturing of different goods and services.[24]

This analysis of the medieval Kandyan society asserts that it was a feudal setting much like that of its sub-continental neighbor addressed earlier. However, in terms of the nature of castes and number of caste groups, the two settings were dissimilar.

Fig. 32

Kandyan Chief & Semiotics of the Outfit (from the 19th century).

The politically and socially influential positions of highest calibre identified in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy could be addressed as Kandyan 'political' or the 'governing-elite' for the study's convenience. As they were not rivaled or threatened by alternative groups with political ambitions – holding oppositional social and economic influences as in modern democratic societies – the concept of the 'political-class' cannot be applied here. The powerful positions of such governing-elites were displayed through the semiotics of theirs outfit (Fig. 32) (Nimal de Silva, 2010).

The more numerous and less influential lower administrative positions discussed thus, become the Kandyan sub-elite.[25] However, this particular categorization and terminology should only be considered as a guideline as this is a pre-modern Eastern situation; the antithesis of what theories on elitism is meant for.

**Kandyan Elite Domestic Architecture**

The ideal means of conceiving the Kandyan governing-elite house is through its sub-elite counterpart (known as the *Hatara-andi-gedara*). An ideal example (called *Wattegedara*) could be adduced from *Matale*, belonging to a family line of sub-elites (Fig. 33-35).[26]
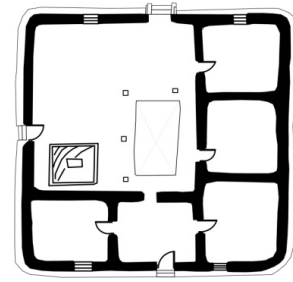
|          |          |          |
| Fig. 33  | Fig. 34  | Fig. 35  |

*Watte gedara* in *Matale.*
Fig. 33   front view.
Fig. 34   courtyard.
Fig. 35   plan.

While the catalogue section 1.1 undertakes the underlying factors behind the modelling of this type, section 1.2.1 discusses its characteristic features and the variations to be found.

In the governing-elite house, this generic version saw repetition and the number of times it happened was proportional to patron's socio-political command (Wijetunge, 2011b: 31). *Aluvihare Maha Walauwe*, in *Matale* that was originally built by *Aluvihare Maha Dissave* could be illustrated as the quintessential Kandyan manor house (Fig. 36-38). Catalogue section 1.1 undertakes its underlying factors and 1.2.2 discusses the type in relation to its characteristic features and variations. The Kandyan peasants on the other hand, were living in their vernacular houses as they had done for centuries.





Fig. 36           Fig. 37
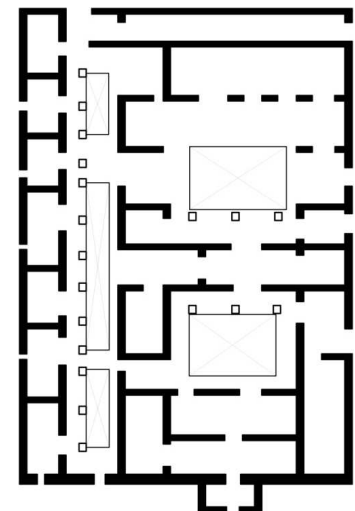
Fig. 38

*Aluvihare Maha Walauwe* in *Matale*.
Fig. 36   front view.
Fig. 37   courtyard.
Fig. 38   plan.

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## 4.2 Colonial Context; Under the British Aegis

This segment will take up economic, political and socio-cultural aspects of British Ceylon, which will lead to a discussion of its condition of elitism. This helps to conceive its social stratification and thus, elite domestic architectures.

**Dawn of Colonisation**

*Modernity*

It is important at the outset to explore what prompted the condition of 'modernity' in Europe, and how it was dispersed to the East. N. de Silva (2008) holds the view that West-Europeans experienced a quantum leap in their culture in the 15th century, in the light of renaissance and religious reformations, bringing into existence the 'modern' era. Kohen and Kennedy (2000) in fact, trace its emergence back to the 17th century. They mark the dawn of 'enlightenment age' as a vital landmark that brought about historic changes, where the region's primary and secondary social institutions were dramatically transformed.[27] In this light, Knowles (2008: 1-2) argues that it was the enlightenment that subsequently led to the 18-19th century Industrial Revolution. Thus, 'modernity' in its connotation, refers to the condition realised by this new radical change,[28] where the aforementioned events imparted a new sense of 'ego-centricism' in to the European psyche (N. de Silva, 2006a: 37).[29]  On the other hand, in Max Weber's (2010) view, new ideological changes that ensued triggered new attitudes towards religion as well as secular life; especially, the attitude towards work and wealth.

Coming back to the roots of ego-centrism, N. de Silva (2005; 2006a) states that the first traces of this trend was evident in the works of Renaissance artists and scientists.[30] It was this new drive for self-indulgence in the aftermath of the 'hundred-years-war' that prompted Europeans to embark on a Capitalist path that resulted in the subsequent colonization of most of the 'extra-European' world (Perera, 1994: 63-66).[31] Although the Iberians were Roman Catholics, N. de Silva (2008) argues that they equally appropriated the sense of individuality that the events in Europe had promulgated, although the notion was uncomplimentary to their more orthodox strand of the Christian faith.  Hence, arguably, the Dutch of the Dutch-reformed and English of Anglican Christian faiths who ventured into colonization much later, were more ideologically-equipped for the task at hand.[32] Consequently, for King (1984: 9), this European expansion in Asia was a major stage in the development of capitalism on a global scale. Capitalism after all, *"[…] has indeed unified humanity's history and made the world one"* (Nairn, 1981: 341).

### A system Change

By the late 16th century, the Iberian world expansion project had come to a stand-still leading both Spain and Portugal to bankruptcy (Perera, 1994: 80). From the late 15th century, Portuguese had established an archipelago of trade and military outposts on the Indian Ocean space. Despite failing to conquer indigenous hinterlands from these outposts, they controlled vast sea territories. Portuguese created the first communication network links with Europe and the Orient, and established in Perera's (1994: 50-51) terms, a sense of 'Eurocentricism'. Although the more commercially-oriented Dutch cashed-in on the Portuguese decline, they also suffered the same fate in Asia (Perera, 1994: 59).[33] It was the French and British who were finally able to use such 'nodes' as 'penetration points' (to realise full-conquests) to eventually established a 'system of states' in Europe, and 'empires' in the extra-European world (Perera, 1994: 80-81).[34] Kennedy (1989: 75) argues that the post 1450 waging of war in Europe was intimately connected with the birth of the modern 'nation-state'. The monopolization and bureaucratization of military power and violence by the state was centripetal to *"nation building"*. According to Arrighi (1990: 380), it was the Dutch-led Peace of Westphalia of 1648 that was instrumental in creating an inter-state system in Europe.[35] As Perera (1994: 83) illustrates (Wallerstein's view), these states sought to create relatively homogenous national societies from 16th century onwards. Hence, Western Europe was reorganized into 'nation states' that in turn, reorganized a large part of the extra-European world into a number of West-European empires; each centred upon its respective coloniser state (Perera, 1994: 80).

### 'Core' and 'Periphery'

Wallerstein (1988: 4-5) mentions of a power imbalance between the European nation states, where the political polarization that is parallel to its economic counterpart places the stronger states in the core and weaker in the periphery; forming the economic process of *"unequal exchange"*. Hence, when a state becomes hegemonic amongst the core states, it uses its dominance to reinforce the advantage of its own productions, and to legitimize its role in the interstate system by cultural impositions (Perera, 1994: 83-84). This indeed, is in line with the economic-determinacy attributed to Western situations, where cultural prerogatives follow its economic counterpart. When the post 1450s European wars were all related to the production of the nation-state system in Europe, the wars that took place between European nations and indigenous rulers the world over were caused in the production of European empires. The imperial powers, by monopolizing power and violence within the extra-European territories, divided the larger world into West European empires. In this light, Perera (1994: 84-85) argues that it was in this context that West Europe became the place that determined the fate of the extra-European world via a system

of agreements, treaties or wars. Hence, this world configuration could be conceived broadly, as consisting of a 'core' and a 'periphery'. It is imperative to stress that it was the Dutch who established its hegemony among the core powers first (Arrighi, 1990: 390),[36] where the British lead came later when they rescued the *"about-to-be-destroyed interstate system"* in their struggle against imperial pretensions of France. In this light, it could be argued that it was the struggle towards core hegemony – the hagemone – that resulted in the turbulent condition in 17-19th century Europe. Consequently, the maritime belt of Ceylon by 1796 had become the periphery of a new core being constructed by Britain. Since the British colonial encounter in Ceylon cannot be conceived without its precursors, it is pertinent that they are introduced at this stage.

## Moderate Modernity by Portuguese and Dutch

### *An Overview*

The Portuguese era marked the beginning of modern Sri Lanka (Jayasuriya, 2000: 253). Portuguese initially settled in already-urbanised trading entrepots with indigenous patronage and subsequently consolidated to take full-control of them (Munasinghe, 1992; 1998: 109). The Dutch to follow, settled mainly in places where Portuguese had fortifications. European-type urbanisation had already begun by the Portuguese that was made more systematic by the Dutch within their 'Third Urbanization' process (Bandaranayake in Wijesuriya, 1996: 59). For Perera (1994: 63), the Portuguese colonizers in the extra-European world, provided the *"[…] seed bed for the production of a colonial third culture"*.[37] It was to this phenomenon the local populations living in and around Portuguese and Dutch fortifications (and along corridors that linked them) embraced (or were exposed to), in varying degrees. The degree of modernity suffered by locals could be investigated in a number of ways. Firstly, it could be argued that it was only the indigenous populations living within the maritime regions that were exposed to Western influences. This view is confirmed by Wallerstein (1990: 332, 334, 335).[38] Perera (1994: 126-127, 147) tells us that while the Portuguese activities were more or less limited to their outpost towns, the Dutch subsequently ruled from them, larger areas around the coast that ran inwards to the hinterland.[39] On the other hand, British records bear witness to the feeble and engrossed degree of commercial activities in maritime Ceylon on their arrival.[40]

Portuguese acceptance of the feudal system and its bending, resulted in the creation of a loyal faction of indigenous elites.[41] Arguably, it was this particular faction that for the first time in the island's history, suffered Westernisation. While peasants in the maritime-hinterland borders still lived in traditional rural villages and engaged in agriculture, it would have been the urban-dwellers who were directly affected (Perera, 1994: 142-215). The only way the rural peasants had possibly felt the grips of

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Portuguese administration might have been caused by taxation.[42] The Dutch not only made the Portuguese taxation more proficient, they also introduced an array of new influences encompassing the economic sphere; for instance the import-export economy and Roman-Dutch Law (Nimal de Silva, 2010; 1995: 24).[43] On the other hand, it could be inferred that racial intermingling carried out with three-fold objectives was the key to a smooth Westernisation in the maritime (K. Jayawardena, 2009).[44]

The favourable Portuguese attitude towards permanent settlement establishes that a considerable degree of racial mixing did occur.[45] The degree of Westernisation suffered by the exposed-local and 'half-caste' populations articulated in a range of cultural appropriations (Jayasuriya, 2000: 253).[46] Such appropriations may have imparted on indigenous cultures, the notion of individuality that converted their lifestyles into hedonistic ones.[47] Conversely, despite their promotion of racial mixing at the outset, the Dutch colonists later developed a racial superiority complex against Eastern races (Perera, 1994: 63).[48] For Boxer (in Perera, 1994: 78), the Dutch always remained an 'alien body' in the fringe of Asian society, and maritime Ceylon was no exception.[49] The strong economic focus on their part would have also prevented them from imparting their culture on locals to the same profound extent that prior Portuguese had fared.[50] Thus, the Calvinist and Lutheran sects of Dutch reformed Christianity in Ceylon, and accompanying cultural ensemble, became the sole domain of the Dutch nationals and Dutch-Burgher (Dutch descendants) community. Thus, in comparison to the Portuguese influence, the Dutch influence is arguably weak (Jayasuriya, 2000: 254). However, as Nimal de Silva (1995: 126) confirms, apart from the cultural influences, certain architectural traits did creep into the indigenes; probably via the local elite to have originally aped their Dutch rulers.[51]

Following the British take-over, about 900 Dutch Burgher families chose to stay in Ceylon (lankalibrary.com, 2011). They submitted to British dominance and welcomed British political and economic changes. Their allegiance had earned them a privileged status in British Ceylon's social stratification; decades before locals were allowed to participate in the aforementioned spheres (Ivan, 2008; Perera, 1994).[52] Consequently, the group retained their discrete status and identity right up to independence (Robson, 2004: 15). In present-day Sri Lanka, direct Portuguese descendants termed 'Portuguese-Burghers' (i.e. *Mesitos* or *Mulatos*) are a very small and largely unaccounted for minority, while their Dutch counterparts are relatively numerous. In 1946, 0.8% of Ceylonese population were Burghers of both kinds,[53] and by 1981, they had declined to 0.3% (lankalibrary.com, 2011). When it is commonly acknowledged that the Burghers chose to live as an exclusive community under British rule, Portuguese Burghers are said to have undergone further-intermingling with local communities; mostly beyond recognition (especially, with the so-called 'lower-caste'

groups from the Maritime regions) (Roberts, 1995; K. Jayawardena, 2009).[54] Another pertinent point to note is the fact that out of the 1981 figures, about 72 % of Burghers lived in Colombo (colonialvoyage.com, 2011). Out of these only available figures, it could be inferred that their influence would have only prevailed in the urban realms of the island. Within the absence of in-depth statistical, racial and anthropological research, these promulgations remain mostly speculative. However, the point to note is that even in terms of the maritime Sinhalese population, it is commonly accepted that a significant majority remained Buddhist into independence.[55]

## Architectural Legacy

As confirmed by Ashley De Vos (2010) and Peter Gerlach (peter.gerlach.eu, 2011), there are no Portuguese domestic architectural remnants in Sri Lanka, apart from a ruined seminary house from *Atchuweli* in Jaffna that Lewcock et al (2002) illustrate.[56] Hence, the only way of understanding the Portuguese domestic realm is to draw on Portuguese and Dutch period travel descriptions and engravings, as well as domestic examples from the region (in neighbouring destinations ruled by the Portuguese).[57] Even with the aid of such sources, scholars can only speculate on the nature of Portuguese house in Ceylon.[58] On the other hand, Dutch rule in the Maritime Provinces was carried out with the foremost motive of profit-making, and they were efficient and cost-conscious enough to alter and re-use Portuguese buildings at the outset; and only by the 1720s, buildings with 'real Dutch character' started to emerge (Lewcock et al., 2002: 171-175).[59]



Fig. 39



Fig. 40
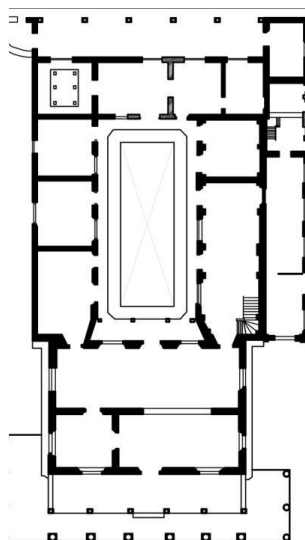


Fig. 41

An excellent example for a quintessential Dutch house in maritime Ceylon could be adduced from Galle – *Atapattu Walauwe*. It was built to serve as the residence of a local noblemen and high-ranking official, who was in charge of eight divisions (*Pattus*) within the Dutch-held Galle commandment (Fig. 39-41).

*Atapattu Walauwe* in *Galle.*
Fig. 39   front view.
Fig. 40   front veranda.
Fig. 41   plan.

Section 2.1 of the catalogue discusses Dutch period domestic architecture in Ceylon with relation to its characteristic features, variations and underlying factors. Further, the discourse could be conceived in terms of phases that are also covered. In comparison, the majority of peasants however, endured a discrete existence in their rural villages, where their customs/beliefs and arguably, domestic architectures were largely unfettered by the colonial encounter.

**A Rigorous British Modernity**

*Historical Advent*

The Dutch who ousted the Portuguese in 1658, had by the late 18th century accounted for the entire maritime region of Ceylon (Madugalle, 2005: 1-5).[60] It was these Dutch-held territories that were subsequently taken over by the British in 1796, within the course of events that followed the French conquest of Holland during which, the Dutch Stadtholder William of Orange fled to Britain (Mills, 1965: 9).[61] Peace of Amiens in 1802 officially ceded the Dutch-held territories in Ceylon to the British according to Perera (1994: 85),[62] and consequently, Ceylon's maritime-belt became a part of an expanding British Empire. According to Arrighi et al (1989), British imperialism, its hegemony among the capitalist states and expansion of European world economy, all reached their apogees in the late 19th century. The British to fully control Ceylon are believed to have imparted modernity on its indigenous population to a much rigorous degree than any of the previous Western conquerors.

*Establishing Economic-Centrality*

The British organized their empire around a network of what Perera (1994: 87) sees as 'strategic ports'.[63] The 'Seven Years War' (1756-1763) in India had been a seminal factor of Franco-British conflict, as the naval superiority there was the key to a world-wide British dominance (Wallerstein, 1989: 179).[64] Consequently, Ceylon's possession too became imperative in this exercise.[65] The new balance of power under British hegemony (following Napoleon's defeat) produced a long period of peace in Europe. This transferred the warfare from centre to the periphery and also consolidated the construction of a world centred upon Britain (Perera, 1994: 85).[66] Under these circumstances of making of a core-oriented politics, Ceylon's strategic vitality was marked by holding it as a 'crown colony'.[67] Within the newly-won stability in the region and following the fall of the Kandyan Kingdom,[68] the British pursued to 'unify'[69] and 'centralize'[70] Ceylon (Perera, 1994: 91-92, 95-97, 101-103, 140-46). Consequently, right after take-over, the immediate action by the colonial state was to create a

communication system stemming from Colombo; the city central to the island's subjection.[71] By the early 20th century, apart from a good railway network,[72] Ceylon had been equipped with highly-organized postal, telegraph and telephone services for communication (Perera, 1994: 187-88).[73] This marked a shift from *"subjection to control"* and the control was subsequently changed from *"military to administrative"* (Perera, 1994: 101). Having enabled such changes, the initial repressive state of the British rule (expressed through its governors' despotisms)[74] was gradually released into an array of 'democratic-reforms'.[75] This in turn, not only saw positive aspects such as the upward social mobility for the locals,[76] but also constructed a new animosity amongst the ethnic and caste spheres competing within it (Perera, 1994: 93-105; K. Jayawardena, 2009: 146-47).[77] What the British created according to Leitan (1990: 95), was a highly-centralized bureaucratic structure for political integration and maintenance of law and order, which in Perera's view, also had some room for lobbying for 'reforms'.[78] The Ceylonese legislators did not pose a threat to the colonial system in which, their identity was formed and privileges conferred (Perera, 1994: 248). According to K. M. de Silva (1989: 162), this inclusion of Ceylonese was what in fact, formed a *"long-term political structure"*.[79] Browning, Halcli and Webster (2000: 166) in fact, state that realisation of democracy is a defining feature of Western modernity; demanded by a free-thinking people. Thus, the phenomenon in Ceylon marked yet another step towards modernisation.

As against the 'ancillary position'[80] attributed to economics in the pre-modern situation, the British embarked on a path to establish economic-centrality. The statement by Giddens (in Knowles, 2008: 1) that the 'modern age' is *"characterised by industrialisation and capitalism"* sums up the British move.[81] While unification and centralisation attempts mark the first four decades of British colonial role, it was the reforms recommended by 1833 Colebrooke-Cameron commission that brought about the complete destruction of the age-old pre-modern system that Kandy functioned upon (Mills, 1965: 68). Reforms ensured that a 'revenue base' was established for a West European-type 'capitalist economy' to take shape.[82] Consequently, bringing of the self-sufficient village entities into capitalist modes of operation was carried-out subtly (Mills, 1965: 19-21).[83] The state used its increased revenue to import goods to establish dependence of the colony on the larger world economy that indeed, happened shortly (Perera, 1994: 169).[84]

Then, a plantation system that incorporated the 'colonial economy' into the 'European world economy' was established,[85] accompanied by a new duality between it, and the archaic forms of cultivations (K. M. de Silva, 1981: 297-314).[86] This in turn, induced subsequent Ceylonese interactions in a sphere prior dominated by British representation (Perera, 1994: 240).[87] Opportunities were also created for some to engage initially in small-scale economic ventures. Them having accumulated

substantial capital in the early 19th century, reinvested on more lucrative venture that in turn, elevated them from petty-bourgeoisie, to the new bourgeoisie positions by the turn of the century (K. Jayawardena, 2007: 2-34).[88] These areas ranged from arrack-renting to plantations, where the bulk of entrepreneurial representation came from what Perera (1994: 244) calls the 'south western quadrant'. The local bourgeoisie participation in the colonial economic system gradually grew, and eventually surpassed that of the Europeans to take the lead by the early-20th century as Wright (2004) illustrates, and it was this ascent that largely marked their elitism.[89] As a response to the weight of colonial military power, they had adapted to the colonial system to become also the new 'Ceylonese leadership' (Perera, 1994: 244).[90]

The next in the British agenda was the ideological transformation of the indigenes. The development in West Europe *"all encompassing regimes of truth"* concerning the world, reflected the venerated Hegelian belief that the Eastern spirit was 'static' in contrast to the Western counterpart, which was oriented to change and development (Perera, 1994: 182-83).[91] Hence, what the Ceylonese received in place of *"Buddhist cyclical notions of time and space"* were European Christian traditions – Greek-Judo-Christian tradition in N. de Silva's (2005; 2006a; 2008) terms – of *"linear time"*. In place of a Buddhist philosophy that emphasized on *"no-self but eternal change"*, a *"self-centered ideology"* was introduced (N. de Silva, 2006a: 37).[92] Economic, political and social developments analogous to the ones existing in the industrialized metropoles were propagated in the extra-European world, where the quantification of social and natural phenomena was developed as a means of controlling and predicting them.

As a crucial outcome of this knowledge, economics became a central aspect of life. Here, 'progress' became an irrefutable and universal truth tied to economics. With Adam Smith's contribution to the secularization of the notion of wealth, the economists became the proprietors of progress. This newly-formed primacy of economics became instrumental in replacing ethics with reason – the use of non-ethical laws to explain natural phenomena.[93]  This 'pro-growth' ideology equated the well-being of place with its ability to foster economic development.  The quantification of social problems and their 'scientific exploration'[94] also happened during this period (Perera, 183-84). The 1830s reforms were crucial instruments for these transitions that in turn, made a largely 'pre-modern' population 'modern'. Colonial education played a major role in this exercise.[95] Perera (1994: 111) argues that the institutions such as education and religion facilitated the transformation of *"disoriented"* natives into 'subjects' of the new colonial society and space. This consequently, resulted in the creation of an Urban-oriented Intelligentsia.

Colonial Ceylon was an 'urban oriented' creation, produced *"from and through"* Colombo (Perera, 1994: 112).[96] Thus, the faction of Ceylonese to be first exposed to British modernity was the 'urbanites' residing in the already-existing and British-created urban towns, where their creation had been for the benefit of the colonial state (Corbridge, 1993: 176).[97] It was Western education that in fact, defined according to Perera (1994: 110-111), [98] the lead of the so-called 'first beneficiaries' (Perera, 1994: 110-111, 251-253).[99] This made modernisation synonymous with urbanisation and direct interaction with the colonial masters. In this light, it should be stressed that the direct effect of the British political and economic modernisation already addressed, was felt feebly by a majority of colonial subjects in Ceylon who resided largely in the rural villages.[100] The 1870s and 80s in Ceylon, marked the beginning of its transition to the twentieth century, although it did not become well-defined until the 1890s (Mills in Perera, 1994: 239).[101]

The Ceylonese elite adaptation to Capitalist and colonial institutions and spaces was facilitated through a delicate process that Perera (1994: 234-240) refers to as 'Ceylonizing'. Ceylonizing colonial society and space is the term he gives to a broader array of agencies and processes that operated within the colonial capitalist world system without colliding with it, elevating Ceylonese power and position within the colonial society. He claims that this was carried out through 'economic, political and administrative' Ceylonizing, in turn making a national space.[102]

The most conspicuous factor in relation to Ceylon's urbanization was that, it was contrary to the West-European process that was largely determinant on the Industrial Revolution that Knowles (2008: 3) attests to.[103] The stepped up urbanization broke the communal backbone of traditional village life in favour of what Knowles calls a *"more impersonal"* or *"individualistic"* way of life that can in fact, yield an economically-deterministic explanation. In Europe, industrialization-aided urbanization spread at a tremendous phase, to see the rise of ever-larger towns and cities that effectively abolished the rural villages and traditional communities that were once common place (Carib, 1997: 20). Without industrialisation, this never materialized in Ceylon.

Under these circumstances the Cultural transformation from 'Lankans' to 'Ceylonese' was to be completed. The presence of colonial bourgeoisie had given a cosmopolitan character to urban Ceylon,[104] and the faction also set the trend for the making of a new 'colonial third culture' via an array of practices (King in Perera, 1994: 171) (Fig. 42).[105] In this light, Perera (1994: 223) posits that the nascent Ceylonese elite *"followed British model of wealth, power, and prestige",* and their process of emulation was articulated by *"seeking to rise to the topmost positions in colonial political, economic, and administrative systems"*, occupied by Europeans (Fig. 43-44).[106]

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Not only assimilating lifestyle practices,[107] following the British elite into their residential neighbourhoods[108] and being inspired by their architecture were also *"…part of a broader emulation of British Colonial culture"* (Perera, 1994: 306). Roberts (1984: 15) posits that the construction of 'palatial mansions' with neat drive-ways and gardens was just as much part of this status competition as elegant dress, profligate wedding receptions, and the use of material artefacts of Western origin. Thus, *"conspicuous consumption"* for symbolic purposes was *"played-out through material form"* (Perera, 1994: 306). As a unified Ceylonese community, the local elite contingent perhaps, exaggerated metropolitan culture as a buttress to maintain their social and cultural identity, according to King (in Perera, 1994: 252).[109]

Owing to their more advanced military and navel powers, security was not a primary concern for the British (Perera, 1994: 114-115). Consequently it could be inferred that British cultural dispersing was not ensued via racial intermingling, but by the foregoing means.[110] In a situation where economic-centrality had been established, its social layering arguably assumed a degree of complexity; in a setting where both class and caste mattered.

Fig. 42    **Dress worn by the legislators 1920-1970s:**
           **a gesture of hybridity among many other practices.**

| | Legislators Usually Wearing | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | European | National | Both |
| Legislative Council 1924 | 84 | 2 | 13 |
| 1st State Council | 72 | 8 | 20 |
| 2nd State Council | 59 | 13 | 26 |
| 1st Parliament 1948 | 53 | 21 | 26 |
| 2nd Parliament 1952 | 46 | 19 | 33 |
| 3rd Parliament 1956 | 31 | 27 | 41 |
| 4th Parliament 1960 | 27 | 30 | 42 |
| 5th Parliament 1960 | 28 | 34 | 37 |

Note: The change in dress code from European to National as well as some legislators wearing both dress forms could be illustrated as a manifestation of the increasing local participation in the political arena over the decades.

Fig. 43    **The composition of the upper ranks of the Ceylon civil service.**

| Year | Europeans | Ceylonese |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1920 | 79 | 11 |
| 1930 | 83 | 55 |
| 1940 | 49 | 81 |
| 1950 | 10 | 124 |

Fig. 44    **Stratification of the colonial administration.**
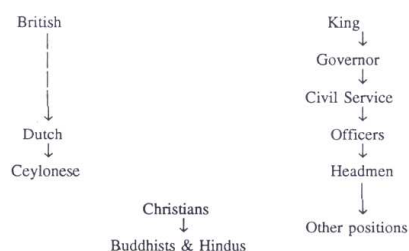
**An Economically-based Social Stratification**

In contrast to certain British colonies, the national elite in Ceylon were not made up of new immigrants, although a few Tamils, Parsis and Bhoras of Indian origin did establish a foothold. Lankan elite group comprised mainly of local inhabitants and Burghers (Jayewardene, 1984: 9). Roberts (1973: 263) refers to the intermediate faction between the colonial rulers and masses as the 'national ruling class' or 'local elites' (arguably, the national governing-elite), while emphasizing that the distinction between the two was neither *"precise nor rigid"*.  By the 1920s, 5-6% of Ceylon's population belonged to this group (Roberts, 1973: 12).  Robert's ambiguous classification is remedied by V. K. Jayawardena (1972) in her studies of the labour movement in British-Ceylon. She analysed British Ceylon's social stratification through the concept of social class. As V. K. Jayawardena (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 99) illustrates, the class constituency of 19th century Ceylon was threefold. They were,

      1. Bourgeoisie
      2. Petty Bourgeoisie
      3. Working people

*Bourgeoisie and the Petty-Bourgeoisie*

Bourgeoisie in British Ceylon consisted of the British colonists and locals. While British counterparts were either the governing-elite who occasionally took-up plantations and the ones to have come with capital to invest in plantations or other economic ventures, the local bourgeoisie group was much more complex in composition. V. K. Jayawardena (1972; 2007) claims that although the formation of local bourgeoisie runs far back, it was during the British colonial period that their importance grew significantly along with numbers. She divides the bourgeoisie into two sub-groups; the *Govi* caste nobles who held *Mudliyar* titles and what she calls the *Nauvoo riche*. Owing to indifference towards certain groups in her classification, the bourgeoisie could be re-classified in-depth, taking into consideration more complex socio-cultural sub-divisions that are often neglected.

In colonial Ceylon, the up-country and low-country division was indispensable within the social stratification. Low-country was the first to be subjugated to the processes of commercialization, monetization, westernization and Christianization, at least three centuries before the fall of Kandy (Roberts, 1995: 228). The low-country feudalists were the first faction to align with the Western conquerors in order to retain their apex status in the indigenous social hierarchy. The first evidence of such colonial allegiance runs as far back as the Portuguese and Dutch periods, when largely the *Govigama* nobles and also certain non-Govigama groups elevated themselves as the indigenous governing-elites. The *Govigama* elites had always occupied the ruling positions in the

maritime, since the Sinhalese seat of power shifted to the kingdom of *Kotte*[111] in the 14th century. When the maritime regions completely fell under Dutch control, and in the absence of an indigenous monarchy, these elites had to adapt to colonial polities. As Roberts (1995: 1) posits, *Govigama* was the caste that not only commanded the highest 'ritual status' among the Sinhalese, but it also enjoyed the numerical superiority and a monopoly of access to the highly influential Buddhist monastic order; the *Sangha*. Since the colonists did not seek to disrupt the existing political and economic systems, the *Rajakariya*-based administrative positions occupied by the caste continued down into the time of British occupation. Therefore, this resulted in a number of *Govigama* noble families continuing their influence from Portuguese times, into the British era. They shall be called 'traditional elites' of the low-country.

On the other hand, there were non-Govigama factions that experienced upward social mobility during the Portuguese and especially, Dutch colonial periods. As history tells us, the first of low-caste group to receive colonial patronage belonged to the *Karava*, which was of military importance to the Portuguese in their extended series of wars against *Seetavaka* and later Kandyan kingdoms (Roberts, 1995: 50-51). As history attests to, the Portuguese turned a number of individuals from this group into military and regional authorities.[112] Similarly, certain other lower castes – mainly *Salagama* and *Durava* – also acquired analogous positions later on, via economic means. The Portuguese and Dutch revenue in Ceylon was acquired largely in two ways. Firstly, they both bought from locals, goods such as spices that had a massive demand in Europe. Secondly, they acquired the revenue that the indigenous system of taxation generated (Nimal de Silva, 2010). The more economically-oriented Dutch who were not content with their returns, resorted to manipulate the feudal system to fulfil functions that were lucrative for them. Channelling of the *Salagama* caste into cinnamon peeing and appointing *Mudliyars (Mudaliyars)* from the same group are good examples (Roberts, 1995: 77). *Salagama Mudliyars* not only looked after all activities related to cinnamon production,[113] they were also made territorial authorities. Their authority in the political sphere was assured by affording them with administrative powers, while economic powers were guaranteed by allowing to claim large extents of land to become a 'landed-gentry'. These new positions were constructed in line with traditional low-country elite ranks and privileges of indigenous Lankan kingdoms. This particular group shall be called the 'low-country bourgeoisie', when their fortunes were made in a time well before the industrial revolution. However, as this group ventured into industrial-type cash crop plantations by the second half of 19th century as K. T. Silva (2005: 100) posits, by the turn of the century, they had arguably reformed themselves as the new bourgeoisie. Just as prior colonists, the British continued to re-appoint Lankans as 'junior administrators' in their administrative structure. From the former Kandyan territories, Sinhalese governing-elite ranks such as *Dissaves, Rate Mahattayas, and Muhandirams* were re-appointed,

while from maritime regions, *Mudliyars* [later more diversified as *Maha Mudliyars, Gate Mudliyars etc.* and occasionally, *Muhandirams* too for Perera (1994: 105)] belonging to either Sinhalese or Tamil ethnicities of varying castes. The hybridity of this group was manifested through their outfits – among many other emulative practices – that had both local and Western provenances (Fig. 45). As Mills (1965: 122) confirms, the prior tensions between colonizers and the colonized had made the 'native' element of the administrative structure necessary. On the other hand, their support was instrumental for legitimizing colonial control. According to Chandra (1980: 184), the indigenous administrators were not only 'juniors', but were also subordinate partners of the colonial administration. This was based on the fact that 'native' even by 1903, as the Oxford Dictionary denoted, was *"[a person] especially belonging to a non-European and imperfectly civilized and savage race"*, and in other words, *"a colored person, a black"* (King, 1976: 81). According to Thomas Skinner (in Perera, 1994: 106), it was the colonial state that kept these local administrators of heterogeneity together; through their close supervision, securing prompt punishment for their wrongs, and especially, the court's willingness to question their acts. The British further complicated the nature of this arrangement by creating a hierarchy in terms of ethnicity. The Dutch Burghers were channelled into intermediate positions between the ordinary Ceylonese and the British; with most of them acquiring minor clerical posts in the central/provincial administrations. This made the European representation in the structure dominant (Tennent in Perera, 1994: 106). Moreover, privileges conferred to Ceylonese Christians (Anglicans) in the form of administrative appointments became another British strategy of social stratification that was based on faith (C. R. de Silva in Perera, 1994: 107).[114] After the British take-over, certain *Govigama* families of the low-country – who were mostly non-noble in origin – sided with the British and converted to their faith. The history of some families belonging to this particular group tells us that for the British, they posed as the most original inhabitants of the island as against other low-country caste groups and served as informers and interpreters at their outset (de Saram, 2010).[115] Within the course of the 19th century, they received for their loyalty, similar elevated positions extended to the lower caste groups addressed earlier. This particular *Govigama* group along with the 'traditional elites' of the low-country, by the late 19th century, had formed a cohesive group through marital alliances (de Saram, 2010). They all represented themselves as the 'first-class Govigamas' (Roberts, 1995: 150).

The shortage of capital on the part of British opened up doors for the local factions to engage in the colonial enterprise and thrive (K. T. Silva, 2005: 100). The group that cashed-in on the opportunity mainly consisted of the *Karava, Durava and Salagama* (KSD) castes, with some *Govigama* representation (Ivan, 2006: 19-28). By the turn of 19th century, this group rose to become the most affluent elite faction in the colony. Their wealth and perpetuating loyalty since their commercial outset, earned them

honorific titles from the colonial masters. It is this particular industrialist group that deserve to be addressed as the 'bourgeoisie', as the term makes more sense in the backdrop of hitherto-unprecedented British modernity applied to Ceylon through democratic polity and capitalist economy. This particular group shall hence, be called the '19th century bourgeoisie'. [116]



Fig. 45

Government official with a local headman

(from the late 19th century).

Apart from the foregoing groups, Kandyan feudalists that belong to the *Radala* (noble) minority of the *Govigama* caste cannot be neglected. Jayawardena (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 100) includes problematically, the Kandyan feudalists into the Bourgeoisie group, which can be repudiated on two grounds. Firstly, they were deliberately kept in the sidelines by the British following their failed 19th century freedom struggles. In the aftermath, most of their land was taken over by the colonial state (Perera, 1994: 103).

On the other hand, abolishing of the feudal system by allowing people to engage in their desired professions outside of caste was a blow to them, who had traditionally yielded services from lower-caste groups (Ivan, 2006: 5). Secondly, the Kandyans did not recuperate until the late 19th century, when they procured Western education and subsequently, ventured into the plantation sector (Roberts, 1995: 101-102). Their new allegiance to the British assured the prolongation of traditional hereditary titles from the Kandyan period. Based on the view of K. M. de Silva, Perera (1994: 102-103) illustrates that the British treated Kandy as a separate entity until the 1830s. The administration of the Kandyan provinces were left to the noble ranks of *Dissaves* who were re-appointed as provincial authorities by the Governor (to be placed under the supervision of the 'Resident') (Mills, 1965: 62).[117] Since Kandyans continued to struggle against colonial power into the mid 19th century, the Kandyan culture and its elite lost their key position within the Ceylonese context. According to Roberts (1995: 230) social honour was more important for Kandyans in general – elites and peasants alike – than wealth, and hence, continuing the pre-modern life that was austere, was valued.[118] As the lands of feudalists were restored sometime after their freedom struggles, they desired to keep the land-tenure system unofficially functioning. This placed the Kandyan elite in direct competition with the low-country elite, but also Tamils, Muslims and Burghers who had risen to elite ranks. As Perera (1994: 247) affirms, they had started off with a disadvantageous position to begin with. They shall be called 'status group 2' for the study's convenience.

This particular group, over the course of British occupation, forged marital alliances with the 'first-class *Govigamas'* from the low-country, to pose as a unified status group of traditional elite. Together, they were a faction more obsessed of 'social honour' than new lucrative economic opportunities grasped by their bourgeoisie counterparts (K. T. Silva, 2005: 100). By the early 20th century, this group intensified their competition against the bourgeoisie (Roberts, 1995: 178). In their competition with the *Govigamas*, The KSD elite pursued the social and cultural models constructed by their contenders. Hence, as much as Anglicisation, they were also *'Govigamised'* (Roberts in Perera, 1994: 247). Although V. K. Jayawardena uses the term 'bourgeoisie' to address this particular ensemble, Roberts (1995) and Singer (1964) who had also studied the social stratification of the period prefer the term 'elite'; perhaps owing to the foregoing complications (K. T. Silva, 2005: 99). This unified status group inherently looked down on the 19th century bourgeoisie who had either *Govi* peasant or largely lower-caste backgrounds. On the other hand, they despised the foremost means behind the flourish of their wealth, which they promulgated as demeaning and against Buddhistic teachings. The degree of this stigmatization is best affirmed by K. Jayawardena (2007) who notes that the former group being termed as *"nobodies"* who had become *"some bodies"*, and had to sponsor pamphlets to construct a high ancestry for their respective castes (Karava.org, 2011). Thus, a barrier had been created between the two groups that resulted in a bitter rift by the early 20th century that subsequently articulated in the political sphere (Ivan, 2006: 49-55).

Loyalty to the colonial state, Westernization and urbanization were symptomatic to the foregoing groups (K. T. Silva, 2005: 101). Within their transition from Lankans to Ceylonese, they had completed their westernization with a particular reference group in mind. Perera (1994: 248) notes that unlike the Indian elites (especially, the bourgeoisie), the Ceylonese counterparts were not at all interested in political independence. Instead, they engaged in lobbying for gradual reforms. Owing to these common tendencies, V. K. Jayawardena (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 101) believes that they were never a 'national bourgeoisie' as their counterparts in India. On the other hand, with the exemption of Kandyan feudalists, others had always been associated with urban entrepots (port cities) with thriving economic activities. As Robert (1973: 12) believes, the low-country Sinhalese represented themselves better for their colonial masters than the Kandyan feudalists who were more nationalist and conservative. The Kandyan groups too resorted subsequently, to migrate to cities (especially, to Colombo) to be at the forefront of ensuing changes. For V. K. Jayawardena (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 100), the nascent bourgeoisie were contained by the colonial state (that did not desire to see their enterprises grow) to set them on par with their Western counterparts. Consequently, the local industries were stunted, and their industrial potential that would have elevated them to the level of West European bourgeoisie

was made stagnant (K. T. Silva, 2005: 101). Jupp (1978: 42) on the other hand, refers to the *"complex character"* and *"lack of distinction between business, Landowning and the professions"* of the propertied classes of the island. *"It is almost invariably true that the higher professionals are also landed estate owners and it is this which gives them a rural political base"*. Obeyesekere (2007: 26) in defence of these groups states that it was their astute Westernisations that in turn, preserved their respective sub-cultures. As he argues, culture and religion can continue only, if the race can survive. Moreover, Roberts (1995: 147-148) tells us that by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, newly-acquired Western-type liberal occupations also known as 'genteel professions' (i.e. lawyers, doctors and civil servants etc.), and honorific titles (i.e. Knighthoods), suddenly became popular among these groups than quasi-western elite titles welcomed by their forefathers (Roberts, 1995: 116). This new inclination towards respectable professions gained on merit, could be argued as their embracing of the economic class-structure, and at the same time, a rejection of the indigenous caste-system – at least by a faction with low-caste backgrounds.  The desire to pose as a coherent 'status group' on par with their high caste counterparts perhaps sums up their tendency. They shall for the convenience of analysis termed 'status group 1'. The classification of the indigenous governing-elite/political-class with its complexities is illustrated by Fig. 46.

As K. T. Silva (2005: 101) notes, a petty-bourgeoisie is a multi-ethnic and multi-caste faction that was formed in the capital as well as in British-created provincial towns, small towns and rural centres; in response to newly-formed economic and social needs. In the opinion of V. K. Jayawardena (in K. T. Silva, 2005: 101-102), the petty-bourgeoisie class consisted of two sub groups. Firstly, there was the majority group that engaged in small-time economic ventures such as cash-crop plantations, businesses and industries to find substantial success. This particular group in contrast to rural peasants, adapted swiftly to polity and economic changes ensued by the colonial state. However, culturally, they hardly experienced any changes, as confirmed by both Jayewardene (1984) and K. T. Silva (2005: 102); and their allegiance was directed towards Sinhalese-Buddhist cultural ethos. It was this particular group owing to its financial stability that possessed the capability to lead not only the late 19th century religious/cultural revival, but also social welfare of their territorial domains (K. T. Silva, 2005: 102).[119] On the other hand, there was a smaller faction of people who engaged in non-manual occupations (mainly clerical and routine administrative) in the government or private sectors. In comparison to the former group, they had managed to procure a Western education in English at the secondary level, thus portrayed a degree of cultural westernization. K. T. Silva (2005: 102) believes that this particular group, with their enhanced awareness of colonial system's operation, was subsequently instrumental for social reforms through political involvement.

Numerically, these two groups surpassed the bourgeoisie, but were outnumbered by the 'working classes'.[120]
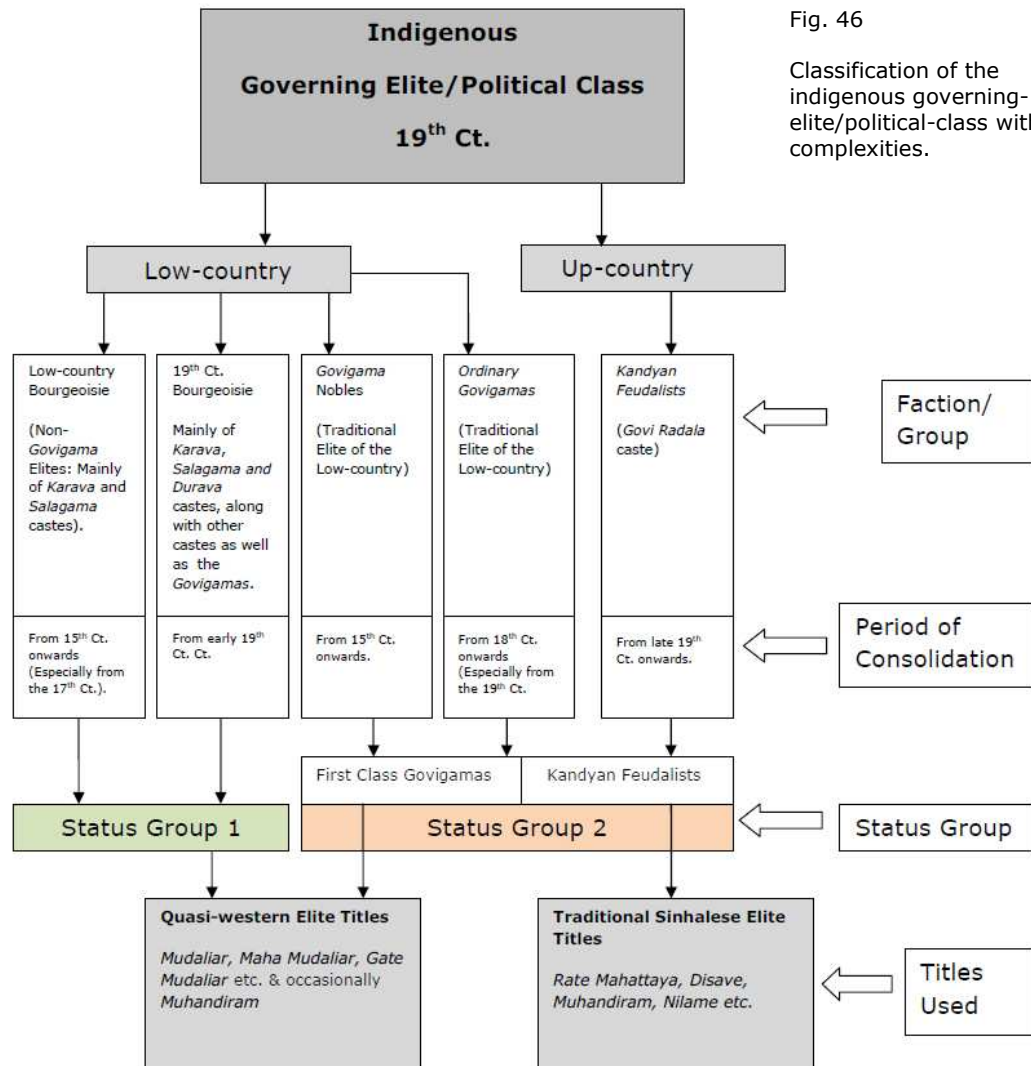


Fig. 46

Classification of the indigenous governing-elite/political-class with its complexities.

## British Elite Domestic Architecture

In the backdrop of modernisation of colonial subjects and social stratification addressed, this section will illustrate examples for each of the discussed elitist groups.

In terms of the status group 1, *Sravasthi* in Colombo is a good example. The best of the low country's 19th century bourgeoisie houses were constructed in the first decades of the 20th century, having mimicked British manor houses. Owing to the Kandyan, Dutch and prior British period architectural residues (especially, of the bungalow), these houses articulated a strong degree of eclecticism. This imposing palatial residence was built by W. A. de Silva, a prominent businessman and philanthropist from the *Karava* caste (Fig. 47-50).

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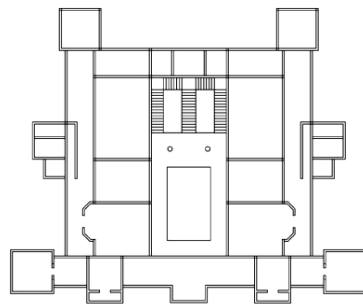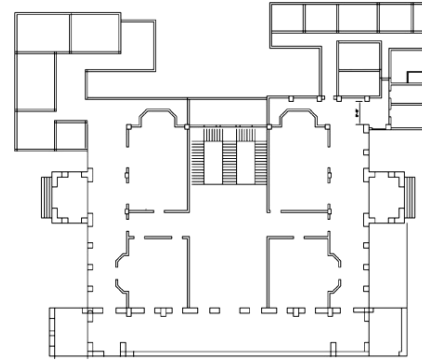
Fig. 47



Fig. 48



Fig. 49



Fig. 50

*Sravasthi* in Colombo, quintessential house of the 19th century bourgeoisie.

Fig. 47    front view.          Fig. 48    interior view.
Fig. 49    upper floor plan.    Fig. 50    ground floor plan.


In terms of the status group 2, a good example is the *Ekneligoda walauwe* in *Ratnapura*. This manor house *was built* in 1823, probably by the *Mollamure Dissave*, and has now been inherited by the *Deraniyagala* family. The style displays hybridity in terms of its largely Kandyan and Dutch period (also early-British to an extent) architectural contents (Fig. 51-53).



Fig. 51



Fig. 52
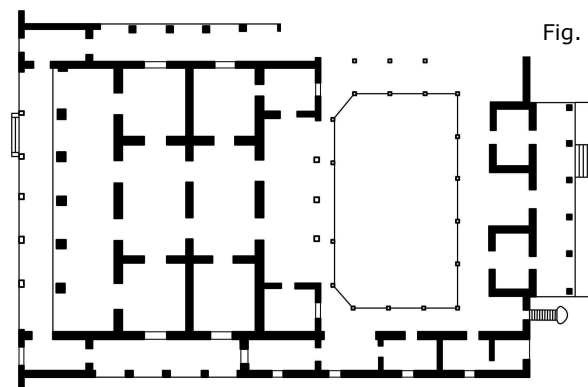


Fig. 53

*Ekneligoda Walauwe* in *Ratnapura,* quintessential house of the traditional elite.

Fig. 51    front view.

Fig. 52    veranda.

Fig. 53    plan.

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Identifying Phases:

The general British period architecture in Ceylon is believed to have a Dutch provenance, and the elite domestic counterpart is no exception. British architectural legacy could be categorized in to three notable phases (Lewcock et al., 2002: 249-252; Wijetunge, 2005, 2007). Since this is not under the purview of this study (as the study looks at examples in line with elitist positions), the catalogue section 2.2 undertakes their respective evolutions (as Phase I, phase II and phase III), characteristic features of the identifiable variations, and especially, the underlying factors behind their modelling. Since these phases have not been identified or properly analysed by any study to date, the catalogue is a unique secondary contribution that came out of this study.[121] Just as they had survived prior colonisations, the majority of rural peasants also survived the British colonial encounter. It was elucidated in Chapters 1 and 5 that they remained loyal to their age-old vernacular until the state intervention in the mid 1980s.


## Conclusion

Kandy – the last Sinhalese kingdom with its distinctive polity, non-exertive economics, and the culturally-determinant social stratification – is the legitimate pre-modern point of comparison with the modern colonial and post-colonial contexts that followed. Dwelling into the foregoing spheres cement the fact that the Kandyan social stratification was culturally-based, and the economic prerogative was secondary. The caste system was the basis of social division, where the elite/sub-elite positions were allocated for the highest caste group, while less politically-loaded positions were assumed by the lower caste groups. The intention of this arrangement was to make the Sinhalese administrative system function and its cultural guardians – the Royal house and the religious order – prevail in an environmentally sustainable manner, so that the Buddhist faith encapsulated within the Sinhalese culture could continue for posterity.  Within its peculiar situation, the Kandyan elitism/sub-elitism could be conceived in order for the austere Kandyan elite domestic architecture to be established as an articulation of them.  An architectural inquiry frames the generic Kandyan house of the sub-elite. The manor house of the elites on the other hand, was a repetition of the former; proportionately to the political power, and thus, the resultant social acceptance and material wealth of the patron.

The post 15th century European colonization of the Orient was the ultimate result of the religious reformations that ensued the renaissance to see culmination with enlightenment, where a sense of communality was traded off for ego-centricism. A new world system was created by the Iberian colonists in the form of an archipelago

of outposts, and it was re-constructed into an inter-state system by their West European counterparts later on. The British colonial saga in Ceylon began at a time when the 'core' of this system had been occupied by their own hegemony. When the previously Dutch-occupied areas of Ceylon were amalgamated into their 'periphery', the British gradually cemented their core-oriented politics in it via processes of unification and centralization. By establishing economic centrality within a political system that was tilting towards democracy from an initial stint of repression, the island was tangled up with the single world-wide capitalist economy that had by the time reached its apogee. A plantation economy was introduced with British capital, and Ceylonese interaction in it – as well as in complimentary ventures – soon followed. This was the ground-work for a more rigorous British modernity to surpass the modest Portuguese and Dutch phases, where ideological transformation and creation of an urban-oriented intelligentsia completed the transformation of 'Lankans' to 'Ceylonese'. The articulation of this change became evident in cultural changes that took a material expression. Domestic architecture was an intrinsic element of this phenomenon. Owing to British ensued modernity, British Ceylon demands an economically-based social stratification. The British period bourgeoisie was perched at the social apex carried sub-categories – low-country bourgeoisie, 19th century bourgeoisie, first-class *Govigamas* and Kandyan feudalists – where the petty-bourgeoisie and working people occupied the descending echelons.

While the former two groups formed a common status group, the latter also followed suit. This resulted in a duality between the two fractions. In this backdrop, the British period elite domestic architecture could be conceived. While the latter status group adopted a hybrid version between the Kandyan manor and the quintessential Dutch house, the former group took a more radical form and mimicked the British manor house while trapping the architectural contents in the houses of their counterparts. Their version hence, was more eclectic in the making.

# Notes

[1] the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*).

[2] This Kingdom had been originally formed as *Senkadagalapura* during the reign of *Vikramabahu III* of *Gampola* in the mid 14th Century, and later was formed as a revolt territory that resisted the maritime Portuguese rule by King *Wimaladharmasooriya-I* in 1592 (Seneviratna, 2008: 14).

Perera (1994: 64) believes that the locus of indigenous resistance to colonialism shifted from the weakening *Sitavaka* to Kandy, which was geographically better-protected. This in his words, brought into existence a *"Colombo-Kandy power axis"* by the late 16th century.

[3] The treaty was to pledge the Dutch support to the Kingdom of Kandy to overthrow the Portuguese. In return, a number of important ports around the country were to be opened up to the Dutch for their trading activities. According to the treaty, the Singhalese king was to be regarded and respected as the supreme ruler of the island by the Dutch while they had to hand over all the other ports and regions acquired by them from the previous colonizer. The intention behind the granting of a number of sea ports to the Dutch

was to let them recover their expenses incurred at the war against the Portuguese and allow them get established in the trading scene of the country. The conditions of this treaty however, were circumvented by the shrewd Dutch administration as they feared that it favoured Kandyans more than them.

[4] By 1796, the Dutch landlocked the Kandyan kingdom by constructing and maintaing a string of about fifteen fortresses around the island. They had secured considerable territory along with all Kandyan sea ports and trading privileges. Their determination was to reap as much revenue as possible from the lucrative cinnamon trade and other cultivations of pepper, coffee and spices, not to mention the profitable trade of elephants. In contrast to the Portuguese forts built to defend from the inland attacks of indigenous peoples, the Dutch forts were capable of both inland and sea defense; the latter as a precaution for possible attacks by other European powers (Perera, 1994: 59-60).

[5] The following written testament by a soldier of the British army (involved in the taking-over of the maritime regions from the Dutch in 1796), writing in 1803 (in Perera, 1994: 147), articulates the solitary position of the Kingdom at the time.

> "I have often heard persons, unacquainted with the interior of Ceylon, express their surprise that a tract of land in the heart of the island, cut off from all external supplies, and everywhere surrounded by European settlements, should so long have remained in the hands of a people neither strong nor warlike, in spite of repeated efforts to wrest it from them".

[6] James Cordiner visited Kandy short after the British take-over in 1796.

[7] These factors predominantly depended on the nature of harvest and prevailing political circumstances.

[8] Henceforth, it shared no underlying similarities with European modernity complimented by capitalism, which has always strived on exploitative growth (N. de Silva, 2006a).

[9] However, such Western inculcations could be questioned in the light of Michel Foucault. He postulates that in the *"panoptic"* modern-age (which is the culmination of European-instigated Modernity), the *"great confinement"* has contained the society through relentless categorization (Jose: 1998). The origin of systematic categorizations in fact, could be traced back to the 19th century, where colonialism was at its helm. Conversely, situations analogous to the 18th century Kandy examined here existed throughout the pre-modern world, where people were only subjected to 'intermittent suppression'. However, the level of human suppression has been gradually exacerbated in the name of Modernity over the years. Consequently, by contemporary times, individuals have been directly brought under the *"eye of power"*.

[10] When trade did occur with colonial powers, it "… *did not constitute bulk exports but so-called luxury items* …". However, the point to note is that "…*Kandyan lives were not dependant on such luxury trade*" (Perera, 1994: 147). Perera argues that it was because of this nature, the Dutch strategy (around 1766) of blockading of Kandy's trading outlets did not weaken the kingdom.

[11] This point was elaborated in chapters 1 and 3.

[12] According to classification by K. T. Silva (2005), the *Govi* caste can be divided into *Radala, Govi* and *Patti*. A faction of cultivators was given high administrative positions by the king (in addition to close relatives of his) to become *Radalas*, while some were appointed as petty-officials. *Sitano* was not an administrative rank, but a social position of prestige.

[13] It is pertinent to mention that as Kandyan Kingdom was isolated, the only alien influences it received would possibly have been from the Southern Indian states, South-East Asia, as well as that of the Muslim traders (mainly from Southern India and South-east Asia) who freely moved from the coast to the interiors (Maharoof et al., 1986).

[14] Hence, the appropriation of Lord Buddha's tooth relic symbolized patronage of the *Sangha* (the Buddhist order of monks) towards the monarchy and its acceptance by the populace; both factors vital for legitimacy. On the other hand, it was illustrated in the previous chapter that the Sinhalese king was considered a *Bodhisatva* or *Chakrawarthi*.

[15] Mainly two Chief Ministers or *Maha Adigars* and a 3rd *Adigar* who was also known as *Maha Nilame*.

[16] The *Adigars* were the principal ministers and the high judiciary of the kingdom. They in most occasions were genealogically connected to the Royal family, while other high administrative positions of *Dissaves, Rate Mahattayas, Muhandirams, Nilames* etc. were given to certain *Radala* groups within the cultivator caste (Wijetunge, 2011b: 24).

[17] Although Nimal de Silva (2010) suggests that both positions were parallel in the hierarchy, Madugalle (2005) seems to think otherwise.

[18]*Koralas* were in charge of fairly large areas of *Korales*, consisting of a number of villages. *Vidanes* were in charge of cultivation and tax collection of a number of villages. *Arachchis* were the protectors of the villages and acted as village chiefs. *Vidanes* were in charge of various service cadres belonging to a number of service castes while *Arachchis* were responsible for each service caste group.

[19] They did not pay taxes to the King's treasury. As Nimal de Silva (2010) notes, at times, they were made *Muhandirams*. Furthermore, according to Madugalle (2005: 29), they were at times given lower ranks of district administration to be titled as *Dissave Mohottalas* of certain *Disawanes*.

[20] They are not to be mistaken with the ones to share the same titular name who held certain minor positions as lower district administrations (as *Rate Ralas*) or in the palace establishment (as *Talpath Wadana Rala, Muthukuda Rala* etc.), as Madugalle (2005: 26-33) points out.

[21] In the eyes of certain Westerners such as Cave (1894: 53-54), such a structure facilitated *"the worst excesses of unscrupulous tyrants"* to flourish over masses, operating on *"harsh laws of the Sinhalese kings"*.

[22] All officials of high and low ranks as well as the cultivator caste peasants were provided with portions of land to make their livelihoods from paddy cultivation as the *"staple food of the people"* as John Davy (1969: 207) – a British ambassador to the late 18th century Kandyan court – wrote.

[23] The power over whole of the Kandyan territory's land was vested in the king and its ownership was distributed over an ensemble of villages of varying sizes. They were *Gabadagam* (villages to supply all requirements of the palace), *Viharagam* (villages dedicated to Buddhist temples and monasteries), *Devalagam* (villages belonging to temples dedicated to various deities), *Nindagam* (villages which were the property of granters or temporary chiefs) and finally, *Vidanagam* (Villages under the petty administrative position of *Vidanes*).

An intermittent tax referred to as the *'Agrabhagaya'* (the good portion) was collected from all villages except from the first two categories, to be granted to the Royal treasury (Nimal de Silva, 2010).

[24] They were allowed to trade their produce to obtain foodstuffs to make a living. The communities in villages belonging to temples were given sufficient rations for the ritual services that they rendered. Such communities according to Roberts (1995), engaged in agriculture as a parallel means of livelihood.

[25] They are the faction that makes the liaison between the former group and masses.

[26] the last to occupy it being an *Arachchi Mahattaya.*

[27] As Knowles elaborates, the contemporary society owes much to their innovative ideas, scientific and technological progress to the foundations laid during the 18-19th century enlightenment (see Giddens, 2002). Knowles (2008: 2) on the other hand, reiterates that the transition from traditional to modern societies was accompanied by brutal revolutions that saw much disease and suffering to the people. Craib (in Knowles, 2008: 2) explores the underlying intention of such moves. He claims that the period saw an unprecedented change in the way people thought about the world that in fact, reflected as widespread unrest. It was the defining period of European intellectual history, when philosophers from Immanuel Kant to Isaac Newton became inspirations to population *en masse* to embrace *"… ground-breaking ideas that would have profound repercussions for civilisation"* (Hall and Gieben in Knowles, 2008: 2). For Porter (2001: 3), philosophers identified in the 'Encyclopedie' were *"… trampling on prejudice, tradition, universal consent [and] authority in a word [where] all that enslaves most minds …"*.

[28] The expression in a humanist standpoint, encapsulates the *"[…] progress of societies, from primitive civilisations which evolved steadily through distinct stages, arriving at a modern age […]"* (Giddens in Knowles, 2008: 1).

[29] The communal teachings of Catholicism were relegated for a new religious perspective that articulated an enhanced sense of individuality (N. de Silva, 2006a). In the light of a view that man can converse with god by himself without congregation, the subsequent development of individuality was inevitable. Knowles (2008: 3) states that this was intensified subsequently, by the Industrial Revolution.

[30] The former through their art (and architecture) articulated metaphorically the sense of individuality of the human being. For artworks manifesting this trend, N. de Silva (2006b) adduces as examples, the more secular as well as individualistic *David* and *Mona Lisa* that replaced more socially and religiously-oriented works such as *The Last supper* and *Pieta.* In terms of architecture, he points to the hitherto unforeseen levels of luxury evident in religious, civic and private edifices realised by Renaissance architects.

[31] In the aftermath of the war, the lack of resources in Europe was one of the main reasons for colonization agendas. Firstly, the Iberians and then the West Europeans embarked on this path.

[32] Both these were reformed versions of Catholicism.

[33] Although the Dutch V.O.C (The East India Company) managed to completely oust the Portuguese from Ceylon to acquire their territories, they failed miserably to penetrate the interior. This was owing to the existence of an indigenous kingdom of autonomy in the central highlands of the island in the form of Kandy. However, the Dutch were successful in land-locking the Kandyans by 1766 (K. M. de Silva, 1989: 59), where their power was restricted to the maritime belt that surrounded Kandy; defended by a ring of about 15 fortresses.

[34] The Dutch and British closely followed the Iberian practices – despite the *"policy of secrecy"* of the Portuguese that concealed from the rest of Europe information about Asia and their progress there – and learned from their own experience to produce more developed forms of knowledge by the 17th century (Perera, 1994: 81).

The Dutch in particular, shrewder in their approach, drew on secret channels to acquire information that eventually made the Northern state the center of European map production (Perera, 1994: 81-82).

[35] For Arrighi (in Perera, 1994: 83), this refers to the *"international"* recognition and legitimization of each government's absolute right over mutually exclusive territories. This particular territorial organization was achieved through the monopolization of power and violence in the hands of the rulers within exclusive jurisdictional domains and the institutionalization of public authority of each sovereign over its subjects.

[36] According to Arrighi (1990: 390), the Dutch took the lead in the *"about-to-be-born interstate system"* in its struggle against Imperial Habsburg Spain.

[37] 'Colonial third culture' in Anthony King's (1976: 58) terms, is defined as the *"European colonial culture which results from the transformation of metropolitan cultural institutions as they come into contact with the culture of the indigenous society"*.

[38] According to Wallerstein, Asia's inner-life was not transformed by them and remained *"…basically unchanged by contact"*.

[39] The latter point is also confirmed by Nimal de Silva (1995: 124).

[40] As Fredrick North – the first British Governor – lamented in 1799, *"[so] little was the commerce of this country … and that so engrossed, that its effects were not felt a few miles outside the principle ports"* (Colvin R. de Silva in Perera, 1994: 147). Thus, we could infer that not many locals in these regions were involved in commercial activities.

[41] This group consisted of the *Govigamas* – possibly residual nobles and chieftains who had retained their traditional titles – and especially, the certain lower-caste groups who were beneficial for the Portuguese on economic and political (defense) grounds.

[42] The Portuguese had reinvigorated the traditional *Rājakāriya* into an efficient and lucrative system, functioning from the grass-root level (Perera, 1994: 87).

[43] While the latter familiarized the indigenes in Western law (conceivable as yet another impartation to regulate local lives), the former disrupted their self-sufficiency by promoting dependency on international commerce. The V.O.C not only exported spices and other valuable commodities from Ceylon, they developed the habit of importing commodities such as printed cotton fabrics from South-East Asia. Nimal de Silva (1996: 126) believes that this caused a striking impact on the Lankan dress of both males and females; especially among the elite.

[44] First, to create a race that would be apt for climatic conditions; second, as a loyal contingent they would make the liaison between the two races by being in a more contiguous position to the indigenes, to better disperse Western culture among them; and third was the need for security as they were to make a buffer between disparate races.

[45] The Portuguese colonization for Jayasuriya (2000: 253), was not saddled with imperial ambitions or status. Their segregation according to Perera (1994: 59), was strictly driven by security concerns.

[46] Firstly, they converted to Catholicism and appropriated its accompanying cultural traits. These traits ranged from adopting Portuguese naming conventions, life style practices (i.e. food habits, dress etc.), incorporation of Portuguese words into the Sinhalese colloquial language, song and dance, to architecture (Perera, 1994: 212; Nimal de Silva, 1996: 23; Jayasuriya, 2000: 253).

[47] contrary to the austerity archetypal to its Sinhalese-Buddhist counterpart (N. de Silva, 2006a).

[48] For a short period, Dutch also attempted to produce a mixed race as a means of expansion – the best example being Governor Johan Maetsuyker (1646-50) launching colonization schemes in Ceylon and Batavia that promoted white men to marry Asian or Eurasian women and settle down in the colonies as the progeny of such marriages were believed to be better acclimatized to local conditions (Boxer, 1969: 247-8). However, things changed drastically later.

The belief that *"[…] the white man, whether merchant, mariner or settler, should stand 'above and apart' from the colored races among whom he lived, moved and had his being […]"* is illustrated by Boxer (1990: 241).

This new attitude attests to the intensification of humanist thinking in West Europe at the time. Thus, in contrast to the Portuguese approach, what Dutch adopted later was more racist and exclusive.

On the other hand, security not being a primary concern of the more advanced V.O.C (both in terms of military and naval spheres) would have also been a seminal factor behind this change.

[49] The articulation of this tendency is in fact, evident in the dipartite racial segregation apparent in Dutch fortified settlements in South and South East Asia (Perera, 1994: 63). The Dutch ruled Colombo was dichotomous or in other words, racially segregated into two zones in an arrangement analogous to fort cities in India (Percival, 1990: 110-111). The Governor, merchants, officers and soldiers all had their dwellings within the fort, while the *oude stad* (the adjacent outside area) was a market place of multiethnic groups, especially for Malabars, Maldivians and Sinhalese according to Hulugalle (in Perera, 1994: 63).

[50] Van Diemens in fact, notes that *"[a] Hollander, when he arrives in Asia, thinks when my six years of service is up, then I will go home to Europe again"* (in Perera, 144: 63*).

[51] Nimal de Silva (1995: 124-126) point out to an array of possible Dutch cultural impartations. Firstly, the naming conventions have to be mentioned. Secondly, certain names in architecture for the new spaces introduced and also names for furniture pieces newly introduced.

Thirdly, food habits; as the Dutch introduced their sweets, pickles and jams, along with their accompanying names. Consuming European-type alcohol had been introduced by the Portuguese and was made a consolidated industry by establishing breweries and taverns by the Dutch. The courage that one gets after a few drinks came to be known among the Sinhalese as the 'Dutch courage'. These new words were absorbed into the Sinhalese colloquial language.

Fourthly, the influence caused on the Lankan dress by their fabric imports (printed fabric from South-East Asia for instance was initially influenced the elite and later peasant dresses of both males and females). Similarly, the Dutch flag depicting the lion (especially, the rampant lion) was absorbed into traditional Sinhalese flags.

Fifth, the Roman-Dutch Law imparted a new sense of cultural control over their governed maritime population.

[52] Most of them in fact, took up second-grade positions in the British colonial administration, engaged in economic investments and were later franchised to participate in politics (Jayewardene, 1984: 125).

[53] Apart from mix descendants, there is another small faction called *Kaffirs* who have African descent. They remain in the North-Western province of present-day Sri Lanka. They were brought to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, as a part of their respective naval forces and also for domestic work. Whatever their African origins, the *Kaffirs* were exposed to and have assumed Portuguese culture. Not surprisingly, there was intermarriage between the Portuguese *Burghers* and *Kaffirs* who belonged to the same culture set; they spoke Sri Lanka Portuguese Creole and were Roman Catholics (Jayasuriya, 2000: 253-254).

[54] Judging by cultural appropriations such as naming conventions and Catholic faith, Roberts (1995) in fact, believes that maritime communities such as *Karave* for example, may have mixed and inter-mixed with the Portuguese descendants over the course of time beyond recognition.

[55] As the population census of 1946 (the last one before independence) suggests, more than 70% of the total population of the island was Sinhalese and 64.5% were still Buddhist. In other words, out of the entire Sinhalese population, by 1946 only 9.1% had converted to Christianity (Department of Census and Statistics, 1976: 44, 48).

Other available statistics enable a better comparison. In 1881, 61.5% of Ceylon's population was Buddhist and 10.1% Christian. 1881 is the only year where both these statistics are available. By 1946, the former had risen to 64.5%, while the latter had plummeted to 9.1% (Department of Census and Statistics, 1976: 48).

The foregoing percentages become indispensible in the absence of figures to illustrate maritime Sinhalese Buddhist populations during Portuguese, Dutch and British occupations respectively. When even the rigorous British modernization programs only achieved so much by independence, it could be inferred that as a proportion, the number to have possibly undergone a considerable degree of westernization by prior colonists, should be minor.

[56] This house has been placed adjacent to a church building.

[57] The former Portuguese colony of *Goa* in India is the best contender for this exercise and the grounds for its suitability over others for the purpose were discussed under limitations.

[58] Portuguese and Dutch engravings reveal that their houses were usually placed in urban settings adjacent to one another in lines (inside forts). They were mostly rectangular in shape, two storied, and hip-roofed. The utility areas of these houses were placed on the ground floor while the accommodation on the upper. Upper floors were surrounded by balconies protected with arched openings forming galleries, where ground floors received light and ventilation from smaller fenestration [(Lewcock et al., 2002: 153-157); de Soysa (1995: 128); Munasinghe (1992)].

[59] As Manel Fonseka (1978: 6) observes, the so-called 'Dutch' architecture in Ceylon established through the 'non-scientific' writings of British bureaucrats who lacked architectural training – especially, British civil servant J. P. Lewis (1902) who coined the term 'Dutch Architecture' for the popular style extant on British arrival – might not be truly 'Dutch' in the making, but an extension of the prior 'hybrid' Portuguese style (Jayewardene, 1984: 51,54). Fonseka laments that *"[the] poverty of our architectural knowledge is such that, we cannot easily date these buildings, but perhaps, as we have suggested, they may recall styles prevalent when the Portuguese were here, as often we suspect, is the case, when we talk of 'Dutch' architecture".* Wijesuriya (1995: 70) agrees to this. Some in fact, attribute this influence to Portuguese-formed building guilds in operation during the Dutch occupation (Ashley De Vos, 2010).

[60] According to Steensgaard (1990: 123), by the 1740s, out of all other spices, cinnamon accounted for 8% of the total sales revenue in Europe for its biggest importer; the V.O.C. Despite such high demand for cinnamon – the highest quality of which only grew in Ceylon – in Europe, just as the Portuguese, the Dutch were also incapable of organizing a system of its production as plantations. Within their strong policy of preserving the wild cinnamon growths – in jungles and forests – they relied on the *Rājakāriya* system of labour for its accumulation. According to Roberts (1995) they forced the caste group of *Salagama* to peel cinnamon bark from plants – a skilful and labour-intensive exercise – and, to boost production increased the number engaged in the occupation by channelling other caste groups such as *Govigama* into it. Despite this arrangement, they could not become independent of the supplies that came from the Kandyan provinces to raise the sufficient quantity needed for exporting (Mills, 1964: 203). The Dutch exploitation eventually resulted in a rebellion and other forms of resistance by the cinnamon peelers between 1757-60; springing up mainly from major production areas in the South-West. The Kandyan king too exacerbated the situation by imposing a quota of trading goods to go to the coast from Kandy and also accepted rebels from the Dutch areas. In this background, although the colonists tried to weaken Kandy through economic isolation, it was unfruitful as the Kandyan society did not depend on external trade, but was self sufficient. Its trading was not constituted of bulk exports, but luxury items of non-essential nature that were costly; gathered rather than produced (Perera, 1994: 147). Hence, a military campaign was led in 1766 to blockade Kandy's trading outlets and further forcing it into a treaty (K. M. de Silva, 1989: 179).

[61] In December of 1794, the French revolutionaries entered the Netherlands and established the Batavian Republic. The Hereditary Stadtholder fled to England and found a refuge at Kew.

Prior to this incident the English East India Company founded in 1600 had to settle for India (the Indian subcontinent), considered to be the 'second best', as against the East Indies that the Dutch concentrated on. The Dutch commercial interests were minimal in India and maximum in the South East Asia region. The above confirms the weak status of the British until the late 18th century.

[62] The British decided to retain Ceylon along with Cape of Good Hope as they were strategically vital for them in their growing empire and restored the East Indian Islands to the Dutch (Perera, 1994: 86).

[63] This arrangement was much more sophisticated than what the Iberians had previously created.

[64] This was confirmed by the British Prime Minister William Pitt (the Younger). On the other hand, in the words of Admiral Fisher (the late 19th century naval authority), certain key ports in India and also Ceylon were *"keys that locked up the globe"* (Perera, 1994: 85). These ports not only allowed reduced travel times, but also were highly defensive.

[65] Thus Trincomalee in the North-Eastern coast of Ceylon had suddenly become an important strategic node to establish a naval base to extend power over the Bay of Bengal. Originally, it was the English East India Company that turned their interest towards Ceylon (Perera, 1994: 87, 88, 89).

[66] The Franco-British conflict perpetuated into the turn of the century, and consolidated as 'Napoleonic Wars' (1792-1815) (Kennedy, 1989: 120). Emerging victorious following Napoleon's fall, Britain cemented its hegemony among the core powers.

[67] The crown colony status was in fact, established following the peace of Amience. From 1802, it was governed separate from territories in continental India ruled by the British East India Company's Madras Presidency. Although Ceylon was taken over from the Dutch by the British East India Company in 1796 that wanted to keep it under its Madras Government, the revolt by the locals in 1797-8 (a little more than a year after its take-over) was used as an excuse by the British government to gain its control (Perera, 1994: 89).

[68] On the 14th of February 1815, the Kingdom of Kandy was ceded to the British crown by a faction of Kandyan feudalists who were discontent with the rule of the king *Sri Vikrama Raja Sinha,* who was disposed to *Vellore* in India (Mahavamsa.org, 2011).

As misunderstood by many, this was neither a conquest nor a total submission to British authority (N. de Silva, 2008). The pertinent point is that the British agreed to a number of pre-conditions prior to the hand-over (Hemapala, 2004: 14, 19-33). The most vital preconditions were to safeguard Buddhism just as prior Sinhalese kings had done, to administer the populace according to ancient Sinhalese laws and customs, and to allow prior political and economic privileges to the Kandyan feudalists (Perera, 1994: 97). The agreement to the former conditions in fact, created unease in the British parliament on the grounds on which, a 'civilized' society such as Christian Britain agreeing to safeguard a religion and culture considered at the time to be 'heathen' in quintessential humanist fashion. These sets of conditions on the part of Kandyans articulates that the Buddhist religion and Sinhalese Buddhist culture was central to the Kandyan politico-economic systems (N. Silva, 2008). Based on the illustration by Mills (1966) of the two conquests directed at the kingdom in 1803 and 1812 both ending unsuccessfully, N. de Silva (2008) believes that if the British had not agreed to any of the foregoing conditions, a complete British take-over would not have been plausible.

By 1817, the colonial state's attempt to manipulate certain conditions of the treaty led to a freedom struggle by a faction of Kandyan feudalists that was brutally crushed (N. de Silva, 2006b; 2008). The suppressed Feudalists were then pushed into oblivion by 1818, while the British established their hegemony (Perera, 1994: 97). The eventual outcome of these events was unification of Ceylon as a single political entity of stability.

[69] After 1815, what Perera sees as the 'Colombo-Kandy Power axis' ceased to exist and the entire island was brought under the control of what he refers to as a single *"English-speaking administration"*. Consequently, the island physically became 'Ceylon' [a corruption of *Sihala Dveepa* for Perera (1994: 95)] – as against its previous representation as the entire island of Ceylon, even when the colonists ruled partially its maritime regions – and the inhabitants, 'Ceylonese' (Perera, 1994: 95-96). For Perera (1994: 97), a major prerequisite for construction of Ceylon was the destruction of extant indigenous social and spatial structures – as Frank (1979: 140-46) has argued in relation to Asia, Africa and Latin America – which were seen as obstructions to the achievement of *"particular colonial objectives"*.

> *"The British simultaneously deprived the Lankans of the capacity to employ the former state, or its political system, as instruments of subversion against colonial rule".*

As Perera (1994: 98) reiterates, this was achieved by the destruction of 'indigenous Kandy' via a new centralisation of Colombo.

[70] The 'Crown Colony' of Ceylon was ruled by British authorities in London through its agent in Colombo; the 'Governor'. In constructing the vital link between the colonies and London, the 'Colonial Agency' was established in 1801, orienting Ceylon through its capital port city of Colombo, to the Metropole. Complimentary to this arrangement, the Governor's office was established in Colombo in 1802, centralizing the authority as well as responsibility over the whole island. This was by and large, a contrast to the historical Kingdoms of Ceylon that were self-sufficient and self contained entities of which, the seat of government was located within the territorial hinterland as the centre of society. On the other hand, this was a clear point of departure from the Portuguese or Dutch organizations, where the empires were hierarchically organized with regional centres; Goa for Portuguese and Batavia for Dutch (Perera, 1994: 91).

According to Chandra (1980: 284), colonialism is not about classes, but between a 'foreign ruling class' and 'colonial people' as a whole. In this light, the Crown's appointment of a Governor as the head of the colony represent a subjugation of the entire Ceylonese society; where " *the powers of the Governor constitute a 'paternal despotism' "*, modified only by the distant authority of the Queen [or the King] (Perera, 1994: 91). The functions of governor's councils were consultative, but adoption or rejection of their recommendations rested exclusively with him (Perera, 1994: 91). The negotiations of power between the governor and other colonial agents such as the Judges and the military – who wished in the early 19th century to present themselves as superior to the governor – and the British authorities eventually separated the executive, judiciary and military functions of the colonial state. These three powers in the island had always been concentrated in a single central power during the days of its kingdoms (Roberts, 1995). However, as Perera (1994: 91-92) argues, the colonial state that revolved around the centralised power of the governor's office until the conquest of Kandy, was now complete.

Following the full take-over, the first step of centralisation was achieved through territorial re-organisation. The island was divided into homogeneous administrative provinces and districts – to be reorganised in the 1830s into five provinces and twenty one districts – on par with the divisions within many European empires. All such divisional regions were subjected to Colombo's central control (Perera, 1994: 101, 103). The method of re-organization along with the practice of naming based on universal Cardinal directions, eliminated Kandy's physical identity and weakened the nationalist feeling of Kandyans (Perera, 1994: 103).

The most evident was the 1833's re-organization allocating parts of former Kandyan territories among all five provinces. Spatial re-organization had to be complimented by communications building. In 1802, a number of demands had been made by the first British Governor Fredrick North to the Ceylonese king on the threat of dethroning (Perera, 1994: 96). Assuming the authority to threaten an indigenous power sums up the humanist and orientalist tendencies of the expanding British Empire. The first was to allow free communication between Colombo and Trincomalee for the British troops and to implement a mail service; both through Kandyan territories. The demands that were repudiated were extended in 1803, to allow constructions of a canal and road through the same (Perera, 1994: 88, 94).

[71] The acts of organizing a network of military outposts in strategic locations, hierarchically arranging administrative centres similar to their former seaborne outpost system (and later urban centres), sum up what was more or less achieved by the mid 19th century.

Contrary to Kandyan kingdom's 'anti-road' policy that Perera (1994: 103) illustrates, a road system was constructed from the early 19th century as the main form of overland communication, and this in turn, linked Colombo and Kandy with other important destinations (Ivan, 2006: 7-18). The vitality of the road system for mobilizing a modern 'Mauritian' military essential for political dominance, and especially, commercial development of the island, is made evident by Edward Barnes's promulgations quoted by Mills (1965: 224).

[72] The railway network was complimented (with bridges) radiating mainly from Colombo and also Kandy, to other strategically and economically vital points of the island.

[73] For Perera, the traditional compulsory service (*Rājakāriya*) was used by the colonial state to get the initial colonial infrastructure laid.

The bullock cart dominated road transportation was replaced in 1865 by introducing the locomotive that significantly reduced travelling time (K. Jayawardena, 2007: 76). The mail service was formed in 1822 (Perera, 1994: 101). Other essential services such as hospitals and schools also were being built the island over. Colonial state also focused on renovating the existing irrigation system in disrepair, in order to review

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the paddy plantation industry, which was the livelihood of the majority of Ceylonese. The health and sanitation of people were considerably enhanced as it was subsequently manifested through a swift growth of the country's population (Pakeman, 1970: 127-141).

[74] The British colonial administration at the outset (carried out by the authority of Governor) was repressive as Perera (1994: 93-105) illustrates via British practices immediately after 1815. The local resistance to this repression manifested in two freedom struggles within the first fifty years of their rule.

[75] With the proliferation of liberalised ideas in West Europe at the time (K. Jayawardena, 2009: 146-147), the British politics took a democratic turn, which consequently affected the way its colonies were being ruled. Democratic reforms were portrayed by the British administration as the most 'ideal' means of governing society, where the society itself was allowed to participate in the process to a certain degree. Democratic ideology was elaborately discussed in Chapter 3. At the same time, a new 'secular' system was mediated to locals as a betterment of the prior political situation – where a kingship manipulated by the religious-order and repressive ancient laws – was promulgated as 'tyrannical'.

Within the system, Representatives from their electorates were sent to the 'House of Representatives' in Colombo to govern the 'nation' as well as to negotiate issues concerning each individual electorate. Pandey (1980: 29) tells us, although the democratic system did not function well in many post-colonial Asian countries which subsequently abandoned it, Ceylon had no issues. Conversely, the system became instrumental in the construction of a new dimension by dividing the country into electoral divisions; making these areas organizational bases for political parties and in turn, the political leaders behind them (Perera, 1994: 350). Hence, it could be argued that it was the success of democracy that allowed social stratums below the non-traditional elite to become national leaders; a new form of upward social mobility. The timely political calculation by the British to grant independence to its colonies made it plausible to negotiate a post imperial space of a 'Commonwealth'. In the process, the elite of the colonies were simultaneously legitimized as 'national' leaders (Perera, 1994: 331). It is notable however, that electoral identities were more complex than party loyalties in Ceylon, since most successful candidates as Perera (1994: 350) affirms, "[…] particularly the elite, have, from 1931, drawn on the support of villagers, through village level leaders – religious, caste, business, or otherwise – who delivered them blocs of vote".

[76] The reforms delivered by Colebrook-Cameron commission in 1833 marks the watershed of British capitalism and democracy in Ceylon (Obeyesekere, 2007: 34). The reforms not only abolished the tenure-system (i.e. *Rajakariya*) that largely reduced the power of the former Lankan administrative system by turning former authorities into 'wage workers' as Mills (1965: 68) believes, it also abolished the British exclusivity of the Civil Service and incorporated Ceylonese into the Legislative Council. As Mills (1965: 66) reveals, the reforms recommended that the civil service (public service) should allow *"the unrestricted admission of natives"* of all classes according to their 'qualifications', and judicial and civil offices be made open when they possess or acquire the necessary qualifications. This enabled a hitherto unforeseen level of upward social mobility for the Ceylonese within the new system while they were being transformed into British clones; loyal and westernized subjects that could be employed in the lower echelons of colonial bureaucracy. The idea was to attain an education and thus, qualifications so that no matter the ethnicity and caste origin, one could acquire state employment. The underlying reason being this franchise basically was to curtail the power of traditional elite. Hence, in British humanist tradition, they were putting an end to centuries of tyranny of a governing minority.

[77] The Ceylonese participation in colonial government affairs began as early as the 1830s. 1833 reforms recommended establishment of executive and judicial councils replacing the function of the former advisory council. For Ivan (2006: 50), the reforms were the first step to orient Ceylonese towards democracy. According to Mills (1965: 105), at the outset, Ceylonese were only appointed by the governor to the judicial council as unofficial members known as 'legislators' and there were no Ceylonese members in the executive council. Executive council initially consisted of five high end bureaucrats of the colonial government, who were British. Its purpose was to aid the governor (Ivan, 2006: 50). Despite judicial council's participation, still, the governor remained as the paramount authority, who was in a position to overrule its deliberations. However, this advent to democracy itself was undemocratic in terms of ethnic representation, where the Sinhalese majority was deliberately made to suffer a significant under-representation. The 1833 Legislative council consisted of 9 officials and 6 unofficial members.

Ivan (2006: 50) points out that for approximately seven thousand Europeans, three places, and for a small number of Burghers, one place was allocated. He reveals the anomaly by pointing at two places allocated to represent a combined Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims population of approximately a million, where one seat each was provided for Sinhalese and Tamils. However, the real under-representation suffered by the majority population is neglected by Ivan. In reality, nearly 75% of the Sinhalese were allocated one place as against a 25% representation of the minority counterparts also receiving an equal representation.

1920s Donoughmore reforms saw 11 constituencies at the provincial level. It appointed three members to represent 'low-county' Sinhala, Lanka Tamil and Burgher populations, and also four members for 'up-county' Sinhalese, Muslims and Indians (Tamils). The new system gave 13 seats in overall to the Sinhalese and only 3 to the Tamils (Ivan, 2006: 53). In Ivan's view, Tamils felt discontented with this allocation. They had suddenly lost the equal participation they had previously enjoyed with the Sinhalese majority. Hence, in N. de Silva's (2000) view, this made things slightly fair for the Sinhalese. Such new allocations attest to the British policy of pursuing new divisions; this time, within ethnic groups (N. de Silva, 2000). Democracy thus, was constituted as a 'just' political system on the surface, yet with sufficient space for underlying colonial manipulation.

A Number of parties were in fact, discontent with the idea of the universal franchise. The most notable were Tamils who were anxious about a Sinhalese domination, and consequently, pushed to maintain 2:1 (Sinhalese:Tamil) proportion for participation. Ponnambalam Arunachalam in particular, was vocal about this reform. On the other hand, certain Sinhalese factions too were at unease. The Kandyans feared 'low country' Sinhalese domination and pushed for a federal solution, while the so-called 'low' caste groups feared that they would be marginalized within a *Govigama* dominated polity. When a vote was called in the council, while 19 votes were in favor of the reform, 17 went against it. This illustrates the degree of discontent towards it. When only A. E. Gunasinghe (a Marxist) welcomed the reforms, other prominent figures including Ponnambalam Arunachalam, D. S. Senanayake, and S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike expressed their concerns (Ivan, 2006: 54). The democratic system that was intended to end ethnic representation politics, in fact, exacerbated ethnic rivalry (Ivan, 2006: 54).

[78] In 1933, a fresh call was made for fresh reforms that incorporated minority concerns as well as demands for decreasing the power in the hands of British bureaucrats that eventually realised in the 1940s. Under the demanded reforms, the three top British authorities were to be replaced by Ceylonese ministers, governor was to reduce his power, and legislative council was to be replaced by a cabinet system; all of which came under attack by the minorities who feared majority domination.

Consequently, they launched a complaint to the British colonial secretary. In case of a cabinet system, they desired one which incorporated their equal representation. Such demands deconstructed the multi-ethnic Ceylon National Congress (CNC) that was formed in 1919 into a number of ethno-centric political parties. The discontent on representation in the 1921 reforms prompted the Tamils to break away from CNC. This act was soon followed the break-away of the 'up country' Sinhalese who accused the CNC of being a 'low country' dominated organization. S. W. R. D. Banradanaike in 1930 left the CNC to form Sinhala *Mahajana Sabha* (SMS). In 1944, G. G. Ponnambalam formed Tamil Congress (TC) and demanded from the Solebeury commission one half of the total representation. He believed that the legislative council should be reformed in a manner where no ethnicity could dominate others. His solution was to create 100 seats where 50 would be given to the minorities by disregarding the proportional system.  Out of the minority seats, Lankan Tamils were to receive 25 seats while other minorities were to compete for the rest. Chelvanayagam in 1949, defected from TC and formed the Federal Party (FP) (Ivan, 2006: 53-55, 57).

Such bargaining lasted until independence, where the subsequent reforms made the system more democratic for the sake of argument. However, its manipulation for British political gain was never jettisoned (N. de Silva, 1993). Moreover, the minority discontent towards the bourgeoning democratic reforms marked the artificially-privileged positions created for them within the colonial polity that they were troubled about losing (N. de Silva, 2008).

[79] A few years after it was shaped, as Mills (1965: 107) suggests, the legislative council became the stage for bargaining for the unofficial members; by both Ceylonese and British contingents. He further states that in 1834, the Ceylonese members demanded for equal number of official and unofficial members to enhance their influence in the legislative council that saw gradual changes for their benefit later on. Unlike their Indian counterparts that practiced non-corporation or rebellion as Panday (1980: 13) points out, the Ceylonese legislators engaged in peaceful bargaining and strived to *"expand their authority within the frame work of the colonial legislature through gradual constitutional reform"* (Perera, 1994: 248). The 1911 franchise marked an increase of Ceylonese representation in the colonial legislature, where an English-educated elite – a mere 4% of island's population – voted to elect their representative (Perera, 1994: 248). In the light of Tinker (1966: 116-117) who confirms that the Ceylonese politicians were specifically interested in acquiring a substantial instalment of 'self-government' for themselves and their class, while guarding their privileges, they were suspicious of the masses. This was manifested through the opposition of this group towards universal suffrage offered in the late 1920s by the colonial state (Weerawardana, 1951: 10). In this context, unlike the Indian National Congress (INC) that turned to people for support, the Ceylonese equivalent created in 1919 did not. In the opinion of Perera (1994: 248-249), within such a political system based on class competition among the elite, those of smaller Sinhalese castes and minorities lost their position when universal suffrage was granted. According to Roberts (1995: 73), when the franchise was broadened in 1920 and 1924, less-numerous Sinhalese *Karava* politicians for instance, were vastly disadvantaged. It was this attitude according to Perera (1994: 248) that created a particular separation between the elite domain of the Low-country urban centres and rest of the island.

Although universal franchise was introduced in 1931, and the number of voters had inflated from 204,997 to 2,175, 000, the candidates were still required to be English-educated. Thus, democracy at the outset neither upset the role of educated elite in politics nor seriously challenged them (Perera, 1994: 254). Even by this time, Ceylonese legislators according to Perera (1994: 249) and Ivan (2006: 54), were still largely Christian, mostly high-caste, highly-urbanized and Westernized, of the highest economic and social class; and largely engaged in Western-type occupations. Perera (1994: 249) believes that such trends were symbolized by their adherence to European dress forms. Up to the early 20th century, both Sinhala and Tamil members appointed to the Legislative Council had belonged to the caste groups of *Govigama*, and its Tamil equivalent of *Vellala* respectively (Singer, 1964: 38). It was in the political arena that caste competition perpetuated through lobbying to the authorities, and it was in this context that the *Karava* elite mobilized to enlarge and reform the council.

[80] Summing up the ancillary position attributed to economics in pre-modern situations, Farmer (1957: 283) states that,

> *"[the] 'underdeveloped' societies have a different view of things which are worthy of effort, and these things do not necessarily include technical change for its own sake, or as a sign of modernity, or as a*

*means to more efficient production. The Westerner thinking about economic affairs in an Oriental setting cannot too often remember that, if one considers the whole known range of human attitudes to work and wealth, then the modern Western attitude is seen to be highly abnormal".*

Although this statement – in a Western humanist and orientalist point of view – discerns that Western institutions (cultural and other) are the 'developed' and 'advanced' normality, while the situations elsewhere – of the 'others' – are 'underdeveloped' or 'primitive'. It conveys best, the sense of original Ceylonese attitude of indifference towards the British-introduced capitalist economy. In a society dominated with the foregoing psyche, the British had to broker a new marriage between economy and materiality.

> *"West European deployment of the economy in the construction of a new society and space made the economy the most central aspect of day to day life". [Consequently] Culture was transformed to view capitalism, and the society organized around capitalist enterprises, such as the plantation in Ceylon, as natural, or orthogenetic, so that the system could reproduce itself. Since this totalization in the name of capitalism is not complete and, among other factors, culture is produced and reproduced through systems of differences and equivalences, the extension of such a world-system of capitalism has produced new cultural differences"* (Perera, 1994: 145).

[81] It is *"…culminating in the current, post-modern state of globalisation which shapes contemporary society with ever-increasing momentum".*

[82] The colonial state required sufficient revenues for building and upkeep of its establishments and judiciary. The need on their part to orientate the populace within the new system was hence, manifested through the powers given to the newly-appointed collectors. In 1808 there were ten collectors for *Colombo, Jaffna, Galle, Matara, Chilaw, Mannar, Kaluthara, Batticaloa, wanni,* and later *Meegampattu.* Perera (1994: 102) notes that in the 1830s, administrative reforms with the emphasis on 'collecting' brought about a more hierarchically-organized system of government agents who replaced collectors.

[83] First, the communal lands the villages functioned on – for agriculture, natural materials for construction, sources of water, irrigation etc. – were taken away, while some peasants were made landless. Secondly, they were taxed (beginning from 1796 itself), compelling them to earn a cash income. Although the state intended the locals to engage in wage-labor, this did not materialize. Thirdly, the *Rājakāriya* was abolished, relieving peasants from their compulsory labor (Mills, 1965: 19-21). Perhaps, according to the Western humanist tradition, this age-old system may have been conceived wrongly as a form of slavery. The power of the aristocrats who owned *nindagam* was curtailed by taking over of uncultivated land. According to K. M. de Silva (in Perera, 1994: 157) the abolition of this system was taken positively by the average Ceylonese. By jettisoning *Rajakariya* that was labeled as 'slavery' and 'forced-labour', in return, the colonial state demanded taxation in the form of money.

[84] As the imports grew (a vital import for example, was rice from Burma), as a consequence of expanding incomes, Ceylon became increasingly dependent on capitalist economy (Perera, 1994: 168). As for King (1989), the garden that produced the stable diet of the industrial worker in England was produced, in the last quarter of the 19th-century, in the empire, while the clothes worn by the estate workers or machine tools and railway carriages used in the empire, in return, was made in the metropole.

[85] The British re-organization of Ceylon's economy took a sharp turn in the 1830s led to the establishment of coffee plantations by the 1850s. As Perera (1994: 148) illustrates, the imperial regime produced a niche in the imperial market for Ceylonese coffee by reducing taxes. This was caused by the lack of competitiveness of Ceylonese cinnamon in the world market.

The colonial state also contributed in numerous ways. They made the plantations a viable enterprise by appropriating the small-time coffee production from the peasants, by breaking the Muslim monopoly in coffee trade, by taking over peasant land – either in the communal forms of *"all forest, waste, unoccupied or uncultivated"* or the land that they could not prove was rightfully theirs – through the Crown Land Encroachment Ordinance of 1840 to be sold cheaply to enterprising private individuals, by lifting regulations against European ownership of land outside Colombo by setting up scientific and technological facilities (i.e. botanical gardens0 and allowing civil servants to venture into the plantation sector to compensate for their reduced salaries (Bandarage, 1983:63, 70-72,94, 231). The Commission according to Bandarage, further recommended the state to disassociate itself from direct involvement in the economy while stating the necessity of a bank of deposit to facilitate finance for economic development. In the face of apathy of the Lankans (Kandyans in particular), the planters and the state had to resort to the importation of a cheap labour force of permanent nature from South India (Bandarage, 1983: 74).

From the single plantation in 1823, the late 1850s saw a growth of a whole system of plantations (17,583 numerically), marking the 'coffee mania' in Ceylon (Milles, 1965: 228). The gathering of trading commodities was replaced by *"production for the world market".* This orientation manifested itself as the plantations successfully responded to the late 1840s economic depression. The enterprise was then re-structured to make up the most dominant portion of island's economy by the 1850s (Perera, 1994: 149). The coffee plantation that was commenced as an 'experiment' in the Kandyan highlands, transformed Ceylon from a sluggish military cantonment to an enterprising British colony. In the absence of credit facilities to the Ceylonese, the ownership of coffee plantations was almost entirely British (Perera, 1994: 161)

A common observation about the plantation economy was that both the capitol and labour investment came from outside, resulting in profits ending up in Britain (Ferguson, 1903: 83), while labourers' wages – during

the initial periods – went to India (George Wall in Perera, 1994: 164). This minimized the capacity of investment and capital accumulation in Ceylon, accompanied with natural catastrophes due to forest clearing; a *"development of underdevelopment"* in the words of Gunder Frank (in Perera, 1994: 164). The formation of the European land-owning planter capitalist class was completed initially by the state establishing *Chamber of Commerce* in 1839 to culminate with *Planters Association* by 1854; making them a powerful economic and political force (Bandarage, 1983: 236). This was carried out by exalting such institutions to the level of constituency in 1855 by changing the mode of appointment of unofficial European members to the legislative council (by the governor) to letting these institutions elect 3 of them through internal voting.

Thus, the problems of planters came to be synonymous with that of the country, as the colonial state came to be largely depended on plantations (Bandarage, 1983: 236). This policy eventually paid off, as the state recorded a surplus by the 1850s from mounting deficits in the foregoing years (Mills, 1965: 86). The plantations became capable of responding to the ever-changing capitalist world market conditions, making Ceylon a part of that economy (Perera, 1994: 169). When the coffee plantations saw their demise by the 1870s owing to the so-called 'coffee blight', by the end of the 19th century, colonial botanists introduced the alternatives of tea and rubber, apart from coconut that has always been commonly planted. Tea in 1887 had increased to 157,000 Acres and by 1936, there were about 2350 estates. Rubber on the other hand, grew from 1,871 Acres in 1898 to 600,000 Acres by 1936; largely owing to the boom of 1905 produced by the nascent automobile industry and the World Wars (Pim, 1946: 62). Coconut also found wide-use as a raw material for numerous industrial needs (Perera, 1994: 176).

86 With the advent of plantation economy, the island's economy assumed a duality. While the plantation economy in the central highlands was owned and run by foreigners for export, the archaic subsistence economy of the indigenes (for domestic consumption) survived undisturbed in the rest of wet and dry zones until independence (K. M. de Silva, 1981: 297-314).

*"The two co-existed with little or no interaction; this dualism has continued to be the central characteristic of the Sri Lankan economy right up to the period of independence in 1948".*

87 Until the late 19th century, the Ceylonese were kept at bay by British monopoly in the plantation sector; by capitalist institutions such as banks and especially, via legislative means as well as market mechanisms. Wallerstein (in Perera, 1994: 240) elaborates on this 'market' mechanism as

*"[…] the institution that requires sellers and buyers constantly to adjust their behaviour in response to new information they receive, within capitalism, defined by the partially free flow of the factors of production and by the selective interference of the political machinery into these processes".*

The British-controlled banks in Colombo did not extend credit facilities to the Ceylonese and according to Mills (1965: 253), even as late as 1929, 80% of the hill-country tea estates were owned by British nationals.

It is wrongly perceived by some that the colonial administrators created the same pre-conditions in Ceylon for industrialization through their institutions of efficacy. Not so. Instead, what they did was to orient Ceylon in its 'peripheral' status towards the 'core' of Western European 'Metropole' as Perera (1994) tells us. The idea behind this move by the British – just as any other colonial power at the time ensued elsewhere – was to create favourable conditions in the island to complement their own industrial and capitalist interests back home. A fully-fledged industrialization in Ceylon was undesirable and not beneficial for the colonial interests. The main role of their colonies was to supply raw materials for their industrial productions back home (as well as for other products that was indirectly complimentary for that process; agricultural products or cash crops for instance). On the other hand, the British were also seeking a market for home-made products in the colonies.

88 Ceylonese venture into capitalist economy initiated as early as the first decades after plantations were implemented. In Perera's (1994: 240) view, this process gained momentum in the 1880s to culminate with independence later on. It was the British concentration on plantations, banking and long-distance trade with the lack of sufficient capital on their part, that mobilized Ceylonese entrepreneurs to invest in areas complimentary to the colonial economy; in turn, strengthening it. As Michael Roberts (1995) and K. Jayawardena (2007) confirm, their entry was marked by providing transportation and various other services to the colonial government, British entrepreneurs or local consumers. The kings had made it their defence policy to deliberately isolate the Kandyan provinces from the maritime areas by not constructing roadways. In the absence of proper roadways, bullock carts had always served as sole transportation means of the island for centuries. Following the British conquest, until a network of roads were constructed linking the maritime economic hubs (mainly port cities) and newly created strategic towns with the hinterland where plantations were set out, private bullock cart owners of the low-country were widely employed. They were indispensible for the colonial state until a railway network was laid in the 1860s (Perera, 1994).

Due to the concentration of British nationals in Colombo and Kandy, Ceylonese had no other choice but to occupy the Colombo-Kandy axis that connected the two entrepots. Initially, as there were no roads, the British had to rely on the locals and their bullock carts for transportation. This was taken up by the locals as an opportunity to form a transport network – as owners and workers – that constructed the vital links between plantations around Kandy and from there, linking Colombo (Perera, 1994: 241). The Sinhalese monopoly in road transportation – having come into existence after the British construed a road network after 1815 conquest – that had prevailed prior to the 1860 when the railway lines were constructed, was broken as the travelling times were significantly reduced. Such services were mostly awarded as contracts.

[89] It has to be stressed here that this tendency was caused in the relative absence of Ceylon's traditional elite – Kandyan feudalists, owing to their deliberate marginalization by the British following their failed freedom struggles and the low-country elite being largely preoccupied with their administrative and political work for the colonial regime. In economic ventures, it was the so-called 'lower caste' groups from the low-country in particular who grabbed the opportunity. Soon after, some of them diversified from arrack renting to venture into cash-crop plantations and graphite mining. However, a faction of the low-country elites and later on, certain Kandyan feudalists also ventured into plantations. Certain non-traditional low-country elites who had joined this group on the other hand, analogous to their KSD counterparts, had started their careers in the same manner (Roberts, 1995).

Ceylonese advent into plantations goes back as far as the 1830s when some of them invested in small estates; between 1844 and 1860, the average being seven acres as against hundred acres owned by their British counterparts (Perera, 1994: 241). However, they later found themselves in a position where they could not compete with the 'industrial' teas estates run by the British that required substantial capital to incept and maintain, and hence, ventured into 'cash crops' from monoculture.
Cash crops conversely, demanded less initial processing, more labour and were profitable as small holdings.

Consequently, these entrepreneurs – manly from the low-country – appropriated coconut and adapted it as a plantation crop along the West coast at the expense of paddy land (Perera, 1994: 242-43). According to K. M. de Silva (1989: 287), the European planters hardly competed with locals in this category, never exceeding 5% of the total. As he elaborates, by 1900, the area under coconut had grown to 41% of total cultivated land in Ceylon, compared to 32% paddy and 20% tea. Additionally, the Ceylonese also invested in rubber, and the distribution was always even with them and their European competitors.

It could be argued that the Ceylonese investments were always 'supplementary' and 'subordinate' to those of the British (Perera, 1994: 243). As Perera (1994: 244) points out, unlike the Indian indigenous capitalists who competed with the British, the Ceylonese counterparts resorted to become *"junior partners"* in Chandra's terms, circumventing conflict. As Chandra (1980; 284) elaborates,

> *"[…] the metropolitan bourgeoisie may share the social surplus in the colony with the indigenous upper classes, but it does not share state power with them"*.

[90] This was clearly a new move contrary to the former Kandyan stance of challenging the new system.

[91] In relation to Western ideological hegemony imparted by colonialism, Goonatilake (1984: 85) argues that,

> *"[…] past knowledge shoots are lost and delegitimized. Those other systems might perhaps have given rise to new nodal points from which fresh knowledge shoots and different explanatory systems could have grown, but the potential is eliminated under the spread of a monoculture"*.

[92] Here, the European Christianity refers to the version of Christianity produced in Europe appropriating and developing Middle-Eastern beliefs and knowledge within a European cultural context.

[93] Economics was in fact, considered the science which speaks a mathematical language.

[94] where statistical registers were widely employed in the colonies for securing information.

[95] Franz Fanon (in Perera, 1994: 111) rightly points out the implications of colonial education.
*"Colonialism tended not only to deprive a society of its freedom and wealth, but of its very character, leaving its people intellectually and morally disoriented"*.

[96] As King (in Perera, 1994: 114) argues in relation to colonial cities in general, the segregated city was *"fundamental in the development of 'categorical' relationships, the stereotyping of one race and its behaviour by another"*.

[97] The main objective of the British colonial rule was to maintain a cheap and effective system of colonial administration, which would police the colonized population and make plausible maximum remittance to Britain of profits of the Empire (Corbridge, 1993: 176).

[98] Thus, the British from the outset had to educate the urbanites to be absorbed into their political and economic structures. Hiring of lower-paid locals from lower castes curtailed the power of traditional Lankan elite groups while allowing the colonial administration to cut-down its expenditure (Perera, 1994: 108-109). According to Mills (1965: 105), English was made the 'medium of instruction', where the locals were educated in English in the newly-established schools based on 19th century 'grammar school' model curriculum developed in the British industrial and capitalist society (Mendis, 1946: 55-56).

In an approach very much contrary to the one of indigenous schools employing a one-to-one *guru-shishya* (student-pupil) system, the impact of 'mass instructional' methods carried out within a specialized space of a class room was greater (Perera, 1994: 110-111). After curtailing government sponsorship to Sinhalese and Tamil schools, five such schools were established in the 1830s and many more later on, based in provincial and district capitals; an act that moved centers of education from villages to towns. The graduates out of the local schools were either to be absorbed within the colonial system, into either the English-speaking administration or to become politicians.

As Mendis (in Perera: 1994: 110) elaborates, English was made the language of the government, the medium of courts, trade and commerce. On the other hand, by the 1880s, Cambridge University examinations were introduced for the tertiary qualifications. The products who had undergone this process became subjects of the new colonial 'urban-oriented culture', more suitable for service in England than in Ceylon, for Mendis (1946: 53, 58, 116). In the opinion of Perera (1994: 110), colonial education was offered as a *"one-way ticket"*, out of the *"poverty and depression"* of rural life. Immediately after the take-over, British established not only the political and judicial institutions, but also other departments facilitating their capitalist system. These included the *Land Registry Department*, *General Post Office, Medical Department* and *Education Department* etc. that had their branches dispersed around the island for a smooth facilitation (Perera, 1994: 108).

[99] In the early days of their rule, the British mainly employed in their administration the sons of the former low-country administrators known as *Mudliyars* as confirmed by Singer (1964: 120). According to Tambiah (in Perera, 1994: 251-252), in 1870, five out of eight Ceylonese civil servants were from the low-country *Mudliyar* families. Tinker (1989: 162) on the other hand confirms that the first Ceylonese to seek higher education in England were a full generation ahead (as early as 1811) of the Indian pioneers of 1844.

The Ceylonese had to comply with more rigorous rules of the colonial administration and at the same time, compete with British nationals for colonial service. As Singer (1964: 118) points out, the whole idea of this quest of joining the colonial administration was *"out-Englishing"* Englishmen. The British competition however, was maintained to counter the local (and Indian) participation – manifested by locals holding just 11 out of 90 positions as late as the 1920s (Singer, 1964: 118-19). However, locals were becoming more vocal and wining concessions from the colonial regime and, by the 1930s, surpassed the British numbers (Singer, 1964: 119,121). By 1934, the Ceylon State Council officially resolved to implement the policy of Ceylonization in all branches of the Public Services (Tinker, 1989: 156), and by the mid 20th century, it had seen extensive Ceylonization (Perera, 1994: 253).

[100] By living austere lives according to Buddhistic teachings, century-old self-sufficiency was continued. Their only sensitivity to colonial polity arose out of taxation that compelled them to transfer their produce into money. Conversely, their urban counterparts were directly caught up in the process.

[101] As he elaborates, during this time-frame, in relation to industrial agriculture, the dependence on coffee as the single staple crop was ended by diversification, bringing into existence more opportunities for capital accumulation. More importantly, the development of the nation-building services during this time, contrasted with the older and simpler conception of the responsibility of Government.

[102] Economic Ceylonizing was carried out by those who invested in the capitalist enterprises, especially in the plantations. Political Ceylonizing was by the local politicians or the constitutionalists who, under an experimental democratic system, strived to increase gradually, their authority within colonial legislatures through constitutional reforms. The third important group groomed under colonialism was that of the administrators. These spheres were briefly discussed before.

[103] The Industrial Revolution's factories and mills that relied predominantly on steam power and increasingly sophisticated and efficient machinery had unparalleled implications on society. Familial life saw a remarkable shift, leading to a loss of traditional values, changes in working patterns and the kind of work available and especially, the new tendency towards urbanization. This caused the more impersonal and individualistic way of life described by Toennies (in Knowles, 2008: 3) as 'gesellchaft'. As for Craib (in Knowles, 2008: 3), the changes in industry via increased productive capacity and resulting new divisions of labour (most notably within factories) made a conspicuous change in family life. The family now lost its prior status as a productive unit as the work was now taking place outside of home. This shattering of family relationships was what ushered in a new age of individualism. This is an economically-deterministic explanation of the phenomenon.

[104] Marx (in Harrison, 1984: 47) noted that *"[the] bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation of the world market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country".* This indeed was true for British-Ceylon. Starting with military personnel at the outset, they were later accompanied by growing numbers of administrators, businessmen, scientists, educators and also migrants (Ferguson, 1903: 9). Although the Portuguese had come to the Orient to settle-down permanently as Boxer (1969: 120,212) notes, the latter colonists did not seek to move permanently and often moved from a colony to another [evident through the account by Peebles (1981: 85) of British Governor Arthur Gordon].

[105] Complimentary to Anthony King's view, Perera (1994: 171) believes that the new 'breed' of *"international colonial community"* contributed seminally to the making of a new 'colonial third culture' and became sources for local emulation. Cultural transformation undergone by Lankans during the British administration is summed up by Perera (1994: 203). Cultural transformation was carried out by the religion partly – where the locals (all elites except Kandyan feudalists and a faction of masses, mostly from the maritime) were taught to worship the god of their colonizers – and partly by education – which taught Lankans the new history, politics and value system of the colonizers while recruiting them into the lower echelons of colonial bureaucracy. On the other hand, the cultural institutions produced subjects that could fill-in such positions as government servants, jail guards, as well as cricket players. In contrast to Portuguese colonialism, in the more secular Dutch and British situations, education primarily relegated religion as an instrument of imparting colonial culture. These processes were complimented by the use of English – as the language of the government, administration and formal public life – perhaps the most crucial factor in transmitting culture. This in turn,

*"[…] cultivated familiarity with different forms of colonial space and the values attached to them, particularly among the nascent Ceylonese elite, technocrats as well as laborers"* (Perera, 1994: 203).

[106] for example, as politicians within the Legislative Council and as plantation owners.

[107] The cultural emulations were eating habits, dress, consumerism and even naming practices according to Perera (1994: 306).

[108] The British established residential neighborhoods to the South of Colombo fort firstly in *Kollupitiya* and then in 'Cinnamon Gardens' and set the trend for Ceylonese elite to follow.

[109] For planters as well as politicians, the factors of class, status and westernization undermined their ethnic and other cultural differences (Perera, 1994: 250). In other words, as Duncan (1989: 197) argues, their secular and elitist orientations kept them together.  Hence, supported by Weaver's (1988: 40) and Wilson's (1959: 84-85) evidences, Perera (1994: 251) states that in addition to sharing a class identity and Western values, this elite considered themselves as 'Ceylonese'; a colonial identity, but ethnic. Duncan (1989: 191) states that the elite guarded this culture jealously from further diffusion and used this to symbolize their privileged-position among the Ceylonese.

[110] It has to be stressed here that unlike with the prior colonists, intermingling was never a British practice. They in fact, took the racial superiority complex formed by the Dutch further; aided by the culmination of the humanist discourse and especially, racial theories in 19th century Europe (Said, 2004). Although British intermingling did happen unofficially to produce a small half-caste population of Anglo-Ceylonese, according to K. Jayawardena (2009), they as a stigmatised faction were subsequently absorbed either into Burgher, Sinhalese or Tamil communities, and thus, did not make an impact on Ceylon's population census. The progeny of local women – mainly the indigenous maids or plantation workers – and British planters or officials of varying ranks, were stigmatized by both communities (K. Jayawardena, 2009).

British racism in fact, was articulated in their new tripartite urban segregation in Colombo.
Colombo fort for example was made completely, a British ethnic compound by pushing its Dutch and Portuguese inhabitants out, who in turn made the adjacent *Pettah* their domain. The Sinhalese, Tamil and Moorish populations were compelled to occupy the suburbs of *Pettah*.

[111] *Kotte* is located in the present-day Colombo district.

[112] Roberts (1995) in fact, tells us that it was a person from this particular caste who was appointed as the first ever *Mudliyar* (connoting the 'first person' in Tamil).

[113] Their functions encompassed on areas from safeguarding natural cinnamon growth in the jungles to administering accumulation and production.

[114] This was analogous to the Portuguese and Dutch benefits received by the Ceylonese Roman Catholics and Calvinists respectively.

[115] They originally would have catered to the Dutch (de Saram, 2010).

[116] Their situation is a clear contrast from the Indian one, where a lack of opportunities to the indigenous business class resulted in a middle-class intelligentsia instead.

Roberts (1995: 13) notes that the *Karava* notables maintained their linkages with the *Karava* poor, but this was largely a patron-client relationship that enhanced the political leadership and entrepreneurship of the elite. In 1917, 65% of the Sinhalese plantation owners were from the *Karava* caste (Perera, 1994: 111-112).

[117] British Resident in Kandy was a permanent reminder to the subjects of the dependent relationship.

[118] This may have had a lot to do with the Kandyan feudalists persuading peasants over whom they held traditional command, to stay introverted from British-enabled capitalist ventures. The underlying reason for this could be inferred as the land interests of these feudalists, which they wanted to continue at the expense of peasants.

[119] Their influential role in the political sphere will be elaborated in the next chapter.

[120] Working-classes here, refers to the masses who engaged in manual labour for their livelihoods. K. T. Silva (2005: 102-103) illustrates three sub-categories within this class. Firstly, there were small-time farmers, fishermen and labourers in the rural settings. The majority of the first two groups owned their own means of production in the form of private land and fisheries equipment etc. However, notably, the complimentary labour of family members was vital for the fulfilment of their occupations. The faction that lacked private means of production had to resort to manual labour on full or part-time basis.  With the lack of prospects for economic growth or surplus, the existence of this particular group was threatened by poverty and debt arising out of generational division of property (K. T. Silva, 2005: 102). Secondly, there was an urban labour class employed within the services sector created by the colonial state such as ports, transportation and industries. It was this particular group that subsequently founded the basis for Ceylon's labour movement. Thirdly, there were South Indian labourers who had been brought down to the colony by the British since the inception of road construction and especially, the plantation industry (N. de Silva,

2008). Through their low class and caste backgrounds, K. T. Silva (2005: 103) believes that they were the most widely marginalised faction of people in British-Ceylon. This group too was entangled in the labour movements subsequently. It has to be stressed here that a majority of the working class belonged to the first group. They in fact, lead a rather discreet existence from main-stream colonial economics, yet were indirectly caught up in politics.

[121] The available literature mainly compliments the two initial phases and neglects the latter.

# Chapter 5   Elitism & Elite Domestic Architecture in Independent Ceylon;

between 1948 and early 1990s

## 5.1 Reorganization of the World-wide System of States and Empires

### Independence as a Modern 'Nation State'

The devastation and mortification suffered in the Second World War that was paralleled by bourgeoning anti-colonial struggles, marked the feeblest point in the colonial project.[1] Having received their conditional support for a hard-fought victory over the Axis Powers, the formidable price the colonists had to pay was independence for the colonies (Perera, 1994: 329-330).[2] In the aftermath, as Perera (1994: 331-332) sums it,[3] the organization of societies into 'self-determinant' and 'modern' states, and states into an 'inter-state system', was just one way of organization among many other alternatives; the swift answer fixed by the core states.[4] This particular option was what in fact, secured the world domination to West European and US powers.[5] Moreover, the process promoted the ex-colonies into European-type modern 'nation states', and this indeed, was what Ceylon became after independence.

### Perpetuating Western Hegemony

Through foregoing measures and processes, the system of states was given a 'scientific matrix'[6] in which, its constituent states had been reduced to *"knowable, manageable, and controllable"* territorial units (Perera, 1994: 332-333).[7] Arguably, there was a humanist tendency to this. In overall, within this arrangement that strived for homogeneity, the 'state' comes first and then the 'nation'; first the form and then the content.[8] Hence, it could be concluded that this arrangement of a world political map has a spectacular flaw that it does not recognize political, economic and especially, cultural differences/divisions within the nation states; thus the world (Perera, 1994: 333).[9] Jackson (1990: 1, 27) argues that although being analogous to what was institutionalized in 17th century West Europe,[10] what the new states received was a *"negative sovereignty"*.[11] The adduced evidence suggests that the term 'independence' was underscored by wishes of the metropole, as well as the new hegemon USA alike.[12]

### Ceylon's New Place in a Fragmented World

Following the re-organization of states, the core powers also fared with challenges posed by the Communists via incorporating them into the system, and

institutionalizing a duality; later to be termed the 'Cold-War' or 'East-West' division (Perera, 1994: 336-337).[13] Deriving meaning from the cold-war duality, *"third forces"* or *"third model"* that Young (2003) introduces (resulting in for example, *Non-Aligned Movement*)[14] fragmented world polity considerably by constructing multiple identities; subverting the homogenizing thrust of Euro-US construction (Perera, 1994: 337-338).[15] Moreover, the post-war world 'monetary institutions'[16] further facilitated a US and core-favourable policy detrimental to the developing nations; contradictory to the principles behind their formation (Karunadasa, 1999: 46).[17] Hence, even economically, the postcolonial world was unequal as well as fragmented and under such circumstances, Ceylon chose the 'third way' initially, to oscillate between the other two paths subsequently.

## 5.2 State of Architecture in Independent Ceylon

Under foregoing circumstances, this section will first tackle the epistemological stance and architectural education in the periphery, to be trailed by the state's role in regulating the architectural profession (along with its implications). In this light, the potential of forging new nation trough architecture will be tackled.

### Core-oriented Architecture

### *Implications of Western Architecture Education*

As an ideological practice linked to the economic histories of society, the 'unquestioned Western epistemology'[18] helped to reproduce colonial and capitalist structure of dominance (and dependence) in the plane of knowledge in which, the metropolitan centre depicted its 'developed society' as the 'model' that the 'underdeveloped' colonial periphery would inevitably trail. In this light, Goonatilake (1984: 110-11) argues that so-called *"significant knowledge assertions"* in the dependant periphery are by the diffusion of ideas of the centre.[19] Consequently, production of so-called *"meaningful architecture"* in the periphery was confined to the process of mimicking Western buildings and architectural styles.[20] The diffusion of architectural knowledge was first undertaken by educational and professional institutions of the metropole as early as 1892; when King's College, London, created the first full-time architecture course (Evenson, 1989: 87).

The architects by the mid 19th century were required to hold a British Charter from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) (architecture.com, 2011).[21] By the early 1950s, core ideological impartations were felt in the newly-liberated colonies and architecture had been conceived as a feasible field to ensue further Eurocentrism (Perera, 1994: 312). RIBA by this time, had been elevated to the sole-authority of

architectural practice of the ex-British empire.[22] Consequently, the core institutions at the time had overwhelmingly monopolized peripheral architectural education. In this manner, a vast range of other building methods from around the world that lied outside the Western domain were overruled. Just as the production of architecture, the centralization of production of its knowledge itself in the metropole, tended not only to homogenize the landscapes across the ex-empire, but also obscured 'national' (or proto-national) cultural expressions. Hence, arguably, the metropole-colony dependence in education was continued into the post-colonial period through its departments and professionals (Perera, 1994: 312).

### Architectural Training & Profession

Until independence, all parties who carried out design and construction in Ceylon were Europeans (slia.lk, 2011).[23] They brought *"appropriate knowledge"* from Britain, while much of it had been constructed via the British colonial experience abroad (Perera, 1994: 209-10). From late 19th century onwards, the official built culture of Colonial Ceylon was produced by various departments of the colonial state, and the foremost was the PWD that employed architects with the RIBA Charter (Jayewardene, 1984: 43).[24] However, from the 1930s, compliant Ceylonese were trained in the metropole.[25] As they studied the same content as the British students,[26] their products hardly altered the existing condition.[27] These Ceylonese were recruited only as 'junior partners'; not to design, but to facilitate design projects by British architects working for the PWD (Perera, 1994: 209-10).[28]

The twilight years of British occupation in Ceylon marked a revival in education.[29] On one hand, C. W. W. Kannangara's education bill made primary and secondary education free for all Ceylonese (Divaina, 2011: 5).[30] Tertiary education on the other hand, was also available form 1921 via University of Ceylon (K. M. de Silva, 1981: 416).[31] However, within the range of professional courses offered, architecture was excluded. These were popular 'genteel professions',[32] and common knowledge about 'architect' (as a professional) was feeble.[33] By this juncture, the Ceylonese architects were essentially educated in the Western-core, owing to the fact that Ceylon could still not boast of an architectural school of its own (slia.lk, 2011). Ceylon's architectural profession in the first half of 20th century was dominated by British nationals who had either previously worked for PWD as Pieris (2007: 28, 49-50) discerns, or the ones to have had setup firms  to get jobs from the colonial government (Robson, 2004: 43-45).[34] In the 1930s, there were three architectural practices of repute,[35] and a handful of architects practiced on their own.[36] Jayawardene (1984:92) in fact, confirms that the latter group's commissions were largely reduced to the domestic realm.

At the time, sojourn to the Metropole to study architecture was an expensive affair, only accessible to a faction of locals with financial stability (Jayewardene, 1984: 92).[37] Moreover, following World War II, the living conditions in the UK were addressed as *"adverse"* by the few who studied there, discouraging others to do so (Tennekoon, 2008: 1). [38] Later, the post-imperial Commonwealth increased the capacity for postcolonial subjects to travel to the metropole and other Dominions to study architecture (Perera, 1994: 310). Consequently, architectural education that had previously been the domain of the bourgeoisie now became available for the petty-bourgeoisie backgrounds too. Despite this benefit, the number of qualified architects in Ceylon remained a handful into the 1960s (Jayewardene, 1984: 91-92).[39] Lankans for the first time were able to complete their architecture studies in the country with the establishment of a graduate program in Moratuwa University in 1961 (slia.lk, 2011). [40] The architectural school was an anomalous entity precariously balanced between the arts and sciences (Pieris, 2007: 20). Its curriculum saw an annual scrutiny by RIBA with Sri Lanka government's consent, to win the core's legitimacy. This trend lasted till 1985, where the program had suffered a metamorphosis into a B.Sc. course by 1971 (Robson, 2004: 21).[41] However, the elite domination of the education remained intact until the early 1980s according to Perera (1994: 404),[42] with little or no changes to the core-oriented curriculum. The latter point is confirmed by Jayewardene (1984: 93).[43]

In terms of the professional sphere, the first attempt to form an Institute of Architects in Ceylon was made in 1948, which was unsuccessful (slia.lk, 2011). [44] Further attempts were made in 1951 and 1954,[45] eventually succeeding by 1956 when *Ceylon Institute of Architects* (CIA) was established, supported by a RIBA-type constitution. CIA had a membership of twelve overseas-qualified Architects (who also had RIBA membership) and by 1960, it was to obtain the status of an 'allied society' of RIBA.  In 1976, the Ceylon Institute of Architects was incorporated as the *Sri Lanka Institute of Architects* (SLIA) by an Act of Parliament (slia.lk, 2011).  Such reliance on core institutions that subsequently became parent bodies of local counterparts articulate their continuing dominance.

### *Domestic Architectural Residues*

Although Ceylon had gained its independence, it was established that the core architectural influence was still intact.  Under the addressed circumstances, the British architectural residues in Ceylon were left by two groups. Firstly, there was the PWD faction who catered mainly to the state and to some extent, to the elite; and secondly, the private group that setup practice to also cater to the same parties (Robson, 2004: 43).[46] Therefore, while the former contingent took part in all three phases of British

architecture, the latter's contribution was limited to the last. By independence, both factions had left their own respective marks in both civic and domestic realms.[47]

It has to be stressed that the employment of PWD architects for the designing of private houses of the locals would have been unofficial. In this light, it could also be argued that most of these designs would have been carried out by local assistants (most of whom had Indian-training) or non-architects (Robson, 2004: 43).[48] On the other hand, based on available examples that are only a handful, private architects would have mainly built estate bungalows and occasionally, rural holiday houses for the local governing-elite (Robson, 2004: 44).[49] Based on the available examples, it could be inferred that during *phase 3*, both factions would have stuck to the style in vogue at the time; the 'Tropical Colonial Bungalow'.

Although many scholars have undertaken British architectural residues in Ceylon at the outset of independence, they have directed attention to the civic realm and neglected the domestic counterpart altogether.[50] In this light, Pieris (2007: 49-50) in her brief inquiry into post-independence period domestic architecture observes that a new style termed the 'PWD-style' – derived by British architects who stayed behind after independence – came into vogue in immediate postcolonial Ceylon; as against the prior version of the 'tropical colonial bungalow'. Although statistically unproven, it could be argued that the grandest PWD-type houses are to be found in the Colombo metropolitan area dominated by the urbanites of governing-elite/political-class stratums. On the other hand, the non-architects would have catered to the petty-bourgeoisie to implement their aped versions in the suburbs. When initially art deco detailing in the form of decorative patterns was the popular choice, later on, PWD houses were also adorned with patterns culled from the indigenous visual arts tradition. Until the 'American style' and other eclectic fashions replaced it in the 1960s, the foregoing groups largely built in this style. A good example could be adduced from Colombo in the form of a house built in the 1950s by a member of the de Soysa clan (belonging to the 19th century bourgeoisie group) (Fig. 54-56). The making of the style explained and variations illustrated in the catalogue under section 3.1.
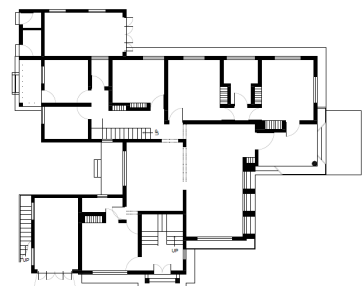


Fig. 54                                    Fig. 55                                    Fig. 56

PWD-type House in Colombo.

Fig. 54    front view.          Fig. 55    side view.          Fig. 56    plan.

### *Plight of the Architect*

A number of prevailing circumstances contributed to ascribe a deprived status to the immediate post-independence period architect. Such circumstances will be taken up here as a provision to assess the different paths open to them.

Lack of Demand:

Jayewardene (1984: 90-91) arranged building practices by independence period into three broad categories that stem from relationship of the client to economy. Her classification therefore, is in the context of a 'semi-feudal' and 'agricultural' country, where contribution of the architect to the shaping of built-environment was peripheral.[51] Designing at this stage had not evolved as a specialised activity, where *"…architect designed houses were privilege of the elite".* Her classification is as follows.

- Peasant or organic buildings representing indigenous modes of construction — Non-architect architecture.

- Public sector buildings — Designed by engineers and architects.

- Private sector buildings — Designed by non-architects and architects alike.

This deserves further elaboration. According to population information centre, the census in 1953 recorded that the population of Ceylon was at 8,098,000; 15.3% of which, was urban and 80.95% rural (Jayewardene, 1984: 92). On the other hand, Justin Samarasekara (in Jayewardene, 1984: 92) reveals that out of this figure, 46% of all houses had mud walls and 40% thatched roofs. The rural population that was far from modernity, stuck to traditional ways of building (using the age-old vernacular) until the 1980s state intervention to modernise the country. Hence, until then, architects had nothing to do with the way the majority built (Robson et al., 1984: 7-15).

Prior to independence, the colonial state monopolised the implementation of public buildings and housing of its employees, whereas the contribution of the native elites was limited to their own commercial and domestic ventures, as well as the religious institutions (Jayewardene, 1984: 37). State projects were delegated to the PWD and fulfilled by its engineers and architects. For Jayewardene (1984: 92), there may have been more of the former than latter. On the other hand, organised building by private sector had been delimited to plantations; factories, staff quarters, bungalows for the managerial staff and 'lines' for industrial labourers. The needs prompted by commerce in the urban centres where administrative, warehouse as well as housing facilities were required, were also fulfilled in the same manner (Jayewardene, 1984: 92).[52] In

such areas, private-sector did employ architects, yet the involvement of non-architects would have been more frequent. The circumstances in the domestic realm too were unfavourable. During the British era, the limited investment opportunities of colonial economy stunted the growth of national bourgeoisie; giving rise to what Jayewardede (1984: 174) calls a 'merchant capitalist class', or as for K. Jayawardene's (1972) social classification, the 'petty Bourgeoisie'.[53] Having interviewed a number of key figures who practiced during the period, Jayewardene (1984: 174) assesses that this particular group did not desire architects' services. While foregoing tendencies confirm the lack of demand for architectural profession, it is important to reveal where the prospects lied.

At the turn of the century, an ostensible change in the variety and quality of buildings required was noticeable. Missionary schools, religious establishments and the few industrial/commercial developments were the *"chief sources of work for the architect in private practice"* (Jayewardene, 1984: 96). The domestic realm too, started to open up as certain elite had now become knowledgeable about the profession (Jayewardene, 1984: 58). This lack of demand was soon to be exacerbated by state monopoly of national building industry.

Early State Monopoly and Fresh Challenges of Subsequent Neo-liberalism:

The responsibilities of the PWD and newly-formed S*tate Engineering Corporation* in the government schemes are confirmed by Bawa and Plesner writing in the 1960s (1966: 124).[54] Designing and estimating for the entire government building program[55] was PWD responsibility and the work was entrusted to private contractors by public tender (Munasinghe, 1956: 64-73). In the 1950s, around 15 contractors of some repute dealt with the largest projects and this group was complimented by the PWD's construction unit. The government policy of retaining all major developments devastated the private sector without demand and competition, which had major implications.[56] First, it stunted the prospects for private architects and secondly, curtailed potential investment which in turn, resulted in a stagnant national building industry. Consequently, in this period, mechanisation was non-existent, while speciality services were not commonly drawn upon in the building world.[57] Building technology had remained in stasis until World War I when new materials were imported and the most innovative at the time were Bitumen and R.C.C, which enabled a certain degree of spatial manipulation in designs (Jayewardene, 1984: 93-94). According to Wynne Jones (1956: 84-86), the same was achieved through the construction of flat roofs and frame structures that were more costly than conventional materials.[58] When commissions were hard to come by, there was less room for experimentation for the private architects. The foregoing state of affairs lasted until neo-liberal economic reforms.

In an attempt to modernise the nation radically, the newly-elected UNP government's funds from 1977, went into the construction of many civic buildings island-wide, as well as for high-rises in Colombo for state-sponsored banks and corporation head-quarters. In order to meet the new demand of the industry the PWD was enlarged and partitioned for better-efficiency (Perera, 1994: 385). [59] However, the resultant agencies

> "[…] largely operated under the same rules of the establishment code, sharing the same approach to spatial and building design as in the colonial period, though modified by the dominant modernist discourse absorbed by new professionals when studying in Britain or … Commonwealth" (Perera, 1994: 386).

The public-sector workers' housing modified by the functionalist values of the modernist discourse and new office buildings following the modernist aesthetics provided minimum requirements; manifesting stringent budget controls of the state.[60] This in the view of Plesner (1986: 85) was "post-colonial denigration" in the period's architecture.

Subsequently, the UNP government assured further challenges by the 1980s. Its policies offered no protection to a construction industry that had little opportunity to learn from experience, and consequently its recovery was painfully-slow.[61] Architects too suffered the same fate in their quest for commissions, which were still usually with the state sector. However, foreign architects and contractors accrued many timely benefits from the UNP economic policies.[62] The state encouraged foreign competition locally and justified it on the premise that within an open market system, the "best man must win" (Jayewardene, 1984: 21-22, 95).[63] The domestic realm too now was facing fresh challenges. The quest for rapid modernisation had conceived building traditions used by the masses as 'primitive' (Ashley De Vos, 2010). A report compiled by a private construction company (Marga) in 1976 on mass-housing situation attests to this new tendency (Jayewardene, 1984: 95).[64] Modern houses needed modern materials that the country did not have, thus needed importation. The government stepped up to the challenge and funded the process of mass-modernisation. Ironically, UNP-led housing projects were mainly delegated to foreign architects who were entrusted to find a synthesis between the traditional and modern as Robson (et al., 1984) point out, while the local counterparts who were better conversant for the task were left out.[65] Weerasinghe (1957: 44) sums up the plight suffered by the architect in the late 1950s.

> "Building permission was not, and still is not, dependant on professional approval; any person may submit plans for building permission [66] [and] any type of building would be sanctioned for erection, if it conformed, merely to the basic requirements […]".[67]

Hence, as Jayewardene (1984: 96-97) concludes, when it came to a question of bread and butter, architects were in a position of having to face competition from *"anyone who could prepare a plan".* Ironically, according to her own study, the situation was the same in 1983/84; and at the time, the Urban Development Authority (UDA) was finally drafting legislation to make professional sanction mandatory (Jayewardene, 1984: UDA, 2011). It was through the aforementioned hindrances that the Ceylonese architects strived to forge a national architectural style for their newly-independent nation.  This quest with gradual success, would commence in the late 1950s and continue into the early 1990s.

**The Stimuli**

This section will address the stimuli received by the architects in the post-independence period in their quest for a national architectural style. It has to be considered that such stimuli were parallel to the state of architecture discussed before. In the process, the governing-elite role underlying the stimuli will also be revealed.

*Architectural Historiography*

It was the British architects serving in colonial Ceylon who first developed an interest in the island's lost architectural traditions, and it was them [such as J. G. Smither[68] and J. Ferguson[69]] who formed the liaison between professional architecture and architectural historiography (Jayewardene, 1984: 43-44). Subsequently, the Archaeological Department of Ceylon became the repository for the upcoming scholars and enthusiasts (Jayewardene, 1984: 50).[70] In addition, independent non-expert interests [such as J. P. Lewis (1902)[71] and Hocart[72]] also contributed to the discourse by their respective documentations of traditional architectures (Jayewardene, 1984: 55).

On the other hand, *Ananda Coomaraswamy*'s research in art history was instrumental in the aforesaid movement.[73] Equipped with an awareness of Fabien Socialism and influenced by Ruskin and Morris, he collected material on art and architecture and produced a number of polemical works that reflected his association with independence struggles the world over (Jayewardene, 1984: 48-49).[74] His most influential project was *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (1908) that recorded the lives and works of craftsmen in feudal Kandy, which became the only substantial study at the time; and the latter *An Open Letter to the Kandyan Chiefs* (1905) was also noteworthy. The pertinence of his work however, was that in a period when the dominant view of Asian art and culture was distorted and prejudiced,[75] they were meant as a protest.[76] Thus, Coomaraswamy arguably initiated a revivalist trend that was born out of the nationalist struggle (Jayewardene, 1984: 4). The next foremost figure in this

development was Dr. Senarath Paranavithana; considered to be the greatest historian, epigraphist, archaeologist and scholar in 20th century Sri Lanka (in J. E. Van Lohuizen-de-leeuw, L. Prematilleke, K. Indrapala, 1978). The book titled *'Stupa in Ceylon'* published in 1946 won him great acclaim, and the archaeological excavations carried out resulting in historical publications clarified areas previously shrouded by ambiguity (Ariyadasa, 2010).

### *Art Historiography and Parallel Movements*

The movements in history of the island were paralleled by the nascent movements in arts. Lack of state support and inferior position accorded by the westernised native elites ascribed a low position to early 20th century indigenous traditions in visual arts (K. M. de Silva, 1981: 481-482).[77] Jayewardene (1984: 24) laments that in the 19th century, British visual art traditions dominated *"wholesale"*, unlike in the prior colonial periods where syncretic styles had evolved.[78] According to Gunasinghe (1956: 47),

> *"[nowhere] was the discontinuity between tradition and modern more complete than in sculpture and painting. The only evidence that continuity was still possible lay in the crafts of the island".*

His more seminal observation was that, no art form could develop unless there is sound recognition of its value and this recognition can come, *"only from the educated few, whose artistic sensibilities have been cultivated".*[79] In Jayewardene's (1984: 24) perspective, the intelligentsia had no education in Kandyan paintings until the 1930s and if they knew of it, it was possibly as a 'folk-art'. In Four hundred years of colonial rule, arguably, Western humanist and modern ideals had haunted the local cultural spectrum. In such a context, a local artist called L. T. P. *Manjusri* in 1934, began documenting Buddhist temple paintings, which was an attempt to revive historical knowledge associated with them.  He also directed his attention at their techniques and aesthetics (Manjusri, 1977; Dharmasiri in artsrilanka.org, 2001). This exercise may have had the underlying intention of making an organized-knowledge available to scholars and public alike; a means of guaranteeing the continuity of an age-old tradition. Manjusri's attempt aroused little public awareness despite his involvement with the renowned '43rd Group' (Jayewardene, 1984: 25).[80] Thus, developing a pictorial vocabulary imbuing traits of surrealist/cubist experiments had been unsuccessful (Dharmasiri in artsrilanka.org, 2001). Similarly, contributions by local artists such as Solias Mendis, M. Sarlis, S. P. Charles and George Keyt in the early 20th century mural paintings articulated a strong dynamism in styles, evoking both traditional and Western propensities (artsrilanka, 2009; kalava.com, 2011; Perera, 2012; Salgado, 1998, 2012) (Fig. 57).[81] The outcome however, was not a reinvention of the classical tradition, but an amalgamation of several Indian and European visual idioms into a new style (Dharmasiri in artsrilanka.org, 2001). The outcome was

criticised by the '43rd group' [82] as a *"conscious articulate protest against a tradition that has long been sapping the vitality of art in Ceylon"*. The group represented the *avant-garde* in Ceylon's art of the 1940s and had been formed as a protest against 'Victorian stadism' of the 'Ceylon Society of Arts' (in Jayewardene, 1984: 25).[83] This artistic avant-garde

> *"[…] did seek inspiration in local sources. Their work would therefore express a dichotomy, arising from their [upper-class] social origins on one hand and their approach to local art forms on the other; the occidental versus the national … [it] chose a combination of international and national sources of inspiration, form and technique, to express their break with colonial conservatism"* (Jayewardene, 1984: 27).

The group being *"perhaps both snobbish and exclusive"* resulted in its delimited social appeal (Jayewardene, 1984: 26).[84] Although the group was a frontier in promoting the artistic *avant-garde* to innovate and experiment with new art forms and techniques [as the impressionist works by Justin Deraniyagala posits (Fig. 58)], its failure to widen art world's intellectual horizon and initiate a critical dialog were notable weaknesses. Hence, *"Art devoid of social content developed, in the absence of art criticism of a higher intellectual and theoretical calibre"* (Jayewardene, 1984: 26).[85] The underlying drive behind the 1940s artistic awareness has to be associated with the growing movements for independence in the colonial world.



Fig. 57



Fig. 58

Fig. 57    Solias Mendis mural painting in *Kelani Vihara* (1927-47).

Fig. 58    Justin Deraniyagala impressionist painting.



Fig. 59



Fig. 60

Fig. 59    *Maname*, famous play by Sarath Chandra.

Fig. 60    *Rekhava*, 1st ever Sinhala film by Lester James Pieris.

Parallel to the political development following 1956, *Martin Wickremasinghe* produced a Sinhala fiction genre that won great acclaim (martinwickramasinghe.org, 2011).

*Ediriweera Sarath Chandra* (in sarachchandra.org, 2011; R. Obeyesekere in artsrilanka.org) [86] and *Lester James Pieris* (in Weragama, 1994: 1-2,121; lesternsumithra.com) on the other hand, contributed by creating what is considered as major breakthroughs in Sinhala drama and film respectively, as acknowledged by Dharmadasa and Halpe (1979: 460) (Fig. 59-60). In the 1950s, *Mahagama Sekara* in his unique capacity that encompassed many realms, paid his dues to later be considered a catalyst in the era's artistic renaissance (mahagamasekara.org, 2011).[87] These breakthroughs imbuing the essence of the traditional and Western elements in the respective spheres were arguably attributed to the campaign for higher literacy and critical standards in readings that the general public conducted during the course of the 1940s; spearheaded by both *Wickremasinghe* and *Sarath Chandra,* mainly benefitting the local university-educated intelligentsia of the petty-bourgeoisie class. It has to be stressed that although the numbers of *Swabhasha*-trained youth swelled in the 1960s, the state education monopoly stunted their initiative and innovation (Jayewardene, 1984: 40).[88] Meanwhile in the English medium too, a contribution was being made (Edirisinghe in srilankablogspot.com, 2010).

> *"In the English medium, authors have been judged as having been unable to conduct a sustained exploration of the world they aught to know best, that of the English speaking westernised classes. Other sensitive intellectuals of the English speaking groups have chosen to make their contribution in the fields of archaeology, history and as orientalists"* (Jayewardene, 1984: 39).

Thus, *"indirectly, they [had] provided a valuable body of criticism of Sinhala literature and drama in English"*. Their campaign employed a set of critical criteria to evaluate the classical heritage, based on a synthesis of what could be considered the best in the Indian and Western traditions (Halpe, 1979: 453-454). In this manner, the pioneer efforts in the 1940s, by the 1960s produced a new clientele for the arts, backed by mass-literacy and higher education. Consequently, the post-1956 era marks two *Janus-faced* approaches in aesthetic ideology; one with an occidental inclination and the other looking back towards tradition (Jayewardene, 1984: 39). The foregoing movements were followed by a range of scholars from Prematilleke, de Silva, Wijesekera, Deraniyagala, Godakumbura to Mudiyanse (Goonatilleke, 1971: 428-441). In Jayewardene's (1984: 56) terms, it was their works – however empirical and primarily descriptive – in the 1950s and 60s, in collaboration with popular journalism, which was responsible for arousing public interest and awareness of the subject. Senaka Bandaranayake's contribution in the 1970s was particularly unique, in its debate on the problems of continuity and discontinuity of Kandyan traditions (Bandaranayake, 1974: 362-363). Such cultural awareness and revival of past glories indeed, went hand-in-hand with populist politic of the day. What these revivalists had done was to assemble a corpus of material for the political movements to dwell on.

For Jayewardene (1984: 27-28, 40), such movements had parallel repercussions in architecture. In her vision, the foregoing dichotomy was continued in the architectural field too to achieve a break through. Hence, just as in other arts, patronage with the national consciousness was the key to achieving this breakthrough. When the stimuli framed a social critique – by dealing with, exploring and not necessarily protesting on issues that the society was concerned about, but cannot raise in any other context – architects that mobilised accordingly trapped the burning social realities. While an awareness of validity of traditional architecture was growing from around the turn of the century, it was not until the maturing point of cultural nationalism that a fruitful indigenous-modern architectural synthesis happened. Such a synthesis required not only the designers with historical awareness and technical skill, but also enlightened patrons.

## Architecture; an Instrument of Nationalism

In the backdrop of such stimuli, the attempts in newly-independent Ceylon to manifest a new national identity via architecture will be taken up here, followed by similar global movements. Then, the contribution at elite domestic level will be paid due emphasis.

### *World-wide Allure of Architectural Modernism*

Hidden Agendas of Modernism:

The longstanding process of European architects reverting back to classical buildings in a particular European tradition was profoundly challenged from the 1920s (Perera, 1994: 310-311). The challenger was the rubric of 'architectural modernism' that was largely a European creation – by the *Congrēs Internationaux d' Architecture Moderne* (CIAM).[89] There were many underlying reasons behind the rubric's success as Perera (1994: 310-311) illustrates.[90] However, within the modernist discourse, there was a single reference to 'place' imbued in the notion of 'tropical architecture'. This was based on the assumption that there were two major climatic regions in the world, namely temperate and tropical.[91] Although Perera (1994: 312) argues that the rubric was conceived within the premise of five century-old Eurocentrism, however in this case, socio-cultural differences were not perceived, but climatic variations. Moreover, he adds to this by stating that the notion of 'tropical architecture' was based on the assumption that indigenous architectures of independent states were *"decadent"* or *"moribund"*, and devoid of a living history. Modernism conversely, was capable of producing *"more efficient"* buildings for the tropics. Vital hidden agendas behind the rubric however, were in its homogenization, standardization and rationalization of the building industry that in turn, opened up overseas markets for metropole-based

producers (Perera, 1994: 312).[92] Moreover, when *tabula rasa* conditions were no longer available in Europe for its architects to build large-scale projects, the tropics was the best place to do so (Pieris, 2007: 3).[93]

By implementing the core knowledge structure addressed earlier, architectural modernism was now being propagated around the world as a 'legitimate', 'neutral' and 'rational' style. Consequently, a new course was established in 'Tropical Architecture' at the Architectural Association (*AA*) School of Architecture in London in 1955 (aaschool.ac.uk, 2012); which could be seen as a giant step of institutionalization that resulted in the disbursement of this rubric to the periphery. Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew initially taught the programme that was continued from 1957 onwards by Otto Koenisberger (Pieris, 2007: 34) (Fig. 61). Perhaps, the pioneers by that time had conceived through trial and error that the modernist *avant-garde* does not work well in the tropics without modifications. However, propagated under a 'neutral' and 'progressive' guise, Perera (1994: 311) reiterates that this architecture was oblivious to their indigenous cultures and strived to 'homogenize' the landscape across the ex-empires. The best indication was the two publications on tropical modern architecture by Fry and Drew.[94] Thus, it could be argued that the tropical school had blatantly conceived that it was the commitment of the 'others' to appropriate Western practices set by them.[95] The conferences organised by the core institutions on the subject of architecture of the former colonies accentuated the foregoing ideology (Pieris, 2007: 3, 33).[96] Hence, by retention of production and disbursement of architectural knowledge, the main architectural schools in the core, reproduced the former colonial monopoly; this time in a wider global-scale (Perera, 1994: 313).[97]



Fig. 61

Maxwell Fry dossier cover depicting the Tropical Modern architectural rubric championed by him.

Political Adorations:

Perera (1994: 311) believes that modernist ideas were in keeping with the desires of most post-colonial leaders whose foremost objective was to use the state as an instrument of change; in breaking away from their colonial past within the process of constructing modern nations (Fig. 62).[98]  As Holston (in Perera, 1994: 311) points out,

modern architecture needed massive state-intervention and centralized-coordination that certainly appealed to post-colonial states. However, it was CIAM's portrayal of a *"common future"* with no historical architectural reference was the most instrumental idea. As Perera (1994: 312) elaborates,

> *"[the] aesthetic erasure, particularly of European identity, and the de-historicization of architecture … made the adaption of modernism comfortable for non-European architects as well as political leaders. The representation of architectural modernism as a central element in the process of modernization made it even more attractive …"*

The immediate post-independence period was much more dominated by drives for 'development' and 'modernization' marked through urban experimentations in the tropics such as *Chandigarh* (Fig. 63) *and Brasilia* (Fig. 64).[99] The romanticism of such futuristic experiments and their sheer scale, elevated the architect from a 'team member' to the heroic ideal of the 'lone architect' (Pieris, 2007: 2-3).[100] Within budgetary constraints of the post-colonial states where the belief that *"ornament is costly"* prevailed, the modernist discourse devoid of it, was cheaper to construct and maintain.[101] For their westernised rulers, the new architecture's failure for cultural expression did not matter. Although modernisation meant that the reliance on the core was amplified, they overlooked the matter.



Fig. 62                                                    Fig. 63
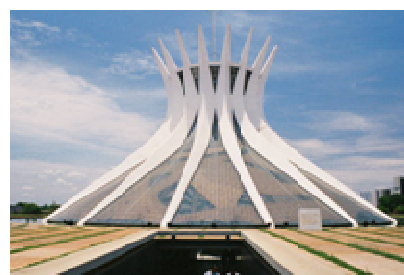


Fig. 64                                                    Fig. 65

Fig. 59   Nehru and Le Corbusier.        Fig. 60   Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab by Le Corbusier (1953).

Fig. 61   Brasilia Cathedral by Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa (1958-70).

Fig. 62   Bangladesh National Assembly Building in Dhaka by Louis Kahn (1962).

Repudiations & Grounds:

Repudiation of modernism was based on the realistic distance from its promises and in the forefront was public denial. The modern *Chandigarh* and *Dhaka* (Fig. 65) did not

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win great appeal by their respective populaces who were deeply-entrenched in their cultural (religious and ethnic) identities – the very characteristic of sub-continental value systems. Instead, they found meaning in their traditional non-secular settings. Irrespective of secular promises by political democracy they were compelled to exercise, poverty and political negligence perpetuated their identity-driven lives and architectures.[102] Most in fact, intuitively conceived the alleged 'identity-free' position of modernists as a fallacy (Pieris, 2007: 4-5, 7).[103] In this light, the use of concrete (in 'brutalist' aesthetics in particular) as it happened in all major projects in the sub-continent, attracted criticism for culturally-alienating place-specific contexts.[104] On the other hand, the aesthetic inclined towards the industrial realm too was conceived as alien by the majority of rural agrarian citizens. When an empowered urban middle-class with its visions of modernity was a distant reality, familiar aesthetics from the rural hinterland carried much more weight (Pieris, 2007: 3).

When their electoral subjects were renouncing modern architecture, the state patrons too were being disenchanted. A few years after realisation, they found that the pristine white buildings were difficult to maintain in tropical weather on limited budgets (Wijetunge, 2010b: 102). The Ceylonese state learnt from its neighbours' mistakes. Consequently, unlike certain countries such as Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, India and Latin America that between the 1950s and 1970s produced a cohort of modern architects, Ceylon did not do so (Pieris, 2007: 3).

Limited Asian Success:

The foregoing affairs shifted the modernist focus mainly towards South East Asia; to the Philippines,[105] Cambodia,[106] Indonesia,[107] Malaysia,[108] Singapore and especially, Japan[109] (Fig. 66) (Pieris, 2007: 3). Some nations in this region, within the absence of notable nationalist agendas, had been hand-picked by the capitalist West as its post-war goods/services hubs and consequently, benefitted financially (Karunadasa, 1999: 53). Therefore, they witnessed massive projects of audacious structures and programmatic innovations, ushering a *"brave new world"* (Pieris, 2007: 5). Malaysia (Fig. 68) and Singapore (Fig. 69) were the perfect examples, where both these countries had previously suffered communal tensions that needed to be subverted via a secular polity and neutral architecture.[110] Both nations were interested in solutions of economic pragmatism and ecological sensitivity, inclining buildings to be in the line of Tropical Modernism. Thus, the style provided contextualisation of the global aesthetic and also formed a shared regional identity.[111] Elsewhere however, the success was rather limited, where Doshi's Team-X in India (Fig. 67) as well as the Brazilian School could be illustrated as isolated success stories (Pieris, 2007: 3).[112]

Fig. 66          Fig. 67          Fig. 68          Fig. 69

Fig. 66     Tokyo Olympic stadium by Mitsuo Katayama (1964).
Fig. 67     *Sangath* in *Ahmedabad* by Blakrisshna Doshi (1980).
Fig. 68     Malaysia Parliament by JKR [Jabatan Kerja Raya] and Ivor shipley (1963).
Fig. 69     Singapore Conference Hall by Architect's Team 3 (1965).

Architectural Modernism in Asia was initially a reaction to the Indianized forms of PWD architecture (Pieris, 2007: 2). With the advent of European-trained architects in the 1930s, design concepts arising from the Modern Movement were introduced to Ceylon's commercial realm. To substantiate this statement, a few isolated examples such as the *Times of Ceylon* (1936)[113] (Fig. 70), *Lever Brothers*[114] (early-1950s) (Fig. 71) and *Baurs*[115] (1939) (Fig. 72) are adducible (Jayewardene, 1984: 100-101; Robson, 2004: 70). It was under such circumstances that a national identity through architecture in Ceylon was sought. However, never in Ceylon, architectural modernism became a state or private apparatus as in the countries aforementioned.
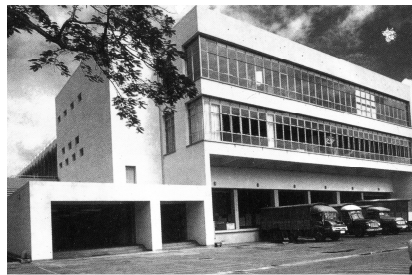


Fig. 70                    Fig. 71                    Fig. 72

Fig. 70     Times of Ceylon Building, Colombo (1936).
Fig. 71     Lever Bros. Co. Colombo (1950s).
Fig. 72     Baur Building, Colombo (1939).

### *National Identity through Architecture in Ceylon?*

The Idea and Pertinence:

Bandyopadhyay (in press, unpaginated *mss*) tells us that with the departure of colonists, the 'identity crisis' of the colonies became complete. On the other hand, the subsequent ascendance of the newly-independent states marked the renewed confidence in their respective national identities (K. M. Silva, 1981: 346). The conception of Western-type 'Nationalism' had been absorbed by Ceylon's Western-educated leaders to be implemented in an ambivalent context where ethnic strife was exacerbating.[116] The obvious challenge to the Sinhalese nationalist cause was how the island's diverse minority groups were to be united under a single flag, yet within a

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Sinhalese Buddhist ethos, while circumventing possible future ethnic conflicts. On the other hand, some conceived nationalism that sought to revive traditional institutions and elites (especially in those societies such as Ceylon that had preserved their civilization) as 'backward looking'. As Bottomore (1993: 81) correctly argues, alongside political struggles for independence, there might develop a cultural conflict in which,

> "[…] the language, values and institutions of the foreign rulers are rejected while the country's own ancient glories and accomplishments are lauded and held up for imitation".

This sums up what happened in nationalist Sri Lanka. West European powers produced a system *of* 'states and empires' within a timeframe between 17th-19th centuries (Perera, 1994: 235). Subsequently, the 20th century saw the construction of most nation states out of pieces of various degrees of cultural differences and independence. Simultaneously, the concern about loss of the so-called *"long-entrenched identities"* with easy comfort of distinctions and judgment was created by colonial powers, which saw a culmination in the 19th century. Furthermore, they also developed a broad spectrum of representational devices to recognize how people perceive others and themselves. Cultural differences, which manifested themselves in appearance, habits or language, were mapped out and even artificially-created to support the new world-order and its epistemological taxonomies.[117] The 19th century's characteristic historical obsession further articulates the structuring of these efforts.

> "Complex processes of establishing historical facts and their interconnections involved as much finding undeniable evidence of past events as eliminating other – less politically useful – pieces of information. In many cases, it was not the sequence of events, but historians and politicians who produced what we know as continuities in history" (Piotrowski, 2009: 1).

In this context, architecture in the core became one of the best logical means for political construction, which could be elaborated in terms of John Ruskin's 19th century theoretical construction of identity in the built-environment through *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1989 [1849]). As Piotrowsky (2009: 1-2) points out, here, Ruskin equates the sense of national identity with the memory and awareness of nation's glorious past and establishes that poetry and especially architecture provide the best mnemonic devices capable of embodying and preserving such symbolic signs. Ruskin further argues in the *Lamp of Memory* (2008) that designers need to actively shape and refine the sense of national identity, and especially, that the national style should be constructed like language, so it could be taught, internalized and reproduced like rules of grammar and vocabulary. The degree to which, the style is invented or imported is less important than the way it facilitates control over conceptualization and the understanding of symbolically proper architecture. According to Ruskin (1989: 202), the national style is well established when

> " *[…] no individual caprice dispense[s] with, or materiality vary[s], accepted types and customary decorations"* and " *every member and feature [is] as commonly current, as frankly accepted, as language or its coin".*

The national style, the embodiment of national identity, thus, must not only be consistent and pure, it must provide a perfect didactic tool for eliminating vagueness and for disciplining common understanding of the structures of belonging. Piotrowski (2009: 2) compliments this statement by suggesting that, architecture has always (and everywhere) given form to culturally nascent thoughts. He believes that buildings have manifested shifts in sense-making since before words could contain and explain them, which he affirms through valid examples. As elsewhere, such notions were indeed acknowledged and attempted to be realised via making of a national architectural style for Ceylon. The first attempts in fact, were made during the concluding years of British occupation, and continued into the post-independence. The approach was incorporating traditional architectural contents into modern buildings. This framed the orientalist perspective of the British architectural professionals who were mainly serving the PWD. Perhaps, they sought to circumvent the communal tensions they foresaw and it was this sentiment that the Western-trained local architects appropriated; perhaps out of their own *"inferiority complex"* (Gunasekara, 2012).

A Failed Revivalism:

As Bandyppadhyay (in press, unpaginated *mss*) tells us,

> *"Enlightenment rationality, often propagated as instrumental thinking under the aegis of colonial culture, empowered the … cultural centres to unilaterally 'de-culture' and ostracise its siblings and disown all 'natural ties' with its traditional roots".*

Within this backdrop, the notion of 'identity' had been characterised by an anxiety regarding its imminent loss or disappearance. Hence, revivalist agendas had arisen essentially out of the colonial/imperial project; either as a reaction to it, or out of guilty conscience (Bandyopadhyay's in press, unpaginated *mss*). In terms of post-independence Ceylon's own revivalist agendas, the indigenous architectural ambiance contained two clear historical strands. Firstly, the undiluted vernacular – both organic and formal – and secondly, the hybrids arising from synthesis of Portuguese, Dutch and British architectures, with the indigenous architecture of each region. By the 1950s, this synthesis was generating yet another dimension in contemporary Sri Lanka architecture. The indigenous tradition however, in itself was not homogeneous. It contained two distinctly recognisable modes of building; the formal architecture of the palace and monastery (i.e. grand design tradition) [118] and the more archaic perennial peasant tradition (i.e. vernacular tradition) (Jayewardene, 1984: 111-12). In this light, the vernacular was theoretically preferred over the grand design tradition's

residues from the classical periods. The explanation was that the latter examples were *"… probably erected with Indian assistance and partly by Indian workers"* (Coomaraswamy in Jayewardene, 1984: 54).[119] However, ironically, it was the latter that periodically found its use.

Within the state-sponsored architectural milieu, at the twilight of British occupation, utilitarian designs were being implemented by the PWD. Jayewardene (1984: 103) correctly refers to them as *"unimaginatively stereotype modern architecture"* that was implemented *"often from type plans"*. Wynne Jones, the former chief architect of the PWD in fact, attributes the wide use of type-plans in PWD work to the shortage of designers in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Jayewardene, 1984: 103). Robson (2004: 43-45) on the other hand, illustrates that the PWD had its hands full by state projects from the early decades of 20th century. This compelled the state to hire outside help from private architects, some of whom that had developed an interest in indigenous architectural traditions that they eventually incorporated into their designs. This trend of 'hybrid' styles, in the light of 'arts and crafts movement' in Britain as well as the colonies, had already been legitimised through exhibitions and tested in the palaces of princely rulers and colonial museums, to eventually reach culmination in the official residences of colonial governing-elite and entire cities (Pieris, 2007: 2).[120] It was these two groups that led the architectural revivalism in late colonial and early post-independence periods.

If the private architects are to be addressed, only Reid and his ER&B (Edward, Reid and Booty and later Edward, Read and Begg) set-up could be lauded for the foregoing trend. Unlike the line followed by their predecessors in Ceylon and elsewhere by them, the 'metropolitan styles' [121] were often *"[…] embellished with decorative devices culled from traditional and classical Sri Lankan architecture"* (Robson, 2004: 44) [as it also happened in the *Indic* styles in India and Ceylon] (Pieris, 2007: 2). In Bhaba's (1994: 35) words, this was a strategy of representing authority in terms of the *"artifice of the archaic".* This trend further benefited from two early-modern architectural styles between 1920s-40s – De Stijl and Art deco – that were very much adoptable for civic projects such as hospitals and educational buildings (Pieris, 2007: 2). A notable example was the *Art Gallery* in Colombo,[122] which was designed as a plain neoclassical composition with *"Sinhalese trimmings"* (Robson, 2004: 44).

The first significant attempt by the PWD to consciously rekindle indigenous traditions in the contemporary designs began in 1925, when Woodeson developed a design for the Ceylon University for the consideration of the College Council (Jayewardene, 1984: 57). [123] When the European classical elevations were renounced by the two Lankan council members who preferred 'oriental' facades instead, a special architectural staff was appointed in 1929 to make a study of the *Polonnaruwa* version of Dravidian

architecture as being representative of Sinhalese designs, and thus suitable for consideration for the task at hand (Jayewardene, 1984: 58).[124]



Fig. 73                                    Fig. 74                                    Fig. 75



Fig. 76                                    Fig. 77                                    Fig. 78

Fig. 73    *Kelani Vihara* Image house, *Kelaniya* (1943).
Fig. 74    Temple of the Tooth, Kandy (14-20th c. A.D.).
Fig. 75    Lake House (formerly, Associated Newspaper Ltd.) (1936).
Fig. 76    *Kala Bhavana* (Art Gallery), Colombo (early 1950s).
Fig. 77    *Lankathilaka* Image house, *Gampola* (15th c. A.D.).
Fig. 78    Temple of the Tooth audience Hall, Kandy (18-19th c. A.D.).

A significant point in the development of this trend can be brought to light in relation to the *Kelani Vihara* (1927-47) (Fig. 73). The design was undertaken jointly, by the architect H. H. Reid, his associate Oliver Weerasinghe, bourgeoisie elite clients (the renowned *Wijewardenes*) [125] and monks. This project of national and cultural significance was arguably, the most important commission received by the practice.[126] The design imbued features from the *Lankatillake* (Fig. 77) and *Gadaladeniya* vihares in Kandy and also *Polonnaruwa Tivanka* image house (Robson, 2002: 44-45). [127] Moreover, the Buddhist cultural resources of India too were encompassed, which manifested best in the famous image house. A similar trend was continued in the subsequent commission in 1936 of the Colombo headquarters of the *Associated Newspapers*; the 'Lake house' (Fig. 75). The 1928 extension [128] (that abruptly continued until 1948) by Reid for *Dalada Maligava* (Temple of the Tooth) in Kandy,[129] for a clientele comprised of the Kandyan nobility, was a similar exercise (Jayewardene, 1984: 62) (Fig. 74). This trend influenced subsequently, religious buildings entirely out of context; for instance, the 1973 Cathedral of Christ the Living Saviour in Colombo (Fig. 81). In such designs, it is notable how tradition had only been applied for embellishment, where a lack of authenticity and inappropriate fusion of old forms and trimmings with new methods of construction were evident.

<div align="center">
Fig. 79           Fig. 80           Fig. 81
</div>

Fig. 79     University of *Peradeniya*, Kandy (1942-52).
Fig. 80     Independence Hall, Colombo (early 1950s).
Fig. 81     Church of Christ the Living Saviour, Colombo (1950s).

On the other hand, incorporation of traditional design principals in a modern secular context of national significance was attempted at the University of Ceylon complex in *Peradeniya,* Kandy (1942-1953) (Tennekoon, 2008: 1) (Fig. 79). For the designer Shirley d' Alvis, the audience hall at the temple of the tooth in Kandy (Fig. 78),[130] 14th century *Lankatilleke* and *Gadaladeniya* and 18th century *Embekke Devale* (temple) were edifices of great value of reference (Jayewardene, 1984: 64).[131] The design was plagued by historical misconceptions and marked the failure pervasive to the process as a whole.[132] The *Kala Bhavana* (Art Gallery) in Colombo (early 1950s) was a similar attempt that did not yield success (Fig. 76). The revivalist trend in PWD modern architecture saw its culmination and decline with the construction of the Independence memorial hall in 1948, designed by Wynne-Jones (Samarasekera, 1981: 20) (Fig. 80).[133] The edifice was a scaled-up R.C.C. reproduction of the audience hall at Kandy, which drew heavy criticism for being too backward-looking (Robson, 2002: 45).[134]

### *Potential Contribution by Elite Domestic Architecture*

A Fresh Social Stratification:

The education franchises in the aftermath of independence formed a hitherto unforeseen social mobility that challenged the established indigenous and colonial social structures (Pieris, 2007: 26). Consequently, the post-independence saw the British period social stratification deconstructed and re-arranged. The immediate result of this re-arrangement was the new educated middle-class that was shaped to parallel the colonial petty-bourgeoisie (K. T. Silva, 2005: 108). Gunawardene (1984: 42) argues that,

> "*[the] nascent bourgeoisie of the period of colonial rule in Sri Lanka* [Ceylon]*, was a weak bourgeoisie, nurtured by and dependant on foreign capital. Its weakness was reflected in the poverty of its culture, especially in its failure to develop a unifying national identity, overarching the identities derived from previous historical epochs. [The underlying reason for this was the] dominant*

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*ideas of culture of this class represented a combination of ideas borrowed from contemporary Europe and from earlier epochs of the island's history".*

In comparison, the middle-class, as a narrow social group poised between the bourgeoisie colonial elite and the rural peasants – between the West and East – possessed new aspirations. In Pieris's (2007: 26) view,

> *"[although] represented as imitating the West, the differences and slippages, in fact the political cultural balance upon which they constructed their identity, was quite independent of the West, and of their own making. In short, their mimicry may be viewed as an appropriation of the trappings of modernity, rather than blatant Westernization".*

However, as Pieris (2007: 26) points out, the 1970s Cold-War politics enabled economic/political instability that resulted in a state monopoly[135] stunted the growth of the Ceylonese middle-class and prevented it from becoming a stable and educated bedrock-polity as in certain Asian countries.[136] As the power remained at the hands of traditional elites, the frustrated middle-class developed an animosity with them that by the early 1970s (and also in late 1980s), culminated as socialist struggles (K. T. Silva, 2005: 93-128). Within their unfamiliarity of elite culture and accompanying architectural trends, they found alternative orientations that in turn, articulated in their domestic architectural sensibilities. It is pertinent to state that the post-colonial period architects who took up the challenge to develop a national style mobilised under the foregoing circumstances.

### *Why Elite Domestic Architecture?*

The search for a national style indeed, was ensued in the elite domestic realm and underlying reasons are worth a discussion. In a general architectural milieu still largely dominated by a British under-hand as confirmed before, the domestic realm was logically the best area to inaugurate this task, in order to make an everlasting impact. It was the most ideal, based on three rationales. Firstly, the dwelling is arguably the most intimate to a considered group in comparison to other built forms (such as institutional architecture, civic architecture etc.) [Its ability to reflect changes undergone by society is in fact, one of the objectives of this study]. This point is supported by Rybczynski's (1988) investigation. Secondly, the nascent Ceylonese architects themselves hailing from elite/sub-elite backgrounds, could manipulate to benefit, their far-reaching and immutable positions over masses – that is, they were in a position to assure propagation of their acquired stylistic agendas, pinned on their legitimate core-based educations. Finally, the architects perhaps, believed that it was the perfect context at the micro-level where they could safely experiment, before hitting at the formula/s that could then be applied at the macro-level.

## 5.3 Domestic Architectural Discourses; Practitioners' Patronage

Writing in 1956, Sarath Chandra (1956, 100) posited that the 'rift' between the upper classes and the masses was particularly wide in Ceylon. In such a context, obtaining architectural services had initially been the sole domain of the elite-class. Since architectural education too being a governing-elite/political-class capability, the allegiances of architects were directed only towards clients from the same class backgrounds. On the other hand, it was them who were enlightened about the profession and at the same time had been exposed to the most current architectural trends in the West. Jayewardene (1984: 28) writing about the state of Sri Lankan architecture in the 1980s reveals its condition that also pertained to the prior decades (back to the 1950s).

> *"Architecture in the modern sense [is] still an activity that does not engage the majority population … the peasants, continue to build as they have always done"*.

However, when individuals from British period petty-bourgeoisie backgrounds penetrated the field in the 1950s, it could be inferred that the foregoing 'rift' deprived them (in their new political-class/middle-class social positions) of major commissions from the governing-elite that consequently inclined them towards the lesser stratums. This section charters the approaches of two factions of nascent Western-educated Ceylonese architects, who had conflicting client allegiances. They could be summed up as architects who catered to the governing-elite and the ones who are believed to have served the new middle-class. Moreover, the social orientation of non-architects is also looked-at, to narrate the storey in its entirety.

### Architects Who Catered to the Elites

The first modernists to work in Ceylon undertook private communions from the 1920-30s. However, the generation with the majority of Ceylonese architects to practice the rubric returned to Ceylon in the early 1950s with their European training (Gunasekara, 2012). By 1957, before the advent of the second generation, these two groups together made the 17 founding members of the Ceylon Institute of Architects.[137] Some of them were relatively known for certain notable projects and others, for other contributions to the field. The commissions for these groups essentially had to come from the elite. It is widely-accepted that the modernists did not deviate from their fashionable mainstream approach as Robson (2004: 49-60) posits. For convenience of classification, these two factions shall from hereon be called the 'Generation 1' (G1).

G1 was followed by a similar modernist contingent (arguably Tropical Modernists)[138] who also returned by the late 1950s.[139] While some remained loyal to their 'modernist training' and others preoccupied with non-architectural involvements, a handful resorted to more experimentation later in their carriers and subsequently embarked on their own respective paths. It is them who make the foremost subject matter of this study. They will from here, be called Generation 2 (G2). The more adventurous G2 modernists on the other hand, could be rearranged under the categories of 'Regionalists' and 'Modern Expressionists'. While G2 was setting out, their *Gurus* from the metropole were preoccupied with propagating the stream-lined Tropical Modernism in Africa and Asia. Ceylonese commissions too were available for them, such as Fry and Drew's designing of the Lionel Wendt Theatre in Colombo that epitomised the tropical modernist repertoire.[140]

Arguably, the third generation was the architects trained mainly under G2 (and to a certain extent under G1) who started practicing on their own by the late 1970s and early 1980s; parallel to their masters. If they were to be referred to as Generation 3 (G3), they lie outside of this study's scope.[141]

### *Modernists*

The Discourse & Prominent Figures:



| Fig. 82 | Fig. 83 | Fig. 84 | Fig. 85 | Fig. 86 | Fig. 87 |

Fig. 82 – Visva Selvarathnam.     Fig. 83 – Leon Monk.     Fig. 84 – Pani Tennakoon.

Fig. 85 – K. R. S. Peiris.     Fig. 86 – Lala Aditya.     Fig. 87 – Justin Samarasekara.

This section sums up the works by a number of prominent modernists belonging to G1 and G2 (Fig. 82-87), while the rest had concentrated their energy towards functions other than architecture. [142] The catalogue section 3.2 narrates the works by some of them. In the 1930s, Oliver Weerasinghe and Hubert Gonsal were the only Ceylonese architects to practice on their own, mainly settling for domestic commissions. While Weerasignhe was renowned for his collaboration to design the Temple of Tooth relic, *Kelani Vihara*, the Lake House (headquarters of Associated Newspapers)  and Bertha Bawa's[143] Colombo house, Gonsal cannot boast of any notable projects apart from the Methodist Church in Colombo (Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, 2011: 34-35). In terms of architectural practices run by British nationals, Andrew Boyd's was significant

for his contribution as a modernist (in fact, the first in Ceylon) (Hollamby, 1962).[144] Although he was a critic of the PWD discourse[145] and an enthusiast of 'local traditions' who shared a sensitive perception towards it,[146] his handful of domestic works in the modernist idiom estranged this inclination.[147] The pristine cubic form of his houses in Kandy and Colombo showed disregard for the climate and contributed to the marginalisation of indigenous architectural traditions via alienation (Jayewardene, 1984: 101-102).[148] In terms of practitioners in the late 1940s, Shirley d' Alvis has largely gone unacknowledged apart for his involvement in Peradeniya University. Out of the practitioners who were in action from the early 1950s, Jimmy Nilgiriya was known for his role in the ER&B although the architectural involvement was meagre (Robson, 2004: 45).[149] Visva Selvaratnam who subsequently developed a certain reputation as a modernist teamed up with Leon Monk to carry out in the 1960s and 70s a series of modern housing (mostly personalised houses and apartments) and commercial projects in Colombo, as well as recreational projects in the outstations; all in the tropical modernist idiom (Pieris, 2007: 52).[150] Justin Samarasekara completed a number of noteworthy civic projects such as the *Sri Pada* College at *Kotagala* and also commercial ones as the DFCC Bank in Colombo. Panditharatna and Peiris on the other hand, collaborated to complete a few buildings of interest such as the *Bogala* Courts and Diocesan Hall (residential and a civic project respectively), both in Colombo (Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, 2011: 40-43, 48-51).

From the newcomers in the late 1950s, Lala Aditya did not complete many projects as Gunasekara (2012) believes and the most prominent project by him was the auditorium for the Methodist College, Colombo. While the only popular building by K. R. S. Pieris happens to be his 1970s tropical modern complex for University of Moratuwa [151] and his own house in the 1960s, Panini Tennakoon as an architect attached to the PWD (later the Buildings Department) from the 1960s, completed an array of works in tropical and international modernisms, with certain discounts towards the traditional idiom (Dharmasiriwardane in slia.lk, 2008).[152] Nihal Amarasinghe's contribution meanwhile was mainly limited to the domestic sphere (Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, 2011).[153] Yvette Kahavita on the other hand, managed to set up practice[154] and with time, developed a reputation by completing a number of prominent commissions in eclectic styles (kahavita.com, 2011). Further, Gunasekara (2012) reveals that although Abeywardene who with his Taliesin Training (with Frank Lloyd Wright) attempted to evoke an organic trend, it died in its birth, only being delimited to a handful of Colombo elite houses.[155]

It is notable how none of the foregoing substantially deviated from their preferred style of architectural modernism. In this light, it could be questioned whether it was historically plausible to advance beyond discontinuities in architecture, in a time when the island's social structure and ideology were yet strangled both economically and

culturally, by the *"multifarious penetrations of imperialism, neo-colonialism and semi-feudalism"* (Jayewardene, 1984: 67, 102)*.* On the other hand, the empiricist approach by architects of the day (at least by figures such as Boyd) prevented them from taking full-advantage of the wealth of potential knowledge history and other disciplines of kin held for architecture (Jayewardene, 1984: 68). Jayewardene (1984: 103) also observes that the architecture practiced by the group from the 1950s (that consolidated in the 1960s), was *"self consciously"* modern. Such projects were patronized by *"different type of clients"* with an *"aesthetic predilection"* of the international style. The buildings in this new style were then more costly than conventional ones and Visva Selvaratnam once declared that *"the clients had money and could afford to pay, to be modern"* (Jayewardene, 1984: 111). Jayewardene (1984: 245) reflecting on *"Architecture with architects being a preserve of the upper classes"* infers that *"… most architects are compelled by financial need to settle for this status quo".* On the other hand, the modernist applications in Ceylon were delimited to the domestic and civic realms. While the domestic application was championed by not many modernists, their more numerous contemporaries – employed by the PWD/Buildings Department – were applying the modernist trope to state's civic projects in far less-adventurous ways to its sub-continental applications. The success of Ceylonese modernist projects too was narrow, analogous to its fate in the sub-continent. The same factors underlying its failure in its neighbouring contexts pertained to Ceylon (Pieris, 2007: 6-7).

### *Regionalists*

The discourse & Prominent Figures:
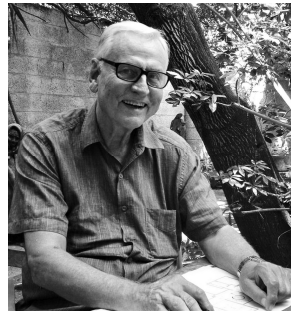


Fig. 88 – Minnette de Silva.

Fig. 89 – Geoffrey Bawa.

Fig. 90 – Ulrik Plesner.

Fig. 88          Fig. 89                    Fig. 90

From the G2 emerged as 'Regionalists', Minnette de Silva, Geoffrey Bawa and Ulrik Plesner as the most talked-about in Sri Lanka's architectural literature (Fig. 88-90). Minnette de Silva was the pioneer to adopt a synthesis between traditions of the past with Tropical Modern design approach and building needs.[156] Her approach, apart from borrowing traditional architectural content (mainly peasant traditions), also took into account sociological experiences in rural life that had survived in the Kandyan regions (Pieris, 2007: 8-9).[157] Making explicit her stance, she coined the term *"modern regional architecture in the tropics",* as early as the 1950s (Tzonis and Lefaivre, 2001: 31).[158] Her ability to dabble with indigenous sources was 'natural'; arguably prompted

by her native background.[159] She had painstakingly tried to synthesise tradition with the modern, but failed to accomplish a crucial break. This failure was due to certain shortcomings. Although she had an awareness of native arts and crafts,[160] she had little acuity of conceptual wealth, technical procedures and history of traditional buildings (Jayewardene, 1984: 72). On the other hand, her overreliance on the Corbisian myth that *"intuition, that miraculous catalyst of knowledge"* (in Jayewardene, 1984: 72) further contained her prospects.[161] The eventual outcome thus, was a modern European architecture embellished with native traditions. For Pieris (2007: 9), it was an unresolved composition without a coherent and synthesised aesthetic. In Minnette de Silva's buildings, the rough edges of different approaches are ostensible, suggesting the precarious balance between Eastern and Western cultures, where her portfolio was one reduced mainly to the domestic sphere (Minnette de Silva, Ashley De Vos and Susil Sirivardana (1998, 231).[162]

Geoffrey Bawa who qualified a few years de Silva's junior appropriated the same approach and later transformed it to form a conspicuous rubric of his own. He was essentially helped by the Danish architect Ulrik Plesner in this effort (Robson, 2004: 50-60).[163] Based on the inclinations of his initial collaborator Minnette de Silva, it could be inferred that Plesner also adopted her traditional architectural appreciation. After joining Bawa and getting to know Barbara Sansoni,[164] Plesner was given the chance to engage in island-round trips of discovery during his stint in Ceylon (Robson, 2004: 51).[165] His broadened knowledge in the composition (i.e. plan and building form), technical essence (i.e. in roof forms), materiality and structural knowhow (i.e. in structural timber-work) of Kandyan architecture was subsequently articulated in writing. For Jayewardene (1984: 73), Plesner was the first to write in appreciation of Kandyan architectural traditions.[166] In an early appreciation of the roof form is made explicit in the photographs illustrated in his article for 'Woven architecture', where Plesner (1959) assesses peasant building techniques. Its conclusion that the *"sweeping roof is the key to everything"* (Jayewardene's interview of Plesner in Jayewardene, 1984: 73) in turn, emerged in the early designs in collaboration with Bawa.[167] Thus, from the first systematic attempt to comprehend traditional architecture in the context of its contemporary counterpart, Bawa had automatically benefitted.[168] Their preferred way of collaborating as a team in designs made this absorption even smoother (Robson, 2004: 53).[169]  Bawa's architecture is tackled in Chapter 6.

Following the 1973 oil crisis that compelled nations to become self-sufficient, economic hardship provoked cultural issues and social unrest. When Ceylon was facing its share of problems, the political elite who were threatened by the struggling masses, as a form of inveigling burning issues and perpetuating control, resorted to 'identity politics' of Nationalism (Pieris, 2007: 10). In this process, Sinhalese Buddhist

version as the majority's preference became the obvious choice (Jayewardene, 1984: 250).[170] The Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist image was thus, cemented in the state-commissioned projects in the regionalist idiom that in fact, had borrowed excessively from the country's traditional (and familiar) buildings. The post-colonial state's growing power and authority was represented in their monumental scale. However, it is notable how the traditional revival in the island did not reach ostentatious levels such as folkloric projections in certain countries (Pieris, 2007: 10).[171]

## Architects Who Catered to the Political-Class/Middle-Class

Pieris (2007:26) makes some salient comments on the cultural stance of new middle-class of post-colonial Sri Lanka.

*"The dynamics of their self-fashioning, occurring as it did above an integrated system of cultural values, did not colonize the middle class imagination…Familial and religious values remained intact beneath an experimental modernity. The disjunctions between these two cultural positions were starkly revealed in their choice of architecture"* (Pieris, 2007: 26).

Under such circumstances, it could be inferred that the political-class's position would have been analogous to that of the governing-elites', while those who belong to the midst of the political-class and middle-class would have oscillated between the two cultural realms. In this light, when a majority of G1 and G2 architects did not alter their client allegiances (that was towards the governing-elite), a handful from the latter group strived to deviate from the mainstream. Their deviation was twofold. First, their clientele was made different. When it cannot be confirmed that they deliberately chose the political-class and middle-class instead of the governing-elite clients; substantiation of this argument is left for Chapters 6 and 7. Second, the style they inclined towards was Expressionist Modernism; a style of American provenance instead of European. Chapter 7 explores this point too.

## Modern Expressionists

The Discourse and Prominent Figures:
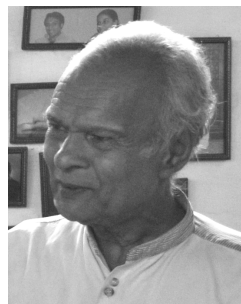


Fig. 91 – Valentine Gunasekara.

Fig. 92 – Chris de Saram.

Fig. 91          Fig. 92

Out of G2, Valentine Gunasekara and his colleague Chris de Saram could be conceived as the only expressionist modernists (Fig. 91-92), as there are no others to have taken up an analogous course (Jayatillaka, 2011). The latter needs to be taken up in association with his collaborator, as no examination has been carried out on the very few projects he completed on his own (Gunasekara, 2012).[172] Valentine Gunasekara embraced Tropical Modernism to emanate greatly, later in his career. His domestic architecture is studied in Chapter 7. Gunasekara and de Saram might have infiltrated a clientele that since the British period, had been catered to by a faction of contenders in practice – the non-architects.[173]

## Non-Architects to the Middle-Class

As Perera (1994: 304) elaborates, the subsequent development of so-called 'modern' architecture transplanted the West European hegemony in the field, from individual imperial domains to a broader global sphere, and *"[…] this disclosure enabled [the] profession to partially liberate itself from direct dependence on the imperial metropoles"* (Perera, 1994: 304). Consequently, middle-class Ceylonese resorted to alternative stylistic orientations from outside of Europe. This study recognizes two of such; the 'American style' and subsequently, more eclectic ensemble of overlapping styles that could be illustrated as a modern vernacular in the making. 'Colonial cosmopolitanism', the domain of westernised colonial elite, is argued to be outlined in the 'International Style' buildings in Ceylon (Pieris, 2007: 11). When popular nationalism rejected colonial cosmopolitanism, the rural migrants – i.e. the nascent middle-class – to the post-independence cities gave birth to 'vernacular cosmopolitanism'; a whole new form of cosmopolitanism accounted for in post-colonial cultural studies (Bhaba, 1996: 191-207). While stressing on the tautological nature of this term, Pieris (2007: 11) suggests of a 'place-based imagery' that is 'a politics of attachment' tied to nationalist histories, when 'quintessential cosmopolitanism' is imagined as an inherently 'detached' and 'transnational' character. In Bhaba's analysis of liminal places of migrants (in the West), cosmopolitanism is given a whole new interpretation as a social awareness between the two polarities; it has vernacular origins and at the same time is disassociated from elite/colonial cosmopolitanisms. These ideas were indeed, framed in the alternative stylistic orientations; from modern expressionism to alternative stylistic possibilities.

### *Alternative Stylistic Orientations of Anonymity*

Apart from the domestic architectural styles propagated by architects that were addressed prior, a non-architect championed style too subsequently became evident. Renowned as the 'American style', the discourse deserves a discussion.

American Style:

Peiris (2007: 47) believes that the proliferation of American middle-class suburban home paralleled with American lifestyle appropriation in parts of Asia and Europe.[174] The growth in post-war media and telecommunication had also begun to consolidate its global-reach (Ssenyonga, 2006). On the other hand, to the newly-liberated Asian colonies that had been subjugated under centuries of European cultures, more liberal-looking, non-feudal and non-colonial American culture was a breath of fresh air. *"The dream that was borrowed or appropriated from America was one of modernity and democracy…"* (Pieris, 2007: 47); the very aspects that the US appeared to uphold. Hence, the style was a stepping stone for the peripheral social classes to ascend in the hierarchy. Subsequently, 1960s Ceylonese began to call it the 'American-style' in the presence of its variants such as 'California-house' and 'Ranch-style' (Fig. 93). In the absence of the television, they grasped it largely through magazines [international ones such as *Better Homes and Gardens, Ideal Homes* etc. (Fig. 94) and local counterparts as Sri Lanka Institute of Architects Journal (Fig. 95)], not to mention the Hollywood cinema (Fig. 96). International exhibitions organised by institutions such as MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) on the other hand, propagated certain styles to win universal popularity (i.e. American style house with 'butterfly roofs') (Fig. 97-98). For Pieris (2007: 47), the American-style was adopted for its *"sense of modernity"* rather than the *"modernist aesthetic",* in the presence of far-modern variants from Europe (Perera, 1994: 258).



Fig. 93     Case Study House No. 22.

Hence, when Ceylonese elite were harking back to a romantic colonial past, domestic styles coming from America (the emerging global culture), appealed to the Ceylonese middle-class as forward-looking.

*"[This] style was used to negotiate an ideal social space for middle-class Ceylonese families in Colombo's new metropolitan suburbs. [It] articulated a new sensibility that was free from the colonial rhetoric of politics, privilege and anglophile values that had inhibited experimentation by middle class home owners of a previous generation"* (Pieris, 2007: 47).

As the American models were based on their timber-based vernacular, they possessed a petite quality that was alluring to the less-affluent middle-class and appeared affordable (Wijetunge, 2011a: 67). The affordability was achieved through the technological innovations at the time such as new materials and repetitive elements, which in turn, was propagated to the middle-class via the media (Widyalankara, 2011).[175] The industrial exhibitions organised by the state laid the foundation for this mediation (Pieris, 2007: 30-36). The sculptural quality apparent in tropical modernism

was also symptomatic in the American style in a different way. Some architects in fact, took the American style to the fringes of Tropical Modernism to enhance its climatic suitability (Gunasekara, 2012). These reasons thus, made it further-palatable to the middle-class. Owing to their Western education, rationality had suddenly become vital in all life aspects. Hence, some of the traditional architectural configurations, elements and detailing found in their village houses had suddenly become irrational in the Western-oriented city life that demanded efficacy; thus excluded (Wijetunge, 2011a: 67). In the meantime, it could be argued that Tropical Modernism and Regionalism that were being popularized by architects had been constructed as unreachable to the middle-class.
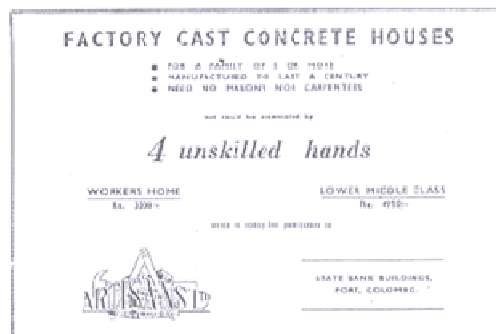


Fig. 94                                                              Fig. 95
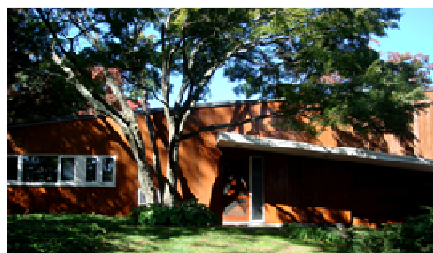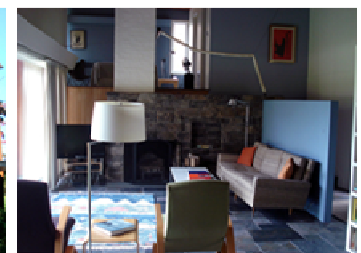


Fig. 96                                        Fig. 97                                        Fig. 98

Fig. 94    An article on self-build houses from 1958 from *Better Homes and Gardens.*
Fig. 95    SLIA Journal Advertisement for a self-build house (1965-66).
Fig. 96    An interior view of the Skybreak House featured in the famous 1971 movie *A Clockwork Orange* by Stanley Kubrick.

Marcel Breuer's 1949's exhibit for MOMA exhibition in New York titled 'House in the Museum Garden'.
Fig. 97    front view.
Fig. 98    interior.

Ceylon in the 1950s was a 'semi-feudal' and 'agricultural' country (Jayawardene, 1984: 90). To the postcolonial elites, Great Britain was still the cultural and ideological hub as against the US; merely considered a nascent economic powerhouse (Perera: 1994: 433). When the elite allegiance was directed towards their ex-colonist, the newly-educated middle-class was drawn towards 'fresh' modernity of the US. The middle-class patrons of the non-architects were less-affluent and socio-politically feeble than the governing-elite/political-class patrons of architects.  The Ceylonese elite having closely-emulated British masters' Western capitalist-modernity, also attained his notion of 'humanism' that Gandhi (1998: 23-41) elaborates on. Although 1956 political change facilitated upward social mobility via educating the middle-class, the Western-educated elites considered themselves to be beneficiaries of first-hand epistemology from the core.  Their locally-educated counterparts were considered to

have received a trickled-down secondary form of the same. This notion justified, amongst many other things, their stance on the American-style domestic building in Ceylon, which was taken as an 'eyesore' (Pieris, 2007: 50). Hence, its sculptural forms that threatened the established-traditions defining elite domestic architectural splendour was *"bad taste"* for them. Most post-independence architects of the country (as intellectuals/elite themselves), also shared the humanist stance of their allied elites. To them, architecture learned from the 'core' was the *"best possible solution"* and anything else that was disassociated with it, was *"inappropriate"*. This belittling stance is framed in Bevis Bawa's [176] (1985: 62-63) article for a newspaper column (Fig. 99).

> *"[A] vast section of the common heard have fallen for their [American] roofs. The infection is rapidly spreading to the remotest corner of our pearl of the East. I have seen village houses, wayside garages and even a cattle shed and poultry houses with the two-way flap".* [177]

Thus, to the Anglicized and Western-educated elite, American style became the perfect tool to fabricate a new form of social distance. Ethnicity and religion as well as caste have over the time, been factors that determined the superiority of certain factions of the island's population over others.[178] In a socialist context where cultural differentiations were discouraged, the state-enabled upward social mobility resulted in a newly out-looked middle-class. This was a class that shared a sense of solidarity not owing to ethnicity religion or caste, but on the grounds of similar intellectual and economic backgrounds, not to mention political ideology. They collectively had to relegate their varied cultural upbringings in favour of a modern Western lifestyle that their occupations and city-lives demanded. Thus, the American style had yielded a form of social unification (Wijetunge, 2011a: 68).



According to Peiris (2007: 52) the style saw its heyday during the 1960s and fell into disuse by the late 1970s.) Wijetunge (2011a) and Widyalankara (2011) both examining the style's trajectory, also agree. The making of the style explained, and variations illustrated in the catalogue under section 3.3.

Fig. 99    A Cartoon by Bevis Bawa mocking the American Style House.

Eclectic Ensemble of Overlapping Styles:

Middle-class architecture beyond 1977 is an unexplored area; a point that was established under the literature review. In this backdrop, historian Widyalankara (2011) reiterates that paradoxically, once the decade-long economic barriers were lifted by Neo-liberalism, Sri Lankans no more desired the 'American style', and during

the course of 1980s-90s, settled for what she calls *"pluralism in design"*. Widyalankara uncovered diverse stylistic discourses ranging from the 'villa', [179] 'mansion' and 'traditional-Kandyan' type inclinations. It is notable that such styles were unauthentic, but had cross-over tendencies and none of them on their own, could establish a foothold. For Widyalankara (2011), they had varying degrees of *"international, regional and traditional"* contents.[180] However, by the 1990s, a new classical tendency became apparent. For Dayaratne (2010: 396), such exhibits of newly-acquired wealth and position had/have driven a wedge between insiders and outsiders; shattering the communality that once was the fabric of the Sinhalese community.

Despite the shortcomings, it is worth discussing the underlying factors that compelled people to dispose a well-received rubric as the American style for such an ensemble of new styles. In Widyalankara's (2011) view, the waning of American hegemony since the 1970s that manifested through difficulties faced during the oil-crisis to unpopular war involvements in Asia, took its toll on the country's super-power status.[181] America was no more the convenor of anti-colonialism and world-peace it once promised to be. Moreover, the post-oil crisis economic emphasis, as political gatherings elsewhere,[182] compelled the South Asian region to form its own alliances that manifested in the forms of *South Asian Association for Regional Corporation* (SAARC) and South Asian *Free Trade agreement* (SAFTA) etc. The latter especially, allowed South Asian countries access to cheap construction materials; the breakthrough for Widyalankara. Suddenly, Sri Lanka could conveniently import from India and Pakistan, cheap materials.[183] Subsequently, the UNP government extended its import policy towards South-east Asia, until the Sri Lankan construction material gallery was inundated with cheap supplies.[184] Taxes by the 1980s were further reduced and more shipping lines were now touching Sri Lankan harbours, making importation swift. This was a considerable turnaround from the prior era, where through import substitution, Ceylon desired to make its own construction materials rather unsuccessfully.

As it happened with the American style, the alternative styles were fed by media; now more rigorously than before. By 1982, the Television was introduced to Sri Lanka and English programs – mainly American and British – were being aired (rupavahini.lk, 2012). The cinema too experienced a revival where more up-to-date films made in Hollywood were speedily imported. Even Western publications (i.e. coffee table books and magazines) relevant to this discourse became readily available. Further, by the late 1970s, as an intended means to receive remittance to strengthen the economy, new reforms enabled Sri Lankans to work outside of the country, where many of them found employment mainly in the Middle-East and the West.[185] Further, small-scale economic opportunities enabled the middle-class to 'get rich quick' and graduate to the new 'upper middle-class'. These areas saw fruition by the 1980s (Weragama,

1994: 7-8). Wijesooriya (2011: 27) in fact, attributes the formation of this class to UNP regime's patronage towards its parliamentarians and bureaucrats/kin.[186]

The architectural frontiers in the prosperous destinations they worked (especially the Middle East) gave Sri Lankans a good taste of Western architecture. Consequently, a 'silent revolution' occurred in the domestic architectural realm, where people – at least the urban middle-class – were now building their own houses according to their own desires. For Tillakaratne (1983), these cognate tendencies won more popular appeal than any architect-produced rubric. [187] In this light, it could be reified that the designers of the middle-class clientele were non-architects (i.e. architectural technicians/draughtsmen). This area remains unchartered territory which is worthy of research and certain stylistic variations of it are illustrated in the catalogue under section 3.5. The coming section attempts to shed more light into this area and emphasises on some works by a well-received figure.

The eclectic international manifestations of the 1980s were championed by highly-skilled architectural technicians who had by the time, developed their ability to conceive domestic buildings of great detailed complexity.[188] The explorations by Pieris (2007), Jayewardene (1984) and Tillakaratne (1983) on the post-independence architectural milieu are the only available literatures that acknowledge a handful of designers such as Arambawela, Devapriya and Kalubovila.

Out of the lot, Alfred Kalubovila remains to be the most well-known. It is notable how only his work has been undertaken for analysis – however meagre it may be – at the scholarly level (i.e. R. Tillakeratne, 1983). Kaluovila's recognition was marked by SLIA's acknowledgement of his contribution to the field in the late 1970s, by devising a new category to admit to the organization non-architects as 'registered members' (Jayewardene, 1984: 243; O. Kalubovila, 2011). Judging from the complexity in execution, Kalubovila's domestic projects incorporated ideas from more adventurous designs at the international level than the ones of his compatriots'. Although his clientele has not been scrutinised, the conducted interviews of practitioners from the period has established that a majority belonged to bounds of the *nouveau-riche*/elite classes (mostly the former). Tillakaratne (1983) calls them the 'new rich business community'.[189] Arguably, the class was poised between the governing-elite and the political-class. This client inclination was rather peculiar for a non-architect at the time that would naturally had catered to middle-class clients.[190]

However, the pertinent factor here is that his clients attained such levels anew, originating mainly from the middle-class/political-class (counter-elite) and at times, working-class origins. The new upward social mobility enabled by neo-liberal economics and polity, as well as the architecture of Alfred Kalubovila, remain

unexplored domains to date. As confirmed by Jayewardene (1984: 243), until his works are subject to a serious study, such observations remain partly speculative. It has to be stressed here that these non-architect propagated styles paralleled with the regionalist and expressionist works by architects into the 1990s. Catalogue sections 3.4 and 3.6 illustrate a number of Kalubovila's domestic and commercial involvements.

## Conclusion

In the aftermath of the Second World War when the colonial-created world-wide system of states and empires was reorganized, Ceylon received its political independence as a modern nation state. Within the knowable, manageable and controllable scientific matrix that the Euro-US constructed system was, the territorial units assumed homogeneity, when the state (form) came first and the nation (content) later. Within the pretension of an equitable system, the Western hegemony was reinstated. Ceylon, despite its initial policy of non-alignment – the third force/model – from the duopoly of the Cold War East-West division, subsequently found itself oscillating between the two camps.

In the immediate post-war world where Western scientific thought and epistemology was incontestable, its influence was continued in the architectural sphere too, through Western-type education and training. The lack of demand for architects in shortage in a predominantly rural and semi-feudal country, exacerbated by an overwhelming state monopoly, stunted the profession's growth. The non-involvement of the architect in the civic sphere was the same in the elite domestic realm too. The initial growth of architectural historiography was accompanied by the subsequent development of art historiography and parallel movements in visual arts, performing arts, literature and cinema – all striving to find a synthesis of the traditional, with the modern. All these collectively, stimulated the nascent post-independence architectural milieu, where architects were an essential part of the elite who sphere-headed the foregoing movements. The post-war allure towards architectural modernism of world-wide proportions carried concealed agendas that were either missed or overseen by the power-hungry governing-elite of the developing world with their feudalisms lurking in the backdrop. However, the 'identity-free' stance of the discourse was soon repudiated on numerous grounds and among many, the separation of values from identity was the most vindicated point; especially, in predominantly rural societies that were finding meanings in their traditional non-secular spheres. All these reasons, coupled with climatic problems, ascribed a limited success to modernism, apart from isolated attempts – mainly in South-East Asia – by a handful of architects/architectural

practices, which managed to establish a foothold. In Ceylon too, similar experiments were carried-out in vein.

The theoretical construction of national identity through the built environment is largely a 19<sup>th</sup> century metropolitan phenomenon, where national architectural style was made conterminous with national identity. This subsequently promoted the world over via colonialism as an omnipresent exercise. The Ceylonese appropriation of the discourse was articulated in a number of civic projects by the colonial state. Within this discourse, the buildings in metropolitan styles were blatantly embellished with trimmings culled from the traditional architectural repertoire of the island. This practice neither received great public acclaim nor reception. The domestic architectural residue of the foregoing practice was the PWD house that was appropriated by two social stratums – the governing elite/political-class and the petty-bourgeoisie. In these houses configured in accordance with Victorian spatial divisions and modern materials either metropolitan (mainly art-deco) or indigenous frills were pervasive. Within the fresh social stratification after 1956 that brought about a new middle-class, the elite domestic discourse at the micro-level afforded the perfect opportunity for experimentation. At the epicentre of nationalism in Ceylon (late 1950s and 1960s), most architects belonged to the elite (governing-elite/political-class) stratum; and a rift prevailed between the elite and non-elite. This development polarised patronages of designers, where architects largely came to cater to the governing-elite/political-class. While the experimentalists – the modernists and regionalists – served the aforesaid classes, a few radicals pursuing on expressionist modernism chose to cater to the new middle-class and also the fringe between that and the political-class. As against the metropolitan influence (conceived to be neo-colonial) received by such elitist-favouring contingents, this counter-group was poised towards the American experiments (conceived to be anti-colonial/democratic gestures) in modernism. The non-architects too found use by the same group and they preferred mostly, the novel and egalitarian 'American Style' borrowed from the USA for its promise of modernity that in turn, was reproached and mocked by the humanistic elites.

The open economy saw the re-shuffling of society, when the middle-class saw polarization into upper and lower strata. The upper level of the social stratum came to be conterminous with the *Nauvoo-riche*, who at times, infiltrated the political-class, or even the governing-elite. When the American style choice waned in the late 1970s owing to numerous reasons, an eclectic ensemble of overlapping styles took hold in the 1980s-90s, underpinned by an array of new developments in the economic, political and cultural spheres. This newly-formed eclecticism was engineered by a handful of competent non-architects working mainly for the *Nauvoo-riche*. They, in their experimental spirit, sought to embrace the vigour of the new capitalist age and

technology. Analogous to the American style proponents before them, their eclecticism won much more success than any of the architect-propagated styles.

## Notes

[1] On one hand, the powerful image and immutability of European powers suffered a shock when Japan defeated Russia in 1904-05 and especially, during the two World Wars. The latter brought the spectre of *"… white men killing each other by the most horrific means scientific minds could devise"*, as pointed out by Hatch (1975: 82), in front of the whole world.

On the other, as Clapham (1985: 29) notes, since 1880s in India and during the inter-war years in British West-Africa, political organizations that pressed for self-governance proliferated. However, these activities were largely confined to a small urban elite; gaining little effective power. By the 1920s, both socialist and nationalist movements had expanded in numbers and *"[…] their sphere of influence posed a formidable threat to European capitalist and colonial systems"* (Perera, 1994: 329). As he further adds, the Bolshevik victory in what became the Soviet Union (USSR) became the principle source of inspiration for these internal challengers of European capitalist states, working class movements as well as Wallerstein's (1989) anti-systematic movements. In the 1920s and 30s, anti-colonial struggle increased to an unprecedented level in most parts of the colonial world with Asia taking the lead (Young, 2003). Khilhani (1987: 46, 65) illustrates that subsequent to Indians  stepping up of their national struggles in the 1920s, the rest of South Asia as well as South-East Asia gradually developed into an anti-colonial battle field.

[2] For Perera it was following World War II that the colonial grips the world over became the feeblest; enabling a great opportunity for the marginalized indigenous peoples to wage anti-colonial struggles. As he sites Clapham,

*"[the] links between France, Belgium and The Netherlands and their colonies were broken by the German occupation of their home country, while Italy's colonies were placed under United Nations trusteeship with the guarantee of eventual independence".*

Perera illustrates that since colonists had waned in power, they had to construct a consensus among colonial subjects for the moral 'correctness' of their war against their Axis competitors. He also affirms that the European imperialist powers extended the slogan of fighting 'Fascism' and defending the 'motherland' in Europe, to their colonies. Hence, the war was portrayed as one where they were also defending the homelands of the colonized from the imperial pretensions of the Axis powers; for which Japan's imperial expansion in the East became the best and closest example. Although many of the nationalist movements in Asia supported the colonial masters in their war against Japan, it was with an underlying intention. As Clapham (in Perera, 1994: 330) affirms, Indian cooperation with the British was secured only on the grounds of post-war independence.

[3] relying heavily on Gellner (1992).

[4] Consequently, the new states were absorbed in to their pre-constructed positions of the so-called 'sovereign states'. It is believed that such a world polity required the creation of modern states in which, both authority and violence was centralized along the European model.

Gellner (1983) expresses his concern over this construction. According to him,

*"[nations] are not inscribed into the nature of things, they do not constitute a political version of the doctrine of the natural kind. Nor were national states the manifest ultimate destiny of ethnic or cultural groups".*

[5] This world-wide inter-state system can be conceived as the continuation of the Euro-American bourgeoisie's creation of a new world after its own image, as Marx (1948) once promulgated. On the other hand, it was more or less the reproduction of the inter-state system originally implemented in the 17th century at the world stage, which was legitimized through the construction of world organizations such as the *United Nations (UN)*. It is ironic that the *UN* and its predecessor, *The League of Nations,* was formed prior to most of the states in the periphery that became its members.

On the other hand, the 'commonwealth' was another alternative given to the ex-colonies to become members of a system of so-called 'sovereign' states. Although Britain submitted to the reality of granting

independence to the colonies following the war – being manifested through its commitment to the Commonwealth – other colonial powers such as France and Portugal negated the need until the 1960s. This resulted in them having to face ferocious battles in destinations such as Vietnam and Algeria (Perera, 1994: 330).

[6] Analogous to the periodic table in Chemistry and Latitude and Longitude in Geography.

[7] They were represented as a *"homogeneous jigsaw puzzle that any child can put together"* (Perera, 1994: 332-333).

[8] It was this notion for example, that forcefully incorporated indigenous peoples in remote Indonesian islands into the state of Indonesia.

[9] In addition to this core exportation, their method of decision-making in the form of 'democracy' was also introduced in to the system by giving each state representing the UN a single vote. However, this was within a frame work that gave more powers to the former colonial European nations and also to the US as well as USSR – the 'allies' of World War II.

[10] through the *Peace of Westphalia.*

[11] This is owing to the fact that each state could only act within a particular territory, unobstructed by other states; although this ideas never materialised as the powerful states tended to interfere in the matters of other states for their own gains (N. de Silva, 2010, 2011). What the European powers received centuries ago conversely, was 'positive sovereignty' that went beyond their borders, which they also employed relentlessly over the extra-European world. Inequality among states was reproduced again – this time on a grand scale – in the 1940s, when the core states retained positive sovereignty in which, economic and military capacity provided them the ability to intervene into the functioning of peripheral states of 'negative sovereignty'.

Hence, an equal vote in the UN did not represent an equal voice or weight to every nation. This political inequality was exacerbated by the institutionalization of the UN Security Council; vesting veto powers in the hands of major military powers (Perera, 1994: 334-335). Arrighi (in Perera, 1994: 335) argues that US hegemony especially, has considerably restricted rights and powers of 'sovereign states' (the same had been far-less free under British hegemony) to organize relations with other states and with their own subjects, as they see fit. On the other hand, sovereign states have become far less free to use war and territorial expansion as legitimate means in the pursuit of their ends.

[12] Perera illustrates that the contemporaneous development of international organizations and trans-national co-operations has created an extensive and dense network of pecuniary and non-pecuniary exchanges, which no single state can unilaterally control, and more seminally, from which no state can *"delink"* except at exorbitant costs.

[13] The Bolshevik revolution not only broke the four century-old West-European challenge to Russia's domination, it also planted Moscow as a centre of inspiration for other revolutionary movements in the early 20th century. Further, every political movement in the world was compelled to identify itself with, and be conditioned by, either USA-type democracy, or USSR-type Communism.

> *"In this sense, the capitalist core was capable of reproducing its world-system by incorporating the USSR to a state of complementary enmity with the USA as evident in providing it with a seat in the Security Council of the United Nations, or most crucially, eliminating any political space outside this duopoly"* (Perera, 1994: 337).

[14] Regional co-operations such as *Pan-Arabism* and *Pan-Africanism* are two other examples.

[15] The new political and economic systems were not complete in the postcolonial world (Perera, 1994: 338). Colonialism did not simply end as evident in independent white-settler colonies around the world, and neo-colonial practices were perpetuated (N. de Silva, 2008). Perera (1994: 338) suggests that although US-USSR competition stunted revolutionary movements in both Eastern and Western Europe, it never materialized in other parts of the world as was manifested through Socialist revolutions in China and anti-Semitic Islamic movements in Iran.

[16] such as the *International Monetary Fund* and the *World Bank.*

[17] In terms of world economics, the USA since the beginning of the 20th century opted to re-organize it (Perera, 1994: 38). This was initiated in 1935 by fixing the US Dollar value to gold, to extend the practice into the *Bretton Wood Agreement* where 'pegged exchange' came into use (Karunadasa, 1999: 46).

[18] As Perera (1994: 180) argues, a development of particular knowledge in the Western core states – advanced as the *"truth"* – brought perception of the entire world into a *"single time and space"*. According to Goonathilaka (1984: 47-48), at the beginning of what is known as the European Renaissance, the Europeans absorbed Eastern knowledge and ideas through Arab sources. This view is also shared by N. de Silva (2006). However, what was transmitted back from Europe to the rest of the world was a *"reorganized, restructured, and reconstituted [as a ] package of knowledge that represented Europe as the centre"* (Perera, 1994: 180). The core of this knowledge, natural science, known as Newtonian and Baconian science in fact, has been formed as a structured reality; produced in European Metropoles.

> *"[The] five premises of this 'classical modern science' are, the belief in determinacy and therefore the possibility of predictions; the potential capability of expressing all phenomena in qualitative language; the mandate to reduce confusion to elegant simplicity; and the moral neutrality of scientists"* (Wallerstein in Perera, 1994: 180).

Structured reality however, implies that alternatives are not possible once knowledge is established. In this monoculture, one seeks for *"definitive agreement"*; or the *"(objective) truth"*. Perera affirms that this gives rise to an *"institutional division of labour"* in the production, legitimating and distribution of knowledge in which, the key centre was seen to be located in the core Western states of Europe. Weber (in Perera, 1994: 181) in confirmation, states that *"only in the West does science exist at a stage of development which we recognize to-day as valid"*.

On account of this dominance that operated within the cultural perceptions of the imperial metropoles, King (in Perera, 1994: 181) argues that, it is

> *"[the] institution of 'science,' especially, 'tropical medicine' or 'tropical architecture,' [comprised] ethnocentric ideas about disease, cultural expectations of health, perceptions of climate and environment, and cultural beliefs and behaviour regarding various perceptions in subordinate and superordinate positions"*.

These forms of knowledge produced within large imperial structures – via the accessibility they had to vast global areas, and within metropolitan cultures – universalized and homogenized the way in which, the extra-European world was perceived across their own cultures, and formed culturally-different perceptions. (Perera, 1994: 180-181). This new homogenization still persists in space-related disciplines such as geography, urban planning and architecture. For example, climatically-defined geographic categories such as the 'tropics' reproduced the former Iberian homogenizing conceptions such as 'India' that subordinated vast cultural differences within the region.

Thus, an epistemological hegemony was constructed through institutions such as science, mediating 'Western scientific' thought as 'superior' and 'rationalizing' (Perera, 1994: 144-45). To realise the same function the earlier Portuguese had to resort to direct military force Making Western knowledge *"generalizable, superior and legitimate"* was complimented particularly by the colonial state that marginalized other forms of knowledge. This is discernible through Maculae's notion in 1836 about British and Indian knowledge forms that Said (2004) illustrates. The centres of knowledge production developed in the metropoles, not least in regard to areas such as 'tropical agriculture' and 'tropical architecture', but encompassed phenomena such as 'development' by the 20th century. Thus, by then, the production, distribution and legitimization of world scale structures of knowledge was complete. Colonial schools taught the arts and sciences of Europe, Christianity, English history and systems of government through the medium of English to local students (Mendis, 1946: 55). An educational system that emphasised on an English interpretation of Western civilization, pursued historical knowledge as a secular vocation and looked at the past as a *"different time and place"* (Perera, 1994: 184). This can be seen in the words of English historians such as James Cordiner, Robert Percival, Anthony Bertolacci and John Davy. The re-writing of the Ceylonese history by translating from *Pāli* to English the *Mahawansa* – the oldest documentary affair of history of South Asia – so that the Ceylonese could read it in English; as a part of new history.

The foregoing enquiry into the world-wide normalisation and mechanisms of propagating Western epistemology, leads way to the exploration of their implications on Western architecture and its education in Ceylon.

[19] in the process, fundamental and basic core knowledge grows largely in the West and is *"transferred"* to the developing countries.

[20] Goonatilake (in Perera, 1994: 404) refers to this *"mimicry"* as the *"imitative syndrome"*.

[21] RIBA was founded in 1834 and its Charter was a guarantee of the so-called British professional ethics.

[22] The RIBA Charter could only be obtained from a University in Britain or any other university of similar stature elsewhere (within the Commonwealth such as Australia).

[23] They ranged from military officers and planners, to architects.

[24] J. G. Smither was the first professional architect to the Ceylon government who served between 1865-83. Edward and G. Bouchier were also architects attached to the PWD as Smither's contemporaries.

[25] the most competent selected through exacting examinations.

[26] materials, culture, history etc.

[27] and although they almost completely replaced their British predecessors after 1948.

[28] also for the Municipal Engineers' Department.

[29] Prior to free education, the schools in the 1930s were demarcated on class lines. Christian fee-levying schools – both Roman Catholic and Protestant – educating 4.3% of the population received 75.2% of the

government grants. The reminder (24.8%) went to non fee-levying Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim schools respectively.  Consequently, the latter group endured shortages in facilities and teachers. The foregoing patronage falsifies the claim of 'free and compulsory' education for all students by the colonial government.

The former group had English as the language of instruction while the latter had indigenous languages. English education by this time had been confined to 5% of the population (Jayewardene, 1984: 190).

[30] Despite protests by the elite, the bill was enacted in 1943, and confirmed on 1st of October 1945. Consequently, Sri Lanka reached independence with one of the highest levels of education and literacy in Asia. This is known as the 'Free Education Act' (Pieris, 2007: 26).

[31] However, owing to its incompleteness, he refers to it as a 'halfway house' to a national university.

[32] from Engineering and medicine, to law.

[33] This trend in fact, continued into the 1950s.

[34] Some had arrived to take on their winning design entries for competitions by the colonial state.

[35] They are namely, Adam and Small, Edward Reid and Boothe, and Billimoria and de Silva.

[36] They were Oliver Weerasinghe, Hubert Gonsal and Classen.

[37] Jayewardene (1984: 92-93) confirms that architectural education in the 1940s was an expensive affair. Only those who received scholarships such as de Silva and Selvarathnam (who qualified in the early 1950s), and those who could afford such as Bawa and Thurairaja (who qualified in the late 1950s) went there. Valentine Gunasekara on the other hand, also managed to complete his education on a very frugal budget (V. Gunasekara, 2011).

[38] In 1949, although Tennakoon was awarded a scholarship to read for a five-year architecture course at the Bartlett School of Architecture in London, the adverse post-war living conditions there, compelled him to return to Ceylon shortly.

[39] Between 1920 and 1957, there were only 20 Ceylonese architects with internationally recognised qualifications. According to L. Aditya (1983: 2), Ceylon Institute of Architects had a founding membership of 12 in 1957 and only by 1960, the membership had risen to 30 (slia.lk, 2011). Jayewardene (1984: 91) in fact, reveals that a few architects had joined the Engineering Association formed in 1906 in search of distinguished professional representation.

[40] Due to the hard work of these founder members of the Institute (with Architect Justin Samarasekera taking the lead), a School of Architecture attached to the Institute of Practical Technology at *Katubedda* was establish in 1961.

[41] According to K. R. S. Pieris (1982: 34), the course became part of the Faculty of Natural Science of University of Colombo in 1968 with postgraduate training commencing in 1972.

[42] Perera (1994: 404) believes that even such an establishment did not guarantee architectural independence. He argues that although schools and tertiary education were subsequently nationalized in the 1960s and made available to all stratums of life, until the so-called 'district-basis' system  was introduced in the early 1980s for University admissions, the *"kind of students"* who got in to the courses did not change (Perera, 1994: 370). Thus, it was through this arbitrary political decision that the elite-dominance in the professions of Ceylon was finally challenged.

[43] The architects who had trained abroad during the post-colonial period still taught by the 1980s and were followed by a faction that joined decades later with their more contemporary core-based knowledge. Thus, the core-dependence for knowledge had been continued. Jayewardene directs her reproach at the early course for its reluctance to sever links with British teaching models. The curriculum showed an oscillation between technological subjects and creative aesthetic agendas, where the ultimate emphasis was placed on 'paper architecture'. Drawings – both technical and perspective – was used as the dominant form of design exploration, analogous to beaux-arts compositional techniques of the past, relegating the more innovative Bauhaus techniques (Pieris, 2007: 20).

Jayewardene (1984: 93) maintains that understanding of regional and national architectural traditions was confined to a cursory descriptive study of the 'classical period' with a summery introduction to the history of Indian architecture. The lack of emphasis on history to contemporary practice, as against the comprehensive discussion of more recent developments in Western architecture, was another major flaw. She also reveals that little encouragement was given to study 20th century architecture at home. The indifference to local architectures and enthusiastic international orientation sum up the magnitude of the core domination. In fact, general appreciation of indigenous architecture did not begin until the 1970s.

[44] by Archt. Herbert Gonsal.

[45] by Archt. Wynne-Jones with Gonsal as the chief proponent.

[46] The franchise of the latter was facilitated by the colonial state at the outset of the 20th century as the former group had their work cut-out.

[47] The legacy of the two groups in these realms up to independence was addressed under Chapter 4.

[48] The non-architects (draughtsmen and technicians) had a local training from *Maradana* Technical College in Colombo.

[49] ER&B, the most renowned private practice at the time for instance, designed a sombre mansion at *Nugedolle* near *Pasyala* for the *Deraniyagala* family, a rocky hide-out at *Dikkande* near *Nittambuwa* and *Villa Venezia* at Queen's Road in Colombo for the *Obeyesekeras* (Robson, 2004: 44). Except for them, no records are available in relation to similar works carried-out by other private architects.

[50] for example, Jayewardene (1984), Perera (1994) and Robson (2004) etc.

[51] She notes that professionalism in architecture and 'architects' as found in the context of the development in the industrialised West, are not really valid models for the study of building in the third-world countries, unless we acknowledge that we are dealing with a limited facet of the built fabric.

[52] In this context, only a limited provision of housing for the low and middle income groups was provided by the private sector in the urban context.

[53] It has to be stressed here that the middle-class only came into existence in the late 1950s (especially, after 1956 and the numbers inflated by the 1960s).

[54] Since the outset of British rule, public-sector buildings were the responsibility of the *Buildings Department* under the PWD established in 1796. This trend was continued until 1963, when *State Engineering Corporation* (SEC) was formed.

[55] except for railways, irrigation and port construction.

[56] It was only in 1977 that this state monopoly was renounced.

[57] The engineering construction field however, had been better developed by the British for the construction of infra-structure (ports, roads, irrigations and railways etc) imperative for plantation economy.

[58] On the other hand, for roofing, corrugated galvanised and asbestos sheeting and the flat 'Calicut' tiles (from India) made possible new stylistic possibilities.

[59] PWD was separated into *Highways Department*, the *Buildings Department* and the new *State Engineering Corporation*, with a number of other agencies. These included *Town Planning Department*, *Housing Department, Mahaveli Development Board*, *River Valleys Development Board* and *Ceylon Government Railways*.

Buildings Department form this point onwards was responsible for designing state institutions – town halls, hospitals, police stations etc. – while the SEC took on the responsibilities of semi-government sector building needs such as banks and corporations

[60] analogous to precedents in Europe and the USA.

[61] Jayewardene (1984: 95) elaborates that although the construction growth factor in the developing countries can at best be 20%, in most cases it is around 10%. In relation to Ceylon, this percentage between 1975-76 had been 3.4% to 6%, while the figure in the earlier years proved to be negative.

[62] at a time when the European building industry had experienced cut backs.

[63] Turner Wickremasinghe (in Jayewardene, 1984: 21-22) illustrates that this policy was deplored by as conservative a body as the SLIA in its 1984 sessions, claiming that the local architects should be given preference in all national ventures, however large or small – as they in no way, were lacking the expertise needed to manage complex projects.

[64] *"Only a small proportion of households who needed houses have resources to build their own, and that housing investment will have to be promoted by the development of financial institutions capable of providing resources needed by the individual house builders and by the sponsoring of housing agencies"* (in Jayewardene, 1984: 95).

[65] Bulk of other projects organised by the state were given to foreign parties too.

[66] to the municipal or local authorities.

[67] in respect to light and ventilation and access laid down in the building by-laws.

[68] The first traceable attempt to rescue Lankan architectural traditions was a folio on ruins of *Anuradhapura* titled '*Architectural remains, Anuradhapura, Ceylon, Comprising the Dagabas and Certain Other Ancient Ruined Structures, measured, Drawn and Described by J. G. Smither'*. Smither was in fact, the first

professional architect attached to the PWD between 1865-83 and is renowned for designing the Colombo Museum and Colombo Town Hall at *Pettah* among many other buildings. His PWD contemporaries were Edward and G. Bouchier (Jayewardene, 1984: 43-44).

[69] Governor William Gregory commissioned the folio where J. Ferguson was responsible for the work being undertaken and published. Furguson also gave Ceylon a seminal place in his 1910 publication of 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture' (Jayewardene, 1984: 43-44).

[70] Under the guidance of 'archaeological commission' appointed in 1868, practical means to be taken in conserving ancient architectural structures and other artworks was established. The archaeological survey of 1890 under H. C. P. Bell was another seminal attempt.

In Jayewardene's view, such appointments did not require specialised training and all conservation works was entrusted to the PWD. Devendra (1969: 9) points out how the post of 'architect' in the archaeology department after Smither was not filled until the 1960s.

[71] However non-scientific and speculative his observation have been, he is renowned for drawing a connection between Kandyan architecture and the architectures of Malabar Coast and Nepal. He also speculated that 14th century *Gadaladeniya* and *Lankatilleke* of *Gampola* period connects classical Sinhalese architectures of *Anuradhapura* and *Polonnaruwa*; and especially, for the 1908 essay titled 'Dutch Architecture in Ceylon' is well-acknowledged. His studies were a result of his empathy for the threatened traditional architecture.

[72] The inconclusive study in 1920 by Hocart – a former archaeological commissioner – on the Kandyan period that also attempted to find continuity from the *Anuradhapura* period is also notable.

[73] He is considered to be the first modern art historian of the island and the career that roughly spans a decade overlapped with the first ten years of his scholarly life. He came to Ceylon to work as a geologist. It was while working as a geologist he contributed to Lankan arts and architecture with his writings.

[74] The *Arts and crafts* movement in England at the time would have immensely influenced Coomaraswamy (Wijetunge, 2007: 111). Albeit directing attention at socio-political milieu and national struggle at the outset, his latter works took a philosophical turn (Jayewardene, 1984: 48). According to the analysis by Bandananayake (1980: 69) of Coomaraswamy's works, they were based on a scientific methodology where systematic accumulation, precise description as well analysis, interpretation and argument were all brilliantly intact.

His involvements with the *Ceylon Social Reform League* and Indian National in particular are notable. His association with the latter reflected through his 'Essays in National Idealism' (Jayewardene, 1984: 4).

[75] The writings of Sir Gregory Birdwood attest to this. His rather derogatory explanations of Indian and Buddhist art articulate a strong orientalist stance.
> *"The monstrous shapes of the Puranic deities are unsuitable for the higher forms of artistic representation; and this is possibly why sculpture and painting are unknown as Fine Arts in India"*
> (in Jayewardene 1984: 48).

In his description, the Buddha image was described as below.

> "This senseless similitude, by its immemorial fixed pose is nothing more than an inspired brazen image, vacuously squinting down its nose, to its thumbs, knees and toes. A boiled suet pudding could serve equally well as a symbol of passionate purity and serenity of the soul" (Lecture given to Royal Society, 1910) (in Jayewardene 1984: 48).

[76] A protest against such views was mobilised by writings of Coomaraswamy who was joined by others such as Lawrence Housman, Walter Crane, W. R. Lethaby and William Rothenstein who produced a letter to the *Times* that led to the founding of the 'Indian Society for the Study of Indian Art and Literature'; a mobilised study of the content of Indian art.

> *"A lofty and adequate expression of the religious emotions of the people and their deepest thought, we trust that the School of National Arts in that country will zealously preserve its individual character which is the outgrowth of the history and physical condition of the country"* (in Jayewardene, 1984: 49).

[77] It was the state support in the past that had hitherto sustained it.

[78] Here, she refers to the maritime and the urban settings while the interiors in her view *"remained more or less unscathed"*.

[79] The educated few (intelligentsia) in the immediate independence had to be either the traditional elite or bourgeoisie.

[80] However, the paintings of *Kelani Vihara* executed in 1937 articulated how feeble the attempt to conceive Kandyan paintings had been at the time.

[81] Predictably, *"[…] peasant artist Soliyas Mendis was sent, not on a tour of Sri Lankan temples, but on a tour of Ajanta and Ellora, by his patron, D. C. Wijewardene [renown member of a low county elite family*

*that have traditionally been patrons of the temple], before he began painting at Kelaniya"* (Dhanapala,1962: 178).

Keyt in particular resorted to Cubism to portray traditional Buddhist stories. Linear beauty of *Anuradhapura* paintings and sensuality of traditional Indian sculpture were synthesised in his work.

[82] Formed in 1943 with a membership of 43 individuals, 43rd group was a gathering place for European-trained sons of the governing elite and foreign intellectuals alike (artsrilanka.org, 2011).

[83] It not only focused on Kandyan visual arts, but also fostered Kandyan dancing.

[84] The lights of distinguished expatriate members such as Pablo Neruda (the poet) would have contributed to this. The group's greatest shortcoming was that the members were all within a Western-educated (English-speaking circle); unreachable by the commoners.

[85] Dharmadasa and Halpe (1979: 400) commenting on this product, state that

> "*[modern] Sri Lankan paintings and sculpture has been distinctly occidental in provenance, and the occasional evidence of oriental motifs has never had the character of a full bodied organic evolution from Sri Lankan traditions of aesthetic experience. One cannot but regret the lack of a more useful interaction between the Sri Lankan aesthetic tradition and the art of modern Europe".*

[86] Sarath Chandra's success in the 1960s was followed by 1970s heyday of Henry Jayasena, Sugathapala de Silva and Simon Navagaththegama.

[87] He was renowned as a poet, lyricist, painter, broadcaster, novelist, short storey writer and movie maker.

[88] Uswatte Arachchi (in K.T. Silva, 2005: 159) calls this *"from highway to blind alley".*

[89] despite its original appearance probably having taken place in the USA, as far as the late 19th century.

[90] Firstly, having swerved from one kind of European history, architectural modernists projected a new kind of future. Thus, architectural modernism was an alternative to the historic and also industrial architectural realms. This made the rubric spuriously 'neutral'. Secondly, the development of building typologies and planning conventions were projected as 'instruments of change', conceived particularly as useful in re-defining the social functions of urban organizations. Thirdly, CIAM's view relied on the state authority to achieve planning goals for the city. Fourthly, Le Corbusier – the leading figure behind CIAM – claimed that radical social change could be affected through this new architecture without social revolution; an appeal that attracted revolutionaries and counter revolutionaries.

[91] This was in fact, the climatic version of the age-old division between 'Europe' and 'rest of the world'.

[92] as building material suppliers.

[93] In Pieris's view, this is what brought Maxwell Fry, Jane Drew, Charles and Ray Eames, Edward Durrel Stone, Joseph Stein and Laurie Baker to India, as well as the first two figures to Ceylon.

[94] The first one in the name of *Tropical Architecture in the Humid Zone* (1956) was followed by *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones* (1964), which was a more generalised version applicable to the wider extra-European world.

[95] The term 'tropical' as Pieris tells us, was a pejorative and carried a negative connotation that was synonymous with 'tropical diseases' (S. Jayatillaka, 2011). Hence, this Western undertaking to determine the best possible architectural solution to the 'undesirable tropics', could be conceived as the postcolonial period residue of humanism that underpinned Western colonialism.

[96] Lai Chee Kian (in Pieris, 2007: 34) narrates this tendency through a paper read by Henry Russell Hitchcock titled 'The Acclimatization of Modern Architecture in Different Countries' at a 1946 conference in London.   In the paper, he extended the scope of international modernism to the expression of regional and national particularities. This was then followed by conferences on tropical architecture in Rotterdam, Lisbon, Washington, D.C. and London in the 1950s. It was the 1953 conference in London that set up the Tropical school at the *AA* for a six month course.

[97] such as the *AA* and Harvard University.

[98] In Europe instead, modernism was utilised as a tool of post-war reconstruction (Pieris, 2007: 3).

[99] *Brasilia* was by Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa. Singapore's 'Public Housing Strategy' actualised Le Corbusier's ideal city and the new state capital for *Punjab* (*Chandigarh*) was also by him (Pieris, 2007: 2-3). On the other hand, the capital of *Dhaka* by Louis Kahn was a similar exercise (Kahn, 2003).

Pieris (2007: 2) states that Prime Minister Nehru's resorting to modern architecture underlined the political intention of easing the undercurrents of ethnic unrests that had scarred Indian independence in 1947.

[100] for which, Le Corbusier is a perfect example.

[101] along with its advantages brought about by new materials and technology.

[102] This is elaborated by Naipaul (1990: 517) as *"a million sectarian mutinies"* against a *"corrupt secular state"*.

[103] As Pieris (2007: 7) elaborates,

> *"[the] separation of values from identity, which lay at the heart of the humanist project, appeared incongruous when introduced to diverse and contested geographies and proved ineffective at many levels. Modernism's [so-called] egalitarian forms were recognised for what they were – the products of western history and culture and were, ironically, read as expressions of Western identity, and a threat to its Eastern counterpart"*.

[104] The association of concrete with brut, Corbusier's brutalist aesthetic for *Chandigrah*, would prejudice a generation of practitioners against such exposed and alienating forms (Pieris, 2007: 29).

[105] In the Philippines, a new generation of architects led by V. Locsin designed experimental multi-storey offices for *Makati*; a planned urban development (Pieris, 2007: 4-5).

[106] In Cambodia, Van Molyvann created a new Khmer style; a synthesis of Angkor sculptural effects and brutalism (Pieris, 2007: 4-5).

[107] In Indonesia, architect/president Sukarno's democracy was articulated through modernist buildings called *Monas*; the National Monument, Hotel Indonesia, Independence Mosque, Asian Games Complex and the Jakarta Bypass (Pieris, 2007: 4-5).

[108] Malaysian Architects Co-partnership (Lim cheat, Voo Fee, William Lim), Ken Yeang and Tay Kheng Soon adopted an agenda to contextualise the global aesthetic in terms of climatic responses.

[109] In Japan, the so-called 'Metabolists' – Kenzo Tange and URTEC etc. – designed futuristic buildings based on patterns of biological organisms.

[110] Malaysia boldly chose a modernist tower imbued with some traditional content as their first parliament building. Singapore followed by implementing Corbusier's utopian experiments in housing to modern institutional facilities. Malaysia had recuperated from the unrest caused by a faction of its Chinese population and Singapore had seen ethnic riots in 1964.

[111] Tropical could be viewed as both anti-traditionalist and anti-colonist; *"an architecture of resistance"* for Frampton (in Pieris, 2007: 6).

[112] Doshi's Team-X in India, defined new symbolic forms for urban, residential and institutional realms that employed innovative engineering and imbued with cultural content. The Brazilian school on the other hand, followed strains of 'British functionalism' for new towns in brutalist idiom and futuristic urban experiments of the so-called 'Situationists'.

[113] Although the building incorporated architectural and construction methods from the modern movement, it was concealed behind a pre-international façade. The Edwardian treatment of the multi-storey exterior by Adam and Small (a local British practice), with heavy masonry piers and constricted fenestration according to Samarasekara (in Jayewardene, 1984: 101) *"run back in time"*.

[114] The factory and office designed for *Level Brothers* by architect Morris Russell working for ER&B in the 1950s, followed more or less the same design principles and execution, hence also deserves the same comments. Bawa was assigned this project once he returned to the practice in 1959 (Robson, 2004: 70).

[115] The *Baurs* Building by Swiss architect Mueller was the first critical departure from the colonial architectural tradition in Ceylon (Jayewardene, 1984: 100). The seven-storey structure consisted of load-bearing walls, articulated clean modern lines, cantilevered floors (first floor), pierced exterior grille wall beyond the window line; all of which guarantying its modern appearance. It is in fact, believed to be the first building in the East to incorporate Corbusian principal of a single corridor entrance to two floors of flats. However, it received considerable criticism.

> *"The obvious lack of feeling in the building has been attributed to the poor understanding of local materials by the designers. The architect made one site visit, and the materials were all imported except the brick, and all building work was managed by locals"* (Extracted from Marg, 1947, in Jayewardene, 1984: 101).

[116] N. de Silva (2000) argues in favour of the legitimate right of the Sinhalese community to have spawned such nationalist sentiments, following their liberation from external forces who had challenged their cultural dominance for centuries, despite its frequent labelling as 'Sinhalese chauvinism' [Jayewardene (1984); Pieris (2007); de Votta (2007) etc.].

[117] New branch of knowledge such as ethnography for example, were created to sanction these processes.

[118] that traces its history to the 1st century B.C.

[119] Coomaraswamy also argued that Lanka's indigenous architecture was one of *"a small agricultural people"* that were *"prosperous" rather than wealthy"*, thus was suitable for national acceptance.

This view is repudiated by Jayewardene (1984: 54-55) who points out to the theoretical limitations if colonial historiography. For Bandaranayake (1980a: 75), paradoxically, while recognizing the creative genius of Kandyan society and culture, Coomaraswamy denies the historical primacy of internal dynamics in the formation of the Sri Lankan tradition.

[120] Edwin Lutyen designed the viceroy's residence (1912-31) and the entire city of New Delhi.

[121] Their architecture was fairly eclectic according to Robson (2004: 43-44) and embraced 'colonial classical', Art Deco and modern styles.

[122] at *Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha*.

[123] Woodeson was the Chief architect of the PWD who had made a study of Sinhalese architecture for the purpose. He was assisted in the task by his assistant H. H. Reid.
For Woodeson (in Jayewardene, 1984: 57), in Sinhalese architecture, *"distinctive elements [are] few, and [they are] dependant on the workman employed"*.

[124] The final proposals were eventually prepared by Wynne Jones (from the PWD between 1942-52). For Jayewardene (1984: 58) his approach was a resuscitation of mediaeval architectural forms and although Lankan in provenance, not atypical of the main theme of Lanka tradition.

[125] The Wijewardenes could be categorised under the 19th century Bourgeoisie. As Jayewardene (1984: 59) elaborates, their fortune was made in the late 19th century by entrepreneurial success. They, at the time, were renowned for owning the Associated Newspapers and investment in urban property. The entrepreneurial success was followed by conferred honours by the British colonists.

[126] The *Dagaba* dating from the 3rd century is believed to mark the spot where Lord Buddha set foot on the island. The temple complex was destroyed in 1575 by the Portuguese. Hence, rebuilding it marked the revival of an event that is culturally significant and also directed as a repudiation to colonial barbarity. The impetus to rebuild the temple grew out of the Buddhist renaissance that had heightened by the early 20th century and the revival of *Kelani Perahera* (A Buddhist procession held on the night of a full moon) (Robson, 2004: 44).

[127] Running friezes of carved swans, imps and elephants that decorate the plinths were copied from *Tivanka* as well as the main façade punctured by free-standing and engaged Kandyan columns (that support projecting cornices) (Robson, 2004: 45). Where the former is conceived to be the only available 14th century link from the *Gampola* era, between classical architecture of the early periods (from 250 B.C. to 12th c. A.D.), the latter draws a connection with 16th-18th century architecture of the Kandyan period (Bandaranayake, 1974: 204).

[128] New buildings were added to the existing complex to create a courtyard around the central shrine. Platforms and staircases now used by pilgrims were also added (Robson, 2004: 44).

[129] Arguably, the most sacred and venerated shrine in the island.

[130] built by the British in 1876, as an extension to the existing structure.

[131] *"Except for the 14th century Gadaladeniya, Lankatillake, and the 12th century stone masonry Siva shrines at Polonnaruwa, all the extant roofed edifices [in the island] belong in the post 17th century period. The immense amount of classical period buildings were therefore unable in their entirely to serve as a source for inspiring the new architects, until historians set about interrupting the data they represented"*.

Remedying this misconception as being indigenous, Bandaranayake (1974: 189-202) elaborates on the type known as *Gedige* to which the above examples belong to. They all hail from early brick tower temples of India; both Buddhist and Brahmical.

[132] As the designer remarks, *"[due] to the proximity to Kandy it became natural that any building in her neighbourhood should reflect something of the well marked features of the third period of Sinhalese design"* (in Jayewardene, 1984: 114).

Traditional site planning principals were accompanied by architectural principles that were applied to individual buildings. From constituents of form such as courtyards, the double pitched tile roofs, raised platforms and detailing such as stone pillars were borrowed from tradition. Especially, intricate detailing on finials, gargoyles, jambs, architraves, urns, moonstones (stepping stones) and guard stones were directly aped and reproduced from classical examples as embellishment. Jayewardene (1984: 115) believes that the picturesque site layout and landscaping of the complex is marred by the ponderous forms of the buildings and applied ornamentations. She attributes this failure to apparent misconception among scholars at the time on the nature of multiple character of the island's architecture tradition.

[133] on the instructions of the prime minister at the time, Sir John Kotalawela.

[134] *"We ourselves believe, that in its national renaissance, Ceylon is inclined to look back too much and to look forward too little"* (Times of Ceylon, 1949 in Jayewardene, 1984: 111).

[135] State monopoly assured the suppression of entrepreneurship in the ideological realm just as in the market place.

[136] As in India, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan etc.

[137] They were Oliver Weerasinghe, T. N. Wynne-Jones , Herbert E. Gonsal, G. B. Altham, H. J. Billimoria , Ronald de Kretser , S. A. David , Justin Samarasekera , Visva Selveratnam , O.S. Candaval , P. N. Wijesinghe , Wilson Peiris, W. B. Claesen, Neville Gunaratne, J. C. Nilgiria, A. Panditharatne and S. H. Peiris.

Wynne-Jones, Altham, de Kretser, David and Claesen were non-Ceylonese in origin (slia.lk, 2011). While the former two were attached to the PWD, the latter was a British architect who practised alone (Jayewardene, 1984).

[138] Arguably, it was the faction of architects to qualify after 1955 that were mostly conversant with the Tropical Modernist idiom.

[139] They were Shirley d' Alvis, Minnette de Silva, Roland Silva, Valentine Gunasekara, Geoffrey Bawa, Thurairaja, Shelton Wijeyratne, Lala Aditya, Nihal Amarasinghe, Christopher de Saram, Yvette Kahavita, K. R. S. Pieris, Pani Tennakoon etc.

There were many Ceylonese studying at the *AA*. Minnette de Silva was there from 1945 to 47. Roland Silva and Valentine Gunasekara both joined together. A year later, they were joined by Geoffrey Bawa and Wijeyratne. Lala Aditya, Nihal Amarasinghe, Chris de Saram and Yvette Kahavita were several years junior (Pieris, 2007: 19).

[140] They also designed a house for a Ranjith Fernando in Colombo.

[141] Robson in his 2004 and 2007 publications that take up the works by Bawa and his accomplices, allude to this classification.

[142] For instance, from G1, Gonsal (along with Samarasekara) is particularly well-known for his involvement in the formation of the SLIA than for his architecture. From G2, Roland Silva for example, turned his attention towards the archaeological field and later became the Director General of Archaeology rather than dwelling on architectural practice.

[143] Geoffrey Bawa's mother.

[144] He was a prominent member of the 43rd Group, who was trained as an architect in the U.K. (Jayewardene, 1984: 27-30). Then he returned in 1938 to set up practice in Ceylon for a few years (Hollamby, 1962).

[145] He described the building styles of the period as follows. They ranged from,

*"[…] straight classic, through a variety of harmonious blends of east and west, to the peculiarly jazzy zigzag of the go ahead jery buildings, attempted reveals of Sinhalese forms which fail glaringly either to carry out any native tradition or to lay the foundations of a new contemporary tradition, because they are not based upon any serious and consistent ideas, weather structures, aesthetic or social, but are merely an arbitrary juggling with forms and fashions"* (Boyd, 1947).

[146] As Boyd (1947) expressed in his enquiry into Lankan built traditions,

*"[…] the aesthetic values of this tradition points, by contrast with the bulk of more expensive but unsuitable and aesthetically insignificant architecture currant in Ceylon, to the spirit in which the new materials and potentialities which modern civilization have necessarily introduced, could (given a social opportunity) be used to develop an architecture that would be both genuinely modern and genuinely of the country"* (in Jayewardene, 1984: 65)*.*

[147] The dilemma that confronted Boyd (1947) betrays the contradictory character of the conflict encountered by designers trained in conditions far-removed to that of the country in which they chose to work. The below statement suggests why he decided to stick with modernism irrespective of his sympathy to tradition.

*"In the revival of architecture nothing less than a revival of the entire national and cultural life is involved. But weather this is possible in conditions of colonial independence, and if not, on what economic and political changes it depends, are outside the scope of this paper"* (Boyd in Jayewardene, 1984: 66).

[148] Houses designed in Kandy and Colombo by him were the *"only links between the modernism of pre and post independent architecture"* in Ceylon. In Jayewardene's (1984: 102) view of Boyd's buildings, although *"[…] he sought to provide answers to local conditions using the spatial freedom of modern planning concepts and materials, the resulting aesthetic is one acutely alien to Sri Lankan aesthetic traditions"*.

These houses articulated unequivocally, a modern appearance, arising out of their facilitation of the modern Western life-style. Generous use of R.C.C. columns, flat roofs and balconies aided to achieve the desired language.

[149] A few houses in Colombo in the modern idiom could be attributed to him. In terms of the extra-domestic realm, only the Liberty Cinema in Colombo is noteworthy (Sri Lanka Institute of Architects, 2011).

[150] Selvaratnam's own house in Colombo is a good example of this style (Sri Lanka Institute of architects, 2011: 52-53). In Gunasekara's (2011) view, their latter domestic projects even fell in the fringes of the so-called 'American' style.

A noteworthy collaboration by Selvaratnam and Monk in the extra-domestic realm is the Park Road Apartments in Colombo (Pieris, 2007; 52). Selvaratnam can further boast of the *Hunas* Falls hotel in *Elkaduwa* near *Matale*, Head Office for Shaw Wallace & Fied in Colombo and the Maisonettes designed in collaboration with Perera (Jayewardene, 1984: 106, 177). The only commendable project by Monk on the other hand, is the carillonic bell tower at *Borella* all saints Church (Sri Lanka Institute of architects, 2011).

[151] The Achitecture/Engineering building.

[152] His masterpieces are the *Bandaranaike Samadhi* at *Horagolla*, the Archives building at Reid Avenue and the Hultsdorf Supreme Court complex (Tennakoon, 2008). He also completed many administrative buildings on behalf of the PWD ([a]rchitectonics; The Architectural Blog with a Sri Lankan Touch).

His own house in Colombo was a ground-breaking modern design, which captivated many new architects for its minimalist quality, material honesty and the environmentally friendliness that converged with the notion of 'living with nature' (Rajakaruna, in slia.lk, 2011).

[153] Nihal Amarasinghe for sometime worked for Geoffrey Bawa (Robson, 2004: 111-112).

[154] in association with Elmo de Silva.

[155] Strangely, Abeywardene (a.k.a Abaya) does not feature in any of the lists and publications produced by Pieris (2007), Jayewardene (1984) or the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects (2011). However, Gunasekara (2012) confirms that Abeywardene's works were published in newspapers at the time.

[156] She in fact, became the first Asian Woman architect to achieve the RIBA qualification (Pieris, 2007: 8).

[157] Day to day events such as Buddhist ceremonies at home etc. came under her interest.

[158] In de Saram's words,

> *"Minette actually took the vernacular apart and tried to put it together again. She had been initiated into it through her political upbringing and social life. Work in Mahila samiti's etc. She never played the Wallawwe Hamuduruvo (lady of the manor) She could relate at all social levels because she came from a line of Ayurvedic practitioners. She was not just a 'woman architect' she was a trail-blazer"* (in Pieris, 2007: 8).

[159] Arguably, stronger than that of foreigners such as Boyd's.

[160] Firstly, she was a fervent follower of Coomaraswamy. Secondly, in her interview with Jayewardene (in Jayewardene, 1984: 72), she remarked that her grand uncle Anreas Nell – a prominent Burgher in British period politics and socio-cultural movements and antiquarian – was responsible for her appreciation of the historical sites of the island.

[161] Jayewardene is severely critical towards her approach of bracketing to intuition, the century-old architectural concepts, procedures and details developed by many masters.

[162] According to her autobiography, the only projects of larger scale she received were the *Senanayaka* flats in Colombo and Kandyan Arts Centre in Kandy.

It is believed that her flamboyance and snobbishness, as attested by (Robson, 2004: 51) and Maurice Perera (2010), repelled potential clients and paved to conflicts with the existing.

[163] Plesner who came to Ceylon in 1958 on Minnette's request, worked with her in Kandy practice for a brief spell until he joined Geoffrey Bawa's Colombo practice the following year (Robson, 2004: 50-60).

[164] a local artist with an inherent liking towards Lankan arts and architectures.

[165] Robson (2004: 55) states that although Bawa did not really engage in the kind of study Plesner and Sansoni were occupied in, he participated in the sidelines. Laki Senanayake and Ismeth Raheem also accompanied them in these trips. Sansoni sketched these buildings, and in collaboration with Senanayake and Lewcock, in 2002, produced *The Architecture of an Island: The Living Heritage of Sri Lanka.*

Jayewardene (1984: 75) reveals that although Bawa rarely accompanied the team, Plesner recalls that many evenings were spent in what he calls 'stimulating discussions' with Bawa on information gathered in the field.

An interview by the researcher with Mr. Maurice Perera (2010) – a long-time close friend of Plesner – revealed an anecdote. When the Bawa and Plesner were travelling together, it just occurred to Plesner who was contemplating in the passenger seat of the car, just as he saw a straw thatched hut, that the leaking roof has been a dilemma to Lankan architecture. That's when they decided to use the same roof form, with different materials.

[166] *"The few buildings that remain from this time are remarkably sophisticated architecturally. Although few in number they show a clear tradition and a well-developed technique of wood construction"* (Plesner in Jayewardene, 1984: 73).

[167] for example, the Shell Company Bungalow in Anuradhapura (1961).

[168] Selections of this work were published in the national newspaper Daily Mirror (1961-62) and also in Danish in 1963 (Plesner, 1965).

[169] Owing to this practice, it is practically impossible to ascertain who designed what?

As they agreed on Plesner's departure in 1967, the projects are attributed to each architect in the line of most commitment (Robson, 2004: 57).

[170] This act is disavowed by certain scholars (i.e. Pieris, 2007: 7) on modern 'secular' grounds. However, deliberately, they undermine the logical choice made by the governing elite and more importantly, the legitimate historic right of the majority to portray their cultural dominance. They do not direct the same reproach at modern Western multicultural states, where cultural and political hegemony of the majority is continued; at times, even without historical legitimacy.

If what goes on in the ex-colonies is viewed as fundamentalism (ethnic and religious) as such authors claim, the roles of certain Western multicultural states such as the US that explicitly takes actions to safeguard its cultural and political hegemony could be questioned.

The United States recently amended its constitution to form English language as the national language in the dawn of a conceived threat by increasing numbers of Spanish-speakers. The majority populations of both the United States and Australia are white-settlers who have overtaken the indigenous populations in numbers.

[171] 'Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park' was initiated in 1971 by Mrs. Suharto and 'Nayong Pilipino' in 1972 by Imelda Marcos.

[172] de Saram's repute arises mainly for his academic contribution at the University of Moratuwa.

[173] This too will be clarified in the same chapter.

[174] An infiltration of American culture, namely 'Americanization', had already perpetuated in Europe during WWII, owing to its indispensible part in it (Andrew Marr in DocumentaryStream, 2011; Gordon, 2009).

[175] Widyalankara (2011) believed this was the most rigorous medium of influence in Sri Lanka.

[176] the elder brother of Geoffrey Bawa.

[177]This was an extract from an article Bewis Bawa (1985: 42-43, 62-64) wrote of the 1980s Colombo's architecture for a magazine targeting largely, the elite. As he further adds, *"The houses of today springing up faster than mushrooms in one's back yard (which is all one has for anything to spring up in) it makes one wonder whether architecture is overtaking modern art… but our people after independence want to be independent; so prefer to buy dozens of magazines, cut out dozens of pictures of buildings that take their fancy take bits and pieces out of each, stick them together – and there's a house. Then a friend comes along when it is half built and says: 'but why not have the roof like this, so a hurried alteration is made …"*

[178] Ceylon from the time immemorial has been a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country.  The factor of caste complicates furthermore, these cultural differentiations.

[179] The 'villa' may be influenced by the Italian villas. It could be stated that the style is particularly preferred by the Sri Lankans to have worked in Italy.  Moreover, Dayaratne (2010: 396) suggests that ones to have come back from the Middle East, have a tendency to build using Arabic styles, where the arch is pervasive.

[180] Laymen's perspectives that they were, these styles should not be taken seriously, but to manifest the evident eclecticism of the time.

[181] Interference in Korea, unsuccessful campaign in Vietnam and the indirect involvement in the Ruso-Afghan war are all notable. Moreover, atrocities committed in Buddhist Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia may have disturbed the Sinhalese Buddhists too; prompting them to swerve their prior allure towards America.

[182] be it the WARSAW pact or NATO.

[183] from steel to cement, aluminium, pre-fab fenestrations, brass-ware and rubber flooring sheets etc.

[184] for instance, timber from countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia etc.

[185] mainly in the Commonwealth countries.

[186] The patronage was to engage in economic schemes; both corrupt and incorrupt.

[187] After all, in the modern day in age,

> "[house] is not only a technical object but a mirror that reflects people's desires synthesised with global trends, as opposed to domestic policies" (Widyalankara, 2011).

[188] It is notable that all the big names had previously worked with architects.

[189] For Weragama (1994), it was only in the 1980s that prior middle-class investments had created dividends to make a faction of it newly-rich. This class had infiltrated the political-class/governing-elite ranks.

[190] Perhaps, this was an abnormality since his connections to the then UDA director and subsequently to president *Premadasa* also have to be accounted for.

# Chapter 6  *Modus Operandi* of a Bricoleur; Geoffrey Bawa
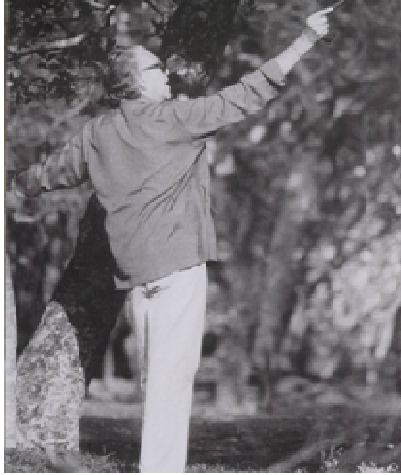


Fig. 100    Geoffrey Bawa.

As the Malaysian architect Ken Yeang (Keniger in Robson, 2004: 12) once said, *"For many of us … Geoffrey will always have a special place in our hearts and in our minds. He is our first hero and guru".* His statement sums up the Ceylonese architect's position in the 20th century architectural sphere of Asia (Fig. 100). Although Bawa over the years has been typecast as a 'romantic vernacularist', Robson (2004: 12) conceives great complexity behind 'labels' that undermined a rich career.

This chapter strives to achieve two major outcomes that are vital to comprehend the implications of his domestic architecture in Sri Lanka. Following a brief account on his life, firstly, an examination using theories of elitism will determine the elitist circumstances of his domestic patrons. If them being elite had anything to do with the success of the styles he championed would be questioned in this exercise. Secondly, through the two selected elite domestic case studies, the underlying economic and socio-cultural factors will be unearthed, as they were articulated in them.

## 6.1 Personal Life

### Being a Burgher Bourgeoisie

Geoffrey Bawa was born in 1919 to a family that represented many of Sri Lanka's ethnic strands (Robson, 2004: 15-17).[1] Mentions of his elite family circle – that belonged to the 'professional bourgeoisie' stratum – is to be found in the renowned publication by Arnold Wright (2005: 565) called *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources*.[2] Under the British colonial policy of *"divide and rule"*, his family had, with rest of the 'Burghers', paid allegiance to coloniser's aegis, and secured  privileged status as professionals; accompanied by landed-wealth (Jayewardene, 1984: 125, A. Deraniyagala, 2010).[3] As K. Jayawardena (2007) tells us, in Ceylon, the Burghers were mistrusted by both the Britishers and locals alike.[4] Consequently, their best option was to pay allegiance to the British administration, accept Anglophone values and receive the accompanying benefits; while distancing their status group from the local classes of lower calibre.[5]

Consequently, as Robson (2004) reveals, Bawa too preferred a European identity, elitist allegiance, flamboyance in life-style and especially, the desire to keep his distance from the non-elite classes, which Barbara Sansoni (in Jayewardene, 1984: 126) confirms. [6] He cultivated a pronounced upper middle-class English accent according to Jayewardene (1984: 126) and as A. Deraniyagala (2011) reveals, spoke Singhalese hesitatingly; perhaps as an exaggerated attempt to exalt his European provenance. Hailing from an affluent background helped him in many ways. First, his family wealth enabled young Bawa to shift between different houses belonging to the inner-family circle while growing up. Robson (2004: 16-17) infers that the personal connection with such houses was what triggered the initial interest in Bawa on traditional architecture. [7] The same factor secured a Western education in the 'core' and ability to embark on frequent foreign travels to remote destinations. [8] From these he developed an appreciation for diverse cultures as well as architectures and the practice he continued throughout his lifetime (Sansoni, 1986: 172-173). Being a minority Burgher in Ceylon was itself a form of transgression as Jayawardena (2009) narrates, [9] and Bawa extended this by repudiating the socially-accepted practices of his kin. For instance, his refusal to acknowledge the family institution was articulated by not marrying [10] and his 'private' personality was explained via the preference to draw a veil over early-life (Robson, 2004: 19). [11]

It could also be inferred that as a Burgher, [12] his perception would have been moulded objectively; not to interfere much with the island's cultural realm. This temperament he applied astutely in predicaments such as nationalism, with neither subjective passion nor prejudice. The most salient benefit as a privileged-Burgher was the access to governing-elite ranks of the country.

**The Architectural Embarking**

Bawa was educated originally at Cambridge, England, where he qualified as a barrister in 1945. [13] Following a brief practice stint as a barrister in Colombo, [14] he embarked on a three year world tour to Europe and North America as he was discontent with his work (Robson, 2004: 18). [15] Ceylon was slipping-off the shackles of empire and as so many of the 'people-in-between', [16] he was confronted with the dilemma of identity. His return prompts one to infer that he may have felt more contiguous to Ceylon as a Burgher, than to Europe as a European. Following his return, having decided to change career paths in 1951, he took up an apprenticeship at ER&B. [17] In 1954 he joined the Architectural Association's School of Architecture in London (*AA*), [18] where he concluded training in 1957 and returned back to ER&B (Robson, 2004: 24). [19] It was under this name that Bawa practiced until 1989, [20] and between 1990 and 2002 he worked in his own name (Robson, 2004: 186), [21] where his practice overlapped with

the island's nationalist window.  In the dawn of nationalist orientation in 1956, Bawa commenced designing as a 'Tropical Modernist' and saw a fleeting change into being a 'Regionalist' by 1970. Within the backdrop of successive nationalist governments with socialist orientations, he subsequently re-invented himself as an architect of the state. When a new capitalist-oriented nationalist government toppled the socialist-oriented contender in 1977, Bawa managed to elevate his status to the country's 'grand designer' – in Robson's (2004: 13) words.  This status he enjoyed until the mid 1990s before his withdrawal from mainstream practice owing to failing health.[22]

### *Clientele*

Since it was inferred that Bawa's domestic clients were from the governing-elite class, the point needs substantiation. This is undertaken by the table below that analyses his clients in terms of their social standing. The outcome revealed that the deduction indeed, was accurate.

## 6.2 Selected Domestic Works; Criteria

It is pertinent here to establish the criteria on which, the following projects were considered as case-studies, where only two factors are mutual to both of them. The de Silvas as well as de Soysas belonged/belong to the governing-elite/political-class in the Sri Lankan class hierarchy. Moreover, both the case-studies are within the Colombo district itself, enabling common grounds in terms of the secondary form modifiers – the climatic factors. On the other hand, there are five grounds on which, the two situations become comparative dualities.

First, it has been established elsewhere that within the design freedom the architect enjoyed, Ena de Silva personally oversaw the project and insisted strongly on reviving her eminent family traditions in the design. Secondly, her feudal ancestry and the accompanying corpus of built-traditions run back to the medieval times (roots.web, 2011a). Further, Osmund de Silva hailing from a different caste background makes it possible to conceive a duality in action between two disparate sets of family traditions.[23] This complication enables the opportunity to see how the resolution came about. Third, the project is from 1961 that is very much near to the epicentre of 1956 nationalist outburst, and fourth, lies within the initial phase of Bawa's work. Last, but not least, Ena was an ardent Buddhist, yet her upbringing had been from a cultural situation where submission with authority had been customary and hybridity in lifestyle was its expression. The case study provides an opportunity to verify this point. Chloe De Soysa too personally oversaw the design and implementation of the project, yet afforded a rather free-hand to the architect. As for her, she and her spouse both were less keen in portraying their own illustrious family histories from more recent times, hailing from a lesser stratum in the Lankan caste hierarchy (roots.web, 2011b). Their shared family background is modern and of the 19th century British period bourgeoisie, whose illustrious built-traditions do not fall back beyond the second half of that century. The de Soysa project is from 1985, from a period when post 1977 neo-liberalism was at its heights and underplayed nationalism was the strategy, lies within the concluding phase in Bawa's oeuvre. As the last point of contrast, de Soysas as Anglican Christians had been excessively westernised in lifestyle during the last century or so that could arguably be conceived as a clear submission to Western modernity with little or no traditional concessions.[24] The two projects together, cover the entire professional career of Bawa, while representing two disparate versions of Sinhalese elitist groups. Thus, the case-studies have the potential of unearthing not only the underlying political, economic and socio-cultural, but also personal agendas of two dissimilar sorts. Substantiation of the dissimilarities and peculiarities within each scenario will be enquired relying on the informal interviews as well as available sources of literature. Unlike many other clients of

Bawa's domestic projects, both Ena de Silva and Chloe de Soysa are alive and participated in the interviews.[25]

## Analysing Ena de Silva House, Colombo – 1961

### *Background Anecdote*

Ena de Silva's (*nee Aluvihare*) father was Sir Richard *Aluvihare*, a notable member of the Kandyan *Govigama* aristocracy.[26] They descend from a family line of *Disawes* and *Muhandirams* from *Matale* in the Kandyan provinces, whose documented history dates back to the 17th century. These positions indeed affirm their long-prevalence as indigenous governing-elite, even before British occupation. In 1938, at the age of sixteen, Ena created controversy by marrying Osmund de Silva of the *Karave* caste – at a time when out-of-caste marriage was uncommon practice. Osmund was her father's assistant, and he too subsequently became the Inspector General of Ceylon police (Robson, 2004: 266). The analysis of social and professional spheres – both historical and current – places the de Silvas under the 'governing-elite'.

First of all, it is pertinent to look at events leading to, and throughout, the course of the commission, as revealed by the available sources of literature.[27] In the late 1950s, after prior attempts of hiring an architect that had failed,[28] the couple hired Geoffrey Bawa who had been introduced to Ena.[29] Although she was aware of him – not as an architect, but for his flamboyance in the Colombo elite circle – she reveals how his dilettante image had initially repelled her. However, when she was acquainted, according to Robson, the prejudice evaporated and they later became best of friends. As Robson (2004: 74) elaborates, at the outset,

> "[…] the de Silvas had one foot in the past and one in the future. Ena was conscious of the Aluvihara family traditions …[30] She demanded a house that would incorporate traditional Kandyan features ... [but] also wanted a modern house […]".

According to  Geoffrey Bawa[31] (in Robson, 2004: 74), inspired by these demands, he responded instinctively to the problem of the compact site.

> "I remember talking to Ena, seeing her surrounded by all the things she liked. All she wanted was brick walls and a roof. The plan came about largely because she, and consequently I, wanted a private compound that would not be overlooked by the neighbours."

Such accounts cement Ena's desires, where Robson (2004: 74) confirms that *"Ena took an active part in the design and building process"*. This frames the dominance of

her Kandyan heritage that apparently relegated the feebler counterpart of her spouse's, and her desire to articulate it through her comparatively dominant involvement in the project. The evident backing down by Osmund in the whole process could possibly be attributed to his submission to the rigour of primordial cast-structure that was still very much alive.[32] He may have sought to reinforce his own recent upward mobility with his spouse's formidable family status. Ena in turn, was responsible for the selection and juxtaposition of a number of important elements, apart from firmly laying out the basic project parameters. It is likely that by allowing such compositions, Bawa trusted Ena's traditional and aesthetic judgements.

### Site Placement

The house is placed on a narrow corner-plot bordered by a by-road (that links with Galle road),[33] a private road and two neighbouring plots with houses (Fig. 113).[34] The 30-perch (approximately 750 Sq. m) site on Alfred Place, reputed for its palatial British period mansions, caused controversy among friends who suggested that it was too small and overpriced. By this revelation, Robson (2004: 74) alludes to the fact that by the early 1960s, Colombo's larger plots were experiencing shrinkage due to sub-divisions. The sub-divisions were intended at making plots affordable to the new immigrants to the city; the new middle-class that was a product of the post 1956 welfare policies (K. T. Silva, 2005: 108-114). When what is known as 'Abercombie's Regional Plan' of 1957 intended to create satellite towns around Colombo (uda.lk, 2011), the elites stayed put in the city.[35] Inviting a foreign specialist from the core to resolve Ceylon's burning urban issues, is suggestive of the immediate postcolonial state's mind-set. The elite retention marks the primacy of Colombo – as the 'entrepot' that linked the nation to the world – even during the formative years of nationalism (Perera, 1994: 372, 286-290). The extant nationalist fervour might not have been sufficient to dislocate the former locus of colonial power to a destination associated with pre-colonial glory. The main seats of political (and administrative), economic, cultural and epistemological arenas fixed there by the former colonists remained undeterred. As the very reasons that attracted the elite to Colombo during the British colonial period still persevered, it was a place of convenience for the de Silvas – Osmund's office (the Police Headquarters), Ena's artistic circle[36] and son Anil's school (St. Thomas's), all were located here.[37] As Matthews (1978: 88) validates, although various acts of nationalism were meant to cure the *"post-colonial identity crisis"*, ironically, legitimisation of the Sinhalese traditional elite claim to the island's political hegemony was continued.

The arrangement of de Silva house reminisces one of a generic Kandyan courtyard counterpart. It could be argued that the foregoing has been blown-up in scale, and

displaced from its original inhabitancy – a spacious court (*midula*) on a hill-country estate – into the confinement of four lanky walls in a congested contemporary urban setting. In an alternative viewpoint, it could be argued as a restoration of the same into its roots; a similar situation it was originally moulded for within the urban settings of *Anuradhapura* and *Polonnaruwa* citadels (Ashley De Vos, 1977: 42).[38]

## *Bargaining of Spaces*

Modern House Within a Manor House:

The plan is introspective and forms a pattern of linked pavilions and courtyards disposed around a large central court (*medamidula*); all contained within a limiting perimeter wall (Fig. 114, 115, 116). The net result illustrates something quite innovative; an inward-looking house on a restricted urban site in which, spaces that a modern elite lifestyle demands are all clearly defined and separated, but at the same time interconnected. Robson (2004: 74) confirms that the main elements of the house are arranged in layers of increasing privacy as they progress away from the street. The front pavilion where the office, studio, garage and a guest suite are placed, looks onto a large central courtyard occupying the heart of the plan. This is surrounded on four sides by an open loggia. Beyond the central courtyard is the main living accommodation, which is a two-storey pavilion. The living and dining areas at the ground level are detached by a staircase-tower and shrine room, with bedrooms located above. The most conspicuous aspect of the plan is its omnipresent openness and especially, the flowing of space from inside to outside, which articulates an illusion of an unbounded space (Robson, 2004: 74-75).

The ground floor employs a workspace, a living pavilion and a service tract that is positioned on the side of the complex. Two long walls define the servants' rooms and kitchens, each separated by small courtyards. The garage is placed at the service tract's intersection with the first pavilion. Special attention has been paid to conceal the aforesaid spaces from the main compound by using an almost blank wall that runs along plan's full-length. Thus, it is between this and the similar opposite wall across the central courtyard that the domain of patrons lies. Arguably, here, the shared tradition of the Kandyan manor and colonial house where utilitarian functions and servants' commodities were relegated to rear-pavilions (detached from main living pavilions) – where rear-pavilions were separated from the main ones by out-houses surrounding courtyards – was deliberately continued. However, when their relegation in the traditional cases was gradual – conceivable as a deliberate playing-down – here, a complete disregard for their existence is evident via a complete shutting-down. The motive would have been perhaps, the wish of both the architect and client – as elites

– to perpetuate the traditional distance between them and their working-class aides, in a peculiar context where upward social mobility was bourgeoning. Their anxiety would have transferred a prior gradual play-down into an impulsive shut-down. In this manner, the sense of awareness of side-by-side co-existence with a culturally-intolerable underclass was obscured.

The open confinements of the living and dining spaces – especially, conceivable as loose and free-flowing spaces – are corresponding to the spatial arrangement of the generic Kandyan house form. This general openness is the key to envisaging new possibilities for the scheme, as the quality has been traditionally used in past examples of architecture. The series of passages and loggia that makeup an internal street is separated, yet conjoined, by/with the habitable spaces. This has been achieved by having the same material (i.e. terracotta clay tiles) for pavings, yet by using dissimilar patterns for different spaces as modernists such as Richard Neutra prior-attempted in his houses (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 97-118) (Fig. 104,105, 110). If conceived as an approach, modern spaces have been plugged-into the open loggia of an enlarged generic Kandyan plan. In comparison, the space allocations for specific functions – quintessentially a modern practice pervasive in the colonial-period dwellings – is evident in the out-of-sight confinements of the front pavilion and upper floor of the rear pavilion. Alternatively, the secluded placement of habitable rooms on the upper floor, and the hierarchical configuration of the house into five interconnected zones may also draw certain contiguity with traditional Hindu domestic planning evident in Northern part of the island or the Southern sub-continent (Lewcock et al., 2002: 53-70). It is a possibility that the Southern Indian ancestors of Kandyan feudalists introduced this practice to medieval Lanka that in turn, is an unexplored area.

Veiled Colonial Content:

The house originally contained a front-facing loggia, which was formed by a raw of bulky timber columns supporting a roof structure, resembling the front porch of the quintessential Dutch house (Fig. 116).[39] Along with this structure, the narrow entrance hall sandwiched between the two habitable rooms of the front pavilion (that leads to a loggia surrounding the central courtyard) was somewhat suggestive of a Dutch (and early-British) period house plan. However, the point to consider is that this arrangement too had been veiled, not to interfere with the interior's 'Kandyan courtyard house' image that dominated the designer's perception. The elimination of the front loggia (Fig. 117), perhaps removed the last concession added to the Sinhalese noble house during the colonial encounter, to receive house visitors from lower social echelons [the nobles traditionally did not admit anyone from lower social

castes beyond the *welimidula* (sand court) of their houses]. Although this alternation was seemingly a regressive step that improved the house's resemblance with the archetypal Kandyan manor, the removal of such a hierarchical spatial symbol in favour of a sitting room dedicated to receive visitors in the heart of its plan, was a stride forward at a time of hitherto unforeseen social mobility.[40] The caste would not have mattered anymore to the family, but the social class. This decision of removal indeed transformed the first impression from a picturesque low-country façade to an austere Kandyan one. Perhaps, later it would have occurred to the designer the contradiction of the inside and outside aesthetics that in turn, was remedied.

The tower-like inner white wall of the front pavilion with its plinth-like horizontal recess (about two feet above ground), reminisces of a traditional tower-wall (*Tappa Bamma*) usually found around the outer-peripheries of traditional Kandyan period houses. Thus, in this case, the peripheral wall of the manor house had been turned inside out. It is this wall, only broken intermittently by a few fenestrations and the entrance passage, is what veiled the front-facing loggia already-mentioned. The shutting-out of the colonial content may be suggestive of the disenchantment towards its rigidity by the architect, where omnipresent nationalism would have possibly rendered the colonial ensemble out of fashion.

Play of Symmetry & Surprises:

The plan on paper suggests of a certain symmetry to the composition, if the less-important service tract is to be ignored. The plan is meant to be read that way. If an orthogonal axis is imagined across the plan, it coincides with the longitudinal wall that separates the guestroom and studio of the front pavilion, and the centre wall that divides the living and dining of the rear pavilion. In other words, a centre wall has been broken by the front and rear loggia and the central courtyard. Further, a series of longitudinal wall arrangements congruent both in front and rear pavilions point to a certain symmetry, which in turn, is an extension to the basic symmetry of the composition.[41] However, this basic symmetry is then marred by manipulation of spaces. For example, the narrow central (rectangular) space that could easily have become the entrance passage has been converted into the guest bedroom, whereas the passage itself has been pushed to the right side, to be sandwiched between the former space and an office room. As Robson (2004: 75) reveals, the axis defined by the entrance passage fell neither at the centre of the courtyard, nor on the line of the service tract loggia. Instead, it fell on an in-between point that presented a direct view across the courtyard of the wall of the dining room, and perhaps, a glimpse beyond, through its fenestrations into the rear light-well. The open sitting room next-door, is kept hidden from visitor's immediate vision. As for Robson, Bawa took great delight in

setting up a system of formal axes and then deliberately knocking them out of kilter that reminds him of Buddhist monastic plans from the classical periods.

Dining room light-well is indeed the source of resilient light – the first striking glimpse in the internalized horizon – for the visitor entering the dark and narrow entranceway. From near pitch-darkness of the passage, it is through the relatively lit-up front loggia (Fig. 103), the filtered light of the central court (from above through its lush green canopy), and deep back logia that is on the brink of darkness (Fig. 106), that the patches of white light on the far-end wall is revealed (Fig. 104). This indeed is a pleasant visual layering of space. Similarly, as one ascends down the dark passage and gets ever-closer to the edge of the front loggia, his/her vision begins to extend both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally he/she starts to grasp that there is a new space – the living room open on two sides – that flows beyond freely to terminate with a better flurry of light at its rear light-well. Thus, the orthogonal vision has now expanded diagonally. Similarly, he/she begins to see vertically, through the heavy canopy of the *plumeria* tree, glimpses of rear pavilion's up-stair façade of white, and ceiling-less underside of the overhanging tiled roof. From a given edge of the courtyard loggia, the eye is also made to travel over the tiled roofs to stop focused on the lofty peripheral walls raised above them. The equidistantly arranged arched openings with trellis coverings on these white walls – with half-round clay roof tiles placed on in a raw – tricks the mind to believe that there is an adjoining parallel wing to the house; beyond (Fig. 107).

This visual layering is then complimented by a spatial layering. The spatial layering is relinquished through a carefully-orchestrated process of entry from the road, which in turn, is made into a journey of visual delights; made plausible through a series of promenades with scenography. It was mentioned before that the house originally contained a front-facing loggia. Behind this lied a high wall, broken only by openings for the main entrance and carport, which defined a long garden-court shaded by *Plumeria* trees (in front of the first pavilion), which served as a buffer-zone amidst the house and the accesses road. This also doubled as a threshold to be crossed as one entered the murky walled confinements of the house from the spacious and radiantly sun lit volume outside. The front loggia was first encountered obliquely as a part of the perspective from the street and gradually revealed the main entrance on the front wall. One solid wooden door opened to reveal another, across the transversely placed courtyards, then opening into the entrance passage (Fig. 102). Upon reaching the logia at the end of the passage, one is expected to bypass the courtyard, and engage in a circumbulatory advance from either side to arrive at the rear loggia, then the living and dining, and beyond. The main focal point of the design is arguably the central courtyard. However, the reward for one who embarks on the journey is the

visual delight, created by light, where a flurry of it, right at the end of the perceptible space – coming from the rear light-well – forms the climax.

The astonishment does not end there. Each space has its own hidden surprise; each room (on the ground floor) its courtyard, and courtyards, their very own focal points – miniature shrines and spaces in congruence with Zen gardens. Thus, the real depth of the house has been extended both visually and physically; where the visitor's eye travels great lengths and body made to cover an exaggerated distance. In another view point, the outside street has been transversely extended into the house and the domestic experience has been interwoven with that of thoroughfare. The foregoing spatial and visual qualities converge and make the house psychologically elastic. In simpler terms, through controlled expansion of views and distances, one feels as though the house is bigger than it really is, and there are more spaces than there really are. This transcends the domestic quality of the house into one of an ancient classical palace of Lanka, where a series of separate pavilions were usually created, and then linked with covered passages to make courtyards in-between (A. Perera, 1991: 24) (Fig. 101). Metaphorically, for the feudal client, the architect had thus conceived a palace, perhaps alluding to their connection with the institution during their medieval heydays at the time of Sinhalese Kings.
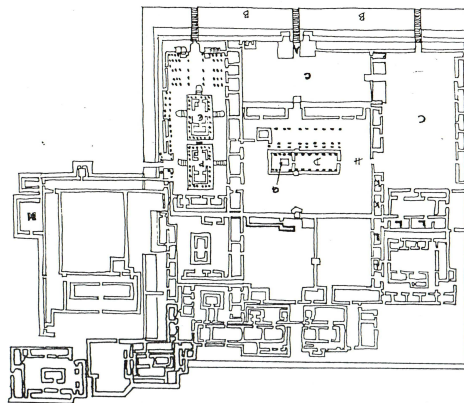


Fig. 101
Ground Floor Plan of *Parakramabahu* Palace, *Polonnaruwa.*

On the other hand, one might ask, why was symmetry made evident? Symmetry in architecture traditionally – be it modern or pre-modern, and irrespective of time and location – embodies dominance. Similarly, symmetrical courtyard representations in traditional Buddhist culture suggest microcosmic representations of the cosmos (Nimal de Silva, 1996: 13-29; Munasinghe, 1998: 71-73). This organization for centuries has been represented in the religious (i.e. monasteries) and secular (i.e. palaces and elite/sub-elite houses) buildings of the Sinhalese. Hence, by incorporating symmetry into the equation, the architect has arguably envisioned traditional continuity of the Sinhalese social structure, as well as symbolic propensities that through decree, served the higher stratums. The forms of Lankan vernacular of the masses were neither symmetrical nor symbolic.  Then, why was it denied? The best bet would be that the architect desired to manifest in an implicit manner, the precariousness of his

client's (particularly Ena's) social stratum, in a democratic political context that opted for social equity. Hence, denied symmetry is debatably a challenged domination; a tussle between two opposed attitudes.



Fig. 102



Fig. 103



Fig. 104



Fig. 105

Osmund and Ena de Silva House.

Fig. 102     Visual layering seen from the near pitch darkness of the entrance passage.
Fig. 103     The diagonal expansion of the horizontal vision through the loggia and the central courtyard.
Fig. 104     View from the dining space; the flurry of light reflected from the rough white wall framing the rear light well.
Fig. 105     Looking back from the modern rear pavilion towards the traditional section of the house.

### *Borrowed Rudiments*

Features:

The composition has borrowed excessively from the past, and thus, it is pertinent to establish what came from where and what they possibly meant. Firstly, in terms of form constituents, the most striking are the central courtyard, its surrounding loggia/verandas, the overhanging roofs and minimal space divisions that could all be attributed to the traditional Kandyan elite dwelling incorporating grand design tradition. Although the former three are also pervasive in colonial period dwellings, their configurations here are inclined more towards the Kandyan prototype. In this light, the already-discussed colonial-type colonnaded façade cannot be ignored. Even the front pavilion too articulates somewhat a colonial rationalist spatial arrangement. Arguably, the removal of the former possibly pushed the latter into oblivion. In comparison to the discussed traits, the overpowering presence of tiled roofs (of simple gables) and their deep overhangs however, bear resemblance to both traditions.

All rooms of the house are naturally ventilated from at least two sides, as Ena specifically insisted on a house without air-conditioning (Robson, 2004: 74). It is also notable that no glass has been used for specially designed fenestrations that serenade light (Fig. 108). The projecting bay windows boxed-out with diagonal timber lattice and raised ventilating ridges formed by extended 'crossover' rafters somewhat manifest a Tropical-Modernist influence that Bawa may have acquired at the *AA* (Fig. 107). All windows – except for boxed bays upstairs – consist of openable louvered shutters, reminiscent to the ones of Dutch/British colonial dwellings. Windows arranged on opposite walls of rooms to face either the loggias or courtyards, facilitate much-needed cross-ventilation. Owing to this arrangement, coupled with multiple courtyards subsumed by shady vegetation and the blank facades that establish an introvert quality, the house works well in terms of thermal comfort in its congested context.

The windows have been contrasted by the two main doors on either side of the entrance passage that are believed to have been rescued from a Hindu temple (Robson, 2004: 75), perhaps somewhere in the Northern quadrant of the island. Those, along with polished round satinwood pillars (with stone heads and bases) placed on the circumference of the central court, add a hint of Hindu architectural influence to the composition. This makes sense in the light that Kandyan feudal lifestyle was a hybrid one that embodied both Buddhist and Hindu influences; prompted by the Dravidian origins of most such families and cultural connections of Kandy with South India (Madugalle, 2005: 11-17). When such influences were felt in the *Devalas* (places of worship found within the confines of Buddhist temples,

dedicated to deities who are in fact, mostly South Indian importations) for the feudalist ranks in-charge of their maintenance (as patrons), borrowing of grand design traditional elements from such edifices would have come naturally.[42] It has already been discussed how such high-cultural borrowings work and what their symbolic bents are.[43] Although the borrowed elements in this case, most probably came from a Hindu *Kovil* (Temple of Tamil Hindus), aesthetically, some compatibility would have been envisaged. When the domestic architecture of the Kandyan feudalists had always refrained from such direct Hindu representations, drawing of the foregoing connection by Bawa alludes to the true origins of a group [as revealed by S. Deraniyagala (2010)] that in fact, claims the heart of the traditional Sinhalese Buddhist polity. Perhaps, the architect sought to recap a forgotten episode of Lankan history.
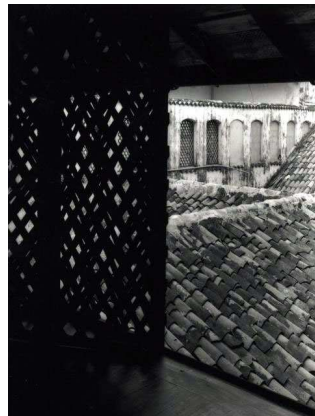


| Fig. 106 | Fig. 107 | Fig. 108 |



| Fig. 109 | Fig. 110 | Fig. 111 |

Osmund and Ena de Silva House.

Fig. 106    Veranda facing the internal courtyard.
Fig. 107    View of the clay tiled roof through the upper floor window.
Fig. 108    Central courtyard through a room on the ground floor.
Fig. 109    Rescued stone instrument from the medieval period as an adornment.
Fig. 110    Matt finished terra cotta on the veranda floor, different from the pattern on the living room floor.
Fig. 111    Looking into a veranda through a half-open louvered window on the ground floor.

Fig. 112

Osmund and Ena de Silva House.

Fig. 112    Looking back at the dining space and courtyard.

### Associations and Qualities

Down Memory Lane:

The de Silva house is the perfect epitome for historical associations and romanticism of the glorious past. As once affirmed, in the house, Kandyan quality hinders the colonial. Harking back to Kandyan past relinquishes the cultural privileges of a social stratum that once came from decree, while colonial associations convey how the same party subsequently hybridized, having to emulate/mimic modern lifestyle practices of their new masters – the British colonists.[44]

First, it is pertinent to take up the most striking feature of the house, the central courtyard. Its *Plumeria* and mango trees were consciously selected mature, with parasitic runners growing on the barks, which were then placed on the courtyard, to be surrounded by a ground covered of river stones and pebbles; both small and large. Here and there, scrubs of grass – largely found in the highlands – and small bushes spring up through the stones and pebbles (Fig. 103). This is arguably, a painstaking representation of the imagery of a perennial river-shore in the Kandyan highlands, lined with archaic trees of shade, where young Kandyan children and adolescents bathe playfully. This may well have been a distant childhood memory of Ena, reproduced.

The grinding stones[45] and the empty stone containers (Fig. 109), placed in the central courtyard convey the notion that the domestic aides of the household have all retired

to their solitude elsewhere, after a hard day's chores serving their overlords. [46] Solitude elsewhere is arranged indeed, in the form of a relegated service-tract. The placement of these instruments in the central court attributes multiple meanings to the space. Strengthening yet another foregoing childhood association, the court's vitality as a communal and working space where underlings in a feudal manor laboured, is revived. Thus, it was one of the spaces where the feudal authority directed at the serfs was dramatically acted-out. One who is there could actually visualise Ena standing at the edge of the loggia and instructing her domestic aides to carry out garden chores, just as her mother and grandmother before her, would have directed household chores of the manor in a similar fashion.[47] In this particular context, the representational ensemble conveys to its visitors, the command feudalists once yielded over lesser peoples who served them in abundance, with great loyalty. Although the above representation is an exaggeration, feudalist families at the outset of independence were still in a position to exploit their prior traditional privileges (K. T. Silva, 2005: 121).

Assemblages of Status:

Rescued furniture pieces of eclectic value and secular day-to-day items obtained from the Kandyan and colonial eras enhance the rhetorical sense of the house (Fig. 104, 105, 111). Colonial furniture pieces, benches, ornamental cupboards, beds, working tables, dining table and stools in popular Dutch/British period styles adorn the interior. In terms of accessories, among period pieces such as candle holders, brazen and clay pots, glass chimneys etc. that dominate, solitary modern pieces are included, like the rusty conical light fittings dangling from the ceiling onto table tops (Fig. 112). The period pieces give the feel of the colonial elegance familiar to the low-country bourgeoisie and also feudalists later on. Perhaps, this was the only discount given to Osmund, in terms of historical familiarity of his own traditional domestic background. The modern pieces, mostly hidden away in private areas, unlike the period pieces that are 'out there' to be seen, hint at the willingness of patrons to embrace the fashions and luxuries that the modern world had to offer, and further, their up-to-datedness on new vogues; certainly a hybrid gesture. However, in overall, the spacious house is uncluttered with furniture; at least in the foremost habitable spaces. Apparently, the loose and free-flowing spaces have made furniture placements ambiguous. The result is a similar feel to the generic Kandyan dwelling and its furniture-less open spaces as Kandyans only used a handful of furniture items (Wijetunge, 2011b: 30-31). Thus, such associations and sensibilities that enable of a harking back to a romantic past is explained by Rykwert (1982: 31).

> *"Memory is to a person what history is to a group. As memory conditions perception and is in turn modified by it, so the history of design and of architecture contains everything that has been designed or built and is continually modified by new work [Hence,] there is no humanity without memory and there is no architecture without historic reference".*

Moreover, the house has also become the venue for other experimentations. Its miniature shrines and Zen-like spaces are conceivable as trials, where the compatibility of two archaic Asiatic landscape traditions, not disparate in origin and allegorical to one another, have been overlapped. These applications suggest that the designer and client both were enlightened about such aspects from outside of Ceylon.


### *Veiled Agendas*

It could be proposed that a certain synthesis had been devised by resolving disparate modern and traditional functions, as a means to equip the house for a postcolonial hybrid elite life-style. The retrieval of once-subverted Kandyan vernacular and grand design traditions and also colonial, are pervasive in the architecture of the edifice. A stroll along would indeed impart on one a sense of solitude, mustering a much-needed break with hustle and bustle of the outside surrounding. The introvert quality that once worked so well in the rural Kandyan houses – generally surrounded by lush green environments – had suddenly become applicable to the rapidly modernizing Colombo. The city by independence was already seeing development as a modern city with ubiquitous concrete blocks; despite being addressed as a 'primate city' in comparison to its contemporary Western counterparts (Perera, 1994: 282). On the other hand, it could also be suggested that the overemphasis on Kandyan built traditions was perhaps, conceived as a means to recuperate Ena's socially-dented Kandyan *Govigama* aristocratic identity. Alternatively, both the client and architect who felt the solidarity of their shared elitisms – although of two dissimilar kinds – might have been seeking to create a romantic niche in the rapidly urbanizing city, in a country of fleeting social changes.

Chronologically-arranged photographs showing genealogies as well as traditional and colonial liaisons that is symptomatic to feudal households are lacking here. The transgression caused to their respective family traditions by the house's patrons would have perchance excluded this element of status articulation and perpetuation. Similarly, photographs suggestive of the family's contemporary epistemological superiority and governing-elite claims have also gone missing. However, the former is somewhat compensated by the pervasive bookshelves throughout the house – in the sitting room, office room, bedrooms etc., as an indirect representation (Fig. 112). The framed abstract artworks on the other hand, demonstrate the good and up-to-date taste of the family with contemporary core-world trends (Fig. 106). Disappeared along

with the family portraits, the symbols of faith; suggesting the radical secular stance adopted by elite cohorts of island's dominant culture (i.e. Sinhalese Buddhist). The shrine room perches hidden in a rear-courtyard, only to be accessed from the outside. Just as the servants were hidden, the religious insignia too suffered the same fate. Unlike their Christian Sinhalese compatriots, the Buddhist elites did not feel threatened by pro-Sinhala (linguistic) and pro-Buddhist (religious) cultural ideology the contemporary political nationalism opted for in aim of political gains (Matthews, 1978: 92). Henceforth, the 'Buddhist household' image was made redundant. Perhaps, Ena being the radical artist and Bawa being the atheist that he was [as S. Jayatillaka (2010) alludes to], may have together, repudiated the foregoing practice as a cliché. Consequently, the atmosphere in the house is made free of the foregoing symbolic propensities, and concentrates largely on the architecture and dwelling equipment.


### Homage to the Tectonics

Improvisations:

As Perera (1994: 369) claims, the first two decades after independence, national economy took an upturn as the world commodity prices increased.[48] Having being labelled as a *"backward"* country by the World Bank,[49] catching up with the West by achieving *"economic development"* became the primary objective of the postcolonial leaders from the 1950s (Perera (1994: 361). As a result, the state intervened by curtailing private capital;[50] analogous to the highly-administrative systems in the socialist states (at least the poorer ones). Ceylon too embarked on the journey towards economic development in a context where the state was the most dominant actor in the process. The first attempts were made with the so-called 'ten-year plan' of 1959 with glaring specificity, and Ceylon rather preferred bi-lateral trade against free-trade.[51] Institutionalizing bi-lateral trade, the SLFP-led consecutive governments imposed harsh import restrictions in 1961 that lasted up to 1977 (Perera, 1994: 365).[52] As many Third World countries, Ceylon too embarked on the economic policy of 'import substitution' (Karunadasa, 1999: 56).[53]

This particular project was carried out during the formative years of austerity measures, before such restrictions were subsequently made severe after 1971 (Matthews, 1978: 84-85). At the time, glass and steel were expensive and modern fittings almost impossible to obtain, leaving the architect without a choice but to employ locally-produced materials. However, such restrictions encouraged Bawa to study how materials had been used traditionally, inspiring him to be innovative. Architectural features such as polished satinwood columns, as another improvisation on Bawa's part, crystallises this statement, and contributes to the notion of being true

to materials. He also successfully persuaded local craftsmen to cooperate by reproducing (arguably pirating) standard designs of contemporary furniture such as the sofas and accessories such as light fittings (Robson, 2004: 75). As another innovation, instead of widely-used PVC or asbestos gutters, Bawa allowed rain water from the roof to cascade down freely and finished the grounds of courtyards in a combination of cobbles and pebbles. Consequently, in terms of materiality, the generally localized palette added an overtly vernacular feel to the house.

White-wash Effect:

The walls are cement plastered and finished in white, while the fenestration surfaces are contrasted with it; either in their dark and rusty, or white and smooth qualities. According to Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993: 39), the 'whitewash effect' was intended to create simultaneity of light and shade on a façade, by the architect and builder who anticipated the work of the elements. In their words,

> *"The contrast between light and dark on building surface provides it with shadows permanently embedded within its fabric. The contrast between light and dark is also an opposition between distinct and indefinite, and a tension between actual and virtual […] an antithesis between spirit and matter, manifested in 'live' and 'dead' stone".*

Although examples are largely adduced from the European context, the idea is equally palatable for the traditional Asiatic situation too, where such symbolic propensities were considered. If attention is paid to the question that should dirt, filth, grime and stains be removed owing to their infectious quality, sets up the possibility of a cognation. As the duo sum this, *"[removal] will be seen as necessary as long as all stains are seen as signs of deformation of an intended pure state"* (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 103).

Hence, using white stucco finishes for the de Silva house by Bawa may have had an underlying agenda signifying renewal – every time the process of whitewashing was implemented, it reminded of a physical renewal to the family, as well as the parties involved or parties observing. On one hand, the function of constant maintenance against nature's onslaught would have entailed the formidable economic affluence of the governing-elite that the de Silvas were. On the other, it was a symbolic restitution of the country's archaic caste structure, at a time when the feudalists had envisaged a foreseeable threat. This meaning is derived by the fact that only the governing-elite of medieval Lanka were eligible to whitewash their houses. Seemingly, the white background finish had yet another role, as it was used successfully by Lloyd Wright who revealed objects against it (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 107).[54] Bawa's revelation of the archaic contents of architectural dwelling equipment could be

emphasised in the same manner – arguably, it was the whiteness of the backdrop that assigned emphasis onto the selected ensemble.

Dirt is not necessarily impure, as buildings are made out of natural matter making earth an essential part of their fabrics. Moreover, in traditional cultures, the distinction between purity and impurity was not absolute, and neither that between the sacred and profane. Thus, Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993: 103, 109) argue that dirt is impure, and also pure.[55] Going against this natural phenomenon therefore, advocates that Bawa did not desire to envisage the life of a building through its fabric; as something that extends in continuum or something that must indefinitely bear the burden of its history. Having identified alternative means of historical currency as discussed, the past illuminated by the weathering building's persistence under the elements (its 'passage of time') was discarded. The periodic maintenance by applying a new court of white, metaphorically would have meant to him, the continuum of the extant order against the natural one – that is, maintaining the advantageous position of the governing-elite, as against the natural/social chaos that also might adjourn it. Thus, he would have conceived elitism as a necessary evil.

An Earth Pallet:

Throughout the house, the floors are covered with semi-rough terra cotta tiles and roofs are clad with half-round clay tiles; both materials borrowed from an earth pallet (Fig. 107, 110). These rough material qualities imparted a traditional tectonic feel to the house, which in turn, became iconoclastic in comparison to other Architect-designed houses of the day. This particular project by Bawa disavows the postulation by Pallasmaa (2005) that 20th century edifices are explicitly biased towards the retinal image over other relegated senses. The due emphasis on the tectonic is what makes this point affirmative. This act revives perhaps, the essence of medieval Kandyan elite and sub-elite dwellings, which were by no means picturesque, but sensory. Just as any other vernacular from around the world, Kandyan edifice was one essentially associated with the tacit wisdom of the body (Wijetunge, 2011b: 30).

Industrial Drive Overlooked:

The strong reliance on traditional material palette and construction methods reveal that industrialization that was ensued in Ceylon after the 1950s had not made its mark on Bawa's design. For the SLFP government, the notion of 'development' was delimited to the expansion of agricultural production and the increasing of manufacture of consumer goods (Perera, 1994: 366).[56] As SLFP's partner *Lanka Sama*

*Samaja Party* (LSSP) was pro-industrialist from its beginning, [57] the government eventually came to propagate industrialization as well as industrial progress to its citizens. As the process was only beginning in 1959 when the de Silva house was being designed, it was not reflected in it. This industrialisation move was anyway to prove unsuccessful soon enough.

Under the 'Five Year Plan' by Ministry of Planning and Employment (1966-70) [within the policy of 'collective consumption of goods'], [58] the factories produced only at a fraction of their capacity, being very large, [59] and demanded immense resources to maintain. Despite their strategic positioning, [60] the government's aim to provide equal opportunities and increase benefits throughout the island via *"decentralization"*, proved to be detrimental to profitability (Karunadasa, 1999: 56). [61] On the other hand, under economic substitution, the foreign exchange received from cash crop exports was spent on imports of raw material and industrial equipment. However, the pertinent factor here is the traditional elites' substantial stake in the plantation sector – *Aluvihares* also owned their fair share. Hence, it could be argued that this economic policy was one that favoured them and ensured the perpetuation of their economic wellbeing.

It was the economic surplus generated from their estates that elites could reinvest in new properties. In the case of the de Silvas, while retaining their inherited fortune in the village 'seats of power' (Ena's family politics in *Aluvihare, Matale* in particular, is renowned), steps were taken to accrue new urban properties as future investments. [62] On the other hand, the economic backing extended to certain newly-independent states by the metropole and America was not extended to nationalist Ceylon with a pro-socialist political allegiance (Karunadasa, 1999: 46-51). [63] Thus, under such circumstances, Bawa would have astutely realised what was to soon become of this industrial drive as well as the anticipated social restructuring behind it, [64] and consequently, did not care to alter his elite-favouring architectural stance with an industrial outer-shell.

### *Unresolved Dialectic?*

The highly articulated and open plan of the de Silva house is modern in its effect, as it incorporates both traditional (i.e. shrine room) and modern Western functions (i.e. office room) suggestive of the hybrid lifestyle of the elite in post-independence Ceylon. Hence, the house can be argued as an attempted synthesis of the two and an articulation of cultural hybridity.

The front pavilion and the logia around the central courtyard is an amalgamation to a modern house, which is really the two-storied pavilion at the rear. When an overemphasis has been directed towards the fine-tuning of the traditional section in terms of aesthetics and authenticity of construction, against its carefully-fashioned 'image', the modern section has experienced utter neglect. Its concrete brutality is attested, especially by the exposed beams that span across the plain white soffits of the living and dining spaces, when they could have been conveniently hidden from view. This rather disassociated area has been adorned using traditional constituents of form (i.e. overhanging roof), certain architectural details (i.e. trellis windows) and dwelling equipment/accessories (mentioned before); all meticulously executed in line with traditional craftsmanship. Hence, arguably, this unresolved dialectic between the traditional and modern hints at the architect's disbelief in modernity. His awareness of the past would have therefore been more complete than the conviction for future.

### Postmodern Inclinations

The excessive dwelling on the familiar content fetches postmodern possibilities for the de Silva house. For Postmodern architects, *avant-garde* modernism was an empty universal shell devoid of history and culture as well as a tool of top-down politics; whether socialist or capitalist. In this light, referring to Huxley, Pieris (2007: 1) tells us that dystopian vision of a "*brave new world*", scripted by technology-driven environmental determinism, has prejudiced the modernist projects – along with its 1950s-70s experiments. At the heart of this problematic, was what she calls a "*[…] Eurocentric humanism, shaped by enlightenment ideology [and] reinforced by early twentieth-century colonialism "[which was] disseminated as an apolitical and universal value".* The introduction of antique building elements – columns, fenestrations etc. – into contemporary buildings or the strategic placement of period artefacts as aesthetic objects is arguably a reaction against the foregoing sterility. However, these incorporations facilitate a certain postmodern orientation (Pieris, 2007: 146). For Pieris, the postmodern discourse by today, has appropriated modernism as one of its stylistic agendas.[65]

Although for Perera (1994: 401), Bawa's rubric of neo-regionalism  for which, the de Silva house is an excellent example, has avoided direct historic quotation as in postmodernism evident in the West, Jayatilaka (2010) finds such an inclination in relation to the country. In Sri Lanka, attempts have not been made to capture and represent all cultures within a single image, or as a series of images (each representing a component culture),[66] but employed particular combinations that produced a new character with which Sri Lankans can readily associate. The de Silva house is the perfect epitome to validate Perera's argument.
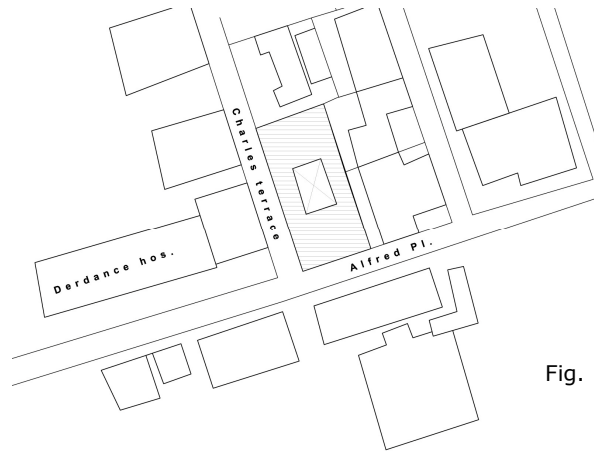
Fig. 113
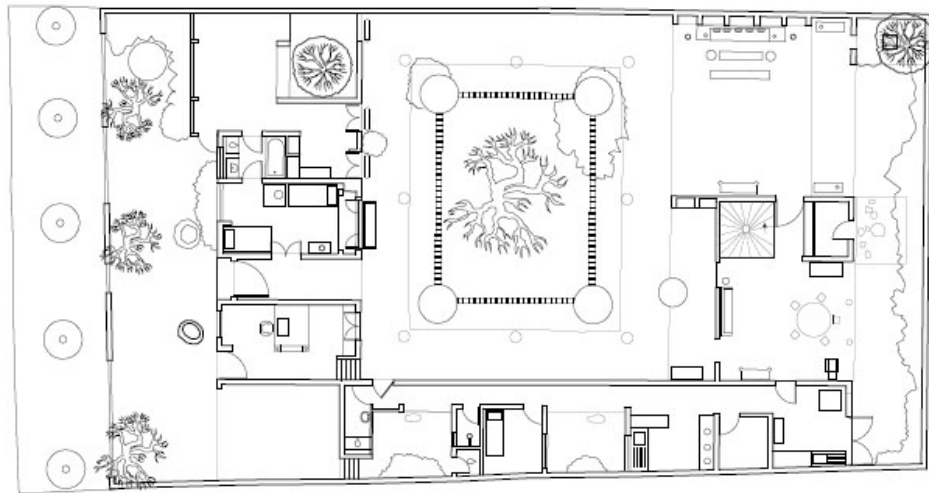


Fig. 114
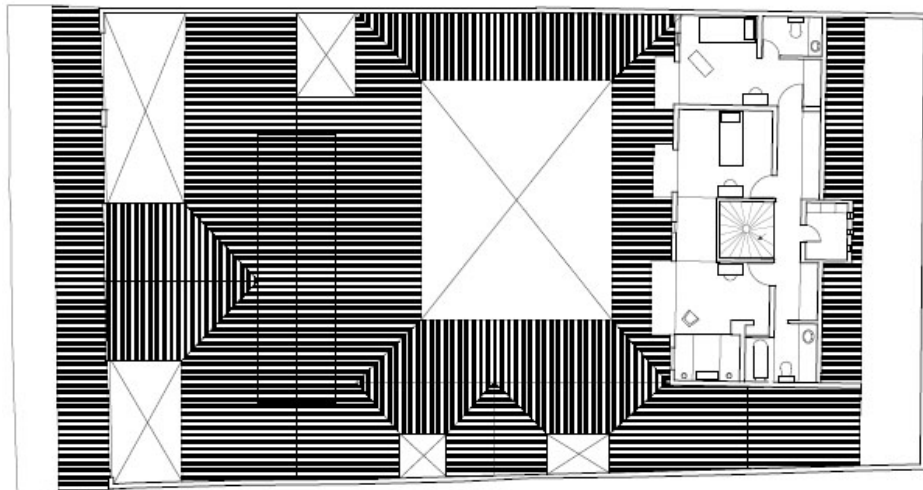


Fig. 115

Osmund and Ena de Silva House.

Fig. 113    Site Plan.
Fig. 114    Ground Floor Plan.
Fig. 115    Upper Floor Plan.
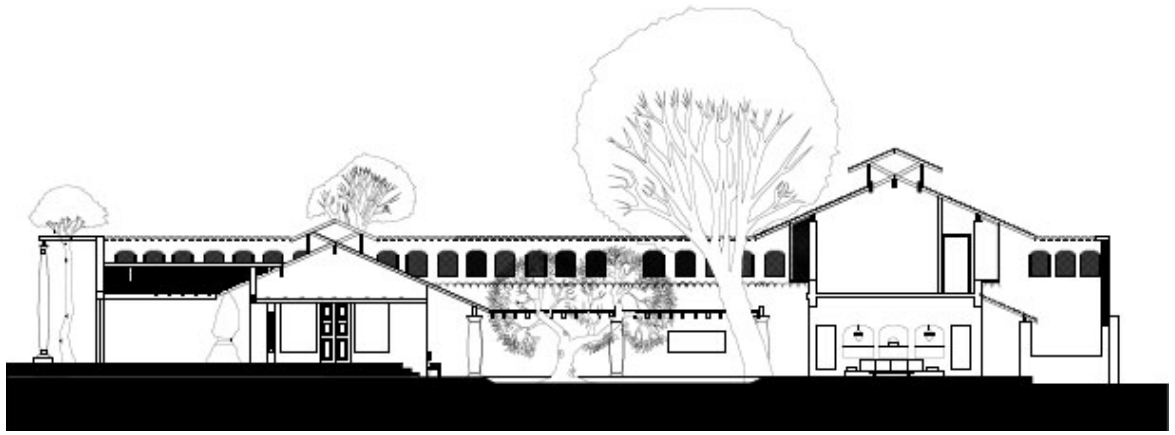
Fig. 116
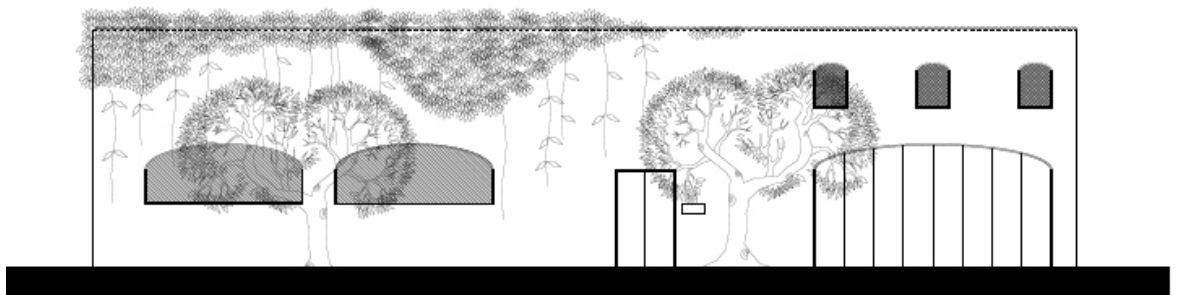


Fig. 117

Osmund and Ena de Silva House.

Fig. 116   Section.
Fig. 117   Front Elevation.

*Inception Tale*

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa were old friends of Geoffrey Bawa. The de Soysas owned an old house with a large garden that stretched between *Wijerama Mawatha* (formerly known as Turret Road) and Boyd Place in Colombo. When it was subdivided to create plots for the de Soysa daughters, one was earmarked for the parents. Chloe reminisces how the entire block used to be a part of her grandfather's estate, where the famous mansion called 'Rippleworth' once gloriously stood (de Soysa, 2011).[67]

Cecil had been the chairman of Ceylon Hotels Corporation when the *Bentota* Beach Resort was designed by Bawa in the late 1960s. Corporations were first established during the 1965-70 UNP reign, and by the end of United Front's stint in power (by 1977), they had become institutions of notoriety for their mismanagement (Matthews, 1978: 85).[68] The UNP re-admission did not make a change (and as a legacy, Sri Lankan cooperate sector is mismanaged to date). The UNP's coming into power with President J. R. Jayewardene being a personal friend [as confirmed by Chloe de Soysa (2010)], would in fact, have landed Cecil the chairmanship. Corporation chairmanships in Sri Lanka were/are indeed, political appointments.[69] Cecil had subsequently become a private hotel developer, while Chloe ran a boutique and gallery called *Mari Porsa* on *Wijerama Mawatha* (Robson, 2004: 176). She also was responsible for the functioning of L. J. Pieris and Company – a well-known real estate agents and managers – that had been set up during Sir. James Pieris's (her famous grandfather) times (de Soysa, 2010).  As for Chloe's memory, upon passing their request to Bawa (somewhere in 1985), he came to the site on a Friday, inspected it, and drew an on-site sketch. By Monday the following week, it had been developed by an assistant into the only available drawing that now hangs framed in the house (de Soysa, 2010). This is more of a presentation drawing despite having a few notes for the use of the contractor. Although for buildings in Colombo since the inception of the Urban Development Authority (UDA) in 1978, it was compulsory to submit to the municipal council an architect/engineer certified set of drawings to accepted standards (UDA Law, 1978: uda.lk, 2011/12), the powerful de Soysas would have found exemption. In any case, Jayewardene's UNP government according to Wijesuriya (2011: 27), was notorious for nepotism, extending the 'chit system' practiced by the prior United Front regime (Matthews, 1978: 86).[70] The party's identity as the preserve of the conservative and privileged classes had in effect, been articulated by the reified inter-elite relations. Perhaps, despite the fact that the new set of regulations had been a few years old at the time, its practice would not yet have been strict (unlike the case today in Sri Lanka). After all, even by 1985, about 75% of the country's population built in their vernacular tradition at will.[71]

As Chloe recalls, *"I wanted an office downstairs and a penthouse…when the children got married, we wanted a smaller place".* Being an intimate friend of the architect, only a general brief was conveyed. In terms of personal requirements and style, as Chloe reminisces,

> *"[he] had been there so often. He used to come there for dinner and parties. Actually he knew me so well, the way we entertained and our life, and I didn't have to tell him anything"* (de Soysa, 2010).

This statement bears testimony to an intimate cultural understanding of the overtly Western lifestyle and family values of the de Soysas by Bawa, which was very much akin to his own. Bawa too was an Anglican in faith, where the modern Western culture that he himself was indulged in, had very little or nothing to do with that of the indigenous Sinhalese (Bawa being a Burgher and de Soysas being Sinhalese did not make much of a difference). The quintessential factor of this British colonial period status group was that, even in semi-feudal Sri Lanka where nationalist and socialist fervours were bourgeoning, they still prevailed self-consciously. For instance, still placed well within the governing-elite/political-class spheres, they could get almost anything done through their connections. The 1950s religious and linguistic nationalisms had not directly affected them even by the 1980s, where they only in fact, needed the Sinhalese language to converse with their indigenous subordinates.[72]

### *Locality*

From Turret Road (connected to Galle Road) – a traffic congested secondary artery that connects two main junctions in the heart of Colombo – a narrow and shady street runs diagonally, between two box-like volumes – one, *Marie Porsa* gallery, and the other, an adjoining mid-rise commercial building; both with their glass facades overlooking Turret road – to the interior of a block, to terminate with a *cul-de-sac* (Fig. 137). As one enters this street, the orthogonal view along the access is dark and tunnel-like, being heavily shaded by the canopies of its *Mara*[73] trees. At the end of the dark passage, there lies a single sun-lit open spot – the turning circle – that induces a phototrophic movement. The approach into a tranquil and introvert domestic atmosphere by a break from the chaos of the outside surrounding, is an experience of crossing a threshold. This is a part of the scheme where weaving of the context into the experiential aspect of the building has been realised.

The de Soysas being keen travellers both within and outside the island as Bawa himself was, he would have conceived the approach as an integral part of the whole experience the house was to offer. The feeling he endeavoured to evoke was perhaps, an analogous sensation felt by adventurers, once they stumbled upon some sort of a long-lost historical monument by surprise. This white three-story structure sits at the side of the *cul-de-sac*, subsumed by vegetation (Fig. 118). This is a surprise indeed, in

a shady habitation surrounded by giant *Mara* tress, where one would not expect an urban house to be. It delegates these sets of trees and also the ones beyond. The approximately 15 perch (379 Sq. m.) site was the result of successive subdivisions of an original much spacious plot; a common phenomenon in post-independence period Colombo. When the first sub-divisions that were being carried out from the 1950s to the 1970s had carved out approximately 30 Perch (758 Sq. m) plots (i.e. Ena de Silva site), by the 1980s, further subdivisions had shrunk the standard to 15 (as in this case) or less. Subsequently, by the 1990s, the size was finally fixed at 6 Perches (151 Sq. m.) by the authorities, through their amendments to the Urban Development Authority (UDA) Act of 1978. The 1977 neo-liberalist reforms had stepped up commercialisation of the city, and consequently, it was experiencing an agglomeration. The commercial building boom in the early 1980s had not only exhausted year-marked zones by *The Master Plan for the Colombo Metropolitan Region* of 1978, [74] the residential areas were now being encroached upon. The establishment of the UDA as a planning organization was a direct outcome of the Colombo Master Plan. *The City of Colombo Development Plan* was prepared and gazzetted by the UDA and it enabled the organization to implement zoning and building regulations from thereon (uda.lk, 2011)**.** [75]

Under such circumstances, the urban landlords found it lucrative to sub-divide their lands to the smallest possible unit before being sold. The result was the ubiquitous residential areas of yesteryear being either fully-subsumed or diminished to encircled pockets; having been reduced in size. The de Soysa plot belongs to the second situation. The house was strategically placed to occupy the centre of the rectangular site to sandwich between two open expanses – a smaller open area to the left and a more spacious one to the right – both serving as gardens. While the shady *Mara* trees occupying the spaces intended as gardens were retained, a handful of trees in the centre were sacrificed (de Soysa, 2010). The site is bordered on three sides by adjoining residential plots and on one side, by the access way.



Fig. 118

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 118    View upon entering the dead end; white cube subsumed
             by vegetation (2010).

### *Negotiating Spaces*

As per the basic brief afforded by his clients, Bawa juggled spaces until he finally arrived at a strictly rational arrangement. In doing so, he stuck to a basic rule established by the modernists that initially inspired him; the concept of 'living above', where services are zoned on the ground, while living and bedrooms are at upper levels. Basically, the plan could be conceived as a large rectangle placed diagonal to the access street, to which, another smaller rectangle has been plugged-in from the side, to arrive as a 'T' shaped layout. The plugged-in section penetrates to break the larger rectangle in two, and the stair-well is strategically placed at this inter-section. It links together the three habitable floor levels of the house (Fig.138-144).

The larger rectangular section of the first floor is dedicated to the living cum dining activities. Through the carefully-arranged furniture that sits in the right places of the open plan, the activities are fixed to the most appropriate areas within the space. The sofas for instance, are placed against the two picture windows with accompanying coffee tables and period pieces that complement the function (Fig. 123). The dining table (for three) on the other hand, is arranged rationally, adjacent to the door that provides access from the kitchen cum pantry (Fig. 124). The dining activity is in fact, extended to the adjacent covered terrace that contains a larger dining table as an option to dine out; a more adventurous alternative. Behind the stairwell and first floor sitting room, stay hidden are the kitchen cum pantry and two store rooms. In terms of domestic aides, the 1980s show new developments. Although the house seems to have five of them, only two are in-house while others are daily visitors. The staff loyalties of yesteryear, in the time of wider employment opportunities – especially, in the government realised Industrial Free-Trade Zones after 1977 as illustrated by Perera (1994: 446-47) – would have disintegrated, leaving only two elderly staff members to serve the household full-time. The driver who also doubled as a manager of household chores and kitchen helpers cum cleaners are all paid wages (de Soysa, 2011). This frames the post 1977 mass-monetization of Sri Lanka, where the young working-class was driven by capitalist aspirations. In order to obtain imported consumer goods of fancy that the 'free market' had made ubiquitous, they were content to serve as wage workers. Their allegiance was no more towards the religious or linguistic issues of the past, but economic; the very factor their vote too was dependant on (Matthews, 1978: 87). More so, the fact that even the in-house staff was not accommodated within the main house illustrates possibly, a new form of mistrust towards the working-classes. Having experienced a socialist resurrection by the class in 1971 and in the backdrop of another one looming by 1985, in-house staff would have been an anathema to the affluent.

The degree of privacy within the foregoing arrangement was strengthened by the placement of the master bedroom on the topmost floor (Fig. 120). The intention would have been that at the end of a hard day's work, the de Soysas could retire to the pent-house, to a state of romantic seclusion. While contiguity with nature was assured by encircling this private space with a green roof terrace, shutting-out any hindrance to the experience by intruding maids was assured.[76] This seclusion suffered by the parents revealed another reality in the day in age, when the 'extended family' was fast-disappearing. When it was still common amongst the rest of the populace [even the middle-class as elucidated by Pieris (2007: 51)], the elites set the trend by assimilating yet another Western cultural strand.

Homage to the Motorcar:

Most of the ground floor of the house was taken over by the two-car garage. The use of motorcars in the age of open economy entailed multiple meanings. The motor vehicle in Ceylon, as elsewhere, had become a 'status symbol' (Belk, Mayer and Bahn, 1982: 523-530); having introduced by the British at the outset of the 20th century. Although initially being the domain of the British governing-elite and the affluent classes [in fact, it was a de Soysa (E.L.F. de Soysa)[77] who became the first ever Ceylonese to own a car (karava.org, 2011)], by post-independence, the ownership had extended to the petty-bourgeoisie. For families belongings to the upper most stratum, the car doubled as an official vehicle for the husband, as well as an apparatus to fulfil the recreational and functional requirement of the wife and children – from taking kids to school, to going weekend shopping or visiting friends and family. These tasks had to be carried out efficiently and in style, where inadequate and unreliable public transport was not an option.

In the post-independence period, the two predominant means of public transportation in the island were the buses and trains that linked the rural outstations with the capital (Kumarage, 2007).[78] The privatization schemes in the 1980s made significant changes to many state-run sectors and transport was one of them (Salih, 1997: 181).[79] Although letting the private sector take stakes in the prior state oligopoly [that had been exercised via the *Ceylon Transportation Board* (CTB)[80] ] improved the fleet of buses under the reinvigorated *Sri Lanka Transport Board* (SLTB) in 1978 (country-data.com, 2011),[81] it deteriorated matters in a number of ways.[82] On one hand, the STB was plunged into a state of apathy owing to politicization of its ranks that had worsened its ill-management and profit-loss during the former regime. On the other, the greedy private sector wanting to reap profit reduced considerably, the quality of the system by employing a fleet of poor-conditioned buses and jam-packing them by neglecting passenger laws. After all, it was the governing-elite – mainly who were tied

with the government – who stepped up to the plate as new stakeholders of this enterprise. Consequently, the roads in and around Colombo that had not been designed to handle vast amounts of traffic, began to experience rush-hour congestions and a hitherto-unforeseen degree of pollution (Q. Perera in sundaytime.lk, 2011).[83] The government could do little with no available funds. Under these circumstances, it could be posited that Bawa's design assisted the elite to inveigle this unpleasant reality.

Prior to 1977, for their affluent owners, the latest automobile model from Europe not only was a consumer object that made their compatriots (from the same class) envious, the widening of the gulf with the lower classes too became plausible through it. The automobiles then, essentially had to be one of the continental makes available in the market. However, after 1977, the opening of economy changed this trend (japanesecartrade.com, 2011). First, the motor vehicle became more affordable as the cheaper Japanese models were making way into the country within reduced import taxes. Second, while most elites kept on purchasing continental makes for their principle car, also developed the trend of buying second and third cars, for the use of family and recreation. After all, the 'transnational' spaces created in and around the capital after 1977 that K. T. Silva (2005: 112) reveals, had in fact, amplified family activities considerably – especially, the recreational side. On the other hand, when the consumption object that once was a status symbol had been threatened owing to newly-found abundance in the open market,[84] the elite response was to extend their purchaseability. Thus, all of Bawa's houses designed in the 1980s, contain parking spaces for two or more vehicles (Fig 119). As Dayaratne (2010: 383) notes, the now ubiquitous car[85] belongs to the layer of 'Japanese cultural colonisation' left its mark in the elite domestic scene in neo-liberal Sri Lanka, and this needs to be taken up separately from centuries of physical European colonisation.[86] It also trapped the new global reality of the emergence of Asian economic giants in South-East Asia as a threat to the Euro-US hegemony that had been responsible for this awakening in the first place (Karunadasa, 1999: 57).



Fig. 119

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 119    Spacious front garden with allocations for multiple
              vehicles parking (2010).

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### Three Dimensionality and Abstraction

All floors and ceilings of the house interior are flat, apart from the open roof terraces that drop by an inch or two. Within the lack of direct architectural space demarcations in the open-planned main space of habitation – the combined living, reading, dining, and parlour room – the dwelling equipment does the job. It is notable how the prominent horizontal lines of the ceiling planes, its unconcealed beams, floors, the members that divide door-windows into sections pervasive throughout the house, all correspond with the horizontal lines of the ensemble of dwelling equipment. This configuration gives these horizontals a vertical continuity, and thus, three-dimensionality. It is this three-dimensionality that defines specific spaces for specific functions in the open-plan setting; not temporally, but by implication, as Leatherbarrow (2002: 43) explores this possibility elsewhere (for instance, in some of Richard Neutra's houses). It is their correspondence with other elements that give shape, profile and character to the room's distinct places. This way of abstraction was a rejection of the traditional colonial architectural practice [schematic historicism] of the parcelled-out *"Euclidean space"* (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 62). The openness of these settings not only carries with it a strong sense of autonomy and isolation; the darker side of individualism, as against a corpus of archaic architectural practices that always pushed for communality. This abstraction was a part of a wider scheme of abstraction.

The play of verticals and horizontals take place within a matrix of white (Fig 123-25). In an interior where all walls and ceilings are white-washed, the features connected to them make themselves visible through shadows. When the most prominent horizontals and verticals are envisaged, along with the prominent colours of the interior – be it the dwelling equipment or accessories – the view along the space in question paints an abstract picture reminiscent of a Mondrian painting. Had the green carpeted floor too been white, this effect would have been more evident. After all, it was Chloe who later applied the carpet, and not the architect who may have considered the aforesaid effect (de Soysa, 2010). Bawa's new approach to abstraction in fact, marks a return to his earliest works in the Tropical Modern idiom. Arguably, the regionalist prerogative and the following stereotyping had taken its toll on the architect's psyche (Robson, 2004: 168).

### Progression of Green

A Journey of Glimpses:

The different spaces and their interrelationships can be best conceived by embarking on a journey through the house. A low boundary wall separates the street from the

site. One enters through a simple iron gate into a forecourt that extends into the covered garage. The forecourt also gives access to the office area that consumes most of the larger rectangle of the 'T'. The office area consists of a hall where the work desks are rationally arranged, a small office room for the director and a small in-house wash-room. The hall is open through sets of large windows into the rear garden, keeping up the concept of inviting the garden in. In other words, it destabilizes the distinction between inside and out. However, the cluttered interior and file cabinets that are kept against windows diminish this effect. From the garage enclosure, one enters into a small rectangular foyer that provides access into a staircase tower that links three floor levels together. The claustrophobic nature of the foyer has been reduced by cutting-off a huge chunk of its outside-facing wall to include an openable glazed window unit that looks out at the shady green. Two narrow flights of steps lead the visitor to the first floor. As soon as one reaches the first floor level, across the passage, through a tall window unit, a glimpse of the outside greenery is permitted (Fig. 136). Once stepped onto the floor and turned left, down the passage, through a wider window panel behind the couch, more greenery is revealed; this time greener, and shadier (Fig. 123). Once this point is reached, on the right, there is an open roof-garden of green. As all the green is arranged around the terrace periphery, it seems as though the interior has freely extended outdoors, and *vice versa* (Fig 124). On the left, across the length of the living room, the eye is made to traverse to the end of another outside terrace beyond (of similar arrangement). From the same stand point, it looks as though to be extending on one side, to reveal more foliage. Although there are two bay-window units placed behind sofas that open the living to the rear-garden, the wide separation wall between them ensures that both their views are not feasible together. This makes each view of green unique in its own right. On the right of the stairs lies a guest bedroom with an on-suite bathroom. This room too offers a less dramatic green view of the outside through a similar bay window.

Once the second floor master bedroom (that is as big as the living room below) is reached, from a symmetrically-arranged series of bay-windows separated in the middle by a wide wall that breaks the view in two, the green of the encircling terraces and also the house garden beyond, is made visible (Fig. 120). A narrow and steep series of steps takes one to the roof terrace that covers the entire area of the 'T's larger rectangle. The roof terrace is fully-shielded by grass, and from the troughs along its periphery, arise fairly sized trees, shrubs and runners (Fig. 135). It is the runners that dangle along the building exterior – nestling the walls and bay-windows on the levels below (Fig. 133).   From the roof terrace vantage-point, the distant green of the immediate precinct as well as of the parks beyond are all mended into a single cover of far-extending foliage, where the eye stops at the horizon of high-rises; marking a climax of the visual delight.

Fig. 120

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House

Fig. 120    The master bedroom with an encircling green roof terrace
That assures natural contiguity (2010).

Evoking Cherished Memories:

The whole spatial experience through the house and the choreographed visual delights are essentially bound with the vegetation that has been made intrinsic to the design. This may have been an experience the architect would have endured, in one of his adventurous trips to the dry-zone. Perhaps he represented in the house, the gradually widening green glimpses, as he encountered them, while ascending upon one of dry-zone's rocky hills. The sensation of being amidst vegetation and looking out, pervasive within the house enclosure, would have been a representation of a picture stored in his memory (Fig. 134, 136). The memory would have been a relished view of the mellow green below, grasped while resting on a shady cave at a high point, from the face of which a curtain of green runners dangled down. As Bawa did his own share of travelling to all corners of the island, [87] being knowledgeable about the same inclination of his clients, would have envisaged an experience they also would have cherished.  Cecil as the chairman of Sri Lanka Hotel Corporation and later a private hotel developer would have surely engaged in site-searching adventures, accompanied by his wife. As for her, even before his Hotel Corporation-days, they embarked on numerous expeditions together (de Soysa, 2010). Within the context of aforesaid possibilities, the simplest of explanations is afforded by Chloe for the pervasive greenery – "*…he knew I was very keen on gardens"* (de Soysa, 2010). Although the house possesses the discussed qualities, it lacks in both spatial and visual layering as evident in Bawa's houses from the foregoing phase.

### Roof Terrace and Vertical Emphasis

According to Leatherbarrow (2002: 13) who relies on Le Corbusier's observations, from the vantage point above, the town appears in its entirety. He also tells us that private gardens in cities are *"signs of joy and surprise".* These gardens and this laughter were the city's secret, protected by the blind walls of the streets. In his words, *"height unveiled urban life",* where every house was a place of happiness and joy of serene existence, made plausible by such withdrawn settings. Not the streets, nor the facades, but the backs and urban interiors to which, people could retreat, were the essentials of settlement. It is *"…the hidden but typifying evidence of architecture in harmony with climate, terrain and region".*[88] The city of Colombo was modelled after the core's cities that are made for profit and not for life, and in Le Corbusier's words, they were *"steeped in indignities",* where their inhabitants were constrained from the *"essential delights"* they could foster. Bawa would have realized this to design the de Soysa house with many vantage points and gardens (both enclosed and semi-enclosed) that are spaces of leisure and contemplation. From the vantage points of its roof terraces, the picturesque city in its entirety is made visible as a delight of urban life (Fig. 121). However, once on the ground, and having penetrated into its midst, the city reveals the hidden realities on its streets, the working-class's struggle for existence and the homeless; framed in urban slums veiled within a veneer of modern sky-scrapers. This was the reality of open economy in Sri Lanka. Its monetarism and pretentious promises for prosperity was driving rural populaces from their village self-sufficiency towards urban destitution (K. T. Silva, 2005: 149-170). Perhaps, Bawa's application was meant as a refuge from all this; an ego-centric escape for the elite towards a romantic seclusion, rather than evoked contemplation that would result in much-needed philanthropy. Thus, from the vantage points he facilitated, in an act of neglect that Leatherbarrow (2002: 16) refers to as the *"oversight",* Bawa decided to abstract the space between the horizon and observer. In other words, the prosaic 'middle ground' intermittently occupied by the open economy's under-classes was not only obscured, but taken for granted. It was only taken as a picturesque plane consisting of rigid geometric objects and nebulous green that melts their edges, disappearing into a horizontal mesh of roads; a matrix. The Alberti-like mathematical perception on Bawa's part did not trigger a Corbusier-like understanding of cultural phenomena. It was the horizon that brought into existent this visual field of potential. After all, in Neutra's terms,

> *"…to gain height against the eternal pull of gravity is the supreme triumph of the living; only the dead must lie level…Flatness of the prototype of forced and final relaxation…of resigned vertical aspirations"* (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 65)*.*

Arguably, Bawa's architectural metamorphosis was adjourned from this contextual high point, which also epitomised the elite triumph against other classes. Moreover, in

the age of open economy, which had drawn the image of the 'American Manhattan' as a sign of economic prosperity in the Lankan psyche, Bawa carried the notion into his domestic architecture. After all, by the mid 1980s, Colombo had already experienced a sky-line designed by the so-called 'foreign experts', who had, in their superfluous understanding of the local setting, placed self-consciously traditional tiled roofs over modern concrete blocks (Jayewardene, 1984: 234,237,241-242). In such a milieu, Bawa's response came from the ground-level and incorporation of the traditional content was made more subtle.
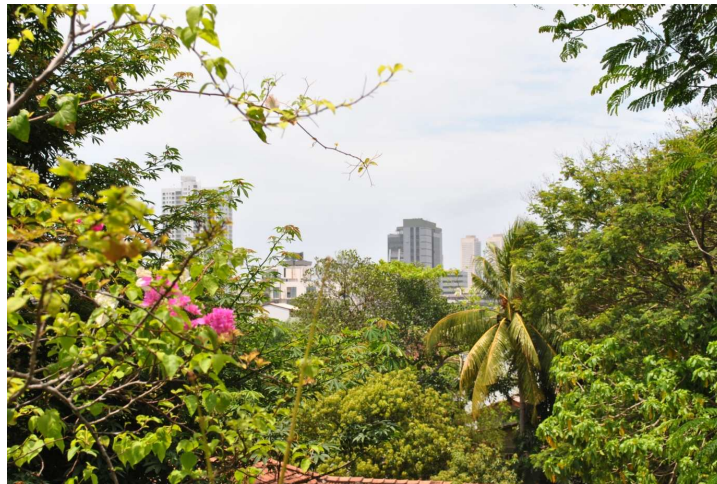


Fig. 121

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 121    The 'oversight' from the main roof terrace that draws emphasis only on the landmarks between the horizon and observer, neglecting the realities at the ground-level (2010).

### Reverence to Modernity; the Underlying Agendas

The modern outlook and the ensemble of spaces accommodating modern functions could be attributed to the excessively Westernised lifestyle of the patrons and architect's inherent knowledge of it. As Chloe elaborates her husband's mercantile involvements, "*[he] was the chairman [of the Hotel Corporation] at the time … he was at LANKEM [A well-known mercantile firm in Sri Lanka] also …"*. As for her, *"I was working [and had taken] charge of the office here … We were both working and there was all this entertaining to do for the tourist board … The chairman had to do all the entertaining"* (de Soysa, 2010). [89] Underlying these posturing evidence lie more complex explanations – personal agendas perhaps.

As Robson (2004: 176) comments on the de Soysa house,

> "*[this] is a far cry from earlier, apparently more traditional, designs: the deceptively simple plans, the white walls and the contrasting frames represent a further move towards the minimalism to which Bawa was increasingly drawn"*.

He confirms that by the late 1970s, Bawa was weary of being pigeonholed as a 'regionalist' and wanted badly to break out of the box. The de Soysa house remains his second domestic project that incorporated the newly-adopted 'stripped-down' aesthetic,[90] which inclined the final outcome more towards the international-style modernism. Robson called them 'Tower houses'. The UNP victory of 1977 marked the neo-liberal economic reforms that rescued the country from prior economic stagnation (Jupp, 1977: 636-639). Thus, by the mid 1980s, Sri Lanka began to reap partial dividends of the government agendas that were put into action since 1977 (Weragama, 1994: 7). In a context when the embracing of capitalism was celebrated – and prior nationalism underplayed, but extinguished – Bawa would have wanted to embrace the new spirit. His joy for the triumph of the capitalist regime his allegiance lied towards (Robson, 2004: 209), was manifested in his changing of preferred domestic architectural language; from modern regionalism to modern minimalism. There may have been more to the story.

The de Soysas' role in this scenario should not be undermined. Chloe, around 1948, took up a short apprenticeship,[91] under a Czechoslovakian modernist architect who practiced for a brief spell in Ceylon. She was given a basic training that consequently imparted a meagre understanding of space and form on her (de Soysa, 2010). From this advent into modern architecture, she took a liking to its aesthetic. Her privilege of frequently having to travel to Europe at a time the rubric was being consolidated would have strengthened the initial adoration that would have in turn, articulated in the ways she decorated her own home and entertained there.[92] As she reveals, Cecil too was fond of the 'new aesthetic' from Europe (de Soysa, 2010). For core-oriented indigenous elite such as the de Soysas who in fact, identified themselves with Western culture (while having little or nothing to do with its local counterpart), any indigenous reference would have been an inclination towards an architecture of the 'others'; just as for any true Westerner in provenance. Bawa being close would have known this temperament of his friends. This explains why Bawa chose to design in a modern idiom, although the de Soysas had seen his entire portfolio dominated by Regionalism. They would have been considered as the perfect clients, to mediate a newly-conceived style within the Lankan elitist cognoscenti.

However, there is another overarching factor that might explain the aesthetic preference of the de Soysas. Cecil took the de Soysa family name from his father, where Chloe's mother was also a de Soysa (and father a Pieris) (family tree.com, 2011). The de Soysa and Pieris family names are two of the most renowned in the 'low-country', for their wealth as well as political and philanthropic involvements. The recorded genealogies of these families belonging to the *Karave* caste run back to the 19th century British period, where they are believed to have been subservient to colonial rule.[93] The obedience earned their share of participation in the 19th century

colonial enterprise,[94] when the families were elevated to the bourgeoisie apex; to stand alongside of the most affluent and influential in Ceylon (Roberts, 1995: 102-106). The self-centred actions directed against Sinhalese nationalism (marked by a number of conspicuous events) [95] earned these families a notorious reputation and mistrust of the rest of the Sinhalese communities; especially of the most numerous *Govigama* caste (Jayawardena, 2009: 179). After having lost the political privilege in 1931, the *Karave* bourgeoisie kept their economic ventures in check until independence. When the independent Ceylon took a nationalist turn, they were further threatened. Most of them suffered under pro-nationalist and pro-socialist governments that came into power one after another. They lost land to land reforms and industries and businesses to state monopolies between 1956-77. Most of the British manor-house type mansions commissioned by this class at the turn of the 19th century along with their estates falling first into disrepair, and then into trusteeship of the state, is the best articulation of this decline (based on findings by author). However, by the 1980s, they under two UNP governments (first between 1965-70, and then from 1977-94) had made a comeback, having landed state positions yielding a considerable degree of political command.[96]

In a neoliberal milieu where traditional architectural practices had been undermined by international inclinations, Bawa's answer to the appropriate domestic style for this faction was obvious. On one hand, if one was to turn backwards for inspirations, the family traditions of the group (as a cultured people) did not go back beyond the British colonial period. On the other, when nationalism was still continuing under a veneer of capitalism, it was not desirable to borrow from the British colonial built traditions; as it would have first, pulled back the progression of their culture towards modernity, and second, would have found repudiation at the hands of nationalists for reviving colonial sentiments.

### *Associations of Duality*

Furniture:

Within the conceived homage to modernity, Bawa astutely plotted to evoke subtly, the once-glorious family traditions of the de Soysas. This he achieved by giving Chloe a free-hand in decorating the house that was subsequently made, both in the exterior as well as interior, a modern product. Chloe resorted to flaunting of a myriad of dwelling equipment and accessories that she and her husband had over the years inherited as well as collected.

The most striking feature of the interior is its furniture, resembling somewhat an organised-clutter that was pervasive in the 19th and early 20th century interiors of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie houses. The pictorial representations in the *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources* published in 1915 by Wright (2005) covers a number of *Karave* mansions (Fig. 122). They help to infer that at the time, a collection of latest and most luxurious European furniture articulated the affluence and good taste of its patrons. Within the minimalist atmosphere of the predominantly white de Soysa house interior, the furniture pieces – chairs, recliners, coffee tables and chests etc. – gain prominence through contrast. The appearance of period furniture in the de Soysa house in one way, evokes the former glory of by-gone family mansions as well as the cultured excellence of famous ancestors, and in another, imparts a sense of continuation of the same eminence. Arguably, this was the maximum extent the de Soysas could travel back in time, and also the most subtle way of doing so; without creating a major transgression. Thus, this could be conceived as a romantic gesture, yet also a subtle hacking back, facilitated by the architect. After all, he did envisage while designing, where the respective period and modern pieces were going to be placed.

The most conspicuous modern pieces are the two white sofas placed against the two living room windows. They manifested the willingness of patrons to embrace the latest fashions the core had to offer. Adding to the period romanticism are the decorative features – porcelain and china collections, brazen ware, Portuguese-period statues and masks belonging to various cultures. Bawa designed a special Aluminium rack system that runs from floor to ceiling for these items to be kept (Fig. 125). Certain objects find their places on the furniture. When some pieces were inherited, others were collected by the couple over the span of their long marriage, where each piece carries its own romantic fable. For instance, the Portuguese period miniature statues of saints were dug-out from their watery hiding places, where they were once concealed by Catholics who feared persecution by the Dutch reformists. This reminds Chloe of the time they went on expeditions together, looking for artefacts in the North-West quadrant of the island. These are the sort of personal memories she cherishes, evoked by the house (de Soysa, 2011).

Being the simplest of structural compositions probably aimed at economy, the de Soysa interiors were rather short in height, and as a result, possessed a horizontal character. The horizontality worked well in visually extending the building and blurring its inside-outside boundaries. In order to make the spaces seem taller than they really were, a visual illusion was deployed through a selected dwelling equipment item. The display racks designed to hold the decorative items were made to reach the soffit, and the ploy worked rather well. However, a taller and more spacious-looking interior would have worked better as a display space for period furniture items; somewhat

analogous to the kind of spaces they were once placed in the British colonial period mansions.



Fig.122
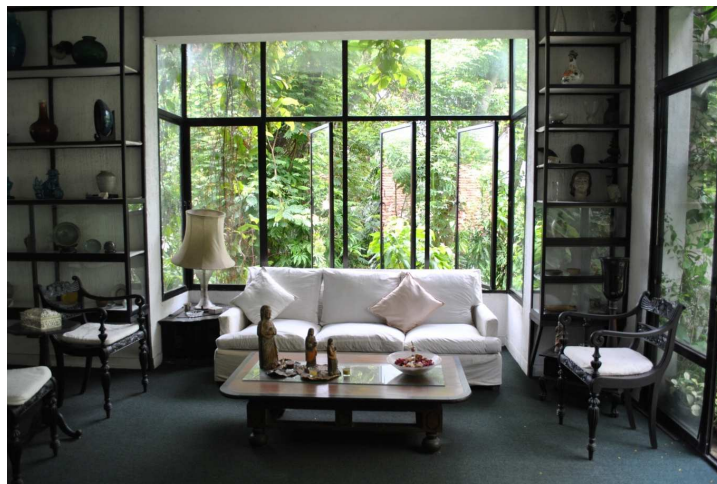


Fig. 123
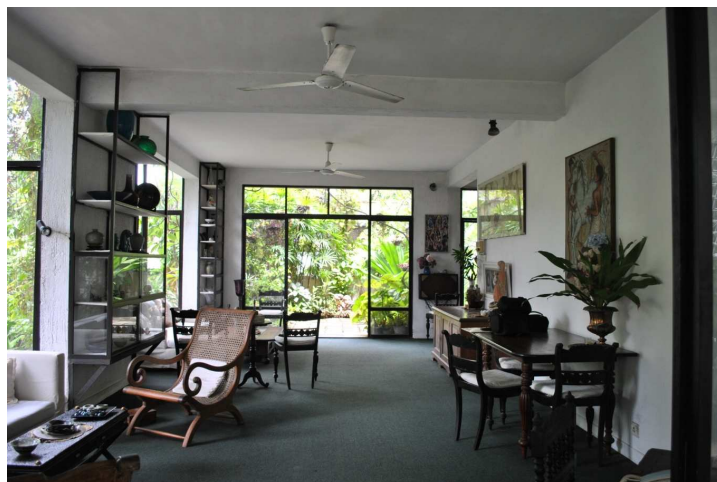


Fig. 124

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 122   Interior view of the living room of 'Rippleworth'; Chloe de Soysa's maternal grandfather's house.
Fig. 123   Looking out from the living room into the lush green gardens (2010).
Fig. 124   Different areas of the open plan assumes fixity of functions via juxtaposition of dwelling
              equipment and accessories (2010).
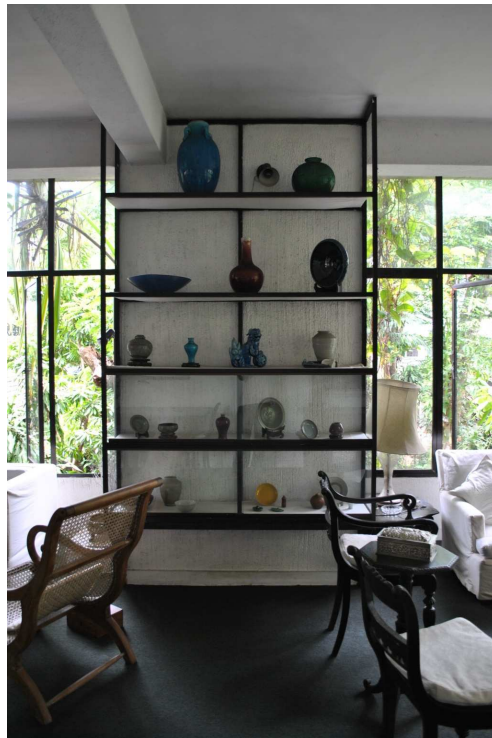
Fig. 125

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 125    The emphasis on horizontal lines that create vertical continuity (2010).


Primitive Art:

The juxtaposition of the traditional decorative pieces of local provenance with the primitive counterparts from elsewhere is noteworthy within the house's interior. As the meanings behind the traditional content were already addressed, the primitive counterpart is worth an elucidation here. For Fehn, primitive art is timeless because *"its signature is Anon, for it is nature herself".* He posits that when Picasso developed a preoccupation with the so-called 'primitive' art – when the artist turned to North African masks and sculptures – he led himself to a site of new discoveries; where the archaic pointed to the modern (in Leatherbarrow, 2002: 19). However, he was distressed to see that, as such artefacts and practices are now familiar to us so much that *"[we] do not discover the archaic but recognize it. Nor can we effect this exchange between remote and contemporary times".* Therefore, in the de Soysa house, the displayed mask, weaved carpet or sculpture from the primitive times do not mean anything than mere objects of consumption that the de Soysas collected from their trips abroad (Fig. 123-26). They are nothing but memories. This also suggests of their outward sphere of enlightenment on the world. After all, as Leatherbarrow (2002: 23) discerns,

> *"[while] 'primitive art' has become entirely familiar, something we easily recognize as 'other' than our own, the life that gives rise to it entirely escapes our grasp. All attempts at participation end in distancing … Because in 'primitive'*

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*art and life we confront a culture that is timeless; ours by contrast, is caught up in its historic moment, even obsessed by its uniqueness".*

The Western practice of displaying primitive ensembles in interiors was thus, followed by the de Soysas rather blatantly. This was a clear demonstration of how these had for the Lankan elites too, become nothing but consumer objects.

Paintings:

Collected so were, the numerous paintings that hung on most walls of the house, adding a pallet of colour to the plain white interior (Fig. 126,127). The stairwell walls were where the most compelling assemblage was strategically displayed. The paintings were largely eclectic in nature; some reproductions of traditional prints from the classical and medieval periods, while others either being hybrids, modern abstracts or impressionist works. The traditional works are suggestive of the respect for history and awareness on part by the de Soysas, and frames the awareness the 20th century artists such as Solias Mendis evoked by copying them out of temple murals. Hybrids from the 1940s and 1950s – the products that attempted to synthesise traditional and modern contents in visual arts – also manifest their attentiveness to the experimentations by the indigenous artistic circle at a key juncture in history. The more recent abstracts and impressionist pieces articulate on the other hand, the understanding of the artistic trends in vogue in the core, mimicked by local artists. The collection – some in fact, by prominent members of the 43rd Group itself as George Keyt and Justin Deraniyagala [as revealed by A. Deraniyagala (2010)] – not only tells the story of the island's visual arts history from pre-colonial to date, it further confirms of the patronage extended by the family towards the field, as enlightened elites with a social responsibility.
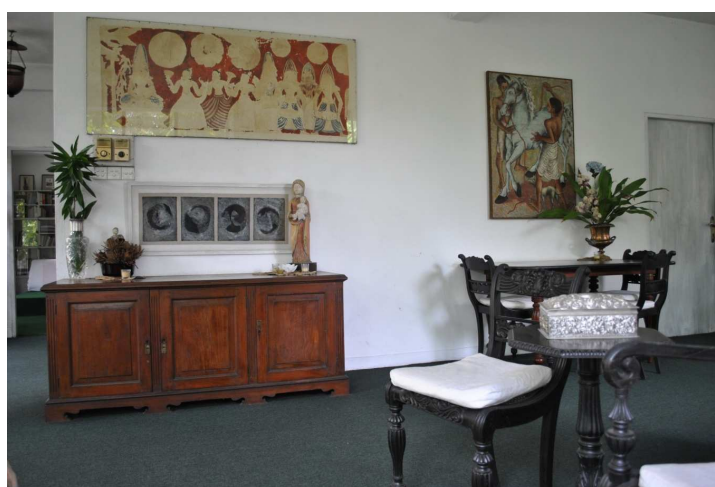


Fig.126

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 126    The living room space with dwelling equipment and accessories adding colour to the stark white interior (2010).
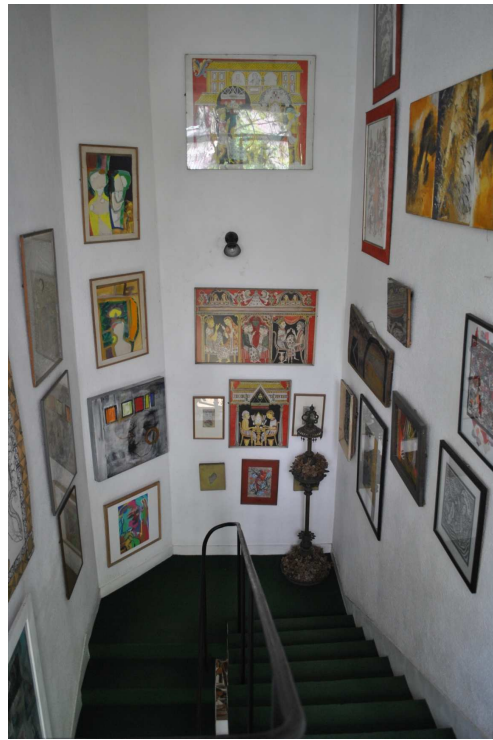
Fig.127

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 127    Stair well adorned with paintings collected over the years, keeping up with the interior
Theme (2010).


Lapsed Pretentions:

It is remarkable how no family photos and portraits are displayed in the public areas
of the house. Conversely, they are all to be found scattered in the bedrooms, and
especially, in the first floor bathroom (Fig. 128-31). While framed photos of the de
Soysa family (Chloe, Cecil and the two daughters) found their place on dressing
tables, tools and chests in the bedrooms, the bathroom became almost a gallery,
narrating decades up to the 1980s. The ensemble comprises of snapshots of children
growing up, lavish weddings of the daughters as well as of some renowned ancestors
from past, trips to Europe, prominent friends (Bawa among them) etc. Two seminal
observations can be made about this representation. It is striking that there is no
systematic genealogical narration of portraits as evident in the houses of most
feudalists.[97] This is very strange provided that the energy the 19th century bourgeoisie
kin of the de Soysas directed at promoting their caste superiority from sponsored
pamphlets to close emulation of the colonial masters by symbolic display (Roberts,
1995: 14-15). By the 1980s, as they had now been promoted again as the governing-
elite, such means would not have been essential. Instead, playing-down caste origins
– being proud of British colonial period ancestral achievement is one thing – would
have been more desirable now. For instance, the hand-sketched portrait of
*Warusahennedige Jeronis Soysa*, the founder of de Soysa fortune, stays hidden,
hanging in a corner inside a bedroom (Fig. 132). On the other hand, there are no
snapshots of prominent political personalities the family was closely associated with;

for example, the lights of President J. R. Jayewardene. It would have been the case that the closeness was so much, and so well-known, no extra effort was needed to portray it. It is also strange that there are no graduation photos of any kind; given that both the daughters attained tertiary education. It could be the case that their degrees from by now well-established Sri Lankan universities did not have to be spectacularly displayed in the parent's house. Inferably, had they attended 'more prestigious' core institutions, the case would have been different.[98]

Based on such observations, it could be argued that for this faction that had learned over time to constantly move with the flow, traditional perpetuation was less important than the current trends in vogue. This was pervasive throughout the documented family histories of the 19th century bourgeoisie, where age-old cultural habits were almost fully stripped-off to embrace a fully-fledged westernisation by the end of that century. As Roberts (1995: 15) suggests, by then, these bourgeoisie families were entirely occidental in provenance. When their family traditions were not so deeply-entrenched in comparison to the 'older' families, constant re-invention would have come easily.[99]



Fig.128                                              Fig.129

Fig.130                          Fig.131                          Fig.132

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 128    Family portraits/snapshots and memorabilia on furniture tops (2010).
Fig. 129    Family portraits and snapshots on the wall (2010).
Fig. 130    Wedding photos (2010).
Fig. 131    Chloe de Soysa snapshot (2010).
Fig. 132    Portrait of late Jeronis de Soysa; the ancestor who led the way to the de Soysa fortune (2010).

### Assembly and Originality

In the age of abundant machine-made products that he calls *"ready-made solutions"*, Leatherbarrow (2002: 119-22) argues that designers can avoid thinking anew about the basic premises of dwelling experience as it will be already done by specialists. No building nowadays is made from scratch. That means something original is supposed to result from something pre-established according to 'market categories'. In Leatherbarrow's view,

> *"[just as] contemporary culture is flooded by advertising [contemporary] architecture is adrift in trade catalogs. Like time, information is a river, but a shallow one, the slight depth of which allows it to frequently overrun its banks".*

The reliance of practices and products successfully used by others disavow unique solutions for new problems at hand. Creativity has been replaced by selection, and cultural value of built products have been diminished at the hand of eclecticism; not stylistically, yet procedurally (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 122). Even the cultural memory attendant to building (the act) has also been discounted. This particular eclecticism that present finalised components is more rigorous than one practiced in the 19th century historicism, where the labour practices still had certain room for approximation for at least, some originality.[100]

In a neoliberal context when the availability of off-the-shelf materials via 'trade literature' was available in Sri Lanka, although Bawa could have conceived assembling a house (as assembling a car), he did not fully embrace the ideal but partially. He never pushed it as far as making a system out of ready-made components to arrive at an outcome that would fail with the malfunctioning of a single part. Although certain fixtures used in the house such as light fittings, ceiling fans, bathroom fittings, certain furniture pieces (the TV stand in the bedroom) etc., would have been picked out of catalogues, with other elements that came from the same, Bawa experimented. The best example is aluminium and steel. He picked thicknesses, diameters and colours to make fenestrations out of the former, and an array of architectural features from hand rails to stair cases and protective shading devices from the latter. Most importantly, such innovations – although not unique innovations – were made rather successfully as a part of the abstract ensemble he realised. They never seemed to stand on their own, but blended in. All in all, by doing so, he may have demonstrated that, even within conditions that hamper creativity, architects could still flourish. On the other hand, he would have embraced this facet of reality afforded by neo-liberalism, and even perhaps, its new possibilities of more complex buildings. In a time when local craftsmanship did not matter owing to the preferences of progressive-minded clients in the domestic sphere, his message became clear. Leatherbarrow (2002: 126) notes that *"[if] originality is a race, the architect never finishes first; always ahead is the*

*product designer".* Bawa may have realised this, and thus, acted to find at least some originality.

### *Dismissed Synthesis*

In the de Soysa house, the already-discussed dualities were deliberate. In most other buildings of Bawa's – especially from the previous phase – architecture was contrasted against architecture. Ena de Silva house already taken up was the best example where its traditional segment was made to compete against the modern counterpart. Here, architecture was contrasted against dwelling equipment; a radical measure realised via uneasy juxtapositions. In other words, while modern architecture became incongruous during the previous phase, in this one, the traditional contingent suffered incongruousness. The direct traditional architectural references were either lapsed, or kept hidden. The half-circular arches on the Eastern roof terrace for instance, were veiled by the dangling foliage (Fig. 143). Allowing the green creepers and runners to subsume the white-washed façade was a similar gesture. They perhaps, were latent reminders of the colonial architectural traditions the de Soysa family in the past, had favoured.

It is apparent that the architect did not attempt to resolve the modern composition to the best of his ability. In the living room and master bedroom, grotesque structural beams span across ceilings, asymmetrically dividing the rectangular spaces.[101] In the former case, this abnormality becomes more apparent as the beam hits one corner of the display rack that rests against a wall (Fig. 125). In the master bedroom, something more hideous is visible. There, while the envelopes of the three open sides of the space showed bay-window units that have been lowered almost to the floor, the structural columns and beams lie outside. This becomes more evident as the windows are laid in an asymmetrical pattern against the outside beams that run straight (Fig. 120).

There are issues in climatic suitability too. The entire house was white-washed, knowing it was to be fully-covered in foliage (Fig. 118). Once the green subsumed the edifice, the white surface became discoloured and visually unpleasing. This is conceivable as an allowed provision for nature to reclaim built environment as apparent in the works of Laurie Baker in India (Bandyopadhyay, in press, unpaginated *mss*). However, the subtleness evident in the reclaiming process of Baker's exposed brick buildings went missing in Bawa's white-washed counterparts, as the contrast with the man-made elements and nature was amplified in the latter. Moreover, the concrete pergolas that cover the office entrance-way (that was intended to support runners) was also white-washed, to suffer the same fate as the rest of the envelop. As the green drape on this structure became insufficient to prevent the rain from beating

the Aluminium glass door-window units below, improvisation was needed. Someone resorted to remedy this by covering part of the pergolas with a corrugated fibre-glass sheet. This is just one example where such improvisations have hampered the aesthetics of the building.

All in all, the entire composition as a whole, becomes an unresolved collection of dualities. This meant that the architect dismissed the need to achieve dialectic in his composition, hinting at his continuing lack of conviction towards architectural modernism in a context with a unique set of circumstances under which, he was compelled to incline towards it. This particular inclination on the other hand, trapped the governing-elite desire to rapidly modernise themselves, and too the country. Bawa's unresolved project possibly, would have been meant as an ill-omen to the everlasting consequences the elite blunder would soon bring.

### Green Trials

The natural affinity has been attained through utilization of various *avant-garde* trends of Architectural Modernism which, place this project in contiguity to the works of Modern masters such as Le Corbusier and Alvar Alto (Menin and Samuel, 2003: 103-161). According to Chloe de Soysa, her house was used by Bawa, as he supposedly admitted to, as the precursor to his famous *Kandalama* Hotel project. As she confirms, the project had already been entrusted to the architect when her husband was the newly-appointed chairman of the private hotelier client Aitken Spence Group (de Soysa, 2010). This is testament to the close connections and alliances in continuity within the governing-elite circle that is also alluded to by Jayatilaka (2011).

As often stressed by media in their persistent advertising campaigns for the *Kandalama* hotel, Bawa's conception of it predated by at least a decade, the concept of 'green-building' (heritancehotels.com). There were a number of foremost principles involved. First, the building was to make a minimum impact on its setting.[102] As one arrives at the hotel, it is hardly visible as a structure, being blended into the surrounding jungle. This is debatably an amplified experience of the first visual encounter of the green-subsumed de Soysa house. Second, it is acknowledged that Bawa strived to compensate for all the sacrificed foliage on site, by replanting on the building surfaces (on its terraces, troughs as well as gardens). The idea was that once the building exceeds its life-span, the environment should be able to fast recuperate (Jayatillaka, 2011). This concept too was first tried out in the house (Fig. 135). Third, how the idea of being a structure 'to look out from' – an observatory – than a retinal-centric edifice, as well as the sensation of looking-out through a drape of vegetation, were encountered in the house. The pleasing of the eye by making a statement via built form was subverted on behalf of nature. Thus, all senses were involved but one.

This indeed, is a gesture of traditional affinity, thus, a subtle historic association. Similar to the vernacular, the experience of living in this 'green' house was to enliven equally all senses, evoking the metaphysical (Pallasmaa, 2005: 25-26). Fourth, the use of Aluminium for fenestrations (unheard of in Sri Lanka at the time), was tried out by Bawa (Fig. 136). As for Chloe, the nature-loving person that she was, insisted on *"saving our trees"* (de Soysa, 2010) at a time when hitherto-unforeseen deforestation was taking place. Behind this concrete view, lurked a salient consequence of mass-modernisation of Sri Lanka. The UNP government was sphere-heading a rapid modernisation program. The accelerated *'Mahaveli'* development project was making way for numerous reservoirs and dams and accompanying agricultural settlements supported by infra-structure in the Dry-Zone. Moreover, the 'One Hundred Thousand' followed by a 'Million Houses' programs under the banner of *'Gam Udava'* (village reawakening) was creating inter-connected cities throughout the island (Perera, 1994: 372-375). Consequently, by the mid 1980s, the resource of construction timber that had been in abundance before had become a valued commodity. The costs had suddenly skyrocketed.[103] In this light, Bawa too must have realised the importance of finding alternative materials to address this new dilemma.

On the other hand, behind the 'package tourist hotel' lied another facet of the discussed modernisation attempt. Sri Lanka's revitalised promotion as a 'tourist destination'[104] marked the UNP government's victory over the crushing of the Sinhalese socialists and containment of the Tamil separatists; a clear sign of perpetuating nationalism. Similarly, the quest to earn foreign currency, be it the destruction of natural environment or at the expense of indigenous cultures, trapped the regime's subservient nature to capitalism and accompanying modernity that was orchestrated in their own version of neo-liberalism.[105] The use of Aluminium as well as an array of other new construction materials thus, marks the newly-formed external trade relations such as SAPTA (Widyalankara, 2009). The new style that Bawa was developing was more international in outlook, and welcomed new materials made plausible through new economic policies. These agendas set aside, as a testament to the appropriateness of certain new materials, it could be illustrated that the dark-brown and narrow window frames of the house seem to melt into the background of branches and creepers that subsume it. The windows have survived the onslaught of sun and rain over the years in tropical weather.

Fig. 133



Fig. 134



Fig. 135



Fig. 136
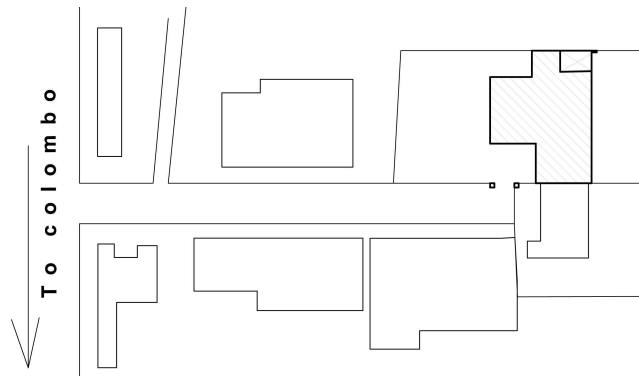


Fig. 137
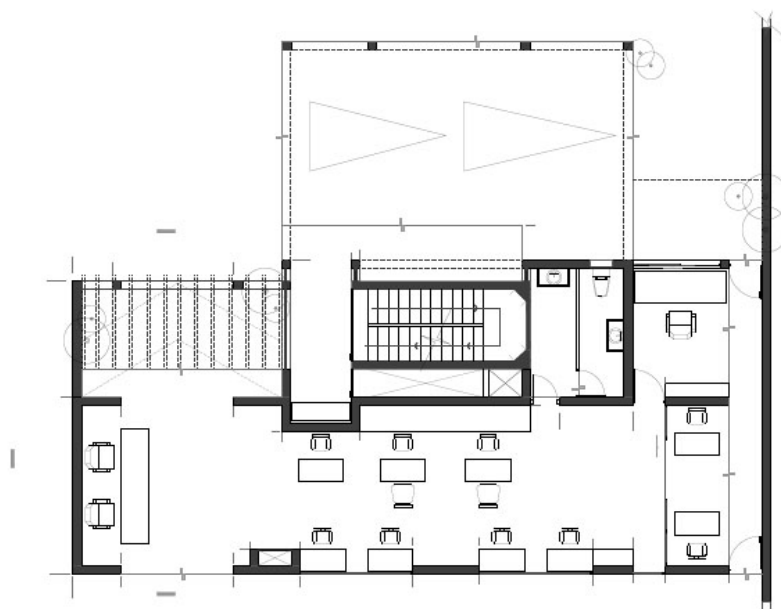


Fig. 138

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 133    Dangling green over the bay windows (2010).
Fig. 134    Dangling green from the double height slab space (2010).
Fig. 135    Green roof terrace (2010).
Fig. 136    Looking out through the green (2010).
Fig. 137    Site Plan.
Fig. 138    Ground Floor Plan.
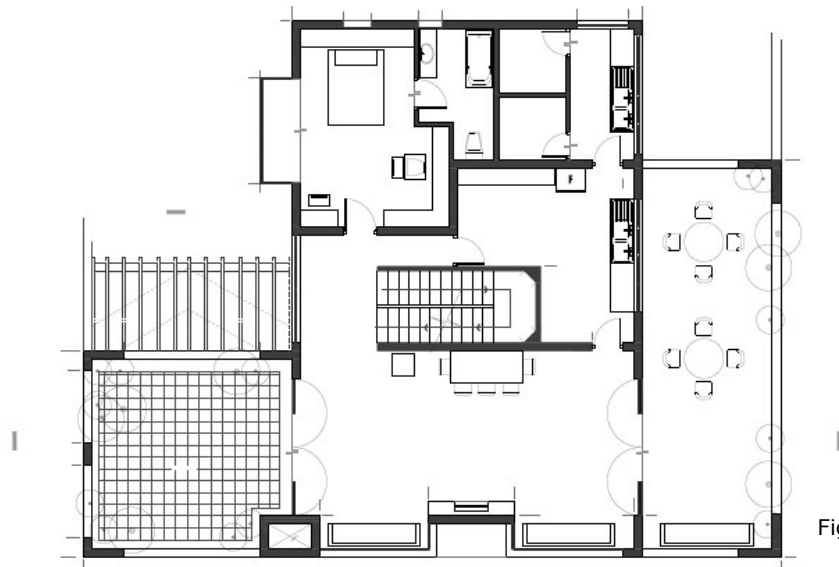
Fig. 139
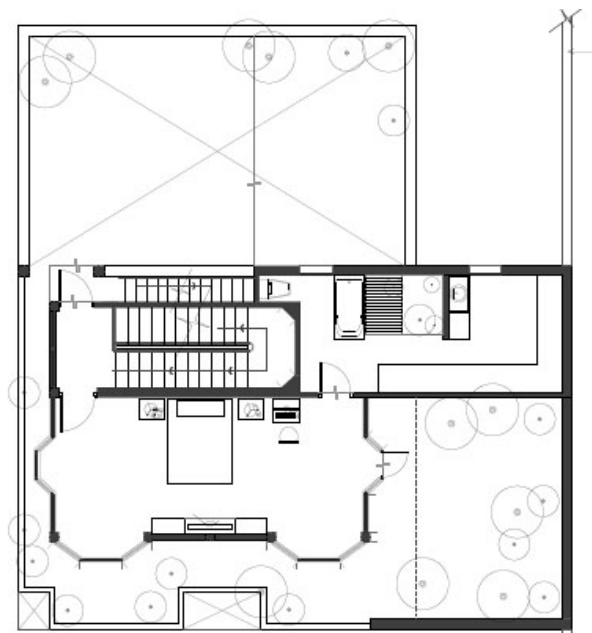

Fig. 140
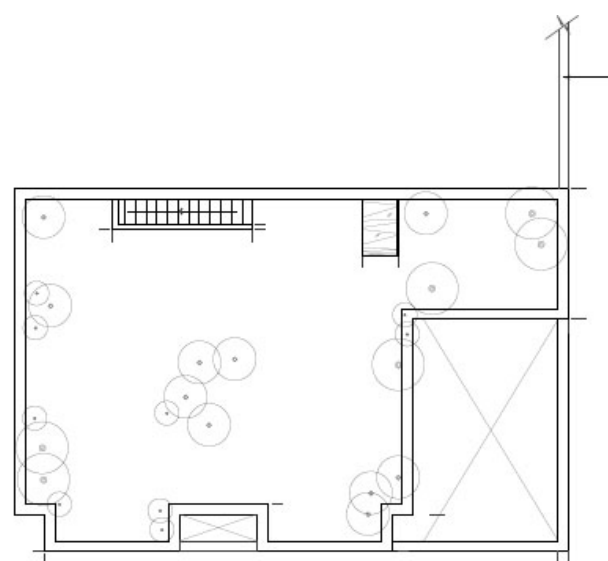

Fig. 141

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 139    First Floor Plan.
Fig. 140    Second Floor Plan.
Fig. 141    Roof Terrace Plan.
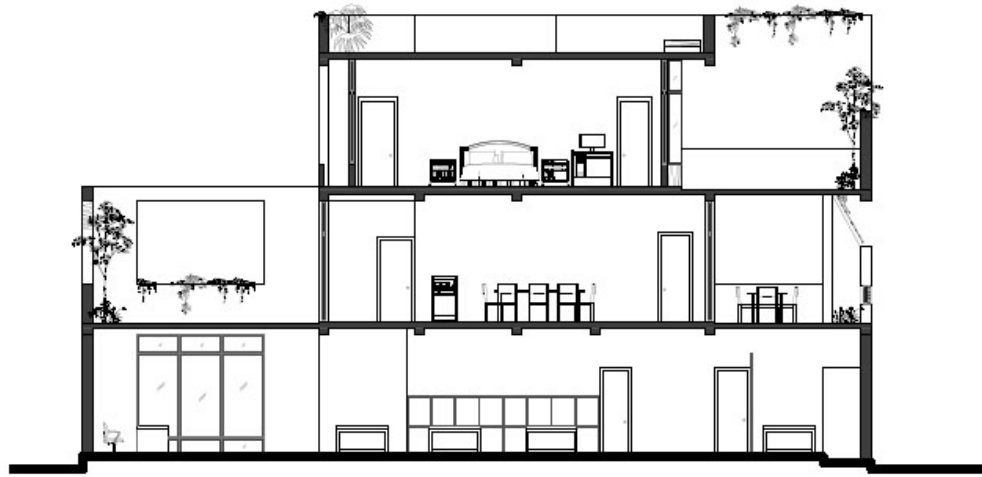
Fig. 142
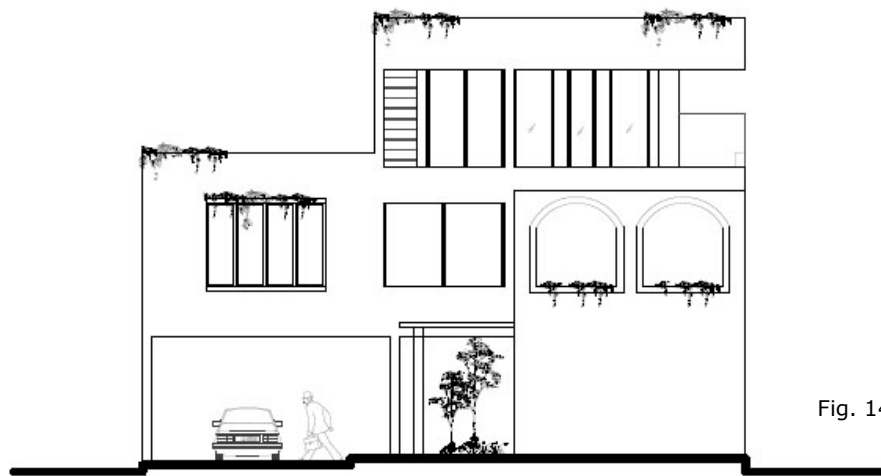

Fig. 143


Fig. 144

Cecil and Chloe de Soysa House.

Fig. 142    Section.
Fig. 143    Front Elevation.
Fig. 144    End elevation.

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## Conclusion

Geoffrey Bawa being born to a Burgher bourgeoisie family in British colonial Ceylon placed him in an advantageous position to begin with. Not only was he able to engage in globetrotting from a tender age, he received the first-hand Western epistemology only elites could afford; not to mention the social influence he could wield. Bawa's advent to architecture was by chance. As a practitioner, his personal wealth in conjunction with the governing-elite/political-class connections granted him with a great deal of design freedom – unhampered by budgetary restraint and client interferences – and won him domestic projects in plenty. Bawa's client allegiance was confirmed by analysing the socio-political and epistemological backgrounds of his domestic clients. Domestic projects for such clients he used as a stepping stone to subsequently receive larger civic commissions at the national level; afforded by the same contingent; explanatory on the direct political power they possessed.

Ena de Silva (nee *Aluvihare*) house by Geoffrey Bawa was for a Sinhalese family steeped in Western values. However, behind a veneer of westernisation, the patrons' desire for portraying family histories/glory laid lurking. Reverting to their former glory of either the medieval or colonial aegis at the epicentre of nationalism was underpinned by numerous factors. On one hand, when the need for a national identity arose in the political and socio-cultural spheres, as governing-elites, the family stepped up to portray their waning indigenous identities as a model for emulation for lesser strata – a means of restoring the status quo. On the other, when their social position was threatened at the hands of the era's unprecedented social mobility, it was a subtle means for them to legitimise the continuance of their group hegemony. Two disparate family histories (arguably, caste backgrounds) competed for domination, where the more deep-rooted and relatively unspoilt Kandyan architectural traditions (of both high and low cultures – grand and vernacular design traditions respectively) inherited by Ena pushed her husband Osmund's low-country contender with a hybrid provenance to a near state of recessivity. Ena's persistence, the architect's obliging as an elite himself, as well as the lauding the project received by fellow elites at the epistemological level are testaments to their consensus on the legitimate dominant culture of the island at nationalism. It was the architecture of this particular culture that was synthesised with architectural modernism by Bawa. However, the firm believer in traditional architecture that he was; his own lack of conviction towards modernism left a chasm in his composition. While the traditional content was masterfully represented, the modern portion of the house remained unresolved.

The de Soysa house was designed shortly after the neoliberal reforms, again for a highly westernised couple. However, this time, both the husband and wife were from the same caste background and status group (the 19th century bourgeoisie). When

nationalism was still alive but implicit, Bawa may have chosen to frame in the house, the new spirit of capitalism and its promises instead. In the age of capitalism, overt portraying of the glory wielded by the family in the recent colonial past had become inappropriate and neither did it help the nationalist cause. Thus, the time had come for Bawa to step out from his regionalist pigeonhole, and to do so the modernist 'tower house' was the key.[106] The traditional content – British colonial in this case – of the design was limited to the dwelling equipment, accessories and to a very limited extent, architecture. These contents in turn, competed with the modern minimalist composition. The collected pieces – arts and antiques from the island and elsewhere – alluded to the late-colonial/post-colonial elite patronage to history/arts, and also revealed the global reach and consumerist nature of the stratum. A green agenda too was pervasive throughout, hinting at the environmental consequences of neo-liberalism. Within the modernist experiment itself, various metropolitan influences in the visual arts was also decipherable.

Both houses – one from the initial phase and the other from the latter[107] – from Bawa's oeuvre embodied to varying extents, not only the foremost events in the political-economic spheres (marked as conspicuous incidents in history), but also the resultant socio-cultural trends of the country for the periods in question. If the architect or client was not directly instrumental in the process, they unveiled themselves obliquely via other means.


## Notes

[1] His paternal grandfather Ahamadu Bawa, was a Moslem lawyer from the ancient Arab port of *Beruwela* who travelled to England to further his studies and while there married Georgina Ablett, an Englishwoman of French Huguenot extraction. Their eldest son, Benjamin, became one of the most successful Colombo lawyers of his generation and in 1908 married Bertha Marion Schrader, a Dutch Burgher of mixed European and Sinhalese descent. That marriage produced two sons: Bevis born in 1909 and Geoffrey born in 1919. Benjamin Bawa died in 1923 and his sons were brought up by their mother and two maiden aunts in their Darley Road home in Colombo (geoffreybawa.com, 2011).

[2] under the 'Social and Professional' section.

[3] The 'Burghers' is a community of mixed European origin, slightly dislocated; as illustrated in *Running in the Family* by Michael Ondaatje (1993).

[4] The British who had assumed a superior racial status in the 19th century light of nationalism in Europe despised Burghers owing to their supposedly mixed racial origins. Similarly, they were subjected to the disgust of the indigenous groups who also by the late 19th century had their very own racial superiority agendas (especially, the Sinhalese). Moreover, their European ancestry aroused a suspicion among the indigenes.

[5] Jayewardene (1984: 126) believes that it was the strong colonial allegiance and accentuated separateness from the indigenes that denied this group of their rightful place within the postcolonial Sri Lanka. This consequently resulted in their exodus to former British colonies such as Canada and Australia where Burgher identity was more negotiable, and the lifestyle threatened at home was plausible.

[6] at a very personal level.

*"[…] his house [in Colombo] excludes the outside world, none of the social conflict seen in his architecture outside, has entered his private world. There, he, like me, becomes European in descent".*

[7] Firstly, there was the Chapman house in Ward place, Colombo, bought by Benjamin Bawa – Geoffrey Bawa's father. He also owned a holiday bungalow in *Nuwara Eliya* where a month each year was spent. Then there was an Anglo-Dutch style coconut/rubber plantation bungalow in *Kimbulapitiya* owned by Fred Schrader (maternal uncle of Geoffrey Bawa – Bertha Bawa's brother), and another estate bungalow of typical mid 19th century style in *Negombo* called 'Western Seaton' owned by Ronald Schradar (a cousin of Bertha Bawa). In 1945 Bertha Bawa got architect Oliver Weerasinghe to design a house on Torrington Avenue in Colombo for Geoffrey. On the other hand, there was the 'Brief' estate and bungalow that was bought by her for Bevis (Robson, 2004: 17).

[8] For instance he travelled to China in 1934 with his mother.

[9] in her study of the Eurasian in the Ceylonese/Sri Lankan context.

[10] and even going into extents of exploring 'alternative possibilities' in terms of his sexuality.

[11] His reluctance to form intimate friendships with the ones willing was underpinned by his fear of losing loved ones. Thus, he kept away from the grieves of sickness and death to the best of his ability, and could not stand the mixing the different spheres of friends that he kept separate from one another (Robson, 2004: 15, 184-186).

[12] the 'in-between' people that they were.

[13] He started studying literature and law at Cambridge in 1938 and passed out in 1945 as a barrister (Jayewardene, 1984: 127).

[14] He joined the legal firm of Gretian who was a renowned lawyer and judge (Jayewardene, 1984: 127).

[15] After his legal education, he disposed his inheritance and spent four years travelling in the USA, Europe and the Far East, This is what Robson (2004: 21) calls the 'grand tour' of 1946. At the end of his tour (in the beginning of 1948), he came to a halt in Italy temporarily. Seduced by its Renaissance gardens, Bawa resolved to buy a villa overlooking Lake *Garda* (http://www.geoffreybawa.com/life/Early_Life.html). In the dawn of Ceylon's independence, suddenly in 1948, he decided to return. Robson (2004: 22, 23) infers that he may have felt at that point that he was 'more Asian than European'.

[16] The term used by Roberts, Raheem and Colin-thomē (1989) for South Asians with European Origin. Jayawardena (2007) too acknowledges this in her own narration of the subject.

[17] upon Wynne Jones's – then head of the PWD in Ceylon – advise to find out if architecture suited him before embarking on its study.

[18] In autumn 1952, he returned to England and after a spell of travelling around Britain to see its country houses and gardens with British friends of elite origin, joined Architectural Association School (*AA*) in London's Bedford square in September 1954.

[19] Owing to his prior training, he was admitted to the 3rd year of the course.

[20] Between 1957 and 1989 Geoffrey Bawa was a partner in the firm of Edwards Reid and Begg (ER&B). His fellow partners from 1957 to 1967 were Jimmy Nilgiria and Valentine Gunesekera. The Danish architect Ulrik Plesner joined the practice in 1959 and worked as a close collaborator with Bawa until the end of 1966. After 1967 Bawa's sole partner was Dr. K. Poologasundram who acted as the engineer and office manager until the partnership was dissolved in 1989 (http://www.geoffreybawa.com/life/Practice.html).

[21] In 1990 Bawa founded a new and much smaller practice under the name 'Geoffrey Bawa Associates'. Channa Daswatte acted as his principal associate from 1993 until 1998 (http://www.geoffreybawa.com/life/Practice.html).

[22] *"It gave me so much pleasure, and someone else was prepared to pay for it"* was the remark by Bawa on his architectural practice (in Jayewardene, 1984: 127).

[23] He came from the 19th century bourgeoisie group.

[24] Arguably, this tendency they painstakingly sustained.

[25] Their husbands are not.

[26] who once served as the Inspector General of Ceylon police.

[27] This is the only option as Ena was reluctant to provide elaborate information.

[28] Based on his interviews with Ena, Robson reveals that how she had interviewed four different architects before Geoffrey Bawa. Although she had seen him *"driving around in his Rolls with his scarf blowing in the wind"* before, she had not known him.

[29] by Geoffrey's brother Bevis.

[30] *"…though she hated the colonial-style* [PWD-style] *bungalow that the architect Charles Gomez had built for her father at Aluvihara in 1956".*

[31] in conversation with Channa Daswatte in 1997 (in Robson, 2004: 74-75).

[32] There is no evidence to clarify that he took special interest in the project, and neither is his contribution acknowledged by Ena.

[33] Galle Road is one of the main traffic arteries of Colombo with a historic significance.

[34] one behind and the other to the right.

[35] In 1948, the state invited Sir Patrick Abecrombie (from the U.K.) to prepare a regional plan for Colombo and its surrounding region covering an approximate area of 220 square miles including the capital the adjoining built-up urban area and also a considerable extent of rural country in the periphery. His *Regional Plan* and proposal for the development of what is called the *Colombo Metropolitan Area* were subsequently amended according to the decisions made by the *Central Planning Commission* of 1957, to carry out the planned development of 'satellite towns' within the region in order to accommodate the overspill of the people from crowded city areas. It was felt that Abecrombie's plan was not adequate to accommodate the rapid changes taking place, especially, in Colombo and its surrounding suburban areas. The Government consequently anticipated assistance of the UNDP to mitigate its problems. This in fact, was the beginning of a build-up of a consensus on the vitality of a Master Plan for Colombo and its adjoining areas.

[36] After all, it was also here that the traditional revivals in various spheres of arts had taken place in the previous decades.

[37] On the other hand, it appears that the linguistic nationalism that ensued following the 'Official Language Act' of 1956 [i.e. the 'Sinhala only' act] (commonlii.org, 2011), which in turn, was mainly responsible for the formation of Ceylonese middle-class, had not affected the lives of the elite who still educated their children in the popular colonial schools in English medium. Although many schools were brought under state-control between 1960-65 as Robson (2004: 49) confirms, the former colonial schools still enjoyed elite-patronage – Act No. 05 of 1951 in fact, had left fifteen fee levying schools as for Jayewardene (1984: 190), and St. Thomas's was one of them.

[38] *"The inward oriented plan form, though often used by the elite in villages, is urban in attitude, and may have been very close in concept to urban housing type that existed in ancient Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa"* (Ashley De Vos, 1977: 42).

[39] The section used here has been drawn after the one produced in Robson (2004) with the front-facing loggia. The front elevation drawn anew conversely, shows the condition after its elimination.

[40] Matthwes (1978: 98) confirms this.

[41] the wall (along the longitudinal axis) inside the studio that shut-off the small courtyard at the left far-end of the plan, the longitudinal wall that separates the entrance passage and the guest bedroom, the short longitudinal wall section that demarcate the courtyard and the longitudinal wall separating the entrance passage and office room.

[42] The *Aluvihares* are the traditional trustees and guardians of *Matale Aluvihare*(the largest Buddhist temple complex in the district) and the *Devalaya* (temple for deities) dedicated to Lord *Kataragama*.

[43] under Chapter 4.

[44] after 1833.

[45] some turned upside-down.

[46] Ena discovered the abandoned millstones from a road-side.

[47] The main chores would have been grinding and drying, to pounding of grain to make flour.

[48] Tea, rubber and coconut were the main exports. Perera illustrates the Korean War as a conspicuous cause behind this. As Perera (1994: 370) tells us,
" *The scares presence of multinational capitol, and the improved conditions of the workers and rural masses as a whole, largely due to the bargains made by the leftist movements, made the gap between the rich and the poor comparatively small".*

[49] The social reality indicated in the tables prepared by the World Bank was contrary to the 'economic indicators' such as income per-capita that suggested the country's *"backwardness"* (Perera, 1994: 370).

[50] The SLFP government from 1956 chose not to support private investment and compelled the state to become the main entrepreneur. A way of achieving this was by their continuation in appointing the members of executive boards and also increasing their number that made state corporations just another variation of state-run institutions.

[51] The best example of this arrangement could be shown in the government's expansion of Sino-Sri Lanka rubber-rice agreement of 1952 to other economic sectors. This Perera affirms, by illustrating the significant change of market orientation in Ceylon's tea exports from a London-centred market to multiple buyers from around the world.

However, the country mainly traded with Britain – its main and long-time trading partner as well as for engaging in bi-lateral activities with China, India, Pakistan and the USSR. The USSR was in fact, was the main supplier of industrial goods for the country. The technical assistant sought for factory products from the USSR for example, was on conservative lines as it was justified by easy payment terms.

[52] Since 1957, the country faced a continuous balance of payment deficit in the current account that was largely met from external reserves. Although by the 1970s, the economy was gradually slowing down, the UF government's economic policy had helped the country to avoid a 'debt crisis' common to most postcolonial states in the 70s and 80s (Perera, 1994: 369).

[53] Taking into consideration the above circumstances, what was eventually ensued in Ceylon by the late-1950s, was a 'quasi Soviet-type' economic development guided by 'five year plans' hampered by austerity measures (Perera, 1994: 367-368).

[54] Lloyd Wright intended first, material expression, and secondly, achieved dematerialisation and consequent democratisation (Leatherbarrow, 1993: 109).

[55] He argues that since the 18th century, gradual separation between categories was established in Europe, and Le Corbusier was a part of this Enlightenment tradition. For instance, his proposal for a city of three million inhabitants reinforced the separation of these categories.

[56] This point was particularly made evident in UNP policies between 1965-1977 when they intermittently ruled.

[57] The name conveyed the meaning of the party opting for social equality. Its industrial stance was manifested by its two members lobbying for industrialization at the Legislative Council (Perera, 1994: 366).

[58] 'Collective consumption of goods' – production, organization and collective provision of consumption of goods and services by the state – stepped up the expansion of public transport, education and medical facilities to remote areas, and also increased the number of building projects in the form of small-scaled public-oriented projects such as bus stations/depots, hospitals, schools etc (Perera, 1994: 372).

[59] to the extent to be called *"Asia's largest"*.

[60] They were places either near the sources of raw materials (as the cement factory in *Puttalam*), or developed as a part of a larger scheme in which, raw materials were produced and processed (*Gal Oya* sugar factory cum plantation and *Ambewela* powdered milk factory and livestock farm).

[61] The industries according to Karunadasa (1999: 56) were uncompetitive in the global market as they were mainly aimed at a local market. Hence, scattering factories and plants throughout the island did not result well (Perera, 1994: 372, 378-379).

[62] Ena did certainly take advantage of the high property prices and sold the house a few years ago to an expanding-hospital chain.

[63] The pertinent factor that could be established here is the comparison between some of the countries the post-war hegemonic powers chose to rehabilitate and others such as Ceylon that they chose to neglect or subvert. The rehabilitation of the former group was caused by their defeats in World War II that compelled them to submit to hegemonic powers' political, economic controls and especially, cultural subordination. Some countries within this group on the other hand, owing to their long-term colonial presence, had voluntarily submitted in relation to these spheres. For them, independent self-expression through nationalism were either not an option or important as it was for Ceylon. Such countries according to Karunadasa were *"pumped"* with Western – mainly American – investments and funding, and their goods/services were also purchased complimentarily; all legitimized by the hegemonic institutions of the IMF and World Bank. Ceylon and other nations in the other group were deliberately neglected with none of such benefits and the process was legitimized. Hence, arguably, their 'nationalism' and 'socialist' inclinations had cost them the potential for 'economic development'.

[64] As for Perera (1994: 386), the overall division of the country's labour that the economy depended on, remained almost stagnant until the 1970s; unaltered by the state sponsored ventures after the late 1950s.

[65] She discusses the mixed legacy of regionalist architecture that dominated 1980s Asia.

*"Its taxonomical organization of vernacular architectures from specific Asian regions and its typological identification of their formal attributes drew on semantic explorations and methods of analysis used in structuralist anthropology. Yet the appropriation of these forms for their historic or cultural imagery suggested its postmodern orientation"* (Pieris, 2007: 130).

66 This was achieved by Cecil Hogan in his design for Papua New Guinea's parliament house. Here, he adopted a kind of compendium of roof typologies treating three village-types of 'typical' house forms merely as decorative shells, which seem almost obviously concerned with a near-literal representative documentation of the art and architecture of the country's multitudinous component cultures (Vale, 1992: 273, 279-280).

67 This British colonial period mansions found special referencing in the renowned book originally published in 1915 called *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources* by Wright (2005).

68 State corporations and the so-called 'co-operatives' continued to multiply during Sirimavo Bandaranaike's stint in power, resulting in at least 115 state enterprises. Their growth and development was not determinant on economic, but ideological and political considerations. Although these assumed the responsibility of most of the country's manufacturing and distribution, after 1971, their productivity gradually declined, despite the privileges and concessions enjoyed. These concessions ranged from accesses to raw materials to lack of public accountability for their cumulative debts (Matthews, 1978: 85).

69 Author's personal experience.

70 The 'chit system' assured for MPs and government ministers that their political henchmen and supports received the available state jobs. This was subsequently extended into other personal favours too.

71 as it was illustrated in Chapter 1.

72 The servants/subordinates came mainly from the same caste group and thus, were loyal to their masters (Roberts, 1995: 13).

73 *Delonix regia*

74 consisted of two interrelated documents; *Colombo Metropolitan Regional Structure Plan* and the *Colombo Urban Area Plan.*

**75** In urban development as the Colombo Master Plan illustrates, a several significant planned developments have occurred. These consist of the *Sri Jayawardenapura, Kotte* Parliamentary Complex, the Superior Courts Complex and the *Biyagama/Katunayaka* Free Trade Zones. The recent developments that has taken place (especially, within the last twenty years) has significantly transformed the urban environment, both in and around Colombo. As the UDA website explains,

*"[the] decision to prepare a new structure plan for the Colombo Metropolitan Region was greatly influenced by the changes during the last twenty years. All aspects of the region, such as infrastructure, transport, health, education, industry, housing and agriculture have been taken into account. The proposed strategies for physical formations are aimed at making the City of Colombo more orderly and environmentally friendly and yet highly dynamic and economically diverse. The strategy of the CMR Plan is to utilize this natural layout by making further improvements for sustainable development through the application of appropriate environmental and physical planning strategies"* (uda.lk, 2011).

76 They could pour-in a drink from the mini-bar, and sit restfully in the bed or the green roof, or even in the bath tub shielded from the outside by glazing, watching city lights beyond the green.

77 He was a grandson of the famous Jeronis de Sosya and son of C. H. de Soysa.

78 Between 1961-79 the traffic flows crossing the city boundary increased at a rate of 2.8% per annum. However, it has increased at a much higher rate of 5.4% per annum during the last two decades. The passenger growth observed within 1985 and 1995 was 4.7%, with bus transport growth at 4%, private vehicles at 11.8% and railways at 2.8%. The analysis by Kumarage (2007) showed that these growth rates were inversely proportional to the cost of travel. In other words, the cheapest forms have had the lowest growth.

79 *"At the time of economic liberalization in 1977, the state sector of Sri Lanka played a dominant role in production, distribution and financing in the economy. Major economic and social activities such as banking, plantations, large scale industries, transport, insurance, telecommunication, postal services, ports, electricity, import and distribution of petroleum, roads, health and education were either under public sector monopoly or largely undertaken by public enterprises"* (Salih, 1997: 176).

However, it was only in the 1990s that privatization was made rigorous.

*"Privatization was announced as a state policy in 1987 with a view to reducing the financial burden on some SOEs (state run enterprises) posed on the government as well as to improve efficiency, profitability and productivity. In preparation for privatization, certain steps were taken by the government from the early 1980s"* (Salih, 1997: 177).

According to the same source, some among these were:
• Improving the commercial orientation of the SOEs
• Allowing the private sector to compete in commercial activities by abolishing public
sector monopolies
• Transferring management of some loss making public enterprises to the private sector
under a contract system
• Franchising certain parts of public enterprises to the private sector
• Closing down of several non-economical enterprises.

In order to set up the legal and institutional framework for the act of privatization, the following functions were carried out.

> "[Two] legal enactments were passed in parliament. These were the Public Corporations Act No. 22 of 1987 for the conversion of government owned business units into public corporations and the Public Company Act No. 23 of 1987 for the conversion of public corporations and government owned business units (G.O.B.U) into public companies. The public companies so formed were relatively free to determine their employment levels, pay scales and were only partially subjected to government tender and investment approval procedures" (Salih, 1997: 177).

[80] The Ceylon Transport Board had the responsibility for providing public road transport between 1957 and 1978. Its fares were heavily subsidized and overcrowding was severe (country-data.com, 2011).

[81] Sri Lanka Transport Board and nine regional transport boards replaced the Ceylon Transport Board. The Sri Lanka Transport Board had responsibility for overall transport policy, budgeting and production planning, whereas the regional boards were responsible for the operation of regular regional and interregional bus services. In 1986 the revenue-cost ratio of the regional boards was 89 percent. Private road transport expanded rapidly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but as in the state sector, there was some contraction in the mid 1980s as a result of the declining security in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country (country-data.com, 2011).

[82] Having come in to operation in 1978, private buses by 1986, accounted for about half of the passenger-kilometres. Many buses in both the state and private sectors were in poor condition (country-data.com, 2011).

[83] Q. Perera reveals findings of a number of key personnel in relation to Sri Lanka's motor traffic research such as Amal Kumarage and Saman Bandara. The findings by experts reveal the build-up of the problem over the last few decades.

[84] By the mid 1980s, a second hand car market too had been formed and this extended the car ownership to the upper middle-class.

[85] and the TV too.

[86] He argues that this was no different to numerous prior influences from elsewhere (i.e. from the sub-continent).

[87] either as a traveller or a sight-seer for potential hotel projects.

[88] irrespective of the city's primitivism or modernity.

[89] Her answer to why the chairman had to do entertaining was that "*There weren't many hotels no?*".

[90] First was the Martenstein house in Colombo (1977-79).

[91] that lasted approximately a year.

[92] As she alludes to the fact, most of her foreign tours would have been with her husband.

[93] *Warusahennedige Jeronis Soysa* who was given the title of *Gate Mudaliar* by the British, and his son, the philanthropist, Charles Henry de Soyza of *Moratuwa*, were perhaps the most famous of de Soysas, while the philanthropist and politician Sir. James Pieris (originally *Telge James Pieris*) was the most famous one bearing the Pieris name (Jayawardena, 2007: 57-58). According to Chloe de Soysa, she is more closely related to the famous C. H. de Soysa than her husband (de Soysa, 2010).

[94] which culminated during the time of their latter progeny.

[95] The de Soysas especially, went to extents of taking colonial government's side during the Kandyan freedom struggle of 1848 and also Sinhalese-Muslim riots in 1915 (Jayewardene, 2007: 171-197). It is also recorded that the *Karave* faction in politics unanimously repudiated the general franchise offered by the British in 1931, in fear of losing their disproportionate political representation (Ivan, 2008: 50-55).

[96] The career history of Cecil de Soysa – analogous to many others belonging to his group – first as a private businessman, and then as the chairman of the Hotel Corporation cum private hotelier, is the best testament to this tendency.

[97] This point is illustrated in Chapter 7.

[98] Surely, the daughters probably have their graduation photos displayed proudly at home.

[99] After all, it was the less affluent rural members of the caste group that have perpetuated *Karave* cultural traditions to date, unscratched (Karava.org, 2011).

[100] Leatherbarrow (2002: 122-123), as many others, vindicates this on the large project sizes of the contemporary day.

[101] Any architect with even the most limited structural knowledge would have settled for a slab-beam for better aesthetics.

[102] This was achieved by the placement of the hotel on site as well as through the approach that leads to it. From the main road the visitors hit a series of unaltered dirt-roads – that are pervasive in the Dry-zone – until reaching the hotel forecourt. Closer to the hotel especially, the approach is through a lush green and shady surrounding of jungles and traditional house gardens. Surely, this is a more dramatic approach to the one of the de Soysa house. The hotel was carefully-draped around a boulder face, keeping a fair distance from it, as well as the surrounding ancient *Kandalama* tank.

[103] Obtained through conversations with a number of civil engineers and building contractors who worked in the 1980s.

[104] This was meant as a recuperation of the initial attempt by the same government between 1965-70.

[105] However, the UNP quest to maintain nationalism within its antithesis – capitalist modernity – is ironic and self-contradictory. Moreover, the implications of open economy would soon prove more detrimental than beneficial; conceivable via the 'trade deficit' that would plague its economy for years (Jayewardene, 1984: 18).

[106] It is a term coined by Robson (2004: 168).

[107] Three phases are made evident in the narration of Bawa's oeuvre by Robson (2004).

# Chapter 7    *Modus Operandi* of an Engineer Bricoleur;

## Valentine Gunasekara



*"To rob a people of opportunity to grow through invention or through acquisition of values from other races is to rob it from its future"* (Lim and Beng, 1998: 54).

This Modernity-instigated line of thinking could indeed be perceived as Gunasekara's motto (Fig. 145).

Fig. 145    Valentine Gunasekara (2011).

This chapter aims to achieve major outcomes that are all vital to understand the implications of Gunasekara's domestic architecture in Sri Lanka. Following a brief advent of his life, an examination will reveal the elitist circumstances of his domestic clients. The scholarly speculation of him predominantly catering to the middle-class will be clarified, making it plausible to draw a connection between the foregoing phenomenon and his career success. On the other hand, through the two selected elite domestic case studies, their respective underlying factors too will be revealed.

## 7.1 Personal Life

### A Petty-bourgeoisie Upbringing

Valentine Gunasekara was born in 1931 to a Catholic family in colonial Ceylon and his father was a landed proprietor who had lost most of his wealth in the great depression of the 1920s. Since the father passed away when Gunasekara was 2 ½ years old, his mother had to nurture a large family of eight children on her own. Thus, the Gunasekaras who once belonged to the 19th century bourgeoisie had suddenly been reduced to the petty-bourgeoisie. Despite financial hardships, with the help of two older siblings,[1] the younger ones were brought up within the vestiges of old family fortune and social connections (Pieris, 2007: 17).[2] The connections indeed, helped him to attend Royal College at Colombo 07, which was arguably one of the best schools in Ceylon at the time.[3] This school, predominantly attended by the rich and privileged in the Ceylonese society, would have been one of the last resorts to perpetuate by-gone bourgeoisie traditions of the family; at least in the epistemological realm.[4] By end of his school days, Gunasekara began as he puts it, *"to quite precociously look at schools abroad for architecture"* (Pieris, 2007: 18). Being an ardent Catholic, he was brought up in a closely-knitted family environment, and the financial hardships endured as a

child growing up would have enlivened a sense of compassion for others that he perpetuated throughout his life. This quality would have been spawned through the overwhelming communality pervasive, first within the immediate and inter family circles, and second, in the exclusive Catholic community. This sense of communality in turn, would have probably compelled Gunasekara to incline towards a socialist political stance – as for certain commentators – as an adult.[5] Despite preventing himself from making direct remarks, he alludes to his discontent towards the uncompassionate manners quintessential to elite living throughout the world (Gunasekara, 2011). His receptivity to Buddhist philosophy,[6] coupled with the teachings of his own faith rendered cultural transgression out of the question for Gunasekara – irrespective of hailing from a hybrid and rebellious culture. Gunasekara's fine upbringing under such influences was manifested subsequently as he became a good family man.[7]

**Advent to Architecture**

Becoming an architect in Gunasekara's case was not accidental, as he knew from a tender age what he wanted to become when he grows up (Pieris, 2007: 17).[8] Having begun his architectural studies at Architectural Association (*AA*) School in London in 1952, Gunasekara completed the course in 1957, before prolonging his stay by another six months participating in the course in Tropical Modernism newly formed and run by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew (Gunasekara, 2011).[9] After returning to Ceylon in 1957, he joined the renowned architectural firm ER&B, as he saw potential there for practicing good architecture (Gunasekara, 2011). In 1959, along with colleague Geoffrey Bawa, Gunasekara was elevated to an equal partner of the firm (Robson, 2004: 50).[10] In 1965 he won a Rockefeller grant and spent the whole of the following year touring the USA and meeting famous American architects. This marked a decisive turning point in his design ideology. Despite the design freedom enjoyed at the ER&B, his subconscious and conscious vengeance towards existing and developing architectural patterns led to the passion of discovering a unique architectural style for a more 'just' society (Rajapaksha, 1999: 13). The spiritual person that Gunasekara was, within the process, his life philosophies extended into architecture (Pieris, 2007: 19).[1]

*Patrons*

Since it was inferred that Gunasekara's domestic clients were from the middle-class, the point needs substantiation. This is undertaken by the table below that analyses his clients in terms of their social standing. The outcome revealed that the deduction was accurate, where most of them in fact, were poised between the political-class and the middle-class.

## 7.2 Selected Domestic Works; Criteria

It is pertinent to establish here, the criteria on which, the following projects were considered as case studies, where three factors are mutual to them. The Illangakoons as well as de Silvas arguably, belong to the political-class sphere in the Sri Lankan class hierarchy, and both families gave the architect a free-hand in design and construction processes. Moreover, since both houses are from within the Colombo district itself, it enables a common ground in terms of the secondary form modifier – the climatic factors.

There are three grounds based on which, the two situations become dualities of potential comparison. First, the Illangakoons belong to the 'traditional elite' group with a renowned ancestry, and their accompanying corpus of built traditions in turn, run back centuries; at least to the medieval times. Sepala (the husband) belongs to the 'low-country' division within the traditional elite sphere and, Sunethera (the wife), to the 'up-country' contingent, where how this internal duality was resolved is interesting to explore. Considering their gradual decline in political power over time, the family arguably finds a place in the political-class. Second, the Illangakoon project is taken from 1970-71 that is very much near to the epicentre of 1956 nationalist outburst, and lies within the initial phase of Gunasekara's work. Third, the Illangakoons were ardent Anglican Christians and their lifestyle showed a hybrid propensity.

Conversely, the de Silvas – both Upali (husband) and Manel (wife) – by genealogy, belonged to the colonial petty-bourgeoisie turned post-independence middle-class that later saw an upward mobility after open-economy, to ascend into the 'upper middle-class'; and from there, to the political-class. Their ancestry is neither recorded nor well-known. The project coming from 1985-88 on the other hand, is a period when post-1977 neo-liberalism and underplayed-nationalism were at their heights, and the last phase of Gunasekara's architecture too, lied within the same period. Although the de Silvas were Buddhists in faith, they were neither religious nor culturally conservative, but outward oriented.[11] Their cultural hybridity is much different to that of the foregoing faction, or to the Sri Lankan middle-class in general. Hence, this could be taken as an opportunity for comparison. Consequently, the two case studies have the potential for unearthing not only the underlying political, economic and socio-cultural changes of the time, but also personal agendas of two dissimilar social groups reflected in architecture. Other than the dualities, there are other benefits too in these selections. The two projects together, cover the entire professional career window of Gunasekara and useful to illustrate how his client patronage was changing within the nationalist period. Another significant point of consideration in the selection is that unlike the majority of Gunasekara's domestic clients, some of the individuals involved in these projects are still alive and accessible.[12]

### *Leading Saga*

Sepala Illangakoon hailed from a traditional elite family from southern Sri Lanka that had been in prominence since the Portuguese times (de Saram, 2010).[13] Sunethra's father on the other hand, was a *Senevirathna*, associated with the same contingent. She is also related to the renowned up-country clan of *Maduwanwela* of which, the fame is mainly attributed to the *Maduwanwela Maha Dissave*[14] and his ancestral *Maduwanwela Walauwe*[15] (Illangakoon, 2011). Sunethra's maternal grandfather[16] was the first Sinhalese Speaker of, and maternal grandmother[17] the first woman appointed to, the State Council of Ceylon (Illangakoon, 2011).[18]

Sepala was a planter who had lived most of his life in estate bungalows in the hill-country. Sunethra in fact, reminisces how after her marriage, she went to live for some years with Sepala in what she calls his *"wonderful estate bungalow"* surrounded by picturesque views and gardens.[19] Estate bungalows in Sri Lanka are generally associated with white British plantation owners and their indulgent life styles (Perera, 1994: 192-194), and it was only after independence that Ceylonese filled the vacuum left by them. Sepala according to Sunethra, was one of the first Ceylonese to venture into the profession (Illangakoon, 2011). In 1939, Sunethra's father on his retirement had spent a considerable sum buying ¾ acres of land on Rosemead Place, Colombo, that had an old British colonial period house standing on it.[20] Sunethra received approximately 25 perches (632 Sq. m) of this estate on her marriage. The Illangakoons' shift from *Hapugastenna* in the hill-country to Colombo frames the capital's centrality even two decades after independence. The 1956 religious and linguistic nationalism or the resultant upward social mobility had done too little to alter the city's status as the political, economic, socio-cultural and epistemological centre of the island. Considering the fact that Sepala by that time, was in a position to delegate his plantation's work to assistants, and as Sunethra did not work, their children's education would have been the key intention behind their move, having left behind a comfortable life in the plantation.[21] Sunethra believes that Valentine Gunsekara was introduced to them by a friend and as she and her husband did not have a clear idea about how they wanted the house to be, the architect was given a free-hand (Illangakoon, 2011). Chris de Saram (2010) as a close observer of the project confirms that the Illangakoons did not tamper with architect's creativity.[22]

### Whereabouts

Location:

The Illangakoon house was commissioned in 1970 to see completion by 1972. Rosemead Place since the British period, has been one of the most sought-after residential neighbourhoods in Colombo. For Perera (1994: 386), it is among the few elite enclaves within the colonial-created urban city.[23] It was stated earlier that the plot where the house stands today, used to be part of a much larger estate that has over the years, been subjected to many sub-divisions. The sub-divisions hint at two timely realities. On one hand, the progeny of the nationalist and socialist change – the new middle-class – was by the early 1970s, flocking into Colombo to seek for new opportunities, and consequently, the capital saw a hitherto-unforeseen agglomeration (K. T. Silva, 2005: 112). This fleeting population growth by the late 1950s, called for planners to form 'satellite towns' around Colombo (uda.lk, 2011).[24] On the other hand, the elites too were flocking into Colombo in the wake of the long-anticipated Land Reform Act of 1972 that in turn, intensified the rate of subdivisions. The pro-socialist United Front Government's act was a watershed moment that had reduced the land ownership by an individual (over 20 years) to a maximum of 50 Acres. Although the long-overdue measure was applauded by many political commentators such as Matthews (1978: 84), the high-handed manner over how 400,000 acres were distributed to landless peasants was widely-repudiated.[25] The feudalists might have conceived this measure as a threat to their traditional land-associated privileges and thus resorted to means to elude it (Atapattu, 2010).[26] Consequently, establishing a better foot-hold in the capital through new investments was perhaps their logical reaction to the impending crisis. The colonial-period urban properties of their ancestors that had hitherto been used for short-stays [as illustrated by Arnold Wright (2005)] were replaced by ones built anew for permanent habitation. Thus, when their natural settings in the villages were tempered with, the traditional elite sought refuge in the capital.

Although the Illangakoons were affected by this controversial piece of legislation,[27] as many others from their estate-oriented status group, they too had eluded the Business Acquisition Act of 1971 that allowed the state to nationalize many privately-held assets as part of its socialist policies (Matthews, 1978: 85).[28] It was the bourgeoisie faction that was mainly affected by the law, whereas the Illangakoons remained unscratched until 1975, when the Land Reform (Amendment) Law affected the bulk of cash-crop cultivated land (Perera, 1994: 377).[29] Until this point, the principal locus of production – the plantation sector – was in the hands of British and Ceylonese bourgeoisie (Perera, 1994: 376-377). Consequently, the Illangakoons too lost a significant stake of their estate (de Saram, 2012).[30]

For Perera (1994: 377, 413), the ascent of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranayake to premiership exalted her Kandyan aristocratic relatives to influential positions.[31] Hence, in favour of regaining political influence the faction enjoyed in history, their land-based social privilege was traded-off; yet not completely.[32] As Perera (1994: 387) reveals, although the Rent Control Act that was introduced by 1972 to be followed by House Property Act of 1973, were similar socialist measures to reduce the power of private landlords,[33] they too were subjected to abuse and distortion by political motives.[34] These so-called 'progressive legislature' were subsequently extended to cover aspects from minimum lot sizes for buildings [20 perches (505 Sq. m)] to maximum buildable square areas [2000 Sq. Ft. (185 Sq. m)] (Perera, 1994: 387). Consequently, by the early 1970s, the feasibility of building a palatial house anew in Colombo had been eliminated, provided that retaining a colonial palatial house without sub-division itself, was a luxury not many could afford. Illangakoon house plot trapped the aforementioned realities.

Approach and First Impressions:

In the wake of land reforms, Gunasekara would have pre-conceived what was to become of the larger estate in which, he had 25 perches (632 Sq. m) to design on. He intuitively designed the house to occupy 15 perches (379 Sq. m) while leaving the balance outside as a front garden strip to ease any possible future congestion. Owing to the hitherto-unforeseen plot limitation, the architect would have attempted to, in de Saram's (2011) words, *"create the illusion of space"* (which is not really there) by making the garden also a part of the house.[35] On the other hand, Peiris (2007: 57) notes in regard to the design that the entire site has been well-utilized as a *"spatial-container"* as against the palatial-type building placement previously employed by Gunasekara. When the plots were down-sized, the government regulations required a given house to have a 'frontage' and a 'rear space'. The former was dependant on the nature of access road while the latter on the number of floors (uda.lk, 2012). The ground floor plan of the Illangakoon house reveals that a strip of land [of approximately 10 feet (3 meters)] that runs the entire width of the plot has been allocated as the rear space, while a frontage is not evident. Sunethra's father's original estate faced Rosmead Place (Road) and stretched towards the interior of the block. If the estate is divided into four equal quarters, the old house stood on the north-western quarter. Another house was subsequently built on the south-western quarter that was later occupied by Sunethra's mother until her passing (Illangakoon, 2011). Consequently, Sunethra inherited the north-eastern segment while the left-over segment was given to her brother, where another house stands today. The access road from Rosemead Place was strategically-placed at the linear division to penetrate the land, to turn west at the intersection of the four boundaries to provide access to the mother's house. The opposite turn has a dead-end and acts as a narrow entrance

court into the land-locked house (Fig. 162).[36] As Sunethra reminisces, the entrance way to the house at the time of its completion, ran through an extensive garden. Now, each property is demarcated by lofty boundary walls (Illangakoon, 2011).

As one enters the narrow tarmac access path from Rosemead Place, the house is far from sight. This approach way itself conveys a tunnel-like quality as it is contained by high boundary walls on either side and dappled by the falling branches of trees from the neighbouring gardens. Hence, only when one strides a few yards forward and reaches the bend, a high wall with an entrance door protected by a wide cantilevering canopy above come into view (Fig. 167), giving the first indications of a house. As the visitor draws closer, the weathered brick wall with vegetation growing on the surface and the horizontal beam demarcating the roof terrace level that frames the sky are revealed through the camouflaging foliage (Fig. 146). The foliage breaks the strong geometrical edges of the façade. Consequently, the first impression is a strong sense of natural affinity. Although the overall three-dimensional form is a rectangular box with chunks irregularly removed, the gaze from the outside is limited to a wall-like façade.


Fig. 146

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 146     The front elevation at the end of the access path (2011).

### Traditional Reminders with a Twist

Plan Compilation:

Gunasekara's ground plan is reminiscent to a Kandyan manor house in many ways; from its placement on site to the configuration on plan. Gunasekara placed the house far away as possible from the principal access road, to occupy the north-eastern quadrant of the site.[37] The rectangular compound (demarcated by four lanky walls) that he created was placed against the rear and eastern boundaries of the plot with dead walls, to have a forecourt in the south-facing front and the western side, resembling a *Midula* (entrance sand court) of the traditional arrangement (Bandara, 2009: 8-18). The forecourt was accessed through a garden of foliage along the narrow

entrance way earlier-described. Arguably, the traditional idea of *Midula* was abstracted in this way, however, retaining the dramatic experience of arriving at a Kandyan elite house.

The ground floor plan illustrates the vacant and built-up areas within the compound (Fig. 163). The forecourt extends to the interior through the two access points on the façade – one for pedestrians and the other for vehicles – into a spacious car-porch that appears to be open-to-sky. Although covered with a flat concrete roof slab, the two large square openings on it (clad in glass) and the small strip of open-to-sky space in front (that has been formed as a garden), together, flood the space with ample light to create this quality. This combined area is the largest courtyard of the house. At the back of the plan facing the northern boundary, is another strip-like space running along the shorter side of the rectangle, forming the rear-garden. There is in fact, another smaller internal courtyard, placed against the eastern boundary wall. This configuration suggests that Gunasekara, displaying his artistic propensities, has taken the concept of the traditional courtyard house and turned it inside-out. Here, the habitable spaces that were placed along the periphery of the generic Kandyan plan were pushed to the centre, to be surrounded by courtyards. The plan of the generic Kandyan elite house was framed by an array of cultural motives – lifestyle, traditions, customs and beliefs (Ashley De Vos, 2010).[38] Some of them, especially the latter, were neither tangible nor explanatory along Western epistemological lines. Within Gunasekara's Western ideological stance of rationality, there would not have been room for such unscientific discourses. Consequently, the foregoing would have been representational of a dying tradition, without considering its intangible currency.

The upper floor plan in contrast, illustrated a rationalist approach, where different spaces were allocated for distinct functions, each having sufficiently cut-off from others (Fig. 164). For instance, all habitable rooms on the upper floor are cell-like spaces, arranged in rows for efficiency and privacy.   The living room that is clearly demarcated by walls, connects the two separate sets of rooms together.


The *Parti*:

Arguably, the mainstay of Gunasekara's plan configuration is the *parti*, as the study of floor plans reveals the presence of three prominent lines (in the form of walls) that makes the foremost spatial divisions within the compound (Fig. 163). These lines break the built-up area into four unequal quadrants. This configuration is consistent with the larger sub-division of the site, hence, is conceivably a pattern. Gunasekara was indeed interested in patterns and this point will be taken up again later.

The foremost *parti* division is represented by a curve wall that defines the large courtyard (that consists of the car-porch and small courtyard), and is broken in two

places to provide access to the house interior. The more prominent opening in the middle opens onto the entrance foyer, while the smaller and less-apparent one (towards the eastern-side) to the service quarter. The next line divides the northern end of the plan in two longitudinally, to connect with the curve at the southern end to extend the division. The last line is the one adjacent to the eastern courtyard (perpendicular to the eastern wall) that encloses the service tract on one side – two other sides are defined by the peripheral walls of the compound and the one remaining, by the end of the curved wall. On the upper floor, *parti* makes an 'I' shaped configuration by two parallel sets of lines – each set dividing the plan into three unequal segments along the long and short sides of the rectangle. On the sides of the 'I' shaped plan there are voids, and it is these that make the ground floor courtyards plausible. As it was stressed before, this configuration suggests that Gunasekara conceived the inter/intra family relationships to happen on the ground floor, while providing each of its members the option to extend the latter into the upper level. More seminally, he provided them with cell-like private rooms (separated from one another with bathrooms) to retire to solitude. This illustrates the entire horizon of possibilities conceived by the architect. On one hand, Gunasekara's own belief on what suits a modern Eastern Christian family – in his understanding of the value given to interactions between family members in the Eastern context, and the emphasis on the same by his Catholic faith – and on the other, the necessity of privacy in its modern $20^{th}$ century sense was facilitated in the design as two extremes, providing the Illangakoons with an opportunity to oscillate within them as appropriate. This conciliatory stance articulates the liminality of the family that he would have identified.

Subtle Tokens:

The house displays a traditional undertone in terms of certain borrowings from indigenous and traditional architectures. The set of concrete columns supporting the living and dining room roof slabs demonstrate an abstract resemblance of timber pillars inside a Kandyan temple (Fig. 147, 148). These columns, triangular in profile, are tapered towards the top and display flat triangular column heads. Their fare-faced surface treatment and dark brown colour, enhance similitude to slender timber columns found in many buildings associated with the Temple of Tooth in Kandy (i.e. *Magul Maduwa*), yet without the embellishments. Moreover, all upper floor windows are protected with iron grills. Although visually, the grills impart a prison-like feel to these spaces, the rigidity of the patterns have been somewhat diminished by their modest floral adornments (Fig. 150). The four-pedalled flower repeated, is a popular one in the traditional motifs in the Sinhalese grand design tradition (Nimal de Silva, 2010). Among such contiguities to indigenous architectural details, there exist colonial contents.

The most prominent is the base of the main spiral staircase that ends with circular steps; each descending step surpassing the one above in size – a detail pervasive in the Dutch colonial house verandas (Fig. 147).[39] The ground floor ceilings are framed with prominent horizontal beams of concrete and the exposed shuttering marks of smaller planks registered in the fare-faced concrete soffit draws contiguity to timber ceilings of colonial houses. The colonnade of the entrance foyer strengthens the colonial connection. Even the light fittings that Gunasekara selected for the public areas are reminiscent to glass chimney pieces (protecting oil lamps) that used to dangle in the low-country verandas – distinctive to Dutch and British eras.



Fig. 147

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 147     The entrance foyer accessed via the garage space (2011).

Apart from these traditional architectural contents that have all been subtly integrated, there is a more apparent representation in the house – the colonial gardens inside the Kandyan courtyards. The colonial garden in Ceylon takes after the picturesque classical tradition, culled from Renaissance Italianate gardens by their Western designers. In the Illangakoon house, the open lawns are surrounded by flower beds, where each flower bed contains a single variety of either flowering plants or colourful shrubberies. Flowerbeds are demarcated by graphite stones irregular in size. The idea of using flower pots, which is essentially a colonial impartation on Sri Lankan landscape design, has also found its place here. The flower pots are either kept in the corners or dangle from above.

The striking aspect here however, is that the Italianate garden has been realised with tropical plants mostly endemic to Sri Lanka. The ferns, shrubs, palms and runners that subsume the facades and courtyard walls, all inform contiguity to the traditional Kandyan house that usually merged into a pallet of green.  The Illangakoon house can arguably be categorised as a 'recessive' representation – a state of conscious withdrawal pertaining in this particular case to the traditional content deployed in

architecture. This conscious withdrawal is identified by Bandyopadhyay (in press, unpaginated *mss*) in relation to Laurie Baker's works in India.[40] As he notes,

> *"Recessively suggest not a complete absence but a degree of latency, a holding back; it is always there – everywhere, yet not really there – deflected further or made inaccessible. [Baker's praxis] recede[s] into a renewed relationship with the dense background of the everyday, [in which,] he foregrounds the site, the life and aspirations of his clients […]".*

Gunasekara achieved indeed the above and his addition to Baker's formula was the recessive traditional architectural content concealed under a veneer of operative agendas of technology and culture (lifestyle) that were selectively fore-grounded.



Fig. 148

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 148      The courtyard facing the garage and entrance foyer (2011).

### *Space Articulation*

Way of Living:

In a rapidly globalizing world, Gunasekara recognized the changing Sri Lankan lifestyles in the process of assimilating Western values. However, he managed to maintain aspects that induce family gatherings and hospitable spirits, in order to make home life desirable (Pieris, 2007: 13-14). It is notable how the design has been conceived with due emphasis on family spirit, perhaps upon the architect's own personal conviction as a *"family man"* (Weeramuni, 2010).[41] Consequently, preference in providing for personal needs has not only been centred upon the parents, children have also been given equal consideration. This is discernible by measures from providing separate bathrooms for the two children, to the degree of careful thought that has gone in to making their bedrooms visually-appealing. Whereas architects often design buildings as artefacts that must remain uncluttered by personal effects in order to preserve their aesthetic integrity, Gunasekara's houses were 'homes'

designed for living in with children (Pieris, 2007: 14). Family life would have been for him, a form of congregation,[42] and it is the personal belongings that add dynamism while attributing identity to spaces. The pragmatic surfaces, integration of furniture/decorative into built surfaces and anticipation of familial intimacies emphasise the pleasure of dwelling as a collective unit. Each design decision was underscored by a disciplinary ethic that understood the need to discipline children, as well as to give their creativity the desired freedom (Gunasekara, 2012).

The house has been zoned in a manner of great efficacy symptomatic to modern rationalist planning (Fig. 163, 164). The public areas where the extra-family interactions happen and the services areas essential for household's functioning are both placed on the ground floor. The exclusive spaces where intra-family interactions occur are strategically placed on the upper floor, hidden away from the public eye. The upper floor spatial arrangement is comparable to the same practice of exclusion found in colonial houses from Dutch and British periods (Lewcock et al., 2002: 183-240, 262-300).[43] Traditional Sinhalese courtyard houses conversely, discouraged such exclusions, which were articulated in their relative lack of space divisions (Wijetunge, 2011b: 28). In the Illangakoon house, while the ground floor is reminiscent of the latter, the upper floor frames an inclination towards the former, assuming a fruitful convergence of architectural configurations from two disparate periods.

The spaces meant for specific functions, rationalized spatial sequences and zoning, also entail an avant-garde tendency. Here, the life-style modern architects intended for the 20th century urban denizens converge with the unique one demanded by the patron family. Since the inhabitants themselves were meant to engage in cooking and cleaning in this new lifestyle, sufficient spaces were allocated for the functions in modernist planning. Contrary to this approach, in the Illangakoon house, services areas such as kitchen, storage and servants' quarters are tucked-away into a corner of the plan with an insignificant functional access from the garage. The lack of priority given to these functions, or ignorance towards the employees who fulfil them, is identifiable by their crammed-configuration, and the fact that they are insufficiently lit and ventilated (the only light these spaces get comes through the roof-light above). Hence, Illangakoon house could be placed on par with British colonial period elite domestic predecessors – especially, the PWD-type house – where such spaces were discretely arranged, prompted by the need of maintaining a social distance with servants and maids. Arguably, this was an implicit rejection of, or ignorance towards, the notion of upward social mobility that was the buzzword of the period.

As Sunethra admits, the family lived a Western lifestyle in every conceivable manner (Illangakoon, 2011). The assortment of spaces in the house illustrates that the they drove around in motor vehicles, received/entertained visitors and family in the living room, dined in the dining space, watched television in the TV lobby, worked in the

office room, accommodated guests in the guest bedrooms, retired to the privacy of bedchambers or withdrew to the seclusion of the roof terrace. Seemingly, these were all modern Western lifestyle practices that prompted either mutual entertainment or solitude. On the other hand, they received less-important visitors in the entrance court/foyer and concealed the existence of their servants; both characteristic practices of the feudalists.  Therefore, on one hand, the Illangakoons aspire to Western cultural norms while perpetuating certain traditional practices. This liminal tendency in fact, attributes a certain hybridity to their cultural repertoire. However, Gunasekara as the implementer, took the Western architectural conceptions and modified it to suit the local conditions; both cultural and climatic. Thus, rather than mimicry, a creative fruition was envisaged.

Gunasekara stressed the importance of culture to the development of the human spirit, and exposed its essential factors of faith, family, community and personal identity (Pieris, 2007: 13-14). However, the particular culture he had in mind was the hybrid Sinhalese-Christian culture that he ideologically admired to be more liberal and on par with Socialist sense of communality,[44] and not the majority's Sinhalese-Buddhist counterpart. This personal view confirms of the cultural clash that was looming in the immediate post-independence.

A Stroll Along:

As one enters the compound from the outside, a tall spacious volume – demarcated at the distance by a curvilinear perimeter wall – acts as a welcoming space. This space in fact, makes the exterior smoothly flow into the semi-enclosure of the entrance court and this threshold of a space ensures continuity with the outside (Fig. 163). The two rectangular openings[45] on the slab above the entrance court give the sensation of entering a medieval Kandyan courtyard house. The curved wall opposite the garden beyond the entrance court and the much-wider one to the right, conceal from view the service spaces beyond (already mentioned). The car-port is placed on the right side of the entrance, covered by the roof slab above. In an age when owning a motor vehicle was a luxury for most Ceylonese; here it became a status symbol at its best.

Spatial differentiation being achieved through level differences rather than wall divisions is a unique feature of the design. Spaces have seen conjunction visually and disjunction level-wise. From the garage one steps up to the first floor lobby level that appears to be floating about a foot above the entrance level.  From the side of this rectangular space, rises a spiral staircase and its treatment as a sculptural piece is symptomatic to the modernist *avant-garde*. As a visitor approaches the spiral, he is inevitably drawn towards the less-interrupted and more spacious volume beyond. The space right in front is the dining area, the floor level of which, also floats a couple of

steps above the lobby level. From the left hand corner of the first floor-level, one can step down a couple of feet, into the spacious rectangular living space. Both the living and dining spaces open out to the densely-planted rear garden that blurs/reconsiders the inside-outside dichotomy. In other words, the inside has become outside and *vice versa*. Garden foliage also helps to undermine the domination of the building's interior geometric form.

The ground floor living and dining spaces not being extensive in size, portrays the tendency of the Illangakoons practicing Christian faith, to engage in occasional entertainment of outsiders at a more private level; perhaps on special occasions such as birthday parties or Christmas (Fig. 158).[46] On the other hand, the upper floor living space was exclusively meant for the family members. From the side of the dinging space, one can step down into the only guest bedroom with its own attached bathroom and wardrobe space. This bedroom also opens up to the rear garden through a panelled window that brings in the view of the shady green atmosphere outside. From behind the spiral staircase, one can step down into the pantry, flanked by a small (heavily-planted) internal courtyard that provides ample natural light and ventilation to the space. It is notable how a fully-equipped pantry cupboard has been included as a show piece, when the actual cooking was done in the adjoining space concealed from view. The concept of the pantry was first introduced in the PWD houses (Pieris, 2007: 49-50). This marks the up to date nature of the Ceylonese elite lifestyle and its willingness to assimilate practices and apparatus arriving from the West anew.[47]

Having gone up the steps to the upper floor, one enters a narrow rectangular living space that is now used as the TV lobby. At the far end of this space, a couple of feet above, the perpendicularly arranged bedroom wing – containing one master bedroom and two bedrooms for the children – is hidden away by its recessed internal-facing wall. From the public spaces below and the family space on the upper floor, the bedrooms mark a spatial division at a more personal level. The spacious master bedroom has been designed with a fully-equipped attached bathroom, a private wardrobe, in-built work desk, floating cupboard storage as well as strategically-arranged counter tops (for belongings and accessories); manifesting the level of customisation and detailing evident in a five star hotel room. The fact that this trend has also been extended to the children's' bedrooms conveys a clear idea about the level of luxury demanded by the inhabitants, and how it was painstakingly accommodated by the architect. Such a level of luxury was unthinkable for a majority of the rural population (or urban contingent for that matter) in Ceylon at the time. This indicates the great degree of disparity that existed between elites and masses by the early 1970s; more than a decade after the 1956 political change.

Behind the spiral stairs is a small office room, again carefully customised to the personal requirements of Mr. Illangakoon,[48] open to the outside through wide windows. As the section (Fig. 146) illustrates, the spiral staircase reaches the open roof terrace – that cover the front end of the upper floor plan – to be hidden inside a concrete casing. From the terrace (Fig. 165), this is represented as an ornamented sculptural piece, placed in an empty volume of which, the boundaries are the horizontal slab plain below that connects with the horizon at the far end, roofed by the sky. Spectacular view of the Colombo's surrounding green from the roof terrace is the climax of the series of green glimpses one experiences by thoroughfare. In the early 1970s, Colombo did not boast of a sky-line and hence, remained more or less green. The green zones the British planners in the past had envisioned for the colonial capital city – after the parks and gardens in London – were still maintained by the subsequent post-independent nationalist governments.  Although access has been provided to the two lower roof terraces from the upper floor living area, their usage as habitable spaces is unsatisfactory; hence, remains largely unused. The only conventional roof of the building covers the bedroom wing,[49] and according to Sunethra Illangakoon (2011), this was a future provision for expansion.

### Traditional Reminders Extended

Materiality and Weathering:

In the Illangakoon house the structure is exposed to reveal its role and so is the external envelope for the same effect. The internal envelope in contrast, has been diminished in effect. Contained within the structure and external envelope, the internal envelope engages in an intense dialogue with them. Sprouting from the ground, internal walls at times reach the ceiling and enclose on four sides, spaces of privacy. At times they stop short of the ceilings (with one/two sides reaching the soffits) to loosely define spaces. How the contours complement this task was discussed earlier.

The materiality of the house is striking. Gunasekara has paid reverence to the modernist *avant-garde* principle of material honesty and used a series of fare-faced finishes throughout. One of the most notable is the ceilings that he has left untreated as an articulation of the construction process as did masters of modernism such as Le Corbusier and Aalto (Menin and Samuel, 2003) (Fig. 154).  As Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993: 5) illustrate one of the most ancient commonplaces in architecture that, *"[finishing] ends construction,* [and] *weathering construct finishes".* However, they claim otherwise as *"[…] eventually every one falls under the influence of the elements, and this end is known from the beginning",* thus repudiating the claim that weathering *"constructs"* finishes when the action of the elements deteriorate the building – *"Weathering does not construct, it destroys"* (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow,

1993: 30). Over time, the natural environment acts upon the outer surface of a building in such a way that it's underlying materials are broken-down. When it is left uninterrupted, leads to failure of materials, and the final dissolution of the building itself; leading to *"ruination"* – an outcome hardly desired by neither the architect, builder, nor the owner. Buildings need constant maintenance that aims at *"revival"* via conservation and replacement, in order to prevent this (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 5). Gunasekara's buildings, analogous to the ones by the modernists who realised the expenses involved in this matter, were designed to be 'maintenance-free'.[50] However, no matter how maintenance-free the construction, weathering is inevitable.

> *"In the mathematics of the environment weathering is a power of subtraction, a minus, under the sign of which newly finished corners, surfaces, and colors are 'taken away' by rain, wind, and sun. But is weathering only subtraction, can it not also add and enhance? Deleterious consequences can be complemented by the potential value of sedimentation and the accumulation of detritus on a surface through the action of the weather. This process always marks, and these marks may be intended, even desired"* (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 5)*.

Gunasekara indeed desired the above effect in the Illangakoon house. Its concrete/cement-plastered surfaces (Fig. 147, 149, 151), unplastered brick work (Fig. 153), algae subsumed rubble pavings (Fig. 152) and seasoned timber fenestrations (Fig. 157) are arguably, a romantic appreciation of the appearance of buildings that have aged. This, in the words of Bandyopadhyay (in press, unpaginated *mss*), is *"nature reclaiming territory lost to human habitation"*. Just as the late 18th-19th century West-European fascination with the ruin,[51] Gunasekara's interest in the mid 20th century was local; derived by the classical Sinhalese palaces and religious monuments – he admits to their inspiring role in his works (Gunasekara, 2012). In ancient buildings, marks of the environment are added, leaving residual deposits that reveal through traces, the coherence of ambient elements on a surface. These consequences in the Illangakoon house were a direct result of insufficient provision of projections for regulating the downward-flow of water; sills, copings, downpipes etc. that Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993: 32) call *"a common inadequacy of 'flat' facades"*.

Hence, weathering adds the *"finish"* of the environment – subtraction leads to final ruination and intimates, therefore, end of the building as it would the death of the figure. Thus, aging then, in words of Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993: 16), *"[…] can be seen as either benign or tragic – or as both"*. The point applies in the same way to Gunasekara's projects. This 'aesthetic deterioration' makes buildings either *"sightly"* or *"unsightly"*, depending on the perception of the beholder (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 32). The additions or deductions by the elements create a mask on the building surface.[52] The Illangakoon house's porous concrete and brick surfaces certainly underwent the foregoing effects in monsoon Sri Lanka.[53]  For instance, the

R.C.C. structure is exposed throughout the house, the external envelope is of unplastered brick, all ceiling soffits plaster-less, floors are of cement renderings – all wearing layers of surface accumulation.[54] These surfaces, determined by both Gunasekara's design and the circumstances of its tropical location, as Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993: 47) sums up, joined the *"artifice and nature"*, and by analogy, effected simultaneous completion and deformation of the construction.

> *"The building's regeneration and degeneration emphasises the temporality of nature as an order of beginning and ending, or, more broadly, life and death […] The relationship between architectural surface of this kind and its setting is evident in the use of the term 'rustic' […]"* (Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 47).

As (Bandyopadhyay, in press, unpaginated *mss*)  argues in relation to Laurie Baker's works in India, the Illangakoon house too manifested *"perpetuated construction",* as Gunasekara resisted it with a 'finish'. Just as in Baker's architecture, in Gunasekara's project too, *"[…] the carefully conceived and detailed enclosure therefore becomes the site of persistent dialogue between nature and human habitation; weathering and maintenance helping to sustain a dynamic equilibrium".* The foreground and background are eternally interwoven in these works, and what we perceive (as either background or foreground) are arguably, momentary snapshots of this rhythmic sequence. It seems like they have not departed the *"primordial moment of figuration and becoming"* that Deane (in Bandyopadhyay, in press, unpaginated *mss*) emphasises.

The weathered building in the tropics is a normalcy. Ancient Sinhalese buildings of grand design tradition realised out of permanent materials,[55] having met destruction at the hands of foreign invaders, were left to weather for centuries. It is fair to claim that Sri Lankans derive the meaning for these *"ruins"* in association with *"sightly"* pictures their weathered – dilapidated, plant and moss-covered – state of existence. Thus, Gunasekara's replication in the Sri Lankan context was arguably a historical harking back; a harking back that helped to legitimise symbolically the social apex of Kandyan feudalists via this particular form of architectural representation. Although Gunasekara – the compassionate human being – would not have envisaged this underlying symbolism, it would have given away a wrong message to the observers of the project.  After all, genealogically, the faction has little or nothing to do with the classical periods. On the other hand, his receptivity to the Buddhist teachings of uncertainty would have been manifested in this manner in his architecture that was left to gradually decay.

Fig. 149           Fig. 150           Fig. 151
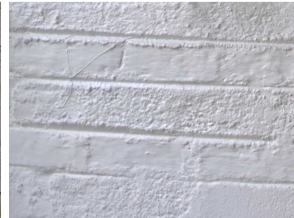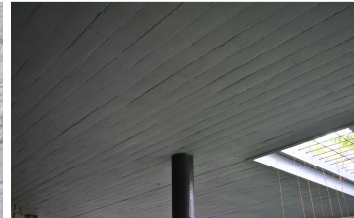


Fig. 152           Fig. 153           Fig. 154

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 149     Attention to detailing; the sign board (2011).
Fig. 150     Floral panelled protective window grills (2011).
Fig. 151     Attention to detailing; the patterns Sunethra and architect drew on the entrance foyer floor (2011).

        Fare-faced finishes.

Fig. 152     the rubble floors of the carport (2011).
Fig. 153     the unplastered walls treated with a lime solution (2011).
Fig. 154     ceilings with shuttering marks exposed (2011).

Dirt and Completeness:

The dirt is not necessarily impure, as buildings are made of natural matter making earth an essential part of their fabrics; in traditional cultures, the distinction between purity and impurity, sacred and profane was not absolute, and neither that between the sacred and profane; and dirt, is both impure and pure (Mustafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 103, 109).[56] Such distinctions are enlightenment phenomena within which, marks on white buildings are considered as stains – impurities and faults. It was Le Corbusier who changed this tradition through his exposed concrete buildings that marks are seen as inevitable; driven by the anticipation of weathering and poor workmanship. The exposed materials concealed simultaneously, the deficiencies of construction, and revealed through surface textures, unintended weathering marks that he thought added to the building. In Mustafavi and Leatherbarrow's (1993: 110) terms,

> "[faults were] expected and served as the unexpected basis for new solutions, [and] in buildings built this way the likely residual deposit of dirt, and the sense of order it suggest, was anticipated and seen as part of the architectural order. Stains were not intended as elements of a fragmentary or fragmented architecture, instead their incorporation into the building added to its completeness".

Moreover, such finishes became a tangible time line that through comparison, determine phases within its existence in time – past is not a specific and limited period of time over and done with; but rather *"what has come to be"* (Mutafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 116). Thus, Gunasekara's borrowing from Le Corbuisier's work that he vastly learned from, marks certain events in the past – events of the time's *"[…] feelings, thoughts, tastes and so on […]"*. Corbusier's feelings, thoughts and tastes were all suggestive of equality and Gunasekara too seems to have celebrated it based on his own personal convictions. He consequently, did not resort to *"renewing beginnings"* in Mustafavi and Leatherbarrow's (1993: 120) sense, by allowing refinishing as solutions for weathering. Possibly, the completeness of the project for Gunasekara would have been its agenda of social equity, and a subtle harking back was made complete via a portrayal of historical continuity. After all, traditional Sinhalese architecture was one with almost exact similarities of symbolism.

### Personal Agendas

Gunasekara has also attempted to make the patrons a part of the wider construction process, where they were employed to fulfil a subtle act of personalization through customization. Sepala's intellectual capacity and worldview as a well-travelled individual has been valued by closely associating him in the design process. According to Sunethra Illangakoon (2011), Gunasekara was very flexible in accommodating their ideas. This manifests through, for example, spaces such as the office room being extensively customised in line with Sepala's preference. Perhaps, being an expert planter who was knowledgeable about building maintenance, Sepala might have had a certain influence on utilization of, for instance, slip-resistant random rubble in the entrance court/garage, the exposed concrete soffits of ceilings as well as unplastered brick walls throughout the house. The use of random rubble in the driveway and around garden plant troughs draws a degree of contiguity with nature as well as evoking a resemblance with traditional buildings from the island's pre-colonial past. In another point of view, this is a rural association in an urban context. The randomness of such materials imparts a much-needed sense of irregularity into the house's formal atmosphere, dominated by geometric modern aesthetics.

More importantly, the housewife who was to spend bulk of her time in the house bringing-up the children, was assimilated into the process at a more personal level. As Sunethra (Illangakoon, 2011) goes back in memory lane, when she was finishing secondary school, she sought to peruse an education in architecture as she was talented in drawing. Although she dreamed of going to France to realise her ambition, her mother insisted that she got married; which happened right after she finished high school. Having known this, Gunasekara made an opportunity to display her artistic

ability by setting up scaffoldings inside from which, she was made to sketch-out patterns on the cement floors (Rajapaksha, 1999: 17) (Fig. 151). This perhaps, was a channel for Sunethra to self-indulge and mediate to others her once-subverted potential.

Women's subaltern position that Gandhi (1998) attributes to be a primordial phenomenon in the South-Asian context was not always the case in the island as N. de Silva (2008) posits – at least until the subsequent Dravidian interactions with the Sinhalese culture.[57] Under this rhetoric, Sunethra submitted, abiding by her parent's wishes, and then, to her husband's. The manifestations of the former was the consent given to her arranged marriage, as well as giving up her career ambitions in favour of becoming a 'home-maker',[58] and to the latter, was choosing to convert to Sepala's faith of Anglican Christianity as an expression of her allegiance. After all, what she gave up was the dominant culture of the island that would have prevented their future cultural isolation in nationalist Sri Lanka. At a time when women were wielding hitherto unforeseen emancipation in post-war West as Gandhi (1998) affirms, the post-independence Ceylonese situation too was improving at a much slower phase. The democratic election of Mrs. Bandaranaike in 1960 as the world's first woman prime minister was in fact, an indicator of the tolerance of a society towards the idea of gender equality (Seneviratna, 2011). Sunethra's involvement in the design process – although it is unclear to what extent – and especially, the concession given to her to make her distinctive mark on the house confirms the foregoing point. After all, by the contemporary times, Sri Lanka has the best figures in South Asia for women's' involvements in the professions,[59] education and politics that indicates on one hand, the persistence of a resilient cultural norm, and on the other, the willingness of the nation to modernise.[60] All in all, it could be argued that Sunethra's retention as a house wife and her crushed dreams were abstracted by Gunasekara as patterns on the floors of the Illangakoon interior. The flowers, leaves and waves appear to be a mystical representation of a dream; a dream of perhaps, of what could have become of her. Instead, the primordial dominance of what Mandel (1977: 24) calls the *"patriarchy"* took hold and Sunethra too, like her feminine ancestors before her, became an instrument of it.

### Picking the Right Rubric

Considering the Client & Threshold:

Gunasekara assumed the task of designing a house for the Illangakoons who were more or less in his own shoes, despite hailing from two different class/caste backgrounds. In a socialist state obsessed by the Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism, he himself must have felt relegated as a semi-westernized Sinhalese individual of Catholic

faith with a residual bourgeoisie background (Pieris, 2007: 155). Analogously, the Illangakoons who were highly-westernised Sinhalese practicing Anglican Christianity with an overarching feudal background would have also felt threatened. The sense of uncertainty felt by the family would have been the cause behind entrusting of the task of building an enclave to an individual of similar circumstances; out of solidarity. Gunasekara's adaptation of a modernist design might have been resulted by the state of self-consciousness suffered by the family – just as Gunasekara himself – within a proliferating state of affairs detrimental to their comparable ways of life.

When Sunethra was asked if they insisted on a house that could portray their feudal heritage, her instant answer was that *"those things never came to mind"* (Illangakoon, 2011)[.61] In other words, when the feudalists chose to *"underplay"* family splendour, their contemporary contenders from lesser backgrounds who had experienced fleeting upward social mobility resorted to flaunt *"pretension"* (de Saram, 2011). However, considering that the regionalist discourse was embraced by many feudalists, this statement loses currency. Hence, the Illangakoons' modest preference could be explained on two grounds. First is religious isolation suffered by them from their kin that had by now, re-converted to Buddhism from Christianity and resorted to wearing the 'national dress' in the age of nationalism.[62] These were conceived as breaking the former loyalty to the Empire (Perera, 1994: 380, 382). Had the Illangakoons been Buddhists, the regionalist discourse that was palatable in a nationalist milieu, already proliferating across the elite sphere, would have definitely been an option. Second is the socialist fervour of the time. The turbulent political affairs between 1956 and 1970, would have hinted at a timely reality of upward social mobility for the masses. It is commonly accepted that the United Front (UF) government was a precarious one,[63] which was made evident in the 1971 insurrection by the discontent youth (Mathews, 1978: 87).[64] In this light, Illangakoons may have felt the danger of riding on the nationalist wave as their kin did, at a time when the looming lower-classes threatened to topple the governing-elite. This would have prompted them to resort to a more ethereal portrayal of historical associations, as against the more direct approach by the ones dwelling on regionalist romanticism. Thus, they would have been content with the rather 'neutral' rubric that Gunasekara presented to them. Their receptivity towards the style would have been induced by its applications the world over as an instrument of decolonisation and modernisation. Just as Nehru had conceived Corbusien modernism to be *"unfettered by tradition"* as Evenson illustrates (in Bandyopadhyay and Jackson, 2007: 19), the Illangakoons would have had the same confidence. They by education and foreign travels, would have had exposure to it.

Frascari (in Bandyopadhyay, in press, unpaginated *mss*) defines the double-faced presence of technology – *as logos of techné and techné of logos* – on understanding

the role of detail as a generator of design; and emphasises that construction and construing of architecture are both in the detail. As Laurie Baker [who is analysed by (Bandyopadhyay, in press, unpaginated *mss*)], Gunasekara too employed detailing not only to achieve a connection between his building's different components, but as a site of dialogue – as a threshold. In Bandyopadhyay's words, thresholds were used

> " *[…] as interstitial sites for constructing relationships between tradition and modernity, technology and culture, past and present, the local and global and even between his [Baker's] acquired Indian-ness and his innate foreign-ness"* (in press, unpaginated *mss*).

In Gunasekara's case, all these points were similar except for the last. Gunasekara conversely, was involved in the personal dialogue with two innate convictions – his Sinhalese-ness and Christian-ness.

### Architectural Novelties

Masculine and the Feminine:

Having been inspired by Le Corbusier and Alto, Gunasekara in the Illangakoon house incorporated the nebulous 'female' forms to an outline of rigid 'male' forms.[65] This manifests especially, in the rigid and quintessentially modern plans where the nebulous elements in the form of spiral staircases,[66] curvilinear walls and round columns etc. have been featured. The curves placed within a regimentalized grid create a clash (Fig. 163). As he elaborates, rigid male forms represent domination while the nebulous female forms portray natural contiguity. He believes that since the renaissance, Western architecture of the 'modern era' has been all about rationalism and domination though symmetry (Gunasekara, 2011).[67] In his own words,

> *"[we] don't need pyramids and big cathedrals to make us feel like ants on the ground. It was the resurgence around the human spirit. We are greater than those ideas. We are the mixture of the mother who forgives her son, fathers don't do that. Fathers are very rational people [who execute] the logical consequence"* (Gunasekara, 2011).

Therefore, for Gunasekara, creating architecture was all about natural contiguity that entailed a smooth interaction of the human spirit with Mother Nature where it is at the most ease. As he further elaborates by reverting to Lankan classical architecture,

> *"[we] have the most marvellous curves. Look at the old Thuparama* [the first Buddhist *Chaithya* (pagoda) of the island constructed around the 3rd century B.C.]. *So that's what we should be teaching and that's what we should be after".*

After all, according to his religious beliefs, in the world created by the all mighty, both male and female forms are equally pervasive. In this light, he questions why this balance should not be extended into architecture (Gunasekara, 2012).

Overcoming the Obvious Edge:

In the Illangakoon house, certain walls appear to be severed from the horizontal levels that had traditionally grounded them, thus consequently appear to hover in the sideways sweep, from setting to setting and to site (Fig. 155). At times, certain dwelling equipment (i.e. the cupboards inside bedroom) were also fixed onto the walls without touching the floors to enhance this effect. Because the walls were consistently made to appear to float, one is inclined to return once again to the building's horizontal levels as their stable and structuring elements. This ultimately creates, *"rooms within rooms",* with the loss of the *"obvious edge"* as Neutra achieved in his projects (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 61). Just as a sculptor uses the term 'plans' to refer to 'animated planes'[68] that define a sculptural work (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 51), the section of Gunasekara's entire ensemble shows the animation of the plan in correspondence to the site it sits on. The Illangakoon house floats, rather than sink below.



Fig. 155

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House

Fig. 155    Raised dining area demarcated by curvilinear walls (2011).

### *Dwelling on the Techne*

Assembling Disparate Schemes:

Although the non-alignment policy by the early 1970s diversified Ceylon's political links with the outer-world to both Cold War camps,[69] Britain still remained the *"quasi-metropole"* Perera (1994: 356-357).[70] This relationship reflected especially, in the architectural/engineering realms as the bulk of island's professionals were still being trained in Britain.[71] On the other hand, most modern cultural influences were still coming from there, within which, the American sphere of influence was bourgeoning. When the middle-class was being attracted to the latter, the elite allegiance was still with the former, as it was the metropole that still gave them their resourceful

(colonial) identities. Gunasekara as a professional equipped with knowledge of 'meaningful architecture' attained by education in the West (Perera, 1994: 310, 391), in his design for the Illangakoons, resorted to Tropical Modernism that had been conceived by the core intellectuals as the most suitable rubric for the tropics.[72] It seems that the humanist strand associated with the term 'tropical' that Jayatilake (2011) illustrates, by this time, had been discounted for its modern aesthetic and rationality. The modern lifestyle choices that Gunasekara provided for were still European in the making as Americanization had still not taken hold. However, its influence did not go unnoticed. Gunasekara was awarded the prestigious Rockefeller scholarship in 1965, and such grants marked the American desire in the ex-colonial world to promulgate Americanization, concealed under the guise of Globalization (Mc Gillivray, 2001: 280-289).[73] The American extension of its cultural tentacle was underscored by the bi-polar world polity of the Cold War period (Perera, 1999: 421).[74] In Pieris's (2007: 39) view, the tour reversed the colonial encounter where the native studies the metropolitan centre; in a context where the US was not still considered a colonising-power.[75] The American input indeed, was immense, and was soon reflected in his work.[76]

On the other hand, the Russian revolution had taken place early in the 20th century (1905) and it had taken more than half a century to make its impact on Ceylon, despite the USSR being the main source of inspiration for the Ceylonese version of socialism.  In Russia, revolution had a major effect on all branches of the visual arts with graphic designs and propaganda making the biggest strides.[77] As French (1998: 88) elaborates,

> *"Russian constructivism embedded the ideas of industrial production wholeheartedly. The buildings and projects are machine-like: constructed from machine-made standard components, planned methodically according to use […] the drawings also have a mechanistic feel […]".[78]*

Socialism was developing patterns of new social structures and institutions; prompting architectural research on town-planning and communal-housing on these grounds.[79] Gunasekara's socialist inclination would have prompted him to embrace such agendas. In the socialist Ceylonese state, he would have reckoned that it would find better reception.[80] In an immediate postcolonial milieu where rulers of the newly-liberated nations were striving to change their economic outlooks towards industrialization for achieving of 'development' goals set by the Western 'core' states, their Ceylonese counterparts were also drawn towards the trend. The policy change of the nationalist and socialist government of 1960 was manifested via their organization of international industrial exhibitions (Pieris, 2007: 30-34).[81] It was in this context that Gunasekara set off his career. However, in Ceylon, the movement suffered a similar ill-reception it had received in Lenin's USSR.[82] Just as Lenin's mistrust towards culture

as an avenue to people's hearts enabled a short life for the discourse, the indifference of the Ceylonese governing-elite had stunted Gunasekara's indirect importation.

Gunasekara's bias on technological innovation and experimentation in new building materials/techniques/programs articulated in a recessive state throughout the Illangakoon house.[83] To the expert eye, the free-standing columns that support the flat-roofs; cantilevering slabs, floors and even wardrobe cupboards; repetitive elements such as the pergolas and vertical columns; challenging features to execute such as the spiral staircase; all suggest of his persistence on innovative technology. On the other hand, his dogmatic belief about 'creation' and pervasive patterns in nature were also epitomised within this process.[84] As Pieris confirms, Gunasekara's long-term partnership with civil engineer Jayathi Weerakoon was instrumental for the realisation of this technological-emphasis, and their sharing of socio-political ideals was complimentary to the exercise.[85]

A seminal purpose of technology as Gunasekara notes is to make architecture available to a majority by making buildings cheaper and easier to build. As an ardent Catholic and an enthusiastic learner of Buddhist philosophy, he was bounded by the idea that one has to be compassionate towards other human beings.[86] This strong belief underlined his persistence on technology and reliance on it to overcome problems posed by nature as well as society. However, irrespective of his own convictions, Gunasekara had to cater to an elite family to implement his experimentation schema; as only this class could afford such innovations that were more expensive than the conventional solutions at the outset. In a situation where no one had implemented such technology before, a flaw-less final product could not be guaranteed. Although what he implemented for the first time in Ceylon had been successfully carried out elsewhere, without local precedents, only an *"enlightened"* clientele in the opinion of Gunasekara (2011) – such as the Illangakoons – would have been sensible-enough to agree to his untried agendas. Hence, it could be argued that in order to introduce new technology that was assimilated from the West as a possible solution for a majority's housing plight, elite domestic projects became a stepping-stone for Gunasekara. His commitment was reflected in the level of attention to detailing in his works that Peramune (2010) reveals, also evident in the Illangakoon house. Moreover, the forgoing observations entrap the strong degree of personal conviction present in Gunasekara's approach, where he did not simply fulfil a process of emulation.

At a time when America was conceived as a seat of anti-colonial movements, its landscape-centred, symbolic and egalitarian approaches were in his view, ideal for a nation seeking for an identity; without the prejudice of established caste/class structures (Wijetunge, 2011a: 68). Symbolic content and its compliance with art were vital for him as a socially-responsible architect (Gunasekara, 2011). This meant that

within this particular method, buildings could communicate ideas in a way that took them beyond the sterile modernity of international style architecture.[87] Thus, arguably, the investment by the Rockefeller foundation had indeed paid off. What Gunasekara had done was seizing the positive and humanitarian strands from two very disparate political ideologies – one capitalist and the other, socialist. However, at this outset, the confidence was deficient to be more audacious in the symbolic sphere.

Kit-of-parts and Hindered Creative-Fusions:

The efficacy of the 'machine age' had challenged the traditional relationship between larger, more permanent elements (stone, brick etc.) with smaller, replicable parts (frames, doors, windows etc.). In many modern buildings pinned on new methods of assembly (configuring a pallet of both new and traditional materials in unprecedented and varying proportions), the number of replicable parts exceeded those used by the traditional building processes (Mustafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 17). With the increase of number of parts, also grew the number of joints (or points of connection) between them. Mustafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993, 17) calls them *"joints by juxtaposition rather than synthesis",* and these provided a wider opportunity for environmental elements to penetrate. This demanded careful weather-tightening with sealants that also changed the relationship of architect and builder, to the building. Consequently, the builder having shred his traditional knowledge on building, now relied on construction procedures almost entirely prescribed by the architect who received his knowledge from construction manuals (trade literature) and guidelines from authorities (Mustafavi and Leatherbarrow, 1993: 21). This reduced room for invention by the builder on which, traditional *"gentlemen architects"* relied on. In Ceylon, this would have certainly been the case, where colonial 'designers'[88] would have implemented their metropolitan architectural influences, yet with plenty of room for local-manipulations at the hands of local craftsmen and artisans.[89] However, the foregoing possibility was hindered by Gunasekara's over-reliance on the kit-of-parts – its unmodified repetitive details and specifications.[90]

There is a hidden explanation to this story. Gunasekara was practicing at a time of great austerity. Although his approach was on par with socialism-promised equality, at a time when steel and cement was scarce and expertise in concrete technology low, economically, there was no room for errors within his experimentation (Gunasekara, 2012).[91] Besides, his clients too were pre-occupied with modernity and did not desire direct historical-quotation. Consequently, Gunasekara would have assumed the role of the 'heroic architect'. Alvaro Siza argues that more choices in materials results in an abstract sense, whereas less choices allow more experience with it (in Mutafavi and

Leatherbarrow, 1993: 25). Perhaps, Gunasekara living in tough-times shared the same ideal – he surly became a specialist in concrete construction, perhaps more than any other architect of his time. On the other hand, he may also have shared Auguste Parret's dictum that 'weather-proofing' could be achieved via the retarded deterioration of the concrete – realisable through eliminating the possibility of faults in construction. This sums up Gunasekara's painstaking level of detail-perfection achieved on the drawing board (as confirmed by de Saram, 2010).

The graphic codification was a foremost aspect of his praxis, where they were unique and autonomous – descriptions in Sinhalese for the convenience of local masons and carpenters is notable.[92] The drawings dictated construction, and breaking on site that occurred were caused by Gunasekara's drive for perfection, not by site-experimentation. The allegiance to Western construction and materials removed the possibility of appropriating local materials and craftsmanship in their traditional capacities; but adapt them to suit the kit-of-parts agenda (Gunasekara, 2012).[93] Consequently, his projects such as the Illangakoon house were consumed by technology's homogenous thrust.

### Political Blunders Reflected

JVP Insurrection:

A complete circulation of the indigenous elite never materialized with Ceylonese independence, or with nationalism. What the latter produced instead, was a circulation of elites within the political-class itself.[94] In his explanation of conditions in a given society that affect revolutionary change, Brinton (in Bottomore, 1993: 50) brings to the fore, certain key factors that the industrially-backward Ceylon too possessed.[95] Ceylon's revolution indeed came in 1971 (Perera, 1994: 429-30).

Using the entire house as a spatial container has been coupled with the use of pergolas that enclose the open-to-sky spaces within one spacious volume. Although the architect only envisioned the pergolas to be light filters and supports for the dangling plants and runners, the insurrection of 1971 led by the pro-socialist *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* that K. T. Silva (2005) examines, raised security concerns for the Illangakoons (Illangakoon, 2011), as it did for many other traditional elite.  This frames the social insecurity felt by the elite in the light of a movement by the discontent youth who resorted to *"extra-parliamentary means"* in as Fernando (2010) puts it in favour of circulation of the elites.[96] Within such distressing conditions, the Illangakoons coped by fortifying themselves inside their house. Gunasekara having being requested obliged by placing steel bars horizontally at gaps[97] between the pergolas and covering ribbon windows with steel grills (Fig. 156, 150). The introvert

nature of the house contained by four lanky walls, coupled with above remedies, would have given the Illangakoons a peace of mind within six months of political turmoil that saw a sacrifice of approximately a thousand youth (Matthews, 1978: 87).[98] As Fernando (2010) elaborates, an impact of the insurrection was the de-legitimacy of the incumbent centre left United Front government that slowly created conditions for the right wing to take over in 1977.[99] The remedies put forward by the governing-elites were not only ineffective, but some were actually irrelevant leading to whole new tussles. Hence, it could be argued that they were still inveigling their way through to hold on to power.[100]



Fig. 156

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 156    Pergolas over the rear courtyard with steel bars across
              for protection; framing the vitality of security felt during the times (2011).

### Tropical Modern Reminders

A number of innovations appraised a strong degree of environmental sustainability in the house. Firstly, the house compound was surrounded by greenery on the exterior, complimented by more foliage on the inside gardens (Fig. 148), the roof terrace (Fig. 157) and on the external envelope (Fig. 146).[101] This cutting-down of solar heat-gain was the key to climatic comfort. Secondly, cross-ventilation was consolidated by having courtyards and wide openings on opposite walls throughout the house.[102] On the interior, not a single wall reaches aloft to touch the slab soffits, and most individual walls do not meet in corners as they are free from load-bearing columns. Owing to such design features, numerous gaps have been formed throughout the interior via which, the air flows freely. As for the information the tenants supply, even the subsequent urban-heat-island that has shrouded contemporary Colombo (since open economy of 1977), has not hindered the level of thermal comfort in the house.[103]

Fig. 157

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 157    The flowering plants on pots, irregularly arranged on the
            roof terraces; adding colour to a monotonous space of concrete (2011).

### Subtle Harking Back; Dwelling Equipment

Furniture:

According to Sunetra (Illangakoon, 2011), she brought in from time to time, furniture from her ancestral homes[104] and Gunasekara too was fond of the idea. The use of specific furniture for specific functions has not been customary in traditional Lankan lifestyle and thus, architecture. Just as the limited application of grand design tradition, furniture usage too has for centuries, been the domain of the elite – especially, royals and Buddhist clergy (Wijetunge, 2011b: 29-30). However, the feudalists may have utilized furniture to a lesser degree, whereas the peasants hardly had anything to do with it (Ashley De Vos, 1977: 48-49). This was certainly the situation in the Kandyan Kingdom prior to its fall in 1815 (Wijetunge, 2011b: 32). In de Soyza's view (1995: 127-136), furniture usage was extended in Ceylon following the colonial intervention, and gradually grew in the Dutch-held maritime during the 18th century; as the period coincided with the 'golden age' of furniture design in Europe. Once the land tenure system was abolished in 1833 and Kandyan regions were made accessible through the 'Colombo-Kandy corridor' by the mid 19th century, modern Western cultural traits infiltrated Kandy. Consequently, the Kandyan feudalists embraced maritime architecture and furniture trends in vogue. The colonial-inspired lifestyle that survived amongst the traditional elite and low-country bourgeoisie down into post-independence was in fact, reflected by the furniture preference of the Illangakoons. Each of the carefully selected furniture pieces – such as recliners, stools, dining-sets and ornamental chairs that have been displayed in the house – has either a historical association with family, or special emotional connections to either Sepala or Sunethra (Illankakoon, 2011) (Fig. 158).

Within this ensemble of period pieces, there are also modern ones, making the selection an eclectic mismatch. The house over the decades has been furnished with an ensemble of pieces for the family's ever-increasing functional needs. The use of most up-to-date furniture styles from the West advocate the elite desire to assimilate new fashions and trends, in order to be at the forefront of stylistic change. For example, the living room set that is presented as the centrepiece of the ground floor living room – accompanied by a low coffee table and a small cabinet – (Fig. 158) and the dining room set (Fig. 155) are in the Scandinavian style. Kirchheimer (2011) attributes the beginning of modern Scandinavian furniture to the famous 'Stockholm Exhibition' of 1930 that carried a socialist undertone.[105] In this backdrop, it is remarkable how even in the early 1970s; certain Scandinavian styles were still in vogue in Sri Lanka. It is commonly acknowledged that such styles became popular in the island in the 1960s-70s, and the modern furniture in the Illangakoon house substantiates that there was a time-lag of almost two-three decades between its European origin and Ceylonese reception. The pro-socialist politics after 1956 would have been the reason, where 'import-substitution' was the norm. When exports comprised mainly of agricultural commodities produced in plantations belonging to the elite-class, the import process too benefitted them. The imported raw materials were processed either in state factories run by the governing-elite or in their privately-owned, for the products to be sold to the masses (Karunadasa, 1999: 54). Apart from essential food-stuffs and commodities, the import quota also comprised of items of luxury for elite consumption. The Illangakoons using their elite standing would have consequently enjoyed their share of luxurious imports, when the poor masses were not in the position to do so. Perera (1994: 368-369) in fact, blames the failing of the industrialization policy and its expansion during the 1950-60s on this elite-centered discrepancy.

In the presence of modern furniture with lifestyle agendas built into them, the traditional pieces found duel purposes by their modified functions. They complemented to varying extents, the roles fulfilled by the modern pieces. Tall eight-sided stool traditionally-known as *kanappuwa* is a good example. Although this piece had an important role to play in the colonial period houses – usually being kept in the front veranda with a *Bulath Heppwa*[106] placed on it to welcome visitors – in the Illangakoon house, its function was to serve as a stool where family photographs were kept on. The picture frames that act as secondary objects, mediate between two primary pieces that compete with one another; one, a highly-ornamented traditional piece, and the other, an austere modern one. Other pieces meanwhile, continue to fulfil the same functions as they have always done, in association with the new. For instance, the grand *Kavichchiya*[107] and *Viyan anda*[108] (both from the Dutch colonial period) have become the centrepieces in the living and the guest bedroom respectively, still serving their age-old functions, to be surrounded by Scandinavian style contemporary pieces

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that have their very own functions [109]. Then again, new changes in the lifestyle are also articulated by certain new pieces. The best adducible example is the upper-floor living space becoming a TV lobby in the early 1980s; with the introduction of the television to the country (rupavahini.lk, 2011). The cushioned tubular steel TV lobby set was a popular choice at the time, which had to be accommodated; again with a considerable lapse between its first Western propagation by the Bauhaus in the 1930s (Kirchheimer, 2011).



Fig. 158

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 155    Living room furniture and accessories from different eras;
             an eclectic mismatch (2011).

Accessories:

In terms of accessories and adornments, the house displays ambivalence. Throughout the ground floor, the white walls have been decorated with period China plates (Fig. 159).[110] In certain corners, intricately patterned China vases are kept, while decorative pots are placed on cabinets and stools. Moreover, adorned brass lamps, copper pots and candle holders (with their convoluted glass chimneys) on the floors, brass oil lamps hanging from ceilings, embellished wooden chests placed in corners, standing ornamental clocks from England; all hark back to romantic feudal/colonial times when only the elite could afford such luxuries. Alongside period pieces, objects and artefacts collected over the years are displayed. The tribal masks from Africa and boomerangs from Australia for instance, convey the family's globe throttling capacities, which would have been considered a distant luxury by many in the pre-jet age.

The most striking aspect about the house's interior décor is the prominence given to family photographs. An entire wall on the ground floor living room as well as another on upper floor TV lobby has been adorned by them (Fig. 160). Owing to their strategic location and systematic arrangement, it was arguably, a deliberate consideration on the architect's part, having being insightful about the clients' background. The

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agendas behind these photographs are three-fold. Firstly, there is a genealogical representation of Illangakoons in chronological order. Some represent the renowned family members who had played seminal roles in the island's feudal and colonial histories.[111] Further, past associations are expressed by the series of wedding photographs that covers the last century of family marriages; illustrating what pretentious and lavish affairs they had been. On the other hand, there are snapshots depicting prominent figures in contemporary politics connected to the family, as a portrayal of its claim to the governing-elite/political-class ranks.[112] Then, the graduation photographs of the young generation[113] from their Universities in England is a clear sign of its continued epistemological superiority over the lesser classes who had recently found upward mobility through local tertiary education.[114] More seminally, framed pictures of Jesus Christ are pervasive throughout the house, with the most compelling ensemble found on the staircase wall (Fig. 161). On one hand, the Illangakoons proudly cherish the meaning of being traditional elite as a group that long-resisted Western subjugation[115] that they desire to display. On the other, they contradictorily acknowledge submitting to British colonialism, which in turn, is best articulated in the depictions of their faith,[116] complimented by remnants of former family members who embraced British ethos of culture and politics. This ambivalence that hovers between total submission and reception with own adaptation is indeed, what Homi Bhaba (1994) referred to as 'hybridity'. King (1984) alternatively, would have referred to the Illangakoons as a family of 'colonial third culture'. The foregoing evidence suggests that they resorted to ethereal means in portraying historic associations. Hence, arguably, their portrayal of family glory was rather a private affair, intended for an exclusive group of kin and acquaintances with analogous backgrounds – it was more of an internal celebration of the past than a public exposé.

Fig. 159


Fig. 160


Fig. 161

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 159    Portraying family glory; China on the wall (2011).
Fig. 160    Portraying family glory; family portraits of genealogy (2011).
Fig. 161    Depictions of allegiance to faith (2011).
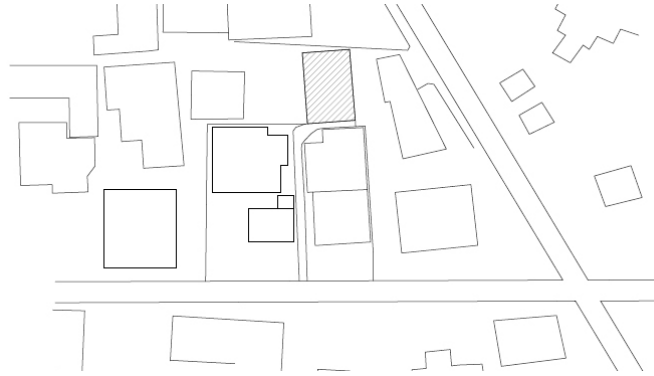
Fig. 162
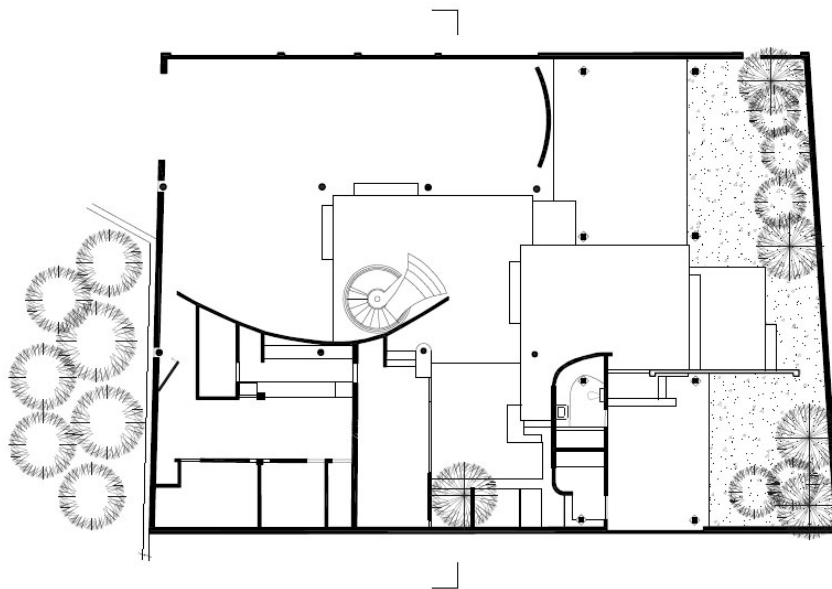

Fig. 163
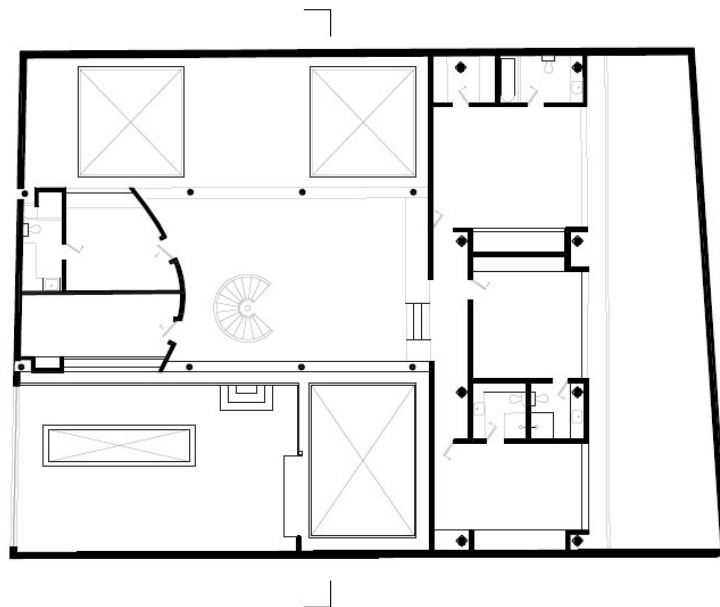

Fig. 164

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 162    Site Plan.
Fig. 163    Ground Floor Plan.
Fig. 164    Upper Floor Plan.
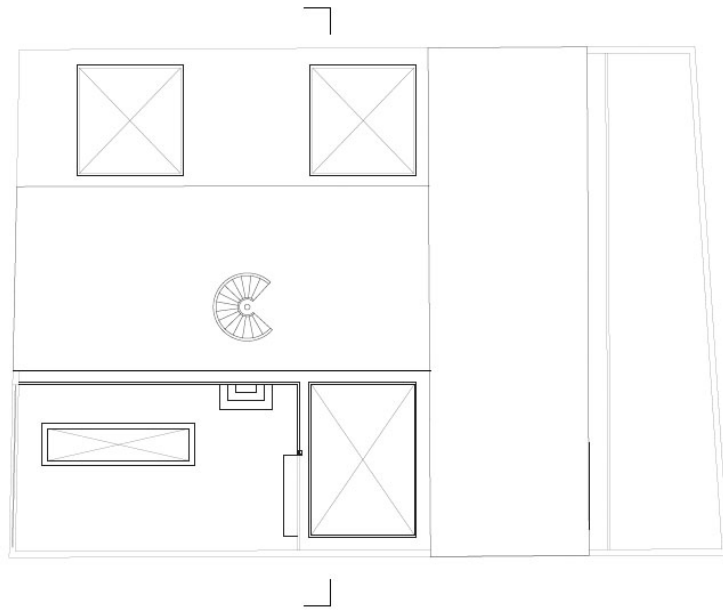
Fig. 165
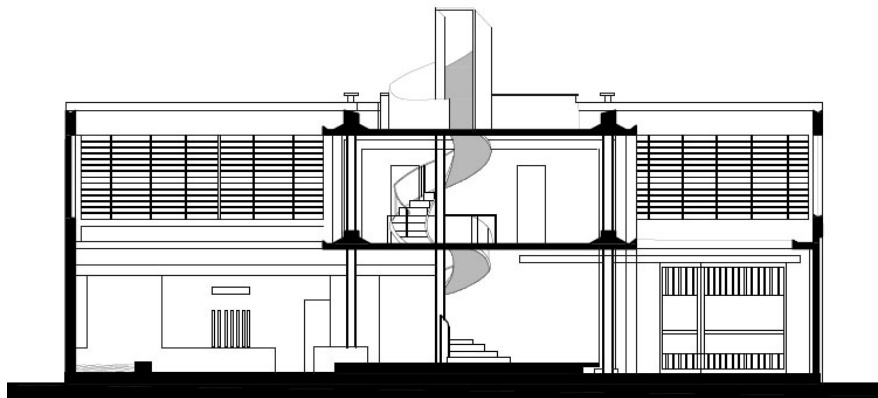


Fig. 166
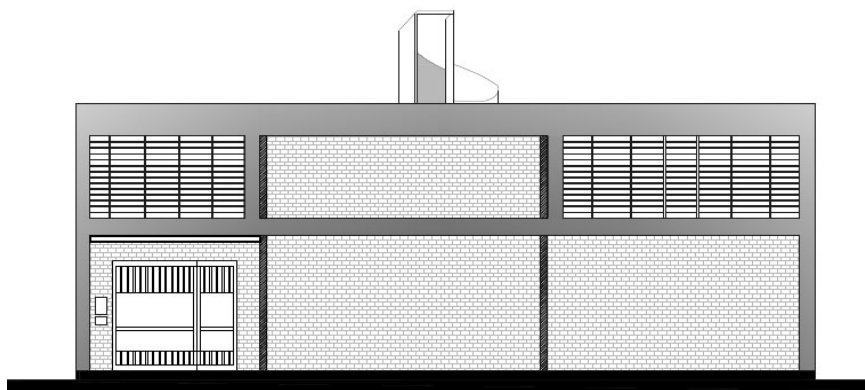


Fig. 167

Sepala and Sunethra Illangakoon House.

Fig. 165    Roof Terrace Plan.
Fig. 166    Section.
Fig. 167    Front Elevation.

*Sketch of the Plot*

Upali de Silva was educated in University of Ceylon[117] to qualify as an accountant. He started his carrier working for the Bank of Ceylon[118] before he was stationed in Rome and subsequently in the USA, as he took up assignments for the World Bank. His wife Manel was a home-maker and they had a son and a daughter. A plot of land in Mt. Lavinia with a colonial-type bungalow was inherited by Manel and the couple desired to build a comfortable house to retire to. Although at one point, the option of keeping the old façade and extending the bungalow was on the cards, they thought it was too *"old-fashioned"* and could not provide the level of comfort they desired (A. de Silva, 2010).

As their son Asitha de Silva reminisces, Gunasekara's wife and his mother were best of friends and the fact that both his parents were impressed by some of Gunasekara's projects subsequently led to the commission in 1985 (A. de Silva, 2010).[119] The attraction towards a building that alienated most of its observers sums up the revolutionary spirit of the de Silvas who were willing to go against the grain. Pieris (2007: 45-52) in fact, attributes this daring quality to the Sri Lankan middle-class of the time at large. On the other hand, Asitha notes that his parents knew of Geoffrey Bawa who was by the time, undoubtedly the most famous architect in Sri Lanka and probably also saw some of his works. However, as he recalls, his parents often alluded to Bawa' reputation as an architect of the elites. This would have compelled them to settle for more accessible Gunasekara; hailing from a similar class background as themselves (A. de Silva, 2011). Gunasekara met with the family in Rome during a visit and discussed the preliminary details, where A. de Silva (2010) believes that he was given a free hand to design by his parents. As the de Silvas had spent many years abroad, their preferred lifestyle was more Western-oriented as Asitha claims; something that the architect would have comprehended during his numerous visits to them.[120]

*Site Relations*

The house sits on a corner plot at the intersection of two streets.[121] While the adjacent plot on the Sea Street is vacant,[122] the property borders the playground of the neighbouring school (Fig. 178). The approach to the neighbourhood from Galle Road – a foremost traffic artery of the island from the colonial times – is dramatic. From the congested Galle Road lined by commercial blocks, one descends gradually along narrow and shady Sea Street into the Mt. Lavinia beach-strip renowned for its

picturesque quality, passing through a series of residential and hotel properties. The beach draws daily loads of visitors, both locals and foreigners alike, and their approach is past the de Silva house, which is only a block away. The tranquil residential setting has a relaxed atmosphere, opposed to that of the Galle road that frames the commercialisation of the Colombo suburbs in recent years. The haphazardness and eclecticism of Galle Road's commercial buildings have in fact, infiltrated the sea-side stretch too, as evident by its stylistic multiplicity of houses. Only a handful of palatial British bungalows that once occupied the area now remain. According to Gunasekara (2012), once Manel's ancestral house was demolished, the plot was sub-divided and the new construction happened on the eastern-facing portion. Land sub-divisions were still commonplace and buildable plots around urban areas were still diminishing by the 1980s.

### *Cultural Orientations*

Lifestyle Choices:

Neo-liberalism for K. T. Silva (2005: 112) was a 'reversal' of the welfare socialist state into an era of Western dependence and market mechanism. In his opinion, the process revitalised the urban middle-class that was threatened by post-1956 changes. Although this particular class could be considered a derivative of the former urban petty-bourgeoisie (more than a mercantile class), they were a new 'international wage-earning class'; a product of globalisation-enabled 'trans-national spaces' (Hettige, 1995: 1998).[123] Neo-liberalism after 1977, linked Sri Lanka to the globalisation process and its onslaught was now felt rigorously (K. T. Silva, 2005:112). As for Weragama (1994: 7-8), the foregoing affairs secured hitherto-unforeseen opportunities for the country's populace in political, economic and cultural spheres. The colonial petty-bourgeoisie had, by the 1960s and 70s, been replaced by the nascent middle-class, and the middle-class by the 1980s, had seen a polarisation into 'upper' and 'lower' middle-classes. This particular class was ideologically bound with the 'international space' and quintessentially 'consumerist' in nature.[124] The growth in world-wide media-telecommunication and especially, international travels fed their lifestyle. Consequently, they shed ethnicity, religion and caste backgrounds, in order to share certain solidarity as a common class; marked by common interests, wants and needs, as well as actions in a context when post 1977 economic benefit had been delimited to the Western province (K. T. Silva, 2005: 113). The faction's orientation largely differed from 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' applicable to the archetypal Sri Lankan middle-class (Pieris, 2007: 11-13). Upali de Silva's shift from working for Bank of Ceylon to the World Bank marks his ascent from the middle-class, to the newly-formed urban upper-middleclass (that is also congruent with 'high-ranked employees

working abroad' that fall within the 'international wage-earning class' category). However, considering the prestige, economic and power dimensions associated with his occupation for which, the caste background was irrelevant (the de Silvas are from the *Karave* caste), arguably, the family could border the upper middle and political-class fringe. Even their political allegiance, like that of the prototypical middle-class prior to its polarization, would have been directed at the right-wing; either at the UNP or SLFP,[125] but the Marxists (Matthews, 1978: 100). This inclination guaranteed further upward social mobility, especially, if the allegiance was directed at the ruling party. The outward orientation of the de Silvas was embodied in the spaces Gunasekara had to accommodate in the design, facilitating a lifestyle that was predominantly Western. The usual ensemble of spaces suggestive of the 1980s version of modernity (from living, dining, car porch, servants' quarters, pantry and kitchen to attached bathrooms seen even in the middle-class houses) was kept intact,[126] where the most striking difference came from how Gunasekara marked their demarcations, inter-relationships and how they interacted with the outside.

A Critical Cosmopolitism?

When the notion of cosmopolitanism for the nationalist elite in Asia was 'progressive modernism', alternative expressions to it emerged from below. Mignolo (in Pieris, 2007: 12) uses the term 'critical cosmopolitanism' to address projects outside the domains of both modernity and colonialism, suggestive of a border thinking. This occurs outside official nationalisms and elite hegemonic cultures; as struggles by marginalised communities for political and economic equalities. Within post-colonial settings, the former colonial class structures play a seminal role in marginalization of the newly-arrived contingents in the ex-colonial city; the economically-deprived rural migrants with bourgeoisie aspirations (Pieris, 2007: 12). Bhaba and Clifford (in Cheah and Robbins, 1998: 262-370) stress on the 'hybridity' of such spaces. In their view, both revivalist cultural agendas of postcolonial polity as well as an authentic alterity are equally rejected by such migrants. In the Sri Lankan case, the quintessential middle-class embraced a liminal architectural position within their rural vernacular (and colonial hybrids) and authentic alternatives from abroad as the so-called 'case study houses', to eventually settle for its local variant; the 'American style' house. This particular project for Gunasekara, for an upper middle-class client with rural origins,[127] afforded the perfect opportunity to seek for an authentic alterity instead, as the circumstances had now changed with neo-liberalism. The discussion on the house to come, will reveal how it was authentic.

***Spaces in Continuum***

Configuration:

The design encompasses the entire site extent, where the structural components (columns and beams) are almost pushed to the edges, with two vacant strips of space allocated as a 'frontage' and 'rear space' (Fig. 179). By the 1980s, planning and building regulations in Sri Lanka had become strict – especially after the formation of the *Urban Development Authority* in 1978 (UDA Law, 1978). The peripheral column grid that sprouts from the ground rises to the roof level, to be tied together by rings of beams at floor levels. This assemblage creates a spatial container within which, the vertical and horizontals planes interact to create volumetric spaces. 'Spatial container' concept developed by Gunasekara throughout the 1960s and 70s, had thus been continued in the 1980s.

There are two prominent lines legible on the plans. The prominent line that cuts across the site in the longitudinal direction – broken only by the placement of three doorways – is the spine (or datum) that holds the composition together. The other, the west-facing boundary wall that rises up to the roof terrace, completely cuts-off the building from the adjacent site. This was caused by rationality; when a pleasant view could not be afforded and on climatic reasons. The spine-wall divides the plan into north and south-facing sections.  Another almost perpendicular line to the spine-wall divides the south-facing section into two unequal compartments. The strip-like reflective pool extends this division into the north-facing section, to separate it in two. The plan could consequently be read as four enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces, where two of each kind criss-cross. North-western and south-western quadrants are enclosed to form the bedroom section and dining cum pantry/servant's quarter respectively; north-eastern and south-western ones are the entrance-court cum garage and living room cum rear-garden respectively. Through the entrance court/garage space, the access road has been invited to the compound, to be extended deep into the interior via the narrow corridor that runs alongside the spine-wall. The two visitors' bedrooms facing Sea Street and spacious master bedroom at the Western end of plan are all accessed by this single corridor. The peripheral wall enclosing the row of rooms and their attached bathrooms, are placed on the Dehiwela-Mt. Lavinia Urban council prescribed 'building-line' (Gunasekara, 2012). The internal walls that separate them appear to be radial, emanating from the spine-wall, where the assemblage of walls portrays a fish bone; a metaphorical representation. Such configurations based on datum lines place Gunasekara's planning in contiguity to similar works by Alvar Aalto such as Villa Mairea and the famous Baker House (Lahti, 2004). When the former manifested a geometric articulation of the concept, the latter was a rather nebulous representation that would have appealed to Gunasekara. The element of rationality that was evident in the earlier works of Gunasekara, as that of Aalto, had been replaced by a strong

degree of expressionism. It appears that Gunasekara was fascinated by Aalto's convictions that

> "[…] form is a mystery that eludes every definition", [and when] there are many situations in life in which organisation is too brutal; the duty of the architect is to give life a more sensitive structure".

The corridor also provides a single opening into the open living room that extends into the garden. Its outer floor lines correspond with the two contour lines that break the garden space into three descending levels. Opening of habitable spaces in this manner into semi-enclosed gardens assures the continuous flow of spaces throughout the entire site extent. This makes the building look more spacious than it really is. The south-eastern quadrant is again divided in two, by a wall parallel to the one perpendicular to the spine. Out of the two units the division creates, the east-facing one is the dining cum pantry and the other, hidden-away in the corner, is the servant's quarter with a small bedroom and attached bathroom. Both sections are lit and ventilated commonly from a small private rear-garden. The dining cum pantry is divided across, again by a level change, and a pantry top that demarcates a small foyer is accessible from the garage. The foyer at the garage level also provides access into the servant's quarter at the same plane. The dining/pantry located at a level as high as the living room has an access door leading to it.

Consistent with Gunasekara's earlier designs, the de Silva house too pays homage the *Beaux-Art* tradition of the *Parti*.[128] Comparison of plans (Fig. 179-82) from Gunasekara's domestic portfolio allows one to infer that the architect has attempted to capture *"the essence of the project at large"* or the *"central idea or building concept"*, in the words of Danielle Shows and Matthew Frederick respectively (cited in wespeakarchitecture.com, 2011). This explains the strong divisions on the plan narrated before. Dividing the site into four quadrants is the basic *parti* of the design – as it was in the Illangakoon house – where the entrance, massing and spatial hierarchy have all followed that basic organization. The perfectionist that Gunasekara was (as Pieris, 2007 reveals), he pushed the idea to cover other design aspects too – apparent in the pervasive triangle in plans, stairwell, the pond and other elements on the façade. The 'wholly-inclusive' possibility of *parti* that Frederick posits has been explored, when most others believe that *"…perfect parti is neither attainable nor desirable"* (cited in wespeakarchitecture.com, 2011). The reliance on the *parti* makes it plausible to argue that Gunasekara's fundamental design approach did not change over time – be it catering to the elite or sub-elite.

The Journey:

Once arrived at the entrance court from the street, one is naturally drawn towards the light-flooded front end of the internal corridor, drawn by a phototrophic movement (Fig. 174). A few steps have to be climbed and the reflective pool crossed over, to reach the slightly-wider starting point of the corridor. The foyer-like quality of the space allows one of three journey options; either to continue down into the darkness of the passage, to enter the naturally lit living through the door on the right, or take the playfully-arranged staircase to ascent to the upper levels bathed in the light from the roof gaps. Hence, this arguably, is a threshold point.  The corridor provides access to bedrooms as well as the living and garden beyond. Zigzagging staircase flights lead into landing levels provide access at first, to a mezzanine, and then, to an apartment unit, and finally, to the open roof terrace. A bizarre object that vaguely resembles a pyramid protects the stairwell.

### *Architectonics*

Orchestrated Views:

The views from the house are carefully envisaged and choreographed. Only the southern façade affords extensive views via full-height door-window panels, while the northern side only contains ribbon-like windows fixed closer to the ceiling level. The eastern facade is almost blank while the western one has a few ribbon windows and horizontal linear cuts. The choices were strictly functional. The north and east sides had no views to offer, the west side's neglect was climatic, and thus, at the south side the emphasis was directed on. The loss of load-bearing walls precipitated in the loss of the façade, which in Vidler's (1989: 42) perspective, allowed the long window to be inserted into what became no more than a thin skin stretched across the surface of the edges of the horizontal slab (Fig. 169). From the first and second floor rooms, Gunasekara frames in all cardinal directions, views of the surrounding middle-class houses and hotels that were growing in numbers leaps and bounds. The middle-class penetration into a quarter formerly dominated by sea-side palatial estates of low-country elites, marked a new becoming; the first step perhaps, towards a more 'just' society that the architect prophesised. Gunasekara's revelation has to be taken in the context where the middle-class suburban neighbourhood (first encountered in the 1960s and 70s) was, even by the mid 1980s, not an omnipresent occurrence in Sri Lanka. Pieris (2007: 50-51) who maps locations of these neighbourhoods around their inception, in fact, attribute the phenomenon as a limitation to Colombo's new 'satellite towns'.[129] In the light of no available research on the area, it could be inferred that the middle-class disbursement elsewhere in the island would have been sporadic and limited. It is under these circumstances that Gunasekara's effort gains currency. On

the other hand, the proliferating hotels – some brand-new and others, converted former elite houses/mansions – framed yet another new reality of open economy, at the macro level. The liberal system had created a new 'urban middle-class' according to K. T. Silva (2005: 112) and arguably, the class was not only propelling tourism industry to record highs by the mid 1980s; most importantly, it was buying-out and pushing elites out of Mt.Lavinia.  The family estates of the de Sarams' and Bandaranaikes' that not-so-long-ago comprised most of the sea-side land stretch between Mt.Lavinia and *Dehiwala,* had by now been reduced to a number of dispersed properties.[130]

When looking out from top floor interior towards south, the horizon line falls amidst the horizontal floor-ceiling planes; framing the view of the vast expanse (Fig. 168). As soon as one steps outside on to the terrace, the external web-like structure assumes the framing function (Fig. 172). First, it frames the direct view along the horizontal, and also vertically, the sky above. The views the upper terraces selectively furnished is metaphorical of two contemporary realities. The view of the immediate St. Thomas's college (its classical facades of main building blocks), conveys the colonial legacy still present in the back of 'sovereign' and 'nationalist' Sri Lankan state. Perhaps, Gunasekara was lamenting on how the colonial aegis was maintained in vain via the epistemological sphere, in a nation that would vastly benefit from its removal. The residential neighbourhood between the edge of school playground and distant horizon, portrays the expanding middle-class sphere of influence; spreading modernisation from the suburbs to rural. The framed view of the sky is perhaps, a frill, but makes sense in regard to a similar arrangement inside. The oblique vertical view inside the building from the entrance level promises a phototrophic movement towards light from the gaps above, evokes the feeling of being inside a chapel.[131] After all, light, for Temple (2007: 76-102), is suggestive of knowledge and redemption; and more vitally, immanence of God. This spiritual quality was surely imbued in the design.



Fig. 168

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 168    View of the expanding commercial realm towards suburban Colombo
             from the roof terrace (2010).

Nature's Inspirations:

The close proximity of the spectacular Mt. Lavinia beach has made its mark on the design. The representations of rugged-edges of beach boulders are pervasive throughout the house, from its pointed wall edges (Fig. 169), pergola frames (Fig. 177), to jagged staircases (Fig. 170). The house could be conceived as a huge boulder, dislocated from the beach to perch uneasily within schools of geometric buildings – a natural phenomenon amidst man-made objects. This theme seems as an extension of the fish bone metaphor that inspired the plan's configuration to start with. The vegetation sprouting from plant troughs to dangle and camouflage the facades (Fig. 183-84) is comparable to the green algae subsuming boulder surfaces; and the protective structure (Fig. 172), the grasp of an octopus's tentacles. In another point of view, Gunasekara has allowed Nature to re-claim as Laurie Baker did in his Indian projects (Bandyopadhyay, in press, unpaginated *mss*); yet in a more rigorous way in comparison to previous works.  The green affinity of the de Silva house may trap Gunasekara's distress on two timely issues.  On one hand, he might have been expressing disgust at the exacerbating scale of deforestation and resultant pollution plaguing Sri Lanka.[132] Gunasekara (2011) in fact, reminisces how green and unpolluted the Lankan cities were in his youth. On the other, Gunasekara might have been directing his reproach at the extant main-stream architectural scenario with its outright disregard for nature. In his view, even the meagre laws that were there to protect the environment were/are not adhered to (Gunasekara, 2011). Thus, Gunasekara would have been refuting the haphazard tendency that by 1977, took hold of the Sri Lankan urban fabric, and particularly, the brutalism of the UNP government's modernisation programme. It not only enabled certain non-architects to prevail as attested by O. kalubovila (2011), the so-called foreign experts also thrived in the opinion of Jayewardene (1984: 237), where both parties could be held responsible for environmentally unfriendly practices. Perhaps, de Silva house was Gunasekara's message to society on what the commitment to nature should be.  The Natural replication matter will be extended later.


Deconstructive Touch:

In terms of architecture, certain deconstructive inclinations could be ascertained in the de Silva house. First, the concept of the house has been deconstructed into three discrete units; a larger unit for the parents and two smaller units for the two siblings (Fig. 179-81). Secondly, the structure has been separated from the envelope; again an alien practice to Sri Lankan architecture at the time. The structure is not based on a geometric grid as it has been twisted, while floor slab planes have been dislocated from their ideal positions (Fig. 184). This assemblage suggests of certain

precariousness; an impression is given that the building has survived a hurricane. The perverse external structures that support the wide pergolas (extending from the envelope to form a web-like protective configuration) in turn, adds to this effect. What underlies this precariousness will be discussed later.

Volumetrically, the design could be conceived as a series of loose horizontal and vertical planes, detached from one another. Vegetation has been skilfully deployed to infill spaces between the structure and envelope. The green also gives a humane appearance to the strong geometric edges of the composition (Fig. 184). Such transgressions have caused the external aesthetic of this house to take a bizarre and unconventional turn. Internally too, odd-shaped spaces have been fashioned with pointed corners. Not just the bedrooms, the living and dining as well as the bathrooms share this predisposition that is far distant from their 'ideal' configurations for the Sri Lankan mind. The underlying meanings behind this tendency will be taken up later.

Bodily Analogy and Effacement:

The deconstructive predisposition the discussed transgressions caused to traditional architectures[133] was augmented through other experimental tropes. Gunasekara (2011) being the great admirer of Le Corbusier was deeply inspired, for the master's trends to be articulated in his works. He paid homage to Le Corbusier's reliance of the human body – like that of Alberti – as the foundation to repetition that resulted in the 'free plan' and Vidler (1989: 46) believes that there is plenty of evidence to substantiate this argument.

> "From the house to the city, the body acts … as the central referent: its shape informs the layout of the Ville Radieuse its analogy infuses biology in to the mechanics of the city and the building; its proportions are embedded into every measure through the operation of the tracés régulateurs of the Modulor".[134]

Within this bodily architecture, lies the concept of effacement. Like the face, the façade of a building is *a metaphorical plane of intersection between the eyes of the observer and what one may dare to call the 'soul' of the building"* (Vidler, 1989: 41). For Colin Rowe (in Vidler, 1989: 41), the existential interface between the *"eye and idea"* was necessary for any interaction between building and observer to take place. *When considering intercourse with a building, "[its] face, however, veiled, must always be a desirable and provocative item".* On the other hand, Leatherbarrow (2002: 73) tells us that façade generally *"registered first"*, and to 'arrive' is to stand in front of the façade. This is a face to face exchange that allows the building in question 'stand apart' from the rest that blends into oblivion.[135] The lack of façade Rowe attributes to the continuous-failing of modern architecture.[136] It was the emphasis on the horizontal, and on the interpretation of inside-outside relationship that had made

possible the 'free-façade' – no façade in the traditional sense. For Rowe, 'Face' was never a preoccupation of modern architecture (in Vidler, 1989: 42).

There is more to this effacement. It could now be linked with the initial discussion on bodily architecture. The tradition of 'Renaissance bodily analogy'[137] has become *"psychologised"* as a principle of 'humanistic architecture' in general (Vidler, 1989: 41). An ascription of a 'corporeal psychology' to the experience of architecture is pointed out by Wőlfflin (1966: 77).[138] In Wőlfflin's view, it denotes the 'creature'-like nature of the building *"with head and foot, back and front",* and in Scot's terms, we unconsciously invest the building itself with the human movement and moods (in Vidler, 1989: 42).[139] The two principals together, form 'the humanism of architecture'.[140] Moreover, the direct face-façade analogy demonstrative of eye and idea (that was once discredited through racial physiognomic analogies with regionalist styles in the past) that Vilder (1989: 44) elaborates, has been lapsed deliberately. Rowe (in Vidler, 1989: 44) however, is critical towards this lacking as he insists that the face is the indication of the *"internal animation"* of a building, *"both opaque and revealing",* in the line of George Simmel's (1901) exploration on the 'Aesthetic Significance of the Human Face' as an index for modern spirituality (he believed that the face is the mirror of the soul).[141]



Fig. 169                                                                                          Fig. 170

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 169    Alien outlook (2010).
Fig. 170    Zigzagging staircase flights (2010).

As the modernists he admired, Gunasekara's path to artistic representation of the building's soul arguably took a more indirect form of abstraction in the de Silva house.

For him, the entire sphere of experience the building offers (involving all senses) should signify its soul, not just the façade (and eye) that appeals to the sense of vision.[142] After all, 'façadism' is a post-renaissance phenomenon that came into being after the perspective was invented (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 76), and its result was the façade assuming what Pallasmaa (2005) calls a *"retinal-centric imagery"*. It seems that this bodily architecture and effacement carry their underlying agendas.

The hitherto-unforeseen degree of bodily articulation by Gunasekara within the configuration could be pinned on the turmoil of social life, at a time when the image of the slain body haunted the Sri Lankan psyche. Sri Lankans had by the mid 1980s been traumatised by the constant terrorist attacks by the hordes of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) the island over.[143] They were the first of many more to follow (Jalaldeen in dailynews.lk, 2009).[144] The horrific images were reported via an array of media institutions that had by the time, seen a remarkable expansion thanks to neo-liberal policies. In a context when the value of human life had diminished drastically, Gunasekara allegorically evoked its significance. An architecture based on the human body (and its extension to the macro level) would have been an assumption of prominence to it that had been lost, and thus, to human life the human body is a vehicle for. The humanist idea would have been that human life is there to be indulged, but to suffer (N. de Silva, 2008b).[145] Gunasekara would have indeed embraced this sentiment via his European avant-garde training. On the other hand, Christian ethos that Gunasekara cherished, maintain that nature is by god, for human development (N. de Silva, 2006a). His own personal compassion towards humanity imparted by his strong conviction to faith, would have provoked such a depiction in the de Silva house. Within this depiction, wrapped amidst the building's effacement, lied an embodied message.

A nation's soul is arguably its cultural ensemble. However, this is never the case almost everywhere including Sri Lanka; as in every modern nation state, there is always a dominant culture that underplays the impact of its contenders in the making of a national identity (Ericssen, 1993: 143-146). It is the dominant culture that forms itself as the face, and therefore the soul, of a nation state. It is pertinent that the de Silva house by Gunasekara was built during a time when the majority's Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism was experiencing yet another peak. It was a revolutionary building that arguably added a last phase to Gunasekara's career, as he went on to apply its metaphorical currency to an array of projects of national importance to come as posited by Pieris (2007) (the failure to launch is irrelevant here). Thus, arguably, this was an experiment at the micro-level; the initial step of something greater envisaged. By denying a face to the building that he would have metaphorically taken as Mother Sri Lanka, Gunasekara possibly refuted the majority culture's claim to become the nation's face and soul. In the end, in a given multi-cultural situation, each

culture assumes its meaning (identity) in relation to 'other' cultures (Ericssen, 1993: 121). This reality was recorded in the faceless, and in Pallasmaa's (2005) terms, 'haptic' architectural experience that Gunasekara promoted; depicting that a country's soul is an ensemble of cultures, but a dominant one. Debatably, this was never a refutation of Sinhalese Buddhist claim to legitimate cultural dominance,[146] but an appeal for timely reconciliation among disparate cultures of Sri Lanka.



Fig. 171

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 171    Looking out onto the street through the web-like structure (2010).

### *Trapping Global Trends*

Reason for the Pastiche:

The design illustrates a clear set of dualities with the humanism of the renaissance and anti-humanism of modernism. Humanism is evident in the *parti* configurations, bodily reference and other rational design choices from orientation to environmental sensibilities. On the other hand, anti-humanism renders the building faceless and attributes an eccentric physical and experiential quality to it.  The unresolved nature of such dualities suggests that emphasis was not on a dialectical relation to his composition, but showed a grappling to arrive at a good solution. Considering Gunasekara's artistic inclination, the house could indeed be viewed as a pastiche that replicates nature's occurrences. The form in overall is abstract, with the corporeal element celebrated, analogous to 19th century paintings by the pioneers of impressionism. The emphasis is not on the product itself, but the feelings it evokes (Evans, 2003: 161). It is this 'whole' that makes sublime plausible.

In a period when architecture in Sri Lanka was lagging behind in artistic substance, but fulfilling cultural needs of modernity[147] and nationalism,[148] Gunasekara may have been trying to awaken the artist in the architect. After all, Gunasekara (2011), the

artist, comments that when architecture is an art form, what is the use of an architectural product that does not evoke the sublime in its observer? This certainly complies with Nammuni's (1987: 10) idea that a good 'shelter' should have a profound and enduring impact on its user that in turn, *"distracts"* him from the specific (building), to the contemplation of the abstract (and thus away from his physical constraints, anger frustration and poverty), *"[…] very much like a good poem, music or a good book[…]".* When such artistic qualities are ascribed to shelter, then only architecture is created.[149] Hence, architecture certainly, was created here.



Fig. 172

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 172    Tentacles of an octopus (2010).

Alien-ness:

The overall composition of de Silva house is expressionist than rationalist (Fig. 169-72). Although Gunasekara was tempted by the rubric of deconstruction, he never incorporated its more salient features into his repertoire. Its haphazard tendency [that arises out of joining together discordant pieces to arrive at unrelated abstract forms] and the design being carried out in parts [the 'bits and pieces' approach (Raunekk, 2010)] would not have appealed to the idealist that he was. In this backdrop, it could be discerned that Gunasekara's application of certain key ideas of it in that particular juncture of Sri Lankan history was audacious, and explains the added-alienation suffered by observers of his works.

Analysing the role played by Gunasekara, Christopher de Saram makes a number of seminal observations. His use of concrete forms was looked upon as an *"anti-traditional"* gesture during a period when identity was being found through nostalgia. Valentine's *"alien-ness, American-ness, modernity, freedom" was seen as "anti-national".* Within an orientalist discourse,[150] *"as Bawa became the role model, Valentine became the villain of the piece"* (de Saram in Pieris, 2007: 21).[151]

An Ethereal Familiarity?

Although Gunasekara's architecture from a first glance proved alien, it did contain certain elements of familiarity within. In the works of American practitioners,[152] he saw an effort to mould new technologies into an aesthetic that resonated with a specific geography; that he conceived to be a definitive break with the colonial past. The plastic curvature of concrete, experimented within tropical climates by South American modernists suggested an approach comparable to the linearity of the prairie style that had emphasized the expanse of the vast American geography. In this light, Pieris (2007: 13) suggests that,

> *"[the] reference to ancient monuments of Incas and Mayas in Californian Modernists suggested ways in which he might approach and reinterpret Sri Lanka's historic architecture. For Gunasekara, the undulating softness of the tropical geography and interweaving of form and space in the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa would be parallel sources of inspiration".*

In this particular case, having set aside historic references, it was the concomitant landscape he decided to replicate. After all, Mt. Lavinia where the famous hotel sits on a rocky vantage point, is a landscape with colonial associations apart from its economic significance. The hotel, formerly a colonial mansion, and the surrounding beach stretch linked with it, attests to a renowned love story (mountlaviniahotel.lk, 2011).[153] Thus, this romantic association would have induced Gunasekara's creativity – in recreating the environment through imaginative replication. How this replication was realised was discussed earlier.

The building, analogous to the works of many modernist masters (i.e. Saarinen and Lloyd Wright) was not conceived as an object, but one that grew from its site. As Saarinen, Gunasekara would have also resorted to, not by the implication of surrendering of the building to its place, but instead realising enhancement of its place – collaboration with the natural and the man-made (Leatherbarrow, 2002: 107). In this light, the notion that the latter of Gunasekara's works lacked any reference to past is a fallacy. Consequently, there was indeed, some form of familiarity of the context in his work, however ethereal it was. Presumably, it was this etherealness that rendered comprehension ineffective for its lay observers.[154]

Audacious Technology:

The de Silva house trapped a timely reality through its technological emphasis. The audacious concrete technologies used for the challenging structural configurations marked the culmination of Gunasekara's sectarian devotion to technological experimentation; and the kits-of-parts approach too he had by now, perfected (Fig. 169-72, 176). For Jayatilaka (2010) this technological stride forward pushed

boundaries. Having taken inspiration from the 1960-70s industrialisation drive by the state and exhibitions it organised, Sri Lanka's engineering profession (in the 1970s) endured an innovative phase, and the tricked down effects sustained into the mid 1980s (Pieris, 2007: 13).[155] In this backdrop, Gunasekara continued to collaborate with Jayathi weerakoon on whom he had great confidence. For them, new technology promised solutions for the nation's housing crisis, when for many architects (i.e. regionalists); a veneer of vernacular had either provided solutions, or concealed the chasms left by modern technologies. A vernacular masquerade on a modern concrete building not only diminished negative effects of the tropical climate where humidity accelerated the decay of materials, it also obscured problems of poor workmanship in a profession that dependent on poorly-paid informal labourers. Moreover, the scale and additive nature of the vernacular favoured the artistic skill of the architect underplaying the role of the engineer. Gunasekara refused to abide by these choices that had become customary by the early 1980s, and was determined to contribute to the progress of the industry by continuing experimentation (Pieris, 2007: 21).[156]

### *Tropical Modern Residues*

Gunasekara, in his inherent knowledge on Tropical Modernist applicability in the Sri Lankan climate, was astute enough to borrow appropriately from the rubric. Upali de Silva house is a repository of many Tropical Modernist experiments that yielded positive results.

The most striking discount to the discourse could be found in the section of the building. The parallel, yet slipped, horizontal slab planes create vertical openings to enable stack effect throughout the house. The high entrance court space especially, with abrupt openings all around the spacious volume is the foremost stack ventilator. The slab arrangement coupled with vertical wall sections that stop short of soffits, facilitate a fair degree of cross-ventilation throughout. The stack and cross-ventilation coupled with the 'shadow-umbrella' effect to keep the interior cool. This is achieved in three ways; primarily, by the web-like pergolas resting on the external structure to protect the building envelope, and secondarily, by the plant troughs that cover the circumference of the building (also by the surrounding greenery in the gardens all around). Especially, the wide canopy-like pergola structure that covers half of the rear-garden is striking (Fig. 177). The building at a glance is partly camouflaged by its surrounding trees, bushes growing on troughs, as well as runners that dangle from pergolas and slabs. These cut-down heat gain and glare, while making the experience of looking out (through greenery) pleasant. There are other precautions too. The fenestration on the west-facing façade has been largely reduced to narrow strips to minimise glare and heat gain amplified by the property's close proximity to the sea.

On this largely blank facade, Gunasekara cut ribbon-like strips horizontally, for the cool sea breeze to flow through the garden (Fig. 173).[157]

Gunasekara's commitment to his tropical modernist training revealed a truth that most non-architect designed buildings of aesthetic pretentions failed to acknowledge in tropical Sri Lanka that was fast-urbanizing. Climatic suitability had been traded-off in the name of modernity and the de Silva house exemplified the applicability of the discourse, three decades on.



Fig. 173

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 173    The Tropical Modern residues (2010).

### Making Sense of Things

Identifying Trans-national Preferences:

Gunasekara's domestic design for the progressive de Silva family replaced one that was the status symbol of the petty-bourgeoisie of yesteryear. An introvert bungalow with its hybrid colonial aesthetic was replaced by a totally alien and extroverted product that had architecturally encompassed the most fashionable philosophical strand of the time (i.e. deconstruction). The design traps the modern aspirations of a fairly recent class construction – the upper middle-class.

Within their commitment to authentic alterity, modern aspirations and outward-orientation had compelled them to turn their backs on colonial values systems, class structure and also architectures. The class did not possess a past heyday to celebrate, or a repository of pompous traditions to borrow from. Hence, in the very modern house by Gunasekara for the de Silvas, the traditional concession was removed, even from the dwelling equipment and accessories. This allowed de Silvas the freedom to choose what they wanted to use as well as display in the interiors, and the choice was obviously conterminous with the rest of the modern house (A. de Silva, 2010).[158]

Deconstruction of the Family Unit:

The excessive westernisation of the de Silvas would have eliminated the sense of family contiguity pervasive in the quintessential Sri Lankan setting that was in turn, manifested in their request for a house that would ensure privacy for parents, as well as for each of their two young-adult children. Gunasekara thus, had to facilitate the deconstruction of the family-unit.[159] This organisation was not consistent with the quintessential Sri Lankan dwelling arrangement[160] and was in fact, more of a Western sensibility. The only concession made to the Sri Lankan family was the encouragement for interactions provided on the well-resolved ground floor. The traditional Lankan dwelling after all, was a single storey open plan configuration that prompted constant family gatherings. Having realised this, he may have reproduced a parallel for the de Silva on the ground floor, while the clients' specific requirement was reluctantly accommodated on the upper levels, as isolated compounds.

Deconstruction of Sri Lanka?

The agenda at the national level is more compelling. The eccentric design by Guasekara is a precarious-looking ensemble of architectonic elements that has in fact, deconstructed the very idea of the conventional house. The shift towards a deconstructive tendency frames perhaps, the turbulent politics of Sri Lanka of the period – overridden by the famous Indian intervention of 1987 that called for a federal solution to the ethnic conflict (Gunaratna, 1993).[161] The intervention as many patriotic others, would have been considered by a frustrated Gunasekara himself, as a disturbance of Sri Lanka's sovereignty. The point when the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) would pull-out, by the end of 1987, was unforeseeable.[162] At the time, it was everyone's view – including the president to be[163] – that this domestic crisis needed a home-grown solution (Gunaratne, 1993). Thus, the attempted-deconstruction of Sri Lanka would have been possibly framed metaphorically via deconstructive inclinations in Gunasekara's domestic architecture. The ensuing uneasy politics and its deteriorating consequences[164] would have prompted the subsequent extension of the style into the civic level for more public receptivity.[165]

Pejorative Residues and Trickled-down Content:

Gunasekara's design conceals other unpleasant realities of neo-liberal Sri Lanka too. As the ground floor plan illustrates, concealing of servants' spaces in the de Silva house marks the sinister elite desire to keep working classes at bay; a continuum even the new upper middle-class favoured (Fig. 179). Irrespective of their repudiation of elitist architectural aesthetics, allowing of certain unethical practices that could be

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hidden conveniently was desirable. After all, the 'wage workers' the domestic servants now were, having stripped-off their former loyalties, were neither trustworthy nor reliable in the age of monetarism and political turmoil.[166] However, Gunasekara, within his own convictions may not have approved of this, yet would have succumbed to his clients' pressure.

The de Silva house is protected on all four of its sides by lanky walls that appear impassable. This fortification suggests of yet another unpleasant political reality. The second insurrection led by the JVP – comprised mainly of Sinhalese working-class youth – between 1988-90 had a background of events commencing from the organisation's outset and pioneering struggle in 1971. When Gunasekara began to design in 1985, in the wake of the Indian intervention, the nationalist ebb of the JVP who fervently opposed to it was extremely high. People by this time realised that it was just a matter of time before the notorious organisation would go on yet another violent rampage against the Sri Lankan state and it eventually happened in 1987 (Dayasiri, 2011).[167] The Sri Lankan state's latest creation – the upper middle-class – would have taken umbrage by JVP's burgeoning acts of resistance in the South. The architect would have been astute enough to predict what was to come; based on the ill omens of the time. Thus, what he created was a receptacle within which, the affluent family could seek refuge in the wake of an insurrection by a rival class. However, within the hindrance of four surrounding walls, the expressionist quality of Gunasekara's pastiche was hindered.

The due consideration given to the automobile in the house too is conspicuous. The automobile in the past had always been in the island a 'status symbol' of the affluent. It was a gulf-creator between classes; earlier between the elite and others, now between elites, sub-elites and others. The prominence given to the automobile space in the designing of the ground floor is noteworthy. Not only that Gunasekara provided ample space for two cars, he also ensured that they could be comfortably manoeuvred from the road; made evident through the splayed edge of the garage entrance, and the hard mass-concrete floor that was formed as a vehicular ramp (Fig. 179). Just as in elite houses, the two-car garage by the time, had become customary in upper middle-class counterparts too, as Gunasekara's other designs also confirm. The open economy by the late 1980s had made relatively inexpensive Asian automobile makes even more affordable by lowering taxes. This trend was analogous with other developing countries as Connors (2011) suggests.[168] Consequently, for a social group mainly stationed in the Colombo suburbs, automobile was a good alternative to what Pieris (2007: 50) calls *"perilous public transport"*. It not only assured comfort, but also a new 'visible consumption choice' in the words of Belk, Mayer and Bahn's (1982), to demarcate class lines with the 'lower' middle-class, as well as a stride closer to the elite class.

Most of Colombo district's major roads since open-economy have been plagued by vehicular-induced air, noise, visual pollutions as well as fatal accidents. Referring to this concurrent unpleasant state of the Sri Lankan roads, Dayaratne (2011: 3) notes that the motorcar has been often seen as a 'necessary evil'. In Dayaratne's (2011: 3) view, the modern urban spaces have been dehumanised in the quest for development and progress, and the over-reliance on private means of transport have removed the element of what he calls *"unplanned social encounters"* that has the potential to break prevailing social barriers. He concludes that in the 'hostile' roads of contemporary Sri Lanka, such encounters are unlikely.[169] Arguably, such issues would have been first encountered by the mid 1980s (Chandrasiri, 2003: 2).[170] The policy-makers employed by a progressive Sri Lankan state following 'development' aims set by the capitalist West, gave priority to 'movement space' than 'social space', creating 'conduits' for efficient transport as in cities of the Western world (Dayaratna, 2011: 3). This significant policy change that was a complete reversal of the prior human-friendly urban inclinations arguably found indirect representation in the de Silva house.[171]

Christianity, Modernity and Cultural Clash:

Gunasekara, the ardent Christian (Catholic), speaks through his architecture. Replication of natural occurrences – *"patterns, order and proportions"* in his own words – is appreciating that they exist, and paying homage to the creator who in his grace, created such, for us to reach ultimate and intense inner joy – the sublime – and in the process create art. Repetition throughout the house reinforces the above, evoking their omnipresence, thus immanence of God. The anticipation of industrial repetition as a panacea to cure domestic ills of a country by making architecture accessible to all is indeed in line with communal Catholic teachings.[172] In making architecture cheaper for more social accessibility, modern technology makes the foregoing intentions plausible for Gunasekara. He is confident that the environmental constraints could be overcome;[173] within the strong (perhaps too strong) conviction he holds on science and technology (Gunasekara, 2011).[174]

Gunasekara's approach framed yet another vague reality; that is the plight of the Sri Lankan Christian in the age of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism. The co-existence of Buddhism and Christianity in the island had always been an uneasy affair. When Sinhalese Buddhism was rescued from its oblivion at the hands of colonialism the state patronage the Christian faith had prior received by foreign rulers was removed. In fact, the once-dominant minority religion that intervened in state affairs and education as Perera (1994: 266-67) illustrates, by the 1980s, had plummeted to its lowest ebb since first introduced centuries ago.[175] This called for its reinvigoration that took place largely in the rural areas, as a wave of organised conversion of poor peasants by

various Christian sects.[176] This was naturally challenged by the Buddhists, where their gradual resistance was to culminate later,[177] and the outburst did not show until 2004 when a series of anti-Christian attacks took place (Pieris, 2007: 100).[178] This is the concurrent phase of the ever-existing tussle between Christianity and Buddhism, where the liberal policies of the post 1977 were arguably the precursor to this development. When the country was infiltrated by modern cultural influences than never before,[179] it was the perfect opportunity for foreign missionary organizations to cash-in.

Thus, when Gunasekara's personal fear of losing religious freedom was reflected in his architecture, the shrewdness of certain factions of his minority community resulted in the Buddhist counter attacks.[180] The Buddhist resistance on the other hand, was prompted by the urge to contain the relentless modernisation of the Sinhalese population under neo-liberal conditions. The fear that modernity was impairing the archaic Sinhala culture and its world view [as Dayaratne (2010) illustrates of the post 1977 changes in the rural village] in fact, underscored this urge. The perpetuation of Sinhala culture in the nationalists' perspective is vital as the receptacle of Buddhism. Endurance of Buddhism on the other hand, ensures the continuum of the alternative epistemology it harbours; that in their belief has the potential of curing ills ascribed upon the human being by modernity (N. de Silva, 2006a).
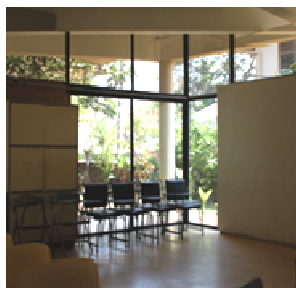


Fig. 174          Fig. 175          Fig. 176          Fig. 177
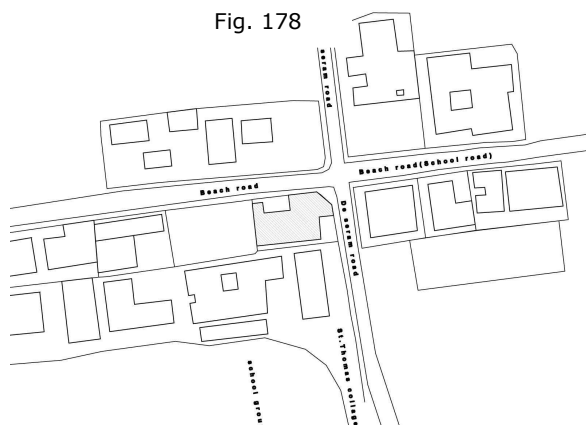


Fig. 178

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 174   Into the gloomy depth of the ground floor via the corridors and level changes (2010).
Fig. 175   The ground floor living (2010).
Fig. 176   The irregular beam details visible from the staircase (2010).
Fig. 177   The pergolas surrounding the main structure meant to be covered in vegetation.
Fig. 178   Site Plan.
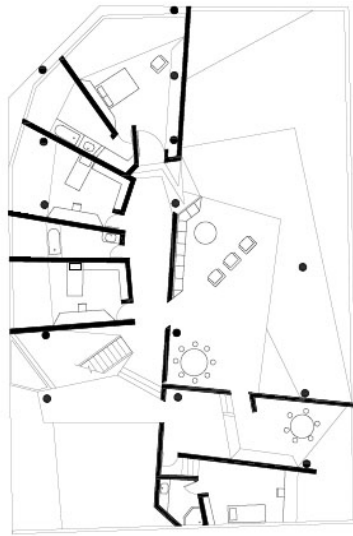
Fig. 179
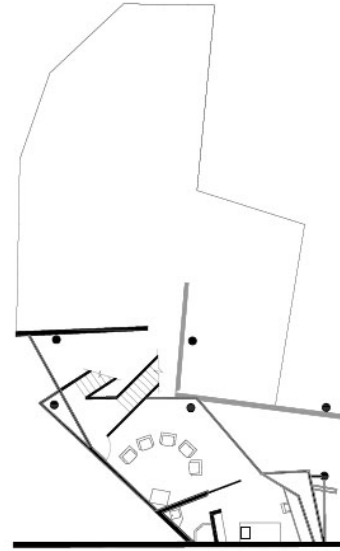

Fig. 180
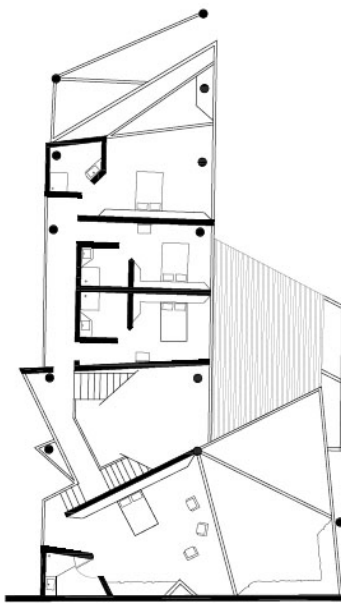

Fig. 181
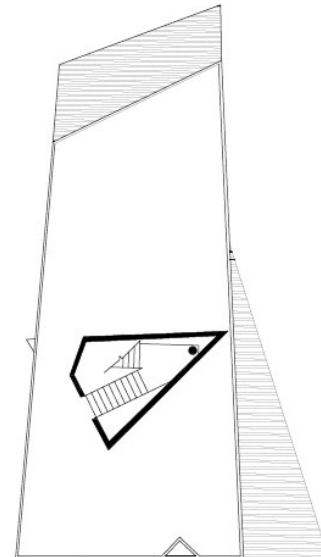

Fig. 182
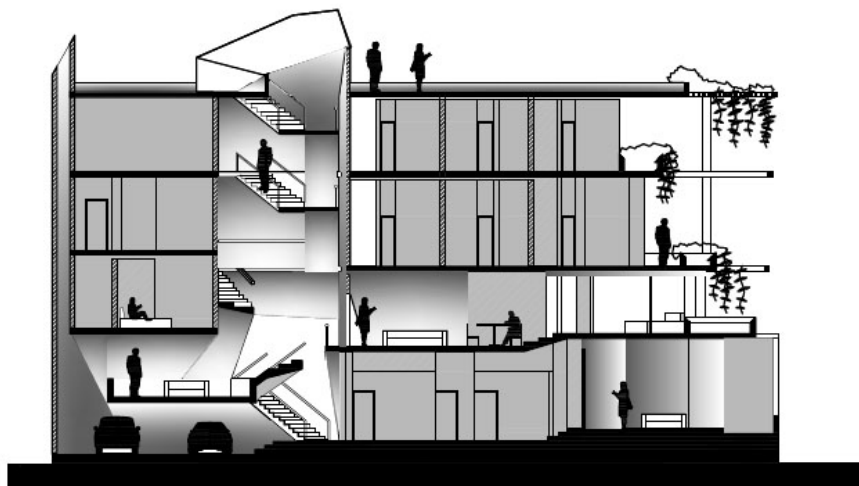

Fig. 183

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 179    Ground Floor Plan.
Fig. 180    Mezzanine Level.
Fig. 181    Upper Floor Plan.
Fig. 182    Roof Terrace Plan.
Fig. 183    Section.
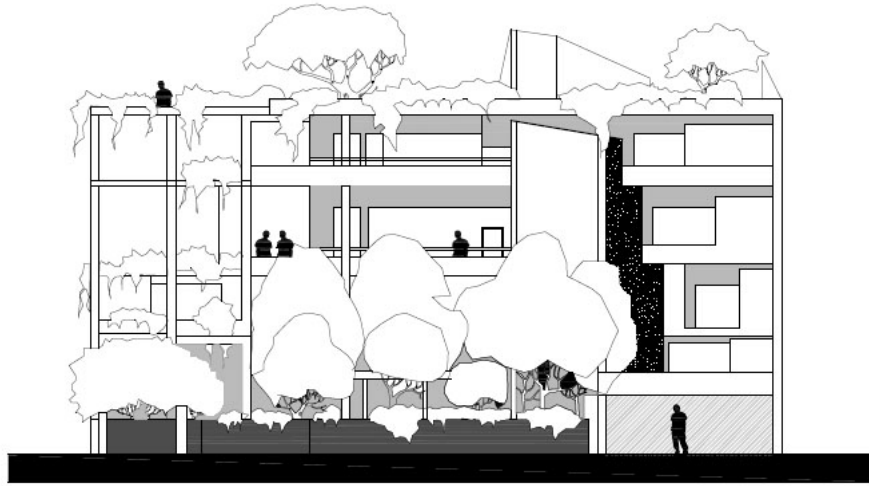
Fig. 184

Upali and Manel de Silva House.

Fig. 184    Front Elevation.


## Conclusion

Valentine Gunasekara was born to a family that had seen a sudden decline in position – from bourgeoisie to the petty-bourgeoisie – in the early 20th century Ceylon. His financially-challenged family was a closely-knit unit (analogous to most other catholic families in Ceylon), desperately attempting to continue the past vestiges of glory. Consequently, Gunasekara received the best available education; both at the secondary and tertiary levels (in Ceylon and England respectively). Despite his exposure to first-hand metropolitan epistemology, he continued his professional life on fairgrounds – with neither elite backing that won him commissions, nor substantial personal wealth that gave him room for choice/freedom in projects. Gunasekara's ardent Catholic upbringing and respect for/knowledge of Buddhism imparted in him a strong sense of compassion towards others. Hence, in line with such ethics, it could be argued that he would have developed a socialist political allegiance in his adult life.

Just as the post-war European metropolitan influence was ensued in the developing world, the US equivalent too was on course, and Gunasekara was one of the first beneficiaries of its many recruitment schemes. The pretentions of egalitarianism and democracy the United States promised to uphold appealed to Gunasekara who despised the colonial and feudalist residues plaguing his motherland; and also its architecture. Consequently, he came to cater largely – it is unclear whether this was by choice or he was compelled to – to the nationalist middle-class intelligentsia or the fringe between the former and the political-class. After neo-liberalism, his sphere of influence was limited to largely the new upper middle-class that bordered on the political-class. Analysis of his domestic clients affirmed that except for a handful of cases, the most did not have access to direct modes of political power. Lack of this on

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the clients' part curtailed Gunasekara's chances of landing commissions at the civic level.

The Illangakoon house was designed for a family of which, both the husband and wife had a traditional elite provenance, thus, high-caste backgrounds. As the family's political and economic powers that had waned over time, they arguably found their place within the political-class. The enlightened clients that they were, the Illangakoons gave Gunasekara great freedom in the design. Gunasekara's response did indeed trap nationalism; not its pervasive culturally-charged version that dwelt on reflecting the traditional architectural content, but its political counterpart riding a socialist vehicle. The Illangakoon family's adherence to the Christian faith and Western lifestyle rendered the overt representation of the chosen dominant culture – Kandyan culture – and its architectural traditions inappropriate.  In this backdrop, the socialist inclination was framed by the kit-of-parts approach that Gunasekara borrowed – with the intention of expanding the sphere of architecture – from the American experiments. His appropriation was on par with the pro-socialist state's emphasis on modernity, framed in the industrial exhibitions it organised. At a time when the radical socialist element threatened the nation state still run by the traditional elite, the self-conscious clients that were the ruler's kin (and associates) would have sought refuge in a 'neutral' rubric such as architectural modernism. On the other hand, the same approach was coupled with the pervasive natural agendas to mark Gunasekara's own conviction in the creator (and the act of creation). Meanwhile an ethereal historical invocation too was envisaged; in both architectural content as well as dwelling equipment and accessories. Irrespective of his belief in the traditional strait-jacket as an impediment to the development of the human creativity (and spirit), the rescued antique pieces were chosen for a recessive celebration of former family glory (also to an extent, currant), concealed behind a façade of modernism. The modern ensemble in contrast, reflected the family's up-to-date-ness in the core's cultural frontiers.

The design for the de Silvas on the contrary, was for a family where both the husband and wife were from a petty-bourgeoisie provenance, and also belonged to the same lower caste group. About a decade after neo-liberalism when persistent nationalism had threatened the nation's moral values and sovereignty, Gunasekara's prior emphasis on the just society and spirituality, seemed to have intensified. While vindication of economic inequality for inter-ethnic and inter-religious strives continued to justify his political stance, disenchantment with the unethical political reckonings and prolific violence, perhaps drove Gunasekara even-more towards the all-mighty. While the socialist inclination was still articulated in the now stepped-up kit-of-parts approach, the attempted political deconstruction of his motherland and the resultant bloodshed was engulfed in his interests in architectural deconstruction. Within this agenda, the promotion of the de Silvas from the middle-class into the upper middle-

class/political class fringe was also represented in the architecture of the house in its spatial configurations. Since the family had no glorious family history to celebrate, and a unique architecture to revive in the age of reinvigorated nationalism, the best choice was external orientation for architectural borrowings. The borrowing epitomised a feature of mimicry quintessential to the class they belonged.

The two houses – one from an initial phase and the other from the latter – from Gunasekara's repertoire entailed to varying extents, not only the foremost events in the political-economic spheres (marked as conspicuous incidents in history), but also the resultant cultural trends of the country for the periods in question. When the architect and client did not directly mobilise in their capacities directly, they found indirect reflections in alternative ways.

## Notes

[1] brothers and sister (a doctor, lawyer and teacher respectively).

[2] The former, Gunasekara reminisces in terms of family anecdotes (Gunasekara, 2011). What remained as evidence of the former family glory, according to Pieris (2007: 17) was the valued family furniture embellished in colonial styles.

[3] This was essentially a school moulded on Victorian 'grammar school' model.

[4] At school, as symptomatic to for his class origin, he enthusiastically took up sports and captained the cricket team in 1950.

[5] Robson (2004), Rajapaksha (1999) and Pieris (2007) in particular.

[6] having practicing Buddhist relatives.

[7] having married Ranee Jayamanne in 1962, who bore him eight children.

[8] having realised his artistic talent at school.

[9] However, the overwhelming cost of architectural education in Europe compelled him to take-up an apprenticeship at E.R. & B. The options available to him in terms of architectural schools were either in India or Europe. In India, Sir J. J. School of Art (Sir JamshedjiJeejeebhoy School of Art) in Bombay was renowned in Ceylon. Out of English schools, Cambridge, Regent Street Polytechnic and Architectural Association (*AA*) were the most sought after (Pieris, 2007: 18). As a precursor to his architectural training, between 1950-51, Gunasekara worked under Jimmy Nilgiriya, largely on what he calls 'colonial style' bungalows, and a handful of other projects. He designed a monument for the Obeyesekere family for which he was well-paid. He also designed a house for a cousin called Shelton Karunarathne (Pieris, 2007: 18).

[10] He joined the E.R. & B. having turned down an attractive offer to work with two of his former *AA* colleagues; Visva Selvarathnam and Leon Monk. Their commercial-oriented practice did not appeal to him (Gunasekara, 2012).

[11] as atypical to the Sri Lankan upper middle-class of the time.

[12] Most of the clients of Gunasekara are either no longer alive, or are not in the best of positions to supply information owing to their advanced ages. However, some of the clients in relation to the selected case studies are still alive. Although Sepala has passed away, Sunethra Illangakoon is still accessible in her twilight days. On the other hand, although both Upali and Manel de Silva are no more, their son Asitha has obliged to the research by providing valuable information.

[13] The family is in fact, connected to most of the renowned names such as the Obeysekeras and de Sarams hailing from the same region.

[14] Famous locally as the 'black prince of Ceylon/*Sabaragamuwa*', he is said to had shown his abhorrence towards the British administration that is cherished even today by the villagers who frequently mention of a number of heroic anecdotes associated with his life (Weerasekara, 2006; Kuruppu, 2001).

[15] that is now a museum.

[16] Sir Francis Mollamure.

[17] Adileen Mollamure Kumari Hami.

[18] Thus, it appears that she is more proud of her maternal ancestry.

[19] in the plantation at *Hapugastenna* where in fact, both their children were born.

[20] It is there the family lived after Sunethra's father's retirement, having left the official bungalow in Curtley Road, Colombo.

[21] The children were sent to two prominent colonial period schools in Colombo and Sepala and Sunethra had also attended them respectively (Illangakoon, 2011).

[22] Gunasekara was introduced to Chris de Saram by his cousin Sepala Illangakoon, after his return to Sri Lanka from architectural studies in the UK. Consequently, Chris became familiar with the project and built up a friendship with Gunasekara with whom he later practiced with for some time (de Saram, 2010).

[23] This was, either from the 'low country' or 'up county'. It was commonly accepted during the British Colonial period that in order to own property in such prime locations, one had to either hail from a traditional elite family, or be a member of the new bourgeoisie.

[24] These were meant to accommodate the overspill of people from crowded city areas.

As what is known as Abercrombie's Regional Plan for the Colombo Metropolitan area that was insufficient to meet the growing needs, it was amended according to central Planning Commission's recommendations in 1957. The 'satellite' town was such a recommendation (uda.lk, 2011).

[25] Matthews believes that the values of the program were offset by the method of distribution. Very little of the land acquired by the government was transferred to individuals. On the other hand, the peasants were unable to make proper use of it once it came to their possession. Most of the taken-over land was turned over to various government agencies or to cooperative organizations such as the Up-Country Co-operative Estates Development Board.

[26] On the eve of the act's implementation, many resorted to desperate deeds in order to retain their lands. They sub-divided land amongst family members. Mrs. Atapattu (2010) (nee Elapatha) explains how her family lost most of their land as both she and her sister were less than 20 years of age at the time of the act's implementation.

[27] The act applied only to holdings of individuals. It left untouched the plantations owned by joint-stock companies; many of them British.

[28] Nationalization was carried out across all businesses – weather owned by Ceylonese or foreigners – that also applied to plantations by the 1970s. In other words, the state was employed to combat especially foreign capital. Complimentary to nationalization was the expansion of state activity in sponsoring banks, insurance corporations, new industries and development projects particularly in agriculture. Moreover, elected workers' councils were given a role in management process within many state departments and corporations (Perera, 1994: 386).

[29] In 1975 the Land Reform (Amendment) Law brought a significant portion of the country's private estates under state control. Over 169,000 hectares comprising 395 estates were taken over under this legislation. Most of this land was planted with tea and rubber. As a result, about two-thirds of land cultivated with tea was placed in the state sector, having allocated nearly one million acres for government departments, corporations and corporative. The respective proportions for rubber and coconut were 32 and 10 percent.

[30] The government paid some compensation to the owners of land taken over under both the 1972 and 1975 laws. By 1988, the state-owned plantations were managed by one of two types of entities, the *Janatha* (people's) Estates Development Board, or the Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation.

[31] His observation is based on the fact that following her husband S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake's – the former prime minister – death, the SLFP was reformed in the 1960s, around a leadership comprising in part, her relatives. K.T. Silva (2005) also agrees to this view.

[32] The reforms also affected them, including the Prime Minister who herself lost 1,300 Acres, and J. R. Jayawardene [the leader of opposition (UNP)], 600 Acres.

[33] by placing a ceiling on rents and limiting the number of houses a private person could own respectively.

[34] Although the individually-owned land sizes and property numbers had now shrunk, the elites – especially the governing-elite – had found ways to inveigle their way through the law to continue their land and property-based dominance. Thus, Matthews (1978: 85) believes that the altruistic aims of these radical measures were overshadowed to the bitterness and mistrust by the country's majority.

[35] Gunasekara (in Rajapaksha, 1999: 14) himself would have referred to it as *"bringing the garden in"*.

[36] This was the stretch that Gunasekara left in front.

[37] Provided that the south-western quadrant too was vacant at the time, it is unclear whether this selection was by choice, or he simply designed for the site that was allocated to Sunethra by her father.

[38] discussed in Chapter 4.

[39] details discussed in Chapter 4.

[40] Many before him from Le Corbusier (in Leatherbarrow, 2002: 174), Heidegger (1997), Gadamer (1996), and Leatherbarrow (2002) had alluded to this effect.

[41] Experience of Gunasekara's own family life would have come in handy within the process of conceiving a design for a similar situation.

[42] His religious buildings explored the discipline that was built into the ritual process, while freedom was expressed in the manner of congregation. Church buildings he designed for various denominations reinterpreted the program of worship as an expression of humility than authority; analogous to traditional Buddhist architecture of the island (Pieris, 2007: 114-115).

[43] In such houses, a spatial hierarchy was evident where visitors were generally received in the veranda while only the immediate relatives and friends were entertained in the interior spaces specifically allocated for the function.

[44] N. de Silva (2006) makes this connection.

[45] one over the entrance-court and the other over the heavily-planted square-like garden beyond.

[46] A *'Dana'* (alms giving) or *'Pirith'* (blessing) ceremony that would happen in a Buddhist household for instance, requiring additional space for extended numbers of relatives, neighbours and friends to gather would not have become an issue with the family in consideration.

[47] The pantry also marks the beginning of a new trend that subsequently became popular in middle-class houses (Wijetunge, 2011a: 66-67). This is just a single example within the wider process of middle class's emulation of the elites.

[48] with its attached bathroom and a narrow storage room next door.

[49] timber roof structure, corrugated asbestoses cover and flat asbestoses ceiling.

[50] requiring as little repair as possible.

[51] The theme according to Leatherbarrow (1993: 6), appears very frequently in painting, literature, aesthetics and architecture of the time.

[52] Accumulation of dirt enriches in one sense, and if uninterrupted, leads into the surface dissolution, just as weathering effect explained before. Mostafavi and Leatherbarrow (1993: 42) call this the *"death mask";* as both effects gradually dissolve buildings

[53] Not only does rainwater deposits residues from the air or nearby soil, it can also leave traces of soluble sails from other materials of construction – especially those situated above a porous surface. Dirt carried by the winds on the other hand, is deposited in cracks parallel to the ground level, and on flat surfaces above the ground level. This accumulation together, with stains made from rainwater, can dramatically transform the overall appearance of buildings (Leatherbarrow, 1993: 32).

[54] The cement renderings are rough in public spaces used to receive visitors (i.e. the reception lobby), whereas in the more private places for the guests and family members are to recline (i.e. the living room), they are smooth.

[55] especially, from the classical periods.

[56] He argues that since the 18th century, gradual separation between categories was established in Europe, and Le Corbusier was a part of this Enlightenment tradition. For instance, his proposal for the city of three million inhabitants reinforced the separation of these categories.

[57] He attributes the phenomenon to the Aryan migrants and argues with examples, that the non-Aryan tribes (the original inhabitants) were originally matrilineal [in line with Mandel's (1977: 24) addressing of the 'fertility goddess' in similar ancient situations] and the trend was continued even after the advent of Buddhism. N. de Silva points out to many women rulers of the country in its documented history. Further, he posits incidents in Buddhist Lanka to affirm this point. For instance, the respect attributed to women, at least from the 2nd Century B.C., is posited through numerous stone inscriptions that point to women patrons of Buddhist monasteries. In order to be a patron, they would have held dominant positions in society. Moreover, they are addressed as (at times), as *"the wife of…"* so and so (at times, prominent figures such as the generals in the army of King *Dutugemunu*), suggestive of their well-respected positions.

Hence, it could be posited that the South Indian influence would have over centuries, modified the Sinhala Buddhist cultural stand on this aspect. After all, the feudalists of the island mostly trace their roots to the Southern sub-continent (Deraniyagala, 2010).

[58] the preferred existence for a lady at the time.

[59] in both private and government sectors (D. Gamage, 2010).

[60] Kohona (in Gamage, 2010) appraised the UN member nations and its top officials that *"Sri Lanka has integrated MDGs into the national development agenda and among its successes are the achievement of near universal gender parity in primary education, with the ratio of girls to boys in primary education reaching 99% in 2006. The literacy levels of 15-24 year olds has reached 95% across all sectors for both males and females. 113% of those attending universities are women. A staggering 69% of teachers are women. Access to health care is almost universal, and 98% of child births took place in hospitals. Maternal mortality at child birth (11.3 per 1000 births) and child mortality (39.3 per 100,000 births) are almost at MDG levels and the government will seek to improve this further."*

[61] As de Saram (2010) stresses, the elite who had been on the apex for so long do not have the need of *"broadcasting"* their past glories; or current influence for that matter. This is arguably true for the up and low country traditional elite as they in fact, were factions who had since the pre-modern times, occupied the zenith of the Sinhalese caste and administrative structures. The *"others"* in their vision, who rose to elite ranks during subsequent periods – the 19th century bourgeoisie and post 1977 *Nauvoo-riche* for instance – require to resort to means to mediate their newly-gained social positions.

[62] the *Bandaranaikes* are the best example.

[63] formed by the SLFP with the liaison of pro-socialist LSSP and CP.

[64] just 9 months after the coalition government came into power.

[65] Menin and Samuel (2001) in their phenomenological exploration of the works of Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto – considered to be two of the most prominent figures of 20th century European-instigated rubric of Modern architecture – reveal the rigorous underlying inspirations of nature in their works.

The sterile architecture of historicism and capitalist pretension in the previous centuries prompted them to inveigle their respective approaches (which appear to be dissimilar on the surface, but possess more or less the same underlying grounds) to be more humanistic, closely-associated with the mystic patterns and forces of Mother Nature; with a sacred and metaphysical twist. Hence, this was an attempt to unite the human spirit with nature; the place where human habitation began. The acknowledgement of nature's repetitive patterns was evident in Corbisier's work with recurring of the modular-cell. The master also paid homage to site topography and strived for dialectic of the rigid and nebulous, while impregnating his architecture with overt natural symbolism. Conversely, accommodating trends of nature was articulated in Alto's work through flexible standardization, where he also resembled natural vestiges via material finishes, and also reverted to Finnish vernacular wherever possible. In addition, both strived to dissolve boundaries between nature and the man-made though their work (Menin and Samuel, 2003: 85-167).

[66] Apart from the main one inside the house, Gunasekara also placed an exterior spiral staircase in the north-eastern corner of the rear space to serve as a service stair case.

[67] On the other hand, Palasmaa (2005) attributes retinal-centric imagery, and Rybinski (1988), the notion of luxury to the modern condition prompted by the same movement.

[68] Cézanne also used the word to describe the essential lines of his paintings.

[69] He illustrates the 1970s unrest of the world polity that affected the island. He posits certain seminal historical occurrences in the 1970s from the issue of 'Diego Garcia Crisis' that emerged out of Mauritius, events led by the interventions of both the USA and USSR in the politics of other nations, along with

nationalist and religious fundamentalist views proliferating throughout the world. In this light, USA strived to establish a strategic base in *Trincomalee*, which was turned down by the government with the assurance of its regional-power and neighbour India for future assistance. India by helping – for example, by Sirima-Shastri pact of 1966 that agreed to accept half of plantation Tamils back during their citizenship issue, assistance to counter the 1971 socialist rebellion, giving up claims for *Kachchativ* island in 1974, and as the peak, 1987 Peace Accord later on – attempted to contain the role of USA in the region, which had already become a reality with Pakistan's alignment following its defeat in 1971 Indo-Pakistan war. The outer world relations on the other hand, was conceived through friendly ties with China, jettisoned relationship with Israel, recognition of the provisional government of South Vietnam and also seeking technical assistance from Eastern Europe.

[70] *"Despite criticizing of US intervention into the activities of the states in the periphery, Sri Lanka's post-colonial relationship with Britain was no doubt fundamental in maintaining its relations with western core states, and hence, a balance between the camps"* (Perera, 1994: 357-358).

[71] Owing to flexible commonwealth schemes, a majority of them were still being trained there.

[72] The influence had clearly not ceased two decades on. Even the engineering tools and construction methods were British in the making, learned by local engineers further qualified in the metropole.

[73] By making available grants, *"[the Foundation] works to spread the benefits of globalization to more people in more places around the world"* (rockefellerfoundation.org, 2011)*.*

This was no different from the attempted perpetuation of hegemony by the former colonisers during the same time. The hegemony encompasses political, economic, socio-cultural and epistemological spheres.

[74] when the Soviet competition was intense.

[75] owing to its anti-colonial cultural tendency.

[76] On the Rockefeller tour,  having set off from New York, Gunasekara travelled for a year across the Eastern states – from Princeton to Philadelphia – to the West –  to Arizona and California – and as far as the South – to Mexico (Pieris, 2007: 40). He visited well-known buildings by American architects in New York, Boston, New Heaven, Philadelphia, North Carolina, Houston, San Antonio, Phoenix, Colorado Springs, Moline, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, Chicago, Racine, Detroit and Pittsburgh. When possible, he spent time with these architects and benefitted immensely. He also met Paolo Soleri in Arco Santi. In Mexico, Gunasekara travelled to National Autonomous University of Mexico by Felix Candela and Carlos Lazo. It was California that would have the strongest impression on him (Pieris, 2007: 41).

During his visit, he met Kevin Roche – who had taken up finishing Sarinen's (Finnish-American architect) work after his demise – who arranged to work for six months in Sarinen's office. The stint allowed Gunasekara to grasp the advantages of working through models and close attention to construction details; a breakthrough from the paper architecture practiced by his Ceylonese compatriots who had learned through drafting, aesthetic composition and measured drawings (*"facadism"* or *"image-making"* in Gunasekara's words). It was the form of the building that mattered to him. Most importantly, the experience taught him systematic design and pre-fabricated kit-of-parts; legacies of American industrialisation. In Ceylon where labour-intensive colonial building methods prevailed, this was a radical measure (Pieris, 2007: 43).

Gunasekara was most impressed with the works in California, a place he found somewhat analogous to Ceylonese conditions in both climate and sensibility (Pieris, 2002: 41). His California mentors were Craig Ellwood, Richard Neutra, Charles Eames and many others (Gunasekara, 2012). Ellwood from LA in particular, had taken part in the case study houses by *Arts and Architecture* magazine where solutions were arrived at through simple linear boxes combining pre-fab concrete systems with steel.  Although his houses were reminiscent of the *avant-garde*, the simplicity of form, use of pre-fabrication and architect-designed furniture suggested a very personal and egalitarian way of building (Pieris, 2007: 42). This approach Gunasekara perceived as alien to colonial cultures as his own (Gunasekara, 2012). Richard Neutra who had designed in a modern regionalist idiom for Southern California in particular, was arguably the most influential for Gunasekara. He had created horizontal plane structures that rested lightly on the landscape by using steel frames, timber sliding panels and stucco finishes. He maximised views through Lemlar Louvers and the use of mirror surfaces and reflective pools (to illustrate how water reflect the conditions beyond) to extend the architectural space into the surrounding landscape was noteworthy; his own house at Silver Lake (1932-rebuilt in 1966) is the best example (Pieris, 2007: 42). For Gunasekara (2012), it was probably the first building with the flat roof that contained two inches of water outside so it seemed to sort of melt away into the horizon. The juxtaposition of the flat-roofed industrial aesthetic and the soffit contours of the site appealed to him very much. However, he realised that the environmental sensibility in Neutra's work was not evident in Sarinen's (Pieris, 2007: 42).

[77] Artists such as Malevich, Tatlin and Chagall held centre-stage for a brief spell with the general notion of 'harmony' in the new socialist order (French, 1998: 88-89).

[78] "…*using block-printing techniques, in sharp contrast to the handcrafted watercolour drawings of contemporaries…*".

[79] Moisei Ginzberg's Narkomfin housing block in Moscow (1929) is a good example. Moreover, the town planning works on the grounds of linear development by Nicolai Milyutin was also instrumental.

[80] Gunasekara's approach is arguably more in line with a faction of constructivists who were more interested in the abstract ideas of painters such as Kasimir Malvich and El Lissitsky (led by the Vesnin brothers). Their works in particular – *Leningradskaya Pravada* for instance – embodied their group concern on romanticism of the machine aesthetic, yet with a sedate, rectilinear and almost flat elevation (French,1998: 89). The Illangakoon house indeed fits this description.

[81] The first one was held in 1965, with emphasis on building construction.

[82] and subsequently Stalin's Russia.

[83] He is a fervent believer in the notion that technology can answer questions posed by nature and holds the opinion that the Sri Lankan designers "*don't cheat enough*". In Gunasekara's (2011) view, technology gives us flexibility and enhances our ability to choose the best possible solution for problems at hand; making us "*masters of the condition*". In his words, "*[…] we have to be ready to live in a wonderful age and not be afraid of it*".

[84] He illustrates patterns in nature as well as in music and mathematics (Gunasekara, 2012).

[85] Jayati Weerakoon became the practice's foremost structural engineer and was employed in numerous interesting and complex projects. This partnership spanned throughout Gunasekara's carrier (Gunasekara, 2012). Gunasekara describes him as a great friend, very well read, with knowledge of Sri Lankan history and *Jataka* stories. Weerakoon played the *veena* and other Indian instruments and was also an expert in karate. He had worked on several major projects such as the *Nalanda Oya* Dam, the satellite earth station at *Padukka*, the cement factory at *Kankasanthurei*, the paper factory at *Valaichchenai*, dozens of water towers for the Sri Lankan Water Board, six bridges for the *Gal Oya* Valley and even the timber bridge in *Kithulgala* for the motion picture 'The Bridge Over the River Kwai'. He joined Gunasekara to design the chapel for St. Martin de Porres in *Horana*. Weerakoon (in Pieris, 2007: 19-20) notes that,

> "*[it] was our general arrangement that VKG and I discussed structural elements at the beginning of the project. He sent me prints of his preliminary plan-sheets upon which I scribbled structural notes and reinforcement bar schedules. Since I did not maintain a private design office, VKG's drafting office staff made the structural drawings*".

Weerakoon also recollects that without exception, clients were under severe budgetary pressure due to several factors. The socialist import-substitution policies of the government had led to rising costs of buildings due to the scarcity of imported materials from the West. He recalls that low-strength mild steel imported from India was used for reinforcement. Sri Lankan hardwoods were used for timber and rubber wood for scaffolding (Pieris, 2007: 19-20).

[86] Gunasekara is of the strong belief that "*you have to fight your own desire*". As he elaborates, "*I do not want to desire. It's only between me and my thinking, nobody else's*". Therefore, it is up to one to take the decision once and for all and "*make a change*" for the good of others.

[87] Owing to such pioneering measures, Chris de Saram (2010) refers to Illangakoon house as Gunasekara's "*trail blazer*" that paved way for more ingenuity and experimentation later in his career.

[88] engineers and architects alike.

[89] King (1984: 32-33) illustrates this point by the conspicuous difference with the Bungalow conceived by foreigners and ones built by the Indians using local skills and materials.

[90] This lack of opportunity for a creative fruition is one of the culpabilities for the rubric's ill-reception by Sri Lankans.

[91] Gunasekara (2011) considered them to be "*open-minded*" clients, on their receptiveness towards the brand of modern architecture he was propagating.

[92] It is these qualities that compelled Pieris (2007) to publish some of Gunasekara's drawings in her autobiography of him.

[93] Thus, arguably, the local masons and carpenters he employed had to adjust their repertoires.

[94] traditional elite class in the Sri Lankan sense.

[95] bitter class antagonism based on immense rich-poor gap, desertion of the ruling-class by the Western educated intellectuals, inefficient government machinery and political ineptness of the rulers etc.

[96] As Fernando (2010) elaborates,

*"Since independence in 1948, there had been only four significant violent political events prior to 1971 that could have destabilized the country in any serious manner. None of them in fact did, other than disturbing the peace in a temporary fashion. The first was what has been called Hartal in 1953, a worker rebellion associated with a general strike, however, without any motives for capturing political power. The death toll was 12. The communal riots in 1958 did disturb the relations between the two major ethnic communities in the country - the Sinhalese and the Tamils - with 159 people killed but did not have any immediate impact on the state power. Followed was the assassination of the Prime Minister, SWRD Bandaranaike in 1959, again without any motive to change state power or even the government. More serious would have been the military coup in 1962, nevertheless failed, even before it was launched without any significant event or death".*

[97] of about four inches.

[98] Just as the Sri Lankan state was shaken by the insurrection, the Indian state too saw concerns, thus aided its neighbour militarily to realise a successful suppression. The insurrection barely lasted for six months.

[99] Judging by the fact that the JVP itself supported the United Front to come into power in the 1970 elections and launched the insurrection within a year, it is not unreasonable to argue that the objective result of the insurrection was the strengthening of the right wing politics in Sri Lanka.

[100] The promulgation of the 1972 Constitution was completely unrelated to the foregoing event. The standardization of university admissions in 1972 is considered by Fernando (2010) to be a distorted outcome of the insurrection, which on the other hand created grievances on the part of the Tamil youth when the insurrection was solely by the Sinhala rural youth. The Tamil issue by the late 1970s, would also exacerbate to be reflected in Gunasekara's subsequent work.

[101] A large number of Plant pots were strategically placed over the flat slabs (including the roof slabs) as well as on the concrete cantilevers. In the double-height rear garden space, plants from upper slab level dangled through the pergolas. Consequently, from the upper floor bedroom wing as well as living/TV spaces, a sense of being surrounded by lush greenery is evident.

[102] Cross-ventilation is a decisive factor for comfort in the tropics.

[103] According to Sunethra Illangakoon (2011), the house, even forty years down the line, is still comfortable without the aid of ceiling fans.

[104] She particularly reminisces how she had lost some of the valuable furniture pieces from her ancestral manor houses in *Ambilipitiya*, and also how she managed to recover some ebony furniture from another house in *Makandura*.

[105] The Exhibition of 1930 in Stockholm was a trade fair that featured radical industrial designs in both architecture and furniture. This had an underlying political agenda that promoted socialist reforms. Radical furniture designs of functionality were equated with radical functional social design. The exhibition included industrial architectural designs and prototypes of workers' apartments (with mass-produced furniture made of industrial materials). The exhibition followed after Sweden's Gothenburg Exhibition of 1923. This had featured designs that applied the craftsmanship of the past, to a humanist control of machine-craft.

[106] A brass dish with beetle leaves arranged on it.

[107] A form of traditional chair.

[108] King-size bed with a roof-like structure.

[109] In the first case, by the living room set, coffee table and cabinet; and in the latter, by dressing table, office desk (and chair), cushioned bench, long floating cabinet and a tubular steel arm chair. All these are in modern Scandinavian styles.

[110] Some even bare emblems and court of arms of the manor house they came from.

[111] For example, paintings of famous Kandyan predecessors such as *Maduwanwela Maha Disave* and *Iddamalgoda Kumarihami* dressed in their elaborate Kandyan attire are up on the wall alongside with figures from the more recent British period such as Sir. Frances Mollamure and Lady Adeline Mollamure (Illangakoon, 2011).

[112] The best example is the photograph of Mr. Ranil Wickramesinghe – who is presently the opposition leader as well as having the honour of becoming the country's prime minister twice in his political career, taken at a family occasion who poses alongside the Illangakoons.

[113] The grand children of Sepala and Sunethra.

[114] In a humanist point of view, the Westernized elite believed that the education they receive from the metropolitan 'core' was first-hand knowledge in comparison to the trickled-down second hand one their *Swabhasha*-trained (trained in mother tongue) local counterparts obtained in Ceylon (Wijetunge, 2011a: 67-68).

[115] at least the Kandyans until 1815 (and even later in 1818) led a resistance.

[116] pictographically represented Jesus Christ and miniature Christian crosses – the epitomes of Christianity.

[117] located in Colombo.

[118] a state-run institution.

[119] They were impressed especially, by the Tangalle Bay Beach Hotel.

[120] both in Rome and prior ones in Sri Lanka.

[121] The 'Sea Street' leads to Mt. Lavinia beach and 'de Saram Street' to the nearby St. Thomas's college rear entrance.

[122] it is now used as a car park.

[123] The categories are high-ranked employees working abroad, executives of multi-national corporations, high bureaucrats of government projects run by foreign grants and executives of International organisations, NGOs and INGOs (K. T. Silva, 2005: 112).

[124] The super markets, cafes, gyms and night clubs that have sprung up in major cities in Sri Lanka reflect the lifestyle of this class. The progeny of this class seek Western education. Consequently, international schools have sprung up to cater to them, as precursor to their education abroad.

[125] the two mainstream opponents in Sri Lanka since independence.

[126] the respective meanings of these new incorporations will be discussed later.

[127] After all, although both Upali and Manel grew up in urban areas, their rural origins is undeniable. When Manel was born and brought up in Mt. Lavinia, Upali's origins are traceable to rural *Kegalle* in the central province. Even Manel's father hailed from a rural town. Although it could be inferred that her mother was from the Mt. Lavinia area itself, it was a rural fisher's hamlet on the coast during the British period. The professional engagements on part of grandparents place them well within the colonial petty-bourgeoisie class – according to the information supplied by Asitha de Silva. His maternal grandfather was a senior civil servant [Superintendent of Government Stores and Director of CTB (Supplies)]. Maternal grandmother operated a 'Patisserie' that served short eats and soft drinks to St Thomas's College boys from the back garden of the old house that was on the site of the present house. Details about paternal grandparents is unknown (A. de Silva, 2011).

[128] from Jayakody, Munasinghe, Weeramuni, Gunasekara to Elapatha houses.

[129] such as *Ratmalana*, *Nawala* and *Rajagitiya.*

[130] Author's personal experience.

[131] Gunasekara in fact, completed a considerable number of them (Pieris, 2007).

[132] What underpinned deforestation was discussed in chapter 6.

[133] both Eastern and Western alike

[134] He calls this *"an ever-present body reflected in and projected into a bodily architecture".* Vilder assesses that despite the rhetoric of the free plan and façade, there seems to be a countertendency at work in Corbusier's work, emphasising continuity with the humanist position.

[135] Leatherbarrow (2002:72) notes that *"… every build design is meant to stand apart from its surroundings because each is supposed to have its own look, weather it looks a little or a lot like the buildings that preceded it, within its vicinity or elsewhere [and] before the advent to façade recognition a person is still en route, still in the midst of things and more or less vagabond, aware of what's around but not focused on anything in particular".*

[136] Vidler (1989: 42) argues that *"Once the horizontal slab on columns, permeable to light, air, and space, had technically and polemically replaced the vertical load-bearing wall, the façade was inevitably at risk".* This was expressed in Le Corbusier's prototype, *Maison Domino.*

[137] inspired by Vitruvius to be extended by Alberti, Filarete, Francisco di Giordio and Leonardo da Vinci.

[138] As he elaborates, *"we judge every object by analogy with our own bodies".* In Scott's mind, the building's 'body' acts as a referent for *"the body's favourable states.* [The] m*oods of the spirit…, power and laughter, strength and terror and calm".*

[139] On the other hand, Scott notes that *"We have transcribed ourselves into terms of architecture"*, where we respond to the appearance of stability or instability of a building as our identification of the building itself. In other words, *"[we] transcribe architecture into terms of ourselves"*.

[140] What provides the basis for design is the *"tendency to project the image of our functions into concrete forms"*. On the other hand, *"the tendency to recognise, in concrete forms, the image of these functions"* is the basis of criticism (Scotte, 1924: 239).

[141] Simmel believed that it was no doubt the result of its unity in response, a symmetry that rendered all the more expressive even the slight distortion of one of its parts. Further, he noted that the structure of the face makes too exaggerated a transformation in any one of its parts impossible without positively unaesthetic, almost unhuman results. He equated such 'centrifugal movements' – characteristic of baroque figures – to 'despritualization', the weakening of the domination of the mind over the extremities of the being. Beyond this, the face is an index, not simply of 'mind' in the abstract, but individuality in the concrete. *"The face strikes us as the symbol, not only of the spirit, but also of an unmistakable personality"* (Vidler, 1989: 45). For Rowe (in Vidler, 1989: 45), lapsing of the facade in the face of anti-individualist program is a dislike for personality.

Simmel's perception was that face as a bearer of meaning far-surpasses the body in expressiveness. On the other hand, the eye epitomises the face in mirroring the soul and appearance; the latter leading to the veiling and unveiling of the soul (Vidler, 1989: 45).

> *"At the same time it [eyes] accomplishes its finest, purely formal end as the interpreter of mere appearance, which knows no going back to any pure intellectuality behind the appearance. It is precisely this achievement with which the eye, like the face generally, gives us the intimation, indeed the guarantee, that the artistic problems of pure perception and the pure sensory image of things – if perfectly solves – would lead to the solution of those other problems which involve soul and appearance. Appearance would then become the veiling and unveiling of the soul"* (Simmel, 1958: 281).

For Simmel (in Vidler, 1989: 45), art's task of *"creating a maximum change of total expression by a minimum change of detail"* is framed in the *"most complete model"* of the face. For him, the symmetry of the face makes sense due to this quality. Simmel believed that stripping-away of the face from soul would be analogous in some sense, to the denature of the soul itself, or at least, to deprive it of that content it received from the face as its expression and representation (Vidler, 1989: 45).

[142] Gunasekara's building, rather than being a mimetic and figurative correspondence is based on abstract qualities – height, weight, stability-instability, and so on.

[143] the most memorable incidents being the notorious massacres in *Sri Maha Bodhi* and *Aranthalawa* in 1985 and 1987 respectively.

[144] The massacres mark the stepping up of the LTTE's terror campaign, where they extended their attacks from the military to the Sinhalese Buddhist civilians. The horrors of these attacks particularly, still haunt Sri Lankans twenty years on. *Anuradhapura Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi* massacre took place on the 14th of May, 1985. In *Anuradhapura*, LTTE cadres massacred 146 Sinhalese civilians. The cadres first entered the main bus station and opened fire indiscriminately killing and wounding many civilians. Then they drove to the *Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi* shrine and gunned-down monks and civilians as they engaged in religious activities. *Aranthalava* massacre took place on 2nd of June, 1987. It was the massacre of 33 Buddhist monks (most of them young novice monks) and four civilians by LTTE cadres in the *Ampara* district of Eastern Sri Lanka (dailynews.lk, 2009). Many more similar attacks followed after 1987.

[145] expressed through modern capitalism, the discourse ensued that in turn resulted in the ego-centric individual

[146] judging by Gunasekara's (2011) utmost respect for Buddhist teachings, Sinhalese history and complete disapproval of separatism.

[147] via emulation.

[148] via a fruitful fruition of modern and traditional contents in the Regionalist discourse.

[149] *"Architecture is thus 'Significant building' – building which communicates, building which possesses fine 'language' and wears appropriate expression. Architecture is building which makes man complete. Like a good teacher it is that which renders itself absolute. It is building which releases the Inner Force of Man and fortifies him against external forces"* (Nammuni, 1987: 10).

[150] whereas the preferred architecture of that time was one based on the European perspective of the orient – finding the nice things that ordinary people in the country have done historically – outside their scope of experience.

[151] In de Saram's view, Gunasekara was the male counterpart of Minette de Silva.

[152] Eero Saarinen, Louis Kahn, Charles and Ray Eames, Paul Rudolph, Richard Neutra, Kevin Roche etc.

[153] This is said to have occurred between a former British Governor General of Ceylon, Sir Thomas Maitland, and the beautiful mestizo dancer called *Lovina*. It is believed that the name Lavinia is a derivation from Lovina.

[154] They comprehended its added alien-ness instead.

[155] This is confirmed by Sri Lanka Institution of Engineers' 'Innovation and Self-reliance; 'Kulasinghe Felicitation Volume', History of Engineering in Sri Lanka' published in 2001 (in Pieris, 2007: 26-41). Civil engineer Dr. A. N. S. Kulasinghe is considered the father of modern Sri Lankan engineering field (kulasinghe.com, 2011).

[156] Gunasekara not only played the part of bricoleur – picking up various seminal architectural influences from an extant array of mainstream practices of the time – he ventured beyond the conventional scope, and exploited potential solutions engineering profession was capable of delivering. In the process he knew exactly what engineering material and tool was to be used for each unique job at hand, to a level of efficacy. This made his approach one of an *engineer*'s. Towards the very end of his career, as the de Silva house posits, the two approaches converged; making him an *engineer-bricoleur* (Pieris, 2007: 152-153).

[157] Conversely, on the garden-facing façade, all windows cover full-height between floor and soffit.

[158] He confirms that all dwelling equipment and accessories in the house were new and no traditional content was retained.

[159] as opposed to his own personal preference for family contiguity portrayed in the earlier designs.

[160] be it vernacular or colonial hybrids, extended family is a common occurrence.

[161] The separatist demands by the Tamil politicians at the democratic level since the 1950s, was by the 1970s, overhauled by Tamil militarism that found its patronage both in the sub-continent and the West (Gunaratna, 1993). When Tamil politicians were conspiring to carve-out a separate state within Sri Lanka democratically – as it appeared following *Tamil United Liberation Front* being disproportionately elected as the opposition, and immediately after declaring a *Tamil Eelam* in their electorates of majority (Matthews, 1978: 96) – the militants had resorted to violence (Gunaratne, 1993).It was such systematic provocations that resulted in ferocious outbreaks – such as the 1983 anti-Tamil riots the island over by certain Sinhalese mobs – and the civil war that in turn, shunned Sri Lanka's Buddhist image and vilified the Sinhalese in the eye of the world (Ivan, 2006: 79-86). The persistence of the India state, driven by own self-consciousness, compelled its belligerent neighbour to abandon the conclusive stage of campaign against separatist LTTE (the infamous *Wadamarachchi* operation), and engage in dialogue. This was to result in a hitherto-unforeseen concession – the 'federal solution' (known as 'the Thirteen Amendment' to the constitution). Notwithstanding the nationalist Sri Lankan state's willingness, despite of uproar and mass agitation that culminated as the JVP insurrection in the South (that erupted in 1989), LTTE's persistence for self-determination marked a new phase of the Eelam War that the Indian Peace Keeping Force had to fight (Gunaratne, 1993).

[162] this was to happen two years later.

[163] Ranasinghe Premadasa's.

[164] the JVP and state violence in the South (srilankaguardian, 2007), and hardening social life that compelled Gunasekara himself to flee (Pieris, 2007: 155).

[165] The fact that the de Silva house became the predecessor to many other projects of civic importance was mentioned before.

[166] In colonial Ceylon, even the petty-bourgeoisie traditionally received services of loyal domestic aides.

[167] The eruption happened immediately after the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord of 1987, when the JVP began their so-called 'Anti-IPKF War'; ironically not directed at the Indian forces in Sri Lanka, but its Sri Lankan supporters and sympathisers the organisation prescribed as 'traitors' (Dayasiri, 2011).

[168] He notes this as a result of his enquiry into the Nigerian middle-class car market.

[169] and only 'planned encounters' are fostered by the affluent classes.

[170] The increase in vehicle population in Sri Lanka was significantly higher during the post 1977 period. Of the total number of vehicles, about 44% are active in the Colombo Metropolitan Area (CMA). The total number of vehicles in Sri Lanka has increased from 129,520 in 1970 to 1,374,144 in 1996.

[171] The statement applies to both pre-colonial and colonial regimes alike.

[172] for betterment of lives, this is an essential fulfilment.

[173] He is not in favour of its limitations and hails modern-day technological achievements of man (Gunasekara, 2011). For instance, he adores the mechanised house of luxury that is a common phenomenon in his present home California.

[174] The linear progressive nature of Western science and epistemology is attributed to Christianity's concept that the resources of the earth and its beings are meant for the habitation and progression of the human being – all of which are god's creations (N. de Silva, 2006). Further, the underlying truth behind Western epistemology is that once man is able to comprehend – in an all-encompassing manner – the forces of this universe – by subjecting universal phenomena into an epistemological process of rational deconstruction – he will come to possess the ability to control them for his kind's advantage (leichakman, 2006); analogous to the above view. In this light, Gunasekara's willingness to acknowledge Western science and its benefits is explanatory based on his homage to the creator. In doing so, he fails to draw the connection between science and capitalism that he despises – for it is capitalism that ushers scientific development articulated as technology, where both feed one another (N. de Silva, 2006). On the other hand, Gunasekara would have been unaware of the idea that modern science will surely *"grind to a halt"* someday as noted by Russell stannard (in OUlearn, 2010), and owing to its limitations, would not deliver control over forces of the universe for the betterment of the human kind as promised [as N. de Silva (2006) also maintains].

[175] For instance, the Christian figures had dropped from 10% of the population in the early 20th century, to 7.4% by 2000 (K. Pieris, 2000).

[176] These sects ranged from the from Roman Catholics, the Methodists to adherents of Jehovah's witness, and the American evangelists also played a major role. Western funded hospitals and other charity organisations offering help (only if converted), free English classes teaching Christian religious contents, to pre-schools that teach pupils Christian hymns and elements of Christianity among many other means, took over the task of religious propagation. Among many practices employed by the proselytisers, the most unethical however, was approaching people in their hours of vulnerability such as sickness, physical handicap bereavement or financial difficulties (K. Pieris, 2000; christianaggression.org, 2011).

[177] The predecessor of *Jathika Hela Urumaya* (JHU) was *Sihala Urumaya*. With Buddhist monks in the lead, JHU was formed as a Sinhalese Buddhist political party in 2004 (jathikahelaurumaya.4t.com, 2011). The party lobbied to prevent forceful proselytizing resulted in the so-called 'Anti-conversion bill' enacted in 2009 (Jain, 2009; solofeminity.blogs.com, 2009). A similar bill had been presented in 2004 but failed after the Supreme Court found it unconstitutional.

[178] The attacks were directed on small evangelical groups who were converting the rural poor. This was eventually stepped up to target the majority Catholics, resulting in a number of isolated incidents.

[179] be it the state policies or proliferation of media that urged for modernity.

[180] Anyway, the liberal individual that Gunasekara was, it is unlikely that he approved of unethical conversion of desperate peoples, especially from a religion he himself admired.

Although Gunasekara is skilfully tied up with personal opinions of certain authors, he does not believe that the reinvigoration of Sinhalese Buddhism in the island was in any way chauvinist. In his words an *"inferiority complex"* under the colonial aegis underpinned the nationalist phenomena and its resultant architecture (Gunasekara, 2012).

# Chapter 8  Conclusion

**Conclusions Leading to the Case Studies**

The conclusions that were separately presented for Chapters 1-5, which paved way for the two case studies, are presented below.

It could be argued that the Sinhalese cultural situation is inimitable and its modern nationalism carries a pre-modern provenance. On the other hand, the vague boundaries of the post-independence nationalist window that needed re-definition were fixed between its 1956 inception and 1994 lowest ebb.  The culturally-determinant Sinhalese social stratification was pushed into oblivion by an economically-determinant counterpart after the colonial encounter. Thus, in the age of modernity, Sri Lankan elite not only derived their meanings from the economic class, but also through their caste standings. The caste element in fact, made the social stratification by the former more complex, and it is against this particular social framework that elite domestic architecture could be assessed.

It is imperative to posit that the elitist positions marked in the elitist theories (i.e. governing-elite/political-class/middle-class etc.) are conterminous with the ones framed by the social stratifications conducted by scholars in relation to the island (i.e. bourgeoisie/petty-bourgeoisie etc.), dwelling on similar theoretical lines of economic-determinism. When the British elite domestic architectures were assessed, based on the foregoing elite positions, the Kandyan situation was tackled by considering both economic and cultural determinants that in turn attributed it with a degree of complexity in comparison. In the post-independence Sri Lanka, which saw a continuity of the same colonial circumstances to soon undergo a new social reorganisation, domestic architectures of the various groups were tackled in the same manner as in the Kandyan situation. Identification of the architects of this period who catered for the two most notable elite groups (i.e. governing-elite and the middle-class), and in addition, the proponents of the two most varied trajectories therein, led to the selection of Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara. It is their architecture that the case studies undertook.

**Synopsis of Case Studies**

The case studies provided answers to the research questions tackled by this thesis. How this was done concentrating on case study outcomes (in association with previous conclusions) is presented in the sections below.

Answering research Questions:

This research established that while the elites and sub-elites strived for modernity in colonial and post-colonial Sri Lanka, the masses largely remained in their pre-modern state until the mid 1980s. It took the drastic interventions by a progressive capitalist state to 'modernise' them. When lifestyles and the resultant domestic architectures of the elite underwent considerable changes over the centuries – a statement perhaps valid from the beginnings of the island's civilization to the era of neo-liberalism – the same spheres in relation to the masses remained more or less in stasis. This historical observation (narrated in the research), in association with the case study outcomes in chapters 6 and 7, helps to crystallise the assertion that it is in the domestic architecture of the elites that the shifting political, economic and socio-cultural changes (periodic changes) are reflected/represented/evoked.  This was confirmed through the analysis and interpretation of the case study houses belonging to clients with disparate political and socio-cultural capacities. How the houses were moulded by their respective designers/patrons based on the influences in the aforementioned spheres (at the points of their realisation), was discussed in chapters 6 and 7. This answered the foremost research question undertaken by this study and has provided an original contribution.

On the other hand, the more numerous middle-classes (the sub-elite) also did reflect these realities in their domestic architectures, however, in comparison, in a more distant manner. In their case, the time-lag between the events and actual manifestations was in fact, more, and at times, completely removed from elitist agendas.

The analyses of domestic clients of both Bawa and Gunasekara in chapters 6 and 7 (along political and epistemological lines) established their respective client allegiances. In Bawa's case, largely a governing-elite allegiance with a marginal political-class representation was evident, and throughout his carrier this tendency remained unaltered. In Gunasekara's case, initially, a commitment to the middle-class (and also the fringes between that and the political-class) was evident, whereas the post-neoliberal era marked a shift towards the newly-established upper middle-class (and

also the fringes between that and the political-class). The second research question is answered here and it is also an important contribution to knowledge.

The last research question of what cultural strands of the Ceylonese elite survived from pre-colonial and colonial situations that found articulation in their domestic architectures was indeed confirmed via all projects taken up in chapters 6 and 7, except for one. When the case studies of the houses belonging to the governing-elite/political-class positions (de Silva/Aluvihare, de Soysa and Illangakoon families) posited what old cultural strands survived precisely and how they were articulated in terms of architecture,    the one of the middle-class/political-class de Silva family illustrated their newly assimilated cultural strands and articulations.  To realise this outcome with successful results, the utilised instrument of phenomenological application to Sri Lankan elite domestic architecture could be affirmed as an original contribution. The enquiry established the underlying reasons, as well as how and to what degree the surviving cultural strands were articulated.

Further Discussions:

The study in the process of achieving its main research questions yielded supplementary outcomes that are worth elaborating.

Conditions of Patrons

As the clientele of the two architects in consideration were already assessed, it is vital to explore how different groups reacted to periodic changes in different ways, and how the manifestations came about in their respective domestic architectures.

The case studies covered domestic architectures of three formidable groups in the Sri Lankan society – the 'traditional elite' (feudalists), '19th century bourgeoisie' and the 'upper middle-class'. While the elitist theories place the former two contingents within the governing-elite/political-class, the latter that touches the boundaries of political-class finds its place in the sub-elite category. An analysis against respective periodic changes and phenomenological interpretations of houses belonging to these groups unearthed the following outcomes.

The post-colonial domestic architecture of the traditional elite carried three architectural substances – the modern content, the colonial and the indigenous contents – where the pervasiveness of the latter relegated the former two. This tendency could be attributed to their excessive reliance on a glorious past (e.g. the pre-modern Kandyan era) for their present existence. Architectural contents – basic

configuration, elements, features, details and dwelling equipment – were borrowed from periods when the faction occupied apex positions of the island's social hierarchy. The colonial content embodies their mimicry of the modern trends set by their colonial masters, and thus, their subservient state to the colonial aegis. It also suggested their willingness for modernization; yet within their own terms. However, the real glory and thus, legitimacy was derived from the pre-modern content; especially, the content culled from the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist culture. Architectural modernism that binds the indigenous and colonial contents together is suggestive of the indispensability of the modernist system in a world that has been brought under a single politico-economic system and time, where the modern lifestyle practices are inevitable. However, at a time when the nationalist fervour had subsumed the aforesaid effect, the colonial content would have aroused an animosity, and the modern was more appropriate as it was devoid of historical continuity (at least, it was believed to be). The excessive reliance on the indigenous element also embodies the fact that the feudalists, despite their waning power, sought to perpetuate their former command over the lesser politically/culturally empowered contingents now undergoing a fleeting upward-mobilization. It seems that the pre-modern legitimacy (as the traditional rulers) lay at the back of even the most modernised feudalist's psyche.

The 19th century bourgeoisie, on the other hand, displayed two strands to their domestic architectural ensemble – the modern and colonial. For this particular faction who had suffered at the hands of the traditional elite (and also high caste masses) during the pre-colonial milieu, the colonial advent was a great escape. It was the heyday when siding with the colonial masters and winning the aegis of the colonial system afforded them with great affluence, political power and social honour. The bourgeoisie had no issue adapting to the colonial systems and architectures via a process of mimicry, from their humble beginnings. These modest origins had inculcated in them, a sense of constant willingness for change, which was manifested yet again, through their commitment to modernist architecture in the age of nationalism. Modernist architecture in the 1980s was suggestive of neo-liberalism and its spirit, where the colonial architecture once lay cherished, had no place in their progressive psyche. However, the reluctance to completely shed colonial-era glory compelled them to choreograph within a modernist matrix; certain rescued colonial memories in the form of selected dwelling equipment as well as accessories (and architectural features to a lesser extent). These draw meaning from the period when the bourgeoisie attained their highest point in the island's social stratum.

The upper middle-class domestic architecture conversely, possessed a single strand: that was architectural modernism; indeed a radical stance. Having shifted from the petty-bourgeoisie to the middle-class at the outset of post-independence nationalism,

and thereon more recently graduated to the upper middle-class after neo-liberalism, the contingent had no overwhelming past glory and associated material artefacts to draw on. When the feudalists and bourgeoisie had to hark back in time for their social recuperation, the upper middle-class's logical option was to keep moving forward as only that could strengthen their status quo. The best means of gaining ground was thus, to turn to westernisation via rigorous outward orientation. There was nothing to be lost and everything to be gained, where only future could promise them an apex position in the social hierarchy. The outward reach was marked by an audacious domestic architecture from the more promising USA, and not the decadent ex-colonial core. The neo-liberal reforms had furnished the opportunity and they had grabbed it. Comparison of all case studies reveal that modernity is the common commitment of all three groups; however in varying degrees.

On the other hand, the first two occasions especially, confirm that a creative fusion of disparate architectural contents could yield productive hybrid architectural rubrics.

Individual Metamorphoses:

Although there appears to be an anomaly in the sphere of influence by Bawa and Gunasekara on their clients, it could be argued that the two case studies considered for each architect were conceived on common grounds; setting the ideal condition for a phenomenological analysis. Despite Bawa's advantage through his renowned 'take it or leave it' approach on clients (a luxury that Gunasekara never had), it was confirmed that both architects received 'free hands' in these commissions. Within such circumstances, both Bawa and Gunasekara's projects taken up, revealed that they reflected periodic changes – either in the form of architect's or client's own agendas directly, or indirectly in other ways.

In relation to individual architectural metamorphoses too, there were outcomes. Bawa's regionalist tropes that found success at the epicentre of nationalism (and perhaps even later), by the twilight of his career, was replaced by a minimalist international-type inclination in the age of neo-liberalism (although he did not get the opportunity to augment its influence). Thus, his architecture was generated by necessities of the times, as evident from his ever-changing approach to design configuration and style. Gunasekara on the other hand, stepped up his technological emphasis with a more up-to-date deconstructive tendency towards the end of his career. It appears as though nationalism or neo-liberalism did not matter to him so much, as the metamorphosis was at a more personal level. Thus, Gunasekara's basic stance in design remained static, despite the change in style. However, this does not mean that his architecture did not reflect periodic changes. Reflected indeed in his

projects much distant realities than local, as an antithetical gesture to his point of comparison; the regionalist tropes of Bawa. Then again, both architects also imbued their own personal agendas – hedonistic and atheist lifestyle underpinned on capitalism in Bawa's case, and spiritual and egalitarian inclinations in Gunasekara's – into the aforementioned equation. It appears that their disparate patrons also shared their respective temperaments. However, these areas deserve more research in order to cement these points.

How Things are Reflected?

The case studies afford other conclusions too. While periodic changes, as individual events, reflect in elite domestic architecture in concrete ways, the points where smaller events conjoin to form proceedings of great intensity – nationalism and neo-liberalism for instance – are articulated in more abstract manners.

Nationalist Representations via Regionalism and Expressionist Modernism:

When the great majority of working-classes were even by 1985, steeped in rural circumstances, the aforementioned discourses were largely the phenomena of urbanites and suburbanites of elite (governing-elite/political-class) and sub-elite (middle-class) provenances. From the ensemble of designers who served them, only the regionalists, from their inception in the late 1950s, into the 1980s, directly trapped the nationalist fervour, and articulated it in their architecture. All other groups, architects and non-architects alike (except for modern expressionists), were oblivious to the nationalist discourse, and turned to represent other less vital agendas in their architecture. The trapping of the nationalist phenomenon by the modern expressionist group was perhaps not intentional, yet was evident at an ethereal level. To the general public of Sri Lanka, the direct representation appealed out of familiarity, as against the implicit evocation that they did not grasp. The comparison of literatures on the two discourses and their proponents (undertaken in Chapter 2) confirm that even the academics missed out on Gunasekara's ethereal homage to nationalism, or they deliberately ignored it under the influence of overwhelming elitist/epistemological allegiance to Bawa's works. Exploring how nationalism was trapped in the two *modus operandi* of their domestic works was indeed, an original contribution.

Syntheses Achieved?

The phenomenological analyses of cases studies revealed that neither Bawa nor Gunasekara managed to achieve a satisfactory synthesis in terms of their compositions that dwelt on the modern and traditional. In other words, more could

have been done to resolve their designs, especially when it came to details and this identification too is an original contribution.

In relation to the former's works, the subtle merging of the directly presented traditional building rudiments with their modern counterparts are at times ignored or crudely carried out, resulting in grotesque displays of elements (either traditional or modern) in his houses that stand alone. As a result, the traditional and modern segments remain mostly disassociated. With regard to the latter, his practice of indirect traditional quotation (at an ethereal level) within a more explicitly modern (expressionist) matrix gets lost, owing to the great deal of effort that goes into the resolution of engineering details. Hence, more could have been done to invoke the traditional content in his houses in terms of detailing and the same could have been manipulated more sensibly to achieve a better synthesis.

Decolonisation Achieved?

In answering the question of whether decolonisation was achieved by the architectures of either Bawa or Gunasekara, the foregoing arguments would rule in favour of both "*Yes"* and *"No"*. The affirmative answer arises from the fact that both of them did create breakthroughs – creative fusions through mimicry of core architectures and the traditional rhetoric – despite the fact that Bawa's solution was considered more legitimate than Gunasekara's. Pointing out to the fact that Gunasekara's architecture that was often propagated as quintessentially modern, trapped traditions at ethereal levels itself is an original contribution.

The negativity springs up as they both had to base their inventions on Western architectural rubrics from two different parts of the world – both promoting Western modernity – one overtly and the other, hovering similar ambitions in an introvert manner. After all, when the country was an instrument – not by choice, but by manipulation – of the world-wide system of modern states and empires, it could be argued that they had no other choice. The foregoing conclusions derived as well as observations made, make it plausible to arrive at other vital conclusions and also predict future reckonings that make way to point out to areas of future research.

*Limitations*

In order to determine how a specific architectural language is adapted to represent the architectural identity of Sri Lanka as a whole, this research is insufficient. This project narrated the historical lengths of domestic architecture of the Sinhalese in the island, and isolated the two most formidable domestic architectural styles (championed by architects and chosen by the elite/sub-elite) that were engaged in a duopoly for dominance in the age of nationalism. Geoffrey Bawa, having catered largely to the

governing-elite clients who later extended larger projects (especially, state projects), his rubric consequently, was exalted as the 'national/flagship' style of Sri Lanka. An ensemble of other complementary stimuli – personal advantages[i] and propaganda (both involuntary[ii] and deliberate[iii]) – too could be produced.

Valentine Gunasekara on the other hand, from having to cater to the less-affluent and politically-feeble clients who could not win him larger projects, also was unfortunate enough to suffer utter neglect[iv] and stereotypical libel[v] as a practitioner – a number of reasons could be attributed. Inferably, within a capitalist political system concealed in a socialist outer shell, his egalitarian ideas were not palatable; to the political-elite or/and the intelligentsia. Consequently, the style that he championed never received the same reception as that of Bawa's.

Other than the foregoing points, nothing substantial could be established without an in-depth analysis of evident phases (the existence of phases was hinted at by the two case studies), and especially, the extra-domestic involvements in the careers of two architects in consideration (at least of Bawa's). An exploration into client allegiances of such projects (especially, state projects) has the potential to reveal how each architectural phase that started at the domestic level saw transcendence; in order for a national style to be constructed. Moreover, another potential area of research could be the degree of influence by the masses (working-class) on these phenomena. An exploration into civic projects meant for the masses and their receptions to them would prove resourceful in this particular exercise.

### Broader Aims

The main purpose behind this research is to determine and demonstrate that domestic architecture of the elites reflect/evoke more immediately, the impacts of political/economical/socio-cultural forces as their physical manifestations in relation to the island's context within the nationalist window. When this point is confirmed, it could be deducted that similar research projects would wield analogous results when applied to other seminal events and ethnic groups in the island, or elsewhere – at least in comparable (akin) sub-continental situations. If such results could be produced, a theoretical potential is tenable. This sums up how the study's broader aims were met.

### Possible Future Research Areas

Having elaborated the revelations in the form of conclusions and after discussing limitations as well as presenting how the broader aim was met, it is imperative at this stage to posit any future areas of research yielded by the study.

It was the comprehensive narration of the entire historical spectrum of the Sinhalese elite domestic architecture with special reference to nationalism (neo-liberalism was just a notable incident within this) that in fact, produced the foregoing analyses and conclusions. The repository of knowledge secured within this process was a salient contribution by the research. The outcomes of typological variations, phases and the underlying factors behind them, pertaining to pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial domestic architectures of the island taken up, resulted in the accompanying catalogue. It in fact, chrysalises that it was the domestic architecture of the elite that over time, saw a metamorphosis. Optimistically, the imperative findings of this study would open up paths for future researchers in the field.

The study confirmed that the architecture of masses remained in stasis in their pre-modern conditions until recent (mid 1980s) state interventions that produced hybrid results. This was the point of comparison against the elite domestic building that underwent changes over the epochs. Since all selected case studies are either from or before 1985 although nationalism ends about another decade later, the scientific validity of this research is secured. However, in order to conceive what went beyond this juncture, more research is needed. Since the architects in consideration did not work beyond the early 1990s, the next generation's (G3) architecture would be instrumental to explore the elite domestic trajectory. In terms of architecture of the masses on the other hand, a whole new research is necessary.

## Notes

[i] First, Bawa's lack of personal commitments gave him great freedom. His hedonistic inclinations, constant urge for travel and no commitments to family and friends would have worked in his favour (Robson, 2004). Bawa's lack of close affinity to people around him suggests that he would have extended the same discrete tendency towards his clients. His lack of anxiety about losing friends – it was friends who mostly became his clients – would have provided him with the perfect opportunity to look at design problems objectively, keeping personal affinity aside, and thus, deliver better products. Within the lack of presence of a family to care for, he would also had more time to dedicated to his designs as well as to sharpen his architectural knowledge; via prolonged conversations with architect friends, reading and physically experiencing architecture by constant travelling.

Second came his personal wealth. As Jayewardene (1984: 246) tells us, *"[architects] who can reject commissions and select clients, must necessarily possess, an alternate source of income, or be extremely successful in their own practices, both of which privileges Bawa enjoyed"*.

She believes that it was an ensemble of factors that made him successful; all of which could be bracketed-down to his personal wealth. On one hand, there was his ability to select clients prompted by his lack of reliance on architecture for livelihood. On the other, once selected, the affluent clients gave him sufficient time and did not hamper his creativity through budgetary constraints. She adduces especially, his state corporation and semi-government clients who spent more lavishly than government departments. Apparently, the only 'low cost' project by him up to 1982/83 was the industrial estate at *Pallekelle* (Jayewardene, 1984: 246-248).

[ii] The state appointments led into further opportunities for Bawa. The island-wide propaganda housing program of UNP government fell under the purview of the Buildings Department, the State Engineering Corporation, the National Housing Development Authority and the Urban Development Authority. The state handled lower and middle income housing and other civic amenities for the masses (Jayewardene, 1984:

248). Within this setup, Bawa was appointed as the consultant to the *Kotmale* Multipurpose Project of the Mahaweli Programme (Jayewardene, 1984: 251) as he was ironically retained by the British architectural and engineering practice of Sir William Halcrow and Partners; the main consultant to Ministry of *Mahaweli*. Bawa was asked to give a 'face lift' to the intruded-upon landscape. The pertinent point here is that out of the ensemble of Sri Lankan architects with their meagre opportunities, he was selected by the state.

On the other hand, the popularity of the long-serving E.R. & B also cannot be overlooked, as it was known as the oldest surviving British period practice in Ceylon at the time. It attracted not only state commissions, but projects from the expatriate, business and plantation communities (Robson, 2004: 24). After all, Robson confirms in Bawa's autobiography that all the initial commissions came to the firm for its good reputation.

Moreover, his completed projects too were instrumental. Robson (2004) tells us that Bawa's resort hotel style became familiar to travellers in South-East Asia.

Academia too played a vital role in glorifying Bawa. In terms of propagation in Asia, Regionalism benefited from one seminal aspect that prior styles had not; its very own centres of architectural production and accompanying intellectual platforms that by the 1960s had been established (Pieris, 2007: 128-29). In fact the growth of the former in Asia, coincided with the consolidation of the latter; both to reach culmination by the 1980s (by this time, a number of prominent professional as well as academic bodies had been established in Asia). Asian academics were complimentary in arising the interest in the subject of the Western academics and also in the deliberate image-building exercise of the region's architects. After 1973, the rapidly globalising oil-producing Middle Eastern countries of which, the indigenous architectural identities had been threatened, became the seminal talking point. On the other hand, Middle-Eastern funding subjected Asian Islamic countries to concomitant pressure of Islamicized cultural production that essentially included architecture. Aga Khan Foundation sphere-headed its apolitical reproach against foregoing tendencies to *"combine technical expertise with an understanding of the cultural context in which they [Asian architects] build"* [agenda displayed on all MIMAR[ii] Journals]*.* Through vernacular revival, resistance to modernisation as well as Islamicization was anticipated. The outcomes were programs in non-Western architectures commencing – in Boston (Harvard University, and Massachusetts (MIT) – annual award (Aga Khan Award for architecture) as well as publications – a journal (MIMAR), and monograms on architects from the region such as Geoffrey Bawa, Charles Correa and Hassan Fathy (Pieris,2007: 128-29).

[iii] Deliberate image building was systematically carried out. First came the Academic and related involvements. Bawa's role as a design tutor has to be acknowledged – both in universities and privately, at office that churned out some of the G3. His teaching was accompanied by academic-related involvements. Publications played the most seminal role in this exercise, where writings both by Bawa and others from 1959, were instrumental for his fame. It has to be stressed here that rather than publications of academic nature, it was the non-academic counterparts that really made a mark. Throughout his career, Bawa took part in a number of exhibitions, either as a participant who displayed work, or being the subject whose work was acknowledged. By the last decades of his career, Bawa was conferred a number of honorific titles, by the Sri Lankan state and from institutions both in Sri Lanka and abroad. Not only the conferred honours by organised bodies, he further received such at the personal level from distinguished personalities too; for instance Prince Charles.

Bawa on his own too, may have attempted to portray himself as a lone genius by undermining contributions by the many – both architects, engineers, artists and other artisans – who toiled for him as attested by Robson (2004) in his autobiography. Similarly, his work has been mediated to the world mostly by foreigners – who were in most part friends and acquaintances, where David Robson is the foremost figure – who portrayed Bawa in their literary works as a mysterious personal divination – the lone European serving the chaotic Third World, trying to make it a better place. The never-ending problems of the Third word are portrayed as outcomes of its inherent shortcomings, where the underlying roles of Western colonial and neo-colonial practices are underplayed. At times, the history is superficially traversed and conclusions made to make politically-inclined remarks with underlying agendas.

[iv] Gunasekara received only some feeble hype. It is unfeasible to conceive propagandas of any kind; both voluntary and involuntary. No friend or colleague – both Sri Lankan and foreign – took up the task of propagating and glorifying his work within a process of image building. His architecture remained largely unheard of until a handful of academic attempts were made recently out of genuine interest.

Further, there have not been any exhibitions of Gunasekara's work whatsoever, and neither did he receive any international honours. It was only in 2010 that his native country finally appreciated his contribution to the profession and awarded a lifetime achievement award at its February exhibition inauguration ceremony.

The only publicity he may have involuntarily received was through his former students. Gunasekara taught in the school of architecture intermittently as a guest juror and design tutor, but his greatest contribution to students was by employing them in his practice (Gunasekara, 2012). However, the point is that none of them, in their work, show an affinity to that of their former mentor – this point needs credibility via an academic enquiry – thus, a continuation of his genre.

In the academic realm too he seldom had proponents. According to the researcher's own personal experience, as also confirmed by Pieris (2007: 20), Chris de Saram was the only voice that spoke consistently 'against the grain' in University of *Moratuwa* – that was outside of Geoffrey Bawa's Regionalist trope – nurturing an early appreciation of the works of Minnette de Silva and Gunasekara. His undertaking

to revive the figures under the shadow of Geoffrey Bawa was continued by students of de Saram who later became lecturers; Vijitha Basnayake for instance, under the subject of 'appreciating architecture'.

[v] Since the 1970s, modernist experiments by Saarinen, Niemeyer and others, within a radical critique of a 'socially void global criticism', are being pulled out of history's shelve"*…but Valentine Gunasekara remains a casualty of regionalist prerogatives"* (Pieris, 2007: 24).  A stereotypic libel disadvantaged Gunasekara's architecture was based on two grounds; his personal conviction to faith and political allegiance. An important distinction between Gunasekara and his contemporaries was his Roman Catholic faith and large family of eight children, both of which converged with his architecture. This can indeed be attributed to the communal teachings – in relation to intra and extra family relations – of Catholicism (N. de Silva, 2008; 2006). Catholicism had led him to architecture and his profession was a reflection of it. Most of his inspirations and the limits that he defined for himself were determined by his very strong religious belief. Anoma Pieris (2007: 100) maintains that Gunasekara's expression of his catholic faith, *"additionally alienated him"* in a nationalist background where indigenous archaic associated with Buddhism was burgeoning.

The communal teachings of his faith developed a deep compassion in Gunasekara for others, and this would have led to his socialist political allegiance. This analogy between Catholic communality and socialism has been affirmed by N. de Silva (2006; 2008) in his narrations of Marxism as well as divine underhand behind Western epistemology and humanism. This socialist conviction would have intensified following his acquaintance with de Saram who shared the same ideals (having shed his feudal upbringing). He would have aided Gunasekara to find ways to reflect socialism via architecture (Pieris, 2007: 20).

For David Robson (2004), Gunasekara's inability to attract projects can be attributed to him wearing his *"political allegiance on his sleeve"*. In Pieris's (2007: 24) view, instead of relying on political back up, Gunasekara in his inherent honesty depended mainly on his minority religious community for commissions that was only a handful. The stereotypic libel had taken its toll, reducing Gunasekara's commissions, and thus, economic status.

PRE-COLONIAL

By Kandyan Indigenous

COLONIAL

1796 Maritime Administration Dutch — ELITES / SUB-ELITES

Kandyan Regions British 1796-1815 — ELITES / SUB-ELITES

1956 Maritime Regional British Administration — ELITES / SUB-ELITES

ANDREW BOYD

# Appendix-2   Limitations

## 1. Concentration on the Sinhalese Elite Population within the Nationalist Window

The study concentrates on domestic architecture of the Sinhalese elite as they are the most numerous population that is responsible for the most ancient civilization in the island. Sinhalese account for 73% of the country's population while Tamils and Muslims make up 17% and 10% respectively (1981 census). Consequently, a large number of domestic examples can be produced from different periods and places of Sri Lanka for the Sinhalese elites than for ones belonging to minority populations. Further, the Sinhalese have had the most interactions with the colonial powers, resulting in their domestic architecture being vastly influenced by them. According to Dayaratne (2010:383), Sinhalese settlements exist all over the island except in the Jaffna and Batticaloa regions of the North and East, where Tamil and Muslim settlements dominate. Within this taxonomy, many variations of building types can be found; ranging from single-roomed peasant dwellings, middle-class cottages with verandas and front yards, to aristocratic dwellings (*Walauwes*), which have all been extensively studied. This makes available, a rich archive to draw on. On the other hand, the Sinhalese community does not by any means, share a homogeneous culture. The distinguishable differences of caste, religion and economic-class within the population itself, is considerably more than in other Sri Lankan communities. This complexity furnishes further possibilities of analysis.  The focus on the nationalist window on the other hand, sets a clear boundary for the study to be plausible.

The architectures of other ethnicities are equally fascinating and are dealt with elsewhere. However, in certain occasions, these are used as secondary materials where appropriate, to compliment the main focus.

## 2. Reliance on Objective Theories on Social Stratification

The extant theories on social stratification are two-fold. The 'objective' theories of Carl Marx dwell up on tangible factors for the purpose while the 'subjective' theories introduced by Max Weber rely on the intangible. The theories on elitism that have come under the purview of this study are all premised upon the former category, in their varying degrees. The latter is not considered owing to the difficulty of its application to the study.

## 3. Limitations of Western Theories on Elitism

The theories on elitism availale in contemporary literature, for their formation, pay homage to the notions of Marxism and Democracy in varying degrees. At a juncture where all these ideas have been challenged, the best possible solution is to logically appropriate the most suitable one for the study's purpose.

## 4. Stepping Stone of Eastern Elitism

Bulk of the theoretical material available on the condition of elitism is by the Western academia, which predominantly addresses elitism of the West, within the modern-era. Even the material available on Eastern elitism are by Western scholars and they possess an orientalist perspective. Owing to the state of oblivion the study on Eastern elitism suffers from, an attempt has been made under this study to tackle this situation by establishing Eastern elitism pertaining to the sub-continental context, based on available historical material. However, this by no means, is a comprehensive study, but sufficient for this particular exercise. Eastern elitism remains a fascinating area open for further research.

## 5. What Underwent Evolution?

Only the evolution of plans, constituents of 'form' (verandas, court yards, porches, roofs etc.), architectural features (i.e. fenestrations), detailing (i.e. carvings, mouldings) and materiality of elite-domestic buildings will be dealt with in this study in a general sort of a way. These particular architectural elements and features were chosen as they were the most distinguished factors to undergo evolution.

## 6. Typologies and Elaboration

As the study's focus lies on elite domestic architecture, in relation to each period in consideration, identifiable typologies were represented as separate examples with descriptive details. As this was an additional outcome, it has found itself in a supplementary catalogue.

However, in relation to houses of the sub-elites and masses, such emphasis has not been directed, owing to their secondary nature. They are instead, presented pictographically where appropriate, without such in depth analysis. Besides, no typological study can be found, in relation to the post-independence period domestic architecture of the masses.


## 7. Concentrating on Architects' Work

This study concentrates on the works of post-independancel Ceylonese architects designed for local elites, within its 'foreground'. Especially, the case studies addressed in Chapters 6 and 7 are drawn from two of such architects. The works by foreign architects, engineers and technically-qualified local draughtsmen from the colonial periods and local craftsmen in the Kandyan situation, are used as secondary material to support the main arguments. The justification for this stance was provided under section 1.7.


## 8. Concentrating on G2.

Both G1 and G3 lie outside of this study's scope as they were the once to have made a breakthrough. While G1 was steeped in modern architecture, G3 dwelt on what G2 created. On the other hand, the scope of this study does not permit a detailed account on the area. It seemed more appropriate to concentrate on the visual documentation with accompanying text. A little justice can be done to the wide-ranging and fascinating subject, which is briefly dealt with here.


## 9. Considering Only Projects Handled by Bawa and Gunasekara

In the process of comparison of client allegiances, only the projects handled by Bawa and Gunasekara are to be considered. The reason for this limitation is that we can only assume that these clients came to either Bawa or Gunasekara as they wanted them specifically, to design their houses. Although the initial projects by the two architects come from a period where both were working for the same firm (ER&B) as equal partners, it could be argued that the clients who came to it came with the specific architect in mind. The outcome of the analysis will crystallise this point.

## 10. Colombo; the Elite Entrepot

Colombo was the main centre of penetration utilized by the Portuguese and Dutch colonizers as well as the British. Over the last five hundred years, Colombo has not only been the island's main political and economic nerve centre, it has also been the first point of contact for Western Modernity before spreading to rest of the colonial territories within the island. Since the full British take over in 1815 that fully opened Ceylon up to the outside world in a hitherto unforeseen manner – being formed as an essential link in the British-formed global economic apparatus – the economic opportunities has always accumulated in Colombo. As Perera (1994: 372) affirms, it was destination of the *"…colonial produced 'entrepot' functions – including the linking of Ceylon to the world economy…".* This made it the ideal centre for all locals – irrespective of their cultural and class differentiations – who wanted a share of this economic action. The British ensured Colombo's centrality by making it the place of economic command functions – via expansions of communication networks based there – as well as the cultural and ideological center (Perera, 1994: 214)."*[so] it was Colombo that made Ceylon and not Ceylon (nor Lanka) that made Colombo"* (Perera, 1994: 93). As Perera (1994:507-508) further elaborates in relation to the British period,

> *"[…] the colonial political, economic, and cultural systems did indeed converge in the colonial port city of Colombo, making it the prime colonial as well as capitalist center in Ceylon. It was also here in Colombo that the colonial space of Ceylon and the larger imperial space of the British Empire both converged and fused into a single entity giving access, on one hand, into the external world of empire and, on the other, for some at least, the interior world of the colony".*

Following independence, most of the elite population of the country accumulated in its major cities and the capital Colombo was at the forefront; for the same reasons that made it central during the colonial period. Apart from its retention as the location of political and economic centrality that in turn, concentrated political and economic elites in Colombo, by the time, its ideological centre position had been also consolidated. All its serious educational functions that involved the elite itself still took place here and new cultural trends from the 'core' were still put into effect by the elites here. This was no exception for the nascent post-independence architectural profession – the profession itself being a mean of ideological impartation in its own

right – and the elites – the architects and their clients – who were trying to be fashionable by keeping up with the core. Therefore, most of the domestic examples from the post-independence period can be seen in Colombo district itself. This justifies all four case studies being adduced from within the Colombo district.

## 11. Problematic Numbers

In relation to the historical periods considered (especially, for the post-colonial), it is implausible to count the percentage of architect-designed houses out of total houses commissioned by elites, or even the total number of commissions for that matter. There is no statistical evidence whatsoever. Under such circumstances, the best possible solution is to dwell on the domestic portfolios of architects and infer.

## 12. Excluding Houses Outside Ceylon

This study concentrates only on the Ceylonese/Sri Lankan elite, as it intends to study their sensitivity to periodic economic and cultural changes in the country. Hence, although the architects in question catered for clients from overseas, such examples are irrelevant. Thus, when analysing their portfolios, only the houses designed and implemented in Sri Lanka are taken up.

## 13. Excluding Flats and Bungalows (for Companies)

The study excludes from consideration the flats designed for individual clients by the architects in consideration. These are arguably not comparative to personalized houses as they are designed for a generic group of users belonging to a certain social class or status group; with intended requirements by the client and architect alike. Consequently, unlike individual houses designed for individual families, they do not closely reflect clients' special needs prompted by their life styles and family/social backgrounds.  Likewise, the bungalows designed by the considered architects for private companies are also omitted.

## 14. Excluding Diplomatic Clients

This study excludes the designs by the two architects for ambassadors of foreign countries (Western countries in this case). The designs are more likely to portray the westernised cultures with own cultural peculiarities to the countries they represent in general than individual needs. We could infer that individual needs give way for official diplomatic needs that strive to manifest one's country's cultural superiority.

## 15. Lack of Portuguese Domestic Examples

Firstly, there are no Portuguese elite domestic architectural legacy in Sri Lanka at the present (Ashley De Vos, 2010; Lewcock et al., 2002). The nearest references to this rubric are the drawings of houses found in the few Dutch prints of Ceylon's fort cities and the single domestic remnant from the Portuguese-period found at *Atchuweli* in the Jaffna district, which is not an elite domestic building but a seminary. Its dilapidated condition renders a proper architectural investigation implausible.

In order to counter this lack of references, domestic buildings of elites in Goa were undertaken. As Perera (1994: 51) points out, within the hierarchy of archipelago of Portuguese Indian Ocean outposts, Colombo did not occupy a central place as Goa. Owing to its central position, the commercial and socio-cultural activities that were pursued in Goa were unparalleled to what happened anywhere in Maritime Ceylon. The fieldworks to Goa proved that the domestic architecture there has nothing directly in common with any of the domestic examples to be found in colonial Ceylon.  In this backdrop, the deduction that the so-called 'Dutch architecture' in Ceylon is actually the legacy of the Portuguese built tradition has been elaborated under Chapter 4. Consequently, the study turns to Dutch and British period examples.

## 16. New context; new meaning

The study's drawing on ideas, arguments and research appearing in certain works does not mean that this study submits to the overall ideas which the authors of these works had in mind. Descriptions and analyses are not mirror-reflections. They are of necessity, constructed within the limits of language and intellectual framework of those who propagate notions and also within the particular contexts of their ideas. Hence, ideas from works of others, used in this research have changed from their original contexts  and thus, carry newly constructed meanings.

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## Appendix 4    Publications Featuring Geoffrey Bawa

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# Appendix 7    Glossary of Terms

**Chapter 1**

Apē budun – Our Buddha
Arhath – A state of Enlightenment
Arya Chakrawarthy – A royal lineage from Jaffna kingdom that is believed to have a North Indian origin

Balangoda Manawaya – The ancient human skeletal remains found in Balangoda
Bas unnahe – A Dutch language derivation found in the Sinhala colloquial language for mason
Bauddhaya – The Buddhist
Bhikku – Buddhist monk
Bhikkuvage urumaya – Heritage of the Bhikku
Bodhisatva – Heroic/minded one for enlightenment

Chathuskotika – An ancient epistemology grounded on a four-faceted logic
Chola – Ancient kingdom in South India

Deshaya – Land
Deva – An ancient tribe from pre-Aryan Lanka
Dharmishta – Righteous
Dhamma Dīpa – Land of the doctrine
Dravida Mahajana Sabha – A political party in British colonial Ceylon

Eelam – Make-believe state of Tamils

Gal Viharaya – Name of a temple in *Matale*
Gama – Village
Gam Udava – Village Awakening
Govi – Farmer in Sinhalese or farmer caste
Guru – Teachers

Hindutva – A pro-Hindu movement in India

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna – A pro-socialist political party in Sri Lanka
Jathika Hela Urumaya – A pro-Sinhalese Buddhist political party in Sri Lanka
Jathiya/Jathi – Race/nationality in the modern sense

Kamkaru – Labour/er
Kanda Uda Rata – Kingdom on the hills
Kuttam Pokuna – Two bathing ponds located adjacent to one another
Kuvanna (Ku-vanna) – Dark-skinned person

Lak Diva – Shorter version of Island of Lanka
Lanka Dweepa – Island of Lanka
Lanka Sama Samaja Party – The party for an equal society in Lanka
Lena – Cave

Maha Seya – Great pagoda
Mahabharata/ Mahabharatha – One of the two great Sanskrit epics of the Hindus
Mahajana Eksath Peramuna – A political party meaning people's united front
Mahavamsa/Mahavansa – The great chronicle
Mahaveli – Name of the longest river in the Island
Mayamatha – Ancient Indian treatise pertaining to architecture

Naga – An ancient tribe from pre-Aryan Lanka
Nagara – Cities
Naide – Pre modern Sinhalese equivalent of architect/engineer
Nirgun Brahman – world with no qualities
Nivasa Dasa Lakshaya – One million houses
Nivasa Lakshaya – One hundred thousand houses
Niyamgam – In-between villages

Pali/Pāli – Ancient North Indian Language from Buddha's time
Pancha Maha Balavega – Five great forces
Pandyas – Ancient kingdom in South India
Pirivena – The place of education of Buddhist novice monks
Podu Peramuna – A political party meaning common front
Pura – Large cities

Ramayana – One of the two great Sanskrit epics of the Hindus
Ravaya – A popular newspaper in Sri Lanka meaning rumour
Rajakeeya Mawatha – Royal Avenue
Ruwanweli Maha Seya – The Biggest *stupa* built by king *Dutugemunu*

Sakra – The lord of all deities
Salpiti Korale – An area in western Sri Lanka consisting of number of villages
Sandakada Pahana – Moon stone (a form of stepping stone)
Sangha – Order of Buddhist monks
Seema malakaya – Building used for ordaining of Buddhist monks
Sanskrit – Ancient language of the Aryans
Shunyathavada – A canon in Hinduism
Sinha – Meaning lion in Sinhalese
Sinhala Deshaya – Land of the Sinhalese
Sinhala Maha Sabha – A Sinhalese political party in British colonial Ceylon
Sinhala Urumaya – The heritage/birth-right of the Sinhalese
Sloka – A couplet of Sanskrit verse
Sri Dalada Maligava – Temple of the tooth in Kandy
Stupas - Dome-shaped Buddhist shrine building
Sudu nelum – White Lotus
Suriya mal – Sunflowers
Swaraj – Self determination


Tamileela makkal Viduthalaip Pullikkal – Tamil People's Liberation Tigers
Tampita Vihara – Temples on pillars
Thavalam – Caravans
Theravada – One of the two Buddhist canons

Veda – Indigenous doctors
Veddas – The indigenous people of Lanka
Vikalpa – Alternative
Vikalpakari – Pushing for an alternative
Vatadage – A form of image house in Sinhalese classical architecture
Vijayanagar – Ancient kingdom in South India

Yaksha/s – An ancient tribe from pre-Aryan Lanka


**Chapter 2**

Chinthana Parshadhaya – Society of thinkers

Deepavanshaya (Deepawansa) – The Chronicle of the Island
Durava – Name of a Sinhalese Caste

Ettukettu – A *Kerala* house type with two inner courtyard

Karava – Name of a Sinhalese Caste

Nālukettu – A *Kerala* house type with one inner courtyard

Poco – Shortened form of post colonial theory

Thupavansaya – Legend of the Topes


**Chapter 3**

Agganya Sutra – A discourse of Lord Buddha found in the Buddhist holy book of    *Tripitaka*
Aithereya Brahmana – An ancient Indian collection of sacred hymns
Angampodi Velakkara Heva Pannaya – A military unit consisting of soldiers of Indian (Dravidian) origin
Ardha Vaidika – The half caste population between Aryans and non-Aryans
Äsala (Esala) Festival – Yearly three day celebration in Sri Lanka related to Buddhism
Äsala (Esala) Perahära – Procession related to the *Esala* festival
Aya – Social positions/ administrative rank in ancient Lanka
Attam Kramaya – A corporative system of work

Badahäla - A caste in Lanka
Badahäla Badda - Duty/ tax yielded from the *Badahala* caste
Badda - Tax
Bathgama / Padu - A caste in Lanka
Berava - A caste in Lanka
Berawa Badda - Duty/ tax yielded from the *Nakathi/ Berawa* caste
Brahmana – The highest caste of the four-fold Indian caste system – Priest
Brahmana Rala – Respected person of Brahmin descent

Cakkavatti – Great king
Chale – Region in India
Chandala - A lower caste of ancient Lanka (Rodi)

Dalits – Untouchables in the ancient Indian society

Damba Diewa – Ancient Indian sub continent
Deegha Nikaya – Deegha sect
Devalaya (Dēvalaya)/Devalas (Dēvalas) – Place/places of worship found within the confinements of Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka, dedicated to various deities.
Dēvarāja – God king
Dhamma - Religion
Dhammarāja – Righteous king
Dobi - A caste in Lanka
Dola/s - A caste in Lanka

Gâdi – A lower caste of ancient Lanka (Rodi)
Gahala - A caste in Lanka
Gamika – Head of the village
Gammuladani – Head of the village
Ganapathi - Social positions/administrative rank in ancient Lanka
Gandhabba –Ancient tribe of Lanka
Gate Mudliyar – *Mudliyar* of the governor's gate
Gattara - A caste in Lanka
Gauthama Dharma Sutra – Oldest of the four treatises
Govigama - A caste in Lanka
Goviya - Farmer
Grāmaneya – First dynasty of Sinhalese kings

Harijans – Untouchables in the ancient Indian society
Hena /Rada - A caste in Lanka
Hinna - A caste in Lanka
Hunu – A caste in Lanka
Hunu Badda – Duty/tax yielded from *Hunu* caste

Issara – Another name for *Isurumuniya* Monastery

Jat - Caste cluster
Jathaka Katha – Stories on Buddha's previous lives
Jāti - The endorgamous caste
Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi – The most venerated tree in Buddhist Sri Lanka.

Kadaim Poth – A form of log-keeping in pre modern Lanka
Kapa – a pole used symbolically
Kap Ceramony – the ceremony involving the Kapa
Kapuwa – Equivalent of witch doctor / Marriage broker
Kara - A caste in Lanka
Kinnara - A caste in Lanka
Kinnara Badda - Duty/ tax yielded from the *Kinnara* caste
Korale Aththo – A group of Sinhalese people who have south Indian (Dravidian) descent
Kottala Badda - Duty/ tax yielded from the *Navandanna* caste
Kshatriya/s (Kshātriya/s) – Second highest caste of the four-fold Indian caste system – Worriers/Kings
Kumbal/Badahala - A caste in Lanka
Kuruve – Related to elephant rearing
Kuruwe Badda - Duty/ tax yielded from the *Pannadura* caste

Lambakarna - Ancient tribe of northern India

Madige Badda – Duty/ tax yielded from the *Karava* caste
Maha – One of the two seasons for paddy cultivation
Maha Badda - Duty/ tax yielded from the *Salagama* caste
Maha Bharatha – One of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India
Maha Brahma – The creator in Hindu mythology
Maha Mudliyar – Highest rank given to *Mudliyars*
Maha Vihara – The great monastery
Mavlumangalya – Coronation Ceremony
Morathota Vatha – The story of Morathota
Mulasra – name for the two forms of documentation that carry either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history
Murunda/Maurya – Ancient tribe of northern India

Nakathi/Berawa – A caste in Lanka
Navandanna/Achari/Galladu – A caste in Lanka
Nibbāna - Enlightenment

Oli – A caste in Lanka

Pali – A caste in Lanka
Pāli Atuwa – Ancient document that carries either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history
Pāli Tripitaka – Ancient document that carries either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history
Pannadura - A caste in Lanka
Parumaka - Social positions/ administrative rank in ancient Lanka

Pēsakārayō - Weavers
Porowa - A caste in Lanka
Purohitha – Advisor to the king

Rada Badda - Duty/ tax yielded from the *Rada* caste
Radala – Feudalist belonging to the G*ovi* (Farmers) caste
Rajaka – A caste in Lanka
Rājakāriya – Mandatory work yielded by the king
Rasavahini – Ancient document that carries either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history
Rodi/Hulavali – A caste in Lanka

Sahassawathathu– Ancient document that carries either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history
Sadol – An untouchable caste of ancient India
Sakya – An ancient tribe of northern India
Salagama – A caste in Lanka
Seehala Wathathupapakarana – Ancient document that carries either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history
Sinha - Lion
Sinhabahu – Person with lion's arms (hands and feet were like lion's paws)
Sinhapura – Lion city
Siv-hela – Yaksha, Naga Deva and Gandhabba tribes
Situ waru – Wealthy traders from ancient time
Sreni (śreṇī) – Stratum
Sudra/s – Lowest caste of the Indian four-fold caste system – Untouchable/ service Caste

Theraniya – Equivalent of non/female counterpart of the monk
Tripitaka – Buddhis holy book written in *pali* language

Upanaya – The coming of age ceremony of Hindus

Vaduga – Of Nayakkar origin
Vaishya – Waishya caste
Vanga Deshaya – Present day Bengal region of India
Vanniyar – Rulers from the Vanni region of ancient Lanka
Varna - Skin colour
Velladuara / Bodhi - A caste in Lanka
Vidane – Sinhalese administrative rank
Viththi Poth - A form of log-keeping in pre modern Lanka

Wahumpura / Hakuru - A caste in Lanka
Waishya – Third highest caste of the four-fold caste system in India – Land      Owners/Money Lenders/ traders/ Farmers
Wamsathathpapakasini– Ancient document that carries either Sinhalese historic literature or archaeological history
Wasala – Lower caste of ancient India/ Lanka

Yāgas – Hindu Ritual
Yaksha/s – Ancient tribe of Lanka
Yala – One of the two seasons for paddy cultivation
Yogarathnakaraya – Ancient Lankan text


**Chapter 4**

Adigar/s – Prime minister/s to the Sinhalese King (also referred to as *Adikaram*)
Agrabhagaya – Good portion
Arachchis – Head of the village

Chakrawarthi - Great king

Devalagam - Village entrusted to a temple establishment
Disas – A large administrative unit
Disavanes - A large administrative unit
Dissave/s – Administrator/s of a large area
Dissave Mohottalas - Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy

Gabadagam – Entrusted village
Guru-shishya – teacher-pupil

Hatara-andi-Gedara – Generic Kandyan courtyard type house

Koralas – A large area consisting of many villages
Korales - Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy

Lekam - Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy

Maha Mohottalas - Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy
Maha Walauwe – Great manor house
Mesitos – Mixed raced people
Mohottalas - Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy
Mudaliyar/Mudliyar – A high administrative rank given to locals by the British
Muhandirams – Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy
Mulatos – Mixed raced people
Muthukuda Rala – Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy

Nilames - Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy
Nindagam - Entrusted village

Parsi – A population with an Iranian origin who adhere to Islam
Patti – the lowest level within the Govi caste
Pattu – Division

Ralas – Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy
Ratas – A large area administered by the *Rate Mahattaya*
Rate Adikaram – A high administrative position
Rate Mahattayas – Administrator of a large area
Rate Rala – A low administrative position

Senkadagalapura – Kingdom of Kandy
Sihala Dveepa – Land of the Sinhalese
Sitano/s – A high ranked person/s within the *Govigama* caste (noble/s)

Thalpath Wadana Rala - A low position

Vidanagam - Entrusted village
Vidanes - Rank in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy
Viharagam – Village entrusted to a temple establishment
Vellala – Equivalent of farmer in the Tamil caste hierachi

Walauwe – Manor house


**Chapter 5**

Ayurvedic – Indigenous medicine

Dagabas - Stupas
Dalada Maligava – Temple of the tooth
Devale – Place/places of worship found within the confinements of Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka,
        dedicated to various deities.
Divaina - Island

Gedige – a Type of ancient Hindu-Buddhist building
Mawatha - Avenue

Mahila samithi – A feminist movement started in British colonial India

Tivanka – Bended in three places

Vihara/s – Buddhist temple complex/complexes

Wallawwe Hamuduruwo – Lady of the manor


**Chapter 6**

Gam Udava – Village Awakening

Karave - A caste in Lanka
Kovil – Temple of Tamil Hindus

Lanka Sama Samaja Party – The party for an equal society in Lanka

Mahaveli – Name of the longest river in the Island
Matale Aluvihare – A Buddhist temple in *Matale*
Mawatha – Avenue
Medamidula - Courtyard
Midula – Court

Oya – Stream

Plumeria – Temple tree

Tappa Bamma – Compacted earth wall

Weli midula – Sand court

**Chapter 7**

Bulath Heppuwa – Beetle leaves container

Chaithya - Stupa

Hartal – a closure of shops, offices and institutions etc. as a protest or a mark of sorrow

Janatha – People's
Jathaka – Different lives

Kanappuwa – A form of stool
Kavichchiya – A form of sofa
Kumari hami – Lady of the Manor

Magul Maduwa – Courtroom of Sinhalese Kings
Maha Disave – Head *Disave*
Midula – Front sand court

Pravada – Opinion
Pirith – Blessings

Sihala urumaya – a pro-Sinhalese Buddhist political party in Sri Lanka
Swabhasha – In own language

Veena – an Eastern musical instrument
Viyan Anda – Bed with a head cover

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# මේ අපේ උරුමයයි

CREATIVE CONNECTIONS
*Exploring and Discovering Relationships*

# Role of the 'American Style' in Post Independence Period Domestic Architecture in Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

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## ABSTRACT

Having gained independence in 1948, a faction of Ceylonese elite embarked on a nationalist political course in 1956. Nationalism, with ups and downs, was perpetuated into the 1970s. In a context where elitist architects propagated core-oriented modes of domestic architectures, the middle-class patron non-architects turned to post-war mass-housing in the United States for inspiration, going by the name 'American Style'.

This paper evaluates the style's generic characteristics and explores apparent as well as underlying reasons for its success, where the latter, once bracketed down, proves to be decolonization. In the absence of major scientific studies on the topic, the methodology relies heavily on informal interviews conducted with style's patrons as well as for senior practicing architects.

## ORIGIN

In the 1950s, US development companies combined with post-war GI loan schemes to produce the 'magic carpet to the middle class', and acres of model-homes were built to cover suburban land tracts. Home ownership became central to middle-class aspirations and was an essential step of the "American dream" (Johnson, 1994: 4). However, Pieris (2007: 47) believes that symptomatic modernism of this model was *"not entirely unself-conscious",* owing to the critique directed towards post-war Levittown suburbs. Levittowns and tract-housing sprung up usually in vernacular styles such as *Cape Cod* that predominantly appealed to post-war middle-class taste (Budds, 2011: 2). In 1945 John Entenza launched an experimental program titled the 'case study houses', aiming to design a low-cost prototype for post-war California that lasted till the mid 1960s. These houses have been described as icons of mid-century modernism, and Pieris (2007: 48) believes that it was *"… one of the many moments when the house became a laboratory for experimentation with new technologies, materials, building processes and aesthetics associated with social change".*

## INSPIRATION

Peiris (2007: 47) believes that the proliferation of American middle-class suburban home paralleled with American lifestyle appropriation in parts of Asia and Europe. An infiltration of American culture, namely Americanization, had already perpetuated in Europe during WWII, owing to its indispensible part in it. The growth in post-war media and telecommunication had consolidated its global reach (*Ssenyonga*, 2006). On the other hand, to the newly-liberated Asian colonies that had been subjugated under centuries of European cultures, more liberal-looking, non-feudal and non-colonial American culture was a *"breath of fresh air"* (Alahakoon, 2011). *"The dream that was borrowed or appropriated from America was one of modernity and democracy…."* (Pieris, 2007, 47); the very aspects that the US appeared to stand for. Hence, the style was a stepping stone for the peripheral social classes to ascend towards elitism. Subsequently, 1960s Ceylonese began to call it the "American-style" in the presence of its variants such as "California-house" and "Ranch-style". In the absence of the Television, they grasped it largely through magazines such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Ideal Homes* etc., not to mention the Hollywood cinema. Pieris (2007, 2007: 47) states that the American-style was adopted for its *"sense of modernity"*, rather than the *"modernist aesthetic",* in the presence of far-modern variants from Europe as Perera (1994:258) tells us.

## PLACEMENT

During the late 1950s, suburbs of Ratmalana, Nawala, Rajagiriya, Nugegoda etc. sprung up around Colombo as residential areas to accommodate middle-class new-comers (Pieris 2007: 50). This group who had arrived from rural areas was largely the intellectual progeny of post-colonial state's educational franchise. However, they were relegated to the peripheries of intellectual, political, administrative, economic and social spheres. The middle-class had no stake in city real estate, and was required to vocation in Colombo; the "one-horse town" of Ceylon as Perera (1994:405) refers to it. Owing to limitation of land within city-limits, the less-affluent middle-class had to settle for suburbs on the metropolitan periphery.

## CHRACTERISTIC FEATURES

American-style house articulated a revolutionary breakthrough from its immediate predecessor, the Victorian box-inspired *Public Works Department-type* house (Gunasekara, 2011). In contrast to palatial houses that normally had a considerable extent of surrounding landscaped-garden, American-style house placed within a smaller plot was pushed into one side of the site to create a semi-private garden (Alahakoon 2011).

The generic house was single-storied and had an open-plan. It would normally have a covered entrance-porch via which, one enters the main living area; directly-linked to the adjacent dining/pantry. The "free-plan" as Pieris correctly points out, was normalized in this manner. The rooms placed in-line would usually open into the living and dining where services were placed at the rear (Manawadu, 2011). The typical plan led to an irregular envelope that could be roofed at any convenient angle. The house was a simple shed with multi-directional roofs. In certain occasions a two-way flap commonly referred to as the "butterfly-roof" was utilized, which became the style's most striking feature. This in fact, was a copy of Marcel Breuer's 1949's "House in the museum garden" exhibit for MOMA in New York (Walkers, 1998: 188). Sometimes a number of butterfly-roofs were accommodated in the same building with little concern for proportion. The reason behind such daring roof angles was corrugated asbestoses roofing sheets,

Pre-fabrication found common use in Ceylon's domestic architecture for the first time. Floor and wall tiles for the first time, became a common feature. Sometimes, stone, brick and wood combinations were utilized as exposed finishes to make features such as wall-claddings. As Pieris (2007: 52) further-elaborates, Stone, pebbles and granolithic finishes for feature-walls lent rusticity to the building surfaces. It is possible that the non-architect designers had not really conceived the modern architectural notion of "being true" to materials and simply fulfilled emulation. Hence, probably in a state of unawareness, the experiments on the tectonic by American architects – who attempted to replicate patterns of the American landscape for natural contiguity – also became symptomatic in the works of local designers. Tectonic quality could possibly have appealed to a group of people who grew up mostly in rural vernacular houses with similar materiality. R.C.C concrete was frequently utilized for front porches made to cantilever significant spans, as well as for awnings.

A notable feature of the style is its tendency to open the interior to outside environment through openings on the envelope, as against rather-enclosed British-period houses. Breathing-walls made of pre-fabricated units of either concrete or clay that is common in the tropical modern works of Fry and Drew (1982) also became symptomatic of this style. Incorporation of environmental devices such as concrete-grills, louvers and awnings; quintessential to Tropical Modernism also became a seminal feature. The strip of wall between the two roof flaps was punctured at intervals to enable stack-effect as a passive means of cooling. Owing to such innovations, these houses were cool and livable (Alahakoon, 2011).

### Innovations

Sculptural elements such as spiral staircases became plausible through pre-cast technology. Further, pre-fabrication was used to make repetitive features such as concrete lovers and breathing-walls blocks etc. The R.C.C technology pioneered in structural elements where cantilevering slabs and awnings became characteristic. Pieris (2007: 51) also

attributes its popularity to the 1965 international industrial exhibition held in Ceylon that inspired technological versatility through numerous innovative projects that exploited prefabrication and new construction processes.



**Figure: 1 Typical American style house.**

## APPARENT REASONS FOR PROLIFERATION

### Economy

As the nascent middle-class had the opportunity to engage in government and private-sector employment since the 1950s, they had managed to accumulate nominal wealth by the 1960s. Some had sold their village properties to pay for their suburban houses (Alahakoon, 2011). Due to their permanent employment, the middle-class was given a chance for the first time to acquire long-term bank loans, mainly from state-run commercial banks. Lons could be used either to purchase land or to fund houses (Wijesinghe, 2011). Such nominal financial-backing was sufficient to realize the economical American-style house.

### Land shortage

Suburban plots in the 1960s were being down-sized for affordability. In order to regulate such moves, the *Urban Development Authority* (UDA) was compelled to impose plot-size regulation; making the minimum fifteen Perches (Chris de Saram, 2011). Consequently, most of these houses were placed on relatively smaller plots, compared to their predecessors. UDA regulations after 1978, further-shrunk the plot-size to a mere six Perches that has perpetuated in to the present-day (UDA regulations, 2008:17).

## UNDERLYING REASONS FOR PROLIFERATION

### Upward Social mobility

Ceylon gained its political independence in 1948. By this point, the peripheral position of the newly-independent nations had been concretized through neo-colonial practices of the Western-core and ensuing ideological impartations did not spare the profession of architecture (Perera, 1994: 332). These tendencies prevailed for nearly a decade under the so-called *"post-colonial third culture"* (Perera, 1994: 257). However, a breakthrough came in 1956 when a local-elite faction under the banner of *Sri Lanka Freedom Party (S.L.F.P)* came into power, having been equipped with a nationalist agenda. As a reactionary force against bitter memories of colonialism, they adopted left-wing socialist slogans (Perera 1994: 358). Nationalism triggered measures such as making Sinhala the national language, enforcing a ceiling on private property, non-alignment, nationalization of vital economic resources to culminate with re-naming of the country 'Sri Lanka' in 1972. The ceiling on private property in paricullar, undermined the power of traditional elite; the feudalists and bourgeoisie. Property acquisitions complimented nationalization of vital economic resources, opening up numerous blue-collar employment opportunities.

Despite elite protest, Kannangara's free education bill was passed in 1943, and by 1945 primary and secondary education became free for all (Jayetilleke, 2004). Tertiary education conversely, was available form 1921 via University of Ceylon, although considered as a "halfway-house to a national university" (de Silva, 1981:416). This non-elite educational franchise brought about a newly-educated faction within the middle-class. Consequently, the 1960s saw a large body of *'swabhasha'* trained youth although their intellectual horizons were extremely limited. All such changes led to a hitherto-unforeseen upward social mobility that strengthened the middle-class, altering the composition of existing class structure. However, this mobilization did not by any means; threaten even a single sphere of elite dominance. The post 1956 middle-class mobility from rural-oblivion to urban-modernity could thus be stated as the foundation that lead to the proliferation of American style house

### Aesthetic novelty

When Ceylonese elite were harking back to a romantic colonial past, domestic styles coming from America, the emerging global culture, appealed to the Ceylonese middle-class as forward-looking. As Pieris (2007, 47) discerns, *"….this style was used to negotiate an ideal social space for middle-class Ceylonese families in Colombo's new metropolitan suburbs"…* It *"… articulated a new sensibility that was free from the colonial rhetoric of politics, privilege and anglophile values that had inhibited experimentation by middle class home owners of a previous generation".*

As the American models were based on their timber-based vernacular, they possessed a petite quality that was alluring to the less-affluent middle-lass, and appeared affordable. During this period, Tropical Modernism was being popularized by a handful of architects such as Andrew Boyd, Visva Selvarathnam and Leon Monk etc. (Gunasekara 2011). Even more renowned figures such as Minnete de Silva, Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekera started off with this style, to later deviate to their own respective styles of *Neo Regionalism* by the former two and *Expressionist-modernism* by the latter respectively(Robson:2010). As Selvarathnam (in Jayawardene, 1984: 111) once explained, the clients who were in a position to hire architects *"could afford to be modern"*. These clients were the elite, or at least the political-class in the case of Gunasekera. The sculptural quality apparent in the out of reach tropical modernism was also symptomatic in the American style in a different manner. Consequently, this factor made it further-palatable for the middle-class. Owing to their Western education, rationality had suddenly become vital in all life aspects. Hence, some of the traditional architectural elements and detailing found in their village houses had suddenly become irrational in the Western-oriented city life that demanded efficacy; thus excluded. Hence, this process could be perceived

### Middle-class Patronage

Ceylon in the 1950s was a semi-feudal and agricultural country (Jayawardene, 1983: 90). To the postcolonial elites, Great Britain was still the cultural and ideological hub as against the US; merely considered a nascent economic force (Perera: 1994: 433). When the elite

allegiance was directed towards their ex-colonist, the newly-educated middle-class was drawn towards "fresh" modernity of the US. Pieris (2007) and many others superfluously believe that the American style was a middle-class phenomena. By carefully analyzing the professions of this group of people as against the ones catered by the architects of the period a social distinction becomes explicit. The middle-class patrons of the non-architects were less-affluent and socio-politically feeble than the elite and political-class patrons of architects.

### Elite non-elite rift

The Ceylonese elite having closely-emulated British masters' culture of Western capitalist-modernity, also attained his notion of 'humanism' that Gandhi (1998:23-41) elaborates on. Although 1956 political change facilitated upward social mobility via educating the middle-class, the Western-educated elites considered themselves to be beneficiaries of first-hand epistemology from the 'core'. Their locally-educated counterparts were considered to have received a trickled-down secondary form of Western knowledge. This notion justified, amongst many other things, their stance on the American-style domestic building in Ceylon, which was considered to be an "eyesore" (Pieris, 2007: 50). As Bewis Bawa (1985, pp. 42-43, 62-64), the elder brother of Geoffrey Bawa wrote derogatively of the 1980s Colombo's architecture, *"The houses of today springing up faster than mushrooms in one's back yard (which is all one has for anything to spring up in) it makes one wonder whether architecture is overtaking modern art… but our people after independence want to be independent; so prefer to buy dozens of magazines, cut out dozens of pictures of buildings that take their fancy take bits and pieces out of each, stick them together – and there's a house. Then a friend comes along when it is half built and says: 'but why not have the roof like this, so a hurried alteration is made …"*

Hence, the sculptural forms of the American-style that threatened the established traditions that defined elite domestic architectural splendor, was "bad taste" for them. Postcolonial architects of the country, as intellectual elite themselves, also shared the humanist

approach of their allied elites. To them, architecture learned from the 'core' was the "best possible solution" and anything else that was disassociated with it, was "inappropriate" and "bad taste".

"….a vast section of the common heard have fallen for their [American] roofs. The infection is rapidly spreading to the remotest corner of our pearl of the East. I have seen village houses, wayside garages and even a cattle shed and poultry houses with the two-way flap" (Bawa, 1985, pp. 62-63).

Thus, to the Anglicized and western-educated elite, American style became the perfect tool to fabricate a new form of social distance.

### Negation of cultural differences

Ethnicity and religion as well as caste have over the epochs, been factors that determined the superiority of certain factions of the island's population over others. Ceylon from the time immemorial has been a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. The factor of caste complicates furthermore, these cultural differentiations. In a socialist tendency where cultural differentiations were discouraged, the state-enabled upward social mobility resulted in a newly out looked middle-class. This was a class that shared a sense of solidarity not owing to ethnicity religion or caste, but on the grounds of similar intellectual and economic backgrounds, not to mention political ideology. They collectively had to relegate their varied cultural upbringings in favor of a modern Western life style that their occupations and city-lives demanded.

## CONCLUSION

Ceylon's Nationalist and socialist-oriented political change of 1956 ensued a hitherto-unforeseen social mobility, where a multi-cultural middle-class was newly-educated and employed. This social mobility inflated the Ceylonese middle-class who chose to emulate their American counterpart's domestic model. A new sense of non-feudal, non-colonial and middle-class oriented American modernity was thus appropriated resulting in changing of a largely rural population with indigenous cultural values into a rather modern faction. The cultural hybridity they possessed was open for more outside influence. Owing to middle-class's intellectual, managerial, bureaucratic,

political as well as social marginalization by elite humanity, coupled with their lack of economic affluence, placed them in the new peripheral suburbs. As against core-imparted domestic styles, the cheaper, far easily-buildable, maintainable and relatively comfortable American-style house with aesthetic novelty became rational. As the style refused British colonial life-style for one more American, it articulated a strong degree of decolonization. Further, this style had appealed to the middle-class – not to be confused with the political-class. In a context where American style became the aspiration of a vast rural populace, it could be conceived as the domestic style that achieved much-needed cultural-unification in a precarious social context.

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# ISVS 5 - 2010 Abstracts

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# THE ROLES OF TRADITION AND VERNACULAR IN POST-COLONIAL ELITE DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF CEYLON (SRI LANKA)

Nishan Rasanga Wijetunge

Following a brief stint of independent-rule from 1948 under a class of post-colonial third culture, a political breakthrough came in 1956, when a faction of local-elite with a strong nationalist agenda came into power in Ceylon. Within this politically-induced backdrop, several nascent Ceylonese architects felt the urgency for a new architectural identity for the nation. The domestic architectural rubric they derived on behalf of the country's newly-defined elite stratum is referred to as Modern regional architecture in the tropics (MRAT), which in another sense could be postulated as Designed-vernacular. MRAT was based on Architectural Modernism, and epitomized in its making the essence of the country's proverbial indigenous architectural tradition of Kandyan vernacular. Furthermore, the selective-traditions of colonial-Dutch and colonial-British of hybrid parentage were incorporated to the formula. This modus operandi was further-enhanced through traits obtained from the local arts and crafts movement by the rubric's proponents such as Geoffrey Bawa. This rubric gradually culminated as an immense success over the years, to become the flagship elite domestic-style of the island. Moreover, it became the ideal manifestation of the immutable position of country's core-oriented elites while

securing its posterity. Conversely, a lone contemporary counterpart challenged this position by embracing a socialist agenda and attempted to realize it through an expressionist modernism, with the emphasis on the international-style technology. By the exclusion from his designs, the elements of tradition and vernacular- which by that time had become a quintessential part of the representational repertoire of elite domestic architecture- Valentine Gunasekara strived to disseminate the notion of a more equitable society, perhaps somewhat less-successfully. The paper attempts to adduce the triumph of the cross-fertilized MRAT, as against its relegated modern expressionist counterpart, in order to discern the respective roles played *by tradition and vernacular in the scenario.*

*Keywords:*

*Tradition, Vernacular, Postcolonial, Elite domestic architecture*

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The paper attempts to adduce the triumph of the cross-fertilized MRAT, as against its relegated modern expressionist counterpart, in order to discern the respective roles played by tradition and vernacular in the scenario.

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# Introduction

The contemporary global architectural milieu is shrouded by ambivalence due to precarious architectural practices instigated by capitalism and globalization. Homogenizing forces of the mass-media and built mediocrities of the international fashions have relegated traditional continuity (Lim and Beng, 1998: 12-18). Hence, in such a context, questioning the respective roles of tradition and vernacular in contemporary global architecture becomes imperative to determine future prospects.

If this reproach is directed at Sri Lanka, addressing its post-colonial period becomes indispensable; where reverting back to vernacular tradition with the essential patronage of its elites was explicitly spawned. The two most celebrated domestic architectural rubrics of Sri Lanka's post-colonial period could be discerned as vernacular-biased *Neo-Regionalism*, and *Expressionist Architectural Modernism* –which dwelled on innovative technology. Hence, postulating reasons for the apparent relegation of the latter by the former antithesis is of crucial importance, in adducing the pivotal roles played by tradition and vernacular respectively.

# Tradition in Architecture

The word "*tradition*" originates from the Latin verb "*trado-transdo*", which means is "*to pass on to another*", or "*to transmit possession*". Tradition is thus seen as a duel process of preservation as well as transmission (Beng, 1994: 21). According to T.S Eliot (in Beng, 1994: 21), a true sense of tradition is a sense of the timeless and the temporal together.

"*Tradition... cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It nvolves in the first place, a historical sense, which... involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence...*". Although the definition of tradition is commonly perceived to be a set of fixed attributes, many repudiate this view and believe it to be a series of layers transformed over time (Lim and Beng, 1998: 54). Hobsbawn postulates the notion of "*invented tradition*", which includes both traditions that are gradually invented, constructed and formally instituted as well as the ones to emerge in a less easily-defined manner within a short time frame. He defines tradition as "*...taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past*" (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983: 1). Throughout history, discontinuities in architectural traditions have been prolific[1]. In traditional societies, cultural processes and external forces take a long time to be considered as "established". Once this is completed, they sustain for extended periods of time (Lim and Beng, 1998: 55). Williams (1980: 39) however, disseminates that, what may pass-off as "cultural traditions" or the "significant past" is actually selective traditions[2]. Hence, it could be perceived that traditions are always contested, transformed, resisted and invented over time. It could be affirmed with a great number of examples from around the world that, in traditional societies, age-old architectural forms have reached high sophistication. Albeit their slow denigration, they remain more expressive and sympathetic to the aspirations of the people than any contemporary contender. The expressions of

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, conviction through their local craftsmen
, practices,whichtrulycelebratetheir devotion,
contemplationand commemoration(Limand

,, Beng,r998:54).Onthe other hand,inthefield
ofarchitecturea dichotomyexistsin the form
of 'granddesigntradition,and,its antithesis,
the'folk tradition'.Rapoportpostulatesthat
themonument-buildings

belongto the grand

, designtradition,and are erectedto impress
eitherthe populacein termsof the powerof
the patron, or peer-group of designersand
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a seminalrole in the construction of society; whichcouldeitherbe culturallyhomogeneous orheterogeneous.

Boththesesituationscould possibly find an enhanced degree of sophisticationowing to the existenceof sub-cultures

withina given culture4.Culture imbuesvarious traditions relating to the assortedfunctionsof human life. In other

words,cultureensuresthatitscitizensabide by differentsets of rules set by tradition, with relationto the performanceof these functions respectively.Such rules ensurethat whatever underlying factors5 behind them are preserved,andthen transferredfor posterity, while manifesting a unique identity with relation to a given function. The notion of identityhasalwaysbeenintricately-relatedto traditions;n35 lingering on to numerous traditionsis what gives a societyits identity. Douglasand d' Harnoncourt (in Limand Beng,

t998:54) postulate that,"To robapeopleof its tradition is to rob it of inborn strengthand identity". Sincemaking buildings is a basic necessityof the human repertoire, different cultures from around the world have primordiallydevelopedtheir very own built traditions. Since every society essentially entailsa "high" culturethat influences "other levels"of crrltures,assuggestedby Bottomore (t9g3 116)0, in terms of buildingtraditions, this distinctioncould be further-elaborated highculturechooses" grand designtradition', whilst other cultural levelsare relegated to "vernacular tradition". Hence, Vernacular becomesa modus operandi,with a unique

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identity of its own. the term

'verndcular'is the notion of

building as an
organic process, involvingsocietyas a whole,,
(Lim and Beng, r998: 1o). perceivedas

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by Beng (t99+, r9); edificesof vernacular are
not merelyperceivedto be the brainchildof
any individual architect,but the productof an

entirecommunityas a whole;workingthrough
itshistory (l-im and Beng, r998:ro). Vernacular
structures are invariably built by local
craftsmenof anonymitywith local techniques
and materials, reflectingsociety'saccumulated
wisdom and collectiveimages. Thgy are
imbuedwithcosmologicaland religious values,
socialand politicalstructures,sensibilityand
attitude towards time and space.Moreover,

their forms and proportions, craftsmanship and decorations manifest symbolic propensities and hence, are meaningful (Beng, 1994: 19). As Lim and Beng (1998: 11) suggest, *"There is hardly any need or scope for "improvement" in the various vernacular languages of housing generated indigenously around the world..."*.

## Manifestation capabilities of the elite domestic form

The elites in society are an *organized-minority*, which tends to dominate the 'unorganized masses' in terms of an array of practices (Mosca, 1939: 53). These could be attributed to their superior intellectual and physical qualities possessed by nature, to inherited or acquired powers, essentially in economic and political spheres (Bottomore, 1993: 102). Through these superior qualities, elites tend to stay at society's forefront manifesting their prestige, leading way for masses to follow, while striving to further-widen the existing gulf between the two stratums. This generic nature of elites as a whole is true, irrespective of their location in the world, weather in a primitive society or the most advanced. In the olden ages, apex-status of elites was manifested through their *royal, noble, cleric, aristocratic* or *bourgeois* positions in society, and in the contemporary world, they prevail in the forms of *intellectuals, managers of industry* or *bureaucrats*, making these elite-positions real determiners of most life aspects of masses (Bottomore, 1993: 404).

The elites rule, they manage, and are the ideological think tanks that manipulate society, while masses merely go along with what is imposed up on them with minimal resistance. Hence, the elite facilitate new political and economic changes in society, or alternatively, these changes take place because of them and their self-centered actions[7]. On the other hand, Pareto's *economic dimension* (in Bottomore, 1993: 2) postulates that, economics is a vital aspect that constitutes elitism. The elites epitomize their political power to achieve the economic edge over masses or alternatively, the reverse takes effect, as Mandel (1982: 18-25) points out as it happened through human history. Policies of the so-called *"governing or political elites"*[8] as Pareto (1960: 1423-1424) refers to them, always strive to reinforce the best interests of its allied-elites of *"close coalition"*, as Bottomore (1993: 277) suggests. This is achieved through a concretization of an inequitable system that in turn makes and sustains them, with the intension of assuring its posterity. With dawn of the 20th century, it could be perceived that, merely the elites possessing some combined degree of economic as well as political edge, and occasionally the intellectual edge, became particularly capable of social influence. These abilities consigned them at the elite-apex as the "political" or "governing" elite, along with their immediate circle. The bureaucrats, managers and intellectual elites who merely possessed what their given names suggest, were relegated to immediate lower elite stratums. However, coalition between the apex and this stratum is what keeps the system in tact. The sub-elite stratum (the middle class) forming the liaison between the ensemble of elites and masses could be conceived as a different and less-influential group altogether (Bottomore, 1993:5). This Western-derived structure of elitism was subsequently imparted on the Ceylonese context via five epochs of Western colonialism.[9]

Since political and economic arenas are the *raison d'être* behind elitism as affirmed earlier, they also make elites the most sensitive their periodic changes in comparison to the masses.

Domestic building on the other hand, is a basic human necessity, which articulates the lifestyle of its dwellers. Then again, life style is a reflection of various traditions imbued in a given culture. As Rapoport (1969: 46) elaborates, "*The house is an institution, not just a structure, created for a complex set of purposes. Because building a house is a cultural phenomenon, its form and organization are greatly influenced by the cultural milieu to which it belongs...*". Hence, ico-economic changes are best-manifested in the unique built traditions of its elites. This built tradition exposes itself best, though a degree of great intimacy in the physical form of elite dwelling, as it could be derived through the discourse on the notion of "*home*" by Rybczynski (1988)[10].

# Roles of tradition and Identity in Architectures of post-colonial Ceylon

After the Dutch-held maritime regions were handed-over to *British East India Company* in 1796, which was followed by the fall of Kandyan kingdom in 1815, the British colonial project in Ceylon instigated (Mills, 1964). Since the early 16th century to this point in time, Ceylon had merely remained one of the conspicuous penetration outposts in the Portuguese-Dutch created Seaborne Empire. The radical capitalist economic policies and gradual democratic reforms imposed by British colonists spawned a new peripheral status for Ceylon within the British Empire; with its hinterland centered upon London (Perera, 1994: 126-127).

Consequently, Ceylon that had managed to sustain a modest level of globalization to this point in time, suddenly started to feel its effects more rigorously. Albeit the feeble launching which mainly dwelled on the traditions of the expelled Dutch predecessors, the British building program perpetuated, and by the time Ceylon was granted its political independence in 1948, the island had experienced three distinctly identifiable *phases of British architecture* (Lewcock, Sansony and Senanayake, 2002: 249-301). Phase-3 of British architecture is perceived to be the one where British finally made their mark by curtailing the hybrid Dutch influence of the prior era to a meager level. In the domestic architectural scene, this was largely realized through the burgeoning influence of the 19th century *colonial bungalow* they had painstakingly developed in the subcontinent, to a point of culmination by their concluding years (King, 1984).

Some scholars believe that, the European Colonial projects affected new paradigm shifts throughout the whole of Asia, and the unequal socio-cultural as well as economic exchanges resulted in the emergence of "*re-invented*" traditions in hitherto unforeseen scales. Certain . types of hybrid architectures which relegated local cultural identities emerged and eventually gained acceptance with time (Lim and Beng, 1998: 55). Hence, the colonial bungalow could be adduced as an example of such. Phase-3 saw its finale by attempting to rationalize an ideally-functional and comfortable colonial domestic building for the tropics in the form of *Public Works Department's* bungalow-influenced *Tropical Colonial style* (Pieris, 2007: 49-50). This almost paralleled with Modernist propagations of the *Tropical School* of AA, which strived to derive a streamlined *Tropical Modernism* for the world's dry and humid zones (Fry and Drew, 1982); a further evolution of *CIAM* 8's Modernist avant-garde. According to Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger's postulation (in Lim and Beng, 1998: 55), a colonial power had to invent "tradition" in order to create a sense of

historical legitimacy.

The Ceylonese equivalents of the discourse emerged in the forms of *Indic styles*, and *pseudo architecture*, which were largely delimited to monumental and civic buildings as Pieris (2007: 2) and Robson (2004: 43-45) affirm. By this juncture, the peripheral position of the newly-independent nations had been concretized through neo-colonial practices of the central Western-core (Perera, 1994: 332). These attempted ideological impartations of architecture could be conceived as a desperate measure to form a patronizing relationship between the core and periphery. These tendencies prevailed in Ceylon after independence, under the auspices of a so-called *"post-colonial third culture"*. They, who had assumed political power from the British, resembled their foreign predecessors in every conceivable manner (Perera, 1994: 257). However, a political breakthrough came in 1956 when a faction of local-elite came into political power in Ceylon having been equipped with a strong nationalist agenda. As a reactionary force against the bitter memories of colonialism, they adopted left-wing socialist slogans. Moreover, the newly-liberated different ethnicities of the island, who had been previously suppressed by the colonial heel had to be unified under one national identity; circumventing the propensity for future tension (Perera, 1994: 258). Within such a backdrop, several nascent Ceylonese architects felt the urgency for a new architectural identity for the nation[11]. Anoma Peiris draws a valid analogy with *Calud Levi-Strauss's* appropriation of the terms *bricoleur* and *engineer*, and the two mainstream approaches of post-independent Sri Lankan architects (Pieris, 2007: 150-152).

# Neo-Regionalism: The modus operandi of a Bricoleur

Ceylon's post-colonial architects were essentially educated in the Western-core[12]. It was a context where, the core institutions had monopolized peripheral architectural education. It is also evident that clients of these architects were essentially, the country's elites or sub-elites of some form. From such an ensemble of postcolonial Ceylonese architects, Minnette de Silva, a former *AA* (Architectural Association School of London) trainee, was the pioneer to adopt a synthesis between vernacular and modernism with due emphasis on sociological experiences of Ceylon's rural life. Clearly depicting her stance, she coined the term *"modern regional architecture in the tropics"*, as early as the 1950s (Tzonis and Lefaivre, 2001: 31). Minnette's work overtly manifested the problems of post-coloniality, which was exposed as a *"precarious balance of Eastern and Western cultures than merely an aesthetic resolution"* (Pieris, 2007: 50). Geoffrey Bawa, who qualified few years junior to Minnette, also from the AA, appropriated an approach that resembled Minnette's. Both started-off with Tropical Modernist ideology coupled with the referenced vernacular building practices by their immediate colonial practitioner predecessors (Scriver and Prakash, 2007: 33-37). The incorporation of timeless and unconscious hence, backed this approach with authenticity. Clifford (1987: 121-130) describes this as the *"savage paradigm"*; a colonial discussion of a climatically-appropriate native architecture with the desire to rescue authenticity out of destructive historical changes. This approach according to Lico (in Pieris, 2007: 10) was not merely delimited to Ceylon, and also found its use in other countries of the Asian region.

Bawa drew inspiration from a range of regional architectures from Europe, Ceylon's own colonial past as well as its pre-colonial examples of both grand and folk design traditions. Especially in his domestic projects for influential economic or political elites, vernacular recurred overtly. The type of vernacular he picked up was largely from the hybrid manor houses[13] of the Kandyan elite apex as well as its sub-elites. This spawned an incongruous degree of familiarization in his architecture, which was lacking in the projects of his contemporaries. However, many perceive that Bawa's architecture "...has a western aesthetic sensibility and provided a utopian comfort zone for a clientele facing the many disruptions of post-colonial change, of urban growth, and industrialization" (Pieris, 2007: 9).

As Rykwert (1982: 31) tells us, "Memory is to a person what history is to a group. As memory conditions perception and is in turn modified by it, so the history of design and of architecture contains everything that has been designed or built and is continually modified by new work...." Hence, "....There is no humanity without memory and there is no architecture without historic reference". Analogously, Eliot (in Beng, 1994: 10) disseminates that, "The past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past....the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show".

Lim and Beng (1998: 10) further-concretize the above notion by affirming that, "If one does not hear the past clearly and honestly, it cannot become part of one's work. Architecture, like the other visual arts, is in the final analysis the domain of the intuitive mind and eye" (Lim and Beng, 1998: 10).

Alternatively, it is possible in-deed, to seek synthesis of traditional and contemporary (appearing as binary oppositions) through Art[14]. However, such a synthesis should not be of janus-faced nature with the schizophrenic coexistence of two opposing ideas, but one single gesture which should simultaneously be contemporary and timeless as well as "ethnic" and "modern" (Lim and Beng, 1998: 10). Hence, elucidation of these affluent disseminations affirm that, this is what exactly Bawa's architecture was all about. Working with the scarce resources available to him, and with no striking innovation, he had undoubtedly played the role of a bricoleur; in deed of a very clever one[15]. The lure of picturesque along with nostalgic propensity and romanticism of the period had undermined the full potential of technological innovations in architecture. The ideal stepping stone for Neo-Regionalism was astutely conceived by Bawa as the elite domestic realm of postcolonial Ceylon. The architect himself hailing from an elite background may have caused such an intuition. By recreating environments imbued with elite associations of both indigenous and hybrid-colonial conditions of familiarity, the vernacular had concretized the immutability of its elite stratum of patronage. Hence, as Pieris (2007: 10) suggests, a potential restructuring of the country's postcolonial social sphere was made feeble by this rubric, and consequently the socio-economic mobility of the masses was largely hindered. The hybrid local identity it catered for, again, was favored by the country's Westernized and semi-westernized elites who themselves were products of colonial hybridity as Bhabha (1994) postulates. Other than its limitation to an elite clientele, the style was further-limited by the rigidity of the colonial structure as well the ever-prevailing ethno-religious nationalism. The masses meanwhile were either caught up in this nationalist zeal or lost in capitalist and homogenizing practices of the international

style. Neo-Regionalism's public acceptance eventually came with the auspice of the state-implemented civic projects and with the ideological transformations they instigated. The rubric in fact, suffered a paradigm shift from Bawa's own facile objectives as Pieris (2007: 11) suggests, into a whole different plane; with its "revivalist, traditionalist and chauvinistic forms" eventually making it conceivable to the masses. It was regionalism – rigorously backed by the political sphere – which heightened its focus on identity; not the neo-vernacular in its original form devised by its pioneers. Regionalism was then oriented towards an international audience for eventual laudability, and hence failed miserably in the attempt of much-needed decolonization.

# Expressionist Architectural Modernism: The modus operandi of an Engineer-Bricoleur

" To rob a people of opportunity to grow through invention or through acquisition of values from other races is to rob it from its future" (Lim and Beng, 1998: 54).

This Modernity-instigated Western line of thinking could indeed be perceived as the motto behind Valentine Gunasekara's architecture. He took inspiration from America, epitomizing exposure of his study tours[16], and sojourns in California. Henceforth, he deviated from tropical modernist school quite early in his career after assimilating its essence. Freedom of spaces, tectonic qualities, and the rigorous modular articulation of form of his structures were borrowed from mainly American experiments. Gunasekara chose to relegate the industrial aesthetic of the European avant-garde to the appropriation of landscape-centered American counterpart. In the affluent works of Euro Saarinen, Louis Kahn, Charles and Ray Eames, he saw an effort to mould new technologies into an aesthetic that resonated with a specific geography; that he conceived to be a definitive break with the colonial past. As Pieris (2007: 13) suggests, "The plastic curvature of concrete, experimented with in tropical climates by South American modernists, suggested an approach that could parallel the linearity of the prairie style that had emphasized the expanse of the American geography….."

Seminally, "…The reference to ancient monuments of Incas and Mayas in Californian Modernists suggested ways in which he might approach and reinterpret Sri Lanka's historic architecture. For Gunasekara, the undulating softness of the tropical geography and interweaving of form and space in the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa would be parallel sources of inspiration".

To Gunasekara, the emerging middle class (i.e. new class of local professionals, graduates from newly-formed Sri Lankan universities etc.) – the new sub-elite of Sri Lanka – appealed greatly; as he perceived them to carry the vitality for self-definition, essential to appropriate economic growth and thus, social mobility. Although, it is their cultural expansion that paved the way for general cultural expansion in Sri Lanka, they never got off to a position where they could threaten the immutable position of the country's elites[17]. In a rapidly globalizing world, Gunasekara recognized the changing Sri Lankan lifestyles in the process of assimilating western values. However, he managed to maintain aspects that prompt family gatherings and hospitable spirits, in order to make home life desirable. He

stressed on the importance of culture to the development of the human spirit and exposed its essential factors of faith, family, community and personal identity (Pieris, 2007: 13-14).

However, Gunasekara's ideology was largely dogged by the hybrid Sinhalese-Catholic culture that he wholeheartedly admired. He perceived this culture to be more liberal than the majority's Sinhalese-Buddhist counterpart, and also found it to be on par with a desirable sense of Socialist communality that De Silva (2009) attributes to Catholicism. Despite the fact that his earlier house designs greatly resembled tropical modernism, he endured a metamorphosis that evolved through modernist expressionism to the final form of deconstruction towards the end of his career[18]. One conspicuous factor that could be identified in retrospect was his sectarian devotion to technological experimentation. Sri Lanka's engineering profession of the 1970s – according to Sri Lanka Institution of Engineers' *Innovation and Self-reliance; Kulasinghe Felicitation Volume, History of Engineering in Sri Lanka*, 2001 Volume – was enduring an innovative phase, and Gunasekara became one of its great beneficiaries (Pieris, 2007: 13)[19]. With relation to his projects, Gunasekara not only played the part of bricoleur – picking up various seminal architectural influences from an array of mainstream world-wide practices of the time – he knew exactly what engineering tools to epitomize for each job, to a level of efficacy; making his approach a one belonging to an engineer-bricoleur. Albeit its groundbreaking approaches, the rubric overtly rejected tradition, perceiving it as a backward step to progression as it is connoted by Lim and Beng (1998: 13). However, architectural modernism that he based his broader aims on had a share of flaws of its own, especially with regard to the postcolonial tropics[20].

# Conclusion

Sri Lanka is a nation with a primordial Sinhalese-Buddhist culture and its accompanying traditions. Sinhalese built traditions (both grand and folk design traditions) have been time-tested throughout various quantum leaps in world globalization history that pertained to the island. By analyzing the success of Bawa who acknowledged such traditions in his architecture as against Gunasekara who repudiated and in turn, became unsuccessful, the immutability of country's dominant culture and traditions articulates itself. Within the absence of a panacea for ever-prevailing East-West cultural clash, beneath a veneer of appropriated Western cultural attributes of the hybrid-elites, the fervor for indigenous prevails. Furthermore, the different degrees of political auspices received by Bawa and Gunasekara elucidate the factor's seminal role in publicizing a certain architectural rubric among the masses. Hence, masses are manipulated and influenced by the governing elite in society – the ones who rule them in collaboration with its immediate circle. Owing to the intuition gained via his elite upbringing, elite domestic realm was astutely epitomized by Bawa as a stepping stone for Neo-Regionalism to gain future acclaim.

Art for art's sake never seemed to have worked in Sri Lanka. Albeit being aimed at the betterment of society, art is ultimately political. The Sri Lankan elites of influence did not embrace a rubric based on vernacular tradition due to their genuine belief of it as the one that best-represents country's cultural identity, within the process of fulfilling their social responsibility as elites. The surviving feudal elites after independence were rather obsessed with creating a nostalgic niche of their own, through a rubric that best-epitomized the defunct design traditions

of Ceylon's medieval and colonial periods from their past heydays. It also appealed to elites who were the progeny of country's latter social mobility, as it was conceived as the ideal means of artificially-aligning themselves with their old counterparts to gain public legitimacy.

Henceforth, it is discernible that just because a certain architectural rubric threatens the posterity of the elite system, it would logically not succeed in a context with a strong cultural base, without the familiar traditional archaic as the vernacular.

# End Notes

[1] Architecture has not remained "pure" anywhere, as there have always been hybrids (cross-fertilizations) of indigenous and imported. The two have been diffused, hybridized, and in the process, synergized. Hence, such types in their respective forms, in a given time frame, are potential models for even more similar transformations.

[2] "From a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded.....Some of these meanings and practices are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture"(Williams, 1980: 39).

[3] The authentic meaning behind folk tradition could be discerned as, "…the world view writs small, the "ideal" environment of a people expressed in buildings and settlements, with no designer, artist, or architect with an axe to grind (although to what extent the designer is really a form giver is a moot point)."

Folk design tradition represents itself in the form of vernacular; which again could be classified as primitive and other forms, where the latter could again be divided into pre-industrial and industrial (Rapoport, 1969: 2).

[4] This is facilitated owing to factors such as religion, occupation and cast-system etc.

[5] These underlying factors could be religious, symbolic, biological and environmental etc.

[6] In every society which is complex, there is a number of 'levels of culture' to be found, and it is utmost vital for the health of the society that these levels of culture inter-relate to each other. Yet, the manner and the taste of society as a whole should be influenced by the society's 'highest culture' (Bottomore, 1993: 116).

[7] It has to be noted here that political changes may also occur due to social revolutions. In that case

it referred to as 'circulation of elites', where a faction of elites within the political class itself, replace the apex.

[8] From the ensemble of various types of elites in a given society, the governing elites tend to possess the greatest level of power, which places them at the centre of high cultural influence. Governing elites could either be an absolute monarchy, a certain form of collective government (democracy, socialism etc.) or any combination of varying degree of the two. The extent of high cultural access made available to the other elites, by the governing elites, varies in different contexts. In most Western contexts after Modernity for example, high culture has not been a jealously-guarded condition. Conversely, in the East, it has always been delimited either to the royal family alone, or to the immediate circle of aristocrats surrounding them.

[9] The quasi elite structure that sprung up by deliberate-intermingling of Eastern and Western counterparts during Portuguese and Dutch rules was jettisoned in the late 19th century. This was achieved via a Ceylonese appropriation of a fully-fledged British elite structure analogous to the one above. Roberts (2005: 147-148) affirms this point through his discourse of the late 19th and early 20th century British Ceylon's newly-acquired western-type liberal occupations (such as lawyers and civil servants etc.), which began to be addressed as "genteel professions". This ideology in fact, survived though the postcolonial period to the present day in Sri Lanka.

[10] The fact that the elites are the pioneers to have historically developed a degree of intimacy with their dwellings than any other social stratum, further-contributes to the concretization of this view.

[11] Anoma Peiris postulates that, the task facing Ceylon's postcolonial architects was twofold. On one hand, the need for constructing a sense of geographic belonging against a former history of colonial expression, European Modernism (inculcated to them through their core-based architectural education), and nascent chauvinist nationalism of the region as a whole, was prevalent. On the other, they needed to reconcile their only training – the one in modernism – to the design of tropical environments (Pieris, 2007: 150-152).

[12] This was owing to the fact that Ceylon did not have any architectural schools of its own at the time.

[13] These domestic buildings drew mainly on the indigenous vernacular belonging to folk design tradition, as well as for certain traits of grand design tradition.

[14] The Renaissance's architects and artists such as Michael Angelo, Borromini and the others, successfully-mediated strong beliefs and practices of the Roman church with the mythic imagery of ancient Greece and Rome.

[15] Consequently, this rubric culminated to become the flagship elite domestic-style of the island by the 1970s and 80s. Moreover, it became the ideal manifestation of the immutable position of

country's core-oriented elites in the top ranks. It also assured through architecture, the posterity of the elite-made system.

[16] Gunasekara received the Rockefeller Foundation Travel Grant in 1965 and travelled the US. (Pieris, 2007: 152)

[17] Despite the potential to become such a counterforce, with time, they merely became the stratum that formed the liaison between the elites and masses; exactly the function of "sub-elites" throughout world history.

[18] This could be affirmed via a chronological evaluation of personalized houses completed by him throughout his carrier.

[19] Pre-cast concrete, thin shell structures and industrial methods had attained a point of culmination, and such techniques were appropriated into his repertoire. The close partnership with engineer Jayati Weerakoon made such inovations plausible. (Pieris, 2007: 152).

[20] Although its bold formal expression undermined the colonial metropolitan identities that had previously been hegemonic in Asian cities, it never quite won the hearts and minds of the peoples of the region. This stance could in-deed, be blamed on a fallacy, which inculcated the notion of modernism as an "identity-free" rubric.

The separation of values from identity-which lay at the heart of the humanist project appeared incongruous when introduced to diverse and contested geographies, and proved ineffective at many levels.

The critique of modernism by that time was on the rise. As per the emerging post-modernist school, "Modernism; the aesthetic of the European avant guard, is…… an empty universal shell devoid of history and culture, a tool of top-down economic policies whether socialist or capitalist. Its monolithic forms cast deep shadows subjugating a diminished urban citizenry. It was a utopian project that somehow misfired. At the core of its problematic was a Eurocentric humanism, shaped by enlightenment ideology, reinforced by early twentieth-century colonialism and disseminated as an apolitical and universal value" (Pieris, 2007: 1).

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# Kandyan Elitism as an Eastern Brand of Elitism and Formulating Kandyan Elite Domestic Architecture

## Nishan Rasanga Wijetunge

### Abstract

This paper attempts to discern the condition of elitism with relation to a unique Eastern situation – the indigenously-governed Kandyan regions of Ceylon – that only saw light of the relentless forces of Western-led globalization as late as 1815. Kandyan elitism, over the years, has been either misinterpreted or addressed facilely by scholars, while being indifferent to the separation between Kandyan elites and sub-elites. The objective here is to make explicit the factors underlying this division, which could be manifested through Kandyan elite and sub-elite domestic architectures. Identifying ambivalences evident in the two types is intrinsic to this exercise.

## Capitalism and Western Elitism

The perception of intellectual superiority of the Western world over its Eastern counterpart has persisted for centuries, and reached a point of culmination by the 19th century; through Western-instigated colonial projects. The foundation to this hegemony was laid during the Renaissance in 15th century Europe, perceived to be a quantum leap experienced by the ever-prevailing process of globalization. Even prior to the spawning of so-called "modern-era" itself, as Said (2003: 31-92) postulates, Western epistemological pre-eminence had been largely propagated by their prolific texts. As a direct consequence of Western colonialism, the colonists placed themselves at an immutable position as the controlling-core of the world, while relegating the colonized to a subordinate periphery (Perera, 1994: 211). Henceforth, Western knowledge became the accepted norm while ancient Eastern epistemological realm was pushed to an oblivious corner.  In such a milieu, the Western academia has not only devised a fervent body of knowledge on the discourse of "elitism" over the epochs, this knowledge has been inculcated throughout the world. Therefore, the widely-received canon of global-elitism applied to wide-ranging contemporary and historical situations is really, the Western structure of elitism superimposed on non-Western conditions. This structure has hence been blindly and ignorantly appropriated by Eastern scholars, and applied to Eastern contexts, undermining the opportunity to envisage the ensemble of quintessential factors that constitute elitism in the Eastern sense.

On the other hand, albeit laudable epistemological and scientific instigations of pioneering dimensions in the Ancient Far-East, it has to be categorically acknowledged that science and technology culminated to its present sophisticated state in Europe, with the spawning of the so-called Modernity.  Renaissance,

religious reformations, enlightenment and industrial revolution – all conceived to be quantum leaps in the relentless process of globalization – were affected following the15th century, when Europeans made a conspicuous change from communality (based on orthodox Christianity), into to ego-centric individualism, which largely relegated religion (de Silva, 2003). The mammoth shifts these developments spawned, proved too radical for the feudal economic system as well culture as a whole, in the Western world at the time. Consequently, a capitalist socio-economic structure which was more apt for such development was appropriated, which in turn assured the consolidation and posterity of Western science and epistemology.

With the growth of Western science, knowledge and awareness of the environment also grew, as conceiving the great mysteries of what was 'Created by god, the all mightily' was conceived as one of science's vital tasks. However it is widely postulated that, although Western science has experienced a metamorphosis through the epochs of archaic primitivism and paganism – which perceived different aspects of nature to possess supernatural powers – there is still a long way ahead. De Silva (2006: 11-15) and Steger (2003) postulate that capitalism, which is inherently based on the exploitation of labour, not only paved the way for scientific consolidation historically, it has also misinterpreted the definition for development, and facilitated a rigorous process of exploitation. Exploitation of fellow human beings as well as of the environment was exacerbated to hitherto unforeseen levels through the ever-expanding capitalist practices. Capitalism which is driven by profit-making as Mandel (1982) tells us, since its advent, has not only manufactured what people essentially need in order to survive in the world, it has further prompted them to strive for, and acquire, the not-so-essential amenities to life; instigating what

is widely propagated as a consumer-society. All such developments according to de Silva (2006), sprung up in 15th Century Europe, which was consequently proliferated the world over through European colonialism. The simple logic is that the world possesses only limited resources, not sufficient for everyone to live lives of consumerism. This was true in deed in the 15th century, when European consumer societies decided to resort to unjust and exploitative means of colonialism in order to achieve their capitalist realities, and in the contemporary world, such practices are still continued via neo-colonialism (Perera, 1994: 328-371). Furthermore, the destruction of the environment was brought to unprecedented levels during the 18th century-initiated process of industrialization in Western Europe, and has been continuously sustained to the present-day levels of catastrophe. Western elitism of the Modern era – the brand of elitism discerned and propagated the world over by Western academia – was born and nourished in such a capitalist and egocentric realm.

## Concepts of Western Elitism

Rousseau (in Bottomore, 1993: 101), based on the world-renowned Politics of Aristotle  (Which reads, "From the hours of their birth some are marked out for subjection and some for command"), instigates the apparent basic differences among human beings, which he has credibly classified and transcended to levels of inequalities. "…there are two kinds of inequality among human species; one, which I call natural or physical, because it is established by nature, and consists in a difference of age, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind or of the soul: and another, which may be called moral or political inequality, because it depends upon a kind of convention, and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. This latter consists of the different privileges, which some men enjoy to the prejudice of others; such as that of being more rich, more honored, more powerful or even in a position to exact obedience" (Bottomore, 1993: 102).

Hence, one could assume that Elitism was derived out of such pioneering Western notions of human inequalities, prevalent over the ages, and has been discussed in more general or wide-ranging terms in recent times. The rationalization with relation to various conspicuous periods of recent history derived by Bottomore, after having referred to various well-established scholarly propagations reads, "The word 'elite' was used in the seventeenth century to describe commodities of particular excellence; and the usage was later extended to refer to superior social groups, such as prestigious military units or the higher ranks of the nobility" (Bottomore, 1993: 1).[1]

Conversely, Horton's point of view establishes the role of elitism after the Industrial Revolution taking place in Western Europe throughout the 19th century. Prior to this juncture, European-elite largely consisted of the higher clergy as well as the land-owning nobility, and always had been an inheritable status.  "Membership of an elite group is often inherited, but in some societies it may be acquired" (Horton: 1964, 294).[2]  This inclination proliferated throughout the world by the means of colonialism. Appropriating from this background, Barber (1968: 19, 22), utilizing the simplicity of ranking dimensions, delineated three separate but interrelated dimensions for the elite; the economic dimensions, the power dimensions and the evaluation or prestige dimensions. Both Vilfredo Pareto and Garento Mosca are two laudable proponents of the discourse, to define Western Elitism in more relevant terms as Bottomore (1993, 1-12) points out. Their inculcations could be condensed into a few common concepts that can be logically applied to Western elitism within the entire modern era. In every society (Western societies in the core and their subordinate counterparts in the peripheral world), the elites could either be found in the form of various 'functional groups' or as a 'political class'. The more conspicuous and loosely-defined latter consist of those who occupy the posts of political command and, more vaguely, those who can directly influence political decisions.[3] Within the political class itself, there exists a smaller group, the 'political elite' or 'governing elite'; consisting of the individuals who actually exercise political powers in a society, at a given time. This includes members of the government, and of the high administration, military leaders, and in some cases, politically influential families of an aristocracy or royal house, and leaders of powerful economic enterprises. However, it is less convenient to set the boundaries for the 'political class' as it might include the 'political elite' as well as the 'counter-elites'. The latter may comprise of leaders of political parties which are out of office and representatives of new social interests or classes such as trade union leaders, groups of businessmen and intellectuals who are active in politics. The political class hence, as suggested by Bottomore (1993: 8), comprises a number of groups, which may be engaged in varying degree of cooperation, competition or conflict with one another. Henceforth, in Western conception, the governing elites, formidable in both political and economic spheres, are the most powerful, while they allow certain functional elites to prevail in close coalition; to safeguard the system and means that sustain them as elites. At the end, it all comes down to the conduct of a minority that relegates the majority, prompted by relentless greed, triggered through the modern-era capitalism.

## Kandyan Kingdom: A discrete existence

Iberian-Portugal from 1498, gradually composed a vast seaborne Empire in the form of loosely-knit military and trading outposts over the Indian Ocean region, and formed Lisbon as their hierarchical centre. This act could be perceived as the stepping stone of the attempts by the capitalist Western-world, to pur-

sue their ego-centric future fulfillments. This could furthermore, be envisaged as the pioneering instigation of Euro-centrism, that was brought to a point of culmination by the 19th century.



**Figure 1: Map showing the land-locked status of Kandyan regions by 1796**

Source: Mills, 1964

The Portuguese who had been controlling maritime Ceylon since 1505 were superseded by Dutch – a Western European capitalist force – that had consolidated to the Eastern colonial forefront by the mid 17th century. Although the Dutch V.O.C (The East India Company) managed to completely oust Portuguese from Ceylon to acquire their territories, they failed miserably to penetrate the interior. This was owing to the persisting resistance of the Kandyan Kingdom, located in the hostile geographic region of central hill-country. This Kingdom had been originally formed as Senkadagalapura during the reign of Vikramabahu III of Gampola in the mid 14th Century, and later was formed as a revolt-territory that resisted Maritime Portuguese rule by King Wimaladharmasooriya-I in 1590. King Rajasinghe II, a latter ruler of the Kingdom, signed a treaty with the Dutch and collaborated to successfully annihilate the Portuguese from maritime Ceylon by 1658 (de Silva, 1981: 133-134).[4] This treaty however, was circumvented by the shrewd Dutch administration later on, as they feared it favored Kandyans more. Consequently, the abhorrence between the two parties eventually led to war, and hostilities prevailed in the form of occasional as-

sault on one another, for decades. However, toward the closing years of Dutch occupation in Ceylon (by 1796), the Kandyans had lost all their maritime possessions to the V.O.C, and were land-locked in the central hill-country itself (Pakeman, 1970: 68-69), leading to unprecedented austerity after centuries.[5] The last time that a Sinhalese monarchy may have faced such a condition was probably before the 15th century, during Dravidian invasions from Southern India. The following written testament by a soldier of the British army (that took over the maritime regions from the Dutch in 1796), writing in 1803 (in perera, 1994: 147), articulates the solitary position of the Kingdom. " I have often heard persons, unacquainted with the interior of Ceylon, express their surprise that a tract of land in the heart of the island, cut off from all external supplies, and everywhere surrounded by European settlements, should so long have remained in the hands of a people neither strong nor warlike, in spite of repeated efforts to wrest it from them". James Cordiner (1807:103), a Britisher who visited the kingdom shortly afterwards, best-describes in his descriptive writings, its modestly-globalized position. However, in 1796, at the point where British acquired Dutch-held maritime regions, Kandyan kingdom still possessed the bulk of island's land mass, which had been subdivided into twenty one grand divisions.

## Deriving Kandyan Elitism

### Historical making of stable structures

In medieval Ceylon, Elitism was essentially a factor that had been empowered by feudalism, which in turn was backed by the primordial caste-system. Ceylon had originally received the fourfold Indian caste system with the waves of immigrations that occurred predominantly from Western, Eastern and South-Eastern parts of India, as far as the 9th century B.C; with the most documented affair taking place in the 5th century B.C., as the arrival of prince Vijaya of the Sinha (Lion) tribe, along with a contingent of five hundred (de Silva, 2008). With the advent during Anuradhapura period in the 3rd century B.C., of the philosophical doctrine of Buddhism that subverts the concept of caste, Sinhalese consequently developed their unique equivalent to the Indian caste system. The royal family, essentially of warrior (Kshatriya) origin (always directly traceable to Northern Indian Aryan Royal bloodlines), and aristocrats (close relatives of king who were made highest officials of the Kingdom), made the uppermost echelons of the Anuradhapura period, while the majority of the populace was engaged in paddy cultivation as their main means of livelihood. Even the artisans that immigrated with prince Vijaya, and the ones to have done afterwards, were placed at the same level in the social strata as the farmers. Documented evidence such as Mahavamsa – the comprehensive and continuous historical inscription from the 2nd Ct. B.C., of the Buddhist monastery of Maha Vihara of Anuradhapura – makes references to

the feeble class distinction between aristocrats and masses in the historic city, in periods of great prosperity which saw the culmination of Buddhism. The strong social and economic structures that ensued during the Anuradhapura period perpetuated for one and half millennia, until Southern Indian invasions prompted the Sinhalese seat of power to shift via Pollonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Gampola, Kurunegala and Kotte respectively, until Kandy became the concluding destination. Schumpeter's propagation that, "Social structures, types and attitudes are coins that do not readily melt. Once they are formed they persist, possibly for centuries…," (Shumpeter, 1942: 12-13)[6], which indeed, is affirmative with relation to ancient Ceylon. The essence (the basic structure) of strong social and economic systems that developed during Anuradhapura was sustained down into the Kandyan period; having survived continuous South Indian and European interventions for nearly a millennium. However, the overwhelming South Indian fervor that has always persisted in the backdrop (owing to cultural and trading ties) penetrated this structure, and revived to a substantial extent, the once-subverted caste system, by the time of forming of the Kandyan Kingdom. Socioeconomic and administrative structures of the Kingdom have been addressed by numerous Westerners who manage to visit it during the course of 18th and 19th centuries. Despite the apparent contiguity to Said's Orientalism (2003), their well-documented affairs best manifest the socio-cultural, economic and administrative structures as well as architectural practices of the Kandyan provinces before 1796, and concretize the ever-existing cultural clash between West and the East.

### Social structure

When the kingdom of Kandy was enjoying a spell of economic and military successes in the mid 17th century, its political, economic and administrative structures were also at their heights. In Kandyan social structure, the cultivator caste (majority) was second only to the Royal caste, to which the King and his immediate family circle belonged. The cultivators, referred to as 'Govigamas' that relegated all service casts to the peripheries of society, was then divided into 'Radala' (chiefs), 'Sitanos' (nobles) and ordinary peasants (Perera, 1991:57).[7] The Royal caste still had genealogical Kshatriya (warrior) origins in the subcontinent, while the majority of numerous service castes (of specialist and ritual services) could be traced back to Southern India; Malabar and Coromandel coasts in particular (Roberts, 1982:1). A faction of cultivators was given high administrative and social positions by King in addition to close relatives of his, while some were appointed as petty officials. It was these highest ranks of administrative and social nature that made Govigamas either Radalas or Sitanos respectively. The Kandyan caste system, analogous to counterparts found in neighboring India, led to very unique social and administrative structures of

its own. It is pertinent to mention that Kandyan Kingdom, as a landlocked and oblivious entity, the only apparent alien influences it received was possibly from the Southern Indian states, South-East Asia, as well as of the Muslim traders (mainly from Southern India [originally from the Middle East], and also South-east Asia) who freely moved from the coast to the interiors. Conversely, the maritime regions were experiencing a rigorous level of globalization in comparison; owing to colonial practices.

### Administrative & economic structures

With relation to administrative structure, king was considered the supreme ruler of the kingdom who had to assure the protection of Sinhalese culture and the state religion of Buddhism. Hence, the appropriation of Lord Buddha's tooth relic symbolized the patronage of the Sangha (the Buddhist order) towards the monarchy, and its acceptance by the populace; both factors vital for the affirmation of legitimacy. Under the king, the administrative structure contained the first Adigar (the prime minister) and also other Adigars (mainly two Chief ministers or Maha Adigars and a 3rd Adigar who was also termed Maha Nilame) exercising great power and influence. They were the principal ministers and the high judiciary of the kingdom (Madugalle, 2005: 28). As Perera elaborates (1991: 47-48), out of the twenty one Kandyan grand divisions, nine smaller provinces (Districs) of the Kingdom's interior were termed 'Rata's, and administered by Rate Mahattayas, while twelve of the more extensive regions that surrounded Ratas, were referred to as 'Disas' or 'Disavanes', administered by Disavas or provincial governors. Although de Silva (2010) suggests that both positions were parallel in the hierarchy, Madugalle (2005) seems to think otherwise. The former also tells us that Muhandirams were appointed as heads of various departments in the King's court and shared more or less the same privileges as Disavas and Rate Mahattayas. On the other hand, there were officials of the palace establishment, revenue administration and chief temple authorities known as 'Nilames' (Madugalle, 2005: 26-31), who were also influential in the Kingdom's affairs. By drawing an analogy with the Western-derived elite structure mentioned at the beginning of the paper, all these positions in Kandyan administrative hierarchy could be discerned as 'political' or the 'governing' elite.

Under Disavas and Rate Mahattayas, were minor officials such as Koralas (in charge of fairly large areas of Korales, consisting of a number of villages), Vidanes (in charge of cultivation and tax collection of a number of villages), and finally, Arachchis (the protectors of the village or traditional village chiefs). Vidanes were in charge of various service cadres belonging to a number of service castes while Arachchis were responsible for each service caste. Apart from such positions, there were Maha Mohottalas and Mohottalas; free-yeomen with their very own land which they

cultivated exempt from taxes payable to King's treasury. As De Silva (2010) tells us, at times, they were made Muhandirams. Furthermore, according to Madugalle (2005: 29), they were also given lower ranks of district administration to be titles as Disawe Mohottalas of certain Disawanes. De Silva (2010) also states that a step above the ordinary cultivator caste peasant was the 'Ralas', who were relatively wealthy and respectable. They are not to be mistaken with the ones to share the same titular name who held certain minor positions as lower district administrations (as Rate Ralas) or in the royal palace establishment (as Talpath Wadana Rala, Muthukuda Rala etc.), as Madugalle points out (2005: 26-33). Rate Adikarams were also a faction who held provincial judiciary positions. On the other hand, various secretary positions in the palace establishment, chief, commander, captain positions in the military establishments and chiefs (assistants) positions of district offices were given the name 'Lekam'. It has to be noted here that all these were minor positions in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy. In this pre-modern context, a single group of people in power controlled the Kingdom's socio-economic aspects as a homogeneous political entity. As they were not rivaled or threatened by alternative groups with political ambitions – holding oppositional social and economic influences – the concept of the 'political class' can not be applied here.

In the eyes of certain Westerners such as Cave (1894: 53-54), such a structure facilitated "…the worst excesses of unscrupulous tyrants…" to flourish over masses, operating on "harsh laws of the Sinhalese kings".

The administrative machinery functioned on a primordial land tenure system referred to as 'Raja Kariya', All the officials of high and low ranks as well as the cultivator caste peasants were provided with portions of land to make their livelihoods from paddy cultivation as the "staple food of the people" as John Davy (1969: 207), a British ambassador to the late 18th century Kandyan court wrote. The sizes of these land allocations were proportional to administrative ranks. The peasants worked these lands and also the ones of their respective lords' while "….a fixed share of their produce had to be yielded to their feudal overlord- generally a land owning chieftain or a Buddhist monastery" (Pakeman, 1970: 127). If this is to be further-elaborated, the power over whole of Kandyan territory's land was vested in the king, and its ownership was efficiently distributed as an ensemble of villages of varying sizes. Gabadagam- villages to supply all requirements of the palace, Viharagam- villages dedicated to Buddhist temples and monasteries, Devalagam- Villages belonging to temples dedicated to various deities, Nindagam- villages which were the property of granters or temporary chiefs, and finally, Vidanagam- Villages under the petty administrative position of Vidanes (Perera, 1991: 50). Hence, a periodic tax referred to as the 'Agrabhagaya' (the good

portion), as De Silva (2010) tells us, was accumulated from all villages except for the first two categories, to be granted to the Royal treasury. The service castes provided their essential services as artisans in the self-sufficient Kandyan regions and were also allocated lands to live on and cultivate. The artisans lived as communities in villages and specialized in the manufacturing of different goods and services. They were allowed to trade their produce to obtain foodstuffs to make their living. The communities in villages belonging to temples were given sufficient rations for the ritual services that they rendered. Such communities according to Roberts (1995), engaged in agriculture as a parallel means of livelihood. The Adigars in most occasions were genealogically connected to the Royal family while other high administrative positions of Disaves, Rate Mahattayas, Muhandirams, Nilames etc. were given to certain Radala groups within the cultivator caste. In relation to the Kandyan system, all such positions that had direct access to political and economic means, which allows the exercising of substantial levels of social influence, could hence be conceived as Kandyan elites; in the Western sense. All positions below these ranks, yet above the one of cultivator peasants – making the liaison between the two groups – rationally become sub-elites or the 'middle class' (in contemporary terms).

**A brief comparison**

However, the most pertinent factor in relation to Kandyan economic frame work is that, taxation was never a rigid practice. De Silva (2010) affirms, "it was never clearly laid-down", and predominantly depended on the nature of harvest as well as the prevailing economic conditions. It was merely a means to sustain a political and economic system, which was formed and delimited by a culture, which was essentially molded on two conspicuous Eastern religions (mainly Buddhism and vestiges of Hinduism). The production sectors of agriculture and manufacturing of goods were never meant to form surplus values but subsistent levels. Although the system superfluously appears to be facile and unjust – as it forced people to remain within their marginalized castes, and allowed certain privileges to the governing elites who seemingly exploited them – it was more or less static in the long run. Henceforth, it shared no underlying similarities with European modernity dictated by capitalism, which always strives on exploitative growth. The Westerners hence discerned Kandyan structures to possess no potential for "further exertion" and confirmed it to be an existence of "easy apathy" (Cordiner, 1807: 105). However, such Western inculcations could be questioned in light of Michel Foucault. He postulates that, in the "panoptic" modern-age (which is the culmination of European-instigated Modernity), the "great confinement" has contained the society through relentless categorization (see Jose: 1998). The origin of systematic categorizations in fact, could be traced back to the 19th century, where colonialism was at

its helm. Conversely, situations analogous to the 18th century Kandy examined here existed throughout the pre-modern world, where people were only subjected to intermittent suppression. However, the level of human suppression has been gradually exacerbated in the name of Modernity over the years. Consequently, by contemporary times, individuals have been directly brought under the "eye of power".

## Possible influences on Kandyan Architecture

By the late 18th century, the building traditions of Kandy, as an intrinsic traditional element of its unique culture, had evolved to a particular state to manifest a unique identity. However, it is pertinent to consider the fact that, by this time, Singhalese architecture in the Kandyan regions had been exposed various outside influences (Lewcock et al., 2002: 20); affirming the primordial nature of globalization. Kandy (Kande in Sinhalese giving the meaning of mountain) was formed as a kingdom during the Portuguese-era as a independent state which opposed Portuguese colonial rule, by a monarchy that fled from Portuguese-held Kotte (in the maritime regions near present day capitol Colombo). Hence, possible architectural influence that they may have carried with them to Kandy from the Portuguese-maritime cannot be negated. The Dutch who gradually took-over from the Portuguese had good diplomatic and trading relations with Kandyan monarchy for decades, before relations deteriorated towards the end of the 18th century. For a certain period, the Dutch acknowledged their subordinate status to the Kandyan king, for example, by facilitating an array of diplomatic missions ranging from offering their services to Kandyan religious missions to South East-Asia to paying of annual stipends of gratitude etc. Owing to these relations, the influence of Dutch architecture that was well-established in the maritime, on its Kandyan counterpart is rationally inevitable. On the other hand, Muslims who had engaged in trading activities for centuries in Ceylon may be another factor of possible influence on Kandyan architecture. They were blockaded after the Portuguese seized the island's coastal line and were consequently compensated by the Kandyan King Senarath I by settling them down (mainly in the Eastern regions of the country) as well as allowing them to conduct commercial activities with Kandyan regions. However, the bulk of such alien influences were directly dealt with by the Kandyan state itself, and not by the masses. Hence, the possible alien architectural traditions to have appropriated could be deductively attributed to Kandyan grand design tradition; culturally delimited to Royal and religious edifices. The incongruous factor about Kandyan Kingdom was that the buildings of even its elites and sub-elites were put in contiguity to those of the masses via employing vernacular tradition. Yet, the masses were further-relegated to primitive vernacular forms whilst the elite and sub-elite, especially the former, were allowed by the King himself, to appropriate certain elements of the jealously-guarded Kandyan grand design tradition.[8] Henceforth, even a trickle-down effect of grand design traditions to the non-elite masses through emulation was annihilated. From an ensemble of evidence adduced from Western European situations such as Britain and France in the modern era, where the aristocrats and bourgeoisie (elites and sub-elites of society) as well as the Royals were franchised to utilize grand design tradition at their free will as Evans (1993: 55-91) illustrates, the medieval Kandyan situation is a clear contrast. The flexibility of the Western situation could be postulated to capitalist and egoistic thinking that has overshadowed Western cultures for half a millennium. The geocentricism spawned in the Modern-era West will be elaborated later in the paper.

Moreover, the Kingdom from its humble beginnings had always maintained cultural and commercial ties with the Southern Indian states that did not diminish even after becoming landlocked. Although scholarly speculations concurrently prevail, and valid analogies between cultural and high cultural architectural ties of Kandy and the Southern Indian states (Kerala in particular) have been drawn in the Sri Lankan architectural rhetoric, this has never been sufficiently looked into. However, the close relations that existed between the Kandyan royal blood lines and also of the aristocracy with Southern India provide backing to such speculations.

## Factors Determining the House Form

Rapoport (1969) adduces valid examples from around the globe, from different periods in human history, to affirm culture to be the foremost factor in molding the built form, while all other alternative factors, especially the environment, becomes secondary. His canon could be logically attributed as being ideologically-neutral (as it does not advocate merely a Western point of view on the discourse), as the sited examples not only come from the Western world, but also from all over the East and elsewhere. With relation to the Kandyan situation, with the absence of other possible alternative determiners affecting the built form such as economy, defense etc., the second most conspicuous factor could be envisaged as its climate. Why such factors did not become seminal determiners will be addressed later on.

### Cultural Factors

Beliefs

A clear analogy could be drawn between Kandyan built form and Rapoport's propagation, as it is culture in general terms, was predominantly based on the philosophical doctrine of Buddhism as well as for other sets of believes more closely associated to ever-present influence of Hinduism. These beliefs were carried down from generation to generation through tradition, and varied from one cultural group to an-

other. As Nimal De Silva validly postulates, "The traditional house that has existed in Sri Lanka for more than two thousand years was an outcome of a strong philosophy of Buddhistic life - i.e. the simplicity and the impermanent nature of life. The house was part and parcel of nature, the materials were borrowed from the nature and returned to the nature…"

"…The traditional concept was to live in and around the open areas of the house and not within the enclosed compartments of the house and it was the most suitable solution for Sri Lankan climatic conditions.

A house built in this nature, needs regular maintenance and it was continuously embodied in the customs. There are cultural festivals at regular intervals such as New Year, Vesak [celebrated the birth, enlightenment and passing of Lord Buddha], Sudde Poya (Esala) [a full moon day celebrating a certain episode in Buddha's life], etc. The maintenance of the shelter by applying cow dung on the floor and walls, sometimes white washing, thatching the roof, cleaning the house etc., were aimed for the festivals, hence the house was well-maintained" (De Silva, 1990: 16). (Explanations within parenthesis are by the author).

On the other hand, the customs and beliefs pertaining to formation of the dwelling were contained in the ancient medieval treatise of 'Mayamatha', which manifests the explicit Indian influence on the discourse. The scientific validity (in terms of Western science) of Mayamatha has been a factor which has been continuously explored by the academia. It overtly laid down beliefs influencing the site selection, design and construction of a house, treating the house metaphorically as a microcosm of the cosmos.

chakra" and "Pada-Bedum-Chakra" – diagrams found in Mayamatha – used to achieve a successful outcome. Placing of the main door was a vital task in the design process as it had to be oriented towards the North, South or East as per the "Bhoominage" (the earth serpent) of the site. If the main door was at the head of the Bhoominage- it was to bring death to the chief occupant of the house, if placed at the tail- the wealth of the occupants to be diminished or crops destroyed and if placed on the stomach; prosperity to prevail with wealth, health and better harvest. As per the treatise, forms such as circles, triangles were jettisoned and the ideal forms for the plan were either square or rectangle. Moreover, parts jutting out were perceived to be inauspicious.

The suitable square and rectangular plans were then to be divided into seven vertical and horizontal squares known as "pada". The courtyard of the house was essentially to be placed within the centre square. In terms of building's placement, special measures also had to be taken pertaining to Mayamatha, which compelled the site to be classified into four divisions. The outer-most section was declared as "Perethapada" (area of spirits), the first inner, "Manushayapada" (area of human beings), the second inner, "Devapada" (area of gods) and finally, the innermost centre as "Brahmapada" (area of Brahma). Prethapada and Brahmapada were considered to be unsuitable for locating a building while Manushyapada and devapada were the most ideal. The rules pertaining to construction were mainly centered on the time factor; time to commence work, placing the first foundation stone, placing the main doorway etc. Auspicious times were even applied to planting of vegetation on site. Maya-
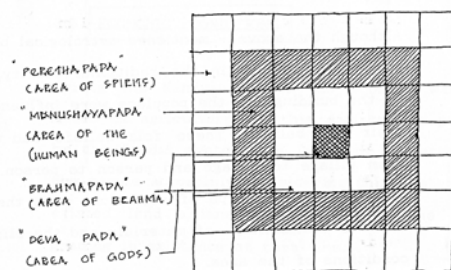


(a) Pertaining to planning of the house
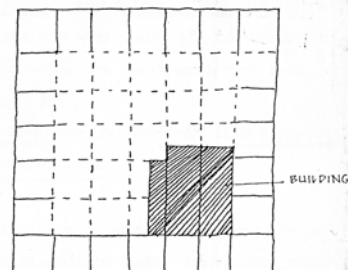
(b) placing building on site

**Figure 2: Pada-Bedum-Chakra:**

Source: Perera, 1991

With relation to site selection, the features in the site as well as the nature of environment was considered while shape, terrain, existing vegetation, soil conditions, living organisms and its previous uses were absolute determining factors. The soil in particular, was tested for compaction, porosity, color, smell and taste and matched with the clear classifications given in the treatise. In the design process, zoning and orientation was the most vital and referred to as "Bhoomi-nage-

matha further laid down guide line for the preparation of timber for construction; for example the distribution and transfer of loads when placing timber members in the roof etc. (Perera, 1991:53). Time for laying the foundation stone was carried out by astrologers to suit the horoscopes of the main occupant and his wife. Enshrinement of auspicious objects was always made as a ritual with blessings of religion as well as gods and deities of belief. These rituals brought in a

spiritual element to new dwellings, with confidence to the patrons (De Silva, 1990: 16). Such rigorous limitations imposed by religious-imparted cultural beliefs manifests underlying measures taken to safeguard the environment, and efficiently provide users the most ideal environment to dwell in, whenever construction took place. This is completely contrary to the Western position where no such limitations existed; to enable construction activities to take place more freely.

### Family life

Kandyan family life was manipulated by various traditions imposed by a culture that seminally imbued Buddhist philosophies, with occasional modifications caused to it by Hindu influence. Kandyan society was essentially one of male-dominance. With relation to the family structure, men were assumed to be the sole-providers of the family unit, while women were more or less relegated to caring for children and running of the household (Davy, 1969: 207). This cultural norm was valid for the whole of society, irrespective of a family's position in the social hierarchy. The essential characteristic of the traditional Singhalese dwelling found in these parts was their openness, owing to the lack of hierarchical order, and family-life not being overtly separated from visitors. Women of the household eventually slept in one corner of the open verandah of the dwelling, while men in another corner (when there was no clear division of rooms). No special attempts were made to segregate or screen off women from the resident men, and especially from the visiting men who are outside the immediate family circle. When there were rooms, women slept inside while men slept in the open. The concept of privacy in the modern sense was unknown to the Singhalese; in colloquial Singhalese for instance, there is no word which connotes the meaning of privacy. Kandyan life style's element of inter-family relationships was kept to a minimal.

These rather unique characteristics in terms of intra-family relationships are thought to have derived from Theravada- Buddhist teaching of rejecting the hierarchical structuring in the view of social or family life. Contrary to sub-elite dwellings that manifested the above arrangements, elite dwellings always consisted of multiple rooms, and in some occasions, multiple court yards surrounded by their own sets of rooms (Lewcock et al, 2002: 20-21). This affirms that the Kandyan elite culture was more of a hybrid between Theravada Buddhist and Hindu cultural influences, which eventually manifested itself via elite domestic architecture. The Kandyan royal cultural contiguity to Hindu South India being aped by the elites as well as their very own South Indian origins (the Brahmin genealogy of a majority of Kandyan aristocracy could be traced back to South India) that De Silva (2010) affirms, could have possibly been the causes of this state.

When Buddhism merely influenced the lifestyle promoting austerity and equality without hierarchical order in the dwelling form, the Hindu influence advocated somewhat the contrary. The Kandyan house form, especially of the elites, and sub-elite to a modest extent, hence, was an ambivalent edifice; placed in a liminal state of cultural hybridity.

### Climate

Although Sri Lanka is a small island, it possesses distinct climatic variations, caused by the unique topography, which forms a centrally-located hill-country, surrounded by a flat low country. Consequently, the island could be divided into climatic regions pertaining to the rainfall patterns, and its Central, Western, South-Western parts come under the wet zone, which has a high rainfall and subjected to the South-West monsoon (De Silva, 1990: 17). Kandyan provinces mainly situated in the central parts hence, fall within the wet zone and the mountainous central topography with surrounding thick jungles had constituted it as impenetrable in the eyes of its Western colonizers. Hence, defense was logically omitted from the ensemble of factors that made up the Kandyan built form.

The roof was a conspicuous element in Kandyan climatic condition, which was given due emphasis. Its design with a steep slope provided protection from rain by enabling water to flow off swiftly. The insulation capacity of covering materials and the breathing nature of the roof provided protection from heat. Moreover, the low wall-plate height and long eves protected the walls from the hot sun and rain while cutting down the glare reflected from cloudy skies. The gap between wall and roof provided proper ventilation, and defused light into the room, while the high plinths ensured that the outside breezes entered the houses through fenestrations. The construction materials for walls were always high in insulation capacity. The internal and external verandahs with eaves and small fenestrations of houses kept the hot sun away, keeping the interiors cool and comfortable. The high plinths and impermeable nature of clay used for construction prevented the rising of dampness during rainy days. All materials were accumulated from the locality and simple technology was epitomized to put together edifices which were essentially "low cost" shelters (De Silva, 1990: 16).

## Sub-elite and Elite Dwelling

### Sub-elite House: The generic form

The earliest account of private domestic architecture of the Kandyan regions could be found in the writings of various European diplomats as well as its political prisoners. Robert Knox (in Lewcock et al., 2002: 19),

an Englishman kept a prisoner who lived amongst the Kandyan Singhalese peasants in the 17th century, writes, "Their houses are small, low, thatched cottages…." he says, "The poorest sort have not above one room in their houses, few above two…". Here, it is rational to perceive that, he is referring to vernacular forms utilized by the masses, pertaining to primordial folk design traditions of the Sinhalese. As John Davy (1969: 161), a British ambassador to Kandy during the late 18th century describes, "Their best houses, those of the chiefs, …of mud with tiled roofs, raised on a low terrace, and always of a single storey, built in the form of hollow squares; presenting externally a dead wall, and internally bordering the open area is a verandah, with which the side-rooms communicate by narrow doors".

According to Ananda Coomaraswamy (in Lewcock et al., 2002: 20), a typical Singhalese rural house (yeoman's house) was a "simple framed, one-storied, timber and mud walled building with a thatched roof. It contained a square court yard open to sky, surrounded by an internal verandah which was used for all the activities of living and working; off this "the poorest house… had but one room, few more than two or three…."

Although this description tallies with the ones of foreigners made centuries ahead of him, Coomaraswamy's addressing of it as "yeoman's house" is problematic. Perhaps, he may have appropriated the term by making an analogy with the term's connotation in England; a farmer who cultivates his own land, who is a lesser freeholder with political rights below the landed-gentry. However, this analogy makes sense in terms of the Kandyan sub-elite stratum; the free farmers (Maha Mohottala, Mohottala etc.) who may or may not have enjoyed administrative positions. However, his generic house form which he refers to as the 'Singhalese rural house' or the 'Yeoman's house', clearly does not apply to the more elaborate house



**Figure 3:Coomaraswamy's generic Kandyan house form**
Source: Lewcock et al., 2002.

forms of Kandyan elites. Squares and rectangles were the desired plan forms of these houses while the overall form was reduced to cuboids. They were always built on raised platforms termed "pila" above ground level. The outside area beyond and surrounding the Pila was referred to as "veli-midula" (sand or gravel court) and was always kept open free from vegetation; mostly paved by sand or gravel. This was done to prevent animals such as serpents entering the house from surrounding jungle.

The open interiors were demarcated by four blank walls with one or two doors placed at the opposite ends of the plan while windows found seldom use. The open spaces surrounding the central courtyard were generally austere, well-lit and airy. The living area was termed "Mahamaduwa" while the dining cum domestic space was given the name "Heenmaduwa" respectively (Perera, 1990:60). The rooms were always dark and gloomy in the absence of openings to outside. In Lewcock et al's (2002) view, the most important of these rooms was that used as a dark room for child birth. At other times it served to house the chests in which cloths were stored. Most importantly, rooms served as the sleeping quarters of women during the night when men always slept in Mahamaduwa. Within the internal space of the house, four or six stone pillars supported the "atuwa" or rice bins (large wooden chests). Occasionally the rice bins were separate structures outside the house in which case they were usually constructed, like the house, of a timber frame-work with in-filling walls of wattle-and-daub (Lewcock et al, 2002: 20). The size of these bins was a measure of the wealth of households and thus acted the role of a symbol of prosperity.

The building tradition utilized for these dwellings was a synthesis of grand and folk design traditions while the balance tilted more towards the latter. Folk tradition Vernacular was more explicit as all materials were obtained from the surrounding environment and hence, manifested a sense of environmental sustainability. The houses were crudely built and possessed simple wattle-and-daub (jungle timber frame filled with clay) walls while structural members of the usually-thatched roofs was of jungle timber. Straw was the main material of thatch in paddy-producing areas of the island (which included the hill country), and straw was laid on the timber frame work as either bundles or packed forms of approximately 200mm thicknesses. Applying a new top layer was carried out, following every harvest. However, roofs of most of the surviving examples have later been covered with clay half round tiles. The particular type of local clay used for the wattle-and-daub construction is referred to in Sinhalese as "Makulu Mati", and gave walls a whitish finish once completed; as lime plastering and white washing with lime were prominent traits of Kandyan grand design tradition. Most of the surviving houses have also been possibly lime plastered and lime washed at later periods. Grand design tradition made
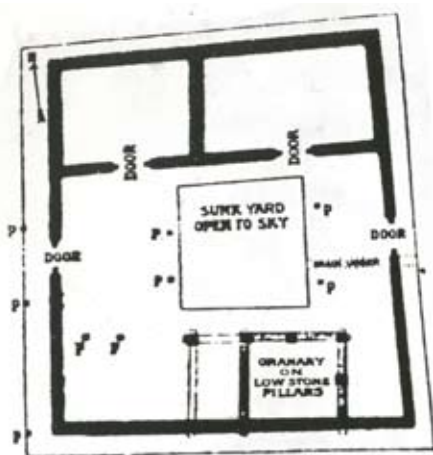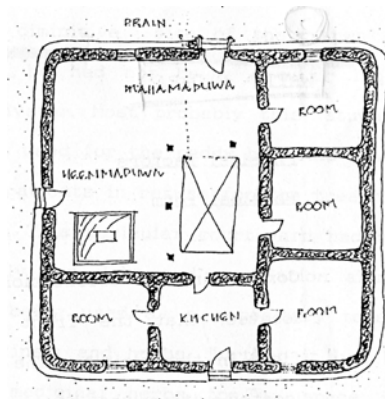
rare appearances in these houses only in terms of the carpentry work. Door frames and sashes were mostly carved with traditional Sinhalese motifs while occasionally; ends of roof timber members (rafters) also manifested such adornment. Complicated door hinging and locking mechanisms are also a vital part of the Kandyan carpenter's repertoire.

Addressing of Kandyan dwellings of this generic type also known in Sinhalese as 'Hatara-andi-gedara' has always been a facile affair, where scholars in the field have continuously failed to conceive the major underlying difference between Kandyan elitism and sub-elitism, which could be manifested through their distinct domestic architectural practices. Hence, the above-addressed generic dwelling form could be directly attributed to the Kandyan sub-elite. When they rose to higher offices to become elites, they appropriated elite dwelling traditions. Hence, it could be avowed that, in such an austere milieu such as the Kandyan provinces, the domestic building perhaps, was the only means that the two stratums of the structure could make distinctive identities for themselves. Only a handful of such sub-elite houses have survived the journey through time to the present-day in their purest and original forms, as most have been destroyed by haphazard-alterations or excessive post-independent period infrastructural development projects.

This best affirms the non-picturesque and façade-less nature of the austere Kandyan dwelling form.

## Extended versions

The generic and simple form was occasionally amalgamated to form extended houses; prompted by the needs of extended families. The extensions could be carried out in any one of its four sides according to the situation in hand. At times, the extension was done with no court yard and light and ventilation was facilitated by doors and windows open to outside (Perera, 1990: 62). The roof extensions were also improvised according to the situation. It appears that there were no rules pertaining to these extensions. However, whether these extensions were carried out during the Kandyan period itself is ambiguous.

### Walauwe: manor houses of the elite

The modifications to the generic dwelling form occurred, retaining its basic constituents, when the house belonged to someone of more political and economic influence; an elite. As Robert Knox



**Figure 4: Hatara-andi-gedara at Matale called Wattegedara, belonging to a family line of petty officials or sub-elites; the last to occupy it being an Arachchi Mahattaya.**

Source (the Plan): Perera, 1991.

As Pallasma (2005; 63) suggests, the experience of home is structures by distinct activities such as cooking, eating, socializing, reading, storing, sleeping, intimate acts etc., and not by visual elements. "A building is encountered; it is approached, confronted, related to one's body, moved through, utilised as a condition for other things. Architecture initiates, directs and organizes behavior and movement. A building is not an end in itself; it frames articulates, structures, gives significance, relates, separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits. Consequently, basic architectural experiences have a verb form rather than being nouns. Authentic architectural experiences consist then, for instance, of approaching or confronting a building, rather than formal apprehension of a façade…."

(Lewcock et al., 2002: 19) postulates, "The great people have handsome and commodious houses. They have commonly two buildings one opposite to the other, joint together on each side by a wall, which makes a square court-yard in the middle."

The beginning of this statement provides an ample idea about the bigger scale of elite houses in comparison, while the latter part explains an alternative way court yards were formed (rather than the common practice of forming a court yard by placing covered usable spaces around a central opening as in the examples studied), which is also affirmed by De Silva (1990, 2010). As Knox (in Lewcock et al., 2002: 19) further elaborates, "The houses of great persons only

**Figure 5: An extended sub-elite house from Manikdiwela near Kadugannawa in Kandy.**
*The plan clearly illustrates the generic form and the new addition.*

Source: Lewcocke, 2002

differed from those of lessen men by having more rooms and court–yards, better timber for the beam-ends, and verandah pillared, and their brackets well carved….."

The number of rooms was increased in these bigger houses while more courtyards were utilized to supply light and ventilation to the deep interiors. The arrangement was not always symmetrical and accommodated respective site situations. Out-houses were added to accommodate extended functions of the elite life style, which was not to be seen in the ones of the sub-elite to accommodate judgment halls (commonly seen in the houses of Disavas and Rate Mahattayas), larger kitchens, extra granaries (occasionally two storied), stables for horses, cattle sheds etc. According to De Silva (2010) elite houses illustrated the same materiality as the previously-addressed sub-elites counterparts, while some refinements were made under special privileges granted by the King; owing to outstanding services rendered to the Kingdom by such elites. Tiled roofs, lime plastered - lime washed walls, two-storey constructions and especially, refined carpentry work, which were traits of Kandyan grand design tradition evident in these edifices. As per Knox's (1966) affirmation, the roof structures were assembled with stronger and more valuable timbers. The members were always uniformly finished while beam ends and pillar brackets were carved with traditional Sinhalese motifs. The doors always had thick frames while both solid door and window sashes were elaborately carved. Iron-mongery was utilized commonly in fenestrations and was adorned with Sinhalese motifs. Even the function of building of such a Walauwe (manor house) itself had to be carried out with king's permission only as De Silva (2010) tells us, which affirms its status as the most ultimate symbolic manifestation of elitism in Kandyan society.

The most seminal observation which could be made about these houses is that the generic form which was earlier addressed, found repetitive use to arrive at more complex buildings. Hence, it could be rationally suggested that the number of times the repetition recurred was proportional to the prestige, wealth and thus, socio-political influence of the patron. This process of recurring repetition could also be attributed to nature, where such repetitions are explicit in

its numerous structures. Hence, in a way, such dwellings were symbolic vestiges of the totality of Mother Nature. Moreover, all above postulations about such dwellings brings to the fore, the overarching influence on nature on physical forms. The austere lifestyles of inhabitants in direct contiguity to nature were facilitated through these forms. Houses were derived from nature and eventually returned to it, safeguarding its posterity. The built environments facilitated the entertaining of senses simultaneously and equally; not letting any single one dominate over others. "It is evident that the architecture of traditional cultures is also essentially connected with the tacit wisdom of the body, instead of being visually and conceptually dominated. Construction in traditional cultures is guided by the body in the same way that a bird shapes its nest by movements of its body. Indigenous clay and mud architecture in various parts of the world seem to be born of the muscular and haptic senses more than the eye" (Pallasmaa, 2005: 26).

Consequently, nothing ostentatious was allowed, making original Kandyan houses austere, but picturesque. The picturesque that predominantly caters to the eye, eventually found its way into Kandyan architecture via gradual Western influence the kingdom received. In his seminal examination of the historical using of senses, Pallasmaa (2005; 25) affirms that, "The gradual growing hegemony of the eye seems to be parallel with the development of western ego-consciousness and the gradually increasing separation of the self and the world; vision separates us from the world whereas the other senses unite us with it".

He further elaborates that, "We can identify the transition of indigenous construction from the haptic realm into the control of vision as a loss of plasticity and intimacy, and of the sense of fusion characteristic in the setting of indigenous cultures" (Pallasmaa, 2005: 26). This in deed is evident in the modified sub-elite and elite houses of the Kandyan provinces.

After all,

"Western architectural theory since Leon Batista Alberti has been primarily engaged with questions of visual perception, harmony and proportion" (Pallasmaa, 2005: 26).

**Figure 6 : Maduwanwela Walauwe**

An elite Manor House at Ambilipitiya, was constructed in approx 1725 by Maduwanwala Maha Disave. This is one of the very few remaining manor houses which clearly manifest the repetitive use of the generic plan form, despite showing somewhat colonial influence in architectural features and detailing. Outward facing verandahs, multiple-use of courtyards, number of out-houses serving various functions (interconnected with covered walk ways) and one of the blocks consisting of two stories are its most conspicuous features. Certain modifications have been carried out to the manor house over the epochs.  Some of the architectural features and detailing such as the decorated mosaic floors and intricate carpentry work (carved door window frames and sashes, trellis work, carved timber columns and roof members) are the most conspicuous colonial features.

Source (the Plan): Lewcock, 2002

The term 'walauwe' in Sinhalese carries the connotation for 'aristocratic dwelling' or 'manor house', was jealously-guarded during the Kandyan period. This not only connoted the dwellings of aristocrats, it was also used to identify the houses of high government officials who were classified under elite ranks earlier (who may or not be aristocrats). However, in certain parts of Kandyan regions according to De Silva (2010), even the houses of sub-elites (Koralas especially), later appropriated the term liberally.

## A Manifestation of Hybridity

After the fall of Kandyan kingdom in 1815 (when it was ceded to the British colonial power), the term Walauwe's connotation became evermore prolific. Following the failed Kandyan independence struggle of 1818 led by Kandyan chiefs, the primordial privileges enjoyed by them  (especially, the elite ranks) were abolished by the British, relegating them to an oblivious state. After the abolition of Rajakariya (land tenure system) by Colebrook commission in 1833, the Kandyan regions of Ceylon, just as the maritime, were gradually absorbed into the world capitalist mechanism of the British Empire, especially through the plantation industry soon to be introduced. This finally opened up the Kandyan regions to the onslaught of globalization at a time it was experiencing a quantum leap via industrialization and the culmination of European colonialism. With the jettisoning of feudalism and land tenure system, the Kandyan social structure gradually collapsed and the gulf between elites, sub elites and masses was largely reduced. The most pertinent factor here was that, after 1833, the masses were given the franchise to engage in whatever profession they desired, irrespective of caste, and similarly, the laws that suppressed their building traditions were also lifted. The best example that could be adduced to illustrate this point is the sub-elite domestic rubric that

came into existence parallel to these developments, commonly referred to as the "intermediate" type. The sub-elite dwellings grew in scale and size, while retaining the basic form of the generic version, and adopted certain elements from Dutch period domestic buildings and possibly, Phase-1 of British domestic counterparts, which were already well-received by the maritime populace of that time. Consequently, more rooms for more diversified functions (clearly-demarcated spaces for different functions) were accommodated in the planning of these dwellings with the gradual appropriation of certain Western cultural norms into Kandyan Sinhalese culture. Privacy, which has always been a conspicuous factor in the ego-centric modern Western culture finally penetrated Kandyan domestic form through the houses of their sub-elites in such a manner. Furthermore, material practices also began to change with the in-

corporation of brick masonry for walls and columns which were plastered and white washed. Some architectural features such as round columns with square shaped bases and heads as well as masonry arches were also appropriated from hybrid maritime domestic versions along with carpentry details such as paneled door-window sashes and fluted roof timber members. The use of ironmongery also made an appearance for the first time in sub-elite dwellings. All such appropriated features best illustrate the liminality of the Kandyan sub-elite in a time of pioneering exposure of unprecedented nature, to Western globalization forces. It is noteworthy that only a faction of the Kandyan society of prior eras, who posed as elites, could enjoy such luxuries; analogous to pre-modern Western situations. However, the time-lag between the two diverse realms is almost half a millennia.



**Figure 7: Atipola  Walauwe**

Built by a Korale Mahattaya, Atipola Walauwe is an "Intermediate type" house that belongs to a family line of petty Kandyan officials (sub-elite) from Matale. Note the term Wallauwe being used despite the owners being sub-elites. Although this somewhat resembles the generic plan form of a Hatara-andi-gedara, overt room divisions of interior as well as the increase in scale makes it distinctive. Owing to excessive use of fenestration all round the house, the internal courtyard lost its functional use, and was merely an attempt to continue a primordial building tradition. The most distinct feature is the masonry colonnaded front-facing verandah, which places it in contiguity with the parallel maritime colonial dwelling. These houses could be conceived as a synthesis of the Kandyan generic form and maritime colonial dwelling.

Source (the Plan) Perera, 1991

The acts of capitalism and consumerism spawned by the British-introduced plantation economy to the Kandyan regions by the mid 19th century lead to the fleeting proliferation of westernized house forms of local elites and sub-elites. Influences of Western colonial building traditions even affected bulk of the existing dwellings from the previous centuries, and altered their outlook beyond original recognition. Only a handful has survived and retained their original identity. Until this point in time, the laid-back cultural attitudes of the Sinhalese in general had been conceived by Westerners as mere "ignorance of comfortable living" (Cave,1894: 53).

Despite the overarching European colonial influence that subverts factional Sinhalese architectural trends, as in examples illustrated above, such dwell-

ing forms were compatible with the ever-hybridizing lifestyles of the 19th Century Kandyan elites. These best-manifested the proliferating Western-hold, which was at the time, being concretized in the Kandyan provinces. In other words, what the Portuguese and Dutch achieved socio-culturally and architecturally in the maritime they ruled, had finally crept into Kandyan provinces. On the contrary, largely-unaffected by such Western forces, the proletarian rural masses kept on living in their primitive vernacular forms, well into the neo-liberal economic reforms that the independent nation state of Sri Lanka underwent in 1977 (Jayawardene.1984: 92)

Menin and Samuel (2003) in their phenomenological exploration of the works of Le Corbusier and Alvar Alto (considered to be two of the most prominent

**Figure 8 : Ekneligoda Walauwe**

An elite Manor House at Ekneligoda in Rathnapura. Originally built in the 18th Ct., the house of Ekneligoda Disawe, has undergone extensive modifications during the 19th century British colonial period. This house is the ideal example for the Kandyan elite appropriation of the Maritime elite domestic model. The plan form illustrates typical characteristics of a Dutch colonial dwelling than a traditional manor house, the most unique features being the front double verandah, the rear and side verandahs. However, the prominence given to the court yard is noteworthy. Architectural features such as masonry colonnades illustrate strong colonial Dutch influence. Furthermore, door-window detailing as well as the carpentry work (such as paneled door and glazed window sashes, glazed half-round fanlight arches over fenestrations, rear and side verandah columns, verandah fences around the house, rear storage attics) also places the building in contiguity to its maritime counterparts from the same period.

Source: Lewcock, 2002

figures of 20th century European-instigated rubric of Modern architecture), reveal the underlying inspirations of nature in their works. The sterile architecture of historicism and capitalist pretension in the previous centuries prompted them to inveigle their respective approaches (which appear to be dissimilar from the surface, but possess the same underlying grounds) to be more humanistic, closely-associated with the patterns and forces of mother nature. Hence, this was an attempt to unite the human spirit with nature; the place where it all began. The repetitive patterns and accommodating trends of nature are thus, explicit in their affluent portfolios of work. It could be logically conceived that these very trends were overtly apparent in the austere Kandyan elite and sub-elite dwellings (the original ones), centuries before them.

## Conclusion

The Western-derived structural distinction between 'elite' and 'sub-elite' could be applied to the medieval Kandyan situation, and Kandyan elite and sub-elite dwellings respectively, could be adduced as the most apposite examples to overtly manifest the two unique conditions.

The politically and socially influential positions of highest caliber identified by this paper in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy could be conceived as the ones of Kandyan elites. As an unrivalled and homogeneous political entity, this rather small group could be further identified as the 'governing elite' in the absence of a 'political class'. The more numerous and less influential lower administrative positions

discussed in the paper, thus become the Kandyan sub-elite. The generic house form termed the 'Hatara-andi-ge' was therefore, delimited to the sub-elite while the elite Walauwe was a repetition of this basic block. The recurrence of the basic block was proportional to the political and social influence of the patron. The former domestic type mainly utilized vernacular tradition in its making while employing vestiges of grand design tradition. The latter in comparison, used the same equation although tilting more towards grand design tradition. Even the term Walauwe was a jealously guarded affair. Hatara-andi-ge was an articulation of a Sinhalese culture that imbued Theravada Buddhist teachings, while Walauwe was a hybrid cultural manifestation between Buddhism and Hinduism. However, the boundary between Kandyan elite and sub-elite dwelling was blurred after 1796, as the maritime colonial influence of modernity crept into the Kandyan provinces. Thus, the Western forces of globalization gradually took hold and altered these house forms beyond original recognition via European-introduced cultural and thus architectural practices.

On the other hand, what underlie Eastern and Western elitisms could be conceived as binary oppositions. Eastern elitism sprung up in cultures, analogous in many ways to the medieval Kandyan condition. With the influences of Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism (in this case), co-existence with the environment was always exalted. Henceforth, the resultant socio-political structures were both repressive and unproductive in the Western sense. With laws clearly demarcating and concretizing the immutabilities of elite and sub-elite stratums that enjoyed limited privileges, a potential for the contingent to proliferate in numbers was jettisoned. Most prominently, the fact that the environment would not be subverted but sustained was ensured. Western culture, conversely, inveigled from such shackles from the 15th century, and instigated an ego-centric modernity and thus the modern-era, that has recurrently dwelled on exploitative capitalism. Capitalist practices have not only redefined Western elitism via lifting of religious and thus cultural barriers, it has furthermore dictated terms for elitism and sub-elitism in the subordinate world. Consequently, elitism and sub-elitism were constructed as attainable stratums for the masses. The overall result of this process has lead to gradual exploitation and thus, destruction of the natural environment, which has reached catastrophic levels by contemporary times. On the other hand, as the direct result of the race to attain such ambitions, human conflicts exacerbated, and have reached an unprecedented climax by today. Moreover, all such processes have now backfired on the capitalist system itself, making one question of it future continuity.

Although the medieval Kandyan social structure is commonly-perceived to be one governed by repressive cultural rules and norms, its relative level of free-

dom could be affirmed analogous with the situation of pre-modern Europe. Hence, the sense of austerity evident in Eastern cultures, which is articulated via its vernacular-driven architecture (despite being considered primitive in the Western sense), possess great sensitivity to nature and to humanity in the long run. However, such conditions are no longer in existence, owing to their replacement by precarious western-led capitalist forces of the modern era that infiltrated these cultures via colonialism. The intermediate type Kandyan dwelling of the sub-elite along with the modified elite manor house hence, become ideal models to manifest the succumbing of a once-solitary Eastern society to a capitalist and globalized system. Furthermore, they also manifest the state of hybridity of a colonized population.

The pre-modern Kandyan generic house form conversely, articulates not only its contiguity to nature, but also phenomenological affinity as underlying factors. Catering to the picturesque that is based on the modern-era trends of retinal imagery and Cartesian idealism is neglected here.

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**End Notes**

[1] Furthermore, the earliest known usage of the term 'elite' in the English language could be traced back to the Oxford English Dictionary of 1823, at which time it was already applied to various social groups, establishing the above elucidation.

[2] Moreover, Horton provides his valuable opinion regarding the power dimension associated with elitism, as well as their volume in society.

[3] This class undergoes changes in its membership over a period of time, ordinarily by the recruitment of new individual members from the lower strata of society, sometimes by the incorporation of new social groups. Occasionally these rather-established elite are replaced completely by a 'counter elite', in situations such as revolutions, in a process referred to as the 'circulation of elites'.

[4] The treaty was to pledge the support of the Dutch to Kingdom of Kandy to overthrow the Portuguese and in return a number of important ports around the country will be opened up to the Dutch for their trading activities. It further explained that the Singhalese king should be regarded and respected as the supreme ruler of the island by the Dutch while they should hand over all the other ports and regions acquired by them from the previous colonizer. The intention behind the granting a number of sea-ports to the Dutch was to let them recover their expenses incurred at the war against the Portuguese and allow them get established in the trade-scene of the country.

[5] During this crucial period, just prior to the British arrival Dutch had blockaded Kandy and secured more territory including all its sea ports and trading privileges. They were determined to reap as much harvest from the lucrative cinnamon trade and other cultivations of pepper, coffee and spices, not to mention the profitable trade of elephants.

[6] "A related case is of more ominous significance. Consider the emergence of the feudal type of landlordism in the kingdom of the Franks during the sixth and seventh centuries. This was certainly a most important event that shaped the structure of society for many ages and also influenced conditions of production, wants and technology included. But its simplest explanation is to be found in the function of military leadership previously filled by the families and individuals who (retaining the function however) became feudal landlords after the definitive conquest of the new territory.": This is in deed what took place in the Lankan frontier, when Indians migrated from Northern parts of India two and a half millennia ago.

[7] It has to be noted here that even the cultivator (Govigama) cast itself, has other sub casts within it such as Bathgama etc.

[8] In the field of world-architecture, Amos Rapoport identifies the difference between the 'grand design tradition' and 'folk tradition' based on other similar scholarly classifications. He claims that the monument-buildings belong to the grand design tradition and are built to impress either the populace with the power of the patron, or the peer group of designers and cognoscenti with the cleverness of the designer and good taste of the patron (Rapoport, 1969: 2).

[9] A number of British missions visited Kingdom of Kandy both before and after their conquest of the coastal areas ruled by the Dutch in 1796. The intentions behind these visits were the fact that British wanted to arrange some form of a treaty with the Singhalese king, although this never became a reality. Referring to reports and descriptions by some of these foreigners to visit Kandy is the best way of understanding of what Kandyan elite domestic architecture was like at the time (Mills, 1964: 1-7).

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## The Role Of Tropical Modernism In Domestic Architecture Of Post-Colonial Sri Lanka



Located on a rather peaceful corner plot in Alfred House Gardens of Colombo 3, the residence of Maurice Perera and his wife Malkanthi, has successfully stood the test of time for almost fifty years since its completion in 1965. Archt Ulrik Plesner the young Danish architect with whom they were closely acquainted and whose design of the Sansoni residence where the Architect resided at the time fascinated them greatly, was the obvious choice when the Pereras decided to build their Colombo residence.

**Text and Photography by: Nishan Rasanga Wijetunge**

The house occupies a 10 perch (2722 sq ft) foot print on a 15 perch block and illustrates an efficient and functional plan form. As one enters from the main access road which ends with this dead-end property, a small entrance foyer acts as a welcoming space via a latticed door. Adjacent to this, is a single car port which opens up to the street. From the low-ceilinged foyer of claustrophobic feel, a narrow passage runs down to the more spacious entity beyond. At the end of this passage, an elongated court yard covered with pergolas comes into view on the left hand-side; creating a phototrophic sensation to the visitor passing the dark passage threshold. The shallow reflective pool covering most of the court yard provides evaporative cooling to adjoining living space, making it comfortable during day time. The selective plant varieties, paving pebbles, the clay sculptures, all submerged in the filtered light from above, are real visual treats of this court yard. The tall double height volume of the living has been given a rectangular plan form and accommodates a practical built-in sofa and a few chairs that could be moved around as necessary. At the other end of this living space is a wide door-window which invites the exterior garden into the house. A small intermediate dining area separates the living from the kitchen-pantry area, which is hidden away at the back. The service areas also open up to the same rear garden which extends the entire width of the plot.

A flight of steps minus a hand rail running up from one of the longer sides of the rectangular living space creates access to the upper floor master bedroom. The gable roof above, which extends beyond to cover the living room below encloses this attic-like room from above. According to Perera, the architect had been deeply inspired by the attic spaces in the Kandyan manor houses which made him conceive the same concept for the house. A unique feature here is that this upper space opens up to the living room below only to be separated physically and visually, by a three foot high wall. This is only broken by a far-end opening that provides access to the room via the landing on top of the single flight of steps mentioned earlier. A masonry worktop runs the full length of this short wall and creates a valuable working space as well as storage cupboard spaces underneath, resembling the meticulous level of detailing that is quintessential to functional Scandinavian interiors. A bizarre feature about this master bedroom is that it does not have a door for the space to be fully enclosed. The bedroom has three sets of fixed windows on two opposite walls to enable cross ventilation as in the case of most tropical modern houses. These windows along with most other fenestrations of the house manifest trellis work of Teak wood. The ground floor has two other rooms behind the main living, and one had been utilised as the bedroom for two sons while the other has always been epitomised as Perera's private office room.

All walls of the house are handsomely white-washed while the visible inside of the asbestoses corrugated roofing sheets are also white. The main concrete ridge beam along with the peripheral ones, as well as the timber rafters and perlins of the roof structure, are all coloured in black to create an eye catching contrast with this white surrounding. The fact that these corrugated roofing sheets are covered with half round clay tiles provides the much needed insulation as well as protection to the roof, while being economical at the same time. The projecting wide eves that resemble houses of Kandyan and Dutch periods protect the walls from heavy rains as well as cutting down glare from the sun. This too was a seminal consideration that had sprung up when modifications to architectural modernism was carried out. The floors of the house are all covered with 1' x 1' inexpensive polished terra cotta tiles which enhances the tectonic sensation of the interior. An admirable factor about this house is the fact that he has strictly epitomised a local material palette in its making. The only adornments of the house could be referred to as the few modern George Keyt Paintings, and the few antique furniture pieces treated in this modern interior as works of art.

**It is remarkable how such a natural affinity as well as tranquility could be economically accommodated in a congested context.**

### rasanga wijetunge

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It is remarkable how such a natural affinity as well as tranquility could be economically accommodated in a congested context such as Colombo 3, through ingenious innovations in architecture. However, the most conspicuous factor to be stressed here is the strong lack of reference of the house, thus the style it represents, to neither indigenous nor colonial architectural traditions of the island.

Ulrik Plesner qualified as an architect originally in the Royal Academy Architecture School in Copenhagen, Denmark, had a training in the Tropical Modernist discourse during his sojourn at the Architectural Association, London (AA). It is significant that he associated the three most conspicuous figures in post-colonial period architecture of Ceylon, namely, Minnette de Silva, Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara, all were inspired by this movement during their respective and almost parallel stints at the AA. It was Archt Minette de Silva who aroused his interest on the great architectural traditions of her motherland. During his sojourn in Sri Lanka he worked with Archts. Minette de Silva and Geoffrey Bawa. Among the many projects that are listed as joint projects with the latter are Bishop's College, Colombo 3, St. Thomas' Prep School, Colombo, Ekala Industrial Estate, Ena de Silva House, Colombo, House for Chris Raffel, Colombo. Plesner worked in Sri Lanka from 1958 – 1969 and then from 1980 – 1988 where he worked on urban plans and designs of the new towns being constructed in the Mahaweli settlement areas under the accelerated Mahaweli scheme. His works in Sri Lanka show inspiration drawn from local architecture as well as Scandinavian Modernism, quintessential to the region of his origin.

In recognition of his work he was awarded Honorary Membership of the SLIA in 2008.

The Architect lives in Tel Aviv, Israel and is the principle partner of Plesner Architects.



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## A new domestic architecture for the nation; When did it all begin?

The architectural style of a given era in a country is particularly influenced by its sociological factors; determined by political and economic counterparts that are intrinsic to one another. The domestic architecture of ancient Ceylon was influenced by sociological factors such as the caste system, based on land tenure, feudal landownership and elitism. Domestic architecture was regarded as the ultimate symbol of status expression. Further, environmental factors common to regions around the Indian Ocean also shaped the architecture in Ceylon, resulting in buildings suitable for the respective settings. more....

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## A new domestic architecture for the nation; When did it all begin?

The architectural style of a given era in a country is particularly influenced by its sociological factors; determined by political and economic counterparts that are intrinsic to one another. The domestic architecture of ancient Ceylon was influenced by sociological factors such as the caste system, based on land tenure, feudal landownership and elitism. Domestic architecture was regarded as the ultimate symbol of status expression. Further, environmental factors common to regions around the Indian Ocean also shaped the architecture in Ceylon, resulting in buildings suitable for the respective settings.



**By Nishan Rasanga Wijetunge**

By the end of the 15th century, although the Portuguese established a sizeable seaborne-

empire around the Indian Ocean region, they failed to achieve full-scale colonisation. Thus, the Portuguese architectural legacy in Ceylon is largely limited to a number of churches and military forts.

In the late 18th century, two distinct domestic architectural styles – Kandyan and the Dutch – were created, each based on the political and economic ideologies of the local monarchy-governed territories in the hill-country and Dutch-governed areas of the Maritime. Dutch architecture in Ceylon was a product of indigenous and European influences.

The initial phase of architecture of the British, who later came to occupy Ceylon, was limited to the usages of the same style of the late Dutch-era. Following full-scale colonisation in 1815, the British gradually instituted their architecture in the country. Their styles were influenced by the newly established political, economic and sociological ideologies of the time and the effect of the industrial revolution in Europe.

However, British architecture relied much on pretension than function and was merely a "cosmetic make-over" of the earlier architecture, with less attention paid to climatic suitability. By the early 20th century, the British made an identifiable architectural mark in Ceylon in terms of both public and domestic buildings.

The post-colonial architectural styles, according to scholarly studies, consisted of various styles ranging from the semi classical; colonial and stately used style to pseudo architectural styles commonly utilised for large-scale public projects and the neo-Sinhala style; illustrating elitism of the Walauwa-class.

Modernism, which came into being in the late 19th century, reinterpreted itself as an international style. It had no continuity with architectural history and avoided decoration, placing emphasis on space and plan than mass. The ideas of modernism reflected the objectives of most post-colonial leaders, who sought to use the post-colonial state as an instrument of change in building a modern-nation. This made modernism comfortable for non-European architects who were tasked with introducing new architectural identities.

The only form of reference in the modernist discourse to a particular place was found in the idea of tropical architecture. This assumed that there are two major climatic regions in the world – temperate and tropical.

For the post-independence Ceylonese architects seeking a new architectural identity, breaking away from the British Architectural legacy, modernist architecture provided the neutral terrain. Further, architectural education in the former colonies, reflected similar views. The post-imperial commonwealth facilitated this trend by providing opportunities to travel to other dominions to study architecture. Tropical modernism was the result of this attempt to further govern the built environment of Europe's former colonies.

Valentine Gunasekara respected the universal modern movement or international style and anticipated a fairer social-fabric and an architecture that would become a new frontier in the island. Valentine, who possessed the characteristic of a modernist 'expressionist', started off rather conventionally in his initial phases with domestic architecture that did not largely differ from tropical modernism.

Later Valentine's architecture developed into being sculptural or expressionist, resembling the works of some noted figures of the modern movement, particularly its American counterparts. His modernist discourse could be best experienced in some of the asymmetrical-shaped plans enabling sculptural-forms, using new concepts of flat roofs or roof-terraces and new utilitarian -spaces to fulfill modern lifestyle-requirements of his clients. He frequently utilised concepts from the modern movement ranging from exposed structures, interpenetration, non load-bearing short-walls, and floor-level changes to passive cross-ventilation. Valentine also explored modern constructional practices that were new to the local-scene at the time, backed by new materials. This led to revolutionary practices such as exposed floor and wall finishes. Ornamentation was given an unprecedented comeback through modernism-influenced patterns.

Minette de Silva on the other hand, despite the initial tilt towards tropical modernism, pioneered in the making of a new Sri Lankan architectural tradition, and referred back to the roots of the forgotten 'Kandyan Vernacular' and the 'Dutch' traditions. She had used the quintessential principles of modernism in her designs which possessed most of the earlier discussed traits found in Valentine's work. Use of traditional architectural basics of form, elements, features and detailing coupled with traditional artifacts, made her architecture regional.

The trappings in her work in the forms of indigenous patterns interpreted through modern material were essentially derived from the early 20th century popularised arts and crafts movement of Ceylon. Therefore, Minette is considered to be the pioneer of 'a modern regional architecture in the tropics'. Use of old architectural traditions made her houses very much comfortable in their tropical settings and similarly familiar to the masses. Yet, the traits of vernacular architecture was not fully explored in her designs but used more as an accompaniment to modernist-based products, in order to fulfill a certain timely political statement.

What Geoffrey Bawa adapted later on was a clear and successful marriage between modernism and vernacular, to come up with a model for Sri Lankan regional architecture. Apart from carrying forward the earlier style introduced by Minette, Bawa intensified the regional 'feel' in his work. The political context and economic constraints of the time that brought about limitations in the field of construction, particularly in materials, were partly responsible.

Bawa believed that regional architecture is what happens automatically, springing from situations, taking into account local materials and the general feel of the place. As some of his contemporaries who were obsessed with European Modernism, Bawa did not believe that this type of architecture is a "lessening of civilization". He freely put to use the vernacular architectural traits and local arts and crafts in his designs juxtaposed with Western equivalents to achieve a balance that was simply unprecedented. This in fact, became the flagship for elite-domestic architectural style the country had been looking for.

Modern regional architecture in the tropics or Sri Lankan regionalism was practiced centuries ago, as far as pre colonial times, adopting to the local climatic conditions and built with available resources. These styles survived over the years without much evolution and deliberate change. Thus the legacy of regional domestic architecture was well established and put to use right here in Sri Lanka, well ahead of its time.

Nishan Rasanga Wijetunge obtained his M.A in Architecture and Interior design from the London Metropolitan University, U.K. in 2005. He also completed his M.Sc. in Architecture from University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka in 2007, and SLIA Part-3 in 2009. He is currently reading for a MPhil/PhD at Nottingham Trent University, U.K.

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# Emulating Vernacular:
## Role of tradition in the elite domestic architecture of Geoffrey Bawa and Valentine Gunasekara

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## Abstract

*This paper critically examines the post-independence architecture of Sri Lanka (Ceylon), in which reverting back to tradition took centre stage. It discusses the pioneering works of two architects from this particular time frame that led the way to subsequent emulation of tradition in the architectural developments in the island, especially after 1977s neo-liberal economic reforms. The paper divulges the underlying factors behind the making of the very disparate approaches of these two architects, while assessing their successes and failures. It especially evaluates the role of tradition in their architectural approaches.*

**Keywords:** Tradition, post-independence, Sri Lanka, Geoffery Bawa,
Valentine Gunasekara,

Introduction

In the contemporary global architectural milieu, homogenizing forces of the mass-media and built mediocrities of the international fashions have relegated traditional continuity (Lim and Beng, 1998). In such a context, questioning the respective roles of tradition in contemporary global architecture becomes imperative in determining its future prospects. If the foregoing reproach is directed at Ceylon (presently Sri Lanka), addressing its immediate post-independence period becomes indispensable, where reverting back to tradition became evident in an array of fields including architecture.

It is posited that the two most celebrated post-independence domestic architectural rubrics in Ceylon are *Neo-Regionalism (NR)* and *Expressionist Modernism (EM)* of which the two most renowned proponents were Geoffrey Bawa and valentine Gunasekara. It was the pioneering works of these two architects during the post independence period that in fact led the way to subsequent architectural developments in the island, especially after 1977s neo-liberal economic reforms. Their approaches however were distinctly different, although both aimed at enumerating tradition in a modernist idiom. This paper, on examining this phenomenon will stress upon the social facet of elitism, and the vitality of political influence on their occurrence, out of an ensemble of factors, by briefly touching on extant elitist theories.

## Tradition in Architecture

The word *"tradition"* originates from the Latin verb *"trado-transdo"*, which means *"to pass on to another"*, or *"to transmit possession"*. Tradition is thus seen as a dual process of preservation as well as transmission (Beng, 1994: 21). According to T.S Eliot, a true sense of tradition is a sense of the timeless and the temporal together. As Beng says,

> "Tradition…cannot be inherited, and if you want it, you must obtain it by great labour. It involves in the first place, a historical sense, which…involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence…"
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> (Beng, 1994: 21).

Although the definition of tradition is commonly perceived to be a set of fixed attributes, many repudiate this view and believe it to be a series of layers transformed over time (Lim and Beng, 1998). Hobsbawm postulates the notion of *"invented tradition"*, which includes both traditions that are gradually invented, constructed and formally instituted as well as the ones to emerge in a less easily-defined manner within a short time-frame. He defines tradition as,

> "…taken to mean a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past"
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> (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983: 1)

Throughout history, discontinuities in architectural traditions have been prolific.[1] In traditional societies, cultural processes and external forces take a long time to be considered as "established". Once this is completed, they sustain for extended periods of time (Lim and Beng, 1998). Williams however, disseminates that, what may pass-off as "cultural traditions" or the "significant past" is actually selective traditions (1980: 39).[2] Hence, it could be perceived that traditions are always contested, transformed, resisted and invented over time. It could be affirmed with a great number of examples from around the world that, in traditional societies, age-old architectural forms have reached high sophistication. Albeit their slow denigration, they remain more expressive and sympathetic to the aspirations of the people than any contemporary contender. The expressions of these surviving traditions attain vigor and conviction through their local craftsmen practices, which truly celebrate their devotion, contemplation and commemoration (Lim and Beng, 1998). On the other hand, in the field of architecture, a dichotomy exists in the form of *'grand design tradition'*

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[1] Architecture has not remained "pure" anywhere, as there have always been hybrids (cross-fertilizations) of indigenous and imported. The two have been diffused, hybridized, and in the process, synergized. Hence, such types in their respective forms, in a given time frame, are potential models for even more similar transformations.

[2] *"From a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded…..Some of these meanings and practices are reinterpreted, diluted, or put into forms which support or at least do not contradict other elements within the effective dominant culture"* (Williams, 1980: 39).

and, its antithesis, the *'folk tradition'.* Rapoport postulates that the monument-buildings belong to the grand design tradition, and are erected to impress either the populace in terms of the power of the patron, or peer-group of designers and cognoscenti with the cleverness of designer and good taste of patron. The folk tradition in contrast, is said to be the direct unselfconscious translation into physical form of a culture; its needs and values, as well as desires, dreams and passions. *"The folk tradition is much more closely related to the culture of the majority and life as it is really lived than the grand design tradition, which represents the culture of the elites"* (Rapoport, 1969: 2). [3]

**Identity via Architectural Tradition**

Culture is generally conceived as *"the way of life".* It can be best-defined through its specific characteristics; namely, "*the accepted way of doing things, the socially unacceptable ways* and the *implicit ideals"* (Rapoport, 1969: 47). It plays a seminal role in the construction of society; which could either be culturally homogeneous or heterogeneous. Both these situations could possibly find an enhanced degree of sophistication owing to the existence of sub-cultures within a given culture.[4] Culture entails various traditions relating to the assorted functions of human life. In other words, culture ensures that its citizens abide by different sets of rules set by tradition, in relation to the performance of these functions respectively. Such rules ensure that whatever underlying factors[5] behind them are preserved for posterity, while manifesting a unique identity in relation to a given function. The notion of identity has always been intricately-related to traditions; as lingering on to traditions is what gives a society its identity. Douglas and d'Harnoncourt postulate that, *"To rob a people of its tradition is to rob it of inborn strength and identity"* (in Lim and Beng, 1998: 54)*.*

Since making buildings is a basic necessity of the human repertoire, different cultures from around the world have primordially developed their very own built traditions. Since every society essentially entails a "high" culture that influences "other levels" of cultures, as suggested by Bottomore (1993: 116),[6] in terms of building traditions, this distinction could be further elaborated – high culture chooses "grand design traditions" whilst other cultural levels are relegated to "folk design traditions". Vernacular is a variant of folk tradition with a unique identity of its own. *"Implicit in the term 'vernacular' is the notion of building as an organic process, involving society as a whole"* (Lim and Beng, 1998: 10). Perceived as "*architecture without architects*" as suggested by Beng (1994: 19); edifices of vernacular are not merely perceived to be the brainchild of any individual architect, but the

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[3] The authentic meaning behind *folk tradition* could be discerned as, *"…the world view writs small, the "ideal" environment of a people expressed in buildings and settlements, with no designer, artist, or architect with an axe to grind (although to what extent the designer is really a form giver is a moot point)."*
Folk design tradition represents itself in the form of vernacular; which again could be classified as primitive and other forms, where the latter could again be divided into pre-industrial and industrial (Rapoport, 1969: 2).

[4] This is possible owing to factors such as religion, occupation and cast-system etc.

[5] These underlying factors could be religious, symbolic, biological and environmental etc.

[6] In every society which is complex, there is a number of *'levels of culture'* to be found, and it is utmost vital for the health of the society that these levels of culture inter-relate to each other. Yet, the manner and the taste of society as a whole should be influenced by the society's *'highest culture'* (Bottomore, 1993: 116).

product of an entire community as a whole; working through its history (Lim and Beng, 1998). Vernacular structures are invariably built by local craftsmen of anonymity with local techniques and materials, reflecting society's accumulated wisdom and collective images. They are imbued with cosmological and religious values, social and political structures, and sensibility and attitude towards time and space. Moreover, their forms and proportions, craftsmanship and decorations manifest symbolic propensities and hence, are meaningful (Beng, 1994). As Lim and Beng suggest, *"There is hardly any need or scope for "improvement" in the various vernacular languages of housing generated indigenously around the world…"* (1998: 11)*.*

**Sri Lankan Architectural Identity**

The foregoing enquiry leads the way into establishing how the Sri Lankan domestic architectural identity was formed over the centuries. According to Nalin de Silva (2006), a unified Sinhalese culture saw its inception in the 4th century B.C., and saw revitalization as the 'Sinhalese Buddhist' culture with the advent of Buddhism in the 3rd century B.C. Since then, as the 'dominant' culture in the island – in agreement with the term legitimized by Eriksen (2002:121), it has produced an array of distinctive traditions. With regard to architectural traditions, when grand design tradition[7] has always been delimited by decree to royals and the religious order in palaces and temples respectively, its folk counterpart (i.e. the vernacular) formed the domestic domain of its masses. However, the system franchised elites (and sub-elites to a lesser extent) to incorporate certain grand design traits into their primarily vernacular-based domestic buildings (Wijetunge, 2011). This arrangement thus formed the unique Sinhalese domestic architectural identity with regional variations. As T.K.N.P de Silva suggests, the traditional Sinhalese house that has existed for more than two thousand years,

> "… was an outcome of a strong philosophy of Buddhistic life - i.e. the simplicity and the impermanent nature of life. The house was part and parcel of nature, the materials were borrowed from the nature and returned to the nature…The traditional concept was to live in and around the open areas of the house and not within the enclosed compartments … and it was the most suitable solution for Sri Lankan climatic conditions"
>
> (Silva,1990:16)

Similarly, the less-dominant minority cultures belonging to elite and sub-elite categories–mainly Tamils–also developed in their respective areas of inhabitance, unique architectural traditions of their own (see Lewcock, Sansoni and Senanayake, 2002). It was from this rich palette of traditions that the new generation of post-independence period Ceylonese architects subsequently borrowed.

**Manifestation capabilities of the elite domestic form**

The elites in society are an *organized-minority,* which tend to dominate the *'unorganized masses'* in terms of an array of practices (Mosca, 1939: 53). These could be

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[7] It has to be stressed here that grand design tradition extant in the medieval period was arguably, the residue of what is considered as the 'classical period' – the culmination point of Sinhalese architecture.

attributed to their superior intellectual and physical qualities possessed by Nature, to inherited or acquired powers, essentially in economic and political spheres (Bottomore, 1993). Through these superior qualities, elites tend to stay at society's forefront manifesting their prestige, leading way for masses to follow, while striving to further-widen the existing gulf between the two stratums. This generic nature of elites as a whole is true, irrespective of their location in the world, weather in a primitive society or the most advanced. In the olden ages, apex-status of elites was manifested through their *royal, noble, cleric, aristocratic* or *bourgeois* positions in society, and in the contemporary world, they prevail in the forms of *intellectuals, managers of industry* or *bureaucrats*, making these elite-positions real determiners of most life aspects of masses (Bottomore, 1993: 404). The elites rule, manage, and are the ideological think tanks that manipulate society, while masses merely go along with what is imposed upon them with minimal resistance. Hence, the elites facilitate new political and economic changes in society, or alternatively, these changes take place because of them and their self-centered actions.[8] On the other hand, Pareto's *economic dimension* (in Bottomore, 1993: 2) postulates that, economics is a vital aspect that constitutes elitism. The elites epitomize their political power to achieve the economic edge over masses or alternatively, the reverse takes effect, as Mandel (1982: 18-25) points out as it happened through human history. Policies of the so-called *"governing* or *political elites"* [9] as Pareto (1960: 1423-1424) refers to them, always strive to reinforce the best interests of its allied-elites of *"close coalition"*, as Bottomore (1993: 277) suggests. This is achieved through a concretization of an inequitable system that in turn makes and sustains them, with the intention of assuring its posterity. With the dawn of 20th century, it could be perceived that merely the elites possessing some combined degree of economic as well as political edge, and occasionally the intellectual edge, became particularly capable of social influence. These abilities consigned them at the elite-apex as the "political" or "governing" elite, along with their immediate circle. The bureaucrats, managers and intellectual elites who merely possessed what their given names suggest, were relegated to immediate lower elite stratums. However, coalition between the apex and this stratum is what keeps the system intact. The sub-elite stratum (i.e. the middle-class) forming the liaison between the ensemble of elites and masses could be conceived as a different and less-influential group altogether (Bottomore, 1993). This Western-derived structure of elitism was subsequently imparted on the Ceylonese context via five epochs of Western colonialism.[10]

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[8] It has to be noted here that political changes may also occur due to social revolutions. In that case it referred to as 'circulation of elites', where a faction of elites within the political class itself, replace the apex.

[9] From the ensemble of various types of elites in a given society, the governing elites tend to possess the greatest level of power, which places them at the centre of high cultural influence. Governing elites could either be an absolute monarchy, a certain form of collective government (democracy, socialism etc.) or any combination of varying degree of the two. The extent of high cultural access made available to the other elites, by the governing elites, varies in different contexts. In most Western contexts after Modernity for example, high culture has not been a jealously-guarded condition. Conversely, in the East, it has always been delimited either to the royal family alone, or to the immediate circle of aristocrats surrounding them.

[10] The quasi elite structure that sprung up by deliberate-intermingling of Eastern and Western counterparts during Portuguese and Dutch rules was jettisoned in the late 19th century. This was achieved via a Ceylonese appropriation of a fully-fledged British elite structure analogous to the one above. Roberts (2005: 147-148) affirms this point through his discourse of the late 19th and early 20th century British Ceylon's newly-acquired

Since political and economic arenas are the *raison d'être* behind elitism, they also make elites the most sensitive their periodic changes in comparison to the masses. Domestic building on the other hand, is a basic human necessity, which articulates the lifestyle of its dwellers. Then again, life style is a reflection of various traditions imbued in a given culture. As Rapoport elaborates,

> "The house is an institution, not just a structure, created for a complex set of purposes. Because building a house is a cultural phenomenon, its form and organization are greatly influenced by the cultural milieu to which it belongs…"
>
> (Rapoport,1969: 46)

Hence, changes in culture are expressed in behavior, and articulated in the physical form of buildings (Rapoport, 1969). Accordingly, since elites are the most sensitive to the society's politico-economic spheres, it could be suggested that, a given society's politico-economic changes are best-manifested in the built traditions of its governing elite–as the most politically powerful faction–with a unique identity. Rybczynski's (1988) discourse of the elite contiguity to 'home' further strengthens this argument.[11] However, the pertinent point to stress here is the impact this particular group can yield over the greater architectural realm of their society–both at domestic and civic levels–through their political influence.

## Tradition and Identity in Ceylonese Architecture by Independence

After the Dutch-held maritime regions were handed-over to *British East India Company* in 1796, which was followed by the fall of Kandyan kingdom in 1815, the British instigated the colonial project in Ceylon (see Mills, 1964). Since the early 16th century to this point in time, Ceylon had remained one of the conspicuous penetration outposts in the Portuguese-Dutch created Seaborne Empire. The radical capitalist economic policies and gradual democratic reforms imposed by British colonists spawned a new peripheral status for Ceylon within the British Empire; with its hinterland centered upon London (Perera, 1994). Consequently, Ceylon that had managed to sustain a modest level of globalization to this point in time suddenly started to feel its effects more rigorously.

It is recognised that the European Colonial projects affected new paradigm shifts throughout the whole of Asia, and the unequal socio-cultural as well as economic exchanges resulted in the emergence of *"re-invented"* traditions in hitherto unforeseen scales, according to Hobsbawn and Ranger (in Lim and Beng, 1998: 55). Within this process, certain hybrid architectures that relegated local identities emerged, and eventually gained acceptance with time (Lim and Beng, 1998). Hence, such colonial architectural trends could be conceived as forces of homogenization.

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western-type liberal occupations (such as lawyers and civil servants etc.), which began to be addressed as *"genteel professions".*  This ideology in fact, survived though the postcolonial period to the present day in Sri Lanka.

[11] The fact that the elites are the pioneers to have historically developed a degree of intimacy with their dwellings than any other social stratum, further-contributes to the concretization of this view.

This indeed is confirmatory for the elite domestic realm in colonial Ceylon. Following the British conquest and unification, European architectural traditions that had been in existence for centuries in the maritime (since the Portuguese occupation) crept into the Kandyan regions. Consequently, by the early decades of the 19th century, the Sinhalese elite manor house (*Wallauwe*) was largely altered, whereas the sub-elite dwelling (*Hathara-andi-gedara*) suffered relatively a lesser metamorphosis (Wijetunge, 2011). Meanwhile, albeit the feeble launching that mainly dwelled on the traditions of the expelled Dutch predecessors, the British building program commenced and subsequently proliferated throughout the island. By the time Ceylon was granted its political independence in 1948, the island had experienced three distinctly identifiable *phases of British architecture* (Lewcock, Sansony and Senanayake, 2002: 249-301). Phase-3 of British architecture is perceived to be the one where British finally made their mark by curtailing the prior hybrid Dutch influence to a meager level (Wijetunge, 2007). In the domestic architectural scene, this was largely realized through the burgeoning influence of the 19th century *colonial bungalow* they had painstakingly developed in the subcontinent (see King, 1984). Phase-3 saw its finale by attempting to rationalize an ideally-functional and comfortable colonial domestic building for the tropics in the form of Public Works Department's bungalow-influenced *Tropical Colonial style* (PWD-style) (Pieris, 2007: 49-50). This almost paralleled with Modernist propagations of the *Tropical School* of *AA*, which strived to derive a streamlined *Tropical Modernism* (TM) for the world's dry and humid zones (Fry and Drew, 1982); a further evolution of *CIAM 8'*s Modernist *avant-garde*. It has to be stressed here that mainly the colonial elite–arguably the colonial bourgeoisie and also sub-elite; the petty-bourgeoisie to a lesser extent–welcomed the aforesaid architectural trends, whereas the majority of peasants who were still largely rural, did not alter their vernacular (Jayewardene, 1984).

On the other hand, Ceylonese equivalents of the Phase-3 discourse emerged in the forms of *Indic styles*, and *pseudo architecture*, which were largely delimited to monumental and civic buildings as Pieris (2007) and Robson (2004) both affirm. By this juncture, the peripheral position of the newly-independent nations had been concretized through neo-colonial practices of the central Western-core (Perera, 1994). These attempted ideological impartations of architecture could be conceived as a desperate measure to form a patronizing relationship between the core and periphery. These tendencies prevailed in Ceylon after independence, under the auspices of a so-called *"post-colonial third culture"*. They, who had assumed political power from the British, resembled their foreign predecessors in every conceivable manner (Perera, 1994).

**A new necessity of Identity**

A political breakthrough came in 1956 when a faction of the local elite–having broken away from the mainstream pro-colonial inclination–came into political power in Ceylon having been equipped with a strong nationalist agenda. As a reactionary force against the bitter memories of colonialism, they adopted the best extant alternative; the left-wing socialist slogans (Perera, 1994). Moreover, the newly-liberated disparate ethnicities in the island, who had been previously suppressed by the colonial heel, had to be unified under a single national identity; circumventing the propensity for future tension

(Perera, 1994). This, in Jayewardene's (1984) view, was undertaken originally by the fields of arts, drama, music, literature and cinema etc. with their renowned respective proponents– debatably, all conceivable as means of nationalist resurgence that pre-dated independence– that subsequently trickled-down into architecture. Thus, within such a backdrop, analogous to the quest of their contemporaries in other newly-liberated colonies that Perera (1994) attests to, several nascent Ceylonese architects embarked on the journey to formulate a new architectural identity for the nation.[12] He particularly stresses on the encouragement given by the indigenous political leaders (i.e. governing elite) of such states in this quest. Peiris draws a valid analogy with *Calud Levi-Strauss's* appropriation of the terms *bricoleur* and *engineer,* and in her view, the two mainstream approaches of the Ceylonese architects from the period in question (Pieris, 2007: 150-152).

## Neo-Regionalism: The *modus operandi* of a Bricoleur

Ceylon's post-colonial architects were essentially educated in the Western-core.[13] It was a context where, the core institutions had monopolized peripheral architectural education (Perera, 1994). It is also evident that clients of these architects were essentially, the country's elites or sub-elites of some form. From the ensemble of Ceylonese architects at the outset of independence, the so-called 'first generation'– Minnette de Silva (MDS), Geoffrey Bawa (GB) and Valentine Gunasekara (VG) stand out from the rest, owing to their attempted deviation from the mainstream of TM, and its variants that overlapped with the fringes of European and American factions of the International Style (IS). These could be conceived as rubrics of largely a homogenizing inclination. As proponents of this particular rubric, architects such as Andrew Boyd, Oliver Weerasinghe, Hubert Gonsal, Billimoria, Shirley d'Alwis, Visva Selvarathnam, Leon Monk etc. thus went largely unnoticed[14] – only acknowledged for their prominent projects – whereas the ground-breakers came to occupy conspicuous positions in the island's architectural history. This point is attested via wide acknowledgements they received, from autobiographies, magazine articles, and academic-journal papers to university dissertations; that have all scrutinized their respective approaches.

MDS, a former *AA* (Architectural Association School of London) trainee, was the pioneer to adopt a synthesis between vernacular and modernism with due emphasis on sociological experiences of Ceylon's rural life and arts and crafts (Jayewardene, 1983). Depicting her stance, she coined the term *"modern regional architecture in the tropics",* as

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[12] Anoma Peiris postulates that, the task facing Ceylon's postcolonial architects was twofold. On one hand, the need for constructing a sense of geographic belonging against a former history of colonial expression, European Modernism (inculcated to them through their core-based architectural education), and nascent chauvinist nationalism of the region as a whole, was prevalent. On the other, they needed to reconcile their only training – the one in modernism – to the design of tropical environments (Pieris, 2007: 150-152).

[13] This was owing to the fact that Ceylon did not have any architectural schools of its own at the time.

[14] Although non-architect architecture (by technicians and architectural draughtsman) was evident from the British period, it became a common phenomenon by the 1960s. For the middle class who had newly approached urban centers for employment prospects, rubrics such as the so-called 'American style' appealed greatly. These were largely designed by non- architects.  After the 1970s (especially after 1977), some of them became renowned. Jayewardene particularly illustrates Alfred Kalubovila (see Jayewardene, 1984).

early as the 1950s (Tzonis and Lefaivre, 2001: 31). Her work overtly manifested the problems of post-coloniality, which was exposed as a *"precarious balance of Eastern and Western cultures than merely an aesthetic resolution"* (Pieris, 2007: 50). GB who qualified a few years junior to MDS, also from the *AA,* appropriated somewhat a similar approach. They both started-off with Tropical Modernist ideology coupled with the referenced vernacular building practices by their immediate colonial practitioner predecessors (Scriver and Prakash, 2007). The incorporation of timeless and unconscious hence, backed this approach with authenticity. Clifford (1987: 121-130) describes this as a *"savage paradigm"*; a colonial discussion of a climatically-appropriate native architecture with the desire to rescue authenticity out of destructive historical changes. This approach according to Lico (in Pieris, 2007: 10) was not delimited to Ceylon, and also implemented in other countries of Asia. Subsequently, while MDS did not win many projects, GB's success went from strength to strength (Robson, 2002).[15]

GB drew inspiration from a range of regional architectures from Europe, Ceylon's own colonial past as well as its pre-colonial examples of both grand and folk design traditions from different ethnic situations. Especially in his domestic projects for influential governing elites, vernacular recurred overtly. Arguably, the kind of vernacular that became pervasive in his works came largely from the manor houses[16] of Kandyan elite apex as well as its sub-elites. This spawned an incongruous degree of familiarization in his architecture, which was lacking in the projects of his contemporaries. However, many perceive that Bawa's architecture *"…has a western aesthetic sensibility and provided a utopian comfort zone for a clientele facing the many disruptions of post-colonial change, of urban growth, and industrialization"* (Pieris, 2007: 9). As Rykwert tells us, *"Memory is to a person what history is to a group. As memory conditions perception and is in turn modified by it, so the history of design and of architecture contains everything that has been designed or built and is continually modified by new work…."* (1982: 31). Hence, *"….There is no humanity without memory and there is no architecture without historic reference".* Analogously, Eliot (in Beng, 1994: 10) disseminates that, *"The past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past….the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show".* Lim and Beng (1998: 10) further-concretize the above notion by affirming that, *"If one does not hear the past clearly and honestly, it cannot become part of one's work. Architecture, like the other visual arts, is in the final analysis the domain of the intuitive mind and eye"* (Lim and Beng, 1998: 10). Alternatively, it is possible indeed, to seek synthesis of traditional and contemporary (appearing as binary oppositions) through Art.[17] However, such a synthesis should not be of *janus-faced* nature with the

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[15] Robson hints that one of the foremost reasons for Ulrik Plesner's departure from MDS's practice to join GB's was the lack of success of the former and the relative success of the later.

[16] These domestic buildings drew mainly on the indigenous vernacular belonging to folk design tradition, as well as for certain traits of grand design tradition.

[17] The Renaissance's architects and artists such as *Michael Angelo, Borromini* and the others, successfully-mediated strong beliefs and practices of the Roman church with the mythic imagery of ancient Greece and Rome.

schizophrenic coexistence of two opposing ideas, but one single gesture which should simultaneously be contemporary and timeless as well as "ethnic" and "modern" (Lim and Beng, 1998: 10).

Hence, elucidation of these disseminations affirm that, this is what exactly Bawa's architecture was about. Working with the scarce resources available to him, and with no striking innovation, he had undoubtedly played the role of a bricoleur; indeed of a very clever one.[18] The lure of picturesque along with nostalgic propensity and romanticism of the period had undermined the full potential of technological innovations in architecture. The ideal stepping stone for NR was astutely conceived by Bawa as the elite domestic realm of postcolonial Ceylon. The architect himself hailing from an elite background may have caused such an intuition. By recreating environments imbued with elite associations of both indigenous and hybrid-colonial conditions of familiarity, tradition had concretized the immutability of its elite stratum of patronage. Hence, as Pieris (2007) suggests, a potential restructuring of the country's postcolonial social sphere was made feeble by this rubric, and consequently the socio-economic mobility of the masses was largely hindered. The hybrid local identity it catered for, again, was favored by the country's Westernized and semi-westernized elites with their mostly urban and hedonistic life-styles. They were in fact, products of colonial 'hybridity' as Bhabha (1994) postulates. Other than its limitation to an elite clientele, the style was further-limited by the rigidity of the colonial structure as well the perpetuating ethno-religious nationalism. The new urban middle-class meanwhile were either caught up in this nationalist zeal or lost in capitalist and homogenizing practices of the international style (see Jayewardene, 1983), whereas the rural masses did not alter the way they had always built for centuries – at least till the 1980s modernization programs by the state (see Robson, 1984).

Neo-Regionalism's public acceptance eventually came with the auspice of the state-implemented civic projects, and with the ideological transformations they facilitated.[19] State commissions were in fact, the result of the acceptance by the governing elite, the rubric GB originally implemented in their houses. At the national level, the rubric suffered a paradigm shift from Bawa's own facile objectives as Pieris (2007: 11) suggests, into a whole different plane; with its *"revivalist, traditionalist and chauvinistic forms",* eventually making it conceivable to the masses. The reception by masses here is arguably an illegitimate one as NR was chosen on behalf of them by their governing elite. Moreover, it was regionalism–rigorously backed by the political sphere–which heightened its focus on identity, and not the neo-vernacular in its original form devised by the pioneers. Regionalism was then oriented towards an international audience for eventual laudability as the evidence presented by

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[18] Consequently, this rubric culminated to become the flagship elite domestic-style of the island by the 1970s and 80s. Moreover, it became the ideal manifestation of the immutable position of country's core-oriented elites in the top ranks. It also assured through architecture, the posterity of the elite-made system.

[19] In Jayewardene's (1983: 253) view, GB's work was limited to mainly domestic and civic realms, and to a lesser extent small-scale industrial. As she confirms, he was not responsible for any significant commercial projects. It is also notable how his industrial projects employed TM (see Robson, 2002). Thus, arguably, NR found success especially in the domestic and civic realms.

Robson (2002) suggests.[20] In Pieris's view, it thus failed miserably in the attempt to achieve a much-needed decolonization architecturally.

## Expressionist Modernism: The *modus operandi* of an Engineer-Bricoleur

*" To rob a people of opportunity to grow through invention or through acquisition of values from other races is to rob it from its future"*

(Lim and Beng, 1998: 54).

This Modernity-instigated Western line of thinking could indeed be perceived as the motto behind the architecture of Valentine Gunasekara (VG). He took inspiration from America, epitomizing exposure of his study tours,[21] and sojourns in California. Henceforth, he deviated from tropical modernist school quite early in his career after assimilating its essence. Freedom of spaces, tectonic qualities, and technological emphasis–i.e. new material experiments and rigorous modular articulation of form of structures–were borrowed from extant American experiments (Gunasekara, 2011). VG chose to relegate the industrial aesthetic of European *avant-garde* to the appropriation of landscape-centered American counterpart. In the affluent works of Eero Saarinan, Louis Kahn, Charles and Ray Eames, he saw an effort to mould new technologies into an aesthetic that resonated with a specific geography; that he conceived to be a definitive break with the colonial past. As Pieris suggests,

"The plastic curvature of concrete, experimented with in tropical climates by South American modernists, suggested an approach that could parallel the linearity of the prairie style that had emphasized the expanse of the American geography….."

(Pieris,2007: 13)

Seminally, *"…The reference to ancient monuments of Incas and Mayas in Californian Modernists suggested ways in which he* [VG] *might approach and reinterpret Sri Lanka's historic architecture".* For VG *"…undulating softness of the tropical geography and interweaving of form and space in the ancient cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa would be parallel sources of inspiration".*

VG conceived the emerging urban middle-class (i.e. new class of local professionals, graduates from newly-formed Sri Lankan universities etc. of mostly rural origin, who decided to migrate to urban centers to grasp employment opportunities)–the new sub-elite of Sri Lanka–to carry the vitality for self-definition, essential for potential economic growth and

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[20] Robson, in GB's 2002 autobiography points out to the ways how his architecture was popularised both in Sri Lanka and abroad. Firstly, his state commissions (the ones aimed at the masses) won him some popularity either in positive or negative terms. These state commissions would have accompanied government propaganda that would have been instrumental for making his name popular. Secondly, the magazine and journal articles (especially, the Aga Khan Award series etc.) by his friends and acquaintances at the academic level made a reputation for him at the international level. Thirdly, the same faction with the help of some of his governing elite clients was responsible for arranging exhibitions of his work in the West. Fourthly, his services as a part-time tutor both in universities in Sri Lanka and abroad, won him new followers.

[21] Gunasekara received the Rockefeller Foundation Travel Grant in 1965 and travelled the US. (Pieris, 2007: 152)

thus, upward social mobility. Although, it is middle-class cultural expansion that paved the way for general cultural expansion in Sri Lanka, it never got off to a position where this particular faction could threaten the immutable position of the country's elites.[22] In a rapidly globalizing world, Gunasekara recognized the changing Sri Lankan lifestyles in the process of assimilating western values. However, he managed to maintain aspects that facilitated family gatherings and hospitable spirits, in order to make home-life desirable. VG stressed on the importance of culture to the development of the human spirit, and exposed its essential factors of faith, family, community and personal identity (Pieris, 2007).

However, VG's ideology was arguably dogged by the hybrid Sinhalese-Catholic culture that he wholeheartedly admired. He perhaps perceived this particular culture to be more liberal than the majority's Sinhalese-Buddhist counterpart, and also found it to be on par with Socialist communality. The apparent contiguity between Catholicism and Socialist ideals is in fact, confirmed by de Silva (2008). Despite the fact that his earlier house designs greatly resembled tropical modernism, VG's approach endured a metamorphosis that evolved through modernist expressionism to the final form of deconstruction towards the twilight of his career (Gunasekara, 2011).[23] A pervasive factor in retrospect to his works was the sectarian devotion to technological experimentation. Sri Lanka's engineering profession of the 1970s–according to Sri Lanka Institution of Engineers' *Innovation and Self-reliance; Kulasinghe Felicitation Volume, History of Engineering in Sri Lanka*, 2001 Volume–underwent an innovative phase, and Gunasekara became one of its beneficiaries (Pieris, 2007: 13).[24] Behind the technological emphasis, there was an agenda of making modernity plausible to the masses via affordable architecture (Gunasekara, 2011). In relation to his projects, Gunasekara not only played the part of bricoleur–picking up various seminal architectural influences from an array of mainstream world-wide practices of the time–he knew exactly what engineering tools to epitomize for each job, to a level of efficacy; making his approach one belonging to an engineer-bricoleur's. Albeit its groundbreaking approaches, the rubric overtly rejected tradition, perceiving it as a 'backward step' to progression as it is connoted by Lim and Beng (1998: 13). However, architectural modernism that he based his broader aims on, had a share of flaws of its own, especially with regard to the newly-independent tropics.[25] The foregoing tendencies apparent in VG's works could indeed be bracketed down to his repudiation of the elitist class; their feudalist, capitalist and hedonistic inclinations. A more just and equal society was the ideal for humanity in his mind (Gunasekara, 2011).

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[22] Despite the potential to become such a counterforce, with time, they merely became the stratum that formed the liaison between the elites and masses; exactly the function of "sub-elites" throughout world history.

[23] This could be affirmed via a chronological evaluation of personalized houses completed throughout his carrier.

[24] Pre-cast concrete, thin shell structures and industrial methods had attained a point of culmination, and such techniques were appropriated into his repertoire. The close partnership with engineer Jayati Weerakoon made such inovations plausible. (Pieris, 2007: 152).

[25] Although its bold formal expression undermined the colonial metropolitan identities that had previously been hegemonic in Asian cities, it never quite won the hearts and minds of the peoples of the region. This stance could in-deed, be blamed on a fallacy, which inculcated the notion of modernism as an *"identity-free"* rubric.

## Conclusion

Sri Lanka is a nation with a primordial Sinhalese-Buddhist culture of dominance, and its accompanying corpus of rich traditions. Sinhalese built traditions (both grand and folk design variants) that had survived up to independence had been time-tested throughout the apparent quantum leaps in world globalization history that pertained to the island. By analyzing the relative success of GB who acknowledged such traditions in his architecture as against VG who excluded and in turn, became less-successful, the immutability of country's dominant culture and traditions articulates itself. Thus, it could be argued that beneath a veneer of appropriated Western cultural attributes (i.e. western modernity) of the hybrid Lankan elites, the fervor for indigenous traditions persists.

Furthermore, the different degrees of political auspices received by GB and VG—the former receiving largely governing elite commissions and the latter, middle-class commissions—elucidate the factor's seminal role in publicizing a certain architectural rubric. Hence, masses in society are manipulated and influenced by its elite – the very faction that rules them in collaboration as an allied circle. Owing to the intuition and private connections gained via his elite upbringing, the elite domestic realm was astutely employed by GB as a stepping stone for NR, to be subsequently applied to state commissions. The governing elites who were fond of GB's houses, commissioned him at the state level by using their political influence. Larger civic commissions were followed by mass popularity and acclaim from both home and abroad. The acclaim too was spear-headed by the elite stratum. On the other hand, VG's disapproval of elite ways compelled him to incline towards the less politically formidable middle-class. His domestic products for them neither won him substantial future commissions nor acclaim.

On the other hand, Ceylonese elites of influence did not embrace a rubric based on vernacular tradition due to their genuine belief of it as the one that best-represented country's national identity, within the process of fulfilling their social responsibility. The surviving post-independence elites—of either feudal or bourgeoisie origins—were obsessed with creating a nostalgic niche for their own, through a rubric that best-epitomized the defunct architectural traditions of Ceylon's past, from medieval and colonial heydays of their ancestors. Perhaps, this was conceived as a means of creating a new social division. In this light, it is discernible in relation to VG's approach that just because a certain architectural rubric threatens to topple the elite system, it still would not succeed in contexts as Sri Lanka with a strong cultural base. Thus, the traditional archaic becomes indispensible in such situations.

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simplicity and the impermanent nature of life. The house was part and parcel of nature, the materials were borrowed from the nature and returned to the nature…"

"…The traditional concept was to live in and around the open areas of the house and not within the enclosed compartments of the house and it was the most suitable solution for Sri Lankan climatic conditions.

A house built in this nature, needs regular maintenance and it was continuously embodied in the customs. There are cultural festivals at regular intervals such as New Year, Vesak [celebrated the birth, enlightenment and passing of Lord Buddha], Sudda Poya (Esala) [a full moon day celebrating a certain episode in Buddha's life], etc. The maintenance of the shelter by applying cow dung on the floor and walls, sometimes white washing, thatching the roof, cleaning the house etc., were aimed for the festivals, hence the house was well-maintained" (de Silva, 1990: 16). (Explanations within parentheses are by the author).

On the other hand, the customs and beliefs pertaining to formation of the dwelling were contained in the ancient medieval treatise of 'Mayamatha', which manifests the explicit Indian influence on the discourse. The scientific validity (in terms of Western science) of Mayamatha has been a factor which has been continuously explored by the academia. It overtly laid down beliefs influencing the site selection, design and construction of a house, treating the house metaphorically as a microcosm of the cosmos.
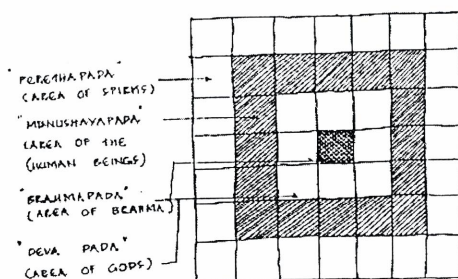


*Pada-Bedum-Chakra:*
Pertaining to planning of the house
placing building on site
**Source: Perera, 1991.**
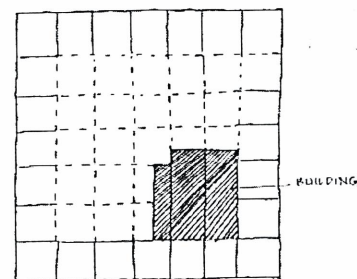
In relation to site selection, the features in the site as well as the nature of environment was considered while shape, terrain, existing vegetation, soil conditions, living organisms and its previous uses were absolute determining factors. The soil in particular, was tested for compaction, porosity, color, smell and taste and matched with the clear classifications given in the treatise. In the design process, zoning and orientation was the most vital and referred to as *"Bhoomi-naga-chakra"* and *"Pada-Bedum-Chakra"* – diagrams found in *Mayamatha* – used to achieve a successful outcome. Placing of the main door was a vital task in the design process as it had to be oriented towards the North, South or East as per the *"Bhoominaga"* (the earth serpent) of the site. If the main door was at the head of the *Bhoominaga*- it was to bring death to the chief occupant of the house, if placed at the tail- the wealth of the occupants to be diminished or crops destroyed and if placed on the stomach; prosperity to prevail with wealth, health and better harvest. As per the treatise, forms such as circles, triangles were jettisoned and the ideal forms for the plan were either square or rectangle. Moreover, parts jutting out were perceived to be inauspicious.

The suitable square and rectangular plans were then to be divided into seven vertical and horizontal squares known as *"pada"*. The courtyard of the house was essentially to be placed within the centre square. In terms of building's placement, special measures also had to be taken pertaining to *Mayamatha*, which compelled the site to be classified into four divisions.

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The outer-most section was declared as *"Perethapada"* (area of spirits), the first inner, *"Manushayapada"* (area of human beings), the second inner, *"Devapada"* (area of gods) and finally, the innermost centre as *"Brahmapada"* (area of Brahma). *Prethapada* and *Brahmapada* were considered to be unsuitable for locating a building while *Manushyapada* and *devapada* were the most ideal. The rules pertaining to construction were mainly centered on the time factor; time to commence work, placing the first foundation stone, placing the main doorway etc. Auspicious times were even applied to planting of vegetation on site. *Mayamatha* further laid down guide line for the preparation of timber for construction; for example the distribution and transfer of loads when placing timber members in the roof etc. (Perera, 1991:53). Time for laying the foundation stone was carried out by astrologers to suit the horoscopes of the main occupant and his wife. Enshrinement of auspicious objects was always made as a ritual with blessings of religion as well as gods and deities of belief. These rituals brought in a spiritual element to new dwellings, with confidence to the patrons (de Silva, 1990: 16). Such rigorous limitations imposed by religious-imparted cultural beliefs manifests underlying measures taken to safeguard the environment, and efficiently provide users the most ideal environment to dwell in, whenever construction took place. This is completely contrary to the Western position where no such limitations existed; to enable construction activities to take place more freely.

**Family life:**

Kandyan family life was manipulated by various traditions imposed by a culture that seminally imbued Buddhist philosophies, with occasional modifications caused to it by Hindu influence. Kandyan society was essentially one of male-dominance. With relation to the family structure, men were assumed to be the sole-providers of the family unit, while women were more or less relegated to caring for children and running of the household (Davy, 1969: 207). This cultural norm was valid for the whole of society, irrespective of a family's position in the social hierarchy. The essential characteristic of the traditional Sinhalese dwelling found in these parts was their openness, owing to the lack of hierarchical order, and family-life not being overtly separated from visitors. Women of the household eventually slept in one corner of the open verandah of the dwelling, while men in another corner (when there was no clear division of rooms). No special attempts were made to segregate or screen off women from the resident men, and especially from the visiting men who are outside the immediate family circle. When there were rooms, women slept inside while men slept in the open. The concept of privacy in the modern sense was unknown to the Sinhalese; in colloquial Sinhalese for instance, there is no word which connotes the meaning of privacy. Kandyan life style's element of inter-family relationships was kept to a minimal.

These rather unique characteristics in terms of intra-family relationships are thought to have derived from Theravada Buddhist teaching of rejecting the hierarchical structuring in the view of social or family life. Contrary to sub-elite dwellings that manifested the above arrangements, elite dwellings always consisted of multiple rooms, and in some occasions, multiple court yards surrounded by their own sets of rooms (Lewcock et al, 2002: 20-21). This affirms that the Kandyan elite culture was more of a hybrid between Theravada Buddhist and Hindu cultural influences, which eventually manifested itself via elite domestic architecture. The Kandyan royal cultural contiguity to Hindu South India being aped by the elites as well as their very own South Indian origins (the Brahmin genealogy of a majority of Kandyan aristocracy could be traced back to South India) that de Silva (2010) affirms, could have possibly been the causes of this state.

When Buddhism merely influenced the lifestyle promoting austerity and equality without hierarchical order in the dwelling form, the Hindu influence advocated somewhat the contrary. The Kandyan house form, especially of the elites, and sub-elite to a modest extent, hence, was an ambivalent edifice; placed in a liminal state of cultural hybridity.

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## Climate

Although Sri Lanka is a small island, it possesses distinct climatic variations, caused by the unique topography, which forms a centrally-located hill-country, surrounded by a flat low country. Consequently, the island could be divided into climatic regions pertaining to the rainfall patterns, and its Central, Western, South-Western parts come under the wet zone, which has a high rainfall and subjected to the South-West monsoon (de Silva, 1990: 17). Kandyan provinces mainly situated in the central parts hence, fall within the wet zone and the mountainous central topography with surrounding thick jungles had constituted it as impenetrable in the eyes of its Western colonizers. Hence, defense was logically omitted from the ensemble of factors that made up the Kandyan built form.

The roof was a conspicuous element in Kandyan climatic condition, which was given due emphasis. Its design with a steep slope provided protection from rain by enabling water to flow off swiftly. The insulation capacity of covering materials and the breathing nature of the roof provided protection from heat. Moreover, the low wall-plate height and long eves protected the walls from the hot sun and rain while cutting down the glare reflected from cloudy skies. The gap between wall and roof provided proper ventilation, and defused light into the room, while the high plinths ensured that the outside breezes entered the houses through fenestrations. The construction materials for walls were always high in insulation capacity. The internal and external verandahs with eaves and small fenestrations of houses kept the hot sun away, keeping the interiors cool and comfortable. The high plinths and impermeable nature of clay used for construction prevented the rising of dampness during rainy days. All materials were accumulated from the locality and simple technology was epitomized to put together edifices which were essentially *"low cost"* shelters (de Silva, 1990: 16).

## Sub-elite and Elite Dwelling

### Sub-elite House: The generic form

The earliest account of private domestic architecture of the Kandyan regions could be found in the writings of various European diplomats as well as its political prisoners. Robert Knox (in Lewcock et al., 2002: 19), an Englishman kept a prisoner who lived amongst the Kandyan Sinhalese peasants in the 17th century, writes, "Their houses are small, low, thatched cottages...." He says, "The poorest sort have not above one room in their houses, few above two...". Here, it is rational to perceive that, he is referring to vernacular forms utilized by the masses, pertaining to primordial folk design traditions of the Sinhalese. As John Davy (1969: 161), a British ambassador[9] to Kandy during the late 18th century describes, "Their best houses, those of the chiefs, ...of mud with tiled roofs, raised on a low terrace, and always of a single storey, built in the form of hollow squares; presenting externally a dead wall, and internally bordering the open area is a verandah, with which the side-rooms communicate by narrow doors".

According to Ananda Coomaraswamy (in Lewcock et al., 2002: 20), a typical Sinhalese rural house (yeoman's house) was a "simple framed, one-storied, timber and mud walled building with a thatched roof. It contained a square court yard open to sky, surrounded by an internal verandah which was used for all the activities of living and working; off this "the poorest house... had but one room, few more than two or three...."

Although this description tallies with the ones of foreigners made centuries ahead of him, Coomaraswamy's addressing of it as "yeoman's house" is problematic. Perhaps, he may have appropriated the term by making an analogy with the term's connotation in England; a farmer who cultivates his own land, who is a lesser freeholder with political rights below the landed-gentry. However, this analogy makes sense in terms of the Kandyan sub-elite stratum; the free farmers (*Maha Mohottala, Mohottala* etc.) who may or may not have enjoyed administrative positions. However, his generic house form which he refers to as the 'Singhalese rural house' or the 'Yeoman's house', clearly does not

apply to the more elaborate house forms of Kandyan elites. Squares and rectangles were the desired plan forms of these houses while the overall form was reduced to cuboids. They were always built on raised platforms termed *"pila"* above ground level. The outside area beyond and surrounding the *Pila* was referred to as *"veli-midula"* (sand or gravel court) and was always kept open free from vegetation; mostly paved by sand or gravel. This was done to prevent animals such as serpents entering the house from surrounding jungle.
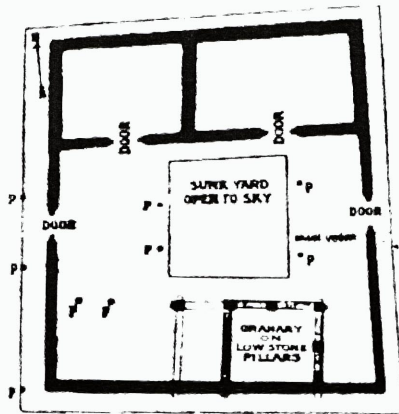


Coomaraswamy's generic Kandyan house form:

**Source: Lewcock et al., 2002**

The open interiors were demarcated by four blank walls with one or two doors placed at the opposite ends of the plan while windows found seldom use. The open spaces surrounding the central courtyard were generally austere, well-lit and airy. The living area was termed *"Mahamaduwa"* while the dining cum domestic space was given the name *"Heenmaduwa"* respectively (Perera, 1990:60). The rooms were always dark and gloomy in the absence of openings to outside. In Lewcock et al'.s (2002) view, the most important of these rooms was that used as a dark room for child birth. At other times it served to house the chests in which cloths were stored. Most importantly, rooms served as the sleeping quarters of women during the night when men always slept in *Mahamaduwa*. Within the internal space of the house, four or six stone pillars supported the *"atuwa"* or rice bins (large wooden chests). Occasionally the rice bins were separate structures outside the house in which case they were usually constructed, like the house, of a timber frame-work with in-filling walls of wattle-and-daub (Lewcock et al, 2002: 20). The size of these bins was a measure of the wealth of households and thus acted the role of a symbol of prosperity.

The building tradition utilized for these dwellings was a synthesis of grand and folk design traditions while the balance tilted more towards the latter. Folk tradition Vernacular was more explicit as all materials were obtained from the surrounding environment and hence, manifested a sense of environmental sustainability. The houses were crudely built and possessed simple wattle-and-daub (jungle timber frame filled with clay) walls while structural members of the usually-thatched roofs were of jungle timber. Straw was the main material of thatch in paddy-producing areas of the island (which included the hill country), and straw was laid on the timber frame work as either bundles or packed forms of approximately 200mm thickness. Applying a new top layer was carried out, following every harvest. However, roofs of most of the surviving examples have later been covered with clay half round tiles. The particular type of local clay used for the wattle-and-daub construction is referred to in Sinhalese as *"Makulu Mati"*, and gave walls a whitish finish once completed; as lime plastering and white washing with lime were prominent traits of Kandyan grand design tradition. Most of the surviving houses have also been possibly lime plastered and lime washed at later periods. Grand design tradition made rare appearances in these houses only in terms of the carpentry work. Door frames and sashes were mostly

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carved with traditional Sinhalese motifs while occasionally; ends of roof timber members (rafters) also manifested such adornment. Complicated door hinging and locking mechanisms are also a vital part of the Kandyan carpenter's repertoire.

Addressing of Kandyan dwellings of this generic type also known in Sinhalese as *'Hatara-andi-gedara'* has always been a facile affair, where scholars in the field have continuously failed to conceive the major underlying difference between Kandyan elitism and sub-elitism, which could be manifested through their distinct domestic architectural practices. Hence, the above-addressed generic dwelling form could be directly attributed to the Kandyan sub-elite. When they rose to higher offices to become elites, they appropriated elite dwelling traditions, which will be discussed later. Hence, it could be avowed that, in such an austere milieu such as the Kandyan provinces, the domestic building perhaps, was the only means that the two stratums could make distinctive identities for themselves. The distancing of peasant masses too, was effectively achieved in the same manner.
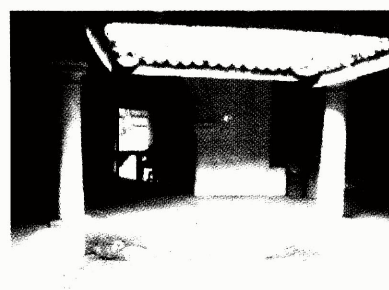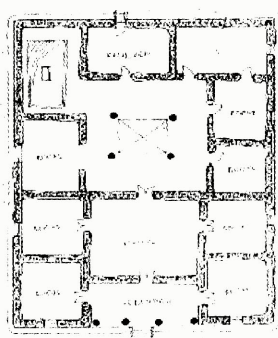


**Source (the Plan): Perera, 1991.**
A *Hatara-andi-gedara* at Matale called *Wattegedara*, belonging to a family line of petty officials or sub-elites; the last to occupy it being an *Arachchi Mahattaya.*

Only a handful of such sub-elite houses have survived the journey through time to the present-day in their purest and original forms, as most have been destroyed by haphazard-alterations or excessive post-independent period infrastructural development projects.
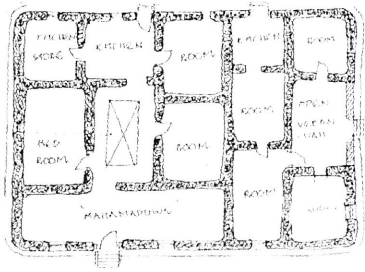
As Pallasma (2005; 63) suggests, the experience of home is structures by distinct activities such as cooking, eating, socializing, reading, storing, sleeping, intimate acts etc., and not by visual elements. "A building is encountered; it is approached, confronted, related to one's body, moved through, utilised as a condition for other things. Architecture initiates, directs and organizes behavior and movement. A building is not an end in itself; it frames articulates, structures, gives significance, relates, separates and unites, facilitates and prohibits. Consequently, basic architectural experiences have a verb form rather than being nouns. Authentic architectural experiences consist then, for instance, of approaching or confronting a building, rather than formal apprehension of a façade...."

This best affirms the non-picturesque and façade-less nature of the austere Kandyan dwelling form.

## Extended versions

The generic and simple form was occasionally amalgamated to form extended houses; prompted by the needs of extended families. The extensions could be carried out in any one of its four sides according to the situation in hand. At times, the extension was done with no court yard and light and ventilation was facilitated by doors and windows open to outside (Perera, 1990: 62). The roof extensions were also improvised according to the situation. It appears that there were no rules pertaining to these extensions. However, whether these extensions were carried out during the Kandyan period itself is ambiguous.

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**Source (the Plan): Perera, 1991.**

The plan of an extended sub-elite house from *Matale,* belonging to a family, which has always belonged to the "middle class", according to its inhabitants interviewed by Perera in 1991. Therefore, we can believe that it was built by a Kandyan sub-elite of some form. The house manifest typical Kandyan generic form features except for the side addition; to cater for an extended family. According to the owners, interviewed in 1991, the house has always been occupied by two families from time immemorial. This house has been long-demolished.
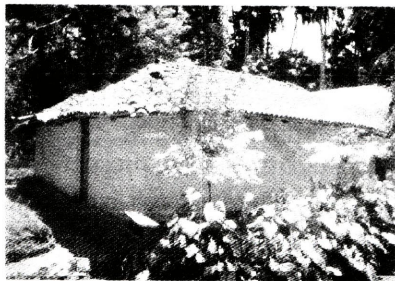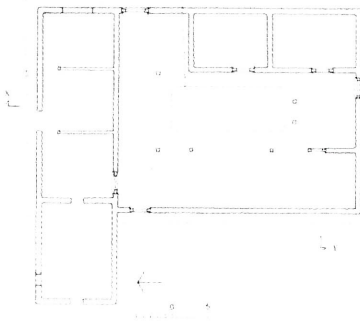




**Source: Lewcock et al., 2002.**

An extended sub-elite house from *Manikdiwela* near *Kadugannawa* in *Kandy.* The plan clearly illustrates the generic form and the new addition.

## *Walauwe*: manor houses of the elite

The modifications to the generic dwelling form occurred, retaining its basic constituents, when the house belonged to someone of more political and economic influence; an elite. As Robert Knox (Lewcock et al., 2002: 19) postulates, "The great people have handsome and commodious houses. They have commonly two buildings one opposite to the other, joint together on each side by a wall, which makes a square court-yard in the middle."

The beginning of this statement provides an ample idea about the bigger scale of elite houses in comparison, while the latter part explains an alternative way courtyards were formed (rather than the common practice of forming a courtyard by placing covered usable spaces around a central opening as in the examples studied), which is also affirmed by de Silva (1990, 2010). As Knox (in Lewcock et al., 2002: 19) further elaborates, "The houses of great persons only differed from those of lesser men by having more rooms and court–yards, better timber for the beam-ends, and verandah pillared, and their brackets well carved...."
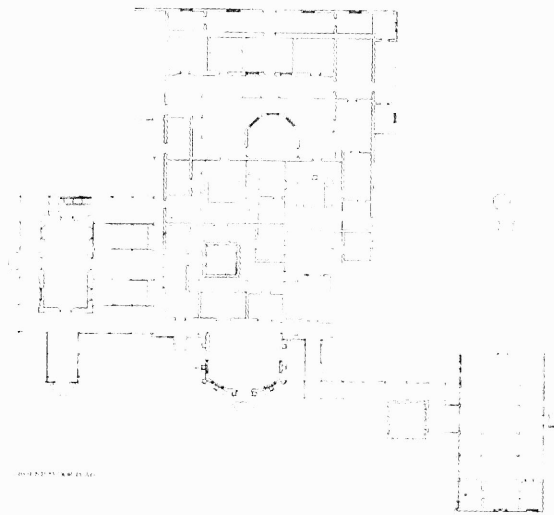
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The number of rooms was increased in these bigger houses while more courtyards were utilized to supply light and ventilation to the deep interiors. The arrangement was not always symmetrical and accommodated respective site situations. Out-houses were added to accommodate extended functions of the elite life style, which was not to be seen in the ones of the sub-elite to accommodate judgment halls (commonly seen in the houses of *Disavas* and *Rate Mahattayas*), larger kitchens, extra granaries (occasionally two storied), stables for horses, cattle sheds etc. According to de Silva (2010) elite houses illustrated the same materiality as the previously-addressed sub-elite counterparts, while some refinements were made under special privileges granted by the King; owing to outstanding services rendered to the Kingdom by such elites. Tiled roofs, lime plastered - lime washed walls, two-storey constructions and especially, refined carpentry work, which were traits of Kandyan grand design tradition evident in these edifices. As per Knox's (1966) affirmation, the roof structures were assembled with stronger and more valuable timbers. The members were always uniformly finished while beam ends and pillar brackets were carved with traditional Sinhalese motifs. The doors always had thick frames while both solid door and window sashes were elaborately carved. Iron-mongery was utilized commonly in fenestrations and was adorned with Sinhalese motifs. Even the function of building of such a *Walauwe* (manor house) itself had to be carried out with king's permission only as de Silva (2010) tells us, which affirms its status as the most ultimate symbolic manifestation of elitism in Kandyan society.

The most seminal observation which could be made about these houses is that the generic form which was earlier addressed, found repetitive use to arrive at more complex buildings. Hence, it could be rationally suggested that the number of times the repetition recurred was proportional to the prestige, wealth and thus, socio-political influence of the patron. This process of recurring repetition could also be attributed to nature, where such repetitions are explicit in its numerous structures. Hence, in a way, such dwellings were symbolic vestiges of the totality of Mother Nature. Moreover, all above postulations about such dwellings brings to the fore, the overarching influence on nature on physical forms. The austere lifestyles of inhabitants in direct contiguity to nature were facilitated through these forms. Houses were derived from nature and eventually returned to it, safeguarding its posterity. The built environments facilitated the entertaining of senses simultaneously and equally not letting any single one dominate over others. "It is evident that the architecture of traditional cultures is also essentially connected with the tacit wisdom of the body, instead of being visually and conceptually dominated. Construction in traditional cultures is guided by the body in the same way that a bird shapes its nest by movements of its body. Indigenous clay and mud architecture in various parts of the world seem to be born of the muscular and haptic senses more than the eye" (Pallasmaa, 2005: 26).

Consequently, nothing ostentatious was allowed, making original Kandyan houses austere, but picturesque. The picturesque that predominantly caters to the eye, eventually found its way into Kandyan architecture via gradual Western influence the kingdom received. In his seminal examination of the historical using of senses, Pallasmaa (2005; 25) affirms that, "The gradual growing hegemony of the eye seems to be parallel with the development of western ego-consciousness and the gradually increasing separation of the self and the world; vision separates us from the world whereas the other senses unite us with it".

He further elaborates that, "We can identify the transition of indigenous construction from the haptic realm into the control of vision as a loss of plasticity and intimacy, and of the sense of fusion characteristic in the setting of indigenous cultures" (Pallasmaa, 2005: 26). This indeed is evident in the modified sub-elite and elite houses of the Kandyan provinces.

After all, "Western architectural theory since Leon Batista Alberti has been primarily engaged with questions of visual perception, harmony and proportion" (Pallasmaa, 2005: 26).

*Maduwanwela Walauwe,* an elite Manor House at *Ambilipitiya*, was constructed in approx 1725 by *Maduwanwala Maha Disave*. This is one of the very few remaining manor houses which clearly manifest the repetitive use of the generic plan form, despite showing somewhat colonial influence in architectural features and detailing. Outward facing verandahs, multiple-use of courtyards, number of out-houses serving various functions (interconnected with covered walkways) and one of the blocks consisting of two stories are its most conspicuous features. Certain modifications have been carried out to the manor house over the epochs. Some of the architectural features and detailing such as the decorated mosaic floors and intricate carpentry work (carved door window frames and sashes, trellis work, carved timber columns and roof members) are the most conspicuous colonial features.

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*Aluvihare Maha Walauwe* in *Matele* was originally built by *Aluvihare Maha Disawe* in the .....century. The building has seen extensive modifications during the Colonial periods – possibly Dutch and British – judging by the arcade around the main courtyard, arches separating spaces, upper floor timber structure, masonery colomns with capitals and bases, the trellis (screen) work as well as cement rendered floor and plastered-painted wall finishes. Even the fenestration as well as furniture arrangements inside illustrate somewhat Low Country influence. However, the repetition of the basic unit is manifested by its plan form. The unique aspect about this Walauwe is its closure to the outside, being surrounded by blank walls, reminiscent to the *Hatara-andi-ge* of the sub-elites. The blank walls have been pierced in certain spaces to provide smaller openings to inner rooms that have been placed on periphery of the plan. The outhouses too have been attached to the main structure only to be separated by narrow court yards.

The only manor house in Sri Lanka that remained until very recently, in its original unaltered state illustrating original form and materiality, was *Dullawa Wallauwe* in *Matale* (de Silva, 2010). This too sadly, has been demolished.

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The term *'walauwe'* in *Sinhalese* carries the connotation for *'aristocratic dwelling'* or *'manor house'*, was jealously-guarded during the Kandyan period. This not only connoted the dwellings of aristocrats, it was also used to identify the houses of high government officials who were classified under elite ranks earlier (who may or not be aristocrats). However, in certain parts of Kandyan regions according to de Silva (2010), even the houses of sub-elites (*Koralas* especially), later appropriated the term liberally.

## Manifestations of Hybridity

After the fall of Kandyan kingdom in 1815 (when it was ceded to the British colonial power), the term *Walauwe's* connotation became evermore prolific. Following the failed Kandyan independence struggle of 1818 led by Kandyan chiefs, the primordial privileges enjoyed by them (especially, the elite ranks) were abolished by the British, relegating them to an oblivious state. After the abolition of *Rajakariya* (land tenure system) by Colebrook Commission in 1833, the Kandyan regions of Ceylon, just as the maritime, were gradually absorbed into the world capitalist mechanism of the British Empire, especially through the plantation industry soon to be introduced. This finally opened up the Kandyan regions to the onslaught of globalization at a time it was experiencing a quantum leap via industrialization and the culmination of European colonialism. With the jettisoning of feudalism and land tenure system, the Kandyan social structure gradually collapsed and the gulf between elites, sub elites and masses was largely reduced. The most pertinent factor here was that, after 1833, the masses were given the franchise to engage in whatever profession they desired, irrespective of caste, and similarly, the laws that suppressed their building traditions were also lifted. The best example that could be adduced to illustrate this point is the sub-elite domestic rubric that came into existence parallel to these developments, commonly referred to as the *"intermediate"* type. The sub-elite dwellings grew in scale and size, while retaining the basic form of the generic version, and adopted certain elements from Dutch period domestic buildings and possibly, *Phase-1* of British domestic counterparts, which were already well-received by the maritime populace of that time. Consequently, more rooms for more diversified functions (clearly-demarcated spaces for different functions) were accommodated in the planning of these dwellings with the gradual appropriation of certain Western cultural norms into Kandyan Sinhalese culture. Privacy, which has always been a conspicuous factor in the ego-centric modern Western culture finally penetrated Kandyan domestic form through the houses of their sub-elites in such a manner. Furthermore, material practices also began to change with the incorporation of brick masonry for walls and columns which were plastered and white washed. Some architectural features such as round columns with square shaped bases and heads as well as masonry arches were also appropriated from hybrid maritime domestic versions along with carpentry details such as paneled door-window sashes and fluted roof timber members. The use of ironmongery also made an appearance for the first time in sub-elite dwellings. All such appropriated features best illustrate the liminality of the Kandyan sub-elite in a time of pioneering exposure of unprecedented nature, to Western globalization forces. It is noteworthy that only a faction of the Kandyan society of prior eras, who posed as elites, could enjoy such luxuries; analogous to pre-modern Western situations. However, the time-lag between the two diverse realms is almost half a millennia.

# ANCIENT CEYLON

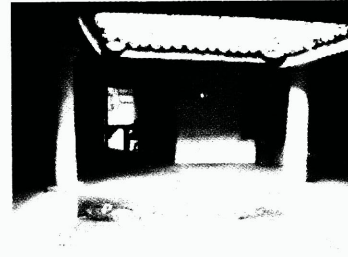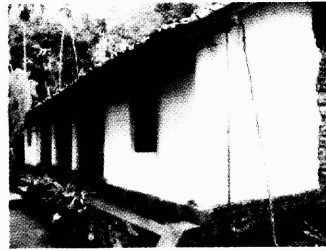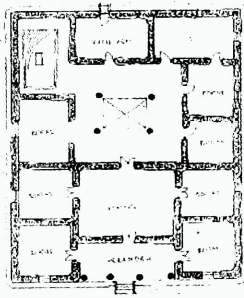## Journal of the Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY**

**SRI LANKA**

**Source (the Plan): Perera, 1991**

Built by a *Korale Mahattaya*, *Atipola Walauwe* is an "Intermediate type" house that belongs to a **family line of petty Kandyan officials** (sub-elite) from *Matale*. Note the term *Walauwe* being used despite the owners being sub-elites. Although this somewhat resembles the generic plan form of a *Hatara-andi-gedara*, overt room divisions of interior as well as the increase in scale makes it distinctive. Owing to excessive use of fenestration all round the house, the internal courtyard lost its functional use, and was merely an attempt to continue a primordial building tradition. The most distinct feature is the masonry colonnaded front-facing verandah, which places it in contiguity with the parallel maritime colonial dwelling. These houses could be conceived as a synthesis of the Kandyan generic form and maritime colonial dwelling.

The acts of capitalism and consumerism spawned by the British-introduced plantation economy to the Kandyan regions by the mid 19th century lead to the fleeting proliferation of westernized house forms of local elites and sub-elites. Influences of Western colonial building traditions even affected bulk of the existing dwellings from the previous centuries, and altered their outlook beyond original recognition. Only a handful has survived and retained their original identity. Until this point in time, the laid-back cultural attitudes of the Sinhalese in general had been conceived by Westerners as mere "ignorance of comfortable living" (Cave,1894: 53).
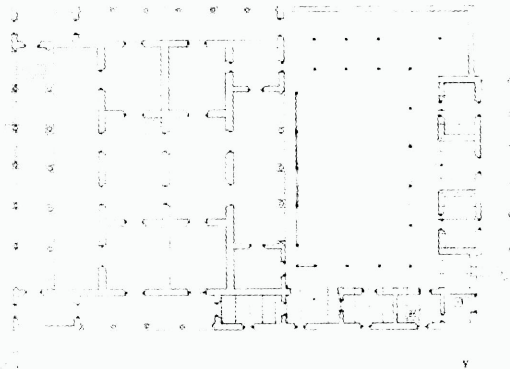




**Source (the Plan): Perera, 1991**

Presently inherited by the *Deraniyagala* family, *Ekneligoda Walauwe,* an elite Manor House at *Ekneligoda* in *Rathnapura,* was built in the early 19th century. British colonial period. This house is the ideal example for the Kandyan elite appropriation of the Maritime elite domestic model. The plan form illustrates typical characteristics of a Dutch colonial dwelling than a traditional manor house, the most unique features being the front double verandah, the rear and side verandahs. However, the prominence given to the court yard is noteworthy. Architectural features such as masonry colonnades illustrate strong colonial Dutch influence. Furthermore, door-window detailing as well as the carpentry work (such as paneled door and glazed window sashes, glazed half-round fanlight arches over fenestrations, rear and side verandah columns, verandah fences around the house, rear storage attics) also places the building in contiguity to its maritime counterparts from the same period.

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Despite the overarching European colonial influence that subverts factional Sinhalese architectural trends, as in examples illustrated above, such dwelling forms were compatible with the ever-hybridizing lifestyles of the 19th century Kandyan elites. These best-manifested the proliferating Western-hold, which was at the time, being concretized in the Kandyan provinces. In other words, what the Portuguese and Dutch achieved socio-culturally and architecturally in the maritime they ruled, had finally crept into Kandyan provinces. On the contrary, largely-unaffected by such Western forces, the proletarian rural masses kept on living in their primitive vernacular forms, well into the neo-liberal economic reforms that the independent nation state of Sri Lanka underwent in 1977 (Jayawardene.1984: 92)

Menin and Samuel (2003) in their phenomenological exploration of the works of Le Corbusier and Alvar Alto (considered to be two of the most prominent figures of 20th century European-instigated rubric of Modern architecture), reveal the underlying inspirations of nature in their works. The sterile architecture of historicism and capitalist pretension in the previous centuries prompted them to inveigle their respective approaches (which appear to be dissimilar from the surface, but possess the same underlying grounds) to be more humanistic, closely-associated with the patterns and forces of mother nature. Hence, this was an attempt to unite the human spirit with nature; the place where it all began. The repetitive patterns and accommodating trends of nature are thus, explicit in their affluent portfolios of work. It could be logically conceived that these very trends were overtly apparent in the austere Kandyan elite and sub-elite dwellings (the original ones), centuries before them.

## Conclusion

The Western-derived structural distinction between 'elite' and 'sub-elite' could be applied to the medieval Kandyan situation, and Kandyan elite and sub-elite dwellings respectively, could be adduced as the most apposite examples to overtly manifest the two unique conditions.

The politically and socially influential positions of highest caliber identified by this paper in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy could be conceived as the ones of Kandyan elites. As an unrivalled and homogeneous political entity, this rather small group could be further identified as the 'governing elite' in the absence of a 'political class'. The more numerous and less influential lower administrative positions discussed in the paper, thus become the Kandyan sub-elite. The generic house form termed the 'Hatara-andi-ge' was therefore, delimited to the sub-elite while the elite Walauwe was a repetition of this basic block. The recurrence of the basic block was proportional to the political and social influence of the patron. The former domestic type mainly utilized vernacular tradition in its making while employing vestiges of grand design tradition. The latter in comparison, used the same equation although tilting more towards grand design tradition. Even the term Walauwe was a jealously guarded affair. Hatara-andi-ge was an articulation of a Sinhalese culture that imbued Theravada Buddhist teachings, while Walauwe was a hybrid cultural manifestation between Buddhism and Hinduism. However, the boundary between Kandyan elite and sub-elite dwelling was blurred after 1796, as the maritime colonial influence of modernity crept into the Kandyan provinces. Thus, the Western forces of globalization gradually took hold and altered these house forms beyond original recognition via European-introduced cultural and thus architectural practices.

On the other hand, what underlie Eastern and Western elitisms could be conceived as binary oppositions. Eastern elitism sprung up in cultures, analogous in many ways to the medieval Kandyan condition. With the influences of Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism (in this case), co-existence with the environment was always exalted. Henceforth, the resultant socio-political structures were both repressive and unproductive in the Western sense. With laws clearly demarcating and concretizing the immutabilities of elite and sub-elite stratums that enjoyed limited privileges, a potential for the contingent to proliferate in numbers was jettisoned. Most prominently, the fact that the environment would not be subverted but sustained was ensured. Western culture, conversely, inveigled from such shackles from the 15th century, and instigated an ego-centric modernity and thus the modern-era, that

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has recurrently dwelled on exploitative capitalism. Capitalist practices have not only re-defined Western elitism via lifting of religious and thus cultural barriers, it has furthermore dictated terms for elitism and sub-elitism in the subordinate world. Consequently, elitism and sub-elitism were constructed as attainable stratums for the masses. The overall result of this process has led to gradual exploitation and thus, destruction of the natural environment, which has reached catastrophic levels by contemporary times. On the other hand, as the direct result of the race to attain such ambitions, human conflicts exacerbated, and have reached an unprecedented climax by today. Moreover, all such processes have now backfired on the capitalist system itself, making one question of its future continuity.

Although the medieval Kandyan social structure is commonly-perceived to be one governed by repressive cultural rules and norms, its relative level of freedom could be affirmed analogous with the situation of pre-modern Europe. Hence, the sense of austerity evident in Eastern cultures, which is articulated via its vernacular-driven architecture (despite being considered primitive in the Western sense), possess great sensitivity to nature and to humanity in the long run. However, such conditions are no longer in existence, owing to their replacement by precarious western-led capitalist forces of the modern era that infiltrated these cultures via colonialism. The intermediate type Kandyan dwelling of the sub-elite along with the modified elite manor house hence, become ideal models to manifest the succumbing of a once-solitary Eastern society to a capitalist and globalized system. Furthermore, they also manifest the state of hybridity of a colonized population.

The pre-modern Kandyan generic house form conversely, articulates not only its contiguity to nature, but also phenomenological affinity as underlying factors. Catering to the picturesque that is based on the modern-era trends of retinal imagery and Cartesian idealism is neglected here.

The outcome of this paper would be a stepping stone for the daunting task of deriving a unique definition for Eastern elitism, based on Eastern epistemology. As Eastern socio-political structures in the modern-era have been pushed towards oblivion by conquering western counterparts, harking back to Eastern pre-modern situations is the only logical approach conceivable.

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**End Notes**

[1] Furthermore, the earliest known usage of the term *'elite'* in the English language could be traced back to the *Oxford English Dictionary* of 1823, at which time it was already applied to various social groups, establishing the above elucidation.

[2] Moreover, Horton provides his valuable opinion regarding the power dimension associated with elitism, as well as their volume in society.

[3] This class undergoes changes in its membership over a period of time, ordinarily by the recruitment of new individual members from the lower strata of society, sometimes by the incorporation of new social groups. Occasionally these rather-established elite are replaced completely by a *'counter elite'*, in situations such as revolutions, in a process referred to as the *'circulation of elites*

[4] The treaty was to pledge the support of the Dutch to Kingdom of Kandy to overthrow the Portuguese and in return a number of important ports around the country will be opened up to the Dutch for their trading activities. It further explained that the Sinhalese king should be regarded and respected as the supreme ruler of the island by

the Dutch while they should hand over all the other ports and regions acquired by them from the previous colonizer. The intention behind the granting a number of sea-ports to the Dutch was to let them recover their expenses incurred at the war against the Portuguese and allow them get established in the trade-scene of the country.

[5] During this crucial period, just prior to the British arrival, Dutch had blockaded Kandy and secured more territory including all its sea ports and trading privileges. They were determined to reap as much harvest from the lucrative cinnamon trade and other cultivations of pepper, coffee and spices, not to mention the profitable trade of elephants.

[6] "A related case is of more ominous significance. Consider the emergence of the feudal type of landlordism in the kingdom of the Franks during the sixth and seventh centuries. This was certainly a most important event that shaped the structure of society for many ages and also influenced conditions of production, wants and technology included. But its simplest explanation is to be found in the function of military leadership previously filled by the families and individuals who (retaining the function however) became feudal landlords after the definitive conquest of the new territory.": This is indeed what took place in the Lankan frontier, when Indians migrated from Northern parts of India two and a half millennia ago.

[7] It has to be noted here that even the cultivator (*Govigama*) caste itself, has other sub castes within it such as *Bathgama* etc.

In the field of world-architecture,*Amos Rapoport* identifies the difference between the 'grand design tradition' and 'folk tradition' based on other similar scholarly classifications He claims that the monument-buildings belong to the grand design tradition and are built to impress either the populace with the power of the patron, or the peer group of designers and cognoscenti with the cleverness of the designer and good taste of the patron. (Rapoport, 1969: 2).

[9] A number of British missions visited Kingdom of Kandy both before and after their conquest of the coastal areas ruled by the Dutch in 1796. The intentions behind these visits were the fact that British wanted to arrange some form of a treaty with the Sinhalese king, although this never became a reality. Referring to reports and descriptions by some of these foreigners to visit Kandy is the best way of understanding of what Kandyan elite domestic architecture was like at the time. (Mills, 1964: 1-7).

# Differentiating between Kandyan Elite and Sub-elite Domestic Architectures

## Dr. Nishan Rasanga Wijetunge

## Abstract

The indigenously-governed Kandyan regions of Ceylon – the present-day nation state of Sri Lanka – could be seen as a unique pre-modern Eastern situation that only saw light of the relentless forces of Western-led globalization as late as 1815. Kandyan elitism over the years, has been either misinterpreted or facilely addressed by scholars, while being indifferent to the separation between Kandyan elites and sub-elites, based on the Western-derived elite structure. The objective here is to make explicit this division, which could be manifested through Kandyan elite and sub-elite domestic architectures.

Further, articulating the underlying factors of the two social stratums as well as illustrating modernity-led ambivalences evident in the two respective domestic architectural types is intrinsic to this exercise.

## Concepts of Modern Western Elitism

Rousseau (in Bottomore, 1993: 101), based on the world-renowned Politics of Aristotle which reads, "From the hours of their birth some are marked out for subjection and some for command", instigates the apparent basic differences among human beings, which he has credibly classified and transcended to levels of inequalities. "…there are two kinds of inequality among human species; one, which I call natural or physical, because it is established by nature, and consists in a difference of age, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind or of the soul: and another , which may be called moral or political inequality, because it depends upon a kind of convention, and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of men. This latter consists of the different privileges, which some men enjoy to the prejudice of others; such as that of being more rich, more honored, more powerful or even in a position to exact obedience" (Bottomore, 1993: 102).

Hence, one could assume that Elitism was derived out of such pioneering Western notions of human inequalities, prevalent over the ages, and has been discussed in more general or wide-ranging terms in recent times. The rationalization with relation to various conspicuous periods of recent history derived by Bottomore, after having referred to various well-established scholarly propagations reads, "The word 'elite' was used in the seventeenth century to describe commodities of particular excellence; and the usage was later extended to refer to superior social groups, such as prestigious military units or the higher ranks of the nobility" (Bottomore, 1993: 1).[1]

Conversely, Horton's point of view establishes the role of elitism after the Industrial Revolution taking place in Western Europe throughout the 19th century. Prior to this juncture, European-elite largely consisted of the higher clergy as well as the land-owning nobility, and always had been an inheritable status. "Membership of an elite group is often inherited, but in some societies it may be

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acquired" (Horton: 1964, 294).[2] This inclination proliferated throughout the world by the means of colonialism. Appropriating from this background, Barber (1968: 19, 22), utilizing the simplicity of ranking dimensions, delineated three separate but interrelated dimensions for the elite; the economic dimensions, the power dimensions and the evaluation or prestige dimensions. Both Vilfredo Pareto and Garento Mosca are two laudable proponents of the discourse, to define Western elitism in more relevant terms as Bottomore (1993, 1-12) points out. Their inculcations could be condensed into a few common concepts that can be logically applied to Western elitism within the entire modern era. In every society (Western societies in the core and their subordinate counterparts in the peripheral world), the elites could either be found in the form of various 'functional groups' or as a 'political class'. The more conspicuous and loosely-defined latter consists of those who occupy the posts of political command and, more vaguely, those who can directly influence political decisions.[3] Within the political class itself, there exists a smaller group, the 'political elite' or 'governing elite'; consisting of the individuals who actually exercise political powers in a society, at a given time. This includes members of the government, and of the high administration, military leaders, and in some cases, politically influential families of an aristocracy or royal house, and leaders of powerful economic enterprises. However, it is less convenient to set the boundaries for the 'political class' as it might include the 'political elite' as well as the 'counter-elites'. The latter may comprise of leaders of political parties which are out of office and representatives of new social interests or classes such as trade union leaders, groups of businessmen and intellectuals who are active in politics. The political class hence, as suggested by Bottomore (1993: 8), comprises a number of groups, which may be engaged in varying degree of cooperation, competition or conflict with one another. Henceforth, in Western conception, the governing elites, formidable in both political and economic spheres, are the most powerful, while they allow certain functional elites to prevail in close coalition to safeguard the system and means that sustain them as elites. At the end, it all comes down to the conduct of a minority that relegates the majority, prompted by relentless greed triggered through modern-era capitalism.

The perception of intellectual superiority of the Western world over its Eastern counterpart has persisted for centuries, and reached a point of culmination by the 19th century; through Western-instigated colonial projects. The foundation to this hegemony was laid during the Renaissance in 15th century Europe, perceived to be a quantum leap experienced by the ever-prevailing process of globalization. Even prior to the spawning of so-called "modern-era" itself, as Said (2003: 31-92) suggests, Western epistemological pre-eminence had been largely propagated by their prolific texts. As a direct consequence of Western colonialism, the colonists placed themselves at an immutable position as the controlling-core of the world, while relegating the colonized to a subordinate periphery (Perera, 1994: 211). Henceforth, Western knowledge became the accepted norm while ancient Eastern epistemological realm was pushed to an oblivious corner. In such a milieu, the Western academia has not only devised a fervent body of knowledge on the discourse of 'elitism' over the epochs, but also this knowledge has been inculcated throughout the world. Therefore, the widely-received canon of global-elitism applied to wide-ranging contemporary and historical situations is really, the Western structure of elitism superimposed on non-Western conditions. This structure has hence been blindly and ignorantly appropriated by Eastern scholars, and applied to Eastern contexts, undermining the opportunity to envisage the ensemble of quintessential factors that constitute elitism in the Eastern sense. The next section will discuss such a pre-modern Eastern context.

**Kandyan Kingdom: A discrete existence**

Iberian-Portugal from 1498, gradually composed a vast seaborne Empire in the form of loosely-knit military and trading outposts over the Indian Ocean region, and formed Lisbon as their hierarchical centre. This act could be perceived as the stepping stone of the attempts by the capitalist Western-

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world, to pursue their ego-centric future fulfillments. This could furthermore, be envisaged as the pioneering instigation of Euro-centrism, that was brought to a point of culmination by the 19th century.
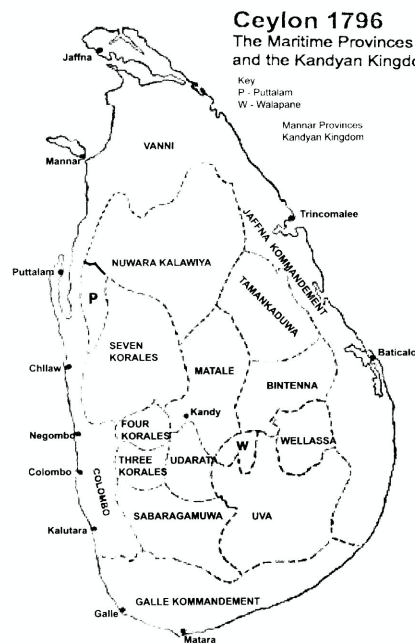


Map showing the land-locked status of Kandyan regions by 1796

**Source: Ceylon Under the British**

The Portuguese who had been controlling maritime Ceylon since 1505 were superseded by the Dutch – a Western European capitalist force – that had consolidated to the Eastern colonial forefront by the mid 17th century. Although the Dutch V.O.C (The East India Company) managed to completely oust Portuguese from Ceylon to acquire their territories, they failed miserably to penetrate the interior. This was owing to the persisting resistance of the Kandyan Kingdom, located in the hostile geographic region of central hill-country. This Kingdom had been originally formed as Senkadagalapura during the reign of Vikramabahu III of Gampola in the mid 14th century, and later was formed as a revolt-territory that resisted Maritime Portuguese rule by King Wimaladharmasooriya-I in 1590. King Rajasinghe II, a latter ruler of the Kingdom, signed a treaty with the Dutch and collaborated to successfully annihilate the Portuguese from maritime Ceylon by 1658 (de Silva, 1981: 133-134).[4] This treaty however, was circumvented by the shrewd Dutch administration later on, as they feared it favored Kandyans more. Consequently, the abhorrence between the two parties eventually led to war, and hostilities prevailed in the form of occasional assault on one another, for decades. However, toward the closing years of Dutch occupation in Ceylon (by 1796), the Kandyans had lost all their maritime possessions to the V.O.C, and were land-locked in the central hill country itself (Pakeman, 1970: 68-69), leading to unprecedented austerity after centuries.[5] The last time that a Sinhalese monarchy may have faced such a condition was probably before the 15th century, during Dravidian invasions from Southern India. The following written testament by a soldier of the British army that took over the maritime regions from the Dutch in 1796, writing in 1803 (Perera, 1994: 147), articulates the solitary position of the Kingdom. " I have often heard persons, unacquainted with the interior of Ceylon, express their surprise that a tract of land in the heart of the island, cut off from all external supplies, and everywhere surrounded by European settlements, should so long have remained in the hands of a people neither strong nor warlike, in spite of repeated efforts to wrest it from them". James Cordiner (1807:103), a Britisher who visited the kingdom shortly afterwards, best-describes in his descriptive writings, its modestly-globalized position. However, in 1796, at the point where British acquired Dutch-held maritime regions, Kandyan kingdom still possessed the bulk of island's land mass, which had been sub-divided into twenty one grand divisions.

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## Understanding Kandyan Elitism

### Historical making of stable structures

In medieval Ceylon, Elitism was essentially a factor that had been empowered by feudalism, which in turn was backed by the primordial caste-system. Ceylon had originally received the fourfold Indian caste system with the waves of immigrations that occurred predominantly from Western, Eastern and South-Eastern parts of India, as far as the 9th century B.C; with the most documented affair taking place in the 5th century B.C., as the arrival of prince Vijaya of the *Simha* (Lion) tribe, along with a contingent of five hundred (de Silva, 2008). With the advent during Anuradhapura period in the 3rd century B.C., of the philosophical doctrine of Buddhism that subverts the concept of caste, the Sinhalese consequently developed their unique equivalent to the Indian caste system. The royal family, essentially of warrior (*Kshatriya)* origin (always directly traceable to Northern Indian Aryan Royal bloodlines), and aristocrats (close relatives of king who were made highest officials of the Kingdom), made the uppermost echelons of the Anuradhapura period, while the majority of the populace was engaged in paddy cultivation as their main means of livelihood. Even the artisans that immigrated with Prince Vijaya, and the ones to have done afterwards, were placed at the same level in the social strata as the farmers. Documented historical evidence such as *Mahavamsa* – the comprehensive and continuous inscriptions from the 2nd century B.C., of the Buddhist monastery of *Maha Vihara* of Anuradhapura – makes references to the feeble class distinction between aristocrats and masses in the historic city, in periods of great prosperity which saw the culmination of Buddhism. The strong social and economic structures that ensued during the Anuradhapura period perpetuated for one and half millennia, until Southern Indian invasions prompted the Sinhalese seat of power to shift via Polonnaruwa, Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Gampola, Kurunegala and Kotte respectively, until Kandy became the concluding destination. Schumpeter's propagation that, "Social structures, types and attitudes are coins that do not readily melt. Once they are formed they persist, possibly for centuries...," (Shumpeter, 1942: 12-13)[6], which indeed, is affirmative with relation to ancient Ceylon. The essence (the basic structure) of strong social and economic systems that developed during Anuradhapura was sustained down into the Kandyan period; having survived continuous South Indian and European interventions for nearly a millennium. However, the overwhelming South Indian fervor that has always persisted in the backdrop (owing to cultural and trading ties) penetrated this structure, and revived to a substantial extent, the once-subverted caste system, by the time of forming of the Kandyan Kingdom. Socio-economic and administrative structures of the Kingdom have been documented by numerous Westerners who manage to visit it during the course of 18th and 19th centuries. Despite the apparent contiguity to Said's Orientalism (2003), their well-documented affairs best manifest the socio-cultural, economic and administrative structures as well as architectural practices of the Kandyan provinces before 1796, and concretize the ever-existing cultural clash between West and the East.

### Social structure

When the Kingdom of Kandy was enjoying a spell of economic and military successes in the mid 17th century, its political, economic and administrative structures were also at their heights. In Kandyan social structure, the cultivator caste (majority) was second only to the Royal caste, to which the King and his immediate family circle belonged. The cultivators, referred to as *'Govigamas'* that relegated all service castes to the peripheries of society, was then divided into *'Radala'* (nobles), *'Sitanos'* (merchants) and ordinary peasants (Perera, 1991:57).[7] The Royal caste still had genealogical *Kshatriya* (warrior) origins in the subcontinent, while the majority of numerous service castes (of specialist and ritual services) could be traced back to Southern India; Malabar and Coromandel coasts in particular (Roberts, 1982:1). A faction of cultivators was given high administrative and social positions by King in addition to close relatives of his, while some were appointed as petty officials. It was these highest ranks of administrative and social nature that made *Govigamas* either *Radalas* or *Sitanos* respectively. The Kandyan caste system, analogous to counterparts found in neighboring India, led to very unique

social and administrative structures of its own. It is pertinent to mention that Kandyan Kingdom, as a landlocked and oblivious entity, the only apparent alien influences it received was possibly from the Southern Indian states, South-East Asia, as well as the Muslim traders (mainly from Southern India [originally from the Middle East], and also South-east Asia) who freely moved from the coast to the interiors. Conversely, the maritime regions were experiencing a rigorous level of globalization in comparison owing to colonial practices.

## Administrative & economic structures

With relation to administrative structure, the King was considered the supreme ruler of the kingdom who had to assure the protection of Sinhalese culture and the state religion of Buddhism. Hence, the appropriation of Lord Buddha's tooth relic symbolized the patronage of the *Sangha* (the Buddhist Order) towards the monarchy, and its acceptance by the populace; both factors vital for the affirmation of legitimacy. Under the King, the administrative structure contained the first *Adigar* (the Prime Minister) and also other *Adigars* (mainly two Chief Ministers or *Maha Adigars* and a 3rd *Adigar* who was also termed *Maha Nilame*) exercising great power and influence. They were the principal ministers and the high judiciary of the kingdom (Madugalle, 2005: 28). As Perera elaborates (1991: 47-48), out of the twenty one Kandyan grand divisions, nine smaller provinces (Districts) of the Kingdom's interior were termed *'Ratas*, and administered by *Rate Mahattayas*, while twelve of the more extensive regions that surrounded *Ratas*, were referred to as *'Disas'* or *'Disavanes'*, administered by *Disavas* or provincial governors. Although de Silva (2010) suggests that both positions were parallel in the hierarchy, Madugalle (2005) seems to think otherwise. The former also tells us that *Muhandirams* were appointed as heads of various departments in the King's court and shared more or less the same privileges as *Disavas* and *Rate Mahattayas*. On the other hand, there were officials of the palace establishment, revenue administration and chief temple authorities known as *Nilames* (Madugalle, 2005: 26-31), who were also influential in the Kingdom's affairs. By drawing an analogy with the Western-derived elite structure mentioned at the beginning of the paper, all these positions in Kandyan administrative hierarchy could be discerned as political or the governing elite.

Under *Disavas* and *Rate Mahattayas*, were minor officials such as *Koralas* (in charge of fairly large areas of *Korales*, consisting of a number of villages), *Vidanes* (in charge of cultivation and tax collection of a number of villages), and finally, *Arachchis* (the protectors of the village or traditional village chiefs). *Vidanes* were in charge of various service cadres belonging to a number of service castes while *Arachchis* were responsible for each service caste. Apart from such positions, there were *Maha Mohottalas* and *Mohottalas*; free-yeomen with their very own land which they cultivated exempt from taxes payable to King's treasury. As de Silva (2010) tells us, at times, they were made Muhandirams. Furthermore, according to Madugalle (2005: 29), they were also given lower ranks of district administration to be titles as *Disawe Mohottalas* of certain *Disawanes*. de Silva (2010) also states that a step above the ordinary cultivator caste peasant was the *'Ralas'*, who were relatively wealthy and respectable. They are not to be mistaken with the ones to share the same titular name who held certain minor positions as lower district administrations (as *Rate Ralas*) or in the royal palace establishment (as *Talpath Wadana Rala, Muthukuda Rala* etc.), as Madugalle points out (2005: 26-33). *Rate Adikarams* were also a faction who held provincial judiciary positions. On the other hand, various secretary positions in the palace establishment, chief, commander, captain positions in the military establishments and chiefs (assistants) positions of district offices were given the name *'Lekam'*. It has to be noted here that all these were minor positions in the Kandyan administrative hierarchy. In this pre-modern context, a single group of people in power controlled the Kingdom's socio-economic aspects as a homogeneous political entity. As they were not rivaled or threatened by alternative groups with political ambitions – holding oppositional social and economic influences – the concept of the 'political class' cannot be applied here.

In the eyes of certain Westerners such as Cave (1894: 53-54), such a structure facilitated "...the worst excesses of unscrupulous tyrants..." to flourish over masses, operating on "harsh laws of the Sinhalese kings".

The administrative machinery functioned on a primordial land tenure system referred to as *'Raja Kariya'*, all the officials of high and low ranks as well as the cultivator caste peasants were provided with portions of land to make their livelihoods from paddy cultivation as the "staple food of the people" as John Davy (1969: 207), a British ambassador to the late 18th century Kandyan court wrote. The sizes of these land allocations were proportional to administrative ranks. The peasants worked these lands and also the ones of their respective lords' while "….a fixed share of their produce had to be yielded to their feudal over-lord generally a land owning chieftain or a Buddhist monastery" (Pakeman, 1970: 127). If this is to be further-elaborated, the power over whole of Kandyan territory's land was vested in the king, and its ownership was efficiently distributed as an ensemble of villages of varying sizes. *Gabadagam* villages to supply all requirements of the palace, *Viharagam* villages dedicated to Buddhist temples and monasteries, *Devalagam* villages belonging to temples dedicated to various deities, *Nindagam-* villages which were the property of granters or temporary chiefs, and finally, *Vidanagam* villages under the petty administrative position of *Vidanes* (Perera, 1991: 50). Hence, a periodic tax referred to as the *'Agrabhagaya'* (the good portion), as de Silva (2010) tells us, was accumulated from all villages except for the first two categories, to be granted to the Royal treasury. The service castes provided their essential services as artisans in the self-sufficient Kandyan regions and were also allocated lands to live on and cultivate. The artisans lived as communities in villages and specialized in the manufacturing of different goods and services. They were allowed to trade their produce to obtain foodstuffs to make their living. The communities in villages belonging to temples were given sufficient rations for the ritual services that they rendered. Such communities according to Roberts (1995), engaged in agriculture as a parallel means of livelihood. The *Adigars* in most occasions were genealogically connected to the Royal family while other high administrative positions of *Disaves*, *Rate Mahattayas, Muhandiram, Nilames* etc. were given to certain *Radala* groups within the cultivator caste. In relation to the Kandyan system, all such positions that had direct access to political and economic means, which allows the exercising of substantial levels of social influence, could hence be conceived as Kandyan elites in the Western sense. All positions below these ranks, yet above the one of cultivator peasants – making the liaison between the two groups – rationally become sub-elites or the 'middle class' (in contemporary terms).



This photograph best illustrates the hierarchical differentiation between Kandyan elites and sub-elites, from semiotics of the outfit to ritual command.
The well-dressed elite in this photograph is seated in the middle, surrounded by the two peasants as well as the symbolic contents such as the *'Sesath'*, while the less-glamorous sub-elite stands on the left.

**Source: www.Lankapura.com**

## A brief comparison

However, the most pertinent factor with relation to Kandyan economic frame work is that, taxation was never a rigid practice. de Silva (2009) affirms, "it was never clearly laid-down", and predominantly depended on the nature of harvest as well as the prevailing economic conditions. It was merely a means to sustain a political and economic system, which was formed and delimited by a culture, which was essentially moulded on two conspicuous Eastern religions (mainly Buddhism and vestiges of Hinduism). The production sectors of agriculture and manufacturing of goods were never meant to form surplus values but subsistent levels. Although the system superfluously appears to be facile and unjust – as it forced people to remain within their marginalized castes, and allowed certain privileges to the governing elites who seemingly exploited them – it was more or less static in the long run. Henceforth, it shared no underlying similarities with European modernity dictated by capitalism, which always strives on exploitative growth. The Westerners hence discerned Kandyan structures to possess no potential for "further exertion" and confirmed it to be an existence of "easy apathy" (Cordiner, 1807: 105). However, such Western inculcations could be questioned in light of Michel Foucault. He postulates that, in the "panoptic" modern-age (which is the culmination of European-instigated Modernity), the "great confinement" has contained the society through relentless categorization (see Jose: 1998). The origin of systematic categorizations in fact, could be traced back to the 19th century, where colonialism was at its helm. Conversely, situations analogous to the 18th century Kandy examined here existed throughout the pre-modern world, where people were only subjected to intermittent suppression. However, the level of human suppression has been gradually exacerbated in the name of Modernity over the years. Consequently, by contemporary times, individuals have been directly brought under the "eye of power".

## Possible Outside Influences on Kandyan Architecture

By the late 18th century, the building traditions of Kandy, as an intrinsic traditional element of its unique culture, had evolved to a particular state to manifest a unique identity. However, it is pertinent to consider the fact that, by this time, Sinhalese architecture in the Kandyan regions had been exposed various outside influences (Lewcock et al., 2002: 20); affirming the primordial nature of globalization. Kandy (*Kande* in Sinhalese giving the meaning of mountain) was formed as a kingdom during the Portuguese-era as a independent state which opposed Portuguese colonial rule by a monarchy that fled from Portuguese-held *Kotte* (in the maritime regions near present day capital Colombo). Hence, possible architectural influence that they may have carried with them to Kandy from the Portuguese-maritime cannot be negated. The Dutch who gradually took-over from the Portuguese had good diplomatic and trading relations with Kandyan monarchy for decades, before relations deteriorated towards the end of the 18th century. For a certain period, the Dutch acknowledged their subordinate status to the Kandyan king, for example, by facilitating an array of diplomatic missions ranging from offering their services to Kandyan religious missions to South East-Asia to paying of annual stipends of gratitude etc. Owing to these relations, the influence of Dutch period architecture that was well-established in the maritime, on its Kandyan counterpart is rationally inevitable. However, some scholars such as Jayawardene (1984: 51-54, 120-121) question the Dutch contribution towards island's architecture and attributes the term 'Dutch Architecture' in Ceylon to J. P. Lewis. Lewis was a British civil servant working in Ceylon who, without any substantial research, assumed that the Dutch were responsible for the rich architectural tradition that existed in Ceylon by the time the British arrived. This idea has been blindly followed by Sri Lankan academics and Fonseka (1978: 6) laments for their failure over the decades, to differentiate between the Portuguese, Dutch and indigenous contents in this architecture. De Vos (2010) in fact, suggests that the Dutch simply dwelt on the rich tradition that the Portuguese before them had developed, by intermingling indigenous and their own traditions. Their own may have been from Portugal itself – where Jayewardene (1984: 120-121) has drawn an analogy with architectural

elements found in popular domestic realm in Lisbon with the so-called Dutch period architecture in Ceylon – or alternatively, from other Portuguese colonies such as Goa.

On the other hand, Muslims who had engaged in trading activities for centuries in Ceylon may be another factor of possible influence on Kandyan architecture. They were blockaded after the Portuguese seized the island's coastal line and were consequently compensated by the Kandyan King Senarath I by settling them down (mainly in the Eastern regions of the country) as well as allowing them to conduct commercial activities with Kandyan regions. However, the bulk of such alien influences were directly dealt with by the Kandyan state itself, and not by the masses. Hence, the possible alien architectural traditions to have appropriated could be deductively attributed to Kandyan grand design tradition; culturally delimited to Royal and religious edifices. The incongruous factor about the Kandyan Kingdom was that the buildings of even its elites and sub-elites were put in contiguity to those of the masses via employing vernacular tradition. Yet, the masses were further-relegated to primitive vernacular forms whilst the elite and sub-elite, especially the former, were allowed by the King himself, to appropriate certain elements of the jealously-guarded Kandyan grand design tradition.[8] Henceforth, even a trickle-down effect of grand design traditions to the non-elite masses through emulation was annihilated. From an ensemble of evidence adduced from Western European situations such as Britain and France in the modern era, where the aristocrats and bourgeoisie (elites and sub-elites of society) as well as the Royals were franchised to utilize grand design tradition at their free will as Evans (1993: 55-91) illustrates, the medieval Kandyan situation is a clear contrast. The flexibility of the Western situation could be postulated to capitalist and egoistic thinking that has overshadowed Western cultures for half a millennium. The geocentricism spawned in the Modern-era West will be elaborated later in the paper.

Moreover, the Kingdom from its humble beginnings had always maintained cultural and commercial ties with the Southern Indian states that did not diminish even after becoming landlocked. Although scholarly speculations concurrently prevail, and valid analogies between cultural and high cultural architectural ties of Kandy and the Southern Indian states (Kerala in particular) have been drawn in the Sri Lankan architectural rhetoric, which has never been sufficiently looked into. However, the close relations that existed between the Kandyan royal blood lines and also of the aristocracy with Southern India provide backing to such speculations.

## Factors behind House Form

Rapoport (1969) adduces valid examples from around the globe, from different periods in human history, to affirm culture to be the foremost factor in moulding the built form, while all other alternative factors, especially the environment, becomes secondary. His canon could be logically attributed as being ideologically-neutral (as it does not advocate merely a Western point of view on the discourse), as the sited examples not only come from the Western world, but also from all over the East and elsewhere. With relation to the Kandyan situation, with the absence of other possible alternative determiners affecting the built form such as economy, defence etc., the second most conspicuous factor could be envisaged as its climate. Why such factors did not become seminal determiners will be addressed later on.

## Cultural Factors

## Beliefs:

A clear analogy could be drawn between Kandyan built form and Rapoport's propagation, as it is culture in general terms, was predominantly based on the philosophical doctrine of Buddhism as well as for other sets of beliefs more closely associated to ever-present influence of Hinduism. These beliefs were carried down from generation to generation through tradition, and varied from one cultural group to another. As Nimal De Silva validly postulates, "The traditional house that has existed in Sri Lanka for more than two thousand years was an outcome of a strong philosophy of Buddhistic life - i.e. the

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# තන්තිරිමලේටත් පුරාවිද්‍යා කෞතුකාගාරයක්

2012 වර්ෂයේ අනුරාධපුර ඔයාමඩුවේ පවත්වන ලද දෑයට කිරුළ ප්‍රදර්ශනයට සමගාමී ව අමාත්‍යාංශයේ මග පෙන්වීම මත පුරාවිද්‍යා දෙපාර්තමේන්තුවේ සෘජු දායකත්වය යටතේ අනුරාධපුර තන්තිරිමලය පුදබිමේ සංරක්ෂණ කටයුතු ගණනාවක් සිදුකරනු ලබ ඇත. තන්තිරිමලේ මෙවැනි ප්‍රතිසංස්කරණයක් සිදුවන්නේ එහි ආරම්භයෙන් පසුව යැයි කීම වරදක් නොවේ. මේ නිසා වස ගණනාවකින් පිළිසකර නොවුණු බොහෝ පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක ස්මාරක සංරක්ෂණ කිරීමේ අවශ්‍යතාවය දැඩි ලෙස පැන නැගී තිබිණ.

**2 පිටුවට**

### මහාචාර්ය සෙනරත් පරණවිතාන මාවත
පැරණි සියවස් මාවත මහාචාර්ය සෙනරත් පරණවිතානයන්ගේ නාමයට



දේශීය සංචාරකයන් සීගිරිය නැරඹීම සඳහා පැමිණෙන පැරණි සියවස් මාවත "මහාචාර්ය සෙනරත් පරණවිතාන මාවත" නමින් නම් කිරීම පසුගියදා සිදුවිය. පුරාවිද්‍යා සතිය නිමිත්තෙන් සංවිධානය වූ මෙම වැඩසටහ- නේදී ජාතික උරුමයන් පිළිබඳ ගරු අමාත්‍ය අචාර්ය ජගත් බාලසූරිය මහතා මෙසේ ප්‍රකාශ කළේ ය.

"සීගිරිය පර්වතය හා බැඳී පැවති මහාචාර්ය සෙනරත් පරණවිතානයන් ලක් දෙරණින් බිහි වූ සුවිශේෂී මිනිසෙක්. මෙතුමාගේ ජීවිතයේ සමීප සම්බන්ධතාවක් සීගිරිය සමග පැවතිණ. දෙස් විදෙස් විද්වතුන්ට සීගිරිය ගැන තොරතුරු ප්‍රකාශ කිරීමට මෙතුමා මහත් වෑයමක් දැරූ

අතර තම ජීවිතයේ එක් කොටසක් වශයෙන් සීගිරියට ආදරය කළේ ය. මේ ලක්දෙරණේ බිහි වූ යුග පුරුෂයාන්ගේ නාමය සදාකාලික ව පවතිනු ඇත".

මහාචාර්ය සෙනරත් පරණවිතානයන්ගේ ජීවිතේ වැඩි කොටසක් සීගිරියේ කැණීම් හා සංරක්ෂණ කටයුතු සඳහා කැප කළ අතර අපේ රටේ ප්‍රෞඪ ඉතිහාසය ලෝකයට ගෙන හැර දැක්වීමට උනන්දු වූ යුග පුරුෂයකු බව පුරාවිද්‍යා අධ්‍යක්ෂ ජනරාල් සෙනරත් දිසානායක මහතා ප්‍රකාශ කළේ ය.

පුරාවිද්‍යා සතිය නිමිත්තෙන් සමරු මුද්දරක් නිකුත් කිරීම ද මෙහිදී සිදුවිය. එහි පළමු මුද්දරය නියෝජ්‍ය තැපැල්පති ආර්.ඩී.පී. ගාමිණි මහතා විසින් ජාතික උරුමයන් පිළිබඳ අමාත්‍යතුමා වෙත පිළිගැන්වී ය. මෙම අවස්ථාවට ජාතික උරුමයන් පිළිබඳ අමාත්‍යාංශයේ ලේකම් කාන්ති විජේතුංග මිය , මධ්‍යම සංස්කෘතික අරමුදලේ අධ්‍යක්ෂ ජනරාල් මහාචාර්ය ගාමිණි අධිකාරි මය , මධ්‍යම පළාත් පුරාවිද්‍යා කොමසාරිස් ඩී.ඩී. විජේපාල මය, දඹුල්ල නගරාධිපතිතුමන්, ප්‍රාදේශීය ලේකම් හා පළාත් සභා මන්ත්‍රීවරුන් ඇතුළු විශාල පිරිසක් සහභාගී විය.

# වියැකෙමින් පවතින ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ප්‍රභූ නිවාසයන්


සාමාන්‍ය ජනතාවගේ පාරම්පරික නිවස


නුවර යුගයට අයත් හතර ඇද නිවස


නුවර යුගයට අයත් වලව්වක්


ඕලන්ද යුගයට අයත් වලව්වක්


ඉංග්‍රීසි සමයට අයත් රජයේ බංගලාව


ඉංග්‍රීසි සමයට අයත් "මැනර් හවුස්" මාදිලියේ නිවාසයක්

සාධකය හමුවන්නේ කිතුල්ගල බෙලිලේනෙනි. ආචාර්ය ශිරාන් දැරණියගල විසින් සොයා ගන්නා ලද මෙහි ගල් පාදම වසර 13000ක් පමණ පැරණි බව කිය වේ. මීට අමතරව තනිංග්හෑමි විසින් අනුරාධපුරයේ දී සිදුකරන ලද කැණීම්වලින් මැටි යෙන් කරන ලද වෘත්තාකාර නිවාස සොයා ගැනිනි. නමුත් මෙම ජනාවාසයන්ට අදාළ සමාජ ස්තරායතන අපැහැදිලි බැවින් මේවා ප්‍රභූ නිවාස ය යන නිර්ණය කිරීම අපහසු වේ. පසුකාලීන ව අනුරාධපුර සහ පොලොන්නරු රාජධානිවලින් හමුවන බොහෝ මයක් ගොඩනැගිලි සිංහල මහා සිරිතට (Grand Design Tradition) අනුව නිර්මාණය වූ පූජා ස්ථාන සහ රජ මාළිගා බව පැහැදිලි ය. මීට සමකාලීනව ප්‍රාදේශීය වෙනස්කම් (regional variation) මත නිර්මාණය වූ පොදු ජනතාවගේ නිවාසයන් ද පැවති අතර ඉතා තාක්ෂණයක් උපයෝගී කර ගනිමින් සැකසූ මෙම ගෘහයන් වූ සිරිතට අදාළ කදිම උදාහරණ වේ.

දිවයිනේ ප්‍රභූ නිවාසයන්හි විකාශනය පිළිබඳ යම් තාක් දුරට හෝ සඳහන් කර ඇත්තේ මහාචාර්ය සෙනරත් පරණවිතාන සහ ආනන්ද කුමාරස්වාමි යන ඉතිහාසඥයන් පමණි. මොවුන් දෙදෙනා පිළිවෙළින් අනුරාධපුර සහ මහනුවර යුගයන්හි ප්‍රභූ නිවාස ගැන පැහැදිලි කළ ද මේ අතර තුර කාලපරිච්ඡේදයන් එහි ස්වභාවය අපැහැදිලි ය. කෙසේ වෙතත් කුමාරස්වාමිගේ **'මධ්‍ය කාලීන සිංහල කලා'** කෘතියේ එන සිංහල ගැමි නිවාස මධ්‍යම සමාජ ස්තරායතනවලට අයත් ගොවි ජනතාවගේ බව අවධාරණය කළ යුතු වේ. එම නිවාස ආකෘතිය වර්තමානයේ දී පවා අතීත නුවර රාජධා- නියට අයත් ප්‍රදේශවල දක්නට ලැබෙන 'හතර ඇද ගෙදර' ලක්ෂණයන්ට සමාන ය. නමුත් මෙවැනි උදර උරුමයන් බටහිර නූතනත්වය නිසාවෙන් දිනෙන් වියැකී යනු ඇත.

උස් වූ අත්තිවාරමක් මත හතරැස් හැඩයක් ගන්නා මෙම 'හතර ඇද ගෙදර' බාහිරට අවම ලෙස විවෘත වේ. මෙහි සැලැස්ම ඉතා සරල ස්වරූපයක් ගනී. හතරැස් මැද මිදුලක් හා ඒ වටා වූ ඉස්තෝප්පුවක් ද කාමර එකක් හෝ දෙකක් මේවා සමන්විත ය. එසේ ම මේවායේ දොර ජනෙල ද අඩු ප්‍රමාණයක් සහිත ය. නිවාසවල වටිනාකම හොඳහැඳින වර්තමාන උරුමකරුවන් තමන්ගේ ම සමාජ තත්ත්වයන් පෙන්වීමේ අරමුණින් මේවායෙහි ඇති දැව, ගල්, වැනි දේ නවීන නිවාස සඳහා යොදා ගැනීම ද අද දක්නට ලැබේ. රොනල්ඩ් ලෙවිකොට් ඇතුළු පිරිසට අනුව 'වලව්ව' යනු මෙහිම පුනර්භාවිත වූ තරමක් විශාල නිවාස ය.

නුවර යුගයේ සාදන ලද වලව් බොහෝ මයක් පසුකාලීනව පහතරට වෙරළබඩ සහ ඉංග්‍රීසි ගෘහ නිර්මාණීය ලක්ෂණ ගෙන ඇති බව පෙනේ. උස් බිත්ති සහ මැද මිදුල් කිහිපයක් ද ඒ ආශ්‍රිත ඉස්තෝප්පුවක් ද සමග සිංහල උළු සහිත පැරණි වලව් වත්මනේ දී බාහිරට විවෘත පැහැදිලි මුහුණතක් ද දොර ජනෙල් ගණනක් කුලුඟුවක් මගින් යුරෝපීය ආරක් පෙන්වයි. විශේෂයෙන්ම පෘතුගීසි, ලන්දේසි යුගවල දී ප්‍රචලිත වූ පිටතට ආවරණය වූ ඉස්තෝප්පු, රුවම් උළු හා සුඳුනු පිරියම් කළ නිවාසවල යුරෝපයේ පෘතුගාලය, ස්පාක්ඤය වැනි ප්‍රදේශවල ආභාෂයන් දැකිය හැකි ය.

කෙසේ වෙතත් මෙම නිවාසවල සිංහල ගෘහ නිර්මාණ ශිල්පයේ කැපී පෙනෙන ලක්ෂණයක් වූ ස්වාභාවිකත්වය ඉක්මවමින් යුරෝපීය පුරුදන ලක්ෂණ ඉස්මතුවීමක් පෙන්නුම් කරයි. ස්වාභාවධර්මය සමග එක්වෙමින් සාමූහික පවුල් ජීවිතයක් උදෙසා සමානාත්මතාවය පෙරදැරිකරගත් බෞද්ධ අගයන් සහිත ම සිංහල ගැමි සමාජය යුරෝපිය බලපෑම් හමුවේ තවදුරටත් නිම නොවුණි. පෞද්ගලිකත්වය මත පදනම් වූ අවකාශ ද ගෘහ භාණ්ඩ ද, වෙනත් අවශ්‍යතා සඳහා ගැළපෙන අවකාශ ද, මේ යුගයේ දී නිවාසවලට එකතු විය. පාරම්පරික ව නිවාස සඳහා භාවිත වූ අමුද්‍රව්‍ය එම නිර්මාණයන් අනුව නුවර යුගයේ දී නිවාස බොහෝමයක් වරිච්චි හෝ මැටි/හුණු බදාමයෙන් බැදි ගල් යෙදු අතර වෙරළබඩ

පළාත්වල නිවාස සඳහා හිරිගල්/කබොක් යොදා ගැනුනි.

නුවර යුගයට සමගාම ව වෙරළබඩ ප්‍රදේශයන් හි ලන්දේසි ආභාෂය ගත් නිවාස බොහෝ ය. ගාල්ල, මාතර ප්‍රදේශවලින් මෙවැනි නිවාස දක්නට ලැබුනද පෘතුගීසි ආභාෂය ලත් නිවාස සොයා ගැනීම තරමක් අසිරු ය. ඇෂ්ලි ඩී වෝෂ් සහ එල්.ජේ. බේකර් ට අනුව ලන්දේසි ගෘහ නිර්මාණ ශිල්පයේ ම අවිච්ඡේදිත පැතිකඩත් වන අතර අධිරාජ්‍යවාදි පාලනය යටතේ දේශීය, විදේශීය ප්‍රභූන් විසින් මෙම ක්‍රම දෙක ම අනුකරණය කරන ලද. සාමාන්‍ය ජනතාවගේ නිවාසවල මෙබඳු ලක්ෂණ නොමැති වූ අතර ඉංග්‍රීසින්ගේ පාලනය ආරම්භ වීමත් සමග ම ලාංකීය ප්‍රභූ නිවාසයන් මං පෙතක් විවර වී ය.

19 වන ශත වර්ෂයේ මුල භාගය වන විට ඉන්දියාවට ඇති වූ ඉංග්‍රීසි දේශපාලන ආධිපත්‍ය සහ එම සියවසේම මැද භාගය වන විට වතු ආර්ථික ප්‍රතිලාභත් සමග ඉංග්‍රීසි පාලකයන් විසින් 'බංගලාව' ලංකාවට හඳුන්වා දෙන ලද. ලාංකීය පරිසරය, දේශපාලන රාමුව හා සංස්කෘතිය අනුව හැඩගැසුණු මොවුන් විසි වන නිවාස ආරම්භ වන බැවින් ම ප්‍රමාණයෙන්, අලංකාරයෙන් මෙන් ම සැප පහසු බැවින් ද දියුණු වෙමින් යුරෝපිය සම්භවය ලක්ෂණ තවදුරටත්. ඉස්මතු කර ගන්නේ ධනවාදය ආරූඪ කර ගනිමිනි.

1920 ගණන් වන විට පසුගිය සියවස තුළ ව්‍යාපාරික ක්ෂේත්‍ර ඔස්සේ ධනපතියන් විසින් යටත් විජිත නිවාස සම්ප්‍රදායන් අනුකරණයෙන් සාදන ලද නිවාස කොළඹ ඇතුළ විවිධ නගරවලින් සොයා ගත හැකිය. ඇතැම් නිවාස එංගලන්තයේ "මැනර් හවුස්" මාදිලියේ ප්‍රභූ නිවාස අනුසාරයෙන් නිමැවූ අතර මධ්‍යම සමාජ පන්තිවල ජනතාව තම පාරම්පරික ලක්ෂණ හා ඉහත සඳහන් යුරෝපිය ලක්ෂණ ද සම්මිශ්‍රණය කොට නිවාස නිමැවී ය. විවෘත ආර්ථික ප්‍රතිපත්තිය නිසා පාරම්පරික වැඩ වසම් ක්‍රමය බිඳ වැටීම හා වේගවත් නාගරීකරණය ද නිවාසයන් හි විපර්යාසයන්ට හේතු විය. ස්වාභාවික අමුද්‍රව්‍ය වෙනුවට කෘතිම අමුද්‍රව්‍යත් දේශීය දෑ වෙනුවට ආනයනික දෑ යොදා ගැනීමත් මෙම වකවා- නුවේ දී සිදු විය. මේ යුගයේ දී සිදුවූ තවත් වෙදගත් කමක් නම් කුල ක්‍රමය මත පදනම් වූ ප්‍රභූ නිවාස සියල් ම රටවැසියන්ට එක ලෙස භාවිත කිරීමට හැකිවීමයි. මෙහිදී සංඛ්‍යාත්මක කුලය නොව ආර්ථිකය මත පදනම් වූ පන්තිය වැදගත් විය.

1948 දී නිදහස ලැබීමෙන් පසුවද ප්‍රභූ හා මධ්‍යම පාන්තික නිවාස සඳහා යුරෝපීය බලපෑම ම පැවතිනි. පශ්චාත් නිදහස් යුගයේ ප්‍රධානම ප්‍රභූ නිවාස ශෛලිය වූයේ පී. ඩබ්. ඩී. නිවාසි (P.W.D. Style) මෙවන් නිවාසවල අලංකාරය සඳහා දේශීය පාරම්පරික මෝස්තර රටා ද යුරෝපිය සම්භවයෙන් 'ආර්ට් ඩෙකර්' (Art décor) වැනි ශෛලීන් ද යොදා ගැනිනි. 1956 දී සිංහල ජාතිකවාදි මුල් ධාරාවේ දේශපාලනය සමාජ වශයෙන් ගෘහ නිර්මාණ ශෛලියේ නවමු පිටුවකට දේශීය ශිල්පීන් අත තබන තුරු ම දිවයිනේ ප්‍රභූ නිවාසයන්ගේ කතිකාවත මෙය විය.

වාණිජකරණය මගින් සීඝ්‍රයෙන් අත්පත් කරගන්නා ප්‍රභූ නිවාස යන දේශීය උරුමය මත පරාපුර ආරක්ෂා සඳහා අරගළ කිරීම මහත් වගකීමකි. විද්වතුන් ලෙස සංරක්ෂණය හා ලේඛගත කිරීම අප විසින් නිසි ලෙස ඉටු නොකළහොත් අන්තර් ජාතික ශෛලියේ නිවාස මාදිලි විසින් අපගේ පාරම්පරික උරුමයන් නිරායාස- යෙන් ම බිලි ගනු නිසැක ය. එපමණක් නොව ඉහත සඳහන් විවිධ වකවානුවලට අයත් ප්‍රභූ නිවාස සඳහා මුඑ පරපුරට දක්නට ලැබෙන ඇත්තේ දේශීය ආභාෂයන්ගෙන් ඔප්වත් වුණු විදේශීය අනුරූපකයන් ය. මෙවන් සන්දර්භයකදී ජාතික උරුමයන් පිළිබඳ අමාත්‍යාංශයට ද මේ සම්බන්ධව ඇත්තේ විශේෂ වගකීමක් බව අවධාරණය කළ යුතු ය

ආචාර්ය නිශාන් රසාංග විජේතුංග
(වරලත් ගෘහ නිර්මාණ ශිල්පි)

වසර 2500ක් තරම් පැරණි ලිඛිත ඉතිහාසයකට උරුමකම් කියන ලංකාද්වීපය පුරා විවිධ වකවානුවල දී නිර්මාණය වූ පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක සහ ගෘහවිද්‍යාත්මක වටිනාකමින් යුත් පැරණි නිවාස බොහෝ වෙයි. මේ අතර ආදිවාසි ජනාවාස යැයි සැලකිය හැකි ස්ථාන කිහිපයක් සොයාගෙන තිබුණා ද, ගෘහ නිර්මාණ ශිල්පිය වටිනාකමින් යුත් පැරණිම