

Touring the (mindful) state of nature: the environmental limitations in Sri Lankan  
cosmopolitan nationalism

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*“Sri Lanka is a very beautiful country. There are a lot of beautiful countries all over the world. But Sri Lanka is most beautiful, because of a lot of natural resources like rivers, and trees, and animals. And people also. Very nice, they have respect, hospitality. Smiling always. If you go to a village, they are nicely welcomed. Like if children come, it is like they are their children. Also, if Sri Lanka just has natural beauty, then it is not good, we want famous for the world. About Sri Lanka, it is a very small country, but it is very beautiful....also government earn money from the international people, because of they want to develop and maintain the places. And we have very natural parks, elephant parks. Bird’s park. And Sri Lanka also getting more, what is it called, funding for some projects. That is what international people, the most important for Sri Lanka, not only Sarvodaya.”- Yamuna, Secretary, Sarvodaya (Balasooriya 2018).*

*“Okay. My focus is more meditation, spiritual, um, and uh, natured focused, so that's one reason I'm working and living here, I mean my mother is Norwegian and I went to art school in Norway, and all that kind of thing, came back here when I was at the end of my teens. That just basically because I needed a physical presence of what I feel from the land and the area which is the eastern vision, which informs my paintings and sensibility to the ancient Hindu, Buddhist world not in the religious sense, but that's where the inspiration comes from through the meditation and also just to be in Sri Lankan nature, which to me is connected in that same worldview, you know, the kind of benign nature that's giving the whole Buddhist concept of confession, that kind of thing. So the paintings are inspired by that. But, uh, I don't really try to illustrate that kind of thing. I just recreate my own symbols.” -Rahju, Kandyan artist (Pereira & Devi Das 2018).*

*“And I think it, Sri Lanka, is defined by its nature more than anything else. At least for me. I mean, people come and go and cultures change and you know, civilizations rise and fall, but I think there's something in the nature because even when you travel out and you come back, it's almost like it's alive and it's rich and it's going last, but of course nothing lasts forever, but like it's been there for a long time. It's going to last for a long time...” -Rudrani, Kandyan artist (Pereira & Devi Das 2018).*

*1. The Nature(s) of Sri Lankan Tourism: promoting the state of nature*

Between December 2017 and January 2018 I traveled to Sri Lanka to investigate Sri

Lanka’s tourist industry, with focus on tourist promotional materials, particularly tourist

maps as well as conducted oral interviews and participatory mapping exercises. During these participatory mapping exercises participants were asked to map or draw what they wanted tourists or visitors to the island to visit. Three main themes emerged from these mapping exercises, that I categorized as “Culture” (indicating historical and religious sites), “Nature” (indicating national parks, landscapes, and wildlife sites), and Former War Zones (including the newly opened Jaffna, former capital of the LTTE, after the nearly 30 year religious and ethnic civil war). This paper will focus on those individuals who indicated “Nature” sites, but as the conversation above indicates these sites were often associated with religious and cultural values, as the quotes above serve as examples..

The first quote comes from a Sarvodaya secretary, a Buddhist-based NGO focused on social service programs and whose international division offers cultural tours to volunteers, serves as an example for how “nature” is understood as a potential resource for the country, specifically for international visitors. This concept of resource, coupled with the ways in which there are particular spaces that nature can be found, i.e. parks, indicates at times that the tourist geographies parallel resource maps. Further, the suggestion that it is just enough that Sri Lanka has this “beauty,” but that it must be shared with the world, but the invitation and hospitality should be extended to others. The second and third quotes come from Rahju Pereira and Rudrani Devi Das, artists and a father and daughter duo, living in the hills of Kandy, Sri Lanka, and indicates the ways in which “Sri Lankan nature” is often connected with spiritual or religious sentiments. The third quote additionally signals the many “taken-as-givens” around “nature” (as well as, culture), where it is understood as ahistorical and outside the dynamic political spaces around it, as if it were not those very political

spaces which help to determine the relationship to and understanding of “nature.” For example, Tariq Jazeel (2013) indicates that the “taken-as-givens” of ‘nature’ and ‘religion’ “do not announce themselves” overtly as productions of ethno-nationalism in Sri Lanka, however, the relationship between nature and Sinhala-Buddhist nationhood in Sri Lanka should also be put into context with “the normalization of ethnicized social relations and identities” within projects of nation building in the country, which includes tourist sights, such as the production of national parks (as the example he investigates) (2). It also indicates, an ongoing and perpetuated notion of the culture-nature divide along development ideologies.

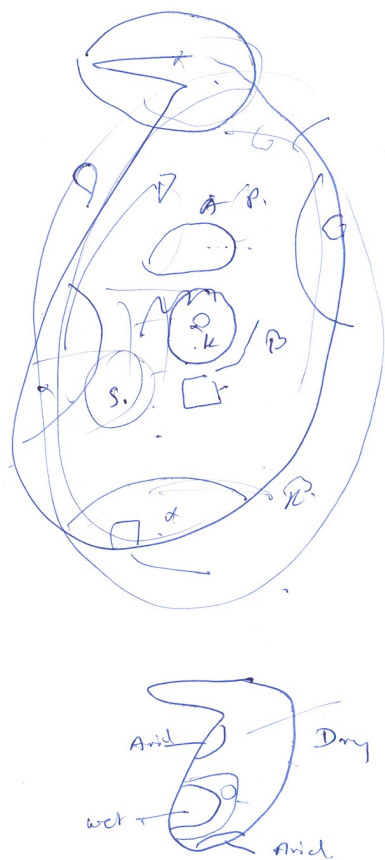
In what follows, I do not attempt to define “nature” as a definitive concept, but instead I look at it as it is discursively articulated and contingently indicated by specific spatio-temporalities. For this project, that includes how it emerges alongside the concept of “Sri Lanka,” and I ask, how does the notion of “Sri Lankan nature” signal simultaneous associations of universal values around “nature” and formations of the particular around already-associated concept of “Sri Lanka?” Using autoethnographic moments to facilitate the complexity of these interactions, nature in such discussions, and as with direct association with “Sri Lanka,” is tied to the territory, the ideology, the discourse of the state itself. As indicated by the conversations above, as well as Jazeel’s argument, it is necessary to investigate the interconnected associations of the state, culture, religion, and nature.

Most of my conversations surrounding Sri Lankan nature, religion, and culture will follow a discussion of Buddhism. This is not meant at the expense of other associations of nature and religions, such as Hinduism, but reflects my own personal relationships and

travels in the country, which are for the most part with individuals who practice Buddhism. In this paper, I will examine the ways in which nature is promoted in tourism as connected to Sinhala-Buddhist state and history, at the exclusion of other identities and beliefs on the island. Although, I would note that Rahju and Rudrani do not claim a specific religion necessarily, but seem to find their own personal values within an Asian-based spirituality and pull from practices of both Hinduism and Buddhism. In my limited experience, this pull of practices between what is now referred to as Hinduism and Buddhism might better reflect the practices or representations associated in Buddhist temples, for example, including the integration of images and carvings of gods and goddess that would seemingly belong to the Hindu faith, and in the case of the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi in Anuradhapura, a white bindi. I make these points not to separate out those things that are “Hindu” and those things that are “Buddhist” but to suggest that in everyday life these practices can easily cross and include the other, but it is in the act of claiming an identity, particularly a state identity, as one or the other that they become radically separate, and to the point of even violence. The work in this chapter looks at the potential violences in the identification of nature and religious identities, particularly as tied to the state and promoted in tourism, as well as the potential environmental impacts tied to tourism. Tourism, and here the example of the tourist map and tourist geographies, promotes “nature” as it merges into the violent cartographies of consumption by the cosmopolitan tourist.

There are unique environmental concerns for tourism when it comes to the Global South, as tourism “frequently causes degradation of the environment through unregulated construction, over-use of resources, pollution and diversion of often scarce water supplies,”

as Frances Brown and Derek Hall have indicted (2008, 841). But also, as I suggest, the ways in which tourism may either contribute to or perpetuate our understandings and values of “nature” and the “natural” world. “Nature” is reason enough to travel to a place in the Global South, and in the case of Sri Lanka both locals and visitors have a shared understanding of the value of such landscapes.



As prefaced, one of the themes that emerged was the concept of “Sri Lankan nature.” Participants emphasized Sri Lanka’s spiritual and historical (in Buddhist and Hindu cosmologies) connection to nature and/or placed value on “virgin” forests, high biodiversity, and national parks. At times, nature in Sri Lanka is deeply personal, connected to individual spiritual and religious practices, beliefs, and values. But as the culture of “nature” leads way to nature as environment, it also becomes a “natural” resource to the country, particularly in the face of tourism. “The Environment” becomes the promotion of beautiful landscapes and wildlife as it offers a variety of experiences to the potential visitor, as well as increases the number of possible

visitors. For example, one member of the Ministry of Tourism indicated how the different

Figure 1: Anonymous Participatory Mapping Exercise from the Ministry of Tourism, indicating climate zones and tourism opportunities. January 11, 2018.

climate zones of the country provided different opportunities for the tourist (dry, wet, arid), and another indicated how the cycle of monsoons that hits the island at different points of the year coincides with different holiday periods of different tourists (Australian, European, Gulf States) (see Figures 1 and 2).

The goal of this paper, however, is not to take the promotion of “nature” and the “natural” conditions of the island at face value. Rather, I suggest that these conversations on Sri Lankan nature and tourism should be placed within larger geopolitical contexts that surround questions of sustainability and the environment, and which situate Western colonial and imperial relations in the development of “nature” as concept, and the ways in which these concepts and values are now being implemented by the state. Tariq Jazeel (2013) begins his book *Sacred Modernity: Nature, Environment, and The Postcolonial Geographies of Sri Lankan Nationhood* by stating that:

nature is something of an obsession in Sri Lanka. Visitors to the island and residents alike never stop marveling at the abundance of flora, fauna, and the succession of staggering beautiful landscapes with which the country seems to have been blessed. But if Sri Lankan nature captivates, it has rarely ever been strictly ‘natural’. Commonplace understandings of the country’s nature are deeply entwined with narratives of history, culture, and religion (1).

Taking these deeply entwined articulations of history, culture, religion, and politics with the production and value of Sri Lankan nature, I further locate these space(s) of nature(s) within Sri Lankan tourism, and the ways in which “nature” can be located on different points of the tourist map for the experience of the cosmopolitan tourist, in the perceived universal value of nature itself. (As well as when it is not.) Vincent J. Del Casino and Stephen P. Hanna (2000) have stated that “[a] tourism map... is an attempt to fix or identify space as ‘tourist’ or ‘non-tourist’ through a deployment of symbols marking paths, boundaries and tourist

sights/sites. People within that space are identified through their representation and interactions as tourists, locals, tourism workers or as those excluded from the map and space” (29). An elephant for Yala National Park, a waterfall for Ella, fish for Arugam Bay, a windsurfer for Unawatuna, etc. all indicate spaces that are marked for the tourist vs. the locals, those spaces that can either be passively or actively enjoyed by visitors. Here, I consider the invitation to nature, the erasure of non-tourist spaces through mapping practices, but also the ways in which culture and religion also intersect the formation of nature in the Sri Lankan context, which does not exclude the promotion of nature to the cosmopolitan tourist. This project looks at two different modes of the tourist map: one is the outline and continued representation of the state as the island, another is the possibility of the specific icons that arise over others, and the often standardized use of these icons. The emergence of these particular icons are connected to the larger historical and political spatio-temporal narratives that allow them to emerge in the first place, including, for example, the association of the elephant for a national park and the colonial history of the hunt.

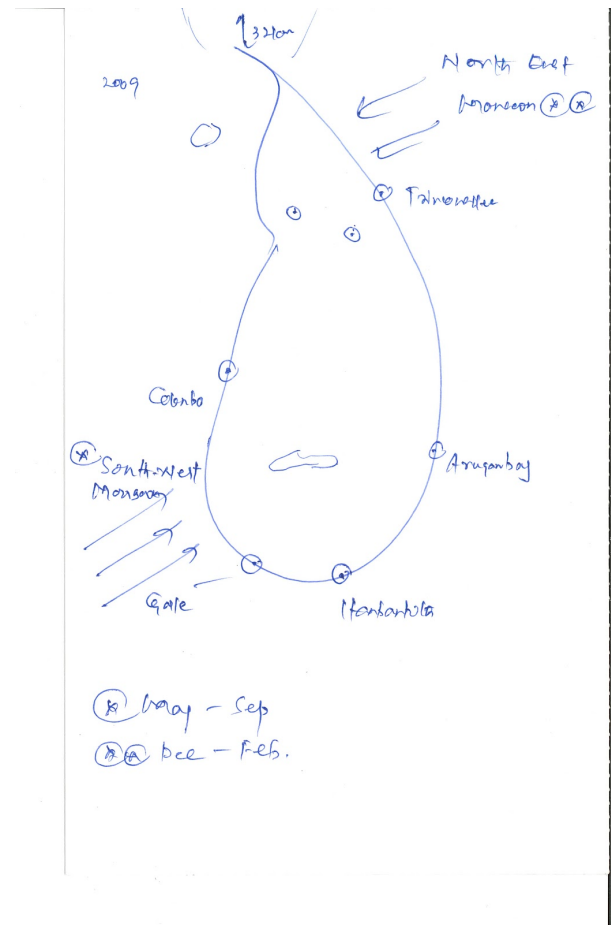


Figure 2: Anonymous Participatory Mapping Exercise from the Ministry of Tourism, indicating how the different monsoons affect tourism. January 11, 2018.

These associations of such icons as simultaneously Sri Lankan and colonial, indicates the continued coloniality within the political modernity of Sri Lanka. Investigating the political modernity of Sri Lanka, Jazeel (2013) has also observed that “nature and religion have been key vehicles for articulating a Sri Lankan modernity whose nation-building trajectories are necessarily temporally hybrid, looking at once outward towards the internationalism of a postcolonial global stage, forward to Sri Lanka’s own national self-determination upon that stage, and backwards to its own historiographical sense of itself” (10). Jazeel also (2013) critiques a “cosmopolitan mode of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism,” in order to point to the “political closures in avowedly cosmopolitan hospitality narratives and performances” (22). Specifically, in his work, Jazeel (2013) examines Ruhuna (Yala) National Park and various examples of tropical modern architecture that both work spatially as a form of cosmopolitan Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism. He considers these examples as ways in which both “participate in a classically Derridean hospitality narrative, and in which they curate space for difference to emerge, to be welcomed and tolerated, but only by consolidating hegemonizing its own sovereign and majoritarian speaking position” (Jazeel 2013, 23).

I use Jazeel’s critique of cosmopolitan Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, but extend this discussion to intersect the politics of tourism geographies, including, here, the politics of representing nature as resource and the extended invitation of the specific extractive hospitality by the tourist map. Like the spatial politics of national parks and architecture that Jazeel (2013) examines, tourist maps additionally help to “instantiate the sovereignty of Buddhist and Sinhala thought, tradition, and aesthetics within the fabric of an everyday



ordinariness that Sri Lankan nature anchors” (23). In themselves they make no political claims, “yet they help shape the parameters through which difference can be recognized and tolerated. That is their politics” (Jazeel 2013, 23). Furthermore, I continue to develop these observations by Jazeel on the Sri Lankan politics of nature and religion as modes of cosmopolitan Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, alongside my reading of Dipesh Chakrabarty’s History 1 and 2 and the capitalist relations to cosmopolitanism within formations of history and the state in order to connect how these politics are operative in the value of “Sri Lankan nature” within the global tourist economy. The juxtaposition as indicated by Derridean cosmo-politics, of cosmopolitanism and the nation state, as well as, the play between the particular and the universal plays out once again in conceptualizations of Sri Lankan nature through a cosmopolitan geopolitics.

There has been some work done on tourist mapping in cultural geography (see, Del Casino & Hanna 2000; Del Casino & Hanna 2003; Farías 2011), however, perhaps because, as “many geographers [may] simply dismiss tourism maps because of their blatant biases as advertisements and/or their flagrant disregard of the cartographic rules for accurately modeling reality,” tourist maps remain an underrepresented mode of inquiry in the field (Del Casino & Hanna 2000, 23). Additionally, although cultural cartographers Vincent J. Del Casino and Stephen P. Hanna have looked at the links between cartography and colonialism with the tourist map, I maintain that there is work still to be done here, specifically what might be gained from an interdisciplinary approach that more overtly links literatures that critique the imperial power relations in mapping as well as the history of colonialism and imperialism in international travel in discussions of the tourist map.

I argue that the dialectical temporality (both towards the former colony and a globalized nation state), are only further sharpened by the productions of nature and the environment within tourist geographies, including the inclusionary and exclusionary destinations of “nature” in “tourist sites” vs. “non-tourist sites.” As seen with the tourist map as resource map, nature is produced as tourist icons and images indicates nature as an extractable-tourism resource. Nature as resource reflects both Western understanding of object-based value systems, as well as confirms the “obsession of the control of resources” within geopolitics, and as been discussed (Mallinson and Ristic 2016, xiv). However, I also suggest caution towards uncritical claims towards non-Western, spiritual connection to nature, in that they might offer a re-conceptualization of nature. While South Asian philosophies might allow for a more relationship-based orientation to nature, in contrast to the object-focused resource, values of “Eastern” and “alternative” ought to be into question within current political systems, as historically developed. Following Jazeel’s observations, any potential alternative to conceptualizations of nature should also take into account the political articulations that shape our historical, contemporary, and even religious (not that the religious is ahistorical) understandings of “nature.” I take Donna Haraway’s (2016) suggestion for a multi-perspective, multi-spatial, multi-temporal envisioning of relations between ourselves and the worlds we perceive to be both external and inclusive of ourselves. Such considerations *might* help in the stranger’s connections to those places she is already going, that is, the connections between tourism and place, as well as produce “alternative,” or even defractive, networks and potential scenarios within geopolitics and global climate change.

Given the exploitative and object-based relationship to nature that these complications seem to indicate (nature as both a profitable and extractable resource as well as an invaluable and priceless resource that is in threat of “running out”), one might be tempted to suggest moving away from Western understandings of nature towards alternative forms, like those found in Buddhism. However, and finally, as Jazeel also suggests, Sri Lankan nature is rarely anything but natural, therefore, any suggestion that might look towards more “Eastern” cosmologies as alternatives to the seemingly sterile, imperial, and objectified nature produced through Western Enlightenment values, must also recognize the signifiers, like Buddhism is also not produced innocently, ahistorically, or apolitically, particularly as the notion of “Buddhism” itself is produced as a capital “R” religion alongside colonial and imperial categorizing, comparing, and claiming alongside with Ethnicity/ Race. Jazeel (2013) contends that Buddhism and the emphasize on Buddhist nature itself is an ongoing project of simultaneous anti-colonialism and nation building within a Sinhala-Buddhist hegemonic state, and that “the very concepts of ‘nature’ and ‘religion’ are only partially able to make visible the political contours of environmental formations in the Sri Lankan context” (2). Therefore, following his work and the consideration of colonial, anti-colonial, and post-colonial states of Sri Lanka as an example of modern nation building around the context of nature, the outsider, and state, as a particular within the general concerns of international relations, as well as pending concerns of changing climates, natures, and environments that more decolonial methodologies of the state and the self in general may be necessary in order to account for potential and on-going and historical crises.

“Sri Lankan nature” emerges in dialectics of in/authenticity and anti/colonial. I begin with a conversation that suggests Buddhist cosmologies as ethical alternatives to environmental concerns. My intervention in this debate is that we must first re-politicize (indeed religion or religious practices are never apolitical or ahistorical), specifically as Buddhism as developed within colonial histories and within Enlightenment values, as well. Therefore, I also locate colonial histories in the development of “natural” spaces in Sri Lanka, including its most popular national park, Yala. The emergence of nature as icons within the continued representation of island space, indicates the promotion of the “state of nature.” Second, I follow how the values of “nature” as an ideal space works in the contemporary contexts of ecotourism, continuing to produce “it” within spaces of mediation and control. This will again note, consistent with mapping practices, tourist spaces vs. non-tourist spaces. And finally, I consider the end of nature. I argue in spiritual and religious understandings of nature that we ought to accept them as *both* radically personal and political. My hope is that by acknowledging the personal value and connection between religion and nature in Sri Lanka and the work that has been done to suggest Buddhist teachings for a more ethical relation to the environment in the face of development and modernity, and simultaneously combine the political and potential violence of a Buddhist nature within nation-building, that we might come full circle back to the need to be able to discuss and story “natures” and “environments” in the radical pluralness that they already operate. That is, to be able to discuss demons, spirits, energies as agentic forces between the fields of the human and nonhuman alongside the state and international community concerns. But first these discussions must be made apparent in their politicalness. And often

in Sri Lanka the inclusion of a Buddhist temple or a national park on a tourist map indicate similar political projects, that is particular form of nation building.

## *2. Buddhist and Colonial Nature(s)*

In the summer of 2012 I worked for Sarvoodaya and before starting on a Monday, a group of us went down to the beach for the weekend in Unawatuna. My friend and I had made a wrong turn going back to our hotel from the beach, and ended up meeting a German ex-pat who, from the few bits of conversation we had, had married a Sri Lankan woman and was currently living there as a painter. About his own beliefs he said this: “Buddhism is my philosophy, nature is my religion.” Talking with someone else about the encounter later, they said, “yeah, I would say most people in Sri Lanka would agree with that statement.” Nature is, again, somewhat of an obsession for both tourists, locals, and even immigrants in Sri Lanka. It is even difficult for myself, at times, to not romanticize the connection. Not unlike the ways in which I am continually taken in by conversations I have with individuals like Rahju and Rudrani, it seems to follow that many Westerners look towards Sri Lanka as a place that is outside the forces of constructive modernity, something more connected with nature. These desires, right alongside the concept of nature itself, should, however, be put into their very political histories.

Not unconnected, there has already been work done on the ways that “Eastern” cosmologies might offer alternative relations to nature and the environment, particularly in the face of such forces as global climate change. Alternative cosmologies might help to disrupt a singular, monolithic view of the world, or even a map of the world itself. For example, how might our understandings of changing climates and the continual question of

responsibility differ if we understood the “world map” or the world itself as a giant Buddhist corpse “comprised of individual corporeal relics” (Shaw 2016, 521).<sup>1</sup> Julia Shaw (2016) indicates a couple different conversations that circulate around the discussion of environmental ethics, Buddhism, and conceptions of nature. One discussion emphasizes and promotes Buddhism as ‘eco-dharma,’<sup>2</sup> which follows teachings “on the basis of its preoccupation with non-violence (ahimsā), and the well-being and (alleviation of) suffering (dukkha) of non-humans” (518). The second discussion, as she relates, “attempts to discount the second drawing on philosophical-theological arguments aimed at discounting the environmentally-engaged model of Buddhism” (2016, 518).<sup>3</sup> Perhaps, a part of this second debate also requires acknowledging the potential romanticism of Buddhism along lines of Western value systems. A part of the issue here is the ways in which “nature” is valued and discussed in Western knowledge. For example, Shaw (2016) states, “[a] key argument here is that the debate about the prominence, or not, of environmental ethics in early Buddhism has been skewed by a one-sided interpretation of environmentalism as being concerned with ‘nature’ as an entity removed from humans, rather than with human:non-human entanglement” (519).

My contribution to this discussion of either use of or critique of Buddhist nature within environmental concerns is not to suggest a middle road as Shaw does, but instead to bring attention (or intention) to their simultaneousness, that is, “Buddhist nature”

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<sup>1</sup> Shaw cites: Walters, J. S. 2002. “Mapping Sanchi in a Whole Buddhist World.” In Lily De Silva Felicitation Volume, edited by C. Witanachchi, 1–14. Peradeniya: University of Peradeniya.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw points out that “dharma” has multiple religio-cultural interpretations, but for its practices in her discussion, which also works for my own here, this can widely be conceived as teachings of the Buddha.

<sup>3</sup> Towards this last point Shaw cites: Schmithausen, L. 1997. “The Early Buddhist Tradition and Ecological Ethics.” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4 (1): 1–74.

simultaneous allows us to discuss relations to nature outside of Western concepts as it also, at times, gains value exactly because of Western conceptions and value of nature. There is a similar contested duality when Buddhism signifies “culture” and “nature” and works as forms of nation-building through systems of coloniality in contemporary international relations. Tourism and its productions, including maps, are one way that the state is able to perform these values in the face toward the international/ universal. A focus on tourist values also helps to position the discussion beyond Western environmental revisionists whose seemingly fall close to romanticization (which is dangerously close to objectification, reification, commodification), and those that critique such potential misinterpretation and misappropriation.

It is exactly Sri Lanka’s particular narratives of history, culture, and religion which helps to give nature additional value in terms of a cosmopolitan tourist. Nature is already valuable as it faces destruction from modernity and development. Capitalistic forces give value to the very thing they threaten. But even in writing about tourism promotion in the country, and not merely the materials themselves, the lean towards the spiritual is evident. For example, note the phrasing used by the article on “Business Strategy, Market Orientation and Sales Growth in Hotel Industry of Ancient Cities in Sri Lanka,” out of the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture at the University of Peradeniya: “[b]lessed with seven UNESCO named world heritage sites and being a richly bio-diversified land in spite of the smallness of the country, Sri Lanka is considered as one of the most attractive cultural and natural hotspots of the world” (Jayawardhana et. al 2013, 228). Jayawardhana et. al indicate

that the country is simultaneously blessed for both its cultural heritage sites and its “natural” landscapes.

Not only are Enlightenment values and understandings of religion and nature “stickily with us” (Jazeel 2013, 12), but it is the additional history of Sri Lanka as an island which only adds to these layers. Perhaps, it should not be surprising that the development of the cartography and geography and Western expansion also happens at the same time as the European scientific revolution in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, which also formed how Europe related to nature. Like colonialism itself, the relation to nature was patriarchal and paternalistic. Additionally, like the mapping of the state at this time (Harley 1988) it was tied to economic practices, as Vandana Shiva (1995) relates that the scientific revolution and its relation to nature “closely related industrial revolution [and] laid the foundations of a patriarchal mode of economic development in industrial capitalism” (xiv). The patriarchal power over and the feminization of nature was also aligned to the colonial project, justifying the order and control necessary and over those that did not know how to properly manage it. Shiva states that “[t]his view of science as a social and political project of modern western man emerging from the responses of those who were defined into nature and made passive and powerless: Mother Earth, women and colonised cultures” (20). As both are now expected and valued by the cosmopolitan tourist, we might also connect the colonial right to access and place to both the feminization of hospitality and nature. But this patriarchal and paternalistic view over nature would also persist when the Western views of civilizing included conservation, as was the case with Yala. The move towards conservation of space also seems to align with the time frame of



Romanticism in Europe, as well as the development of natural history, which we cannot assume was any less politically patriarchal than previous forms of scientific knowledge. Particularly as Alan Bewell notes that (2004) "'natural history' and 'nature' came into being as a consequence of European colonial expansion, their discursive histories are not easily separable from it" (12). Bewell (2004) further contends that "[t]he identification 'nature' with the colonial world was a powerful and enduring one. ..The focus of natural history on the colonial world meant that travel, or at least access to travellers' accounts, was a fundamental requirement" (12). Gilbert Caluya (2014) additionally adds that "[c]olonial islands were central environments through which new conceptions of nature were developed," particularly along the lines conservation and preservation of nature (37). Therefore, I suggest the values and creation of nature as both a mode of economic advancement and conservation through scientific knowledge production and travel narratives appear to continue in the value and promotion of nature as a tourist resource in our contemporary cosmopolitan geopolitics.

On traditional tourist maps of Sri Lanka one key location marked is Rahuna, most commonly referred to as Yala, National Park. As of the publication Jazeel's book in 2013, the park received over 200,000 annual visitors, and in the early 2000s the income generated from the park accounted for more than half the revenue of Sri Lanka's Department of Wildlife Conservation (4). The official website for the park notes from its "First comprehensive tourist map" the park is located on the southeast of the country and two of its five blocks touching the Indian ocean (see Figure 3) ("Tourist Map of Yala National

Park”). As has been noted on more iconographic maps of the country, it is often marked with an elephant or leopard (see Figures 4-5).

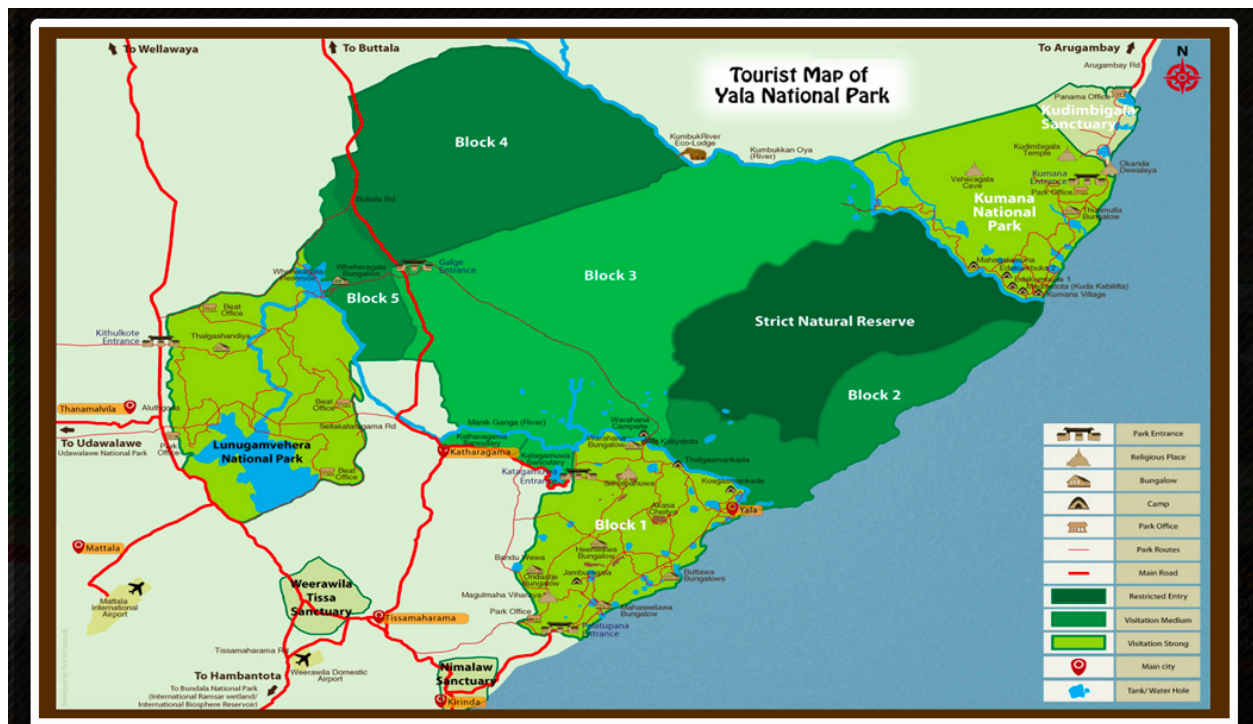
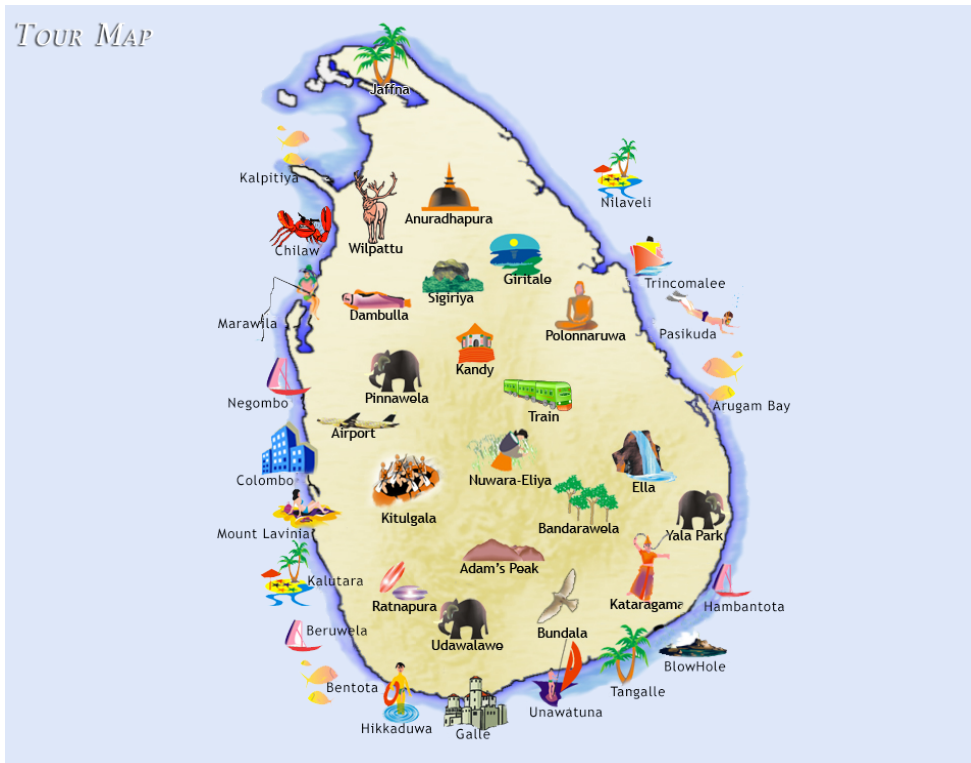


Figure 3: Tourist Map of Yala National Park. Screenshot taken from <http://www.yalasrilanka.lk/>. Accessed: June 24, 2018.

In addition to the overtly religious connotations, as noted above, the possibility of experiencing diverse, “exotic” wildlife and landscapes is another way that nature gains value in Sri Lanka. As the most popular of Sri Lanka’s national parks, it is how, for many visitors, wildlife and nature more generally are mediated for their enjoyment and pleasure. As might be assumed from the icons, the park remains a popular place as it promises large mammals, like the noted Sri Lankan Asian elephant (a subspecies), leopard, water buffalo, but also such exciting reptiles like crocodiles. The promises and potential pleasure of these experiences are anything but downplayed. For example, a blurb from the About page on

Yala's official website reads "It's an experience of epic proportions that brings you up, close



and personal with untamed world of wildlife. Whether you are an avid nature lover or visiting a wildlife park for the first time, if you come here with a mind that's eager to explore and learn, you will go away with new-found meaning to life" ("About Yala").

Figure 4: "Athula Tours - Tour Map of Sri Lanka" Screenshot taken from: <http://www.srilankaathulasiritours.com/TourMap.aspx>. Accessed: October 23, 2017.

These two promotional sentences together indicate the simultaneous articulation

of anti/colonial around values of Sri Lankan nature.

First, the themes of untamed or untouched resonate again, but whose value is extended not just to the experience of the park itself but whose connection to, what we might call, "true" nature is life changing. I suggest that we can see echoes of colonial values of nature in a nature that is located "elsewhere" and "preserved" in this more "exotic" and "wild" place. But the patriarchal stewardship and conservation of these otherwise "unruly" places now fall under the state's guidance. Such abstraction and reification of nature seems

compatible with Western notions of nature, but the emphasize on “with a mind” or a perceived mindfulness to the experience of nature and wildlife might also allude to particular Buddhist principles. Jazeel (2013) argues, for example, that the park remains an extension of a cosmopolitan Sinhala-Buddhist state through what he refers to as “sacred modernity,” highlighting the productions of the *aesthetics* of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism that do not address themselves overtly, as such. The promotional materials of Yala do not overtly assert their Buddhist relationship, but the emphasize of “mindfulness” and experience and learning through non-human nature is an example of how a Sinhala-Buddhist or scared modern aesthetic is achieved. This particular, Sinhala-Buddhist aesthetic indicates an anti-colonial position around the preservation and experience of nature.



Figure 5: Invite to Paradise. Screenshot from: <http://www.invitetoparadise.com/chauffeur-guided-tour-of-srilanka/> Accessed: September 11, 2018.

However, in the very fact that it works through preservation of nature as a national park indicates simultaneous colonial modes of power. This includes not only the formation

of the state itself as a park, but even more directly to the colonial history of conversation and preservation on the island, and the relation to “wildness” that symbolized not only “nature” or particular animals, but as directly tied to the place and people more generally. As noted above, the patriarchal and paternalistic relationship to nature in the colonies was justified through a civilizing mission. This civilizing mission included at times economic endeavors, gaming, or conservation. What remained the same in each iteration was the assumption the native populations did not know how to properly manage nature and the landscape.

The park itself was a former colonial game site under the British, officially established in 1898. The official website seems to reroute around this particular history, noting that it was a wildlife sanctuary in 1900 and opened as a state park in 1938 (which was interestingly 10 years before Ceylon would become officially an “independent” state). Hiding this particular history of the park erases the colonial and Western influence in the creation and perceived need for sanctuaries, conversation sites, and national parks. The politics of preserving space of, or for, nature, indicates Enlightenment baggage of the culture-nature divide, as well as the need to maintain, control, and manage the wildness of the island. The preservation of nature was a part of the civilizing mission. Jazeel observes, for example, that “[f]or British administration, the ‘jungle’ was unhealthy and threatening. Its unchecked and regressive wildness stood in the way of human progress, and therefore it signified both a backwardness and modernizing challenge that taken together ideologically justified the very effort of imperialism” (2013, 37). Rahuna is but one example that indicates the ways in which the claiming and promotion of nature parallels the control and access to

the island more generally. By designating particular spaces of nature for sport ensured control and domination of nature itself, and “the hunt” became a part of the civilizing mission of the island that was more generally connected to same principles of nature that it sought to control: backward, unruly, threatening. But in the first half of the twentieth century Western relations and values of nature would also changed from sport to conservation (Jazeel 2013, 37). This move between viewing nature as a space for civilizing sport to potential preservation (presumably from the very forces that sought to develop the perceived spaces outside of these designated areas) was not particular to Sri Lanka, but a change more generally to the West’s view of nature and the white man’s role (burden) in it. One might even say in the question of independence and the “post”colonial state that the establishment of state parks was one way to legitimate the soon-to-be Ceylonese government, as civilized and external from nature, indicating their ability to self-govern, appropriately (see again, the time frame of the state park). Jazeel (2013) states that “[n]ational emparkment is a worldwide protocol that effectively sets aside space for a nation state’s nature. Unsurprisingly, given its modern roots in British imperialism, national emparkment’s very internationalism universalizes one of enlightenment thought’s primary binaries, that of nature/culture, and in this sense as a process itself it participates in a violent effacement of non-binary worldings and ontologies” (33). As such, national parks assist in producing a nature that can be known and classified through increased abstraction and exoticism, classified as extension of state power, and reflective of national identity.

Moreover, it seems a logical question to consider how much the politics of nature actually changes between colonial hunting grounds, sanctuaries, and state parks? Pala

Pothupitiye, a Sri Lankan artist, would seemingly suggest “not much” (Pothupitiye 2018). Pala’s own work in the past has used colonial-era maps to explore the connected themes of geopolitics and colonialism. In my interview with him, he suggested that there seemed little difference to him between the colonists who participated in the hunt and elephant games, and those that come now to buy an image of an elephant on a t-shirt (Pothupitiye 2018). It is now a symbolic hunt, and both will take home their appropriate trophies. The elephant remains, in either case, the mark for having been to the exotic island of Sri Lanka; it is the signifier for the place itself. A wild and exotic place. The image of an elephant for Yala on a map could have any point indicated colonial hunting grounds, just as easily as it does a tourist location now. Without specific context the promotion blurb promoting “an experience of epic proportions that brings you up, close and personal with untamed world of wildlife,” could also just as easily be about the hunt as it is a state park.

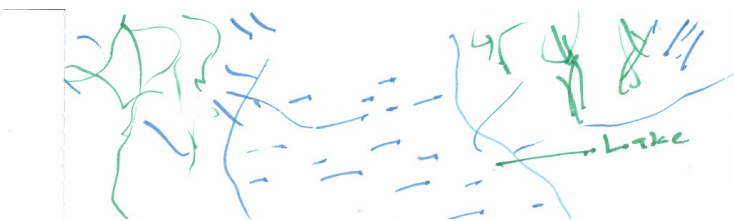
After independence the state park was then promoted as a heritage site by the Ceylonese themselves in the 1950s and 1960s. It was, as Jazeel (2013) also observes, “a wildlife for the nation state, but of the Sinhala-Buddhist nation: a cosmopolitan mode of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism whose nationalism works precisely by claiming as universal its path more particular content” (73). Here, nature is the particular that the state stakes a claim to, but only as its value is already understood towards the international, in terms culture, nature, and nationalism. The territory of national parks and the animals themselves become an extension of this cosmopolitan state.

Additionally, mapping, claiming, or narrating these spaces as “preserved” parallels associations with “untouched” or “virgin” wildlife, reflecting a feminization of the

landscape. Feminization of the landscape only further justifies the state's involvement by once again playing towards patriarchal duties and the stewardship of progress and civilization over the unruly jungle. The play between the universal and the particular in the cosmopolitan, Buddhist state also parallels the simultaneous "adventurous" or even "mindful" tourist, who seeks alternative spaces to experience other than, perhaps, what a resort might offer, and wants to conquer the wilds of an exotic island. There is somewhere in this an emergence of the Enlightenment of human over nature and the enlightenment towards the non-human within/ as nature. But in either context, these modes of cosmopolitanism indicate that the state of nature is not without the state itself.

### *3. Mediating Nature: between localized and state levels; particularities and universals*

When I talked with Bandula in January 2018, the international division of Sarvodaya had already completed a couple of test tours for eco tourism with community villages. The organization and vision of such tours were also reflected by Bandula's own tourist map (see Figure 6) (Senadeera 2018). Which, instead drawing a traditional tourist map as many did, he drew the layout of a village tour itself. The map overviews what the tourist would see if they went on one of these community or eco-tours developed by Sarvodaya. This particular tour example revolved around the production of rice. Bandula's map included the paddy fields, showing where the rice is grown, where and how the farmer cultivates the rice, and how and where the final product is stored. This combination of community and ecotourism, I suggest, serves as an example of how nature itself is cultivated and made consumable. What Marx (1859) once again described as the "sensuous world" is just as much produced as any commodity. Nature as a cultural production can be experience and consumed in particular





places. Places that are designated as the appropriate and legitimate spatio-temporalities of nature.

While the examples, so far, have indicated state-level spaces of nature, more localized promotions of nature and understandings of “The Environment” within tourism and tourist topographies ought not to be overlooked. These more localized examples are also reflective of continued violence and coloniality within development practices. That is, even outside of overt state discussions in the promotion of nature, similar questions in regard to power relations remain. For example, we might ask how much difference is there between an NGO receiving foreign aid vs. revenue from tourists? Particularly, if both are coming from similar structures in terms of the reliance of foreign “investments” ? Cynthia Enloe (2014 [1990]) states that:

[t]ourism is promoted today as an industry that can turn poor countries’ very poverty into a magnet for sorely needed foreign currency. For to be a poor society in the [twenty-first] century is to be ‘unspoilt’. Tourism is being touted as an alternative to the one-commodity dependency inherited from colonial rule. Foreign sun-seekers replace bananas. Hiltons replace sugar mills. Multinational corporations...convert their large landholdings into resorts or sell them off to developers (31).

See Figure 6: Senadeera, Bandula G.L. Participatory Mapping Exercise. January 4, 2018.

The need and desire for foreign bodies and the currency attached to them

appears potentially to be just another iteration of one-commodity based economies, where the commodity, this time, is the packaged Nation State, former Colony -albeit in different wrappings: culture, nature, beaches, tea, wildlife. As more and more local communities and individuals rely on tourist revenue, it seems this holds true for local eco and community-based tourism as much as it does for the resorts. The question that unites both

the local, the international company, or the state-government site is: how to mediate nature for consumption?

Mediating the expectations of “nature” can sometimes come into conflict with the realities of countries often labeled as “developing.” That is, not unlike the idea of nature itself as a production, the consumption of nature by outsiders requires the actual, physical cultivation, maintenance, manipulation, and mediation of space, environments, and materials for pristine landscapes to exist, in whatever capacity. It is often forgotten in tourist spaces that locals also have to live with both the expectations and the realities of nature.

When I asked Ranitri Weerasuriya, an architecture graduate student, what *story* or *image* do tourists have of Sri Lanka, she answered:

*Ranitri: Probably the green, warm, probably more of a “naturey” thing. Because everyone is like “oh it is so beautiful.” Even my classmates will say, “oh I’ve been to Sri Lanka for something, it is so beautiful and so warm.” That kind of ...*

*Shelby: tropical?*

*Ranitri: yea, a tropical kind of thing*

*Shelby: What kinds of images or stories would like people to have of Sri Lanka?*

*Ranitri: Of course I like the beautiful nature part of things, but it’s not really the case. It is only in some places. If only like that was totally real (Weerasuriya 2017).*

The mediation of nature to and for the tourists includes the physical presence of where they will be experiencing the “wild” spaces (parks, ecotourist locations, etc.), or how much of it must be removed or “erased,” in order to be mediated in exactly the right balance. But it also includes the mediation of the “idea” of nature itself. Perhaps, arguably, the maintenance and mediation of the “idea” of nature takes just as much work, if not more (particularly if we are thinking of colonial relations across the centuries), than physical landscaping alone.

The perception and assumption of Sri Lanka is that it will provide untouched natural beauty, diverse wildlife, and a more authentic connection to nature more generally vis-a-vis an ancient (but ahistorical) Buddhist cosmology. These ideologies are promoted through branding and marketing materials, including the icons and symbols which are included on tourist maps, designating where nature is located and where it can be experienced. These kinds of promotional materials are a part of the branding and marketing that help to “normalize and naturalize the idea that tourism is outside of structural violence” (Büscher & Fletcher 2017, 663). But the very possibility that such narratives can be promoted and marketed within contemporary tourism material is also dependent on past narratives of nature, culture, and religion within the idea of the exotic island through histories of colonialism and imperialism. On his discussion of tourist maps, Rob Shields (2003) notes that “[s]patialization ties together the cultural conception of the environment with individual bodies to sediment, in a practical and physical manner, social reproduction in line with place-myths...It embraces not only spatial patterns but temporal rhythms. *Place is a memory bank of societies*” (9). What memories are archived in the promotion of the “place-myth” of Sri Lanka,” as nature becomes a spatial designation to experience and value? To note the “nature(s)” of Sri Lankan tourism is to simultaneously bring into fruition ideals, perceptions, and spaces of “development.” Neither is implied without the other.

Spaces of nature are crafted in particular ways for tourism. Nature, as a space of mediation, must be maintained in order to meet the standards and aesthetic expectations of the tourist. While “nature” is a draw for many tourists to visit the island, it does not include “all” of nature, but those articulations of it which are already valuable for the tourist. For

example, when I also asked Ranitri, what do you think people should see or know about Sri Lanka? She responded with, “...*Bugs. Don't get scared of them. They are just there, everywhere...I suppose that is also my experience living there [New York City], and not seeing a single ant, or fly. And I'm like “wow,” no wonder everybody is so surprised when they see an insect, and they're like “ahhh.” And they think that it is a hygiene thing, but then they're just uncontrollable. And they're just there*” (Weerasuriya 2017). This is the kind of sterile environment that is expected in “modern societies,” and also an erasure of nature, in order to be more appropriately curated and mediated. There is also here an echo of the colonial need to assert and maintain control over nature, as well as I would suggest colonial-racialized notions between the association of cleanliness and hygiene. This goes hand in hand with a discussion of “cleanliness” of the tourist space itself. In the absence/presence practices of tourist geographies promotional materials mediate those undesirable parts of nature out. This includes bugs, insects, and even garbage. On this last one, discussion around trash or garbage also tends to exclude the geopolitics of historical accounts of why the Global North is able to “erase” their consumptions and waste productions, while the Global South is not, but still held to the same standard. This standard includes the incapability to do both the same level of environmental damage and the supposed “clean-up.”

Between 2012-2014, I also worked as a study abroad representative, and I often had students complain that Sri Lanka was “dirty,” and would constantly ask things like why there were no trash cans. When tourists and visitors complain about the waste and the “dirtiness” of Sri Lanka, they do so without considering the larger histories of development,

exploitation, and international systems in the processing and trading of goods, and what that means for “The Environment.” The waste production that is necessary to accumulate “development” status, and the resulting environmental impacts, is further stressed by not only tourist numbers, but also their perceptions.

This is the cartographic violence of the spaces between perception of pristine and untouched nature and the repulsion of naked development. Sri Lanka is untouched, which is again to say pre-or non-modern, “natural.” It is at the same time dirty and polluted, which is to say, perhaps, all-too-modern. This is the double bind of the postcolonial state and coloniality as seen through environmental perceptions. Such perceptions and expectations also do not consider the packaging (literally) and material production in Western development practices that are connected to the mass production, needs, and desires for goods, as connected to their own encounters, and then the simultaneous condemnation of Sri Lanka as a backwards place, that is not quite ready to be at the level needed to attract more Western tourists. Not unlike the colonial civilizing missions of the national parks, this civilizing mission is once again aimed at fixing the unruly and misguided steps of a society that has yet to develop properly.

The sanitized Western world as clean and civilized does not have to see their own trash piling up around them: we have the luxury to afford blindness. Many places around the world have not been afforded the same conditions. But for how long will the West remain exempt? On my first night in Kandy, staying at the new Sarvodaya hotel, I caught a news story flipping through the channels. China would stop accepting recycling from other countries, as it was already up to capacity with its own productions. Catching this particular

news story when and where I did represents a culmination of a lot of pieces that were starting to circulate around, all of which I was not able to completely appreciate at the time.

Surrounding China's decision this news story indicated larger geopolitical and environmental implications. I just happened to catch it on a night I was staying at the Sarvodaya hotel, supporting another facet of their tourism development,<sup>4</sup> and in one of the most associated cities of Buddhism in the country. I mention all of this to overtly stress my own position of the tourist who is complicit in all of these various articulations. Many places, including in the US and UK, are still unsure of what to do with even their recycling (nevermind the massive amounts of trash) as it piles up after China's decision on January 1, 2018. The New York Times article noted on the subject that China has been processing at least half of the world's exports of many recyclable materials, including 7.3 million tons in 2016 (de Freytas-Tamura 2018).

The notion of untouched, that is to say, non-modern landscapes and the simultaneous connection to non-modern cultures is a part of the curation "place-myths" in Sri Lanka, as well as other tourist spaces of the Global South. The sheer increase in volume of images and access to them in the 21<sup>st</sup> century only seems to perpetuate many of these colonial associations, values, and expectations for "nature." Such images help to erase the structural violence of tourism (Salazar 2017). Within cosmopolitan-capital logic, once again, a particular village experience is valued through the lens of a universal conception of "village," "nature," and "culture." Shields (2003) further states that "[r]ather than a loss of

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<sup>4</sup> The hotel itself also had an open-floor plan with the inclusion of open air and green spaces, common in tropical modern architecture (which Jazeel also critiques for aesthetic Sinhala-Buddhist cosmopolitan nationalism).

the local, however, the importance of local place-images and myths as a counterpoint to the received images of other places and spaces is increased, along with the role of the physical environment as an anchor for the spatialization of the place as a certain kind of character of site” (22). But, it would seem that for the value of a particular local-based site to emerge within its particularities outside more generalized notions of the universal concepts of “village,” “nature,” and “culture” and it increasingly becomes distinct in its place-myths and sites of character, then it also becomes potentially locatable on the tourist map. Reified once more into gems for the particular pleasure of the universal subject of the cosmopolitan tourist. The spaces of value for the cosmopolitan tourist and the connection between place as commodity, seem always between various nodes of particularization and universalization.

As the value of nature, and here Sri Lankan nature, continually oscillates between the particular and the universal. “Sri Lankan nature” emerges as a simultaneous spatio-temporal articulation of each. Continued imperial power is also seen “as part of a global economy where rural areas are both a source of materials for consumption in the metropolises and, now, also increasingly a matter of tourist destinations where environments are turned into resorts, theme parks and ecotourist conservation areas, game parks, hunting concessions and forestry hiking areas” (Dalby 2007, 110). This implies here that “the environment” is a resource, even a resource running out in terms of globalization and development. It is also a resource that can be grafted onto continued imperial logics within the needs and desires of the global economy, as the geospatial imaginaries of the metropolis and the peripheries continue.

#### *4. The End of Nature: The Return of Kali*

Islands are always in a space-between. Islands are always changing, either geographically or culturally. Whether “natural” disaster or planned, events like 2004 Tsunami or ongoing development projects, including China’s Port City Project in Colombo (which will add 575 acres of reclaimed land to the capital, contributing to potential tourist revenue, as well) have and will change the island. Altering the coast line and surrounding ecosystems, the Chinese project will have potential negative environmental effects, while also literally changing the “natural” shape of the island. These instances bring into question the production of “nature” as “natural” in historical and contemporary cultural, social, and political productions. This includes just as importantly what we understand in terms of “natural” and “islands” (e.g. China’s creation of islands in their territorial disputes in the South China Sea), as geophysical forces, including extreme climate and weather conditions, and people move, alter, and create islands.<sup>5</sup> To reiterate from the beginning of this chapter, Sri Lanka, as a small island is vulnerable to the effects of our globally changing environments, landscapes, and waterscapes (and is already seeing the effects of these, including issues with agricultural productions, having to import coconuts for the first time in memory), but as a small *postcolonial* island has experienced and continues to experience potential exploitative practices which only further contributes to altered and damaged environments.

But what does the end of progress and development really look like? If we followed its progress thus far, it seems only a line of destruction. According to many environmental

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<sup>5</sup> Although, Chakrabarty notes that in the concept of the Anthropocene (the age of the planet now defined by human influence) that the human is discussed as both an actor but also likened to a geophysical force, and notes that postcolonial theory might both be challenged by this notion of the human but also help in challenging this notion of the human (2012).



experts we have already reached past the tipping point. If there is any chance of survival, there seems need to discuss futures that might be in the plural and which resists totalizing futures, for the environments within our political modernity. Jazeel (2013) adds that nature and religion are two “key vitals for articulating a Sri Lankan modernity whose nation-defining trajectories are necessarily temporally hybrid, looking at once outward towards the internationalism of a postcolonial global stage, forward to Sri Lanka’s own national self-determination upon that stage, and backwards to its own historiographical sense of itself” (10). It is important to stress this point further, that this dual trajectory, what might be described as a dialectical temporality, as Jazeel (2013) argues “is modern, and that modernity itself is a useful concept through which to explore human relationships with the natural world” (10).

Tourism helps to mediate dualities around nature and culture as forms of modern nation building. If we understand the nation state as state of nature, rethinking our assumed relations to nature, rethinks our relationship to the state, and vice versa. The critiques of tourism and their mappings are but one way to critique the encounters of each other in these spaces, and as a place to locate each other in response-abilities. Donna Haraway (2016) suggests on the potential violence and destruction that awaits us to stay with the trouble. Staying with the trouble, as she relates, means and requires “learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful and edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as moral critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, and meanings” (Haraway 2016, 1). Staying with the trouble might be necessary to find balance between the dialectical temporalities of our postcolonial

present. The future of “nature,” “The Environment,” of both the human and non-human is wholly tied up in these same crosshairs. The myriad of unfinished configurations of moral critters should include, then, all with which the discursive formation of “nature” already entails, including both bugs and gods. However, to be clear, any suggestion for the spiritual or religious in nature is not meant in a totalizing or romanticized way, but an acknowledgement of those spaces of both the human and non-human which already operate within modernity.

Mabel Denzin Gergen (2015) makes the claim that geographical interests should also consider the notions of gods, spirits, and deities in forms of local and indigenous knowledges, particularly in regard to discussions of environments and natures. Chakrabarty (2000) has also echoed a similar sentiment, stating “[o]ne empirically knows no society in which humans have existed without gods and spirits accompanying them. Although the God of monotheism may have taken a few knocks—if not actually ‘died’—in the nineteenth-century European story of ‘the disenchantment of the world,’ the gods and other agents inhabiting practices of so-called ‘superstition’ have never died anywhere” (16). The consideration of the sacred and even sentient articulations of nature, also means re-defining the relationship to natural resources. One example from Bolivia, as Gergen (2015) notes, includes indigenous groups that have been successful in even redefining the constitution within “The Law of Mother Earth” to note mineral deposits as “blessings,” and even granting equal rights to both human and nature. This indicates renegotiating the relationship between the human and non-human. However, even while, as Chakrabarty has argued (2012), the postcolonial gives us a lens through which to hold

up the complexities of the human and non-human in all of their articulations within environmental concerns, the postcolonial also gives us the tools to question whose narrative of nature gets to be acknowledged and how. Even a spiritually-Buddhist nature has the potential to continue exclusionary and reifying identity formations in Western logic systems. Alternative relationships, stories, mappings may be necessary to deal with our dialectical temporalities and our relationships with one another, what Haraway (2016) calls oddkin, between bugs, critters, gods, and goddesses. But in this relationship Haraway also means to stress that given in our present environmental crises that we must learn to live and die well with one another.

Travel might provide opportunity to make such relations with one another and within different spatio-temporalities. But travel also both creates and destroys. As an act of movement, like the act of language, the act of mapping, travel itself is violent, it is a movement of desire and power and pleasure. The encounters historically themselves have only increased the violences of these transgressions. But balance must be found. Stressing the need for such balance and the potentially destructive ways of a consumptive modernity, Rahju brought up another figure of the divine: Kali.

*Rahju: also the trauma has to happen. I mean if you think a few generations back and we, our grandfathers, anyone told them that we are now putting poison into our paddy fields, they would get up and slap us left and right because you used to do the chants and connect with the divine gift or they do is maintain it, so they used to attune themselves into it every morning, and in your harvest times the dancers would come or just kind of thing...That says something but how far we can come on such short time. But my hope is that we can make the journey back in short time, as well, once once, you know the trauma hits and the realization comes...Or to our time, according to the Hindu cosmology. We call it Kali. She's the goddess of destruction, so it's now like God and the Devil who are like two opposites, but the positive, negative and it's cycle is one happening, one mechanism. So when people don't learn and they are not willing to shift, then she possess that energy that destroys everything, so it's like a deadline, 'now no more of that nonsense.' She clears everything out and then a new beginning is possible...The*

*new cycle after defeat, so it's a compassionate happening. It's not to recognize, it's not an evil one, but it's compassionate. Out of necessity she comes, she's a symbol of that kind of energy."*

Kali is described here on similar terms as a volcano or fire, where everything is destroyed, but everything grows back stronger, everything returns to balance. Showing me different versions of Kali that he has painted, Raju stressed that destruction is not what she wants to do, it is what she has to do. It seems worth noting that volcanoes are the creators of islands. Shiva (1988) also asks, "[w]hy does the myth that modern science controls nature, persist, when it actually creates a nature that is completely out of control? Violence is not an indicator of control; its use is a sign that the system is becoming uncontrollable" (148-149). But. Whatever balance may or may not be possible in our futures, as of now, our current trajectory seems like a blatant test of Kali's patience.

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