

The British Education System and the Cultural Dilemma: in the light of the Depiction in Early Sinhala Fictions (1866-1906)

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Abstract: - A fiction or a novel as of its particularity in time and place owes a considerable allegiance to social reporting and social history. This research article will attempt therefore to discuss the British education system, its influence on early Sinhala fiction writers that typing the cultural dilemma of English educated Sri Lankans who increasingly felt that within the very education that they had so perseveringly and admiringly perused, lay hidden the spiritual and cultural disintegration. This spiritual dilemma was obvious in Sri Lankan context where Conqueror's language (English) enthroned by law as the official language, the most important medium of instruction in school. This covers the period of writing as many major Sinhala fiction writers like Lindamulage Isac de Silva, Rev. H. Kannangara and Piyadāsa Sirisēna have published their fictions as a way of propagation of Traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture and the newly introduced Western culture along with Christianity. These fictions with considerable allegiance to social reporting and social history have depicted the cultural dilemma of the contemporary Sri Lankan society particularly as a result of the replacement of the traditional temple education prevailed in Sri Lanka by British education system. This paper will deliberate the British education System, its influence on early Sinhala fiction writers. For this qualitative research documented data were collected referring to education reports such as Morgan education report, books, magazine original fictions and web based resources. The conclusion is that the British education system and the Sinhala fiction has the similar aim of propagating culture which has resulted the internal dilemma of the society being between two cultures; traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture and that of Western. While propagating their culture the early Sinhala fiction writers subject to this research have made an effort to depict the cultural dilemma through their characters.

Key words: Cultural dilemma, Cultural disintegration, British education system, Sinhala Buddhist Culture, Western culture

I. INTRODUCTION

The duration from 1866 to 1906 could be considered as the period of massive changes in all facets of society, namely the economy and culture of Sri Lanka. This study attempts to identify the British education system enthroned by colonial rulers in Sri Lanka in 1796 and its impact resulting the cultural dilemma in the Sri Lankan Society. This study focuses on the depiction of the cultural dilemma of the Sri Lankan Society in early Sinhala fictions.

"The concept of culture is used by different people in different ways. For instance, anthropologists see culture as the central

organizing concept in their discipline. For them, culture refers to the pattern of beliefs and values, reflected in artifacts, objects, and institutions that are passed on from generation to generation"¹. Culture is defined in the dictionary of Sociology as "A collective name for all behavior patterns socially acquired and transmitted by means of symbols; hence a name for all the distinctive achievements of human groups, including not only such items as language, tool making, industry art, science, law, government, morals and religion, but also the material instruments or aircraft in which cultural achievements are embodied and by which intellectual cultural features are given practical effect, such as buildings, tools, machines, communication devices, art objects....."²

As culture is transmitted by processes of teaching and learning, whether formal and informal, by what is called "inter learning" the essential part of culture is to be found in patterns embodied in the social tradition of the group, that is, the knowledge, ideas, beliefs, values, standards and sentiments prevalent in the group"³

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned, being Buddhist is inseparable from being Sinhalese, which is Sri Lanka's major ethnic group. With the advent of Europeans, particularly with the advent of British colonial rulers and with the propagation of Western education, this cultural identity was scattered into contrastive sets. The people in that society Sri Lanka therefore were in a cultural dilemma of being between two cultures; traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture and that of Western. This cultural dilemma in that society is depicted in contemporary Sinhalese fictions as a source of social cultural reporting.

II. METHODOLOGY

This explanatory study is based on the historiographical approach. The analysis of documents, cultural records and original texts (Fictions) was used as data collecting method. The qualitative content analysis method was deployed in analyzing documents.

III. DISCUSSION

British Education System and the Cultural Dilemma

It was during the British conquest that a stable and systematic education policy was introduced which brought about some

major transformation in the island. Because of this transformation, the static, agrarian society began to change into a more flexible, modernizing one⁴. “The Christian missionaries in their efforts to diffuse Christianity resorted to three major expedients: education, preaching and the press. The Buddhist reaction to missionary activities also occurred on all three fronts”⁵.

When British came to Ceylon in 1796, there was a very independent education pattern in temples which were acclaimed as education centers. British administration wanted to change this situation and use education as a vehicle for propagating Christianity and Western culture.

The Colonial secretary advised Governor Fredrick North “It is our further will and pleasure that no person shall be allowed to keep a school in the said settlement of the Island of Ceylon, without your license”⁶. Thus it is obvious that the British administration has not paid attention to the education afforded by the native priesthood in their temples for along period. British administration condemning the temple education, wanted to create an education system to make people fit to their administration and culture.

Sir Fredrick North took personal interest in the promotion of Christianity and education; consequently the short period of his administration initiated a revival of schools and the beginning of several new educational developments⁷.

On his arrival in October 1878, with the commencement of the “Dual Control” North discovered that the Dutch educational systems in those territories had been allowed to fall into disuse by the military governors of the company. Only a few schoolmasters continued to work, in spite of their not being paid by the Government⁸.

After the arrival of Rev. James Cordiner and the missionaries of the London Missionary Society at this time, North was able to overcome some difficulties and planned an education reconstruction in the settlements⁷. James Cordiner reorganized Parish schools with financial assistance from Governor North. The arrival of Rev. James Cordiner in the island could be considered a starting point of the reorganization of Parish schools. After his arrival, however, he was given the additional task of becoming the “Superintendent” of all the schools and the examiner of the candidates for the office of schools masters. With the arrival of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society in 1803, it became possible for North to get their assistance. The appointment of Cordiner as the principal of schools therefore initiated the state school system in the country⁹.

The second step in the parish schools was the appointment of preachers and Catechists to supervise the schools. The plan was to appoint one preacher to each of the principle towns. Cordiner records that Colombo, Negombo, Chilaw, Puttalam, Mannar, Jaffna, and Baticloa, each had a preacher as an officiating Clergyman to native Christians in the locality.

Every Sunday he had to hold divine service in one of the Churches in his area¹⁰.

The curriculum in Parish schools involved the reading of the Bible and the object of reviving the Parish Schools was to promote the growth of religious knowledge. Religious instruction took a prominent place in the curriculum.

The revival of the Parish schools was only a part of the plan of education reforms envisaged by North. While the parish schools were to give an elementary education in the vernacular to population North recognized the importance of making provision, for English education among better off in society. For this purpose he embarked on the building up of a superior schools system recommending to the British government the feasibility of giving scholarships for a selected few to go to England and receive University education¹¹.

These superior schools were of two kinds. There was the academy or seminary in Colombo that gave the highest possible education in the country. The other category of superior schools included the preparatory schools that performed a dual function of giving superior instruction as well as preparing candidates for the academy. The superior schools collectively served the purpose of providing well-qualified candidates for all the offices of the government that recruited from native families¹². Thus it is clear North’s ambition was to promote the Western education system in a Christian environment.

Education was the chief means by which the moral upliftment of the people was to be achieved. To the missionary in particular, education was significant for several reasons. It was primarily the means of bringing an understanding of God to the people. Hence in their relation with the state, the missionaries consistently pointed out that education was useful only when it was associated with religion. In the tone of self-assurance, characteristic of the missionary documents of the period, the missionaries declared that in education the moral as well as the intellectual faculties of the children should be developed and that the only basis and sanction of moral teaching is to be found in the grate truths of Christianity¹³.

So far as missionary methods were concerned, the missionaries believed that it was through the establishment of schools that a lasting impact on the population could be made. However, other traditional missionary techniques, like teaching in bazaars, house-to-house visits, and the distribution of tracts were not also considered although useless¹⁴.

“A school begun in any area of the country is like a letter of recommendation to the parents. It softness their prejudices and makes the missionary better known to the people.

Confided Rev. J. Allock of the C.M.S. to its general secretary C.C.Fenn. In 1880 Fenn himself declared that in no other mission had education been so instrumental in converting the people as in Ceylon”¹⁵. Thus, the colonial education system

was involved in diffusing Christianity and Western culture in Ceylon.

Although the government envisioned universal education in the vernaculars, the missionaries had already established a three tiered system of schools; English, Anglo vernacular and vernacular. Given the widely diffused feeling or conviction that the golden road of mobility was the acquisition of English, Vernacular schools where instruction was solely in the native language, were situated in the rural areas. All schools were fee levying but the English schools (existing only in the major towns and famously in the Northern Province) levied the highest.

They became the haven of the mobility conscious emerging Sri Lankan elite and were the despair of the rural poor. In this way Sri Lankans (quite apart from the issue of ethnicity) became two nations. The Buddhist “*pansala*” schools were neglected from roots of nationalism.

“In contrast to the absence of clearly defined educational plans at the beginning of British rule, in 1831 Colebrooke and Cameron laid down the lines on which government endeavors should be developed”¹⁶. They emphasized the importance of instruction in English because they believed that the Sri Lankans could not only fill the minor posts in governments service, but could Judges and members of the legislative council, Secondly, they believed that English education and the development of newspapers would create a changed climate of opinion more in sympathy with the ideas of the rulers and the reforms, which they were contemplating.

As a result of establishing English schools, vernacular education suffered. Significantly, the “Parish schools”, the only vernacular schools the government had maintained, had disappeared by 1833, and the “*pansala* education” was also severely criticized¹⁷.

The sub-committee of 1865 referring to the “*pansala*” declared that there was hardly any useful knowledge provided in them, and that their teaching was so intertwined with error and superstition that the aim and end of all primary instruction would be defeated, if it were to be propagated by the teaching of either Buddhist or Hindu priests¹⁸. This is a clear indication of destroying of indigenous culture while diffusing Western culture throughout the country.

“From the beginning of the 19th century, education (both English and vernacular) was considered to be an instrument of evangelization. The Portuguese and the Dutch who had occupied the coastal areas of Sri Lanka before the British, too, had used education to attain similar ends. Not only private education but also state education was entrusted to Christian missionaries whose principle endeavors was to enlarge their flocks of Sinhalese and Tamil converts to Christianity”¹⁹.

“The 19th century in general and its last sixty five years in particular was thus an era where the English language reigned supreme; in also witnessed the gradual devaluation, denigration and neglect of the Sinhalese language and

literature and the whole complex of cultural traditions that were closely associated with them, and even the threat of their ultimate destruction. Moreover, the use of English as an official language and as the medium of instruction in senior secondary public schools not unexpectedly brought in its wake not only conversion to Christianity but also a wave of cultural infiltration (and its clause concomitant linguistic, cultural, and spiritual alienation) Which is often described as Westernization and Anglicization”²⁰.

During the Colonial power “Children of Buddhist parents born in Colombo had to be taken to a Church where the minister would record the names of the parents and the date of birth and would give a Biblical name to the infant. Anagārika Dharmapāla was a Sri Lankan Buddhist revivalist and a writer dedicated for the protection of traditional Sri Lankan cultural identity could not avoid the influence of British education system and the Western culture in the Sri Lankan society. “*Dharmapāla* was also given the name Don David. As a very young child *Dharmapāla* was sent to a girl’s school in Pettah in Colombo where Dutch Burghergirls were taught English. At six he went to the Pettah Catholic School, an eleven to a boarding school of the Church of England seven miles from home”²¹.

Between eight and ten *Dharmapāla* attended a Sinhala vernacular school. He attended the mission schools because , in his words “ The Buddhist temple school in Ceylon had been forcibly closed, because , in view of a commission appointed by the Government to investigate them , the children attending them were too loyal to the tradition of old Ceylon”. Again it is also very likely that *Dharmapāla*’s father, who had high aspirations for his son, simply wanted to give him an English education which then was available in the mission schools²². Hence, it is evident that even the revivalist who wanted to preserve the traditional Sri Lankan cultural heritage could not get rid of the influence of British education system and the Western culture in the Sri Lankan society.

The conflict between the home and the school environment is manifest in the child’s sensitive conscience at a very early age. He speaks of the humiliation that Buddhism and he faced as a Buddhist, through the taunts of the missionaries. He says of his early education in early education in mission school; “The Padres gave us bon-bons and stroked our hair to show they loved us. But they also would say to us constantly; Look at your mud image. You are worshipping clay”. Then the small Buddhist boy turns in shame from his native religion²³.

Thus, it is evident that education figured prominently as a means of diffusing Christianity and created an averment where people with their traditional Sri Lankan culture based on Buddhist values faced and internal dilemma of being between two cultures; traditional Sri Lankan culture and that of Western.

The contrast between this socialization into Christianity at school comes out dramatically in the following, which refers to his early childhood. “Every half an hour the class had to

repeat a short prayer in praise of the Virgin Mary, and I got accustomed to Catholic ways, though I was daily worshipping my Lord Buddha²⁴.

“However the monks to be sure did have their traditional role as teachers, and they continued to play this role in a large area of the country. Their services in this sphere received little or no official recognition; the “*pansala*” schools were frequently dismissed as worthless, and some-times, because of their connections with Buddhism, condemned as worse than useless²⁵.

Quite apart from the “*Pansala*” (Buddhist Temple) schools, which were scattered in the villages throughout the country, there were also larger and more advanced “*pirivenas*”(Monastic Education Centers) in the same areas where the missionaries also had their educational establishments. But monastic schools and colleges, even at their highest levels, were not, either in their intent or in their effect, area challenge to the educational establishments of the missionaries. The *pirivena* (Monastic Education Centers) but the traditional curricular, which were followed in them, were geared unmistakably to the requirements of monks rather than of laymen²⁶. For the laymen, education was basically training for a secular career, a means for secular advancement. It was by providing an education that satisfied this need that the missionaries were able to attract children of all religions to their schools. Hence, Buddhist children could be distracted from missionary schools only by providing them with genuine alternatives; non-missionary schools with secular instruction comparable to that of the missionary schools. In order wards, as in using the spoken and the printed ward for religious propaganda, so in education the Buddhists, in order to complete with the missionaries, had to emulate them. They were slow accomplishing this; still the basic strategy was evidently not unknown to them²⁷.

In 1868, *Dodanduwe Piyaratna* (1826-1907) of the *Amarapura Kalyaniwamsa fraternity* organized a society called “*Lokarthasadaka Samāgama*” and on the initiative of this society and with the help of funds collected by it, the first non-monastic Buddhist school was opened at *Dodanduwa* in 1869. The person chosen by the society as head master of the school was a Sinhalese convert from Christianity who had had his education in a missionary school²⁸. Between 1869 and 1880 there was thus an increase in the number of Buddhist schools, but progress was very slow indeed. Buddhists were lacking in men, resources and overall organization to complete with protestant missionaries who were already well established in the field. Hence, the bulk of public funds for education still went in fact to the Protestant missionaries. Only the Catholics, under the leadership of their own European missionaries, had the capacity to compete with them²⁹.

The government at this time recognized the necessity of gaining the cooperation of Buddhist monks in addition to that of Christian missionaries. In fact, as far as the interior parts

were concerned, the government had little choice but to seek the cooperation of Buddhist monks; the financial difficulties of the time (mainly because of the decline of the revenue from coffee) necessitated economies in the field of education, and the system of grant-in-aid showed no signs of having attracted the missionaries to the interior parts of the country. The missionaries, on the whole preferred to compete with each other in the more urban and populous part of the country³⁰. Buddhist monks were not quite ready, however, to make use of the new sympathetic attitude of the government. They showed no eagerness to formalize the organization of their schools, or to keep regular attendance of their pupils (a difficult task in any case, in a rural agricultural society where children took some part in domestic and economic activity)³¹.

As there was an obsolete type of education, “*pansala*”(Buddhist Temple) could not keep pace with Colonial education. The temple priests preferred to follow their old-model methods of instruction in learning by heart passages out of Buddhist books. So this out-model way of education was not fit for the changing situation of the society. The only monastic educational institution which by this time was qualified for a regular grant (since 1877) was *vidyālakārapirivena at maligā-kanda*. This *pirivena* was efficiently organized as a result of the enthusiasm of its principal *Hikkaduwe Sumāngala* and of its committee of lay managers³². Because of the new educational system introduced by colonial leaders, the syllabi of *pirivena*, which contained the traditional subjects, like mother tongue (Sinhala) had to be changed. So educated Monks at that time changed the syllabi of *pirivena* education and English was included to make the syllabi to give students a new education to fit to the requirements of the modern society³³. But despite the efficiency of its organization, the curriculum that was adopted and followed was ill balanced from the point of view of the newly accepted standards of the day. While the students were given fairly advanced instruction in subjects such as oriental languages and literature, not even elementary instruction was imparted to them in the new subjects which were being taught in the missionary schools. Thus, we see that missionary education, which was compatible with the changing social situation, attracted many children and through that system of education, missionaries propagated Christianity as well as Western culture. So the Buddhists, who were under the influence of Western culture, were in a cultural dilemma as mentioned above. “At the beginning of the 20th century Rev. A.J. Fraser, Principal of Trinity College, Kandy described the typical product of `19th century English education as “men whose English type education had kept them out of touch with their national culture”, which led to “frustration they felt at being neither English among the English no Ceylonese among their own people³⁴”

This is the spiritual dilemma of the people educated in “an Anglicized atmosphere which bred contempt for everything that was native and traditional. Fraser declares “A thorough knowledge of the mother tongue is indispensable to true

culture of real thinking power, More, a college fails if it is not producing true citizens; and men who are isolated from the masses of their own people by ignorance of their language and thought can never fulfill the part of educated citizens or be true leaders of their race³⁵”

The Sinhalese who went to the English Schools established by government adopted English ways of life without either assimilating them sufficiently or transforming the old ways of life and thought. They gradually lost sight of their cultural background while those who studied through the medium of Sinhala absorbed little of new ideas. There was not sufficient blending of the old and the new. Thus, the type of English Education imparted in Colonial Sri Lanka more often than not created a type of society which was fast dividing itself into two distinct social strata, cutting across the traditional forms of social stratification (like language, religion race and caste). Thus, with in the same race, religion, village or even a single family, “the westernized”. “educated “ individuals held themselves aloof from their neighbors and even blood relations who were not as well educated as them. This middle class elite was “in many ways the most English of Asians and more English than English³⁶”

Such “Black Englishmen” (in Sinhala *Kalusuddo*) as they were to be called (especially by Anagārika Dharmapāla and by early novelist like Piyadāsa Sirisēna and M.C.F. Perera) could continue living their rootless lives in a social context where the English language and Western culture remained firmly enthroned with the European Masters in complete political control. The vast majority of the English Educated Sri Lankans up to the end of the 19th century without doubt belonged to this category³⁷. The life experiences of James de Alwis very clearly highlight the cultural dilemma of the contemporary society. From 1845 to the end of his career, the effects of the exclusive English education that he had himself received in his youth and early manhood appear to have engaged Alwis’s serious attention and condemnation. Alwis returned to his indictment of the system of contemporary education in his introduction to the “Sidath Saṅgarāwa” published in 1852. Here he reiterates in even greater detail that before the view that the contemporary craze for English was a result of the British domination of Sri Lanka, the language of the conquerors having then become “a language through whose medium they (natives) are governed and through which all adjudication in respect of their property, lives and liberties are made³⁸. Alwis also describes how a “knowledge of English conferred on the native privileges above his unlettered countrymen. This then was the great wealth, which he sought to acquire, whilst his own language was neglected, merely as a necessary evil for the purpose of maintaining inter- course with his countrymen³⁹”.

The result was a cultural dilemma, a tearing apart of the individual concerned from his traditional socio-cultural roots; the snowballing effect of the process over a period of time was the birth of a group of alienated and frustrated individuals without a firm foothold in either Western European culture or

in traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture. Education, preaching and the press were the three major expedients resorted to by the missionaries in their efforts to diffuse Christianity in Ceylon. Buddhists used these methods in turn against Christianity after the 1860s.

The Early Sinhala Fictions and the Cultural Dilemma

The Fact that the first Sinhala novel was written with the objectives of propagating the Christian faith reflects the felt desire of a religious community to communicate on a mass scale to the Sinhala intelligentsia ,especially , in the context of the socio-religious and educational climate discussed above.

The fiction “Happy family and Miserable Families” written by Rev. L. Isaac de Silva, a well-known Wesleyan Methodist appears to have been one of the pioneer attempts of propagation of Christianity and occidental culture.

It was the Christians who first conceived the idea in recent times of utilizing the popularity of prose fiction for the propagation of religion. The story known as “The two families (*PavuDeka*) first appeared in the magazine called Ruvan Maldama in 1866 and was continued as a serial up to 1883. In the magazine, the story bore the title of the “Happy Family and the Miserable Family (*Vāsanāvantha Paula shah Kālakanni Paula*) and at the end of the series it was published under its present title of Pavul Deka”.² It contains two stories the narrative of the fortunate family (*Vāsanavantha Pavula*) and the narrative of the unfortunate family (*Kālakanni Pavula*)⁴⁰.

The first story fortune family (*Vāsanāvantha Pavula*) deals with the fate and fortunes of the family of a newly -married couple, Charles and Lucy. The second story unfortunate family (*Kālakanni Pavula*) deals with the unfortunate counterparts, the family of Martinus and Laisi Nona. The important innovatory feature of the two families is its contribution to the development of realism in dialogue, description and plot. “The main plot basically has realistic (i.e. recognizably Contemporary) characters and is portraying the contemporary cultural, social and religious milieu faithfully and realistically⁴¹. The two families depicted in the story are representative of the contemporary urban social ethos, with its newly - converted urban and semi - urban Christians who are under the influence of their recently acquired modern education, westernized culture and religion to throw their traditional beliefs, customs and practices⁴². The two families, moreover, represent in different ways the two groups in middle class in contemporary society: the fully westernized Christians with genuine faith in Christ and the nominal Christians. These people who belonged to the middle class are the people who faced the cultural dilemma of being between two cultures in the contemporary society. “In Isaac de Silva’s view, Charle’s family symbolizes the positive features and values of this newly - Christianized and Westernized Sinhalese society, while Martine’s family represents the deprived and degraded aspects of the same stratum of the society⁴³”.

Charles and Lucy are the embodiment of the newly emerging, converted, Westernized Sinhalese middle class, with its total and unqualified with in the Christian God and the acceptance of the Christians ethics and morality; on the other hand Murthinus's family stands for the degradation of that society, its caricature, though which outward aspects of Westernization, the indiscriminate acceptance of Western cultural values is depicted. They are reminiscent of people in middle class in contemporary society who imbibed only the outward trappings like the consumption of intoxicating liquor, merry making and drunkenness at parties. The widespread prevalence of drunkenness was the results partly of the inveterate habit of indiscriminate imitation of everything that was 'foreign' and Western by the Sinhalese and partly of government policy. During the 19th century, the government indulged in the policy of opening taverns indiscriminately in all parts of the country, purely for monetary gain. As the plantation economy expanded rapidly, the liquor trade became a lucrative business. This was the results of an increase in the numbers of workers on the coffee estates in the central province and wage labour in the towns, in transport and in processing factories and other activities linked to the plantation sector⁴⁴. According to this situation the influence of liquor trade and drunkenness can be seen in this fiction. Martinus for instance, in the fiction "Fortunate and Unfortunate Families" who imbibed Western values indiscriminately is a drunken man⁴⁵.

"In subject matter as well as in diction and certain other aspects of technique, there are clear connections between "The two families" on the one hand and the works of Piyādāsa Sirisena and a Simon de Silva on the other⁴⁶. For example, Simon de Silva's first novel, Meena has the emancipation of women as its basic theme. The theme of equality between the sexes is clearly stated by Isaac de Silva in "The two families". "Up to the end of the 19th century, an important aspect of traditional Sinhalese society was the subordination of the women to her husband, a feature which was severely criticized not only by Simon de Silva, but also by the nationalist- traditionalist Piyādāsa Sirisena himself. This traditional custom was severely criticized as follows. Lucy in "The fortunate family" refers to the absence among the Sinhalese of freedom for the female to choose her future life-partner.

Eg. "Mama bālakālayēsitama deva
bhakthiyaāththekvasitiyāya. Taruṇakālayēdimatahatagathkalp
anāvalnam(kasādayaknobēdayi.
Esēkalpanāunēmāgēādahillatabadhānovanahātiyatamagēkām
āttakātuvapurūṣayektōrāgēnīmatasiritaksiPhalaminisunatarē
nētīnisātbharyāvākāgēsvāmpurūṣyākerehipāvātvīyayutuyutuk
amkopamaṇdurata mage hitatakāvādītībuṇḍakīvot ē yutukam
nisi
ākāraiṣṭakarannatakoiyamstriyakatavatnupuluvaṇāisitunanis
ātādahilināttansamagabāndīmbādīmaasamabāvin
nobādellāya"⁴⁷.

Thus, it is clear that "emancipated" husband and wife, symbolic of the ideal Westernized Christian Sinhalese family. According to Isaac de Silva, Lucy who reminiscent the newly - converted sophisticated Sinhalese woman in the contemporary society, behaves in a completely "Western" non-traditional manner, even going to the extent of sitting in a chair in her husband's presence, addressing her husband as "you" (WU).

In the 19th Century, an important concomitant of emergence of a "Modern" Ceylon in the 2nd half of the 19th Century was the creation of middle - class. In "The fortunate family" Charles who accumulates wealth through a business, represents this class, which emerged in the 19th Century cutting across the caste system. The other noteworthy fact is that although Isaac de Silva often criticizes traditional Sinhalese customs and manners, he is always balanced and sober in his attitudes. While he attacks the Sinhalese attracts for their traditional practices such as the caste system, the tyrannization by the husband and the wife and the absence of "courting" before marriage, he never speaks in adultery terms of everything Western; indeed, he comes out strongly against the folly of over- Westernization⁴⁸. Isaac de Silva is caustic of the Western customers is vogue at the time.

The same type of criticism is leveled against the indiscriminate percolate of external trappings of Westernization like learning of English as a "fashion". Thus it is clear those characters Mārtinuss, John etc. on the one hand embrace Christianity and occidental culture and on the other hand criticize the indiscriminate following of it. They represent the newly converted middle class Sinhalese people in contemporary society who were in a cultural dilemma of being between two cultures; traditional Sinhalese culture and that of Western.

Another work of Christian propagandist fiction is "Grāma Pravṛthiyak" written by Rev. H.Kannangara, first published by the Ceylon religious tract society in 1876. This story is also written with the aim of dissemination of Christianity and occidental culture. In this primary propagandist intention in structure, the use of the fate and fortune of two juxtaposed families: the family of Lonthu Rālahāmi and Dines Gamarāla (Villageman) closely resembles Isaac de Silva's "The two families". In this story the author ridicules Buddhism and Buddhist monks .While criticizing Buddhism the author endeavors to protect the supremacy of Christianity.

The author exaggerates Christian Church and Christianity with the aim of compelling people to embrace Christianity and Western culture. The spiritual dilemma of a newly converted Buddhists is enunciated through the words of Gammarāl's (Village man) wife⁴⁹. They belong to the newly converted family.

The cultural conflict between converted people and non-converted relations of then is depicted through the character of Gamarāla who represents the newly converted personnel in contemporary Sri Lanka Society.

Gamarāla's wife's mother represents the non-converted relation of the society in 19th century. Gamarāla and his family, according to this story, become affluent and luxurious with the blessings of the God, which resembles of the newly converted people in contemporary society in Sri Lanka. With the intention of protecting the supremacy of Christianity, the propagandist motive is set forth in straightforward fashion towards the end of the work in the following remarks of the narrative.

Moreover, the book ends with the author's direct advice to the reader to embrace Christianity. It is clear that Rev. H. Kannangara in this story endeavors to protect occidental cultural identity through diffusing Christianity and making people to forsake Buddhism and embrace Christianity.

VesakDūtayā an early Sinhala fiction by Albert de Silva, one of the leaders of the Buddhist renaissance and a members of Sinhala Buddhist intelligentsia was published in 1894. The plot structure of VesakDūtayā like that of Siribari, falls into two distinct pVesakDūtayā, his love affair and humiliation at the hands of his beloved, the marriage and ultimate ruin of the girl's life and the second part is about the pilgrimage from Trincomalee to Colombo, Dūtayā's life in the jungle and the story of the prince and the princess, the separation and final union. "These two strands of the story are woven together artificially by the connecting thread of the person of the Dūtayā who figures in both"⁵⁰.

The two sections of this story are also distinguished from each other by differences in subject matter; while the first part deals with relatively realistic incidents related to the contemporary society. In both subjects - matter and style, this is very different from de Silva's previous romantic fictions like Siribari and ĀdaraHasuna. This presents a realistic Sri Lankan society during the 19th century. The following example enunciates the cultural conflict between Dūtayā, and his girlfriend.

It is clear that this story, in one hand, is a realistic presentation of a contemporary social problem - the dilemma of people who are caught in two cultures, the westernized Sinhalese urban and semi-urban middle class and the non-Westernized but educated and cultured Sinhalese rural middle class represented by VesakDūtayā, in the Sri Lankansociety in 19th century there was a cultural conflict between above-mentioned two classes and the cultural dilemma in the newly Westernized middle class people themselves was also inevitable. The character of VesakDūtayā represents the non-westernized and cultured Sinhalese rural middle class in the 19th century in Sri Lanka. But this class did not totally emancipate from the influence of occidental culture. That is why Dūtayā decides to study Western life style. One striking feature of VesakDūtayā is its contemporary relevance: this fiction was written during the Vesak season in 1885. By then the Vesak festival was made a government holiday after several years of agitation by Buddhists. We should mention that BentotaAlbet de Silva has used fiction as a tool of

cultural propaganda. VesakDūtayā, according to this story, quotes many sayings and advice of the Lord Buddha on papers and ties them on the legs of Birds and let them go to various places.

Reading these in paper, according to this story, a king embraces⁵¹.

1866 to 1906 is that the more realistic section of this story is a modern fictional representation, a direct acting of one of the Social Phenomena of the late 19th century, the cultural conflict wrought in middle - class as a result of Westernization and denationalization. In the following description VesakDūtayā's girlfriend is shown as an indiscriminate Westernized character⁵².

"Unlike the other propagandist writers like Isaac de Silva, Albert de Silva, depicts in an artistic way, as described above, the cultural conflict in middle class. Sinhalese Society, hemmed in as it was between a tendency towards uncritical, indiscriminate westernization on the one hand and the need to develop as an independent nation with an ancient culture, language, literature and civilization on the other"⁵³. This was the cultural problem of the contemporary Sri Lankan society.

PiyadāsaSirisēna, a prolific writer, was a dominant figure of Sinhalese fiction during the first part of the 20th century and exerted a great influence on the taste of the contemporary reading public, "It was PiyadāsaSirisēna who attempted to hoist the Christians with their own patard"⁵⁴. It is important to mention here Sirisena's career and his life story for several reasons. Firstly, it provides a useful background to his literary works. It highlights his attitudes and concerns. These in turn help us to understand his literary creations. Secondly, it illustrates, very conveniently, the influence of *AnagarikaDharmapāla* on the Sinhala intelligentsia of his time.

Dharmapāla's propaganda actively fashioned *Sirisēna* career. *PiyadāsaSirisēna's* career can be best understood in the context of changes that were taking place in the Sinhalese Social-structure, especially along the Southern coastline. I-lere the traditional isolation of the village had been breached. Geographically, the new Colombo, Galle road and Kalutara and the city of Colombo contributed to that.

Through these networks came new urban values and Social aspirations. Culturally, the opening of English language schools in the towns and the teaching of elementary English in village school provided an opportunity to village children, especially those of the more affluent families to acquire skills necessary for urban employment.' In socio-economic terms the burgeoning capitalist economy siphoned off the more enterprising youth from the village to the city. So people who were in a traditional context, had to face new cultural values, and both Sinhala Buddhist and Western cultural values are mixed up. So, people in traditionally cultured are in a cultural dilemma of being between two cultures. The good example is that *PiyadāsaSirisēna* was named as *Pedrick Silva*, which was

a Christian type name, had to change as *PiyadāsaSirisēna*. Thus, it is clear that the Western Cultural influence was every nook and corner of the contemporary society. *PiyadāsaSirisēna* was born in 1875 to an influential village *Goyigama* (One of the high casts in Sri Lanka) family in the environment of Induruwa; a town which lies midway on the important. Colombo - Gal/c road. This was an area sandwiched between *Karāwa* and *Salāgama* strongholds. Further, Catholic missionaries had been very active among the *Karāwa* community for centuries. One can therefore surmise that the *Goyigama* (One of the high casts in Sri Lanka) were particularly conscious of and sensitive to their cultural identity. "*Sirisēna's* early training was in Sinhala language, literature and Buddhism under a distinguished *RamaññaNikāya* priest *YālegamaSumanatissa*"⁵⁵. But like most Sinhalese youth at contemporary time *Sirisēna* took *AnagarikaDharinapala* as their model.

Like him they adopted "Aryan" names, changed their dress and devote their lives for

Buddhist agitation activity. Though *Sirisēna* did not adopt the life style of *Anagārika*

Dharmapāla he faithfully emulated the philosophy and propagates techniques of his Mentro⁵⁶.

"The revivalist though propagandist of what they regarded as a traditional religion, was a product of a new capitalist environment. They had no traditional authority. Whatever authority they wielded was derived from their individual skills, growing wealth and personal charisma. This was reflected in their propaganda. Firstly it was innovative. They had not only to convey a message, but do so framework of a profitable business enterprise"⁵⁷. Thus, we see the disparity between the traditional Buddhist communication network and the nearly emerged propagandist like *PiyadāsaSirisēna*.

"The form and nature of *Sirisēna's* fiction may be directly attributed to the social milieu in which he engaged in the writing of fiction, and his leading position in the contemporary socio-cultural resurgence of the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. All his novels were intended to achieve the dual purpose of providing" an interesting and pleasant story together with the inculcation of high morals and doctrines"⁵⁸. "*JayatissaSahaRosalin*" written in 1904 and published in 1906 was the best effort of *Sirisēna* in which the cultural dilemma of the contemporary society is reflected. The plot of this fiction is as follows; Wickramasingha *Appuhamy of Kōtte*, a Buddhist belongs to the *Goyigama* caste, has a son *Jayatissa* who attends an English school in Colombo. *Rosalin* is the daughter of *AmarasinghaAppuhāmy*, a Roman Catholic. *Rosalin* is attending a school in the vicinity of that of *Jayatissa*. One day, both *Jayatissa* and *Rosalin* seek shelter from the rain in a deserted house.

Then, they became lovers and began to exchange love letters. After sometime through polemical letters and face-to-face argument on religion, *Jayatissa* succeeds in converting

Rosalin to Buddhism. *Rosalin's* parents decide to give her in marriage to a rich Catholic youth named Vincent. In the meantime, *Jayatissa* visits *Rosalin's* parents and succeeds in converting the entire *Amarasinghe* family to Buddhism.

Vincent now conspires *Silva*, a friend of *Vincent* to kidnap *Rosalin* with the collusion of her maid *Nonnamma*. She administers a sleeping drug in *Rosalin's* cup of tea on a day when *Rosalin's* parents are away in Kandy. *Rosalin* was kidnapped and taken by a train to Hatton and latter removed to a jungle in the vicinity of *Sripāda*.

Jayatissa, having known her kidnapping set out in search of her. *Rosalin* now pretends to have reconciled herself to marriage with *Vincent* and requests him to capture a fawn to be taken home. In pursuing a fawn, *Vincent* accidentally falls down a deep precipice, breaking a hand and leg. *Rosalin* disguised herself as a man and escaped from *Vincent*.

Jayatissa sets out to find her in the jungle and after series of wildly improbable adventures; the two are reunited and live happily ever after.

Here, *Jayatissa* and *Rosalin* are not just "Star crossed" lovers. They are as the characters in the novel, mouthpieces of entrenched religious position. Initially, *Rosalin's* parents did not like to their love because of cultural disparity. Later they accepted *Jayatissa's* views. The progressive acceptance of *Jayatissa's* views by those who were initially opposed to them marks the success of Buddhist ideas over the Catholic.

In considering the characters of *JayatissaSahaRosalin* in detail, *Jayatissa* the loquacious young person is the embodiment of Buddhist virtues and English educated middle class.

Judging by the number and variety of literary and education movements in the late 19th century, there were social and nationalistic activities during this period, which were related to the emergence of this middle class depicted in *JayatissaSahaRosalin*. As *Kearney* observes, the new middle class in Ceylon set out to play an active part in political and other fields.

The rise of the middle class is intimately connected with the expansion of education in English, which gained momentum in the last decades of the 19th Century. The increasingly available white collar careers universally required literacy in English, the language of government and Commerce⁵⁹.

The members of this class took active part in the national revival later in the 19th Century and it was they who struggled for political independence from the British administration. But despite their role in the political field, this middle class maintained an alienation from the traditional culture and literature. These English educated middle class is in a cultural dilemma of being between two cultures; Western Culture and that of traditional.

Jayatissa's character in *JayatissaSahaRosalin*, who represents the middle class, is the amalgamation of traditional Buddhist values and Western Cultural influences. For example while *Jayatissa* is trying to protect Buddhism, he learns English and his courtship with *Rosalin* before marriage is also a sign of Western influence. Thus, it is clear *Jayatissa* is in a cultural dilemma of being between two cultures, traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture and that of Western.

“According to the Kandyan Law, which is based on traditional Kandyan customs, marriage is divided into two *kinds-digamarriage* where the husband conducts the wife to his own home; and *binna marriage*, where the husband comes and lives in his wife’s house. In the latter case, the husband loses his right to manage and control all household and family matters, and is entirely at the mercy of his wife, who can expel him and divorce him, if he incurs her displeasure⁶⁰. In traditional Sinhalese culture, the practice of the bride being courted by the bridegroom was not there indeed, Sinhalese marriages had been contracted by the parents through the mediation of marriage -brokers (*Kauvas*) and the bride and the bridegroom normally see each other for the first time (unless they lived in the same village) only on the day of marriage when they were installed together on the “Magulporuwa. Sexual relations in general and marital relations in particular were not fetished, but were considered rather as casual and inevitable incidents in a person’s life⁶¹.”

In Kandyan times, the practice of polyandry was very famous. The practice of polyandry, universal in the Uda-rata, seems to have persisted in the Littoral even after a century and a half of cultural contact with Europeans⁶².

However, with the spread of English education, culture and the Western forms of courtship and romantic boy and girl attachments became very common. Though *PiyadasaSirisena* wanted to affirm Sinhala Buddhist cultural identity, he has turned his blind eye towards the libertarian and progressive marriage practices of the Kandyan Sinhalese⁶³.

The marriage of *JayatissaSahaRosalin* is not traditional, it is totally Western. The alien Western custom of romance and formal “courtship” were seen in this fiction and the laxity of our traditional marriage is also very clear.

According to Jayewardene (1993:14) in 19th century Sri Lankan society, marrying Christians or non-Sinhalese was held to be a threat to Sinhala Buddhist identity.

While deploring the frequency of inter-marriage, Buddhists also lamented those young men. Imbued with European customs and manners had difficulty in finding “girls among Buddhists to suit their tastes”⁶⁴.

“The six marriage of *Jayatissa* and *Rosalin* in *PiyadasaSirisena's* fiction reminiscent these trends of the contemporary society.

In traditional Sinhalese Society, the woman was looked upon as a mere chattel to the man who exercised docterial

powers in marriage life. No females were given a formal education.

The education of girls did not receive the same emphasis, early efforts to give girls of the Sinhala Buddhist bourgeoisie a modern education had a checkered history and even led to bitter controversies and quarrels in the Buddhist.

Even the highly nationalist - traditional minded *PiyadasaSirisena*, in his fiction “*JayatissaSahaRosalin*”, advocates the higher education of women, and the desirability of respecting the wishes of the female in all his novels. Though *Sirisena* is a traditional -minded person, his modernist attitude towards female is depicted in his fiction. In “*JayatissaSahaRosalin*”, for example, *Rosalin* is an educated woman and she gets the freedom to choose her future partner *Jayatissa*.

The other noteworthy fact is that all arguments are based heavily on the *Buddhist side*. *Jayatissa* first takes on *Rosalin* and converts her.

Thus, it is evident that *Jayatissa* is also using the same method of that was used by Christians to convert people to their religion.

What is most significant in *Jayatissa's* character is that it is not the ideal as viewed from the perspective of behaving very much like an ideal Christian missionary. Though he is conversant with book learning, he is not interested in his personal salvation. He speaks of the degradation of the Sinhalese not because they don’t seek salvation, but because they are powerless as a political entity. He is painstaking and fully commuted to the achievement of worldly goals⁶⁵.

According to this story *Vincent Perera*, Dr. *Silva* and *AponsoPerera* are villains in different sense. They have foreign names, foreign dress and foreign way of life. In other was, the hero *Jayatissa* and here on *Rosalin* belong to *Goyigama* caste and villains *Vincent* and others belong to *Karava* caste. It is clear that though *Sirisena* was ready to voice the opinion that casteism weakened the Sinhala people, by and large he upheld caste principles. Indeed, this was an important facet of his Sinhala Buddhist family ideology. It is noticeable that most of his heroes and heroines like *Jayatissa* and *Rosalin* are of good caste and good pedigree. Villains like *Vincent* are in a low caste. Thus, it is clear though pure Buddhism does not consider the caste differences, *PiyadasaSirisena* who endeavored to affirm Sinhala Buddhist Cultural identity, has given importance to the caste differences in the contemporary society.

As a whole, “*JayatissaSahaRosalin*” manifests the transformation of Buddhist goals from salvation striving to the pressure group, which marked the Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka. This is largely consequence of the changed social circumstances that the Buddhist found themselves as a result of colonial domination. The character of *Jayatissa* represents the contemporary Buddhists who are in a cultural dilemma of being affected by bilingualism and biculturalism.

IV. CONCLUSION

The period from 1866 to 1906 that this study covers was characterized by the predominance of activities leading to Christianization. The Christian missionaries utilized mainly the medium of prose as an instrument of religious propaganda.

In the present study, the socio cultural changes occurred in the 19th century as a result of colonial domination were identified. The British colonial culture in Sri Lanka resulted was a high degree of hegemony among the elite, namely owners of plantations and mines and their families and also native administrations, with many of their sons educated in England and being Christian in faith.

In pursuing this study, special attention was focused on the process of incorporation into European economic and cultural systems manifested in Sri Lanka. First and foremost, the introduction of plantation economy in the place of prevailed peasant economy in Sri Lanka and then, the caste and class and the restructuring of Sri Lankan society in 19th century was examined. This new system in the society gave rise to a whole new class structure, which was foreign to the existing Sri Lankan society. Most of these “bourgeoisie” were in a cultural dilemma of being between two cultures, traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture and that of the Western.

How English education system was used to propagate Western culture throughout Sri Lanka is also examined. Although colonial society in Sri Lanka was at first unfamiliar to the Lankans, this type of education provided the means to familiarize them with this society. This education system provided an opportunity to have an English educated, Western oriented people to fit to the colonial administration and as well as to make the colonial language an agent of social mobility.

It is emphasized that there English educated intellectuals in the contemporary society in Sri Lanka were in general in a spiritual dilemma of being alienated of themselves from their monolingual countrymen, even from their own parents, brothers, sisters and friends. Though there were some exceptions, most of them were also separated from their rich indigenous cultural inheritance, by being cut off at the roots from their traditional language and religions.

It is also highlighted that how the traditional Buddhist cultural identity was divided into several sets which caused into conflict with each other; Sinhala Buddhist versus Sinhalese Catholics; Sinhala Buddhist versus Sinhala Protestant etc. Furthermore, these identities were characterized by regional, occupational and class differentiation.

The revival of Buddhism led by a non-peasant intelligentsia under the leadership of educated Sinhala Buddhists and of Monks from the Sinhalese law country in the latter part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century is also a noteworthy feature in the contemporary Sri Lankan society. The educated Sinhala Buddhists were mostly

school teachers trained in Sinhala vernacular schools and the influential village intelligentsia consisting of Ayurvedic Physicians and village government officials such as headmen, coroners all created by the British bureaucracy. The contribution of Anagārika Dharmapāla in search of Sinhala Buddhist cultural identity is also emphasized. It is also highlighted that though Anagārika Dharmapāla endeavored to affirm Sinhala Buddhist cultural identity, could not totally escape from the influence of colonial cultural domination. This type of spiritual dilemma of the people in contemporary Sri Lankan Society of being mainly between two cultures is depicted in early Sinhala fiction.

The Christian missionaries had provided the initial impetus to the composition of original prose fiction in Sinhalese, in their stories with a local background and Sinhalese characters. In 1866 further headway was made in the direction of original fiction in Christian propagandist work like “*Vāsanāvanthasaha Kālakanni Paul*” by Rev. Issac de Silva and “*Gramapravrtthyak*” by Rev. H. Kannangara. *Jayatissa Saha Rosalin*” by Piyadāsa Sirisēna in 1904 and published in 1906 has depicted the cultural dilemma of the people in contemporary Sri Lankan society.

The main characters “*Jayatissa* and *Rosalin* are not just lovers but the mouthpieces of entrenched religious positions. It is observed that though *Jayatissa*, in this fiction is a exponent of Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism, he cannot reject studying English as a result of the influence of colonial domination. Hence, *Jayatissa* represents the educated Sinhala Buddhist intelligentsia who were in a cultural dilemma of being between two cultures: the traditional Sinhala Buddhist culture and that of the West.

The modernist attitude towards the relations between the sexes as one of the equality and mutual respect is depicted. The theme of the realistic part of “*Vesak Dūtaya*” by Albert de Silva is drawn directly from the contemporary social ethos and dramatizes the cultural conflict between the Westernized and the more traditional sectors of middle class Sinhalese society represented by *Vesak Dūtaya*.

As a whole the early Sinhala fiction concerned was the exponent of the amalgamation of the socio cultural values in contemporary Sri Lankan society.

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