

READING ‘VIRAGAYA’ AS AN EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION ON SRI LANKAN COLONIAL POLITICAL ECONOMY; AN OBSERVATION MADE BY ‘ARAVINDA’

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As a significant economic achievement of colonialism, subsistence agriculture in Sri Lanka was replaced by plantation agriculture to accelerate the slow-moving simple rural economy. The type of capitalism introduced in the plantation agriculture in Sri Lanka, which was considered a main source of raw materials for their industrial products, differed drastically from the commercialized type of capitalism that had existed in Europe. The *pre-capitalist* and the *capitalist* modes of production existed in the same period as well as the same geographical location, causing a fragmentation in the conventional way of life, whose impact was complex. In the many realistic novels composed in Sri Lanka during decade of 1950 and 1960, this complex socio-cultural transformation was a theme. Of them, pioneer literary critic Piyaseeli Wijegunasinghe points out *Viragaya* as an outstanding piece of work. The protagonist Aravinda's behavior and thinking in *Viragaya* exemplify a literary expression of the complex social structure that emerged as a result of the new economic development. Taking this into consideration, the objective of this study is to explore *Aravinda's* dual mentality embodied in the complex nature of his character as a cultural expression on the colonial political economy. Much research has been carried out in social psychology into environmental metamorphoses a person's mentality would undergo as a result of impacts the socio-economic and political atmosphere makes on the instincts and thinking of a person. As a new departure from what has been done, this study concentrates on the perambulation of Aravinda's thinking between tradition and modernity that leads to his dual mentality. Aravinda's deep-rooted socio-economic values are explored through an analytical method. Accordingly, the influence of his exposure to traditional knowledge and practices and modern knowledge and practices and his rejection of the core features of two types of knowledge are discovered. Finally, the following conclusions are drawn: Aravinda represents the rural petit bourgeoisie that exists in association with the urban life; he has no way of entering into the elite under whose blessing he aimed at enjoying the benefits of the capitalism; the discipline he gained from the colonial education prevents him from getting adjusted to his natural traditional rural way of life represented by the majority of his community; and his innate tendency to waver between these two lifestyles - rural and urban.