

**The Worldmaking Role of Sri Lankan Travel Writers:
Negotiating Structure and Agency in the Study of Travel
Representations**

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Abstract

This study is a critical enquiry into the worldmaking agency of travel writers and the underlying social implications. It adds to knowledge on tourism as worldmaking in an understudied postcolonial context of Sri Lanka. Engaging in a scrutiny of the social role of an everyday activity associated with travel and tourism, this thesis addresses the following key questions: (1) Who are Sri Lankan travel writers? (2) How do they represent Sri Lanka through their writing? (3) What are the social mechanisms underlying these representations? Finally, (4) Why are these representations created the way they are?

The study primarily presents three distinctive ways locally produced travel writing in English represents Sri Lanka within tourism promotion, journalism and finally through the perspective of independent local travellers. As such, it broadens insights on the tourist gaze through the examination of three distinctive gazes: the promotional gaze, the journalistic gaze and the activist gaze constructed by local writers. Upon presenting the three resultant versions of representations and their worldmaking power, the thesis then enquires critically into the social intricacies underlying this production process. This is built upon the premise that worldmaking representations are contingent not so much upon initiation or illusion but 'inculcation'.

This is undertaken using the Bourdieusian field of cultural production. It applies the conceptual triad habitus, capital and field whereby the cultural histories including education, lifestyles habits, interests and tastes of writers are examined combined with constraints imposed by various fields they are positioned within society. Consequently, the thesis demonstrates the interplay between external social pre-arrangements underlying the construction of travel representations and the subjectivity of writers, extending knowledge on the critical link between worldmaking agency, the English language and social class. In that, this thesis contributes to the critical tourism studies paradigm by affording a compelling alternative to negotiating the duality between structure and agency in the study of travel representations and their worldmaking power within the particular context of Sri Lanka.

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Chapter 01

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

My academic interest in travel writing began a year into my tenure as a professional Sri Lankan travel writer circa August 2012. I was commissioned to write a travel story about the historic city of Kandy for the *Explore Sri Lanka* magazine. This article, titled *Kandy: Seeking the Unseen* (2012), concludes as follows:

Having lived well over two decades in the beautiful Hill Country capital of Kandy, I wondered how I had taken so much for granted. On that particular bright morning walking the streets I had trodden for years, I opened my eyes for the very first time to a uniquely striking heritage along those thriving streets that blissfully balanced a distant past and a flamboyant present peacefully sitting side by side awaiting the call of a fast-approaching future (Jayathilaka, 2012).

It was the context underlying these very words and the experience writing this travel feature in line with rigid specifications laid out by my employer, which triggered my thirst for knowledge. In other words, I was required to see or view an otherwise familiar place in a new light to entice a particular readership. This and several similar experiences led me to reflect on the social implications within the role of the English language travel writer in a non-Western context; and the diverse mechanisms that influence writers to see, write and represent in particular ways. This thesis on the worldmaking role of the Sri Lankan travel writer is the outcome of this reflection and the ensuing academic exploration.

This thesis extends knowledge on the inherently social and worldmaking role of the travel writer. 'Worldmaking' denotes the constitutive role travel writing and writers play over what is known about places and populations across the geographical world (Hollinshead et al., 2009) unequivocally shaping the way

these places, people and culture are seen and experienced. This is deliberated through an empirical investigation of travel writing as country representations and the underlying social implications, in particular, consideration of the non-Western, non-English-speaking, developing context of Sri Lanka. I thereby attest to the establishment and practice of travel writing in association with fields such as tourism or journalism with significant social undertones to the dominance of the English language and the authority of imperial and neo-imperial culture within such contexts. Hence, the thesis is not only an analytical enquiry into some of the established and emerging representations of Sri Lanka but also certain influential social dynamics that undergird these versions and variations.

With a long and rich ancestry that traces itself centuries back to the West, travel writing or travel literature is a complex genre (Pratt, 1992; Holland and Huggan, 1998) deriving from memoirs, ship-logs, journals, and narratives of adventure, exploration, journey and escape (Blanton, 2002, p.2). This early rendering in words of the extraordinary, the strange, the exotic encountered through early forms of exploration has burgeoned into novel and more diverse ways of writing associated with more recent or contemporary arrangements of human mobility. Hence, I position travel writing as influential not only in terms of the international circulation of people, texts, and visuals, making it a rich repository for shifting notions about mobility but also consider it as being laden with culturally coded messages and representations of cultural difference. Thus, the study is foremost rooted in recognition of this proximity of travel writing to practices of travel and tourism and the impact of the former in the sustenance and promotion of the latter. It is, therefore, set against deep-seated effects of Western colonialism within a postcolonial context. It is positioned amidst the fluidity of contemporary life, against a backdrop of rising globalisation and rapid growth of international tourism and height of human mobility (Urry, 2000) emerging instantaneous media, increasing diversity of culture, cultural diffusion, hybridity and pursuit for meaning and understanding within travel and tourism (Robinson and Andersen, 2003).

Given the power and extent of mobility not only in the West but globally in the face of an enlarging international middle class that increasingly values experiences of travel and have the means to do so (Fürsich and Kavoori, 2001), the consequential transformations within the political economy of travel and tourism have been duly acknowledged in the existing literature. As a result, the tourist encompassing potentials for freedom, autonomy and above all choice, has been identified as the epitome of contemporary life (Bauman, 1993). Therefore, I begin with the premise that practices relating to travel and tourism are more consequential than mere acts of mobility and escape from the ordinary and the mundane but as acts involved in the worlds and lives of others and thereby highly inter-subjective and cultural. As such, the thesis is framed upon the proposition that travel and tourism are powerful generative, constitutive and reconstructive forces with agency in matters of enlightenment and knowing (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001). This constitutive agency is the worldmaking power of tourism or the power to privilege certain versions or visions of and about places, people, cultures or pasts that are “gradually or firmly inscribed or projected” (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.203). I demonstrate the crucial role that writing plays as a part of this, in shaping the way the world is seen and experienced or in this precise case, Sri Lanka. Therefore, I focus on the decisive role that Sri Lankan travel writers play on two fundamental intensities, both as travellers as well as writers/representers. I evaluate their agency to re-think, re-understand and reconstruct the places, people, cultures and pasts they encounter and in doing so, I bring out the criticality of social class in Sri Lanka to this entire process.

1.2. Background and Direction

Tourism as a significant form of human mobility brings to the fore a number of fundamental features with regards to the creation and experience of places, cultures and identities within a global context (Meethan et al., 2006). Thus, tourism, on the one hand, is associated with being mobile and transient, intertwining different social agents, settings and cultures. Therefore, the exchange between hosts and guests has long been under the scrutiny of tourism studies and analysis on matters relating to cultural creation and

maintenance (Rojek and Urry, 1997; Meethan et al., 2006) particularly in terms of commodification and consumption. On the other hand, led by the understanding that tourism is a break away from routine in search of the new, the extraordinary and the 'other', it has been associated with the reconfiguration and remaking of tourist spaces to be symbolically discernible from the ordinary or mundane world of work (MacCannell, 1976; Urry, 2001; Meethan, 2001). In other words, this arises from the necessity for this other to materialise sufficiently different in order to fulfil the tourists' out of the ordinary experience.

Kevin Meethan (2001) was the conceptual catalyst in instigating that tourism actively reconfigures and remakes social-spatial relations in a number of ways (Hollinshead, 2007). Disputing much of the orthodox thinking in tourism studies which he argued were based on "shallow typologies structured around stark 'binary' or 'dualistic' classifications" (Meethan 2001 cited in Hollinshead, 2007, p.165), Meethan argued that places and most interactions and relationships on which tourism is based are dynamic and heterogeneous in an ongoing process of self-making and place-making of actors that are involved (Hollinshead, 2007). This details the fact that touristic places and experience are 'pre-determined' led by the idea that people constantly travel with a set of expectations formulated through various representational media such as tourist brochures, websites and the Internet, TV programmes, advertisements and - of much relevance to the present study - different genres of travel writing.

The images created by these various media connect representations of places to the experiences of tourists as they visit these sites. Accordingly, destination marketers and operators offer tourists with an assortment of representational images of what the places would be like whereby tourists begin to understand and anticipate these sites through an imaginary construction of reality enclosed within representations. These anticipatory constructions are in turn reflected in tourist attractions and their further advertising. Perkins and Thorns (2001), for instance, have pointed out that the primary concern of destination marketers and tourism operators is no longer the authenticity of a place itself but with offering an experience that authenticates the many representational images (Perkins and Thorns, 2001).

As such, since the 1990s, the declarative or representative value of tourism began to be acknowledged and studied. The way in which certain preferred meanings of places, people and culture are articulated in the name of tourism was understood and emphasised in academic studies (Hollinshead, 2004). Some of the leading discussions on these revolved around the way in which tourism is used by various agencies or organisations to exploit normalised, mediated myths and narratives in formulating tourism industry storylines and promotions (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2002; Francesconi, 2011). This notion that places, people and culture are preconditioned by representational images and texts draws on the central precept that there is no simple pre-existing reality waiting out there but that what we encounter is an epistemic world constructed visually and linguistically (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

These considerations on representation have also become foreground for another significant element in tourism in recent years. This is with regards to the representation of non-Western and postcolonial settings (Hall and Tucker, 2004; Buzinde et al., 2006; Olsen, 2008). Tourism was thereby acknowledged as both reinforcing and being embedded in postcolonial relationships where matters of identity, contestation and representation were recognised as being central to the nature of tourism. This is associated with efforts to probe the positions by which the duality between the coloniser and the colonised and related structures of knowledge and power have been established. Thus, considerable focus began to be made on the spatial and temporal proportions of cultural production, social formation of the colony and postcolony and the ongoing construction and representation of spaces and experiences. This has also led to considerations of neo-colonial relationships a situation wherein an independent nation endures intervention and control from a foreign power and the ongoing political, economic and cultural influence of the former imperial powers. This has more recently been understood in terms of the expansion of capitalism and economic and cultural globalisation. These notions have been heavily influenced by works such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* or Ashcroft et al.'s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), leading to the significance of the 'other' in tourism. Studies have thus focused on the representation of the non-Western world and the touristic images built upon a Western way of seeing,

authority and dominant global power relations (Palmer, 1994; Echtner and Prasad, 2003; Hall and Tucker, 2004; Bryce, 2007; Feighery, 2012).

1.3. Significance and Objectives

The importance of this study lies in travel writing and the travel writer being socially embedded, as part of social worlds, which implicitly feeds into their role and function. Writings of travel have been recognised as a means of extending distant places, people, cultures and experiences to readers for hundreds of years, evolving from the need to introduce the reader to the other (Said, 1978; Pratt, 1992; Blanton, 2002). However, the fundamental social implication underlying this process as cultural production has been mostly underrepresented within sociological research; as part of social engagement between the narrating self and the world or an expression of the intricate interplay between the observer and the observed. Above all, the nature of this practice as influencing ways of seeing and knowing the world has not been explored. Hence, I take this study one step beyond mere scrutiny of representations or the way in which Sri Lanka is portrayed, similar studies to which exist in abundance, particularly with an emphasis on the colonial influence. In doing so, I contribute to knowledge on how the travel writer being socially embedded and having embodied dispositions is shaped by cultural resources and location within particular social settings, combining the two levels of analytical enquiry to form one significant sociological research.

The contemporary significance of travel writing, on the one hand, ties in with travel writers and their readers all participating in a global industry of travel (Holland and Huggan, 1998). This takes precedence parallel to the growth of tourism as a global industry where travel is no longer a one-way stream from the West to other parts of the world but the prevalence of a global middle class that understands and engages in travel as a desirable private goal. This increasing prevalence of travel has created an audience and interest in travel-related literature not only for information and enticement for potential travel but also for entertainment as an alternative experience where actual trips cannot be financially afforded (Fürsich and Kavoori, 2014; Fürsich and Kavoori, 2001). On the other hand, the significance of contemporary travel writing also

increases in an era of accelerating media globalisation and proliferating mobile media technologies where readers are increasingly becoming contributors of various types of content, including images and stories related to travel (Good, 2013). In this sense, it is important to consider travel writing in terms of its allegiance to advertising/promotion and the travel/tourism industry in light of increasing public relations efforts of the private travel industry as well as government-sponsored tourism departments.

Sri Lanka, lying off the tip of India is a South Asian island nation with a considerable representational history due to its strategic location and European colonisation for centuries (1505-1948) (Goonetilleke, 1970). As duly illustrated by scholars over time, with the British conquering the entire country in 1815 bringing it under a single English speaking administration, Sri Lanka was transformed into a unified island polity, from a colonial state to a nation state, forming a boundary based society (Wickramasinghe, 2006). According to Jazeel (2013), Island-ness and tropicality are, but two of the ways of seeing and imagining Sri Lanka linked to centuries of colonial self-other relations and formations (Jazeel, 2013; 2009). These ways of seeing continued well into independence (gained in 1948) and the advent of institutionalised tourism in the late 1960s when the first textual/visual tourist brochures and promotional materials began to be produced and disseminated. After the opening up of the Sri Lankan economy to trade and investment in 1977, these processes were reinforced by a burgeoning private sector and commercialised transactions (Samaranayake et al., 2013).

Given this backdrop and context, the inspiration for this study, as mentioned before, emanates from my employment as a feature and travel writer for a reputed commercial publisher in Sri Lanka, producing the two most well-established travel magazines locally. Through the years working in this capacity I have not only engaged in providing content for travel narratives but also brochures, websites, advertisements etc., which led to an initial understanding and awareness on how Sri Lanka is seen and represented in certain ways within tourism influenced by some of the very early Western ways of seeing. This primary insight of the repetition, re-use and reproduction of some of the tropes and ways of seeing Sri Lanka triggered questions that

materialised into this PhD research project. My preliminary questions were mainly on the social role of writers and how they acquire or reject ways of seeing and in turn, reproduce or alter these within their own writing. The research questions that emerged through these early reflections were:

- (1) Who are Sri Lankan travel writers?
- (2) How do they represent Sri Lanka through their writing?
- (3) What are the social mechanisms underlying these representations?
- (4) Why are these representations created the way they are?

In this sense, my aim to examine travel writing and the writer sets forth from within the nexus of tourism studies and sociology. As such, my objective is foremost, to illuminate the representations of Sri Lanka created by local travel writers on the one hand as encompassing centuries of constructed images and ways of seeing and standpoints through which Sri Lanka is seen and experienced so that these images are re-used, maintained, naturalised and normalised and reproduced. On the other hand, I demonstrate the way in which other, potential representations attempt to break away from these established ways of seeing, standpoints through which the country is seen. Secondly, my objective is in drawing attention to the writer as a social agent to link their different representations and ways of seeing to their social milieus, settings and specific fields they are employed by to understand where they derive meaning from. As such, this thesis categorises three different types of travel writers or agents engaging in representing Sri Lanka and thereby engaged in a worldmaking role, the theoretical significance of which I outline below.

1.4. Conceptual Framework

Foremost, with the understanding that writers “contemplate the world voyeuristically” (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001, p.64) and see the places, people and culture they represent and the social and discursive nature of this process, I frame this study on the ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry, 2001). This is one of the most influential and used conceptualisations within tourism studies on the

socially determined nature of seeing that directs one's vision of the world (Urry et al., 2001). Built upon the distinctively visual quality of the tourist industry and the notion that tourists travel to escape their ordinary everyday life, the tourist gaze encompasses the way in which tourists see the places, people and culture. Thus, the gaze constitutes a way of looking at the world, which simultaneously forms what is seen, and the way of seeing (Urry and Larsen, 2011). As such, the tourist gaze is generally guided, built and projected by commercial tourism organisations and mediating bodies whereby representations of destinations as mentioned before are created through the use of narratives, through planned tourism marketing and communications and a range of media such as travel writing. These, in turn, become influential in the formulation of destination images. Following Edward Said's formative work on Orientalism and postcolonial theory, it is recognised that tourism constructs representations of places that correspond with and perpetuate the "othering" of non-Western, developing countries following a way of seeing by the early colonists during periods of European expansion and exploitation (Echtner and Prasad, 2003; Stone and Nyaupane, 2019). Premised on the fact that Sri Lankan travel writers are foremost agents of seeing, I argue using the tourist gaze that the ways they see Sri Lanka are socio-culturally framed through a filter of notions, beliefs, expectations framed by their positions within society. Therefore, both this task of seeing and in turn, representation through writing is far from individual or autonomous. Thus, I employ the epistemological nature of gazing to conceptualise how the writers come to know and see the world prior to writing from within particular social settings.

Secondly, to frame the way in which these writers – based on particular ways of seeing – lift or emphasise certain aspects of the country's places, people, culture and past over others, ignore/overlook or repress elements to advantage particular favoured visions of Sri Lanka, I use the tourism worldmaking theoretical tool (Hollinshead et al., 2009; Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). In other words, worldmaking is conceptualised by Hollinshead and Suleman (2018) as acts of instillation/inculcation whereby a particular version or vista of a place or people is firmly inscribed or projected (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). Accordingly, the worldmaking imaginary

encompasses “a representational repertoire of sites, subjects, and storylines, which view the world from standpoints” (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.202). These standpoints, argue the authors, are held as important by individuals, organisations, institutions that are involved in a process of worldmaking and are built upon inherited narratives (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). I thereby conceptualise that representations created by writers depict the world from standpoints which they or the organisations, institutions, social settings they associate, hold as important. This rests on the premise by Keith Hollinshead et al. (2009) that there are no innocent or neutral worldmaking endeavours and that every worldmaking act or projection inculcates towards some form of held consciousness.

Thirdly, and most significantly, based on the premise that the aforementioned standpoints and ways of seeing are built on “received narratives revered by the interest groups/subpopulations/society with which that management [body], mediative agency, or individual associates (or seeks to affiliate)” (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.203), I engage in an analytical scrutiny of how or where the writers receive or inherit the said narratives. I do this by undertaking an exploration of the writers’ personal histories, upbringing, education, lifestyles and family and employment settings. To do so, I employ Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptual triad: habitus, cultural capital and field in an attempt to shed light on the significance of the social in the process of travel writing, particularly in seeking answers to the last two research questions that directed this study. Therefore, through the engagement of field, I investigate the various contexts or sites within which individual writers maintain relationships; these are examined as networks of objective relations between positions amidst differing standards, conventions, rules and capital that are considered important. Agency of the writers is, therefore, considered in reference to the various fields they are associated with. I explore formal education, use of English language, lifestyles, culturally valued taste and so on under Bourdieu’s conceptual lens of cultural capital that writers have acquired based on which they succeed and persevere in the field of travel writing as well as broader fields of tourism or journalism. Finally, I combine these with the notion of habitus, a socialised subjectivity through which the

internalisation of rules, values and dispositions take place and work as the generative basis of structured, objectively defined practices. I argue that the travel writer role is driven by a working together of particular cultural capital, the rules, standards and principles of multiple social settings the writers engage in and the dispositions they have in turn embodied through these various interactions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

1.5. Conceptualising Travel Writing

Travel writing is a distinct and established category of writing in the English-speaking world, which is often considered “ubiquitous, popular and unavoidable”(Hadfield, 1998, p.2). However, expressions such as travel writing, travel journalism, travel narratives and travel literature are frequently used interchangeably (Steward, 2005, p.40) to characterise an arguably hard to define, “hybrid genre that straddles categories and disciplines”(Holland and Huggan, 1998, p.8). As such, Holland and Huggan (1998) assert that travel writing ranges from “picaresque adventure to philosophical treatise, political commentary, ecological parable and spiritual quest” (Holland and Huggan, 1998, p.8) deriving from fields such as history, geography, anthropology and social science. According to Hanisch and Fürsich (2014), contemporary travel writing includes both accounts of journeys and articles about specific destinations aimed at the traveller (Hanusch and Fürsich, 2014). Stone defines it as “a narrated account of a voyage usually addressed to the residents of the author’s home culture” (Stone, 2018). However, the term travel writing is associated with a range of diverse forms, modes and itineraries such as books diaries, articles and blogs expressing the difficulty to provide an unproblematic definition of what counts as travel writing. However, broadly, one of the characteristic features of travel writing is an autobiographical narration of a real journey undertaken by the author (Holland and Huggan 1990).

Some scholars extend the boundaries of travel writing to incorporate “more information-oriented travelogues and guidebooks” (Holland and Huggan, 1998, p.2). In terms of the latter, Fussell (1980), asserts that the primary function of the guidebook is that of information transfer in an effort at better defining the tourist experience; whereas the travel book, is more complicated

“drawing freely upon literary motifs and the subjectivity one would expect from autobiographical accounts of travel” (Fussell, 1980, p.203). While recognising perceived distinctions in status within their discussion, Holland and Huggan (1998) state:

Is it too cynical to suggest that many of today’s travel writers are motivated less by the universal imperative of cultural inquiry than they are by the far more urgent need for another commission? Travel writing still remains lucrative for only a handful of recognized writers; many others ply a more moderate trade in largely part-time journalism (Holland and Huggan, 1998, p.3).

Thompson (2007) likewise, harshly satirises contemporary travel writers as “press-junketeers starved of original thought” and ‘talentless freeloaders’ who write about travel for free trips producing what he identifies as “journalistic tiramisu” (Thompson, 2007, pp.4-5). Thus, according to Hanusch and Fürsich (2014), the ‘travel journalist’ offers factual accounts of experiences of travel and tourism according to journalistic ethics. Correspondingly, Santos notes the complexity and transformation within travel writing when he (2006) assesses that contemporary mass media travel writing blurs the line between fact, fiction and marketing (Santos, 2006). Thus, some of these defining features of travel writing do not evidently exclude bloggers who could adhere to all of the criteria so far alluded to. Considered an online version of word-of-mouth travel blogs are associated more with self-expression and sharing of personal travel experiences constituting opinion, recommendations and advice (Pühringer and Taylor, 2008; Litvin et al., 2008). Pan et al. (2014) assert that provided their arguable unsolicited, and strongly personal nature travel blog writing is often thought more credible (Pan et al., 2014).

Given such ambiguity and diversity, the travel writing encountered through this study has links to all these criteria and features mentioned and intertwine subjective inquiry and objective reporting, ranging from providing information to offering poetic and imaginative descriptions of people, places, culture and the past of Sri Lanka. However, in place of evaluating the categories they form or a study of the features of travel writing per se, I emphasise the subjectivity and agency of the writer as traveller, reporter, story-teller and worldmaker. I

define the agents in this study as professional tourism writers who create content for tourism promotion; travel journalists who contribute content for local English newspapers and independent bloggers who share their personal travel encounters online. These distinctions are based on their self-identification and the different fields (sites or contexts of production) they interact with. Broadly, I identified and defined the agents of the study as travel writers based on the fact that they write about the places, people and culture of Sri Lanka they encounter through travel in the intention of enticing their readers to visit and experience these diverse aspects of Sri Lanka. Thus, I positioned travel writing as a field in a Bourdieusian sense or a site/context within which individuals maintain social relationships. I thereby considered travel writing as a field of struggle for positions and legitimacy, based on the allocation of specific capital to actors (travel writers) who are placed therein (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

I recognise that travel writing occupies a space of discursive conflict where the writers claim validity to their accounts/representations of actual events, places and people but do so through a personal/subjective vision built upon an assortment of social aspects. Thus, as Holland and Huggan remark “travel writing...charts the tension between the writers’ compulsion to report the world they see and their often repressed desire to make the world conform to their preconceptions of it”(Holland and Huggan, 1998, p.10) based on an intricate social relationship between the observer and the observed. Hence, whether profit-driven or entertainment-oriented, factual or fictitious, I argue that travel writing may be used to chart the power of knowledge and knowledge production in the process of enlightening the reader and shaping the way they see, imagine and experience the places, people and culture written about. Therefore, the different variations in travel writing that I identify within this project such as commercial and profitable tourism promotion, journalism or blogging are but auxiliary influencing factors to this core function of worldmaking.

1.6. Methods: A Brief Outline

As elaborated above, this research project is both an exploration into the textual representations of Sri Lanka produced locally, as well as the social dynamics underlying these representations. Hence, the study was essentially strategised in the form of a qualitative piece of research. It has thereby combined two core components of data. On the one hand, it constitutes the textual content of Sri Lankan travel writing, incorporating travel magazines, newspapers and online travel blogs (texts that appear online). On the other hand, this is synthesised with the emic perspectives of the Sri Lankan travel writer, for an inside understanding of the social actors' definition of the situation through in-depth interviews. The latter contributes to an understanding of their motives, beliefs, desires and thoughts in general, resulting in explanations, verbal descriptions and theories. At the onset of the research, I conducted an analysis of textual representations of Sri Lanka within the two most reputed travel magazines *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib*; the selections were based on a case study of articles written on the city of Kandy. The preliminary findings, themes and understandings derived from this informed the recruitment of travel writers as well as the discussions conducted with these initial respondents.

These primarily recruited respondents were mainly accessed through my prior associations as a professional travel writer, and the ensuing discussions led to the recruitment of more participants for the interviews who, in turn, introduced me to more individuals engaged in some form of travel writing in Sri Lanka. This snowball sampling technique resulted in the encounter with different variations or types of travel writing, such as those who write for local newspapers and independent travellers who maintain personal blogs. Apart from these sources of data, the study is also formulated through the analysis of some grey literature such as government and tourism reports, historical accounts of Sri Lanka and websites.

Finally, my own positionality, not only as a Sri Lankan but also a former travel writer employed at an established publisher in the tourism promotion industry in Sri Lanka was a significant contributory factor in the design and

implementation of this study. As already elaborated, the relevant experiences largely inspired this research project. However, in terms of its implementation, the prior understanding and familiarity of the variations/forms of travel writing, tourism promotion as well as culture of Sri Lanka in general afforded the successful engagement with the travel literature and the participants of this study. A more detailed account of the methods employed in this study is included as a separate chapter (Chapter Four) within the thesis.

1.7. Structure of the Thesis and Chapter Summaries

To evaluate the representation of Sri Lanka drawn by local travel writers and the worldmaking role they perform in the process, it was necessary to synthesise the examinations of the different ways of seeing that different types of writers employ with diverse personal, professional or social contexts, cultural capital and dispositions. This was undertaken to understand who the Sri Lankan travel writers are in terms of social agents, how they represent Sri Lanka, what the social mechanisms underlying their representations are, and why these depictions they produce created the way they are. The answers to these questions are sought throughout the thesis, the structure and summary of which I explain subsequently.

In **Chapter Two**, I take on a review of the literature considering some of the leading academic areas of research. I do this through two main segments. Foremost, I begin with a brief review of the way travel and tourism have been conceptualised within literature and an evaluation of their significance as inherently social endeavours. Here, I frame the literature review on the conceptualisation of practices involving travel and tourism as playing a critical constitutive or reconstructive role in shaping knowledge about places, people, pasts and cultures. Therefore, I discuss the declarative value of tourism and engage in an evaluation of discourse and representation leading on to travel writing. I engage thereby the postcolonial in terms of locating the roots of the practice and the prominence of travel writing as a primary source in and for postcolonial studies. Secondly, deliberating the role of the travel writer I critically explore debates surrounding the traveller tourist dichotomy. These

discussions informed the conceptual positioning of each of the groups of writers encountered in the study within this continuum based on their self-perceptions and the representations they engage in creating.

In **Chapter Three**, following on from the literature review, I consider the main theoretical premises that underpin this research. I begin with an overview of the tourist gaze indicating its implications to socially determined seeing moving on to the worldmaking thesis as the central theoretical pillar of this research. I emphasise the significance of these key academic debates to a study of travel writing in Sri Lanka. Finally, I provide Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework that encompasses the concepts field, capital and habitus through which I present the way in which the inculcation or inheriting of ways of seeing, standpoints feed into a process of representation and thereby worldmaking.

In **Chapter Four**, I present an overview of the way in which this research was strategised and implemented. I open the chapter shedding light on the nature of this research project and the conditions under which the crucial decisions pertaining to its implementation was taken. I provide here justifications to these methods decisions presenting my ontological position and present thereby the main steps taken in achieving to complete the PhD thesis. As a part of this, I discuss the sampling process, accessing participants for the study and the data collection process. I detail the management of data, the analysis, interpretation and ethical considerations before concluding the chapter with an evaluation of my positionality as a researcher and its significant influence and relationship to the object of research.

Chapter Five is the first of the chapters that detail the worldmaking role of Sri Lankan travel writers. Here, I present the first of the worldmaking agents, involved in the first identified category of writing encountered in this study. These are the writers who provide content for magazines by commercial publishers and hence, employed within the field of tourism promotion. I begin the chapter laying out information to some of these publishers, their establishments, products and reputation within the country. Leading on from this, I characterise the travel writing for tourism promotion by taking two examples of the representation of Kandy and the tea heritage of Sri Lanka. In

doing so, I illustrate the preservation of early ways of seeing within contemporary portrayals of Sri Lanka in pursuit of tourist revenue.

I discuss here the presence of an Orientalist discourse and how a tourist gaze is built upon imperialist, Western notions about Sri Lanka deriving from Western colonialism and a way of seeing incorporating the 18th-century sublime sensibility by the British travellers. All of these are inherent in the descriptions of places, peoples and past that these local writers allude to. As such, I demonstrate how, as a part of institutional tourism, the organisations that these first group of writers work for establish legitimacy and authority and become the defining agents of the field of travel writing. Led by this authority, the writers become agents in privileging a particular standpoint, way of seeing and create a version of reality that emphasises certain aspects while overlooking others.

In the latter half of this chapter, I turn to the writers themselves as agents who partake in this worldmaking role and unravel their personal, social histories, cultural resources, lifestyles, upbringing and family backgrounds. Combining the two analyses, I argue that this particular type of writing and representation is a result, on the one hand, of a certain way of seeing or standpoint adopted within tourism promotion to entice a particular type of reader and tourist. On the other hand, it is also a bringing together of specific types of cultural capital such as competency in the English language, and internalised dispositions in the form of a new urban middle class habitus. I argue that it is through specific social conditions that writers internalise the ways of seeing, standpoints - which I explain using habitus. As such, the writers with certain cultural capital become successful professional travel writers within what is considered and reputed as the field of travel writing in Sri Lanka.

Chapter Six is where I present the second worldmaking agent, the travel journalist. Here, I explore some of the ambiguities in defining this category of travel writing yet providing some of its features that characterise the agents as travel journalists. I introduce the field of journalism as well as a brief context and history to its development in Sri Lanka with the predominant influence of Western colonialism in setting its standards and instituting it in the country. I demonstrate the significance of the English language in Sri Lanka and its

critical links to social class, not only determining readership based on lifestyle, taste, education and economic capital but also the role and success of the English language writer. I establish exposure to the English language as an essential cultural capital and part of a privileged upbringing. I discuss the characteristics of this category of travel writing and factors that distinguish it from the previous, highlighting thereby the implication of the field of journalism, its rules and conventions that feed into the way of seeing, standpoints underlying the gaze constructed. Thus, I call attention to how standards such as public service orientation or information-led reporting direct this particular way of seeing and representation. Finally, I once again engage in an examination of this group of writers as in the chapter before pointing out the similarities in the cultural resources such as education or lifestyle in shaping a particular habitus for these individuals to become journalists in the English language. I demonstrate how these agents and their representations are quite similar to the previous but made distinctive only by the rules and standards of journalism.

In **Chapter Seven**, I extend the evaluation of the third worldmaking agent, the travel blogger. Foremost, I introduce this emerging type of writer who is young, urban and independent travelling to remote corners of Sri Lanka for leisure, sharing these experiences and claiming that their version of the country is the most authentic. Here, I illuminate the travel/tourism dichotomy that transpires through their writing and the way this agent establishes their identity as a traveller as opposed to a tourist. The myriad social, economic and political issues in the country are visible in their descriptions of its places, people and culture. They constitute issues such as poverty, inequality or environmental degradation, which these writers argue complete any representation of Sri Lanka, whereas professional and promotional tourism writing conceals such negative aspects. As in the previous two chapters, I propose that these worldmaking agents also derive from the same privileged social class – the urban middle class - as the two other types of travel writers. Using a Bourdieusian stance, I call attention to the characteristic portrayal of inequalities and issues as originating from their social links to International NGOs, or the Third Sector through which they have learned and internalised

certain cosmopolitan ethics and consciousness which in turn affect their ways of seeing and representations. Finally, in terms of their worldmaking agency, I argue that this particular agent is active in producing new, other or potential representations of Sri Lanka over and above existing established representations discussed in the previous two chapters.

Chapter Eight brings this thesis to a close. Combining the arguments presented throughout the thesis, I deliberate how travel writing in Sri Lanka constitutes worldmaking power and agency. I maintain that it is a practice that is performed by a particular social class associated with specific cultural resources such as fluency in the English language, exposure to Western culture, lifestyles and cosmopolitan ethics all of which create a certain kind of habitus that is required to become writers in the English language. These in combination with the different fields of writing such as journalism, tourism further socially condition the writers' dispositions which in turn affect the way they see and their standpoints, resulting in the respective tourist gazes constructed. Thus, I bring into conversation the different types of worldmaking and the agents involved in shaping what is known about Sri Lanka and how the reproduction, preservation or transformation of this is inherently tied to the new urban middle class of the country. In doing so, I conclude the thesis, emphasising the important contribution this research makes to knowledge. I thereby accentuate the study's theoretical contribution to critical tourism studies, particularly in its innovative negotiation of both structural elements and human agency in the study of travel representations through the expansion of the concept of 'inculcation'.

Chapter 02

Conceptualising Tourism, Travel and the Travel Writer

2.1. Introduction

This study endeavours to understand travel writing as a worldmaking endeavour within the context of Sri Lanka. Therefore, as much as it is an investigation into some of the predominant forms of travel writing on Sri Lanka produced locally, it is also a deliberation at shedding light on the crucial role of local writers in English and the inherently social nature of this entire process. Therefore, the thesis encompasses a critical evaluation of writers' experiences of place, from within their travel writer roles (professional or otherwise) and as social actors occupying certain positions within Sri Lankan society, and the representations of Sri Lanka that they eventually construct through text. Thus, given the interdisciplinary nature of the subject of this study, with associations spanning the fields of tourism studies, sociology, geography and even English literature, I attempt to situate this literature review within the intersections of sociology and tourism studies.

The anchor or the broad base of this thesis lies in the sociological study of tourism. The principal aim of it being the emphasis on the social role of tourism, travel and travel writing, I open this review underlining some of the early but fundamental literature that accentuates this, acknowledging that to engage in travel and tourism is to be engaged in diverse socio-cultural relations. I then explore the scholarly concern in the declarative or representative value of tourism, highlighting how cultural discourses shape the way places, people and culture are seen and represented. I thereby anchor travel writing, one of the earliest and dominant forms of representation among tourism representations as a significant socio-cultural practice and an imperative fragment of the repertoire of knowledge built upon expectations and experiences about people places and pasts. As such, I consider the substantial link between postcolonialism and travel writing provided that the

practice emerged from expressing the strangeness of foreign places and cultures during very early explorations capitalising on exotic perceptions of cultural difference (Holland and Huggan, 1998; Lindsay, 2016).

Finally, in an attempt to conceptualise the role of the writer as traveller in line with scholarly interpretations of travel and tourism, I review the tourism/travel dichotomy in tourism studies. As part of this, I dissect some of the literature on what it means to be a traveller as opposed to a tourist. In the process, I review the implications of the concept of authenticity to this conceptual debate taking also into consideration the centrality of backpacker and volunteer tourism of which the themes closely align with the experiences, representations, perceptions and self-identification of some of the travel writers of Sri Lanka. This endeavour facilitates the positioning of the Sri Lankan travel writer within this tourist, traveller continuum in tourism studies with implications to their ways of seeing and representations. In other words, this becomes crucial in understanding their ways of seeing and their experiences of travel/tourism, explicitly shaping the representations they create that in turn, influence their worldmaking role.

2.2. Unpacking the Social in Travel and Tourism

Travel and tourism have increasingly taken a more significant place within research in the sphere of social sciences. Writing at the threshold of the 21st Century, Franklin and Crang (2001) conceded that the opening up of these practices to more extensive sociological analysis was at least to some extent an outcome of the growing acknowledgement among scholars that these are significant constituents within contemporary social life (Franklin and Crang, 2001). Cohen and Cohen (2019) in a recent review of tourism discourse since the 1960s, assert that concurrent to the rapidly shifting and burgeoning tourism industry, the sociological study of travel and tourism has never been more diverse or rich. They argue that tourism is currently analysed and understood from a wide range of modernist and postmodernist perspectives that exceedingly reflect the depth and richness of sociology more generally, echoing the most dominant ongoing social changes globally (Cohen and Cohen, 2019).

However, in tracing the initial scholarly articulations within the literature, one fundamental premise has been that practices within travel and tourism contain the notion of a retreat from established routines and practices of everyday life, where one's senses engage with stimuli that contrast with the ordinary and the mundane (Urry, 2001). With the gradual development of the field of tourism studies, while maintaining that tourism has typically been closely linked with a pursuit of that which is mainly trivial or superficial, unreal or escapist and thereby outside of routine responsibility (Turner and Ash, 1975; Boorstin, 1992; Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001) scholars began to cognise the power and extent of geographic mobility both literal as well as metaphoric, whereby the changing political economy of travel was recognised, and the tourist was seen as the quintessence of the contemporary individual (Bauman, 1993). Thus, to be a tourist was no longer seen as merely an act of being mobile and transient but rather, being involved even if momentarily and casually, in the worlds and lives of others and thereby engaged in myriad other social and cultural practices (Meethan et al., 2006; Rojek and Urry, 1997; Coleman and Crang, 2002). In this way, concerted efforts in research have reassessed travel and tourism as a vehicle through which individuals can reconsider their understandings of self and cultural heritages. Featherstone (1995), for instance, affirmed that to be engaged in tourism is to "take part in educative and self-formative sphere of spiritual and creative significance" (Featherstone, 1995, p.127) that in turn propel and nurture the culturally meaningful self (Rojek and Urry, 1997). These understanding have led to considerable research on the tourist or the contact between hosts and guests (Smith, 1989; Zhang et al., 2006). In other words, in tourism analysis this has meant notions of boundary in terms of distance and difference/inside and outside, all of which form the construction or a renegotiation of the self; of how identities are constructed in relation to difference (Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Johnson, 2007).

Thus, it was acknowledged that travel and tourism reconfigures and remakes socio-cultural relations in various ways based on the premise that tourist spaces and destinations form the 'other' of ordinary day-to-day life and therefore require to be distinct and different (Urry, 2001; MacCannell, 1976; Meethan, 2001; Meethan et al., 2006). Led by this consideration, place and

space have also increasingly been understood as socio-cultural constructions rather than simply physical locations. Tourism sites, attractions, landmarks, destinations and landscapes have been reviewed as spaces through which “power, identity, meaning and behaviour are constructed, negotiated and renegotiated according to socio-cultural dynamics” (Pritchard and Morgan, 2001, p.167).

As a result, places have been seen to constitute a variety of meanings that encompass notions of shared culture, shared language and history and forms of personal and collective identity. Meethan (2006) for instance, notes that it is these intrinsic values specific to certain places or those ascribed to activities which come together with a range of associated services to form tourist products traded within a market (Meethan, 2006). Similarly, Morgan and Pritchard (2001) proclaim that socio-cultural processes shape the relationship between culture, identity and the touristic marketing of places and peoples. Fundamental to this argument, is the supposition that dominant discourses shape our ways of seeing the world (Berger, 1972) a process from which travel and tourism cannot be excluded as historical, political and cultural discourses guide how places, as well as people, are seen and represented in contemporary marketing (Pritchard and Morgan, 2001).

Leading on from these, scholars such as Hollinshead and Jamal (2001) reiterated that even though previously conceived as being essentially physical endeavours, travel and tourism involve practices that are highly reconstructive with regards to an array of “matters of enlightenment and knowing” (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001, p.64). The role of tourism has, therefore, not only been identified as an agent of seeing, being and experience, but also a powerful constitutive agent of cultural invention that functions within highly stimulated, commodified settings - a crucial performative site for hosts as well as guests (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001; Edensor, 2000; Crang, 1997). Therefore, these activities have been understood to take centre stage as a means by which not only places but also people their culture and pasts are seen and imagined in myriad ways both original and as guises. In this sense, they have been identified as powerful Foucauldian instruments of surveillance and discipline through which travellers envisage the world voyeuristically as well as

participate in re-fantasising, refabricating or reinventing it according to their various gendered or other predispositions (Hollinshead, 1999). These conceptualisations of tourism as highly reconstructive and as a powerful constitutive agent have been pivotal in building the main arguments of this thesis, the theoretical minutiae to which are detailed within the subsequent chapter. However, given that the core subject matter of this research project is travel writing and its agents of creation, I begin with a review of scholarly advances in the declarative value of tourism, and representative media as a conduit through which places, people, culture and pasts are not only represented but shaped in myriad ways.

2.3. The Declarative Value of Tourism: Representations of Place

It was during the decade of the 1990s that work on the representative value of tourism began to surface, which has progressed substantially since (Hollinshead, 2004). As such, the innumerable means through which tourism authoritatively articulates the meaning and character of places came to be understood and investigated by the social sciences. In this sense, given the close association of culture, identity and the touristic marketing of places and the recognition that historical, political and cultural discourses shape the way places, people and culture are seen and represented spearheaded a fresh body of research at the time. As such, tourism imagery with the power to construct places, people and culture was one of the most researched aspects particularly in the sphere of tourism marketing (Selwyn, 1996; Pritchard and Morgan, 2001; Lübbren and Crouch, 2003; Jenkins, 2003).

Meethan (2001) one of the instigators of the socio-spatial relations in tourism emphasised that with these understandings the need arose for tourist spaces to be symbolically differentiated from the ordinary and mundane world of work and marked out as different and extraordinary (Meethan, 2001). This was mainly based on the understanding that individuals continuously travel with a set of expectations derived from various media such as brochures, TV programmes, the Internet and various genres of travel writing (Meethan, 2006). It has, therefore, been established that these sources of prior

information eliminate uncertainty and risk, constituting a form of control which channels tourist experiences into pre-determined forms. However, above all, it has been recognised that through continued use and reuse, these representations create and shape knowledge about destinations. Thus, the sociological study of travel and tourism has focused on the creation of these socio-spatial forms, which by referring to common discourse and imagery offer a framework within which experiences are organised (Meethan, 2006). The dominant approach towards the exploration of such issues has derived from the Foucauldian notion of the gaze, which will be taken up for detailed evaluation in the subsequent chapter.

Most significantly, in terms of the direction of this study is Keith Hollinshead's early work led by these initial understandings. Hollinshead began by emphasising the value regimes underlying tourism representations and the political nature of the role that tourism industry plays in shaping the way that the world is seen, experienced and ascribed meanings (Hollinshead, 2004). He has thereby debated the many ways through which the tourism industry not only represents places, populations and cultural territories but arguably demonstrating that this is also a process of making, re-making or de-making of these very places, people culture and pasts. These initial ideas were preambles to Hollinshead's later conceptualisation of the tourism worldmaking framework (Hollinshead et al., 2009) upon which this research is grounded and hence, will be taken into further discussion in the subsequent chapter outlining the theoretical premises of this research project.

2.3.1. Tourism Representations and Postcolonialism

The considerations on image and representation as detailed above have also become foreground for subsequent understandings of tourism within non-Western contexts and its significance as a cultural realm that encompasses configurations of power (Hall and Tucker, 2004; Buzinde et al., 2006; Olsen, 2008). Thus, the position of tourism as both strengthening and being rooted within postcolonial relations was acknowledged within related studies with particular emphasis on identity and representation. The ongoing representations of places and experiences within postcolonial settings gained

considerable attention and many scholars began to use a postcolonial theoretical framework to illustrate how tourism defines and shapes not only cultural values but also landscapes (Palmer, 1994; Bhattacharyya, 1997; Bryce, 2007; Guerron Montero, 2011; Feighery, 2012; d'Hautesserre, 2011). This was often led by Edward Said's (1978) pivotal ontological distinction between the 'Orient and 'Occident' the 'East and the West' and the employment of his concept 'Orientalism' (Said, 2003). This is tied to his notions on how the West shapes the meaning of the non-West or the Orient, shedding light on how "ideas, cultures and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without...their configurations of power also being studied"(Said, 1978, p.5).

Subsequently, it was increasingly understood and recognised in literature that tourism's representation of the non-Western world or the 'Orient' and its touristic images are often grounded in western power and influence denoting dominant global power relations (Palmer, 1994; Echtner and Prasad, 2003; Hall and Tucker, 2004; Bryce, 2007; Feighery, 2012). It was argued that the images of the non-Western world created in tourism for the consumption of the West in the process of marketing the former to the latter, represent a Western, white, male, colonial perspective (Echtner and Prasad, 2003). For instance, according to Hall and Tucker (2004), the 'Otherness' that is created in the process became essential in these contexts, and as tourism is based on 'difference' this encourages:

the preservation of the 'traditional' for tourist experience and is grounded in a colonial desire to fix the identity of the other in order that it remains (or perhaps in actuality becomes) 'distinct' from tourist identity (Hall and Tucker, 2004, p.17).

Thus, the tourist ways of seeing a place significantly differ from other representations given that these places are reinvented, reproduced and reshaped according to the image of tourism. Some of the leading scholarly investigations have advanced the understanding and theorising on tourism's role in shaping the meanings of places and heritage particularly in non-Western contexts (McKay, 1994; Buck, 1993; Rothman, 1996). In one such early study, Elizabeth Buck (1993) through her work *Paradise Remade*

outlines the means through which the tourist industry manipulating cultural and historic storylines downplays the richness of Hawaii's past experiences. She elaborates the way in which tourism constructs "through multiple representations of 'paradise', an imaginary Hawaii that entices the outsider to place himself or herself into this symbol-defined space" (Buck, 1993, p.179). There has been an array of such scholarly commentaries on inaccurate or shallow representations of non-Western and postcolonial settings where tourism has shifted the meaning of places, people culture or pasts, where these places have been re-imagined and narrated as a tropical, exotic or as paradise (Palmer, 1994; Guerron Montero, 2011; Sheller, 2004; Galasiński and Jaworski, 2003). These representations have been understood to be grounded on nostalgia for the empire and imperial myths and deep-rooted ideas of Western myth and dominance (Brito-Henriques, 2014; Salazar, 2009; Selwyn, 1996).

However, others following the lines of Homi Bhabha (1994) for instance, deliberate the ambivalent nature of the colonial heritage and identities and oppose cultural imperialism through concepts such as 'hybridity' and 'mimicry' (Bhabha, 1994). Instead, they perceive tourism as an opportunity for the colonised or the 'other' to (re)articulate and (re)present themselves (Amoamo and Thompson, 2010); or as a "drive for oppositional and alternative readings" (Yu Park, 2010, p.114). Amoamo and Thompson (2010) for instance, assert that the contemporary fluidity of borders and boundaries and the amalgamation of the global/local nexus in tourism production leads to 'cultural hybridity' and transformations that could lead to the 'colonised' exploiting "tropes similar to those of the coloniser" (Amoamo and Thompson, 2010, p.49). They argue that contemporary tourism practices within postcolonial settings could potentially be, a source of postcolonial resistance and contestation of social, cultural and political hegemony that has risen through colonialism (Amoamo and Thompson, 2010).

Considering the significance of travel writing as one of the earliest channels of representation of place and the present study being on travel writing in Sri Lanka, a postcolonial context, within the subsequent section I focus on some of the scholarly explorations on writing and its expressions of the non-West to

further establish the academic backdrop to this study. I begin with a brief overview of travel writing as a prominent mode of representation moving on therein to discuss some of the central debates in the sphere of travel writing and postcolonial theory.

2.3.2. Travel Writing as Representation of Place and Postcolonial Theory

Travel writing has been one of the very early channels through which distant places and experiences have been presented and represented denoting an explicit connection to practices of travel and tourism (Blanton, 2002; Pratt, 1992). Currently, places, populations and culture have been made further accessible through the prevalence of newspapers, magazines, and websites that continue to lure readers with travel-related narratives (Thompson, 2016). Placing contemporary travel writing within a context of increased globalisation, cultural hybridisation and large-scale mobility of populations both within and across national boundaries, Thompson (2016) identifies it as a burgeoning field within academic inquiry. Scholars have been compelled to historicise and theorise these phenomena as a result of which travel writing has gained further academic focus (Thompson, 2016). Lindsay (2016) argues that the rise in the postcolonial agenda, as well as methodology across many disciplines, has also directed scholarly attention to how knowledge of other societies and regions is acquired and circulated and the myriad intercultural interactions and exchange that take place. Travel writing, therefore, gained substantial importance and was considered a significant resource and focal point for discussing such issues (Lindsay, 2016). Consequently, as Thompson (2016) connotes, a genre once viewed dismissively within academia, travel writing has sustained scrutiny and investigation to the extent that “it is probably now impossible to study any branch of the humanities and social sciences without at some stage being required to utilize and reflect upon travel writing in one or other of its many guises” (Thompson, 2016, p.xvi).

According to Holland and Huggan (2002) historically, travel writing has capitalised on exoticised perceptions of cultural difference, having “made a virtue of, and a profit from, the strangeness of foreign places and cultures”

(Holland and Huggan, 1998, p.48), offering its predominantly white metropolitan reading public what Fussell identifies as “the exotic anomalies, wonders and scandals...which their own place and time cannot entirely supply” (Fussell, 1980, p.203). Accordingly, Holland and Huggan add:

Travel writing at its worst has helped support an imperialist perception by which the exciting otherness of foreign, for the most part non-European, peoples and places is pressed into the service of rejuvenating a humdrum domestic culture. However, travel writing had also served as a useful medium of estrangement and as a relativist vehicle for the reassessment and potential critique of domestic culture (Holland and Huggan, 1998, p.48).

As mentioned before, Edward Said’s (1978) *Orientalism* has also been influential in relating travel writing to the colonial project. As emphasised by later academic work, this had cemented the place of travel writing as a primary source in and for postcolonial studies (Lindsay, 2016; Stone, 2018). Influenced by Foucauldian ideas of discourse, Said conceptualised Orientalism as a complex cultural and ideological discourse “a Western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the Orient” (Said, 1978). This was based on a distinction between the Orient and the Occident which helped uphold the authority, superiority and the strength of European identity at the expense of non-European people and cultures; a framework under which the West defined itself. Literature constituting travel narratives that surfaced from “innumerable voyages of discovery” (Said, 1978, p.47) and prolonged contacts established through trade and war were fundamental to the Orientalist enterprise. This assertion is based on the fact that these were the principal accounts of ‘other’ places and people to be circulated to an audience/readership in the West. Said in his study, identifies these platforms as “works of literature, political tracts, journalistic texts, travel books, religious and philological studies”(Said, 1978, p.23).

Accordingly, Edward Said claims that the persistence and pervasiveness of Orientalism was such that no one thinking, acting or writing on or about the region during the post-Enlightenment period could do so without taking it into account. However, Lindsay (2016), for instance, proclaims that for Said,

Orientalism is not just a question of representation but is a “mechanism which articulates and accounts for imperial expansion, it has corresponding institutional support and is irrevocably tied to socio-economic and political structures” (Lindsay, 2016, p.26). Edward Said’s work has been a significant influence on the postcolonial analysis of travel accounts despite the various criticisms levelled against his conceptualisation. Said’s legacy can be traced in subsequent works of postcolonial scholarship on travel and its narratives.

In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) Mary Louise Pratt also engages in a postcolonial critique of travel writing demonstrating that travel narratives whether directly or otherwise, have to a large extent helped produce “the rest of the world”(Pratt, 1992). Unlike Said, Pratt demarcates the focus of her discussion as travel books and narratives about Spanish America, the Caribbean and the West and Central Africa from 1750 onwards. She explains how travel literature created by Europeans about non-European regions of the world generated the imperial order for Europeans at home and positioning them within this. Pratt questions the way in which travel writing made imperial expansion meaningful and desirable to the people of imperial countries. The author establishes that travel literature offered these publics a “sense of ownership, entitlement and familiarity” (Pratt, 1992, p.3) concerning the distant parts of the world that were colonised. Lindsay (2016) in a review of Pratt’s work argues that where Pratt builds on Said’s work is in her consideration of voices hitherto excluded from the archive: the experiences and work of those whose lives the Empire intervened (the traveller). Her examples demonstrate how those on the receiving end of imperialism also “did their own knowing and interpreting sometimes [...] using the European’s own tools”(Pratt, 1992 in Lindsay, 2016, p.29).

Since then, more extensive explorations have critiqued the crucial function of travel writing in relation to European colonialism. Thus, this practice has been perceived as a discourse of colonialism identifying the parallels between writer and coloniser, framing it as a process through which one culture comes to interpret, to represent and dominate another in various acts of naming, representation and interpretation (Lindsay, 2016; Behdad, 1994; Spurr, 1993). Nonetheless, there have been other ways to understand works that may be

considered travel writing. Turner (2001) for instance, disagrees with perceiving all travel writing in a negative light, contending that critics often focus specifically on imperialist statements within writings rather than investigating these works entirely. Another limitation cited is that certain lenses of literary analysis may apply only to writings of international, distant, or cross-cultural travel. Thus, Turner, in her work attempts to illuminate the central role of 18th-century travel writing in shaping Britain's emerging sense of national identity which she argues, intersects with questions of gender and class in the tendency to denigrate aristocratic travellers as effeminate and celebrate the manlier activities of the middle-class traveller (Turner, 2001).

Having examined some academic interpretations with regards to travel writing as a popular channel of representation of place and the inherent links to postcolonial theory, I established that travel writing could be considered a critical mode whereby the meanings of places, people, culture and pasts are shaped in particular ways with specific considerations on non-Western contexts. However, travel writing is far from a singular mode of representation. I attempt to demonstrate through this study that it is instead a complex social practice constituting various forms and agents. Given this, and the focus of this study on the social nature of this endeavour involving different types of travel writers embedded in diverse social settings, I maintain that the travel writer is engaged in a meaning-making world-shaping role. Hence, I once again combine travel writing with tourism scholarship but on this occasion, in the intent of positioning the travel writer role within the tourist/traveller debate. These are two very distinct categories or ways of seeing, experiencing and representing the world vital to this study.

2.4. The Role of the Travel Writer: Tourist or Traveller?

Existing literature identifies multiple forms and meanings that encompass the body of travel literature as presented in the introductory chapter. Just as there are myriad expressions such as travel writing, travel journalism, travel narratives and travel literature used recurrently and interchangeably (Steward, 2005) this fluidity and the inherent ambiguity is reflected in the role of the travel writer. This is noteworthy given the complexity of this role within the

contemporary globalised society of intensified and democratised travel filled with diverse media representations and individuals engaged in travel writing in various capacities, professional or otherwise (Stone, 2018). It is, therefore, essential to conceptualise the travel writer in light of this variation in form such as the tourism writer, travel journalist or the travel blogger influenced by distinctive fields (sites or contexts) of production these individuals work within, the theoretical details of which I elaborate in the subsequent chapter.

Scholars have sought to understand the way that writers perceive their own identity in line with practices of both the travelling and the writing they engage in which characterises the differences between writers, particularly between the different variations alluded to above (Fürsich and Kavoori, 2014; McNair, 2005; Pirolli, 2017; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003). Some academic literature, for instance, differentiates the travel journalist by the cornerstones of journalistic values, strategies and formal codes shared widely by its members. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2003) ascertain elements that represent a journalistic ideology and ethics based on some of which I have been able to characterise some of the Sri Lankan travel writers as travel journalists differentiating them from tourism writers and independent bloggers. These variations will be discussed through Chapters Five to Seven in more depth. However, irrespective of these varying categories, they all engage in practices of travel and tourism the experiences and encounters of which they represent through their writing. Therefore, understanding the proximity that each category of writers has to experiences of travel and/or tourism has been crucial to this study. This, in turn, has been vital in conceptualising their ways of seeing and representations. While some writers' experiences and writing associates closely with tourism, others align more towards travel, explicit in their antagonism towards mass tourism and tourists articulated both as perception during interviews as well as through their writing. Therefore, it is useful to review and unpack the two terms tourism and travel and critical debates on the tourist/traveller dichotomy within existing tourism studies literature in an attempt to evaluate the implications of these to the role of the Sri Lankan travel writer.

2.4.1. The Traveller/tourist Dichotomy

According to Kinsley (2016), a distinction between travellers and tourists becomes increasingly evident within travel writing from the start of the 19th century, a period in which, terminology for the identification of autobiographical texts were gradually emerging (Kinsley, 2016). Polezzi (2004) argues, however, that the relationship between travel writing and autobiography is somewhat ambiguous and complicated identifying both as being “fuzzy, hybrid, complex genres” (Polezzi, 2017, p.121). My intent here, however, is not to evaluate the genres that travel writing extends into but to situate the travel writer within conceptualisations of tourism and travel; or in other words, to trace the tourism/travel distinction in association with travel writing. This leads to an exploration of what it means to be a traveller rather than a tourist. As evaluated by Mee (2007), studies within the field have made use of typological approaches to differentiate between travellers and tourists based on their motivations (Mee, 2007). Such studies have examined tourists, travellers and even anthropologists under the same systems of classification. According to Kontogeorgopoulos (2003) and as reflected in the present study, travel writers themselves propagate this discourse of ‘good versus bad’ by positioning themselves and their experiences as culturally rewarding, environmentally friendly, and socially benign for host communities, particularly with regards to actions that have long been regarded in the popular imagination, as those of the stereotypical, badly behaved mass tourist (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003).

Literature posits that these persistent stereotypes continue to offer an enticing ideal for thinking about the self in relation to others within the context of travel. Whereas the term “traveller” presents a positive and independent model of self-hood “tourists are never ourselves, always other people” (Kinsley, 2016, p.237). The traveller/tourist dichotomy has its origins in the literature of travel emerging at the turn of the 19th century at the threshold of what is currently referred to as mass tourism (Boorstin, 1992). That it continued as a powerful model for considering travel and travel writing is made evident by the fact that some critics of the late 20th century have predominantly argued the case for the historical reality of the two categories, mourning the extinction of the

traveller in a modern age of global travel where tourists proliferate (Boorstin, 1992; Fussell, 1980; Kinsley, 2016).

From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel by Daniel Boorstin (1964) has been a widely discussed essay that has helped substantiate the study of tourism within the social sciences (Cohen, 1988b). Here, the author considers tourism as a degraded form of travel and characterises the difference between travellers and tourists. Boorstin used the example of the modern mass tourist to shed light on the contrived, illusionary nature of human experience within American society at the time, and its members who do not experience reality but rather, thrive on pseudo-events. Eventually, Boorstin argues, this artificial image of the destination begins to be promoted by commercial advertisements based on which tourists choose and evaluate the sights within a destination as examined earlier within the discussion on tourism representations. Tourism, therefore, becomes a closed, self-perpetuating arrangement of illusions. Cohen (1988) reviewing Boorstin's work, however, offers several observations; primarily accusing him of amalgamating opinion with fact. The former does not question the originality of Boorstin's conclusions but do however question that of his opinions conceding that "In fact, they are widely held prejudices about the nature of modern tourism" (Cohen, 1988b, p.31). Nonetheless, Boorstin's essay is believed to have served as a point of departure for more disciplined writings within the sociology of tourism triggering the serious sociological study of tourism in the English-speaking world (Cohen, 1988b).

Conversely, Dean MacCannell (1976), in his early work, *The Tourist* endeavoured to defend tourism as a search for authenticity within the context of rapid modernisation of society (MacCannell, 1976). As such, the image of the tourist created by MacCannell contrasts with that of Boorstin's (MacCannell, 1976; Cohen, 1988b). Whereas in the interpretation of the latter, the tourist expresses the inauthenticity of modernity, in the case of the former, the tourist embodies the quest for authenticity. In this sense, since MacCannell's influential text the concept of authenticity has become a focal point in explorations of the social and cultural impacts of tourism particularly as a vital marker within the travel/tourism debate. MacCannell argues that

tourism leads to commoditisation of the spheres of life in society that destroys the authenticity of local cultural products and human relations (MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1988a). As a result, local culture including customs, rituals, feasts and festivals, folk and ethnic art and costumes become touristic commodities and services produced or performed for touristic consumption. Thus, tourism and the presence of tourists result in a loss of genuine, real culture which is replaced by trivial, commodified events, products and experiences that degrade both the producer and the consumer. According to MacCannell, this process of commodification shifts the meaning of cultural products and human relations and destroys their authenticity, bringing forth in place an alternate “staged authenticity” (MacCannell, 1973). As a result, the need to offer the tourists more spectacular and exotic attractions increases and with that inauthentic, artificial cultural products are exceedingly decorated and “staged” for tourists so as to seem authentic.

Wang (1999) argues that both Boorstin and MacCannell in referring to pseudo-events and staged authenticity posit a museum-linked objectivist formation of authenticity connoting the authenticity of the ‘original’. According to museum terminology authenticity is applied in determining whether objects are genuine, real or unique. However, Wang asserts that authenticity is not a matter of black or white but is to do with a much broader rich and ambiguous spectrum. Therefore, that which is considered inauthentic or staged by experts, intellectuals or elite may be experienced as authentic and real from the emic perspective of the tourist (Wang, 1999). Similarly, Cohen and Cohen (2019) argue that more recent work on the subject is shifting the discourse from an objective to a more subjective concept of authenticity (Cohen and Cohen, 2019). Since MacCannell’s conceptualisation, authenticity has been a popular agenda for study by a range of scholars (Brown, 1996; Chhabra et al., 2003; Bruner, 1994; Wang, 1999; Daniel, 1996; Ehrentraut, 1993; Bryce et al., 2015; Yang and Wall, 2009; Kim et al., 2018; Gilmore and Pine, 2007). A topic of much debate in tourism studies, this will be taken up for further discussion in Chapter Seven outlining its association to the travel writers of this study.

The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to ‘Culture’, 1800–1918 by James Buzard (1993) explores literary anti-tourism in great

detail focusing on the development of tourism in Europe in the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Observing that the term 'tourist' first appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary in the late 18th century, functioning at the time as a synonym for the term "traveller", Buzard moves on to emphasise, through reference to some of the literature of the period, how a negative connotation came to be attached to the term 'tourist' since the mid-19th century (Buzard, 1993). It is therein argued that the 19th century is the period within which processes of democratisation and commercialisation of tourism began, leading to the decline of travel and the rise of mass tourism (Boorstin, 1992; Galani-Moutafi, 2000). Modernisation of transport within the 19th century has been showcased as a main propeller of tourism development. This has led to criticisms of the speed and superficiality with which tourists approached places they visited. Since then, similar observations have been made with regards to air travel establishing tourists as hasty consumers of travel destinations.

Buzard's work fundamentally engages with and critically explores the cultural representations surrounding tourism and travel approaching it from the direction of literary analysis. Buzard claims that the tourist is the dupe of fashion, "following blindly where authentic travellers have gone with open eyes and free spirits" (Buzard, 1993, p.2). He examines a diverse range of texts drawing from literature, travel writing, guidebooks periodicals and business histories in an attempt to understand the increasing rationalisation and internationalisation of the tourist industry. The speed at which tourists travel, their alienation from societies they visit, and the over-crowding of travel destinations are some of the dominant themes emphasised by Buzard that continue to be repeated by the critics of tourism.

Thus, the primary claim within most of these interpretations has been to position the modern tourist in contrast to the traveller as "a passive onlooker in a quest to relish the extravagantly strange from within the comfort and security of the familiar"(Cohen, 1988b, p.30). In other words, the tourist travels isolated from the environment and the local people, in guided groups in search of "contrived" attractions gullibly experiencing "pseudo-events" and disregards the reality around them (Boorstin, 1992, p.84). This very attitude is seen as

leading to the hosts and tourist entrepreneurs to devise ever more extravagant contrivances for tourist consumption which widens the gap between the tourist and the real life at any given location or destination. In contrast, travel involves long planning, considerable expense and great investments of time. Likewise, while travel has been considered as a resource in seeking self-realisation, discovery and self-fulfilment denoting activity where the boldness and endurance of the traveller have been highlighted; tourism has been perceived as an endeavour to essentially endorse one's view of the world rather than transforming it (Rojek, 1991). Paul Fussell (1987) who differentiated tourism from travel also argues:

Tourism simulates travel, sometimes quite closely...But it is different in crucial ways. It is not self-directed but externally directed. You go not where you want to go but where the industry has decreed you shall go. Tourism soothes you by comfort and familiarity and shields you from the shocks of novelty and oddity. It confirms your prior view of the world instead of shaking it up. Tourism requires that you see conventional things and that you see them in a conventional way (Fussell, 1987, p.651).

The tourist, therefore, is deemed unadventurous, predictable, artificial, passive and lacking initiative. It is argued that such individuals prefer to experience place and culture performed for them within settings that are comfortable and familiar, often selecting ready-made itineraries packed for them by a third party (Kinsley, 2016). The tourist has been presented as a product of the leisure industry, touring in groups and remaking entire regions in their homogenous image connoting passivity and consumption.

In contrast, the traveller is considered adventurous, spontaneous, genuine, and in search of the 'real' and 'authentic' experience of other places and cultures, mainly in control of their own travelling itinerary. The traveller is, therefore, associated with discernment, respect and taste, which also links to the Bourdieusian interpretation of class classification and 'distinction', whereby based on these attitudes travellers position themselves at an upper hierarchical social standing than tourists (Bourdieu, 2010; Jacobsen, 2000; Buzard, 1993). Therefore, the traveller tourist distinction is considered part of

the separation of popular pleasure from high culture (Rojek and Urry, 1997). Shedding light on some of the most complex connections between tourism and cultural change, Rojek and Urry (1997) bring together a collection of work titled *Touring Cultures: transformations of travel and theory*. Here, the authors shed light on the complexity of the concept of tourism and assert that one of the central problems of this category lies in the fact that its meaning is often derived from its 'other'. Whether this latter is travel, excursion, voyaging or exploration, the authors assert that the meaning of tourism constantly slides as its 'other' changes (Urry and Rojek, 1997).

In his work *Towards a Sociology of International Tourism* Erik Cohen (1972) attempts to conceptualise a typology of tourists based on their relationship to both the tourist business establishment and the host country (Cohen, 1972). Here, the author maintaining the difficulty in establishing binaries of travel and tourism distinguishes between institutionalised and non-institutionalised forms of tourism. As examples of the former, Cohen cites the organised mass tourist and the individual mass tourist. The organised mass tourist is presented as the least adventurous who buys a packaged tour just as they buy any other commodity in a modern mass-market involving thereby in the guided tour conducted in an air-conditioned bus, travelling at high speed through the country-side. While the itinerary of the organised mass tourist's trip is fixed in advance with prior-prepared and guided stops they make no decisions on their own and seek to experience the novelty of the macro-environment of a new and strange place from the security and comfort of a familiar micro-environment – through familiar means of transportation, hotels or food. Cohen identifies this as the "environmental bubble" of the tourist's native culture (Cohen, 1972, p.168). The only difference of the individual mass tourist, according to Cohen, is that they enjoy a certain amount of control over their time and itinerary compared to the previous case.

In presenting his version of the traveller, Cohen argues that Boorstin's interpretation of the existence of either the mass tourist or the adventurer is oversimplified. He concedes that Boorstin overlooks the noninstitutionalised tourist roles of explorer and drifter. The author presents the explorer as capable and choosing to arrange their own trip preferring, thereby to get off-

the-beaten-track as much as possible. Nevertheless, the explorer, argues Cohen, seeks comfortable accommodations and reliable means of transportation. Thus, even though the explorer endeavours to associate with the people he visits or tries to speak the native language or dares to leave the environment bubble, they still make sure they can step back into it as and when desired, particularly if the experience becomes too strange, uncomfortable or rough. Thus, Cohen's drifter is the closest to Boorstin's traveller. According to Cohen, the drifter ventures the furthest away from the beaten track and accustomed ways of life. They shun any connection with the tourist establishment and considers the ordinary tourist experience fake; prefers to immerse themselves almost entirely in the host culture by living with the people and trying to adopt their ways of living sharing their shelter, food and habits (Cohen, 1972).

The increasing awareness, not only by tourists, travellers but host communities and society in general of the negative impacts of mass tourism, its association with a range of social, cultural and ecological dilemmas, has unlocked prospects for the research of alternative forms of tourism (Theng et al., 2015). According to Ooi and Liang, (2010) tourists, as a result, have begun to search for 'alternative' experiences to the mainstream (Ooi and Laing, 2010). Literature identifies alternative forms of tourism that range from backpacking to volunteer tourism, eco-tourism, community-tourism, ethical tourism, pro-poor tourism, and so on all of which allow the traveller to avoid the dominant mass-tourism model. Thus, over the subsequent section, the literature on two such alternative travel experiences will be evaluated. It begins with backpacking which is in proximity to Cohen's conceptualisation of the drifter and most evidently linked to practices of travel among some of the travel writers explored within the present thesis. I present, therefore, a review of backpacker and volunteer tourism, given the adoption of some of their features and key ideas by those I characterise within this study as the most independent group of writers in their efforts to distance themselves from mass tourism, tourists and tourism-related writing.

2.4.2. Backpacker and Volunteer Tourist

The consideration of backpacking as a specific category of study was influenced by Cohen's (1972) differentiation of the non-institutionalised tourist from their institutionalised other (Uriely et al., 2002). Subsequently, Cohen's non-institutionalised, prevalently middle-class young drifters and explorers were often referred to in literature by a range of other terms such as nomads (Cohen, 1973), youthful travellers (Teas, 1988), wanderers (Vogt, 1976), hitchhikers (Mukerji, 1978), tramping youth (Adler, 1985) or long-term budget travellers (Riley, 1988). Nonetheless, since the 1990s studies tend to discuss these under the category of backpacker (Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995; Hampton, 1998; Loker-Murphy, 1997; Uriely et al., 2002). Therefore, despite the multiplicity of terms and categories that appear in the literature it is mostly agreed that the various non-institutionalised groups constitute a distinct category that differentiates from institutionalised mass tourism (Cohen, 1972; 1973; Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995; Riley, 1988; Vogt, 1976). More recently, according to Cohen (2004) the growing body of research on similar categories has led to the emergence of 'backpacker studies' as a recognised sub-division of tourism studies its consequent institutionalisation bringing forth the formation of a 'Backpacker Research Group'(Cohen, 2004).

Nonetheless, with its rapid rise to popularity, backpacking has begun to attract some dissatisfaction with its growing resemblance to mass travel. The ever-increasing concerns with regards to the sustainability of backpacking tourism have been directed towards both the diverse impact on local communities but also its increasing commercial gains. There is a growing body of research that has, therefore commented on the blurring of boundaries between backpacker and mass tourism (Westerhausen, 2002; Welk, 2004; Ooi and Laing, 2010). The backpackers, therefore, in their search for greater authenticity, push further into the periphery accessing more remote places which eventually lead to their commercialisation. As a result, the once "off the beaten track" often turn into a path most trodden like in the case of Mirissa and Ella in Sri Lanka that the concerned travel bloggers point out as discussed in Chapter Seven. Ooi and Laing (2010) argue that the elitist self-assessment of the backpacker as "anti-tourist" thereby becomes unrealistic. This they assert is due to the fact

that the backpackers' influence on developing societies is often even more lasting and shaping than that of the organised and spatially selective package tourism. As a result, people have increasingly begun to get involved in more altruistically motivated travel which is more sustainable and contrary to traditional forms of tourism, including backpacking. Volunteer tourism is one such form.

Considered generally as "travelling to make a difference" volunteer tourism is argued to be new and among alternative forms of tourism. According to Wearing and MacGhee (2013), volunteer tourism is an expanding sector in the tourism industry, in many parts of the world, both the developing and the developed. The recent exponential growth of this new sector, particularly within the last two decades or so, is reflected in academic literature, global trends and the popular press (Wearing and McGehee, 2013). As noted by the authors, even though it has been in function for a number of years, it was not until after the September 11th disaster and the Indian Ocean Tsunami that travellers had started to seriously consider this form of travel, after which the market had expanded considerably. Literature posits that volunteer tourism amalgamates elements of travel, leisure and volunteer work generally involving the payment by travellers to participate in organised special-interest projects directed towards helping the local natural, social and cultural environments of communities that they travel to (Brown, 2005; Broad, 2003; Butcher and Smith, 2010; Polus and Bidder, 2016). Nonetheless, due to its diversity, there is little consensus within the literature on the nature of volunteer tourism. Ooi and Liang (2009) state that the ideological essence of volunteer tourism centres around the contributions travellers make to host communities its importance set in its "moral agenda" for sustainable tourism (Ooi and Laing, 2010). Some scholars argue that the promise of a decommodified agenda offers volunteer tourism the ability to empower destination communities which is a significant element that has driven their research.

2.5. Conclusion

Through this review of literature, I have attempted at exploring scholarship selectively from key areas that informed the central concerns of this research

project. Based on my critical engagement with the role of travel writers in Sri Lanka and the writing material produced as a result of this process, I provided a conceptual map that demonstrates the connection between tourism/travel and travel writing. I did so in an attempt to understand how they relate to each other, conceptualising broadly, the social nature of travel and tourism to situating the travel writer within the traveller/tourist dichotomy. These will conceptually direct the reader through some of the core arguments developed within the body of this thesis.

Thus, primarily by contextualising this research project within tourism studies, I made links to a body of literature acknowledging the social nature of practices involving travel and tourism. Here, through an evaluation of the measured shift in the understanding that these are more than simply trivial, superficial acts of escape, I shed light on the critical social role that travel writing plays as a mode of representation closely associated with practices of travel and tourism. I evaluated some of the diverse scholarly accounts on travel writing chiefly in ascertaining the Western-centric, Orientalist discourses inherent in the practice and the often-highlighted nexus between travel writing and postcolonial theories claiming how tourism representations are grounded in Western authority and dominant global power relations. This has been core in conceiving the power of travel writing in shaping the way places, people and culture are seen and experienced and how some of the dominant tropes and discourses are carried forward or rejected.

Secondly, this study has been an effort at surpassing an investigation of representations to a critical examination of the role writers play as social agents foremost seeing and experiencing the world through their travels. Therefore, I considered once again the centrality of practices of travel and tourism to this study and the significance of the conceptual constructs of traveller and tourist in positioning the travel writer within this complex continuum. As such, I engaged with the literature on the tourist/traveller dichotomy, exploring significant contributions to the sociological understanding and development of the traveller and tourist. This was crucial particularly in conceptualising how Sri Lankan travel writers represent experiences of travel and in turn shape the way that others experience places.

Chapter 03

Unpacking the Social in Travel Writing: Theoretical Premises

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed some of the existing literature to position this thesis within the nexus of tourism studies and sociology. Therein, I examined the contours of tourism representation, reviewing mainly some of the scholarly interpretations on tourism as a force of social production and the traveller tourist dichotomy. I use this chapter, to more elaborately unpack the three primary theoretical precepts that guided the arguments of this research project. I approach this study in the understanding that travel writing is both an individual as well as collective undertaking, involving, on the one hand, a writer and subjective, cognitive factors, and on the other, society embodying objective, normative stimuli (Hollinshead, 2007; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In other words, this travel writing enterprise is a complex interchange between individual and society encompassing a web of personal, institutional and contextual forces or relations. This involves layers of myriad influences, powers, dispositions and liabilities that affect these writers, causing them foremost to 'see' Sri Lanka in a particular manner before they represent the country through their own words.

Therefore, primarily considering the fact that travel writers themselves first 'see' or 'view' a place as a part of their critical, constructive role, I offer an evaluation of the 'tourist gaze' as conceptualised by John Urry in the early 1990s. Urry, focusing on the tourist reiterates that the act of seeing is a socially learned, endeavour constructed and structured on difference and social dynamics such as class, gender ethnicity or age etc. (Urry and Larsen, 2011). As such, I use the tourist gaze to maintain that representations of Sri Lanka carry different ways of socially pre-imbued seeing and gazes. Secondly, and most crucial to this study, I examine the tourism worldmaking framework by Keith Hollinshead, using which I demonstrate that employing these different gazes and ways of seeing travel writers are engaged in an essentially

worldmaking role. This encompasses the naturalising, privileging or repressing of certain versions or visions about places, population and culture that takes place in and through representations. In other words, I use worldmaking to denote the constitutive role that writers play through their words, in shaping what is known about places, people or culture and how this is undertaken through particular ways of seeing, shaping what is beautiful, scenic or important. Through this framework they then create new knowledge or reproduce/naturalise existing knowledge about places and populations (Hollinshead et al., 2009).

However, following the understanding of socially learned seeing and the fact that underlying processes of worldmaking are already stamped notions of what is important, scenic or important, I finally endeavour to conceptualise the critical social nature of the entire process of travel writing. In order to shed light on the process of social inculcation that takes place with worldmaking, I use Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual triad, field, habitus and capital. I, therefore, elaborate how a Bourdieusian framework could be employed in understanding the inheriting, internalisation or instilling of constructed narratives. This is through the combination of social sites or contexts the writers associate and work within, the cultural resources or capital and their internalised dispositions/habitus, concluding thereby the theoretical framework that substantiates this study of the process of travel writing within the Sri Lankan context.

3.2. The Tourist Gaze

As textual representations produced by Sri Lankan travel writers form a considerable proportion of this study, I begin with the theoretical premise of the tourist gaze. In doing so, I attempt to conceptualise the way in which these travel writers first see or view the places, people or the culture they write about. I strive to establish thereby that this process of 'seeing' is socially pre-imbued encompassing power and the significance of the constructed 'gaze'. John Urry (1990) pioneered a significant breakthrough in the sociological understanding of the experiences and place in tourism. He established that tourism and travel encompass the formulation of pleasurable experiences that are different from those of ordinary, everyday life, ideas of which I reviewed in the previous

chapter. Underlining the visual nature of these experiences Urry argued that they mainly involve 'gazing upon' landscapes, townscapes, scenes or people different and out of the ordinary. Hence, the key feature of tourism was considered to be the binary opposition between the ordinary, every-day and the extraordinary. Asserting that sight or vision was the dominant sense in tourism, Urry postulated the tourist to be a 'sight-seeker' that travels with a camera draped around their neck, gazing upon and collecting extraordinary scenery or sights and places in anticipation of pleasure (Urry, 1990). In terms of this first theoretical tenet employed within this study I particularly emphasise on the notion that going away and 'gazing' at the 'extraordinary', the travel writer not simply 'looks at' but instead classifies, orders, shapes the object of the gaze through a particular filter of notions, expectations and desires (Urry, 1990; Urry and Larsen, 2011). In that sense, I employ the notion that the gaze, exceeds a mere reflection of something that pre-exists out there but is instead a form of 'socially learned' seeing. I maintain that there is no pre-existing reality merely waiting out there for the Sri Lankan writers to reflect and represent. Instead, what they encounter through travel and tourism is an epistemic world constructed visually and linguistically (Urry, 1990).

In the previous chapter, I illustrated that places are selected to be gazed upon based on anticipation constructed through non-tourist means and technologies, such as magazines, brochures, film, TV, digital images where the significance of travel writing derives. I argue that these very modes while visually objectifying these sights, capture the tourist gaze and recapture, reproduce and redistribute them across time and space (Urry and Larsen, 2011). In other words, tourism involves travellers tracing signs and their power, gazing at objects translated to be signs increasing, in turn, the significance of visual culture (Lübbren and Crouch, 2003; Urry and Larsen, 2011). As a result, the underlying strength of the gaze in tourism is in the tourist being engaged as a detached observer prioritising and consuming signs; which leads to the visual culture of touristic sites becoming part of the signifying material (Urry, 2001). Lübbren and Couch, for instance, who employ Foucault's discourse on the gaze, explain that heritage sites and similarly themed settings are often constructed by destination marketers using ideas and notions from existing

cultural material. They assert that tourists, in turn, participate in this constructed gaze and the related administration of space, culture and the spectacle (Lübbren and Crouch, 2003).

According to the tourist gaze, the experiences of tourists who visit places are connected with representations of these sites created in the form of images contained in films, magazines, newspapers, brochures or the media. As such, an array of representational images of these very places are provided to tourists by destination marketers and operators based on which tourists interpret and anticipate these locations. These constructions are thereby successively reflected not only in the material further advertising these tourist locations but the destinations and attractions themselves. Such is the power of these anticipatory constructions that often destinations concern themselves in offering the tourist an experience which authenticates the representations over and above considerations on the authenticity of the place itself (Perkins and Thorns, 2001).

Urry's tourist gaze inclines to be broader in its force and incidence in society and is related to the consumption of goods and services based on the pleasurable experiences they generate, which differ from those encountered in everyday life. As such, when overall changes in society and culture take place, moving towards universal ideas and patterns, so do patterns of tourism and hence the tourist gazes. As such, various types of the gaze could be employed in tourism such as the romantic, the collective, the spectatorial, the environmental or the anthropological. Each of these constitutes certain 'scopic regimes' (Urry and Larsen, 2011, p.2) structured by those who work in tourism/travel that are in turn authenticated and projected through different discourses as I demonstrate using the case of Sri Lankan travel writers in the present study.

Elaborating these ideas further, Hollinshead (2009) states that the 'panoptic gaze' of a profession, institution or community (the idea of the potentiality for people to be continuously observed in certain institutions and situations) as explained by Foucault is the 'power of surveillance', using which their members understand or inspect the people and phenomena surrounding them but from a specific standpoint. This is particularly relevant to this study given

the professional capacity of the work of some of the travel writers and how their epistemic gaze links to their experiential practices of travel. In Foucault's own terms "in the panopticon everyone is watched, according to his position within the system, by all or by certain of the others. Hence, it is this 'normalising gaze' of panopticism that arguably generates that subjectivity and self-control, which disciplines people to fit into a democratic capitalist society (Foucault, 1991). Likewise, the tourist gaze concretises held knowledges of and about people, places and pasts that the tourism industry together with travellers endorses; which eventually becomes normalising/universalising discourse. As such, under the tourist gaze argues Hollinshead, while certain factors, notions, ideas or attractions are powerfully made to dominate commercially others are silenced, subdued, repressed or ignored (Hollinshead, 1999), the understanding of which was a preamble to his worldmaking approach which will be discussed subsequently.

This idea that seeing and being seen necessarily encompass relations of power, which originates in Foucauldian thought has thus been applied within tourism studies through Urry's fundamental concept of the tourist gaze (Bandyopadhyay and Ganguly, 2015). Urry's work has inspired and triggered a sequence of later research and academic work spanning over two decades, particularly endeavouring to understand the dominance of the visual in tourism and thereby analysing the role of images and written content circulated through magazines, brochures, websites and other tourism materials (Pritchard and Morgan, 2000; Burns and Lester, 2003; Lübbren and Crouch, 2003; Haldrup and Larsen, 2003; Pink, 2007; Palmer and Lester, 2007; Price-Davies, 2011; Tzanelli, 2012; Chio, 2014; Hanley, 2016).

As highlighted by Bandyopadhyay and Ganguly (2015), since Foucault's *Panopticon* (1977) it has been impossible, within the sphere of social sciences, to refer to 'the gaze' purely in terms of a neutral or ocular act (Bandyopadhyay and Ganguly, 2015). Instead, led by the Foucauldian 'visionary power' and perceptions on authority and sanction, the relations of 'seeing' and 'being seen' are deemed to be laden with power. Foucault pronounced the 'gaze' of society, its institutions and professions as the way in which their members learn to see and project certain preferred version of reality. Such seeing and

projections, stated Foucault, through a composite intermingling of language and vision, privileges some people and their inheritances over others. Hollinshead (1999) further posits that Foucault detects “visionary violence” within “the discourse and praxis of institutions and professions” which is “a form of coercion that dehumanises” (Hollinshead, 1999, p.9). Similarly, and based on these ideas decades of scholars have also underlined the ‘power’ of the Western gaze to construct non-Western postcolonial destinations and people as the ‘Exotic Other’ (Palmer, 1994; Said, 2003; Echtner and Prasad, 2003; Hall and Tucker, 2004; Bandyopadhyay, 2011; Bandyopadhyay and Ganguly, 2015) some related literature of which was evaluated in the previous chapter.

Thus, building upon this idea of the visionary power and the gaze as concretising held knowledges of and about people, places and pasts, in the subsequent section I elaborate further how this is used by the tourism industry to endorse, normalise, certain factors, elements and aspects of places and destinations and subdue, silence or repress others. I present this argument through the tourism worldmaking thesis as conceptualised by Keith Hollinshead (Hollinshead, 1999; Hollinshead et al., 2009).

3.3. Tourism ‘Worldmaking’

As discussed at different points in the previous chapter as well as the present, images, discourses, worldviews or representational assemblages among others are collectively shared and eventually circulate the globe as signifying material leading to the construction of a ‘gaze’. Crang (2006) posits that this circulation is a “constitutive activity of representations” (Crang, 2006, p.48) which he adds helps (re)create people and places. Keith Hollinshead elaborates further on this, stating that:

this immense imaginary power to invent iconic traditions afresh or to manufacture felt authenticities amounts to the ‘fantasmatics’ of global tourism image-making, rhetoric mongering, and discourse articulations, viz. the very craft by which not only knowledge but life-style and life-space is created (Hollinshead, 1998 in Salazar, 2012, p.869)

This very process of tourism which Crang (2006) identified as “inscribing meaning on the world” (Crang, 2006, p.48) is construed correspondingly by Hollinshead through a conceptual lens he identified as ‘worldmaking’ highlighting the power and agency of tourism. The framework derives from the recent critical and reflexive turn in tourism studies offering an alternative to conventional thinking led by distinct ‘binary’ or ‘dualistic’ taxonomies. This idea was also synchronised with the somewhat instrumental and de-contextualised analysis of place as ‘open’ and ‘unfolding’ rather than a fixed territory of tourism (Baka, 2015); or in the precise words of Hultman et al., “a force of spatial change” (Hultman et al., 2012, p.547). As such, the catalytic foreground to tourism worldmaking according to Hollinshead was offered by Kevin Meethan (2001) through his influential work *Tourism in Global Society: Place Culture and Consumption*, which contested much of the established thinking in tourism studies, giving prominence to tourism’s contribution in the production of society and space, which was mentioned in the previous chapter (Meethan, 2001). Meethan argued that the diverse relationships on which tourism is grounded – between host and guest, tourist and tour guide, local and multinational organisations etc. – are both dynamic and heterogeneous, hybrid and mutually constitutive insofar as they are in an ongoing process of self-making and place-making of actors that are involved. Hence, tourism was seen as – along with the close connection with other forces of social, cultural consumption and production - a “maker, de-maker and re-maker of people places and pasts” (Hollinshead, 2007, p.167).

Hollinshead (2007) conceptualised tourism worldmaking following this insight by Meethan on the subject of social production of locality, space and culture, recognising the substantial power and agency of tourism as an inventive agent. He defined worldmaking as:

the creative – and often ‘false’ or ‘faux’ imaginative processes and projective promotional activities – which management agencies and other mediating bodies engage in to purposely (or otherwise unconsciously) privilege particular dominant/favoured representations of people/places/pasts within a given or assumed region, area, or ‘world’, over and above other actual or potential representations of those subjects (Hollinshead, 2007, p.168).

As an approach or an angle of vision, worldmaking seeks to explore the presence, power and capacity of tourism and shed light on its rich and varied role. As such, Hollinshead et al. (2009) denounce the idea that tourism solely reflects a fixed world out there for the benefit and pleasure of those who travel or tour. They concede that whether it is a projected people, place or past tourism “commonly makes, de-makes, or re-makes those very populations, destinations and heritages”(Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.429) rather than presenting a given realm of being. I use this framework to shed light on the constitutive role that travel writers play in representing Sri Lanka, which I attempt to argue, exceeds beyond mere representation.

Accordingly, Hollinshead et al. (2009) highlight two significant factors regarding the worldmaking role of tourism. They note foremost the capacity or ability to use the creative or inventive agency of tourism positively by communities or groups at varied strata of society, using their own perspective to manifest new, fresh or corrective visions or perspectives about people, places and pasts. Secondly, they emphasise the likelihood of this very authority, power or agency being used negatively to repress, silence or overpower other or unwanted interpretations of these very places, people or pasts. Therefore, this declarative influence of tourism as a political force not only has a constitutive function over knowledge about tourist destinations around the world, their people and their pasts but this role according to the authors can become in each case and over time “contextually sovereign” in its normalising and naturalising outcome (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.428). I apply these theoretical precepts in developing the arguments that the travel writers of this study engage in worldmaking in both above-mentioned capacities which will be elaborated in the subsequent chapters.

Following Hollinshead's line of thought, there has been subsequent work that has contributed to the worldmaking power of tourism shedding light on the way in which identity or image of places can be contested, negotiated and shaped by bringing in new meanings (Tucker, 2009; Swain, 2009; Tzanelli and Korstanje, 2016). Heather Mair's (2009) study of themed tourism and the re-making of a small Canadian community is one such example. Through an interpretivist approach, Mair presents a critical evaluation of the characteristics of worldmaking in the small agriculture community, Vulcan in Alberta. She evaluates the way in which this small agricultural community which was undergoing economic hardships used its name in connection with the Star Trek television series to its advantage to bring in a new image/identity and meaning. As such, Mair evaluates the way in which aspects of the Star Trek image have been incorporated into the community through themed family activities and so on which demonstrates how tourism can conceivably re-make communities through these new meanings brought into ordinary experiences in community life. The study offers insights into the intricacies and power relationships underlying worldmaking (Mair, 2009, p.480).

Another example is a recent study by Keul and Eisenhauer (2019) who extend the tourism worldmaking thesis to demonstrate how tourism promoters exploit changes to law and policy and the related reframing of discourses of deviance to economic advantage (Keul and Eisenhauer, 2019). The authors illustrate this through an examination of the emerging cannabis tourism in the US state of Colorado following its legalisation. Challenging the pre-existing discourses of deviance surrounding the consumption of cannabis shaped by the shift in its legal status, Keul and Eisenhauer demonstrate following Hollinshead et al. (2009) how tourism inventively generated new or corrective knowledges with the emergence of the fully legal retail cannabis environment in Colorado. They assert that even though tourism associated with the illicit use of cannabis has taken place in places such as Amsterdam, where consumption is accepted yet prohibited, Colorado has been the first instance where tourism operators have explicitly created experiences such as guided tours, events and cannabis-friendly lodging where tourists legally consume cannabis and openly immerse

themselves in the cannabis culture and industry (Keul and Eisenhauer, 2019, p.141).

Through their work, the authors emphasise the fundamental tenet of worldmaking as tourism's capability in creating representations, discourses and knowledges of toured places. Accordingly, even though the most intentional worldmaking in tourism can be found in destination marketing this also includes the real production of the symbolic in everyday worlds of tourism and leisure as also elaborated by Mair within the previous example. Above all, in terms of its relevance to the main arguments of this thesis these examples suggest that the process of worldmaking does not take place in a bubble of tourism independent to an external society. On the contrary, the process of worldmaking thoroughly shapes and is shaped by the external cultural and political worlds where tourism takes place. As such, "worldmaking is not intended to be a theory that simply unpacks worlds *within* tourism, but rather a means for understanding how places are produced *through* tourism" (Keul and Eisenhauer, 2019).

This is explained in the 2009 article *Worldmaking Agency–Worldmaking Authority: The Sovereign Constitutive Role of Tourism*. Here, defining the concept and evaluating its promise for future research, the authors recognise that tourism practitioners rarely engage in acts of worldmaking in an "absolute or virginal sense" (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432). They argue that these individuals are pre-programmed in their gaze or aesthetically conditioned and politically pre-imbued with what is worth seeing and celebrating. This projects the understanding that each worldmaking act or articulation is an inculcation or instillation towards some form of held consciousness about the world. In other words, worldmaking is presented as a force of social production consisting of realms of representation that see the world from certain standpoints that are held as important to the individual organisation or agency involved in the act of worldmaking. These standpoints are constructed upon "received narratives revered by the interest groups/subpopulations/society" (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.203) that the worldmaking actors - whether they are individuals, organisations, or mediating bodies - associate with.

Thus while establishing that Sri Lankan travel writers work with socially learned, pre-imbued ways of seeing and standpoints my objective, however, is to surpass a mere investigation of some of these standpoints prominent within travel representations created by Sri Lankan writers. Working from the premise that these are constructed upon “received narratives”, my aim was therefore to understand the way in which Sri Lankan travel writers receive, inherit or are inculcated towards the said narratives and in turn negotiate these as agents in a process of representation and worldmaking. I assert that this understanding lies not only within the social contexts or sites these individuals work from within but derivable also through their personal histories, education, upbringing and family backgrounds.

Thus, in order to conceptualise this underlying social mechanisms and the inculcation alluded to, I use French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s fluid concepts of ‘field’ ‘habitus’ and ‘capital’, to emphasise the relationship between the perceptions and cognitive dynamics underlying the practice of writing, representation and worldmaking that the writers are involved in. This ties in the working of society and the individual, consciousness and objective realities, structure and agency more firmly. In short, I take the position that what travel writers see and how they see are always influenced by the specific conjunction of their ‘field’, ‘habitus’ and ‘capital’ all of which I argue orientates the worldmaking practice of these writers. Hence, the way in which Bourdieu conceptualises this process is reviewed in more depth subsequently.

3.4. Conceptualising Worldmaking as Inculcation

Renowned French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is among those who emphasised the broad, underlying sociological conditions that influence the creation of cultural texts in general. In his work *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993) for instance, he sets out to establish how texts are produced through the workings of the twin concepts ‘habitus’ and ‘field’ (Bourdieu and Johnson, 1993). According to literature, the contribution that Bourdieu has made to the social sciences is through a general theory of practice. As such, his work as a whole has afforded novel and compelling alternatives to dealing with perspectives of objectivism and subjectivism (Harker et al., 1990; Yang, 2014;

Wacquant, 2001; Webb et al., 2002). One of Bourdieu's main concerns is to transcend this opposition and transform structure and agency into a dialectical relationship proposing thereby a theory for the dialectical analysis of practical life (Wacquant, 2001). Harker et al. (1990) assert that such a perspective demonstrates the interplay between personal economic practice and the external world of class history and social practice (Harker et al., 1990).

The first theoretical pillar underlying the present thesis, as mentioned earlier, is the tourist gaze, through which tourists 'see' 'gaze at' places, people and culture. The tourist gaze is 'socially learned' seeing which is far from autonomous. Instead, it involves a process of classifying, ordering the object of the gaze through a particular filter of notions, expectations and desires. Secondly, through the working of these gazes, tourism privileges certain aspects while silencing and repressing others which is the worldmaking role of tourism. The objective of my thesis is to also throw light on the underlying social mechanisms of travel writing; the social pre-programming that precede the privileging, silencing or repressing encompassed through acts of worldmaking or what Hollinshead et al. identify as instillation or inculcation. I conceptualise these underlying processes of inculcation using a Bourdieusian framework, whereby I draw on dispositions or the habitus of agents who live and work within certain social contexts, structures or settings. I further provision the concept of habitus with capital and field both of which feed into habitus the working of which I briefly review subsequently.

3.4.1. Field – Site or Context of Representations and Worldmaking

Bourdieu's conception of field is often considered to take the form of a partly self-directed field of struggle for positions within it. Asserting that positions within a field are determined by the allocation of specific capital to actors who are placed within a field, Bourdieu argued that struggles for these positions are able to transform or conserve the field. In *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Bourdieu explained this as follows:

In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations, they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to the other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.97).

These fields are fluid, dynamic and encompass a series of institutions, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments or titles that interact together forming an objective hierarchy which in turn authorises certain discourses and activities (Webb et al., 2002, p.21). What constitutes as capital within each particular field or how that capital is to be distributed changes according to different fields and groups and individuals within these. Bourdieu argued that positions are determined by the possession of capital by actors. In other words, the amount of power an actor possesses within a field is determined by the position they occupy within the field and the amount of capital they possess. Bourdieu elaborated this through the analogy of a “game” albeit “with caution” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.98) through which competition between players within a field was explained. Thus, actors within a field adjust their expectations with regards to the capital they are likely to obtain in terms of practical limitations imposed upon them by their place in the field, their educational background, social connections, class positions and so on. Reading across both objectivist and subjectivist approaches simultaneously, Bourdieu insisted that social practice is continuously informed by a sense of agency but that possibilities of agency must be understood and contextualised in terms of its relations to fields.

Wiltshire and Williams (2019) in a recent evaluation of the concept assert that the term field is necessarily flexible given that new contexts invariably arise and are being shaped (Wiltshire et al., 2019). A school they argue could be considered a field as too the subject of PE or the associated power structures

surrounding obesity (Wiltshire et al., 2019, p.229). Quite similarly, I employ this concept of the 'field' as an objective context' or a specific site of cultural production with particular norms, boundaries and forces of power at work, asserting that Sri Lankan travel writers work within particular sites or contexts from within which they create their narratives and maintain social relationships. I explore how, within these fields, actors – travel writers- function or engage in their representative roles and how these fields orient their ways of seeing and standpoints. As Bourdieu and Waquat (1992) confer “social reality exists, so to speak, twice in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside agents”(Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127) I consider next the concept of habitus and how Bourdieu used this along with 'field' to theorise social practice.

3.4.2. Habitus – Socialised Subjectivity

Bourdieu identified the partly unconscious 'internalisation' of rules, values, and dispositions as the habitus which de defined as “a system of durable, transposable dispositions which functions as the generative basis of structured, objectively unified practices” (Bourdieu, 1979 in Harker et al., 1990, p.10). More simply, habitus could be considered as the values and dispositions that social actors gain from their cultural history, which are durable and transposable or generally persistent across contexts or fields. In this sense, for Bourdieu the individual, and even the personal, the subjective is in fact social or collective which supports the claim that gazing and worldmaking are not autonomous but social. Using habitus, I argue that the writers envisage the world voyeuristically as well as participate in re-fantasising, refabricating or reinventing it according to their various dispositions/habitus. “Habitus is a socialised subjectivity” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.126). Accordingly, it is a “structuring principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.95) which Harker et al. elaborate are acquired in social positions within a field and imply “a subjective adjustment to that position”. As such:

The schemes of habitus, the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will. Orienting practices practically, they embed what some would mistakenly call values in the most automatic gestures or the apparently most insignificant techniques of the body (Bourdieu, 2010, p.466)

In explaining the integration between habitus and field, Bourdieu used his analogy of the game – a site of struggle and strategy. He asserted that habitus were trump cards – assimilated properties of ease of manners, beauty, elegance, etc. and capital or inherited assets. Both concepts define for the actors the possibilities inherent in the field, and the trump cards determine the style of play, success and failure. However, habitus was also seen to include an actor's own knowledge and understanding of the world, which makes a separate contribution to the reality of the world. This proffers the actor's knowledge as having a genuine "constitutive power" which is not merely a reflection of the world. Thus, I tie in this idea of habitus with that of Hollinshead's idea of tourism worldmaking, to substantiate the way in which travel writers draw on their habitus within various fields for instance, in a process of selecting, rejecting, organising, discriminating, classifying, analysing and constructing people, places and the past of Sri Lanka (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432).

For instance, Bourdieu asserts two particular influences on agency the first being the habitus of socialising agents. He elaborates how a child is disposed to see the world in the same way as the older generation of the primary group "to make the world conform to the myth" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.167). However, in a context of relatively constant and rapid social transformations, the objective conditions of the material and social environment he asserts will not be the same for the new generation. Such objective conditions in turn also durably inculcate dispositions, again influencing both aspirations and practice in line with the objective conditions. Accordingly, in terms of the creation of habitus through socialisation, objective conditions in the material world tend to have a structuring effect on family socialisation practices. This way, these

practices tend to reproduce the regularities in the original objective conditions, while adjusting to the habitus-governed perceptions of the continuously changing external circumstances (Bourdieu, 1977, p.78). Wilkes (1990) argues that within the Bourdieusian framework class is fundamental to the analysis, particularly of these objective conditions. However, he postulates that Bourdieu's analysis of class does not rely on objective, economic nor political criteria alone for its foundation but on "a broad-ranging account of class practices which includes food tastes, clothing, body dispositions, housing styles, forms of social choice in everyday life as well as the more familiar categories of economy and polity" (Wilkes, 1990, p.109).

Bourdieu perceives habitus as emerging from class experiences. However, he does not project social class as the sum of actual individuals in particular groups but rather as a 'class habitus'. This is pronounced as 'the system of dispositions (partially) common to all products of the same structures' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.85). He links this back to the notion that objective conditions are what inform the habitus and therefore must be to some extent idiosyncratic:

though it is impossible for all members of the same class (or even two of them) to have had the same experiences, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for the members of that class (Bourdieu, 1977, p.85).

Therefore, less weight is placed on explicit rules that dictate behaviour, and more on an implicit likelihood and tendency to act in ways that groups expect of 'people like us' (Bourdieu, 1990 cited in Wiltshire et al., 2019, p.228). One's actions are highly contingent on the implicit expectations of how one ought to act as defined by social distance and social position. Bourdieu asserts that the concept of habitus entails us to "forsake the false problems of personal spontaneity and social constraint, freedom and necessity, choice and obligation" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.23).

3.4.3. Capital - Resources

In addition to habitus and field, I employ the concept of 'capital' integrating all of this together to form what Wacquant referred to as a "conceptual triad" (Wacquant, 2001). As mentioned earlier, a field may be conceived of as a field of struggles for positions and legitimate authority. The logic that orders such struggles is the logic of capital (Harker et al., 1990). The definition of capital is rather broad and includes forms of economic, social and cultural resources that individuals acquire to gain status and power through interactions with others in the social world (Wiltshire et al., 2019; Harker et al., 1990). For instance, Bourdieu incorporates into this material objects that can have symbolic value, along with intangible but culturally significant attributes such as prestige, status or authority (referred to as symbolic capital) as well as cultural capital defined as culturally valued taste and consumption patterns. These could encompass a broad range of goods such as art, education or forms of language; some of which will be taken up for discussion within the subsequent chapters in relation to the participants of this study. For Bourdieu, capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange and the term is extended to cover all goods – both material and symbolic without distinction. Accordingly, capital is "rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.178). It is capital, according to Bourdieu, that make fields meaningful.

Bourdieu also conceded that possession of capital is a basis for domination. He argued that capital is convertible, meaning that various types of capital could be exchanged for other types. The most potent such conversion, asserted Bourdieu, is to symbolic capital as it is in this form that the different kinds of capital are considered and widely recognised as legitimate. Most significantly Bourdieu expounds that to be considered an individual or class of status and prestige, is to be accepted as legitimate and often as a legitimate authority. Such a position, he argues, carries with it the power to name, the power to represent common-sense, and especially the power to generate/create the official version of the social world. I mainly draw on these notions and the fact that fields and associated capital are rarely accessible nor acquirable to all, to demonstrate how certain organisations within tourism

have gained authority and power to define or dictate the official version of the travel writing genre in Sri Lanka; how the agents involved in this process are far from random but from specific social, historical class backgrounds equipped with the suitable cultural and symbolic capital for their worldmaking role and agency to determine how Sri Lanka is represented to the rest of the world.

Topping (2016) identifies the cruciality of such a theoretical framework for the study of travel writing. Stating that worldviews are never neutral, she asserts rather that they are influenced both by the attitudes 'systems of dispositions' individuals internalise (*habitus*) and by the intuitional, codified structures within which these individuals operate (*fields*) (Topping, 2016). Howells (2003) asserts that multiple interpretations of the world emerge in the space of possibilities created when *habitus* comes into contact with the field (Howells, 2003). In short, these scholars confirm that travel writers never simply see the world in a direct, unmediated sense-perception but instead, what they see and how they see are always conditioned by the observers' specific conjunction of 'field' and 'habitus' and so informed by political, economic, class affiliations (Howells, 2003; Topping, 2016). Therefore, I endeavour through this study to enrich the tourism worldmaking thesis by Keith Hollinshead through the employment of the concepts field, capital and *habitus* and shed light on some of the underlying social complexities involved in this task.

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter laid out the theoretical foundation upon which the principal claims of the research are grounded. Thus, I initiated the discussion presenting the primary tenet of the tourist gaze, establishing thereby that writers first see or gaze at what they encounter. Through the tourist gaze, I introduced socially learned seeing as part of a pre-imbued process of classifying, ordering and organising. Consequently, I elaborated the second and most important theoretical pillar, the tourism worldmaking thesis as a precept that explains the way in which representations constructed upon these gazes, normalise,

naturalise, emphasise and promote; or privilege particular favoured and often dominant versions of places, people, culture or pasts over competing views.

I presented how the two frameworks proved to be a solid starting point in understanding the representations of Sri Lanka created by different categories of writers and the different gaze(s) constructed therein. I illuminated on how they helped build on the way particular elements are upheld within representations while others are ignored or repressed by the different types of writers. However, underlying these first two precepts is the element of the pre-existing social. According to the worldmaking thesis, the ways of seeing and standpoints that lead to the privileging or the repressing of certain knowledges are socially internalised (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). Worldmaking acts are never autonomous or neutral. Each worldmaking act or projection inculcates towards some form of held consciousness.

Therefore, finally, I elaborated on the Bourdieusian framework built upon the concepts field, habitus and capital as my third theoretical premise, which I used to demonstrate the inheritance, internalisation or inculcation of narratives and standpoints through which worldmaking acts take place. I, therefore, elaborated on the three concepts of field, habitus and capital explaining how these understandings could be derived in relation to Sri Lankan travel writers. All of these concepts together not only support in determining whether or not individuals could become travel writers but how they become successful or otherwise in their task, the detailed accounts of which are detailed in chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Chapter 04

Methods

4.1. Introduction

Throughout the previous two chapters, I explored some of the core academic works amongst existing and related literature that predominantly underpinned this study. As part of this discussion, I laid out the pivotal links between these fundamental scholarly premises and my own understanding of worldmaking and the critical social role Sri Lankan travel writers play in representing the country. I thereby made explicit the theoretical framework upon which this study is grounded. Leading on from this, the present chapter is a concerted effort at unfolding the strategy; recounting the practical procedures used and conscious decisions made in answering the research questions set at the beginning of the process. As a part of this, specific research methods and tools used in seeking the most relevant and appropriate answers to these questions are detailed.

I open this chapter illuminating the nature of this research project and the circumstances under which some of the methods decisions for its implementation were made. As a part of this, I incorporate a brief account of my own understanding of reality which foregrounds these crucial options. Thus, subsequent to an elaboration of the nature of knowledge required to answer the research questions I set out to answer, I consider the sampling decisions made to obtain the two main categories of data gathered through this study. Consequently, I attempt to describe the process of data collection that was undertaken simultaneously through the gathering of travel articles and conduct of interviews, moving thenceforth to illustrate how the data was managed, analysed and interpreted.

Also, through this chapter, I review my position as the researcher within this undertaking, particularly with regards to the subject under investigation. I reflect on how my previous experience as a travel writer (the very group under scrutiny) impacted the execution of the research. Then, I move on to some of the ethical considerations made during the study before finally, indicating

certain aspects and themes left unexplored due to time constraints but with scope for future research.

4.2. Making the Methods Decisions

As demonstrated by pragmatic scholars such as Patton (2015), there exists no rigid rules in qualitative inquiry to determine what data to gather to investigate a particular interest or problem. Accordingly, that rigorous process of designing a piece of research or selecting the appropriate methods is dependent fundamentally upon context (Patton, 2015). Following this line of thinking, at the outset, I made the methods decisions as answers to a specific set of questions. These were led by the purpose of the inquiry, the audiences, research problem or the particular questions I proposed to address, data or knowledge that would eventually be illuminated through the inquiry questions (or what needed to be known) and the resources available.

As emphasised throughout this thesis, I ventured on this research endeavour in a personal quest to understand the process of travel writing. Thus, it was predominantly an interest triggered by my own experience as a travel writer; to explore the way in which Sri Lanka is seen and thereby represented by local writers through the travel narratives they weave for a diverse readership. My preliminary general questions were: could anyone aspire to become travel writers? What makes them successful in their roles? And what influences the way they see and in turn represent the country's myriad places, people, culture and past in specific ways? Likewise, I intended to surpass a mere study of representations and throw light on the social nature of the process of travel writing and seek the social implications underlying the travel writer role within the Sri Lankan context. This is in terms of the broader social, cultural, political and economic contexts the writers' travel accounts and descriptions attest to; an attempt to uncover the influencing factors that shape these stories and the meanings, discourses and dynamics surrounding the experience and representation of the country by these writers. In other words, upon acknowledging certain characteristics and similarities of representations created by the local writers (based on my experience), I wished to understand not only the 'view(s) of the world' or standpoints which lead them to write and

represent Sri Lanka in certain ways but also how this 'view(s)', 'position(s)' or 'standpoint(s)' are received or inherited by these authors. I believed the answer to this lies within their family background, upbringing, education, employment, culture the society or social groups they occupy and their personal history within these various social milieus. Based on these initial reflections I formulated the following research questions: (1) Who are Sri Lankan travel writers? (2) How do they represent Sri Lanka through their writing? (3) What are the social mechanisms underlying these representations? And finally (4) Why are these representations created the way they are?

Primarily, to understand the way in which writers see and thereby represent Sri Lanka, and as illustrated in the previous chapter, I utilise the concept of the tourist gaze. Using this notion by John Urry I demonstrate foremost how 'seeing' is a social task; how certain understandings about culture, people, places and pasts are socially pre-imbued (Urry et al., 2001). I also focused on how the representations created through travel narratives often engage in the task of purposely (or otherwise) normalising, naturalising and even highlighting, promoting or privileging particular, favoured and often dominant versions of culture, people, places and pasts over competing views. This is following Keith Hollinshead's (2009) tourism worldmaking thesis. I attempted to affirm by adopting this theoretical approach that representations created by local writers see the world from a particular standpoint(s) that are held as important by these writers or the organisations they work for based on which they engage in their critical worldmaking acts. I endeavoured to throw light on how these standpoints constitute received narratives revered by interest groups, society or sub-populations these individuals or organisations occupy (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). In other words, according to this claim by Hollinshead et al. (2009), there are no innocent or neutral worldmaking endeavours. Each and every worldmaking act or projection inculcates towards some form of held consciousness. Therefore, my objective then was to move beyond an exploration of some of these standpoints prominent within travel representations created by Sri Lankan writers. I intended to understand this process of inculcation; how or from where they inherit or are inculcated with

the said narratives and how these writers, in turn, negotiate these as individual agents working within various sites or contexts (fields) as they engage in their writing tasks. In this sense, I strived to enrich the academic literature on tourism worldmaking by focusing not only on the views or standpoints through which Sri Lanka is seen but also how they are consciously applied or unconsciously internalised by the authors through an examination of their personal histories, education, upbringing and family backgrounds.

I attempted to do so using Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field to navigate a passage between society and the individual, of structural properties and social action. Thus, while identifying and exploring a certain held consciousness within travel representations, I also sought to understand how they are maintained or reformed through the examination of Sri Lankan travel writers as agents involved in a critical worldmaking role. Thus, on the one hand, I endeavoured to recognise the imprints of broader social structures, constraints and liabilities that influence the writers and on the other, how individual writers manoeuvre within these wider social structures to negotiate received narratives in their practice of travel writing. As such, evading any dualism of objectivism and subjectivism or determinism and phenomenology, I used the concepts of habitus and field which aided me in offering an alternative conceptualisation of the social agent as socially embedded and embodied dispositions as being moulded by one's location within social fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Ontologically, therefore, this research project relies on the conviction of pre-existing social forms or structures, through the associations with which social actors either reproduce or transform these very forms or structures. In other words, the study unfolds on the stance that society and social structures pre-exist or are 'already-made', but social beings interact under the influence of these pre-existing social forms or structures resulting in social action/practice that in turn replicate or change these. It takes place under the realisation that the social universe is constituted not only by the most profoundly buried structures but also the practical activities – conduct, thoughts, feelings and judgements – of social agents. I thus take a middle ground between social structures and the mental/cognitive schemata of social agents under the

position that the latter is the mere embodiment of the former. Bhaskar has also explained this, stating that “the relations into which people enter pre-exist the individuals who enter into them, and whose activity reproduces or transforms them; so they are themselves structure” (Bhaskar, 1989 in Archer, 1998). I illuminate this using Bourdieu’s concept of habitus – the partly unconscious ‘internalisation’ of rules, values, and dispositions; a “system of durable, transposable dispositions which functions as the generative basis of structured, objectively unified practices” (Bourdieu, 1990 in Harker et al., 1990, p.10). In the precise wording of Bourdieu:

if the structures of the objectivity of the second order (habitus) is the embodied version of the structures of the first order, then the analysis of objective structures logically carries over into the analysis of subjective dispositions, thereby destroying the false antinomy ordinarily established between sociology and social psychology (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.13).

Inspired by these ideas, this study took the form of a qualitative inquiry to unravel ‘thick descriptions’; which means that in order to understand and analyse a particular phenomenon one has to understand the background or make explicit patterns of social and cultural relationships and place them in context (Geertz, 2008; Patton, 2015). Therefore, I undertook to analyse accounts, perceptions and experiences of writers to derive a rich, in-depth, holistic and contextually sensitive understanding of how travel writers as a group contribute to the representation of Sri Lanka. As elaborated by Patton “the subjective experience incorporates the objective thing and becomes a person’s reality” (Patton, 2015, p.116) whereby meaning-making becomes the essence of human experience. Thus, acquiring an emic perspective of the Sri Lankan travel writer, an ‘inside’ understanding, or the social actors’ definition of the situation was a major intent of this research. Through the course of the next few segments, I attempt to offer an account of some of the vital decisions made in accomplishing this mission.

4.3. Sampling Writers and Travel Articles

Initially, I set out with the understanding - mainly underpinned by previous experience in Sri Lanka as a travel writer - that travel writing constituted content produced directly and purposefully for the promotion of tourism, and the respective writers are employed by tourism promotion agencies and related publishing bodies. Led by this somewhat limited understanding, and based on the travel stories that I myself had written, I primarily stepped into this research project focussing and gathering travel materials and writers that fit this definition. Hence, very early on in the research, I opted to explore how Kandy as a popular Sri Lankan tourist and pilgrimage destination, an ancient city and UNESCO World Heritage Site is represented in Sri Lankan travel writing. I relied on the logic of picking an information-rich and exemplary case (Patton, 2015) of a most-visited and popular destination for both local and international travellers from which I could learn a great deal about how Sri Lanka is represented. The selection of Kandy was thus mainly centred on its historical significance both in terms of its colonial legacy as well as being a symbol of revitalised Sinhalese Buddhist identity. Hence, based on these characteristics I primarily sampled purposively, ten articles written about Kandy engaging in an initial pre-analysis of how the city is portrayed in magazines *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib* (Inflight magazine of Sri Lankan Airlines) because they were Sri Lanka's most prominent and widely distributed travel magazines produced commercially and also because the texts were in English. These articles were also selected driven by the judgement of purposeful sampling and the requirement of selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. As elaborated by Patton (2015) these are selected based on the fact that a researcher is able to learn a great deal about the issues of central importance to the purpose of inquiry (Patton, 2015, p.264). These first articles along with my basic prior understanding of travel literature, having produced, edited and read them widely during my employment as a Feature Writer facilitated the refinement and development of these ideas further. The rest of the travel articles used for this research were selected while the interviews were taking place, based on the participants' own preferences and selection of their work that they wished to discuss.

While the preliminary analysis of travel literature was ongoing, I reached out to some of my previous contacts in the field of travel writing indicating my current academic interest and requesting their assistance in conducting interviews of travel writers. The recruitment of these writers was based on the characteristic that they had either written some of the first ten articles sampled or had contributed to these same magazines during the time. In this sense, the first ten articles and six writers were purposively sampled led by an initial understanding formed through my previous engagement in the field and in the intention of locating information-rich samples. A snowball technique was used for the remaining sampling of writers and their work. The latter was another very effective and efficient means of strengthening samples. Once the snowball effect occurred with referrals multiplying at each stride more writers were swiftly recruited and their work (articles) in turn identified and sampled. In the following subsects, I detail this process of sampling for analysis both travel writers and the travel literature they produce.

4.3.1. The Writers

Prior to the conduct of this research, I reached out to my former employer BT Options indicating my research interest with a request to recruit some of its in-house feature writers and possibly other parties involved in the production of travel literature. However, this organisation declined this request as they did not wish to be studied. As a result, I alternatively used networks I had made during my employment at the said organisation contacting some of its former writers – ensuring they were no longer employed by BT Options in any capacity. Therefore, the respondents recruited were either writers elsewhere at the time of data collection or were travel writers at some point in their lives. I took into consideration the travel content they had written and experiences writing them with minimal discussions of and references to any publisher or organisation in particular. In terms of accessing these participants, correspondences were primarily made through email and social media (Facebook).

Using these initial few travel writers, I henceforth used snowball sampling to recruit more participants for the study (Noy, 2008; Baltar and Brunet, 2012) as

they all agreed to share with me their own contacts, associates, friends or acquaintances in the field of travel writing. This not only meant that accessing participants was facilitated but as noted by Noy (2008) snowball sampling also contributed to a further understanding of the social milieu and networks of the participants (Noy, 2008). For instance, one of the primary factors this process of recruitment illuminated was the definition of travel writing (i.e. what constitutes travel writing and who are considered as travel writers) in the Sri Lankan context. This occurred when the new contacts appeared to be writing not only for magazines but also newspapers/ newspaper supplements and even personal blogs which I had not anticipated at the beginning of the process. Hence, even though my initial focus had positioned on the limited number of travel magazines published in Sri Lanka, upon recruiting writers for interviews, it was made clear that travel writing could exist in multiple forms or categories. This eventually facilitated the identification of themes and unravelled that participants were from a similar social background. As such, as elaborated by Pawson (2006), participants employ a substantial amount of influence on the overall research, how research plays onto and into existing social dynamics, and consequently, how additional knowledge, or 'nuggets of wisdom,' can be gained (Pawson, 2006). Thus, the following three groups emerged through the sample of writers interviewed. These eventually determined the direction of analysis with the results burgeoning into aspects initially unanticipated; the categories hence also becoming the thematic core underpinning the study upon which the thesis is organised.

1. Professional Tourism Writers

Seven travel writers and their work constituted this category, including six former colleagues that I alluded to above and one writer who was an acquaintance of one of the first six. These participants had all been directly employed for tourism promotion, and the initial six had at one point contributed to the magazines, *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib*. Even though none of them was working for these magazines at the time of the study, and only two of them were engaged in writing as a career, others had all moved on into other professions or were unemployed at the time. Six writers were female and one male. As I was in the United Kingdom during the time of study and they were

all in Sri Lanka at the time, I arranged to contact them as soon as I arrived in Sri Lanka for the period of data collection. For this purpose, I obtained through social media their Sri Lankan telephone numbers and their availability over the period I had scheduled my fieldwork. Thus, immediately upon reaching Sri Lanka for the duration of four months in early 2018, I contacted each of these respondents and began my discussions with each of them. It was through these initial, face-to-face discussions that I was introduced to other writers that they knew, their own acquaintances, friends or former colleagues.

2. Travel Journalists

Five travel journalists formulated this category. One of the respondents from the first group provided the contact details of two writers, who although travel writers, introduced themselves upon my contacting them, as journalists. With more participants eventually identifying themselves likewise, the second category of travel writing within the study was formulated. For instance, one of my previous work-colleagues was an Editor of a women's monthly magazine which recently achieved magazine status from a newspaper, and she agreed to be interviewed. Her position during the time of study was within the newspaper publishing company that all participant travel journalists worked for as free-lance writers. She introduced me to two journalists out of whom I managed to interview one. The last travel journalist that constituted the group was recruited (after recommendations by one of the above) through his LinkedIn profile. They all agreed to participate in my study on the first occasion that I contacted them. One of these writers was male while all others were female. Unlike the previous group, all of these writers were actively engaged in travel writing (even the editor occasionally) at the time of the study - the reason they were recruited as participants. What distinctively identified them apart from other travel writers was the fact that they identified themselves as journalists. They all worked at the time for a reputed private newspaper publisher in Sri Lanka writing for a range of newspapers, travel supplements and magazines produced by this organisation. Apart from the Editor, the others were, however, working at the time as freelance writers.

3. Travel Bloggers

I interviewed five participants that constituted this category (two were interviewed together). One of my initial contacts from the first group introduced me to three individuals who she identified as travel writers. However, upon interviewing them, I classified them as independent bloggers as they revealed that they engage in travelling around the country for leisure based on which two of them maintained travel blog sites. The third was about to start her own blog. Two of these participants were engaged in some form of professional writing for an employer where travel writing was somewhat limited. However, they predominantly spoke about their personal travel experiences. One of these first three travel bloggers also directed me to two more participants who work together - a couple maintaining a single website containing all their personal travel stories. As for this latter duo of bloggers, one engaged in writing while her partner was involved in photography, I did, however, interview them both together.

Thus, overall, I interviewed seven writers who worked as professional travel writers, promoting tourism (referred to within the thesis as tourism writers); five travel journalists who write for local English newspapers and five independent bloggers (two of whom work on a single blog site as a couple: working as the writer and the photographer). Finally, I also had the opportunity to have a brief discussion with the Director Public Relations, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau in an attempt to understand the perspective of institutional tourism in Sri Lanka and the national strategy for the promotion of the country's tourism industry, finally taking the total number of interviews to 17.

4.3.2. Travel Literature

As mentioned earlier, the first ten articles sampled from *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib* magazines for analysis facilitated the direction and structure of the primary six interviews I conducted. However, these were added to with a few others dependant on the examples of writing that the first six participants preferred to discuss over the interviews. The first ten articles were sampled by selecting all articles written about/associated with the city of Kandy through a search within the publisher's online public archive. They ranged from stories

published from 2010 to 2017. The main reason for the selection of the year 2010 is the fact that the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka was marked in 2009 after which significant efforts began to be underway for the development of tourism, a part of which was tourism marketing and promotion. Through a newly outlined Tourism Strategy 2011 – 2016, drafted in 2010, the former Minister of Economic Development, Basil Rajapaksa identified tourism as one of the critical sectors boosting the country's economic growth (Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, 2010). The mentioned magazines also played a significant contribution at the time in the promotion of tourism within the country, being among the very few locally-produced travel magazines at the time. Another reason for sampling articles from 2010 onwards was the fact that writers who contributed to these articles would be approachable (as I joined the organisation in 2010). This first selection and the ensuing analysis significantly helped shape the discussions that I had with the writers. However, I could not interview each and every writer that had written these first ten articles, but they provided a solid foundation and firm starting point for the research, particularly in substantiating many of the characteristics of the first category of tourism writers.

In addition to this, moving forward with the interviews, each of the writers was requested to bring with them to the interview any piece of writing about Kandy, (or in the absence of which any article about Sri Lanka) they had written, which particularly interested them or sought to discuss with regards to their experience of writing. This added five more articles to the first group, seven to the second group and three blog sites to the third. During the interviews, I discussed some of these articles with the respective writers, but the focus of the interviews was not limited to these and included the experiences of the writers more generally.

As a result of letting the interviewees select their own stories of interest, their life experiences, history and personal anecdotes, some of the most dominant themes that emerged related to Kandy was the Kandy Esala Perahera¹.

¹ The Esala Perahera is a religious and cultural procession affiliated to the Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy where the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Lord Buddha is enshrined. The festival is held annually in August each year to pay homage to the Tooth Relic. The procession

Another such prominent theme that continually resurfaced during this endeavour was the tea industry, tea plantation workers and tea-related tourism as a preference of many. For instance, one of the travel journalists was very keen on discussing a series of articles she had written about tea estate bungalows (former dwellings of the British planters). She shared with me several scanned newspaper articles from the series, which I used for analysis as well as her experiences which she unravelled during the discussion. The tea industry and the Esala Perahera cultural procession were also two of the most prominent themes that surfaced from the first ten articles initially analysed about Kandy. After the third category of writers emerged through the interviews, I selected all three of the blog sites that the three bloggers maintained. Thus, *Three Sugars in my Tea*, *NatnZin* and *Nadee Paws* sites maintained by the four bloggers were selected for analysis. The specific blog posts under discussion were selected based on the emerging themes and those that the writers often referred to during the discussions. Whereas the tea heritage was also a rather popular topic of conversation with bloggers, other subjects such as mass tourism, environmental pollution, animal welfare and overcrowding in certain popular tourist destinations surfaced all of which are duly elaborated in the respective chapter.

4.4. Fieldwork – Collection of Data

My approach to generating thick descriptions (Geertz, 2008) relied on a combination of two primary tools for data collection. Through this section, I attempt to illuminate how these were employed in implementing this research project. I began my PhD in October 2016 and had understood from the very outset that data collection would be an iterative process that would continue in the first two years of the study. During 2017 I wrote my initial literature review and applied for ethics approval, which was duly granted. Also at this time, I conducted extensive searches of Sri Lankan travel magazines online (as I was based in the UK) for travel features about Sri Lanka, eventually settling on *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib*. During the late months of 2017, I had already

constitutes traditional dancers, cultural performers and elephants in elegant costumes parading the streets of Kandy.

begun analysis of travel articles within these magazines, which assisted in the strategising of the rest of my data collection to a great extent. However, the rest of data collection in terms of interviews and the selection of more travel material began in the early months of 2018. The interviews were conducted from February 2018 to June 2018 within Sri Lanka. Being from Sri Lanka myself and having been a former travel writer, proved a double advantage in terms of arranging fieldwork, particularly in terms of accessing participants for the study. As mentioned earlier on, to understand how local writers represent Sri Lanka for this qualitative inquiry, I had to examine, on the one hand, the material they created – the products of their writing endeavours. On the other hand, to understand how and why they write the way they do and how they are inculcated into, inherit or internalise the way(s) of seeing and standpoint(s) through which they represent Sri Lanka in particular ways, I used interviews. In the following section, I examine how I used the methods individually as well as combined to illuminate the inquiry.

4.4.1. Interviews

In alignment with the inquiry's purpose, in-depth interviews were used as the first source of data for this study. By the time I left the UK for Sri Lanka, I had prepared a draft interview schedule which included a set of questions although merely to guide the interviews. I had also arranged an information sheet to update participants of the nature and purpose of the study and a consent form for each of them to sign before the interviews. The interview lengths ranged from approximately 40 minutes to two hours, depending on how much time the interviewee could make available. While four interviews were conducted at participants' homes, two at workplaces, all others were held at various cafés around Colombo. These were also selected by the participants based on their convenience as well as being suitable for the purpose. Many of the interviews were guided around the few main questions I had prepared but led by the participants' thoughts and experiences on the process of writing. As elaborated by Patton (2015) "an interview when done well, takes us inside another person's life and worldview. The results help us make sense of the diversity of human experience" (Patton, 2015, p.426). This would be an

appropriate elaboration of the in-depth conversations that I had with each of the participants. In each case, I endeavoured to seek richness of experience.

As such, on the one hand, I was able to encourage each writer to express their views about their writing: what led them to write the stories they shared with me and the context within which these stories were written. I was also able to boost out interesting anecdotes, their likes and dislikes of various elements in their writing and whether and how they would change these narratives given the opportunity. On the other hand, I was able to converse about their personal histories, childhood and education, habits and interests and their journeys towards becoming travel writers. These purposeful conversations, as I prefer to identify them, offered the participants and often myself an opportunity to reflect on our past experiences together as writers. As such, they certainly proved to be what Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) emphasised as ‘inter-views’ – an interchange of views between two individuals conversing about a common theme and in the process producing knowledge through this interaction (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). This allowed aspects of both our experiences to enrich our conversations. Nonetheless, I was able to maintain “empathic neutrality” a concept offered by Patton seeking that middle-ground between becoming too involved which can cloud judgment; or remaining too distant which can reduce understanding (Patton, 2015, p.457).

All participants agreed to my recording the face-to-face conversations using a digital recording device. Written consent for this was granted in each case before the interviews. Thus, while recording the interviews, I also made additional reflective notes during the interviews, particularly about statements and information that needed further probing or follow-up questions which I used to delve deeper into the interviewee’s responses. I offered all participants the opportunity to withdraw from the study during the interviews and after. However, none opted to leave.

I attempted to transcribe each interview as soon as they were held while the conversations were fresh in my mind. As such, I was able to make more observations, accounts of my own feelings and memories separately while the process of transcription was taking place. This post-interview ritual became quite crucial, particularly during the very first few interviews, which helped me

adjust/plan the subsequent interviews based on observations and reflections I had made. This also in a sense, proved to be an initial analysis as I was able to pick up on the insights and themes that were emerging. After adding the basic descriptions of the interviewees to the transcripts, they were stored individually as Microsoft Word documents on a separate folder on my personal laptop with a copy saved on Leeds University's shared drive for security. Each discussion/conversation with the participants when referred to is cited within the thesis, the details of which are provided in a separate bibliographic list of interviews in Appendix 1.

4.4.2. Accessing Travel Articles

As previously mentioned, I began with the analysis of ten travel articles by Sri Lankan writers the study of which facilitated the further refinement and development of these basic ideas. This developed understanding then significantly helped form the basis for the discussions/interviews I had with the writers; a platform used to test further, understand and improve on the initial ideas gathered through the analysis of travel literature.

Similarly, the subsequent interviews directed the selection of further travel articles, based on the participants' choices. In other words, after the initial documents were gathered and while the interviews were being conducted, I managed to add to the number of travel articles written by the writers I continued to interview based on the dominant themes and aspects emerging as well as each writer's preferences on sharing their work for discussion. I provided each individual with sufficient time to carefully consider and select an article(s) they chose to share with me. As such, the expectation was that they email me prior to the interview or after one or two articles they had written at some point in their travel writing careers. While this was successful in some of the cases, this did not work as anticipated when it came to a few writers, who claimed either that they could not find articles, forgot to or were too busy to do this. But in such cases, even when specific travel stories or articles were not discussed, the writers' overall experiences were discussed in depth. On other occasions, I managed to retrieve their work myself often online based on what they discussed during the interviews. Apart from the travel literature directly

under investigation, a wide range of other documents such as government tourism strategies and annual reports, marketing material, both government and organisational websites, educational strategy reports, historical accounts and other such grey literature were also accessed and widely analysed, all of which are included in the main references. Some of these, mainly historical material such as reports on education or history of journalism in Sri Lanka for instance, were obtained at the Ceylon Room at the main library of the University of Peradeniya which I frequented during my period of data collection.

4.4.3. Internet as a Place and Tool for Research

This study takes place in an age where new digital technologies have made a profound impact on everyday life, influencing not only communication, social relations, economy, commerce and production but also the dissemination of knowledge (Lupton, 2014). The social meaning of digital technologies, according to Stalder (2012) “is shaped and reshaped by how they are embedded into social life” (Stalder, 2012, p.242). As experienced throughout the stages of this research this statement is also relevant to the experiences of travel/tourism and travel writing. Thus, the Internet has had a significant presence in this study, not only as a resource, tool or medium but also as a place to be researched (Hine, 2005; Lo Iacono et al., 2016). One notable example would be the fact that the Internet facilitated the easy access and collection of travel articles which would otherwise have been challenging and time-consuming. As I was located in the United Kingdom, during the first year of the study, the digital archives of *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib* magazines enabled the early initiation of collection and preliminary analysis of data, averting any requirement to travel physically and locating magazines.

Secondly, the study reflected the significance of online travel blogs that have transformed not only communication but also the way tourist/travel destinations are being represented, promoted and consumed (Banyai and Glover, 2012). Thus, as mentioned before, the blog sites were a place of research in the analysis of narratives written by Sri Lankan bloggers. However, even though the Internet in this sense constituted the field where data was

gathered the study did not delve into the implications of digitalisation or the impact the development and use of digital technologies and their incorporation has had within the social world under investigation. Therefore, I utilised established methods commencing with qualitative content analysis to gain general information involving the observation and interpretation of the text by coding and grouping words into categories or themes.

Thirdly, I also used social media as a research tool mainly Facebook and less frequently the professional site LinkedIn, not only in accessing participants for this study but also communicating with them throughout the process of the research at various stages. With the evolution of technologies, what was once known as Web 2.0 or new media are currently identified as social media constituting blogs, social network sites, location-based sites, photo and video sharing sites and so on (Mandiberg, 2012; Mackay, 2012). Social media has significantly influenced information sharing, connectivity and interaction as well as participation, transforming the way that society is organised as a networked society (Motion et al., 2016). For instance, social media facilitated my being connected with former work-colleagues of the past without which accessing participants for this study would have proved challenging. As a result of remaining in contact with them through Facebook I was able to approach them and the instantaneity that social media messaging provides considerably reduced the waiting times for responses from these contacts all of which positively contributed to the effective implementation of the study. These platforms also facilitated the return to participants with further questions after the interviews much more convenient. Emailing was also dominantly used, specifically for sharing information about the research (information sheet) before interviews as well as receiving travel articles by the participants.

4.5. Analysis

The first source of data used for this study was travel literature in the form of written text. Thus, inductive analysis of these was undertaken through the use of hermeneutics, which as Patton (2015) notes “constitute an interpretive theory that includes guidance for analysing any kind of narrative data and text” (Patton, 2015, p.137). Foremost, the articles were read and re-read thoroughly

and through what is identified as qualitative content analysis, which is “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort”(Patton, 2015, p.541), core consistencies and meanings, dominant and commonly recurring themes and motifs (Grant, 2004) were derived. For instance, how many times, certain words or phrases were used and in what contexts were closely observed. One example is how certain terms and phrases for instance, such as ‘majestic’, ‘rich history’, ‘colonial identity’, or ‘time stands still’ concurrently reproduce ideas about what Kandy should be and how they function as a part of a process of worldmaking. The ‘image(s) of Sri Lanka produced through representations was thus understood through the words, phrases and patterns in the articles. Discourse analysis was also used for which it was essential to recognise words and language as an embodiment of social relations. According to Dryzek (2013), a discourse is:

a shared way of apprehending the world. Embedded in language, it enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts. Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgements, and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, agreements and disagreements (Dryzek, 2013, p.8).

Based on these ideas scholars argue that language is a social phenomenon which is not only a reflection but also a means through which society’s ideology – or the shared common sense and frequently normative values, beliefs and ideas - is reproduced (Galasiński and Jaworski, 2003, p.133). Also, presenting ideas, thoughts and experiences through language primarily involves a process of decision making with regards to the selection of certain aspects of reality over others and their representation/arrangement (Hodge and Kress, 1993). Carvalho (2008), for instance, argues that:

a constitutive view of discourse has to encompass the analysis of discourse’s concrete means of effect. While discourse analysts have concentrated attention on the text, many of discourse’s modes of operation are extra- or supra-textual, i.e. they are realized beyond or independently of a given text (Carvalho, 2008, p.165).

Thus, some of the questions that were addressed in the process of analysis were: Why do some aspects mentioned and others not? How are things said, and what are the possible implications of that? What is absent from a particular text (factual data, points of view, etc.)? This ties in with the worldmaking theoretical framework according to which the representational repertoire of places, people and pasts view the world from a particular standpoint that may be important to the given agency, organisation or individual engaged in creating these texts (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). My intention here was to understand how or where these local writers received these visions/projections.

This is where I combined the analysis of textual representations with writers as social agents, tracing the dominant ideas within their writing to the broader social and historical contexts personal histories, education, culture and family backgrounds and dispositions of the writers through the analysis of interview transcripts. By the time I returned to the UK after the four months of fieldwork where all of the interviews were conducted, I had transcribed 15 of the 17 interviews in total; and I had gathered notes and observations and made some early analysis. As mentioned before, being a qualitative research project the analysis of interview data had also begun very early and was on-going and iterative from the outset. I had started transcribing as soon as each interview was completed which presented me with an opportunity for very early data organisation, coding and theme identification. Moreover, I believe that my own experience as a writer helped me identify some initial ideas and concerns that I found would be interesting to develop and explore. Thus, before, during and after conducting the interviews I was also engaged in the process of textual content analysis of interview transcripts (Patton, 2015). This also involved collecting, classifying, ordering, synthesising, evaluating, and interpreting the content of communication, in an aim to achieve in-depth knowledge and understanding of the process of travel writing.

Upon returning to the UK, I produced hard copies of the transcripts. In the meantime, I had listened to and re-listened to all interviews many more times without making any notes to help myself become more familiar with each interview beyond any re-reading of transcripts. This often enabled me to

become fully absorbed in the data and hear the essential elements I had previously missed, particularly during the interviews. Through this process and repeated reviews of transcripts, I highlighted similar words, themes, making notes and identifying connections between ideas and linking these with other interviews. After having conducted the interviews, I began to identify specific themes that were appearing and recurring such as the controversies surrounding the tea industry heritage for instance, that most writers actively talked about, or the environmental issues of mass tourism the taming of wild elephants for the Perahera and so on. As the analysis developed, I managed to group some of the earlier emerged themes and reject others falling outside the contours of this research.

Also, in terms of analysis, even though my initial intention at the outset of this project was to utilise the qualitative data analysis software package NVivo, in experimenting with this software package, I experienced a certain distance, and lack of control whereupon I refrained from using this. My decision against the use of any computer-based qualitative data analysis software was primarily as part of remaining true to this particular study's philosophical foundations, maintaining my positionality as a qualitative researcher as well as prioritising human over technological agency throughout the research. Notwithstanding the prevalent use of computer technology in qualitative research and the advantages that they bring to the researcher, there are a number of concerns associated with their unquestioning and uncritical acceptance and utilisation. Foremost, computers and software are a means of data management, facilitating the storage, coding, retrieval comparison and linking of data (Roberts and Wilson, 2002; Goble et al., 2012; Patton, 2015). The qualitative analyst must therefore, still decide what constitute the themes, how to name these and what meanings to extract. In other words, computer programmes are unable to provide creativity and intelligence that make each qualitative analysis unique.

As mentioned before, having been a travel writer myself, I stepped into this research project with some preconceived notions, interpretations and lines of thinking. Therefore, epistemologically, this analysis was part of a continuous process or journey commencing with these very early established notions

which were further developed through the first few articles sampled, the first few interviews and onwards. Beginning from these preconceived understanding, the analysis continued throughout each of these stages particularly during interviews, transcriptions, listening and re-listening to recorded interviews. These processes allowed me to become immersed in the richness of the data. It has been noted that researchers must identify ways through which technology can undermine the holistic imperative and alter the aesthetic effect of qualitative research (John and Johnson, 2000). It is therefore, argued that computer software assisted coding may reify the relationship between the researcher and the data or what is identified as researcher disengagement from the data (Seidel, 1991; Patton, 2015). The more I interacted with the data, the more categories and patterns began to emerge as a result of which themes were marked and notes were made, and most importantly, meanings and interpretations were derived that become part of the analysis. This made manual coding, retrieval and comparison seem natural and the use of NVivo out of place and allowed me to gain closeness to my data and keep the data in their original context (Hammersley, 1995).

In addition, as a part of negotiating the duality of structure and agency within this research and the need to focus on the individual, human action and access the meanings of the social world as it exists for the participants, I endeavoured to be sensitive to the ambiguities and subtle shades of interpretative meaning (Roberts and Wilson, 2002). Thus, my decision to forego NVivo was also as a result of the inductive, interpretive nature of qualitative data. For instance, I did not want to lose the richness and complexities of the speech utterances of interviews. Social interactions and the speech that it generates contain a high degree of indexicality or in other words, the meaning given to utterances by the context in which they take place (Roberts and Wilson, 2002). For instance, even though all participants were interviewed in the English language some of the participants used words, expressions or intonations borrowed from their native language. It was therefore, essential to capture the meanings of the words and phrases that were derived from the particular context inclusive of the tones of voice, feelings, body language, expressions, inflexion for an understanding of the colour of the entire process where meanings were

implied without using actual words (John and Johnson, 2000). All of this became part of the interpretive journey which took place in the form of a series of analytical notes or memos made at the time of interviews.

Due to these reasons, I resolved to conduct the analysis manually, creating my own system of making notes, highlighting, classifying, cross-referencing, using my own mind-maps associations, links and most significantly interpretations. This process led to the subsequent theorising and decision-making being developed more naturally, resulting in my close familiarity with the data. As a result, I believe that while the mechanistic tasks or routine elements of data management can be supported by computer-based software to some extent, there are elements that could not be reconciled with these systems particularly those that require human thought processes, interpretation, creativity and reflection that runs across the entire process of the research project.

4.6. Ethical Considerations

As this study was conducted outside the UK, in Sri Lanka, it is crucial foremost to note that the country merely holds a formal ethical body for medical-related research. Hence, the study did not have to obtain any prior approval apart from the formal ethical approval from the University of Leeds preceding the gathering of any field data. Therefore, abiding by recognised best practice and ethical standards as upheld by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) UK in working with and involving human participants, I primarily ensured that all potential participants are provided with an opportunity to make a free and informed decision about contributing to this research. This was to warrant their voluntary participation devoid of any form of coercion. To ensure complete awareness and transparency on the part of participants the purpose, nature, design, as well as the objectives of this study, were also shared, and these details were made available to them in writing. The potential participants were also provided with sufficient time to consider their choices before their written consent was acquired through a signed consent form. Apart from this, participants were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the research

at any point during the entire process of the study and for any given reason. Furthermore, all images used in this study - mainly as a form of visual aid, supplementary to the discussion - are my own; have been used with the permission of the relevant photographers or have been derived from the public website Unsplash.com which offers the free use of images for personal, most commercial and editorial use.

Finally, as a legal obligation to abide by the Data Protection Act (1998) and as good research practice, all data was gathered in a responsible manner meeting the relevance and purpose and abiding by the participants' rights. Once collected, the research data has been stored appropriately and safe from unauthorised access and will be held for a length of time only necessary for the purpose. In terms of anonymity, even though each participant was anonymised, this proved problematic as their real names were exposed through the requirement of providing references to their work which I cited. In such cases, these writers were notified, and I offered to share with them sections of the finalised thesis providing them an opportunity to make changes or withdraw from the project. However, none were made, and consent was granted. As such, privacy and confidentiality of the participants have been upheld ensuring that the data collected are used only by the researcher and not shared or transferred for any other purpose.

4.7. Researcher and the Researched

The analysis of data involves the interpretations of the depth of detail and nuance of participants' accounts resulting in explanations, verbal descriptions and theories (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) However, as elaborated in literature, critics have raised questions about how the cultural background and values of the researcher can affect the observed/researched. Postcolonial sensitivities, in particular, poses questions on the imbalances of power, wealth and privilege in the study and understanding particularly of the other. According to Patton (2015) "in the twenty-first century postcolonial and postmodern world, the relationship between the observed and the observer has been called into question at every level" (Patton, 2015, p.101). This also brings to the fore the important methodological concept of reflexivity where the

researcher is aware of his/her presence not only in the conduct of research but also in the construction of knowledge (Ali, 2013; Hertz, 1996). According to Bourdieu, reflexivity involves “subjecting the position of the observer to the same critical analysis as that of the constructed object at hand” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.41).

As a part of this reflexive practice, it is crucial therefore, that I consider some of my subjectivities influenced by actions, interactions and interventions involving the researched, particularly in acknowledgement of the “dialectic relationship between the knower and the known” (Feighery, 2006, p.270). In doing so, I focus on how I negotiated the ‘emic’ and the ‘etic’ in relation to the participants of this study. The theoretical underpinnings that distinguish the emic and the etic derive from anthropology with regard to the positioning of the researcher as ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ while being immersed in the interpretation of indigenous cultures, populations and places (Ali, 2014). Thus, I consider how I moved through this revolving insider/outsider position, in engaging with the Sri Lankan travel writers, which Bolak (1996) argues was a useful vantage point for “rethinking the familiar” (Bolak, 1996, p.107). I use the term ‘familiar’ considering my identity as a Sri Lankan researcher as well as a former travel writer, having stepped into fieldwork with the understanding that I was studying my ‘own’ culture and people. However, I recognise that during fieldwork I was simultaneously an insider and an outsider and that on this account my status and position were both empowering and restricting (Bolak, 1996; Feighery, 2006; Hertz, 1996).

Foremost, I was able to assume the role of an “insider”, considered as the emic, which denotes seeing the world from the eyes of the participants. This was facilitated on several different intensities: I was part of the culture that was being researched not only my being from Sri Lanka, but I was also an insider by virtue of my middle-class identity on account of my father’s status as a university academic and my mother’s as a teacher and having had a privileged education and upbringing in an elite government school in Sri Lanka and part of my primary education and tertiary education in the United Kingdom. In addition, as mentioned before, I have previously worked as a travel writer and therefore was familiar with most of the actions, motives, thoughts, beliefs and

desires of Sri Lankan travel writers, having had some experience as an 'insider'. In this sense, my previous status aided to a large extent in accessing and gaining the trust of the participants which facilitated building rapport. As the purpose of the research was explained at the beginning of each interview, these clarifications were well received and accepted with much enthusiasm. The participants all being very well educated English language writers, this task was made relatively less challenging. The interviewees often confided that the interview was a rare opportunity to converse about the experiences of being English language writers; a platform to reflect upon and discuss their experiences, beliefs and anecdotes. Thus, through the nature of these exchanges, I believe at least to some extent, the epistemological divide between the researcher and the researched was minimal. I recognised in this sense, the voices of the participants as equals and co-producers of knowledge. However, while at one level, the insider position afforded me with valuable insight into the world of travel writing, at the same time, I was faced with the "obviousness" of what some of the participants were discussing. Particularly with regards to tourism writers, I felt much at home hearing what was being said that I had to find an appropriate vantage point from which to study this world I had lived in myself making sure to avoid the risk of being blinded by the familiarity.

Therefore, in achieving objectivity, I found myself shifting status to 'outsider' on account of my intellectual and professional status as a researcher. On the one hand, my position as a researcher was acknowledged by the participants as reflected through their numerous questions regarding the scholarly concern in everyday activities of tourism representations, which they were ignorant of but were intrigued to learn about boosting their fascination for this research project. On the other hand, my own self-perception as a researcher facilitated the negotiation of rapport in a way that does not undermine my neutrality concerning what was being said (Hertz, 1996). I endeavoured to ascertain and distinguish between any preconceived notions that I may have taken into the interviews, any personal agendas entertained during the interviews, interview dynamics, and my subsequent interpretations. In other words, I endeavoured foremost to focus on what the participants wished or wished not to discuss. In

upholding that openness and trust flow from non-judgmental rapport I maintained neutrality with regards to the content of what was being said making sure what the interviewers tell me do not make me think more or less of them. For instance, I ensured when phrasing and wording questions to indicate to the participants that I am not interested in something sensational either negative or positive but only keen on what the person's genuine experience has been. I thereby made sure to elicit open and honest accounts from participants without their worrying about my judging what they say. Thus, while acknowledging the impracticability of eliminating all aspects of subjectivity stemming from my past experiences, I have used this reflexively remaining throughout the research process, appropriately and sufficiently detached so that the results are academically valid. I believe overall therefore, that my past experiences improved rather than hinder the quality of my explanations.

4.8. Scope for Further Research

Overall, I have been able to implement this research project successfully, capable of making the most appropriate decisions about methods to retrieve the most suitable and relevant data. I have followed the most dominant themes that led to the analysis and interpretation as illustrated throughout this chapter. However, there were some aspects or themes that I would have preferred to explore further but was incapable of due to time constraints during the three-year course of this PhD project.

One such area is the relationship between travel writing/worldmaking and gender. As elaborated earlier, out of the entire cohort of participants, only four individuals were male. A tourism writer, a travel journalist, a photographer/blogger and the official of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau. It was indicated through conversations with one of these participants that even though men like to become journalists, very few want to become travel writers and some organisations purposely seek out women as travel writers. I believe this is a vast but significant area of research in itself which would have scope for future research endeavours. Similarly, the issue of ethnicity was also left unexplored but would be useful in further efforts to

examine the intersection of ethnicity and worldmaking and whether/how different ethnic groups influence the way Sri Lankan writers see or represent the world.

Finally, the perspective of the reader of travel writing could also be significant, given the interactive nature of online blogs, for instance. This particular research project focused on the travel writers of Sri Lanka. Even though the readership of certain categories of writing was examined using existing literature, it would be useful for future endeavours to explore this further through an investigation into the perceptions of readers. This would shed light on who the readers are in detail and how they decode/interpret the travel narratives created by the Sri Lankan writers and to what extent these narratives help shape their views of the world or standpoints through which they construe reality.

However, for the moment, this study has illuminated some of the prevalent forms of travel writing produced locally and the significant worldmaking role that Sri Lankan travel writers play in directing how the country is represented to the world. In doing so, it also provided insights into the social nature of this process in extending knowledge on the way that these writers are inculcated into, receive or inherit the standpoints through which they see and represent Sri Lanka, unravelling the underlying mechanisms that shape the way that the country is seen, experienced and known the world over.

Chapter 05

The Worldmaking Role of the Professional Tourism Writer

5.1. Introduction

The overarching aim of this research project has been to empirically examine and sociologically theorise the process of travel writing as an everyday activity yet integral in its implications to practices of travel and tourism. As outlined in the introduction, this has mainly been to delineate the way in which Sri Lankan travel writers foremost see its places, people, culture and past and represent these in particular ways with significant implications to the way Sri Lanka is seen, experienced and known globally. This is with reference to the myriad social imprints that underpin the creation of these travel stories and why they are written in specific ways. This chapter is the first of three constituting the outcomes of this exploration, critically enquiring this social endeavour and worldmaking role of the travel writer within the context of Sri Lanka. As such, it presents the first of three categories of travel writing and writers in the English language identified through the study.

Primarily, the chapter characterises this first type of travel writing as promoting Sri Lanka's numerous destinations, locations and culture to a predominantly international readership. Therefore, it begins with a brief account of the magazines that carry these travel stories, including their distribution and readership. I then move on to examine the worldmaking authority of these magazines through their association with the tourism industry in creating and privileging a certain preferred version of Sri Lanka to the rest of the world. I thereby discuss how these magazines hold the authority in defining the field of travel writing within the context of Sri Lanka as a legitimate site of cultural production. I examine how writers strategise their way through to the accepted way of writing to be recognised and legitimised as professional travel writers. To distinguish this category of writing, I subsequently focus on an analysis of a sample of this writing in the form of two case studies: the representation of Kandy followed by that of the tea industry and heritage of Sri Lanka. The

section sheds light on the romanticised, exoticised and historicised representations that encapsulate a promotional gaze built upon centuries of images and circulating discourses. As such, I characterise it as ‘tourism writing’ due to its inherent association with international tourism promotion and the language and discourse of tourism.

I then consider the social implications underlying the worldmaking representations created through tourism writing with an examination of the writers themselves and their shared socio-cultural contexts including lifestyles, habits, and cultural capital that enable them to become proficient writers. I particularly place emphasis on their achievement of the necessary competence in the English language through their privileged formal education and their exposure to Western lifestyles, the culture of travel and the genre of travel writing. I explore these social attributes that shape systems of durable, transportable dispositions – habitus - and not only inspire the writers and provide opportunities for them to become professional writers but also successfully carry out their roles and functions within an established field of travel writing. Finally, I bring the chapter to a close tying together habitus, capital and the field. I conclude that the worldmaking role of these writers is imbued with impressions from their personal histories and internalised cultural capital that interact with the norms and standards of established fields of travel writing and tourism promotion resulting in the particular type of representations they create.

5.2. The Sri Lankan Travel Magazine

This category of writing is made distinct by the magazines it constitutes and the readers it caters to. Some of the most reputed and widely distributed commercially produced travel magazines currently in Sri Lanka are *Discover Sri Lanka*, *Living*, *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib*, the official Inflight magazine of SriLankan Airlines. *Discover Sri Lanka* and *Living* magazines are published by a private enterprise identified as Media Services (Private) Limited. Even though they had initiated a business magazine named *LMD* in 1994, Media Services has since then diversified into leisure and travel. *LMD* had begun as *Lanka Monthly Digest*, which was both business and leisure-

oriented. The name was changed to *LMD* in August 1997, making it more business-oriented. As highlighted through their website, the mission statement of LMD states “to be a vehicle for promoting management excellence, business acumen, a Sri Lankan identity and an evolving vision for national development- and its willingness to be regularly tested against it” (LMD, 2018). The leisure aspect of the magazine eventually tapered off to bring out the new publication dedicated to leisure and lifestyle, *Living* - a bi-monthly magazine launched in September 2005. Subsequently, the *Discover Sri Lanka* magazine was also begun. In 1998, Media Services was appointed publisher of the Sri Lanka Tourist Board²'s official publications for three years. As such, during the period from 1998 to 2001, *Sri Lanka Travel Planner* and the *Travel Manual* were both designed and published by this organisation to promote the country to tourists and to direct them through what Sri Lanka has to offer upon their arrival. These publications had been distributed by the Tourist Board to the travel industry worldwide. Apart from this, Media Services also runs LMDTV which includes Benchmark, a 30-minute weekly business documentary for television, in partnership with the production company, the Wrap Factory launched in August 2001; and Biztalk a similar platform. The latest addition to the Media Services portfolio is the *Cinnamon* magazine – which they publish for the Cinnamon chain of hotels, another predominantly ‘travel’ oriented publication for tourism promotion distributed among the hotels and for sale in major cities. The travel magazines of Media Services principally cater to a tourist and Sri Lankan urban middle class and elite readership but are read mostly by Sri Lankans.

Serendib and *Explore Sri Lanka*, however, are both published by BT Options which has been functioning within the travel publishing field for over 30 years in Sri Lanka having introduced the very first travel magazine in the English language in the mid-1980s. Apart from travel, business and lifestyle magazines in English both print and web-based, this organisation also has reputed advertising, promotions, web and a multimedia arm within the

² Re-established in 2007 as the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), this is the government authority involved with planning, development, regulation, and policy implementation of tourism and related industries within the country.

establishment. As a private publishing establishment, they engage in the commercial “production of corporate newsletters, brochures, posters, coffee table books and other promotional material” (BT Options, 2019b). They are also an authorised reseller and service provider for the Apple brand in Sri Lanka since 2003. Apart from this, since 2015 the organisation ventured into the hospitality industry by opening three beach-side resorts catering to burgeoning surf tourism in Sri Lanka. With a corporate structure and culture, BT Options has a staff of over 70 employees, including professional feature writers that engage in travel writing (BT Options, 2019a).

Serendib is one of their most prominent publications and is the in-flight magazine of SriLankan Airlines which has been in function for over 30 years accessible to all passengers on board SriLankan Airlines. According to the publisher’s corporate website, it is a monthly publication that “explores the exotic isle of Sri Lanka bringing the reader experiences of lush hilltops, adventurous escapades, idyllic beaches, vibrant culture, history, must-see local sights, cuisine and much more” (BT Options, 2019a). This description itself is an exemplification into the language of tourism promotion (Dann, 1996). The use of adjectives such as exotic, idyllic, lush or must-see, attests to the primary intention of this type of writing; which is to attract more visitors into the country (Dann, 1999; Salim et al., 2012). Moreover, access to the *Serendib* for Sri Lankan residents is only through travels abroad and the number of Sri Lankans who travel abroad - even though it has increased through time – is proportionately low.

Similarly, *Explore Sri Lanka* the travel and lifestyle magazine was the company’s first having begun in 1987. This has a distribution of about 40,000 magazines per month circulated widely and free within all reputed star class hotels and restaurants frequented by international visitors. However, a few number of magazines are sold in bookshops, supermarket chains and newsagents in the major cities of Sri Lanka including Colombo and the suburbs. According to the organisation’s website this magazine:

caters to a broad readership including resident expatriates, local residents and Sri Lankan missions overseas. Distributed through a large subscriber base, the magazine is available at the Bandaranaike International Airport, hotels and resorts island-wide, onboard the national airline and lifestyle stores (BT Options, 2019a).

The implications of this are that the local Sri Lankan readership is restricted to a limited, urban, English-speaking, middle-class and elite group centred around the major cities such as Colombo, Kandy, Galle or Kurunegala apart from the international travellers to the country, foreign diplomats and Sri Lankan diplomats overseas. This denotes that local readership of these magazines is restricted to those who can read in English and therefore, a class-based lifestyle choice not typical to the majority, which will be further explored throughout the thesis. This has insinuations to the social fabric of Sri Lanka, differentiated through class and inequality with roots in early colonialism and much later to the 1977 economic liberalisation. Subsequent to the latter and with neoliberal economic policies associated with global economic integration, commercial growth rates increased rapidly and led to the rejuvenation of the private sector released for accelerated capital formation (Hettige, 1996; Lakshman and Tisdell, 2000; Little and Hettige, 2014). With this, large inflows of foreign funds for massive government-led infrastructure development programmes resulted in a temporary economic boom and significant structural and institutional change within the country. This also coincides with the institutionalisation of tourism in Sri Lanka in the late 1960s and the advent of corporate publishing syndicates such as BT Options in the early 1980s, the emergence of market values into the social and cultural spheres and conscious efforts at promoting the country to a global clientele structured upon codes of competition. The consequence of these developments, however, was the heavy concentration of incomes and wealth in the hands of a few; the few who are also associated with both the production and consumption of the magazines in question (Lakshman and Tisdell, 2000). The motive underlying the production of these magazines is entirely commercial and therefore, they are deemed not only in terms of the quality of

the print but also the content – (text as well as photography) substantiating the reputation and high regard they hold in Sri Lanka. For instance, one of the journalists who contribute travel articles for a local newspaper when interviewed stated that magazines such as these had been her inspiration when it comes to travel writing. She added:

Magazines like the *Serendib* I think the level of writing is excellent because that was my go-to research initially; for first-timers, it is very informative, and the style is very unique and very international...I mean if someone from another country looks in the *Serendib* for say a place like Meemure³ they will definitely go there at least once in their lifetime; because the way that the writers write is so much so that they invite you to that place and that is the essence of a travel writer (Interview with Kamani, 2018).

Similarly, former-travel writers for this publisher recalled how they had a very early inclination to write for these magazines, a few of them also asserting that it was a 'dream' that they harboured from a young age. Heather, who had worked for two years writing for both magazines, revealed her regard for the *Explore Sri Lanka* magazine:

Explore was also something that I really wanted to work for since I was a child because my mother used to buy that magazine. So, I would skim through those pages, and I would think to myself someday I'm going to write for this magazine. So, at which point when I got some training in journalism; I just thought I wanted to try out my luck with *Explore*, and so I just applied, and I guess I was lucky (Interview with Heather, 2018).

Thelma, another participant who was once a Feature Writer at BT Options having written for both magazines, had later been promoted to a senior editorial role. She also spoke of her early aspirations. Before this, Thelma had

³ Meemure is a traditional village located on the border between the Kandy District and Matale District in the Knuckles Mountain Range; it is a popular and frequented tourist destination both among locals as well as international visitors.

encountered *Serendib* magazine through her travels to and from India where she had completed her undergraduate studies. She claimed:

So, I would come home every three months; and in the flight, we would get *Serendib*, and I would go through it, I would look at it, I would go through the pictures; I wouldn't really read it, but I would always dream of, you know, writing for them. That was such a big dream (Interview with Thelma, 2018).

According to some of these writers, the high regard held by these magazines locally is because international magazines were not as accessible within the country during the 1980s and much of the 1990s. As such, these two magazines have been the closest to travel literature for a discerning local readership in English. The fact that these magazines cater to an international and domestic elite readership also impacts the local perceptions about them. As a result, the related writing has been moulded into an "ideal type" for travel writing in Sri Lanka for those who aspire to become travel writers, particularly publications such as *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib* that have been in production since the early 1980s followed much later by the few others mentioned earlier such as *Discover Sri Lanka* or *Living*. As such, I argue that this category and the associated organisations and their productions have established over time the legitimate authority or expertise with the power to name/classify or define the field of travel writing in Sri Lanka.

On the one hand, this has provided individuals with a known and recognised identity as travel writers as well as conferring the different forms of cultural capital that create good travel writers (Bourdieu, 2010). I also maintain that this legitimacy these publications hold derives from their adoption of a "Western" model substantiating what scholars such as Edward Said (1978) assert about the relationship between the Western and the non-Western culture (Said, 1978). Similarly, as other scholars have later affirmed, touristic images of the non-west are still being grounded in Western authority and dominant global power relations. Accordingly, image creators of the non-west such as the Sri Lankan travel writers continue to read from an occidental script (Feighery, 2012) which is also made evident through statements (about the

Serendib magazine mentioned above) such as exploring the “the exotic isle of Sri Lanka”.

On the other hand, this power and authority held by these organisations and in turn, the legitimacy this creates for their work renders these organisations to play a worldmaking role. The worldmaking thesis arising through a branch of critical tourism enquiry delineates the way in which management agencies and other mediating bodies within tourism work to favour or emphasise particular dominant representations of places, people and heritage. As asserted by Hollinshead et al. this is:

ideographic/ iconographic/ cosmological hegemony which conceivably undergirds the imposition of a found or felt dominance of some kind – as is articulated or exteriorized through the selection of storylines, sites and spectacles used in the inspected tourism setting (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.430).

This sheds further light on the place of tourism-led travel writing and the influence of organisations cited above in establishing and legitimising ideas about travel writing within the context of Sri Lanka. In the subsequent sections, therefore, I examine this further through an exploration of how writers operate and struggle within the field to establish their positions as successful in-country travel writers.

5.3. The Field of Travel Writing in Sri Lanka

With many of the writers having had early aspirations to become travel writers for the magazines mentioned above, their initial anticipation and excitement within their roles was duly accentuated. Those interviewed explained how they enjoyed their work throughout as travel writers appreciating their opportunity to travel around Sri Lanka not only experiencing the diverse destinations and culture but also learning much about their own country partaking in the exposure they had not hitherto experienced. Despite the initial enthusiasm, however, there had also been some form of apprehension due to the novelty of this experience. These writers have had no familiarity with travel writing which had meant that there needed to be some form of adjustment to the role

and expectations within the organisations or in other words, some form of 'struggle within the field'. Two of the writers had previously worked in journalism – local newspapers – at the point of being recruited to one of the organisations, but a majority had entirely different experiences and qualifications, but travel writing had been a new experience to all of them. As such, one of the common topics of discussion was how they obtained the necessary learning, training or adjusting into the new role, which according to them was accomplished entirely while on the job, through the practice of travelling and writing about these journeys. Thelma, for instance, recalled her first few months as a travel writer:

So, this was like you are thrown into the deep end and either you sink or swim, that's what it was really. But I remember like Mr...gave us a lot of guidance in terms of what he wanted...it was like a clean slate for him as well, and he made us read through older issues. I remember...they gave us a bunch of magazines...Basically, you read through what everyone else has written, and you write your own thing (Interview with Thelma, 2018).

All writers shared a similar sentiment, and they expressed the difficulty in adjusting to this somewhat unusual yet appealing profession because most had shifted directly from other occupations or soon after higher education. As such, each writer had first taken on the role based on their respective understandings or interpretations and experiences in writing resulting in entirely different ways of working, or more specifically, diverse types of writing or researching. Pricilla went on to explain:

To be honest, I had no clue; and there was no one to say this was the right way to do it, and I was always on edge because I wasn't sure if I was doing it right and I remember in those first days I was going and asking my boss...how do I write this? (Interview with Pricilla, 2018).

The writers explained that their prior exposure to international magazines, TV documentaries and subjects in schools such as English literature had played a part in preparing them for the writing. However, because of their diverse

higher educational backgrounds and previous exposures, they have approached travel writing differently. For instance, some would follow a style similar to National Geographic; some would take an academic slant where one conducts research and base one's writing predominantly on facts and information, others would lean more towards poetic writing influenced by their poetry appreciation or writing, or their work within journalism. "And initially you think do I write it this way do I write it that way. You know, and you haven't really done this before, right? And the only kind of essays you've written is in school" (Interview with Thelma, 2018) Thelma explained further.

Kate, who had been seeking employment within an NGO after her undergraduate degree in Economics undertaken in the United States, was unable to secure her preferred occupation upon returning to Sri Lanka. She had preferred working in the field of community development. It was her mother who had suggested that Kate should apply for the Feature Writer position advertised in the local English newspapers. Even though she had studied English literature in school, she had had no passion for writing when she had accepted this position, unlike the other writers. Kate explained her very first experiences as a travel writer:

The first two articles were a bit difficult because I had to get into this whole mindset of like travelling or being a bit whimsical I guess because I was in a very rigid structure of writing on a specific topic... and you know how academic writing is mostly structured. You had to be very scientific you had to have proof, but at ...you just go, and you talk to a person, and you write an article, and you base everything on what that person says, and you can be a bit whimsical and go off topic a little bit at times, and that was acceptable, so it was difficult for the first two or three articles I wrote, but afterwards I think I got the hang of it and just went on (Interview with Kate, 2018).

Accordingly, as reiterated by Kate and other participants, there is arguably an initial process of struggle and adjustment to the position of travel writer within the field. The seriousness or the significance of fitting into the accepted way of writing about people, places and pasts, endorsed by organisations such as

these is further clarified by Harriet who also shed light on those who refuse to or are unable to fit into the requirements of the profession. She revealed:

I remember there were some people who would try to push the envelope and tried to write something a little bit different when we were working at certain places, and those things would immediately be edited out, or those writers would be talked to and adjusted... And yeah, they didn't last (Interview with Harriet, 2018).

Based on these revelations of the writers, I argue on the one hand that this is the point at which these writers first encounter the “sub-field” of travel writing within a broader field of tourism promotion. As elaborated within Chapter Three, I interpret a field as “a network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.97). This field according to a Bourdieusian interpretation is “a field of struggle for positions within it” (Harker et al., 1990, p.8). Upon being recruited as travel writers, different types of cultural capital combine with the action of habitus or “the basis of [their] understanding of [their] lives and the outside world” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127) to the different structures of power (Bourdieu, 1977). This is substantiated through how the writers who bring with them previous knowledge and experience in the form of cultural capital - such as education, exposure to international magazines or prior work experience - strategise their way through to the accepted way of writing. They are in turn recognised and legitimised as travel writers, in an overall process of “internalisation of externality and externalisation of internality” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72). Accordingly, this is the result of the interaction of the capital that each writer brings into the field of travel writing. The resulting actions or practices work towards the preservation/perpetuation of the field of travel writing.

On the other hand, this reflects the constitutive or worldmaking power of tourism and the ‘agency’ or ‘authority’ of these organisations within a broader framework of institutionalised tourism. It mirrors the degree not only to which they collectively manufacture some realities but also how they are “conterminously denying other rival or possible such truths”(Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.429) by making sure through editors that the writers present a particular preferred version of a story that is required and suited for tourism

promotion. These examples discussed reiterate the fact that as part of tourism promotion these organisations and in turn their publications not just axiomatically reproduce some given realm of being but commonly makes, de-makes or re-makes populations, destinations and heritages (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.428).

Another aspect related to writing discussed was having to write about the same place several times or repeatedly with regards to annual events or festivals. For instance, the Kandy *Esala Perahera* is a cultural procession about which the writers must often produce features. One major attraction that draws millions to Kandy, the annual procession of the *Sri Dalada Maligawa*⁴ (see Figure 1) - the Esala Perahera: a religious and cultural festival affiliated with the Temple is considered the largest cultural parade in the world. This takes place over a festive period between July and August to honour the sacred tooth relic of the Lord Buddha.



Figure 1: *Sri Dalada Maligawa* - Temple of the Tooth Relic (Jayathilaka, 2018c)

The celebrations include a procession of decorated elephants, traditional dancers and drummers for ten days on the Kandy city streets which ends on the full moon of August (see Figure 2). The festival begins with a simple

⁴ the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic where a relic of a tooth of the Lord Buddha is enshrined.

opening, but the parade's route lengthens, and it becomes more elaborate towards the end of the festival, ending in the final *Randholee perahera* on the last full moon day. The highlight of the *Esala Perahera* is the carrying of the replica of the golden casket where the Lord Buddha's tooth relic is preserved on the back of an elaborately decorated elephant chosen and trained particularly for this task.



Figure 2: The Kandy Esala Perahera 2019 (Upekshaka, 2019)

Thelma explained how she once had to create two different stories for two different magazines published in the same month. Foremost, she described that she did not have to travel to Kandy to see the Perahera being very familiar with it. Thelma explained how she based her articles on her memories of seeing the procession as a child and as an adult, along with information she gathered from the media unit of the *Sri Dalada Maligawa*. However, to overcome the challenge of producing two very distinct articles for two different publications on the same subject for the same month, she stated that she had to consider the perahera in a different light, a different angle. She explained:

But then what I wrote in that particular article was kind of how perahera ushers in the rain. I think my article was all about how the perahera is kind of like a prayer for rain. I think I tried to look at it differently because everybody writes about the perahera in the same way (Interview with Thelma, 2018).

This is not a challenge experienced only by Thelma, and the matter was emphasised by all the writers of this category, which some of the respondents used to call attention to the difference between writing professionally for an employer and one's own pleasure. However, many explained how they overcame this by focusing on a different aspect or theme each time they had to produce more than one feature on a single location, event or destination. Kate had a similar opinion on this issue and added:

If I was given some topic where I have to go and actually write about the same old place that I see every single day, I would always try to find something unique that I can touch upon. Just like I did for *Saman Dewalaya*⁵. I have written about I don't know three or four articles on that, but I always find a different angle to get to it...always (Interview with Kate, 2018).

Furthermore, the tourism writers stressed having to mass-produce travel features and other such content over a month at the end of which they are paid for their work as employees of these private enterprises. They highlighted the challenge of working for an organisation that produced several different publications each month. As such, they not simply have to create several articles but also provide content for advertisements, annual reports, brochures and websites etc. aside from the travelling they undertake for travel features, which they have to produce within a short period of returning. Kate elaborated that this was the reason that eventually led to her resignation - "too much work and deadlines". She explained that this was the most challenging experience for her and went on to explain:

⁵ A shrine in Ratnapura dedicated to deity Saman, the presiding deity of the Sri Pada Mountain (Adam's Peak) which is believed to have the left foot impression of Lord Buddha placed during his visit to Sri Lanka.

I don't know I can't say that I've been satisfied with any of the articles I've done at... Because good writing requires time you can't just churn out an article within just two-three hours, but that's what we basically did there. They say they give you three days to write an article, but you barely get a day to finish one article because there's always another task waiting for you. And honestly, you need time and space between one article and the next because otherwise what you incorporate into this article tends to flow into the next one and they start sounding a bit similar, which I find a bit irritating, and I've experienced it, and there was nothing I could do because I was so drained I couldn't think (Interview with Kate, 2018).

Andrew, who works for a similar organisation, revealed that at times they are required to hand in their stories within an hour of returning from travel. He claimed that he does an average of three to four travel articles per month, excluding all the other work for different publications and multiple other duties assigned. He explained, "for ... alone I do four articles a month, then ... three, for ... three or four then there is the video work and TV shows. So, what we do is we try to do several jobs at once when we go out" (Interview with Andrew, 2018). He conceded that features are 'mass-produced' and that the writers must produce work to match the demand. Towards the end of the interview, Andrew revealed that one of his future aspirations is to try and become a 'freelance writer' provided that there is not too much editing of his work on the part of the clients. These attestations significantly point to the primacy of economic forces and capitalist imperatives of profit-making at play at these organisations. As such, they are engaged in the process of packaging and marketing Sri Lanka as part of the global tourism industry - one of the world's largest industries (Bianchi, 2010; Huggan, 2001) which will be taken into further discussion later on in the chapter.

Kate was the only writer interviewed who did not have a passion or early aspirations to become a writer. She had merely joined the publishing industry for economic reasons. As previously stated, every other writer emphasised that joining these organisations as writers was in their own words "a dream

come true". However, the fact that Kate identified the type of writing she had to do for these magazines as 'whimsical', which Pricilla explained with the word 'flowery' provides a thought-provoking ingress into the next section concerning the form of writing these respondents are or have been compelled to engage in consciously. The subject, therefore, shifts to some of the significant and prevalent characteristics home to tourism writing in an attempt to understand the underlying sociological implications before directing the analysis once again towards the writers and their social milieus and the associated cultural capital they bring to this type of work.

5.4. Worldmaking through a Promotional Gaze

Within this subsection, the first category of travel writing will be analysed in an attempt to understand some of the dominant features that characterise it. This is combined with the perceptions of some of the writers, many of whom considered their work as a cosmetic endeavour, making Sri Lanka attractive for international visitors, acknowledging the writing they do as romanticised, one-sided or positive. As mentioned before, the notable feature of this writing is the fact that it is closely aligned with the tourism industry. The writing, therefore, plays a vital role within tourism in making, re-making or de-making places, people, culture or pasts through the investment of a variety of meanings and values that ultimately combine to create a product that is promoted and sold (Meethan et al., 2006). Presenting how this is achieved is the primary concern of this section. All the writers concurred that working for magazines produced for tourism promotion run by commercial establishments required them to write in a particular style and manner. Heather, for instance, elaborated on this asserting "when you're writing for a magazine like this you have to write in a way that it sells, so that is a bit of a barrier to when you're trying to be creative and tell a creative story. Because you have to make sure that it also sells, and people read that kind of thing" (Interview with Heather, 2018).

A few respondents also communicated how they had to see places from a "Western perspective" to write in this fashion; or as some described it, see places through the eyes of the global tourist. For instance, when asked what

provoked her to use the word “exotic” to refer to orchids in one of her travel stories, Harriet, responded “that article specifically was written for that target group...the tourists. They are probably looking for an exotic experience” (Interview with Harriet, 2018). She also added that given the complete freedom to write the way she preferred to write perhaps for a personal platform: “I mean maybe I wouldn’t have even talked about orchids for instance, because orchids are you know just orchids. I have orchids in my garden I would probably have gone on and on about the almond trees” (Interview with Harriet, 2018). This not simply alludes to the fact that these writers are in fact far from independent, in that they are actually engaged in a struggle amidst the rules/standards or commonly accepted principles of the fields of travel writing and tourism promotion, but this also exemplifies what Porter (1991) identified as the “anxiety of travel writing”. Through this, he referred to the way in which these writers often have to find some way of describing the familiar in new and entertaining ways (Porter, 1991, p.12). In what follows tourism writing is further unpacked through the investigation of two specific examples. The first is the employment of the sublime in representing the natural landscapes of the historic city of Kandy – a popular touristic destination in Sri Lanka. The second is the historicised, romanticised portrayal of the tea heritage and industry - a colonial legacy and durable asset for the Sri Lankan tourism industry.

5.4.1. Kandy: Seeking the Picturesque Sublime

As mentioned before, all respondents established that writing for these commercially produced travel magazines was a constant effort at representing the country solely in a positive light which involved very descriptive, poetic or ‘flowery’ language as they often described it. Pricilla, for instance, added:

And looking back I also feel there’s a lot of unnecessary elaborations you know; you try to make things unnecessarily elaborate and going to way too much detail and kind of make things look very romantic which is not really the case; and all the adjectives! So many adjectives (Interview with Pricilla, 2018).

I argue that this is part of the practice of seeking and presenting the “picturesque sublime” which I endeavour to explore using the case of how the

city of Kandy is represented. Early scholars have asserted that the British trend of the picturesque date back to the Grand Tour, that it was initiated with Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorrain, whose landscape paintings were often brought back to England by the travellers. English travellers who had seen Italy and the Alps while on the Grand Tour sought to recapture their experience in Britain, as a result of which the Lake District, the Wye Valley, the West Country, and parts of Scotland became popular destinations. Such tourists were thus aided in finding picturesque views by guidebooks and landscape poems. As argued by Byerly (1996):

these early tourists' enjoyment of landscape was based less on an appreciation of nature itself than on the secondary image of nature that they themselves constructed—either literally, through their amateur sketches, or imaginatively, simply in the way that they viewed the scenery (Byerly, 1996, p.54).

Thus, this encompasses a particular way of seeing that the Sri Lankan tourism writers themselves internalise as a part of their role. A few of the writers claimed that travelling and experiencing life and places outside of Colombo (the capital) was itself a novel experience for them. They argued that moving outside of their “comfort zone” was to them at times a “foreign experience”. Pricilla highlighted this specifically when discussing one of her articles about a rural village in Kandy *A Trail of Beauty* (2013). She stated that in hindsight she thought the article seems a little too “flowery”, but it was partly to do with the fact that she was from the city and what she felt when she experienced the beauty of rural nature. Pricilla noted that she used a lot of intensifiers to try and convey to the reader what she felt. In this particular article, she offers a description of the scenery stating “we engaged our eyes to the scenery around. This was by no means an effort as the green carpets of paddy, the canopies and the lakes gleaming mysteriously in the foreboding weather were transfixing sights” (Nanayakkara, 2013). Pricilla’s writing and the way she explained this immediately brings to light the rural-urban duality often seen in classical literature; or in Raymond Williams’ terms the contrast between the country and the city. The writer’s attitude toward rural life and nature encompasses according to Williams’ (1993) conceptualisation, the English

attitudes toward the country and ideas of rural life; the use of the country or 'nature' as a retreat and solace not only from urban life but human society and ordinary human consciousness (Williams, 1993, p.161). Thus, I argue that through such phrases, the writers attempt to replicate the sublime sensibility of 18th century British travellers who viewed Britain through a romantic frame. As highlighted by Andrews (1989) this particular frame of seeing privileged the picturesque, a pleasing melancholy and the sublime, all of which make these writers seek out the wild, mountainous landscapes and "irregular forms of natural scenery" (Andrews, 1989, p.45). As defined by Bell and Lyall (2002) the sublime is "an abstract quality in which the dominant feature is the presence or idea of transcendental immensity or greatness" (Bell and Lyall, 2002, p.4). It is the feeling of being overwhelmed, which dislocates the rational observer and inspires awe, reverence and in some instances, even fear. As elaborated by Squire (1988) in an effort to understand the Romantic reshaping of landscape through Wordsworth and Lake district Tourism, the romantic ideology fostered impressions of an idyllic, untamed Eden. He states:

In response to public fascination with this mythologized and emotional portrait of place, a tourist landscape emerged. Thus even those unfamiliar with romantic literature are encouraged to see particular landscapes from a literary perspective (Squire, 1988, p.237).

As such, in the case of Sri Lankan writers such as Priscilla, this task is made easy through the exposure they have had early on in life through the appreciation of English literature as a part of their elite formal education. This has offered them the pre-programming or aesthetic conditioning necessary for a career in travel writing, which will be discussed further in the subsequent sections of this chapter. Duncan (1999) who focuses on the 'romantic, imaginative geography' and nineteenth century Western accounts of Kandy, states that one of the reasons that the Victorian travellers viewed the city as one of the most beautiful places in the world, lies in the hybridity of the region. He elaborates that these travel accounts and stories "operated through a set of exoticising and familiarising gestures" (Duncan, 1999, p.151) based on the

fact that these early writers were simultaneously shocked by both the “uncanny familiarity of the place as well as by its alterity”. He adds:

And yet this shock was domesticated, which is to say turned into delight, by a textualized way of seeing based upon a form of hybridity which did not evolve on this spot, but rather was invented half a century before, and 7,000 miles away in Britain (Duncan, 1999, p.151).

Duncan argues that before the advent of the British, Kandy had a different imaginative geography centred on Buddhism. It was the British who reworked this through a form of translation which recuperated the Highlands for a British audience re-imagining the mountains, the lakes and the forests, which asserts Duncan, created a discourse, a way of seeing and talking about the place. It is this way of seeing that is internalised and in turn, feed into the promotional tourist gaze that the tourism writers of this study help construct or reproduce. This is expected of their role as travel writers by the organisations that employ them.

Razak (2012), in her article *A Stroll through The Royal Botanic Gardens*, engages in a similar pursuit. The Peradeniya Botanical Gardens is one of the most popular and visited tourist attractions within the city of Kandy. This is one destination that has been photographed and written about countless times, represented and depicted in tourist brochures and magazines that the images ultimately and inevitably have become over-familiar (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Peradeniya Botanical Gardens (Jayathilaka, 2018b)

It has been argued nonetheless that people still flock to these destinations seeking a transcendental experience desiring to move from the mundane to the magical. This is expressed through Razak’s statement “to walk through the gates of the Gardens, however, is to leave behind the jarring din and be enveloped by beautifully manicured grounds, bird sounds and soft breezes” (Razak, 2012b). Here, the Garden which represents nature is portrayed as an antidote to the mundane, quotidian as expressed by theorists such as Bell and Lyall (2002). They argue that the appreciation for nature is most significant in developed Western societies where the height of urbanism fails to provide “contact with the origins of life” (Bell and Lyall, 2002, p.16). To them, the natural world is “other” to modern, urban, industrial civilisation. In line with these thoughts, Razak depicts the Garden as an escape from the violent quotidian urbanism where one could find solace in bird sounds and soft breezes. As in the previous case, throughout her narrative Razak too maintains a sublime sensibility using phrases such as “astonishingly large Java Fig Tree sprawled out on the lawn” or through words such as “picturesque” and “burst of colour” or “the wondrous diversity between species” or “an island of lush green grass bordered by colourful beds of dainty flowers” (Razak, 2012b). Razak states that “the row of Giant Java Almond

trees inspires awe in passers-by with their sheer magnitude” and as such heightening the sublimity of nature. In doing so she provides the visitor with information on something to watch out for in the vast expanse of the garden. Then elsewhere in her narrative, Razak refers to the Orchid Garden (see Figure 4) writing “The allure of these delicate, exotic flowers lie in the various shapes and colours they sport” (Razak, 2012b) where she again draws on Western-centric seeing in framing a particular tourist gaze.



Figure 4: Orchids at the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens (Jayathilaka, 2018a)

In a similar article titled *A day at the Peradeniya Gardens* Wickramasinghe (2017) constructs an image of the Garden as pristine and out of the ordinary into which one could escape. She does this by emphasising the sublime and exalting the natural beauty of the destination. The writer alludes to the Garden as “endless expanses of plants that dance with colour vibrant in their full magnificence” encompassing the “beauty of nature” which she describes as a “magnificent beauty” which attracts its millions of visitors (Wickramasinghe, 2017). She further outlines the Botanical Gardens as “a spectacle of colour, where each species and variety makes one fascinated by the magnificence of nature”. Throughout the article, the author recurrently uses terms such as ‘glory’, ‘astounding’ or ‘magnificent’ in depicting the various species of plants, trees or curated landscapes and states that “the Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya will definitely leave you in awe” (Wickramasinghe, 2017). Yet

again, this suggests the replication of the sublime sensibility. According to Bell and Lyall (2002), the sublime is a central commodity in contemporary tourism. These scholars further assert that within the language of tourism promotion is a highly stylised vocabulary that links the spectators' emotions with the scale and size of the spectacle. All of this according to Ousby (1990) soon combine to create a particular and fashionable slang of all-purpose intensifiers, used to convey a state of exalted, enthusiastic wonderment (Ousby, 1990 in Bell and Lyall, 2002) which I previously noted through the words of the participant writers of this study.

Likewise, in a more recent article written about Kandy titled *Roam around Kandy*, Senerath-Yapa (2017) offer a similar description about the Gardens. He writes in his introduction of this attraction: "the Peradeniya gardens, covering a span of almost 150 acres, is a paradise where each tree is a part of a wild, majestic landscape" (Senerath-Yapa, 2017) also following the style of depiction adopted by both Wickramasinghe and Razak. Representations such as these however, are far from novel in tourism and scholars have discussed such instances emphasising the way in which tourism and popular media images often reproduce simplified, culturally uniform images of paradise-like places, characterised by exoticism and exuberance (Buck, 1993; Palmer, 1994; Buzinde et al., 2006; Bryce, 2007; Guerron Montero, 2011). This technique of representation is emphasised by Etnier and Prasad (2002), who discuss Third World tourism promotion. They bring to the fore, some of the prominent themes frequently used in tourism promotions specific to these countries. As such, they declare that these places are commonly portrayed as natural, pristine, tropical, verdant, gentle, and amiable. Accordingly, the first five of these, they argue, are often used to depict natural landscapes and attractions and reflect the myth of the unrestrained. Therefore, "they paint a picture of an untarnished natural environment characterized by tropical, gentle lushness" (Etnier and Prasad, 2003, p.666). There have been many other scholars who have been engaged in the analysis of the reproduction of stereotypes within tourism encounters and the image of the other, observing that this image has been remarkably persistent (Hall and Tucker, 2004; Wijngaarden, 2016).

Bell and Lyall (2002) maintain that since early commercial tourism, a constant and unwavering agenda has been the desire to experience beautiful landscapes. They point out that some of the unique characteristics of appreciating nature as opposed to other tourist attractions are that it requires no prior knowledge of the local language, no previous experience, special training; that it is not gender-specific nor political with no inherent construction costs. They emphasise that one of the pleasures of being a nature tourist as the “sheer innocence of a curious gaze” (Bell and Lyall, 2002, p.4). According to White (1996) individuals once experienced nature chiefly through work but with the shift in modes of production and ways of life in the modern era “leisure activities have come to bear the burden of connecting us with nature” (White, 1996, p.174). In the process, leisure activities such as tourism have refashioned nature physically as well as discursively, developing and reshaping spatial perception and sense of place, creating unique forms of spatial consumption (Urry, 1995; Denning, 2014).

5.4.2. Tea Gardens and the Language of Romanticism

The above style, language and way of seeing, was further identified within representations of the Sri Lankan tea estates and the 150-year tea heritage, which is another focal selling point within the country’s tourism sector. The tea industry was initiated in a plantation also in Kandy by the British in the 1870s. Hence, for the past 150 years or so tea and its associated attractions, as a part of the colonial heritage, have drawn many a tea enthusiast to the county and to the historic city of Kandy. Jolliffe (2003) identifies tea destinations as exhibiting characteristics of tea-related history, traditions, ceremonies, festivals and events, cultivation and production, manufacturing, services as well as retailing. He defines tea tourism as “tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions and consumption of the beverage, tea” (Jolliffe, 2003, p.131). Jolliffe and Aslam (2009) distinguish tea estates in the hill country (the central highlands of Sri Lanka) as significant among Sri Lanka’s diverse developed attractions and identifies some of the abundant resources for supplying to the tea-related tourism experiences. Aside from tea as a product, recently, several built heritage-remains of Sri Lanka’s colonial

tea industry have evolved into heritage accommodations for tourists. These add to the many tea centres and retail outlets across the country, tea gardens, tea processing factories, landscapes, and interpretive facilities (for instance, the Ceylon Tea Museum in Kandy) all of which constitute the supply for tea heritage tourism in the region (Jolliffe and Aslam, 2009). Among some of the historic accommodations offered to tourists are rest houses, former planters' clubs, former tea estate planters' housing, as well as the Heritage Tea Factory in Kandapola, a redundant tea factory set amidst tea gardens recently repurposed as a luxury hotel (Aslam and Jolliffe, 2015).

Wijetunge and Sung (2015), define the tea heritage in the country as a 'cultural landscape' with utmost significance to Sri Lanka's industrial heritage. They discuss its importance as a landscape resulting from colonisation and hence, the implications of this for long practising agricultural and trading traditions (Wijetunga and Sung, 2015). They argue that since the introduction of tea by the British, the Sri Lankan hill country transformed rapidly, landscapes of wilderness and nature changing into domesticated crop culture (see Figure 5) which remains today with its unique land-use practices and culture. "The cultural changes occurred with the tea industry remain as significant industrial heritage in the country" (Wijetunga and Sung, 2015, p.671). In this sense, as emphasised by Edensor (2005) the tea-related tourism in Sri Lanka also reflects how industrial space is socially produced and commodified to become imbued with fresh meanings and activities that reflect original intentions (Edensor, 2005).



Figure 5: Tea Plantation landscape in Sri Lanka (Kavan, 2018)

With a 150-year past, the tea industry comprising of its estate factories and old British planters' bungalows, now museums and major holiday and tourist destinations in the hill country, have contributed immensely to Sri Lanka both regarding the economy as well as culture. Plantation agriculture began in the uninhabited central highlands soon after the British colonisation of the Island in 1815. Wijetunge and Sung (2015) reiterate that the Sri Lankan tea estates are cultural landscapes created by the combined work of humans and nature. They assert that from the beginning, it has been considered "a man-made artefact with associated cultural process values" (Wijetunga and Sung, 2015, p.668). According to them, the central elements of a cultural landscape with human involvement comprise of forms - the physical aspects of natural and human-made features, relationships as well as practices. As such, it is the integration of these three elements that create a cultural landscape which is broadened and transformed over time. Notably, even though relationships are the least represented element, the creation of the tea estate cultural landscape through the amalgamation of physical forms and practices are reflected in these travel features analysed to a certain extent.

Loolecondera located in Hantana, Kandy, is the first tea estate in the country where the industry had been born in 1867 when Sri Lanka was still a British

colony under the guidance and superintendence of the Scottish planter James Taylor (see Figure 6).



Figure 6: Loolecondera Estate (Silva, 2018)

Today, the estate and factory have been converted into a museum attracting many tourists and a popular subject to many of the Sri Lankan travel writers – particularly in 2017 when the International Tea Convention was held in Colombo to mark the 150th anniversary of the historical event of the birth of Sri Lanka’s tea industry. *Loolecondera: The Beginning of an Illustrious Brew and Preserving a 150 Year Legacy* two features by de Silva (2017), are among a series of articles written to commemorate this anniversary of Ceylon Tea – now a global brand. Apart from these *Ceylon Tea: The Brew that Put an Island on the Map*, *Exuberant Ceylon Tea*, *Ceylon Tea a Brew Loved World Over*, *Ceylon Tea – Soothing the World* and *Ceylon Tea Celebrates 145 Years* are other articles that depict the root origins of Ceylon Tea. Provided this rich historical background of the Loolecondera Estate, elements of culture preside over nature and natural landscape through expressions of history, colonialism, industry and agriculture.

In *Loolecondera: The Beginning of an Illustrious Brew* de Silva (2017) begins her feature by calling to attention that this tea estate was once the home of the Father of Ceylon Tea. The author exploits the sublime romantic sensibility when she claims that this is a place that takes one into “the delightful world of tea” (de Silva, 2017a) As such, she clearly demarcates the birthplace of Sri

Lanka's tea industry as a place entirely separate from the ordinary, the urban or day-today and a place the visitor can escape to. This is not, however, depicted as a mere escape into nature and scenic landscape but also uniquely, as existing outside of time and space. In another article titled *Ceylon Tea Soothing the World* Rajapakse and Nanayakkara (2011) offer a similar introduction to the tea museum of Kandy when they write "visitors who are interested in the tea production process and the history of Ceylon Tea can visit the Tea Museum in Hantane, Kandy for a glimpse into the past" (Rajapakse and Nanayakkara, 2011). This again infers that this tea plantation is 'timeless'.

"As we travelled through the neatly pruned tea fields of Loolecondera under the canopy of red gum trees, the breeze swirled whispering ancient tales in our ears" (de Silva, 2017a) writes de Silva also denoting a sense of otherworldliness and mystery. She indicates, in a sense, that the destination is steeped in history, timeless and unchanged; instilling in the reader nostalgia for a bygone era, a rather common practice within heritage tourism promotion and destination marketing (Caton and Santos, 2007). This notion of nostalgia has been widely discussed within literature around heritage tourism and memory studies as a critical point of conjunction between the tourism-memory nexus. It is generally agreed upon that this sentiment of nostalgia arises from within a sense of loss generated through modernity and the accelerated pace of life and a desire to return to a lost past or better place (Marschall, 2012). As such, de Silva begins recalling the "decades-long journey of Ceylon Tea" reliving its history and that of British colonialism through her descriptions of the various monuments, practices, locations that are part of the tea estate and museum.

Similarly, in another narrative by the same author *Preserving a 150 Year Legacy* featured in a different magazine, she begins her description of the factory by stating: "a quaint colonial aura continues to surround the factory". Her depiction of the tea manufacturing process is of a "chamber of treasures" which comprises but not limited to "metallic beasts, some diesel others using liquid fuel, that powered the tea factories before electricity was widespread", "traditional hand sifters", and "old nylon and jute hessian tats" (de Silva, 2017b). Razak (2012), in an earlier article created to mark the 145th year

commemoration, takes a similar stance when she also indicates that the Loolecondera Estate is timeless. As does de Silva (2017a, 2017b) Razak dedicates the first half of her narrative to elaborate the feats of James Taylor in developing the Ceylon Tea industry and effectively unfolds events of a past through phrases such as “Taylor set up a makeshift processing area for the harvested tea on the veranda of his log cabin. Here, he rolled tea leaves by hand before he was able to invent machinery”. Her introduction to the Loolecondera Estate, therefore, is a historical account which holds no indication of the present. She ends her article with “Taylor’s legacy” where she states:

Today, only the chimney of James Taylor's log cabin, the birthplace of Ceylon Tea, can be seen at Loolecondera Estate. However, his legacy lives on in the acres upon acres of sloping mountainsides of Sri Lanka's highlands (Razak, 2012a).

Echtner and Prasad (2003) argue that this constant reference to the historical context of a destination is the ‘myth of the unchanged’. Accordingly, these writers, in doing so, represent the destination as an a-temporal place, comporting firm roots in the past and fixing this destination firmly in the past. It is argued that in similar countries such as Egypt, India or Thailand for instance, the tourist is invited to travel to a world of the “immortal civilizations” (Echtner and Prasad, 2003). Accordingly, these pasts are represented as being surrounded by atmospheric themes of opulence, mysticism and strangeness, and are often characterised as exotic and associated with mysterious legends.

As travel writers whose primary task is the promotion of these Sri Lankan destinations, the creators of these stories emphasise the 19th century British planters and their tea-estate lives in the mist-clad mountains of a by-gone era. In the process, they tend to romanticise the colonial expansion, industrialisation and exploitation in the employment of the myth of the unrestrained (Echtner and Prasad, 2003). In other words, aspects such as poverty or inequality are not conducive with the themes of paradise, unspoiled or pristine that these writers endeavour to maintain and therefore must remain absent from their representations. Thus, whereas a majority of the articles

analysed devote words to laud the British colonial planters and their contribution to the tea industry, very few writers have made some effort to portray the strenuous work undertaken by the local tea estate workers. They include tea pluckers and factory workers within the contemporary tea manufacturing process and the distinct political, economic, cultural, spiritual or gendered dimensions of their experience, representing thereby a binary between the colonial masters and the local workers.

As an example of the representation of the British planters, one writer invites the readers to “experience life as the British tea planters did at Taylors Hill neighbouring the first Sri Lankan tea estate planted by James Taylor” (Gunawardena, 2016) suggesting immediately a comparability between the British planters and the contemporary tourist or denoting a parallel between the two. Apart from this, the writers all present a romanticised picture of James Taylor who is introduced as “father of Ceylon tea” “founder of tea in then Ceylon” or “the pioneer of the tea industry of Sri Lanka” representative of the heroification or deification of this figure as well as other British planters. For instance, in the article *Ceylon Tea: The Brew That Put an Island on The Map*, the writer praises the work of Taylor and his involvement and achievements in the initiation of the tea industry. She writes, “James Taylor's tireless efforts paid off” and writes about the very first consignment of tea that was shipped from Ceylon in 1872. She continues to describe the work of the Scottish planter when she writes:

As Ceylon's tea economy took off, the infrastructure, especially between the central hills and the Colombo Port, was developed by the British Planter who sought efficiency above all else (Anon, 2017b).

She observes the steady progress of the industry, of the factories that were eventually constructed as the production numbers that increased; how multiple-storey factories were subsequently built, each facility custom-built to suit each tea estate's particular terrain. In the same way, Razak (2012) continues to laud James Taylor's accomplishments throughout her narrative asserting “the export of tea accelerated at an exceptional rate within the lifespan of James Taylor himself” (Razak, 2012a). This heroification is also

evident within the article *Ceylon Tea: The Brew that Put an Island on the Map*, where the writer uses another technique to praise the contribution of James Taylor. She uses an extract of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's tribute to this Scottish planter which alludes to the fact that he had initiated the tea industry in the face of the Coffee Blight which had started to destroy coffee plantations that were underway before tea was experimented with. It thus states:

Not often is it that men have the heart, when their one great industry is withered, to rear up in a few years another as rich to take its place; and the tea fields of Ceylon are as true a monument to courage as is the lion of Waterloo (Doyle in Anon, 2017b).

Such is the depiction of James Taylor representing the colonial tea planters of the 19th century signifying the upper end of the spectrum of the industry, as heroes, pioneers, innovators, or inventors represented as advanced, knowledgeable and courageous. Other writers also add to this by hinting at the life of the British planters in general. In the article *Ceylon Tea, The Brew that put the Island on the Map*, the author also refers to some of the unique cultural attributes that were introduced or created in Sri Lanka with the advent of the British planters and the dawn of the tea industry. She writes:

Along with the planting culture came planters' clubs, joyous dances, sport and other recreation. In fact, the country's first bowling alley is believed to have been set up at the Mathurata Planters Club (Anon, 2017b).

In another feature named *Ceylon Tea a Brew Loved World Over*, the author touches on this aspect stating that Sri Lanka's tea-growing regions are "filled with beautiful English-style cottages such as the old Great Western Estate Manager's Bungalow and popular railway stations such as Radalla, Great Western and Nanu Oya built specifically for each estate" (Anon, 2017a). The writer thereby romanticises the cultural legacy of the colonial tea industry mainly through statements such as "since the planter's life here prospered storybook-like cottages, beautiful churches and planter's clubs emerged as well" (Anon, 2017a).

Even though most writers simply overlook the hard-manual labour underlying the success of the early tea industry, others opt to shed light on the contribution of the tea estate labourers- the lower end of the industry spectrum in complete contrast to the depiction of the lives of colonial tea planters. In her article *Loolecondera the Beginning of an Illustrious Brew*, de Silva (2017) describes the Loolecondera Conservation Forest at which point she adds that this is where housing for tea pluckers and factory workers are provided. She states:

Estate workers find little interest beyond the estate, as their schools, temples, hospital, and even post office are in the field. Their lives, customs and traditions are intricately woven into the fabric of the tea industry (de Silva, 2017a).

Here, the author connotes a somewhat idealised image of the loyalty of these workers and the facilities that are provided for them by the corporation they work for. As highlighted by Wijetunge and Sung (2015), however, tea estates are separated and are often located quite a distance from urban areas and other community settlements. They concede that it is the tedious workload and long working hours that restrict the workers from leaving the estates, and as such these workers have become established as introvert groups of people (Wijetunga and Sung, 2015). Some of the grave issues faced by the tea estate dwellers will be further discussed over Chapter Seven where the travel bloggers' representations of the tea industry will be explored in contrast to the portrayal by these tourism writers.

Based on all of the above, I suggest that this particular group of writers, through constructed narratives of natural landscapes, histories and culture are engaged in orchestrating and perpetuating a particular way of seeing and thereby packaging a Western-centric promotional tourist gaze shaped by centuries of images. I argue that their representation of these places as timeless, mysterious, exotic or enchanting follows on from colonial representations and an acquired Western-centric lens of looking at the country. These established ways of seeing contain messages of colonialism (Said, 2003) led by an "imperialist gaze" grounded on nostalgia, the empire and imperialist myths (Brito-Henriques, 2014). In this sense, the study of this

form of writing is yet another illustration of how images of the non-Western world produced in tourism for the consumption of the West within a process of promotion represent a Western, colonial perspective (Echtner and Prasad, 2003). As a result of this, the 'otherness' is created which is considered vital in tourism. This is built on 'difference' and leads to the perpetuation of the 'traditional' for tourist experience and is grounded in a colonial need to fix the identity of the other so that it remains or even becomes distinct from tourist identity (Hall and Tucker, 2004, p.17).

I propose that the implications of this lead to an Orientalist discourse which examines preconceived notions that comprise an extensive range of subjective constructs about the peoples of the "Orient", their beliefs, and the way they act (Said, 1978). This is based on the initial understanding conceptualised by Edward Said, who stressed that the West "looks at" the countries of the Orient through a lens that distorts the reality of those places and people. This is achieved through the production and dissemination of different texts and works of art which seem unrelated but which work together in constructing the Orient by making "statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it settling it, ruling over" (Said, 1978, p.11).

Thus, I also posit that these tourism writers who work within private enterprises involved in the process of tourism promotion employ these discourses as a part of the "global marketing of cultural difference" (Huggan, 2001, p.12) in promoting Sri Lanka as yet another exotic, romantic, historicised product available within a global mass-market of tourism. At the same time, I also argue that the 'vision' of Sri Lanka produced through the mediation of these private enterprises - alluded to earlier in the chapter and combined with the employment of these discourses, has become favoured and dominant. The reputation and authority of these private enterprises renders this version of Sri Lanka its legitimacy and constitutive power in the field of travel writing; a typical situation where:

a particular vista or outlook becomes entrenched/ embedded/ hegemonic over other actual or potential interpretations or perspectives that privileged or privileging worldmaking vision is said to have authority over the given subject, or within the given setting or context (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.434).

I argue therefore, following the tourism worldmaking thesis (Hollinshead et al., 2009) that the representation these writers create becomes the dominant version through which the potential international tourist comes to know, build their expectations and anticipations on Sri Lanka as a country.

5.5. Negotiating the Agency of the Tourism Writer

The previous discussion explored some of the dominant features of writing for tourism. In what follows this evaluation is further strengthened by an examination of the ideas, perceptions and various anecdotes shared by the interviewees, the creators of these travel stories. This research illuminated the fact that many of the writers are aware of the promotional agenda that underpins the magazines and their content discussed so far. This is one of the main reasons they make an effort to seek other or potential ways of representing the country which is explored further in Chapter Seven. Natalie, for instance, a travel blogger discussed one of these organisations during the interview and shared an equal fascination for the *Explore Sri Lanka* magazine. She described how she had applied for a position of Feature Writer because “Explore Sri Lanka is a beautiful magazine. I mean, I would have loved to see my print there” (Interview with Natalie, 2018). However, after a successful interview and having been selected, Natalie had declined the offer. She explained “I was really grateful that they noticed my writing and that they wanted me to contribute to that you know; it’s like amazing the opportunity I mean, that silky paper...I love that magazine, it’s amazing, but I was like not really, this is not what I want to do” (Interview with Natalie, 2018). As a reason, Natalie explained that she did not agree with how magazines such as these represented Sri Lanka, claiming that the depictions are often one-sided. She identified publications such as these as “commercially driven” reflecting only the “nicer side of Sri Lanka” because mainly foreigners read them. She further

noted that these magazines do not offer a “realistic portrayal of the country, with the real problems that make these places what they are” (Interview with Natalie, 2018). Natalie is not the only participant to highlight this. Many of the writers who *did* work for these magazines once, expressed similar sentiments which have important implications for ideas of authenticity and worldmaking.

The perceptions of these writers are also critical in that they attest to the ‘social’ underlying their representative, worldmaking functions. Primarily, this reflects the fact that those who represent reality in tourism are similar in that they are led organically by held prejudice and inherited notions. In other words, nothing is ever seen naked, or in an original form, worldmaking representations are never raw and are underpinned by already held notions of what is good, scenic, beautiful or real (Hollinshead et al., 2009). Those involved in worldmaking are “already aesthetically conditioned and politically pre-imbued” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432) with these ideas. The sites, subjects and storylines within the representations encompass certain standpoints as explored in the previous section (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018) that are built upon constructed narratives.

Therefore, I consider it vital to examine the society, subpopulations, these writing agents inhabit or associate for an understanding of “the most profoundly buried structures as well as mechanisms” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.7) that influence their worldmaking. Hence, I shed light on the writers’ acquisition of the “schemes of...perception thought, appreciation and action which are durable and transposable” also conceptualised as ‘habitus’, and the cultural capital that underpins this category of travel writers that together shape their worldmaking roles. Thus, I begin with an examination into the social milieus of these actors, based on their revelations about aspects such as childhood, family, lifestyles and habits. Subsequently, the discussion moves on to an exploration of their formal education that has laid the foundation for many of these writers to have reached the goal of becoming travel writers, a privilege not many have access to within the Sri Lankan context. All this substantiates the role of tourism writers; and as elaborated subsequently, the reproduction of its structure and definition, following a predominantly Western model.

5.5.1. The Influence of Family and Social Milieus

All participants interviewed are characteristically from Colombo and the suburbs except one writer who is from Kandy. Some of the most common factors, cited by the writers that denote their social standing have been, opportunities to travel from a very young age (both locally and abroad), English books and international magazines such as National Geographic or Lonely Planet and access to travel documentaries through cable television. Harriet, for instance, stated “I think this was also probably before I left school. I would read a lot of NatGeo magazines watch a lot of documentaries and travel documentaries on TV, so that’s when I started to...I enjoyed travelling; exploring new places” (Interview with Harriet, 2018). What is noteworthy here is that in a context such as Sri Lanka, only an urban, educated and limited few would have access to these activities or resources. Thelma also mentioned this in her interview when she described some of the factors that made her become a writer, giving prominence to travelling as a family. She explained: “I was always interested in culture and travel and as a family, we used to travel a lot when we were kids, so travel was part of our life all the time” (Interview with Thelma, 2018). In Heather’s words “NatGeo is definitely something that I have been reading and watching both as a kid and I still do” which she explained guides her writing (Interview with Heather, 2018).

According to the writers, their parents worked or have worked either in the business sector, the upper layer of the NGO sector, or are/have been professionals such as bankers, doctors or engineers and higher-level employees in locally-based international agencies. Many of the participants mentioned family, who all seem to be educated professionals themselves from affluent, educated backgrounds. Discussing some of the most influential factors that led to her becoming a good writer, Pricilla, for instance, stated “so, my mother had this collection of old books. They were a collection of my grandfather’s books too. So, I did a lot of those old English classics a lot, and I don’t know during my teenage years, I think that was the time I read the most” (Interview with Pricilla, 2018). The writers all added how these influenced not only their ability to use the English language confidently and fluently but also their frames of thought and ways of seeing. Some of these stories and

anecdotes about families, childhood and upbringing reveals significantly about certain habits, practices, choices and preferences of these families, which corroborate the similarity and the shared privileged social milieu of these writers and lead also to significant implications about cultural capital and habitus that impact their choice of career and success within their roles.

For instance, the respondents expressed their parents' efforts in providing them with the best education, especially regarding fluency and competency in English. They have been encouraged to read in English at a very early age - this was an aspect highlighted by many of the writers irrespective of the writing category. Even in the case where English has not been used at home, some of the participants mentioned the encouragement by family at making sure they learned and excelled in the language at an early age. Kate, the only writer from Kandy, explained this as follows:

We didn't speak English at home at all. Mainly, my mom was very concerned about learning the language because she saw the path that the country was taking and how everybody put such emphasis on learning English and knowing English as a language to further their careers and whatnot. So, from a very young age, from about age five, she would read me English books and would get me all these Ladybird books and so on (Interview with Kate, 2018).

Kate's comment alludes to the general perception about and the position of the English language within Sri Lankan society, and the common understanding of its significance as a cultural capital to position oneself in a reputable career. This also reflects the fact that even though one is not brought up in a traditional elite or upper-middle-class milieu, they recognise the significance of taking part in certain kinds of cultural activities such as in the case of Kate, to achieve a distinctive social position based on their endeavours (Savage, 2015). Likewise, many of the interviewees have further sharpened their English during the ages of about 14 to 18 years after which they have followed other streams of study such as marketing, biology, psychology, international relations or law in the English medium.

Based on the above findings, foremost, I maintain that the writers that belong to this category, have all experienced a similar upbringing, social life and education in Sri Lanka broadly during the period from the early 1990s. Therefore, they match what Hettige (1996) identifies as the New Urban Middle Class (NUMC) of Sri Lanka (Hettige, 1996). Hettige (1996) discusses the changing politico-economic circumstances following far-reaching economic reforms implemented in Sri Lanka in the late 1970s and their impact on local youth. He argues that with economic liberalisation dawned the age of modern communication technology in Sri Lanka followed by a free flow of information and foreign cultural goods. This resulted in the availability of information and culture from satellite TV, etc., facilitating the spread of information, ideas and lifestyles (Hettige, 1996). The author also cites the concurrent development of the NGO sector, further extending transnational social and cultural contacts through the establishment of alliances across countries. Thus, according to Hettige one of the most significant outcomes of the economic liberalisation of the late 1970s has been the expansion of the private sector and the emergence of this new middle class he asserts as 'transnational'. He claims that the growing linkages between Sri Lanka and the outside world facilitated by the opening up of the economy decisively influenced the process of elite formation in the country leading to a new business elite and what he identifies as this New Urban Middle Class. According to Little and Hettige (2014):

Introduction of television in 1982, flooding of local markets with all sorts of consumer goods, expansion of tourism, establishment of dozens of international schools and colleges in the capital city providing English education to the children of the wealthy and the members of the NUMC...increased foreign travel by the members of the NUMC, rapid expansion of the advertising industry, flooding of city streets with Japanese and European cars, rapid transformation of the urban landscape, in particular that of the capital city as evident from tall office buildings, luxury hotels, shopping malls, supermarkets and dozens of modern restaurants etc. are all indications of the fact that Sri Lanka has entered the age of modern Western consumerism (Little and Hettige, 2014, p. 64).

As Hettige asserts, on the one hand, this middle-class comprises of diverse elements who have supported the dismantling of the protected national economy and benefitted from this in terms of education, employment and social mobility. He argues that the members of this class are mostly concerned about the future of their children. “The crucial question for them is whether their children can compete in the expanding, transnationally oriented private sector” he states also adding that “their relatively privileged and influential positions...enable them to provide their children with the opportunities to acquire those attributes and certificates that are in demand” (Hettige, 1996, p.7). On the other hand, the author argues that the general education system accessible to the majority in the country has not adapted to changing circumstances to provide the average student with the skills and attributes required by this expanding, transnationally oriented private sector. This naturally favours youths attending privileged urban schools, both public as well as private, which is examined with further details in the subsequent subsection.

As such, I emphasise that not only the writers but private enterprises such as BT Options or Media Services are also a product of the social and economic transformations since 1977 that exposed the country to forces of economic globalisation and neoliberalism (Bianchi, 2010). Concurrently, Sri Lanka’s tourism opened up to large integrated, transnational forms of corporate enterprises becoming as deliberated by Britton (1991) “a major internationalized component of Western capitalist economies” (Britton, 1991, p.451) evolving in collaboration with global capitalism. This is also aligned with Sri Lanka’s continued efforts since the 1960s to embrace and promote tourism as a development strategy for economic growth (Samaranayake et al., 2013). Thus, these writers derive from a social class emerging through these conditions having internalised Western discourses of tourism that cater to the demands of a rapidly expanding private sector with requirements for advertising and promotions led by the logic of competition and profiting. The actors who fill the travel writer role from within this social background, therefore, are significantly strengthened by some of the privileges of this new

middle class such as the proficiency in English which will be explored further as a significant element of their formal education.

5.5.2. The Influence of Privileged Education

Gunasekera (2015), in a class-based analysis of the labour market in Sri Lanka, examines the links between economic class and different labour market variables concerning financial participation and employment in Sri Lanka. In her paper, she posits that the private higher education institutions that have emerged over the last few decades with affiliations to prestigious foreign universities, charge exorbitant fees for degree programmes offering alternatives to individuals from wealthier families who are either unable or unwilling to attend local universities, entrance for which is entirely based on merit. The author proclaims that with “the wide assortment of education options at their disposal and social networks that open avenues for employment, youth from relatively affluent families get a head start in the labour force” (Gunasekara, 2015, p.21). On this light, I elaborate how formal education has been an opportunity or tool for these writers to aspire to become writers and fit into the role.

All the tourism writers interviewed have attended elite government, or private schools in Colombo – except the writer who has studied at a similar school in Kandy. Some of the schools attended have been Royal College, St Bridget’s, Bishops College, Ladies’ College or St Paul’s, most of which are missionary schools that began in the early British colonial era. Even though these are not categorised as *international* schools – where often a British or American curriculum is followed and are currently widespread and popular - the ones under discussion are government, private, or semi-government and adhere to the general government curricula, and all students sit for government set national examinations. These schools are the most reputed in the country considered extremely difficult to access apart from a privileged few. Moreover, three of the writers in this category have completed their tertiary education abroad, Kate in the United States, Thelma and Pricilla in India, whereas the rest of the writers have studied in Sri Lanka. None of the participants has managed to enter government universities as they have not achieved sufficient

grades to do so from the very competitive university entrance examination. Therefore, some of them have been sent abroad by their parents. Two of them have applied to government universities externally much later: at the time of the study Heather was following a degree in Sociology at the Open University of Sri Lanka, and Harriet had completed an external Arts degree at the University of Peradeniya having studied English, Western Classics and Sociology.

For Gamage (1997), a significant contextual element in the formation of upper classes and class relations in Sri Lanka, particularly the elite stratum and culture, has been the English-medium school system established during the British period in Colombo and the provinces. He states:

Generations of children went through these schools and made their ways into tertiary institutions in England and Ceylon, and then into various professional, executive and political positions in Sri Lanka. In the past, average citizens and their children were kept outside the walls of these schools (Gamage, 1997, p.365).

Accordingly, the Western-oriented education imparted through these schools is subsequently incorporated into the civil service professions and as noted by Gamage, still produce the national elites and leaders of the country. The anglicisation of well-to-do segments of society during the colonial period and its aftermath is another focal issue on which scholars dealing with Sri Lankan society and culture have often focused their attention. The level of English in these schools are high, and they offer students the opportunity to study English literature. Even though this is currently prevalent in most government schools, the schools mentioned above have always had separate English medium sections. Harriet explained the importance of her school – Bishop's - as a strong influence on her level of English and writing skills:

The standard of English at my school was very high. And at about year 6 or 7 they started English literature...We would get all our other test papers from the government, and the English paper would be set by our school teachers because they had to have a higher standard. So, from the beginning throughout O/Levels and

A/Levels, I did English literature, and I really liked it and found that I could write even when I was in school. So that's why I did a diploma in journalism when I left school (Interview with Harriet, 2018).

Accordingly, English Literature is not simply available and accessible within these urban elite schools, but the standard for this subject is also set by them. Therefore, all tourism writers had selected this optional subject in school either for the Ordinary Level examination or Advanced Level (competitive university entrance examination) or both. Most respondents agreed that their initial foundation for writing was laid by this training they received, where even when their medium of study was Sinhala⁶ they had written essays in English in line with the curriculum for this particular subject in school. English literature has been a favourite subject within these urban schools, having started with fewer students and increasing in popularity steadily through the years.

The curriculum of English Literature at both levels (GCE O/Ls and GCE A/Ls) involves developing competencies of language and literature, teaching skills of analysis, synthesis and critical thinking and evaluation. According to a policy document published by the National Institute of Education regarding the teaching of English Literature at Ordinary Level, the Ministry of Education places importance on the opportunities that this subject provides for students. "Access to a wide repertoire of words and varied nuances of meaning is one such opportunity. The document reiterates that since literary texts are "authentic" in their use of language, they will facilitate the unconscious acquisition of many structures and patterns of language" (National Institute of Education Sri Lanka, 2015). During the discussion revolving around the use of words in general or adjectives, style of writing and structure, some of the writers claimed that they believed this was an unconscious process where these words and phrases "somehow flow out of them" (Interview with Harriet, 2018). Harriet, for instance, stated that she thought the lessons they learn for literature in school and the texts that were read "gets stuck in our subconscious

⁶ Also identified as Sinhalese - native language of the Sinhalese, the largest ethnic group in Sri Lanka.

mind and then we don't even know when we're putting it all out again" (Interview with Harriet, 2018). As such, on the one hand, this is one of the significant factors underlying the similarity of writing by all these writers; and the fact that these magazines seem somewhat similarly structured with similar words and style. On the other hand, this reflects the likeness in the profiles of professional writers; that a particular type of individual is sought by the private enterprises that produce these magazines.

According to Ashcroft et al. (1989), control over language and text is one of the distinctive features of imperial oppression. They assert that the imperial education system installed a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language or the notion of the Queen's English, as the norm and other versions as impurities (Ashcroft et al., 1989). The authors argue that language becomes a tool whereby a hierarchical structure of power is propagated and the medium through which formations of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established. Thus, much of the debates surrounding postcolonial writing in literary and cultural studies emphasise how language and writing, with its power and authority, can be wrested from the dominant European culture. Scholars assert that the historical moment which saw the emergence of English as an academic discipline also produced the 19th century colonial form of imperialism (Batsleer, 1985; Hall and Tucker, 2004). Accordingly:

The study of English and the growth of the Empire proceed from a single ideological climate and that the development of the one is intrinsically bound up with the development of the other, both at the level of simple utility (as propaganda for instance) and at the unconscious level, where it leads to the naturalizing of constructed values (e.g. civilization, humanity, etc.) (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p.4).

These notions, therefore, help establish the connections between becoming travel writers and cultural capital such as education. Above all, they shed light on the power of the English language as a cultural resource within a context such as Sri Lanka as a major social influence that underline the ways of seeing employed by these writers and the particular gaze they construct. Cultural capital could exist in an embodied state, which is indistinguishable from habitus. This is, therefore, 'fundamental' to an individual because it involves

an ability to interpret the 'cultural codes' which are composed of material cultural objects such as writings, paintings or monuments (Yang, 2014).

Only one of the writers, Thelma, has studied at Sirimavo Bandaranaike Balika Vidyalaya, the only school with a Sinhala name. Even though her English is equally proficient, she mentioned during the interview how the organisation used her own cultural resources - her knowledge of Sinhala and familiarity with the Sri Lankan culture - very strategically in their day to day work. Thelma underlined this further when she explained:

For me, being Sri Lankan it's day to day life for me and like village life would be day to day village life in Sri Lanka that I've seen, I'm very familiar with...so for me at least I think when I wrote the pieces that I wrote I always thought I was writing for someone who's not familiar with Sri Lanka...I would think okay I'm writing for someone who doesn't know this, or who sits in Colombo and is not familiar with it (Interview with Thelma, 2018).

Stating this Thelma also related how the employer used her familiarity with the majority of the country, their lifestyles and culture and her fluency in written and spoken Sinhala strategically when assigning her work. She revealed that this was mainly because many of the writers who worked for this organisation were from Colombo and therefore had not been exposed to this average life of the majority as she described it. Thelma added that because of her excellent spoken Sinhala, she often had to write about village or rural life in Sri Lanka, which is very familiar to her. She noted that it was difficult writing about the ordinary, everyday life at first. "I mean how much can you write about an ordinary village?" she added. She moved on to explain this further:

I always felt they used me for like typical *game*⁷ stuff because my Sinhala is good, and I can kind of fit in with *game* people and like talk to them in proper Sinhala, and my Sinhala is not broken Sinhala. They kind of strategically used me for certain kinds of things like to interview *hamuduruwos*⁸ and things like that; temple stuff. I used to do a lot of temple stuff, and Pricilla used to do a lot of temple stuff. It was just the two of us. I think they were very strategic in that way (Interview with Thelma, 2018).

Given their privileged upbringing and social background, most writers take with them into their travel writing role an entirely different perspective of the country to any other Sri Lankan. Having been brought up in urban surroundings, it is easier for these actors to perceive Sri Lanka from an ‘outsider’s’ perspective and adjust to the requirements of these publishers. As mentioned by some writers, anything outside Colombo, their ‘comfort zone,’ is new and foreign, making them feel the way an outsider would. This is the reason Thelma found the experience challenging. As the only writer educated in a school active in the native language, having interacted with students from less wealthy or privileged backgrounds, she stressed how it was difficult writing about village or rural life of which the ordinariness was the most challenging for her. She also highlighted, however, how the organisation had strategically used her cultural capital. This factor also brings to mind Western Romantic travel in the early 19th century. As Duncan and Gregory (1999) assert, romantic travel was characteristically a passion for the wilderness of nature, cultural diversity and the “desire to be immersed in local colour”. They argue that “by the 19th century its most characteristic figure was the young bourgeois fleeing the dull repetitions and the stifling mundanity of the bourgeois world” (Duncan and Gregory, 1999, p.6) analogous to how some of the respondents explained their travel writing experience away from the city. This then could relate to the fact that the romantic frame through which places are viewed remains much the same.

⁷ Village

⁸ Buddhist monks

Given the above characteristics and particularly those of the new urban middle class that this first category of writers derives from, I suggest that they are a 'cosmopolitan' group of writers. They represent both a generation and limited class of Sri Lankans, socialised into the practice of world citizenship, its institutions and norms and most significantly, according to Pieterse (2006) are led to practice cosmetic cosmopolitanism, which "seeks to produce a gloss that overlays local realities" (Pieterse, 2006, p.1250). This foregrounds the cosmetic writing they engage in for tourism. This is achieved through the intermingling of cultural capital such as privileged education, the standard of English language in elite schools, Western lifestyle and culture, shaping a habitus which in turn combines with the norms and rules of the field of tourism promotion. All this play a significant role in determining not only personal and cultural patterns of choice which make them want to become writers but also what constitutes 'good' travel writing defining the field and who should become travel writers as part of the cultural production and reproduction process. This is mainly underpinned by Bourdieu's understanding which postulates that cultural needs and practices are the product of history, habitus and the field. In other words, Bourdieu highlighted the significant role that schools play in conserving or reproducing cultural pasts and social and cultural inequalities from one generation to the next (Bourdieu, 2010). Reiterating Bourdieu's thoughts on cultural taste and activity developing a form of capital and their power, Michael Savage (2015) through a survey of class in British society asserted how what is identified as 'high culture' is perpetuated by the education system where arts and humanities subjects such as English literature traditionally promote "canonized high art forms" (Savage, 2015, p.96).

Thus, the case of these tourism writers is a demonstration of how dominant economic institutions are structured to favour those who already possess economic capital. As a part of this, educational institutions are structured to privilege those who already own cultural capital in the form of the habitus of the dominant cultural fraction. The narratives that emphasise parents' enthusiasm and endeavours to educate their children in English sheds light on their awareness of the prospects for their children and according to Bourdieu

people come to want and to value what is objectively allotted to them. This brings to light the argument built by Cannella and Viruru (2004) who emphasise the magnitude of the imperialist enterprises from within which these writers function. Most of the global population has and continues to be influenced by processes of colonialization and post-colonization and how these processes have impacted not only academic disciplines that are often taken for granted but also the very construction of 'education' which influence the fashioning of our way of viewing the world (Cannella and Viruru, 2003).

5.6. Conclusion

As the preliminary of three chapters bringing into discussion some of the salient outcomes of the thesis, this particular chapter presented the first group of travel writers in Sri Lanka encountered through this study. These writers and their work were recognised for their association with the field of tourism promotion and reputed and dominant organisations firmly established as part of the country's tourism industry, which renders the writing and representations its legitimacy. Hence, this group of writers were presented as writing primarily for the promotion of Sri Lanka to the rest of the world. The evaluation revealed that this association with tourism is what characterises this category of travel writing which I entitled tourism writing.

I suggested that the associated representations elevate natural landscapes through the employment of the sublime sensibility used by early British travellers. This was exemplified through the portrayal of Kandy as well as the Sri Lankan tea industry, its landscapes and people through a romanticised, historicised frame, all reflective of the "othering" in tourism grounded in Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978). I argued that these writers internalise the way the West 'looks at' countries such as Sri Lanka distorting the reality of these places, people and pasts. This affirms that these representations cater to a Western-centric, promotional tourist gaze (Said, 1978; Urry et al., 2001) involved in othering people, places and heritages: and that tourism is, in fact, an "industry of difference, par excellence" (Hollinshead, 1998, p.49).

As such, the examination substantiated the fact – as previously elaborated in literature - that tourism representations are in fact underpinned by competition

between destinations through distinctive yet simplified representations to stand out from the masses (Morgan et al., 2003; Šajinović, 2016; Keskitalo and Schilar, 2017). Most importantly, this is undertaken as part of packaging and marketing Sri Lanka within a broader framework of the global tourism industry led by precepts of competition and the accrument of profit. The chapter illuminated the fact that the ensuing representations are, therefore, an effort at making Sri Lanka look attractive for the potential tourist through an overtly positive form of writing influenced by discourses that have been circulating in the field since colonisation. As a result, these portrayals are not inclusive of the whole of beliefs, ideas, perceptions and impressions that the writers or the public, in general, have of these places. Instead, they emphasise or lift-up certain elements while suppressing or omitting others, which sums up the constitutive/worldmaking power of tourism or the political force of discourse that Hollinshead (2009) underscores through his worldmaking thesis (Hollinshead et al., 2009). I also posited the power of this version of Sri Lanka created by these writers garnered by the legitimate position that these private publishing enterprises hold within the field of tourism in Sri Lanka.

As such, I asserted during the course of this chapter that these organisations are institutions that 'define' or constitute the field of travel writing in Sri Lanka where the writers' positions and objective probabilities are designated according to the volume and structure of capital they bring with them (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). On this latter note, I brought into discussion how all writers represent the upper-echelons of the social structure already reinforced with the cultural capital required for their travel writing roles. I discussed particularly education which has a significant influence on these agents becoming travel writers with exposure to the English language, lifestyles and habits such as travelling and access to resources such as international travel magazines, books or documentaries. I argued that the writers' social milieus and exposure to cultural resources shape their habitus or an embodied form of cultural capital that these organisations, in turn, seek through the recruitment of travel writers.

Finally, once the writers begin interactions with the field, practices are oriented bringing out the 'things to be done' which are to be done in 'the proper way'

following the rules of the field. This exemplifies how the engagement in a field conditions the habitus that in turn produces practices which perpetuates the standards of the field (Bourdieu, 2000, p.143). Such a synchronisation intensifies the relationship between habitus and field. In other words, the practice and field of travel writing are further entrenched and institutionalised as part of tourism. To conclude, therefore, this chapter posited the fact that as social agents these writers are influenced by broader social forces. These, in turn, reproduce themselves through the internalised structure. Intertwining capital, and field, endowed with the system of predispositions, the practices of social agents, mediated by habitus, are adapted to the structure and thereby contribute to its reproduction.

Chapter 06

The Worldmaking Role of the Travel Journalist

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored the characteristics of writers that represent the country in light of tourism promotion engaged in the widely-accepted, dominant form of travel writing. The analysis therein highlighted some of the influential social mechanisms underlying the way these writers represent Sri Lanka. As such, the emphasis was on how this category of writing is made distinguishable by its association with tourism promotion resulting in an exoticised, romanticised or historicised version of Sri Lanka they create for the potential international tourist. This chapter scrutinises another group of Sri Lankan travel writers and their work. These writers also contribute to representing diverse Sri Lankan destinations, festivals and culture. However, they differ somewhat from the previous by the fact that they identify themselves as travel ‘journalists’ given their affiliation to local English newspapers and allied tabloids and magazines, constituting the second unique category of travel writing, the characteristics and influential mechanisms underlying which are explored.

The chapter opens with a concise introduction to travel journalism, presenting the ambiguities of this classification but settling upon a definition for use in this study based on the attributes of the writing/writers identified. I approach the analysis in consideration of some of the current trends and transformations within the field of print journalism globally with the advancement of technology before moving on to a presentation of journalism in Sri Lanka. I foremost offer a brief evaluation of its history and context and the significance of the English readership distinguished by lifestyle, tastes and habits which is also mirrored in the writers who become English language journalists, which is explored in their shared social class positioning. With this, I present attributes of ‘journalistic travel writing’ in Sri Lanka through a discussion of some of the

examples of their representations through comparisons with the previous category of tourism writing.

Secondly, I attempt to explore the role of these travel journalists and their representations in line with the field of journalism as another distinct field under the broader field of cultural production. I therefore, emphasise the writing as marked not only by the impact of journalistic conventions or principles but also the influence of the symbiotic relationship it maintains with the tourism industry and government public relations at which point the writing drifts from journalistic conventions towards tourism writing discussed in the previous chapter. Finally, I bring the chapter to a close with some of the social mechanisms underlying journalistic travel writing through a discussion of the writers' cultural capital and class habitus combined with the constraints of the field of journalism, the working of all of which I present, as shaping the representative, worldmaking role that this group of writers are engaged in.

6.2. The Field of Travel Journalism

As indicated before, I approach this study acknowledging the multiplicity of genres that constitute the body of travel literature identified through markers such as travel writing, travel journalism, travel narratives and travel literature often used interchangeably. According to Steward (2005) "this is certainly true of 19th-century travel literature where the boundaries between the genres replicated the fluidity of boundaries dividing journalism from literature" (Steward, 2005, p.40). She adds that sufficient credit has not been offered to the press for its role in promoting tourism. Conceding this ambiguity and the fact that the present group of writing requires a working definition to establish the boundaries of its enquiry, I define it as travel journalism presenting it as yet another site or context where representations are created. This demarcation is mainly tied to the fact that all participant writers constituting this group are free-lance journalists who work for the newspaper publishing group Wijaya Newspapers and engage in travel writing as a part of their broader journalistic work schedule. Their travel accounts appear on local English newspapers and affiliated magazines and are published in print and in some cases online at the same time. Therefore, these primarily cater to a local

readership and not specifically targeted at the international tourist as in the previous case.

According to Rosenkranz (2016), travel sections in daily newspapers are part of the larger journalistic field subject to the same occupational ethics and norms. Elaborating the context of the USA he argues that travel journalism as a professional form of journalism emerged out of the context of travel writing as an anthropological interest in distant places popularly represented in the National Geographic Magazine established in 1888. Similarly, Greenman (2012) asserts that “travel journalism is travel writing produced to a journalistic standard” (Greenman, 2012, p.2). Therefore, it is about travel just as business journalism is about business or education journalism is about education. Accordingly, story types, topic niches and approaches vary, and a news story about cruise ships demanding Venice’s fragile infrastructure or an advice article on apps that track airfares or a destination guide about a place can all fit into the definition of travel journalism (Greenman, 2012). What does not vary asserts these journalism scholars “is the journalistic standard”. The analytical enquiry of this second category of Sri Lankan travel writing, therefore, is founded on these notions.

However, the field of journalism globally has been undergoing a radical transformation of practice and organisation. Heinonen and Luostarinen (2008) for instance, suggest that while journalism remains a crucial element of democratic societies its locus may be moving – at least partially – from the sphere of institutionalised profession and specialised organisations towards wider communication spheres that are not well established nor easily defined. This transformation, they argue, arises from changes both in society at large and within journalism itself and is significantly propelled by the new enabling communication technologies (Heinonen and Luostarinen, 2008). In a similar vein, Schudson (2011), asserts that once stringent boundaries delineating business and editorial departments of media outlets, print and online publishing spaces, professional journalists and amateur content creators, producers and audiences are increasingly blurring if not disappearing (Schudson, 2012). For Rosenkranz (2016), contemporary cutting edge multi-media establishments generate profitable business models entwining

commercial branding and what is considered credible, quality journalism “while former beacons of journalistic ethics remodel their editorial calendars to retain audiences and advertisement dollars” (Rosenkranz, 2016, p.54). These emerging modes of production and monetisation traverse boundaries that used to be distinct and definitive for journalistic autonomy.

Therefore, it has been noted that the mechanisms of a journalistic field are increasingly subject to market demands. There have been accounts on how the increasing current marketisation poses one of the most critical threats to the persistence of journalism as an institution of cultural and civil production (Bourdieu, 1998; Schudson, 2005; Rosenkranz, 2016). However, others foreground the importance of maintaining the journalistic field through professional ethics despite a rapidly transforming economic and technological environment (Alexander, 2015). Consequently, the increasingly prevalent online content production shifts the evaluation of what constitutes a good article following targeted, quantitative and economic measurements. Whereas in print, freelance journalists had to convince an editor of the quality of their work to get paid, the contemporary journalist producing online content is more concerned about how many clicks their work will generate and the advertisement revenue this will create (Christin, 2014). Any boundary between the publishing/sales and the editorial that may exist within an organisational structure of print production dissolves when journalists self-publish their work online (Klinenberg, 2005; Schudson, 2012; Rosenkranz, 2016).

Some of these trends and characteristics of the field of journalism attest to the fact that it is a field of struggle in which “individuals and organizations compete, unconsciously and consciously, to valorize those forms of capital which they possess” (Benson and Neveu, 2005, p.4). It is primarily structured by the relative presence of both “economic capital” and “cultural capital” among field participants. According to Bourdieu, economic capital is expressed through audience ratings, subscriptions, and revenue, while cultural capital is expressed by factors such as journalists’ educational credentials, “intelligent commentary,” and professional awards (Benson and Neveu, 2005). Therefore, I approach this study in the understanding that the journalistic field functions parallel to and in competition with others, such as the commercial field and is

perceived as an arena of struggle. With the notion that field change becomes a critical question within the study of journalism, I explore how travel journalism sits within this broader field of journalism.

6.3. Journalism in Sri Lanka

Five participants among those interviewed constitute this category, and it was revealed through their responses that they contribute chiefly to local English newspapers and magazines run by the same newspaper publisher. Thus, as noted above, what characterises this category of writing and their authors is this association with the field of journalism. The participants fitting this category identified themselves as journalists, given the fact that apart from engaging in the activity of writing about travel and tourism, they also contribute to other segments within the newspapers that employ them. However, before an exploration of some of the characteristics of this type of writing and their authors, I begin with a brief outline on the field of journalism in Sri Lanka from its initiation within an early Western colonial agenda to its transformation and development post-independence and post-economic and trade liberalisation.

6.3.1. History and Context

Even though Sri Lanka has been home to a well-developed script, writing system, materials and ola-leaf manuscript production of religious writing, commentaries and other work, the press and journalism was introduced to the country with colonialism following the advent of the Portuguese in 1505 followed by the Dutch and the British successively (Karunanayake, 1996). The Portuguese had introduced the printing press to neighbouring India but not Sri Lanka. The printing press was still in its infancy when the Portuguese had arrived in the country. When the Dutch, the second colonial power arrived in the Island; however, printing in Europe was much more advanced. Having been accustomed to the development of book-printing, the Dutch, when they arrived in the East, had been unable to find anything to satisfy their cultural needs. By this time, the printing press had become a necessity for their cultural and social life. Therefore, it was the Dutch who established the printing press in Sri Lanka in 1737 (Karunanayake, 1996). The press was used by the

Protestants to popularise their religion among the natives. However, the Protestants had been rather slow in the production of religious literature, and the press had been inactive with no attempts to circulate any scriptures. When the British captured the maritime belt of Sri Lanka in 1796, the Dutch Printing Press was taken over by the British and it was soon after, specifically in 1802, that the *Government Gazette* was printed in this press in Sri Lanka by the British Government. This contained general orders, government advertisements, judicial and other notifications that were deemed beneficial for the public to be informed of. Apart from these government notifications, there also appeared a section on public advertisements constituting commercials by individuals announcing public or private sales notices, arrival and departure of ships, births, marriages and deaths. Thus, the *Ceylon Government Gazette* remained the only newspaper until the publication of the first Sri Lankan newspaper the *Colombo Journal* in 1823 (Pieris, 1997).

According to Peiris (1997) over the first 25 years after independence (1948), the Sri Lanka press had remained in the hands of private firms. The expansion of the newspaper market itself was almost an exponential process, driven on the one hand by the enhancement of public interest in the affairs of the government and on the other hand, by the expansion of literacy and education within the country. The proliferation of trade had increased the advertising revenue of the leading publishers after the late 1950s, making it possible for their newspapers to maintain low supply prices yet remain resilient commercially (Pieris, 1997). Lake House one of the most influential trilingual publishing houses in the country, for instance, was established in 1918 by a young entrepreneur recently graduated from Cambridge University - D.R. Wijaywardene - who was also a leader in the Sri Lankan independence movement. This was later taken over by the government under the name Associated Newspapers of Ceylon. The Sinhala segment of the press had flourished during the 1960s following the Swabhasha policy⁹ of 1956. In 1981 the Upali Group of Companies a private firm highly successful in several fields of production ventured into the newspaper industry by commencing the

⁹ The Official Language Act No. 33 of 1956, passed in the Parliament of Ceylon in 1956 replacing English as the official language of Ceylon with Sinhalese.

newspapers *Divayina* (in Sinhala) and *The Island* (in English), initially as weekly newspapers and a year later as dailies. These soon began to rank among the most popular newspapers in the country. Several other newspapers similar to those of the Upali Group soon appeared in the Island among which is Wijaya Newspapers Limited.

Formerly known as Wijeya Publications Limited, Wijeya Newspapers Limited was founded in 1979 by Ranjith Wijewardene, son of D. R. Wijewardena. Ranjith Wijewardene had been chairman of Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited before it was taken over by the government in July 1973. Ranjith Wijewardene successively commenced a range of newspapers: *Irida Lankadeepa* (1986), *Sunday Times* (1987), *Lankadeepa* (1991) and *Midweek Mirror* (1995). The *Midweek Mirror* became the *Daily Mirror* in 1999. Other newspapers, magazines and websites owned by Wijaya Newspapers include *Ada*, *Bilindu*, *Daily FT*, *GO: Guys Only*, *Hi!!*, *LW (Lanka Woman)*, *Mirror Sports*, *Pariganaka*, *Sirikatha*, *Tamil Mirror*, *Tharunaya*, *Vijay and Wijaya*.

Since then and since trade liberalisation in the late 1970s, the mainstream press in Sri Lanka has become increasingly market-oriented and consists of newspapers published by the state-owned Associated Newspapers as well as a limited few private publishers. According to critiques, the intense competition between the publishing houses has positively impacted the form and content of the newspapers they produce. As examined by Peiris (1997), this context has influenced the overall improvement in the quality of presentation achieved through recourse to advanced printing technology and imaginative designing to a certain extent. He asserts that this has not only resulted in a substantial increase in bulk but also the initiation of colourful supplements and magazines that are intended to cater to a wide variety of interests, including travel.

Nonetheless, there have been various shades of opinion on the extent to which the media were curtailed from exercising the rights of free expression in Sri Lanka and the public being denied access to information; particularly during political turbulence in the country over the 1980s and 1990s¹⁰.

¹⁰ War in the North and East, terrorism and insurgencies in the south.

According to Miller (2006), the ethnic divisions that had enveloped the country since the 1980s were reflected in the journalistic community. As such, politicians on all sides of the conflict had claimed and been often voluntarily given, the loyalty of their community's journalists. He asserts that there was no interaction except in Colombo to some extent between Sinhala and Tamil journalists during the years of civil strife with no common language through which to interact. All of this had contributed to a decline in the overall standards of Sri Lankan journalism (Miller, 2006). Other contributions on the politics of this time contain references to the general advances in mass communication which took the form of a proliferation of independent newspaper firms and the relaxation of government controls on news broadcast over electronic media. The most distinct among the dominant views specifically on the press is that there was a relentless onslaught on media freedom which commenced soon after J R Jayewardene took over the reins of government in 1977 which had climaxed during the presidential tenure of his successor R Premadasa (1988-1993). Those with this view have emphasised not only the excessive use of the state sector newspapers, radio or television by the government for its political propaganda but also the intimidatory pressures on the non-yielding fragments of the press (under the direction of influential persons in the ruling party). These have alternated between relatively mild bureaucratic harassment of newspaper corporations to the murder of media personnel. The state of emergency that was prompted at the beginning of the ethnic conflict was lifted in 2011. However, press-freedom violations including threats, murders and censorship have had a continued presence in the country. In spite of this, the privately-owned media organisations and newspaper publishers continue to engage in political debate as a part of which criticism against the government agenda and policies is prevalent.

Apart from the political affiliations and influence, other significant aspects have impacted journalism, that are not unique to Sri Lanka. According to research, globally readers are increasingly shifting to media alternatives such as websites, news apps or social media offering speedier forms of news and information through more proactive platforms (Bock, 2012; Nielsen, 2015). The resultant changes are not identical and differ from case to case,

community to community and country to country. However, the effects are intense and share certain commonalities across most parts of the world. Literature maintains that print, the mainstay of the newspaper business is in decline and daily newspapers have been declining for at least the past decade along with circulation, advertising revenue as well as staffing (Johnson et al., 2014). Online news sources have been identified as cheaper to produce and convenient to distribute, serving much of the function of the traditional newspaper. However, according to the provisional data published in the latest version of Central Bank's Economic and Social Statistics publication, newspaper circulation in Sri Lanka has increased. As such, 538.82 million newspaper copies have been sold in Sri Lanka in the year 2016, an increase from 508.08 million copies in 2015. The statistics also reveal that the daily newspaper circulation has increased from 383.13 million in 2015 to 411.76 million in 2016 (on an annual basis). Even though the most considerable circulation upsurge has been in Sinhala daily newspapers, English daily newspaper circulation has also reached 91.8 million in 2016 from 80.73 million in 2015 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2017). This could be due to an ageing population, as well as the use and access to digital sources being restricted to major cities in Sri Lanka and out of reach for over 70% of the population considered rural and the fact that internet access is still somewhat costly even for urbanites. However, what is noteworthy is that historically newspapers in Sri Lanka have also reflected the social, political and technological shifts in society, attempting to fit into the tastes of their readership (Conboy, 2010).

6.3.2. English Language Readership and Social Class

The research interest in journalism with regards to this particular study lies in English newspapers. Hence, I argue as in the previous chapter that this limits readership considerably with direct implications again to social class in Sri Lanka. For instance, according to Fernando (1977) given that the British brought English to Ceylon in 1796 it was eventually adopted as a virtual mother tongue by a section of the multi-ethnic non-European population of Sri Lanka constituting Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors and the Malays. Most significantly, with the advent of the British arrived the establishment of a modern bureaucracy

along with the extension of secular education. English became the language of commerce, administration and secondary and tertiary education. Accordingly, the study of English had offered all Sri Lankans considerable material gains. Access to English had also provided opportunities for moving away from a caste system based on hereditary occupation towards a class system based on education, government or commercial employment, and money (Fernando, 1977). As such, the Sri Lankan middle-class had come into existence under the British rule. More significantly, it had become more distinct from the rest of the population, “by virtue of its adoption of the English language in domestic and social intercourse, its British style of education, and its Anglicized way of life” (Fernando, 1977, p.343). Hence, the readership of English newspapers in the country had also arguably become associated with a particular class; those who have had the advantage of the English language. This continued into post-independence and enhanced with the economic liberalisation in 1977 and the proliferation of private publishing enterprises and the new urban middle class they cater to, which was discussed in the previous chapter. Therefore, I attempt to emphasise through this chapter a link between readership as well as authorship bound again as in the last category by this critical cultural resource - the English language - which is further illustrated through the deliberation of some of the publications, readers and writers.

The writers belonging to this category and two others belonging to the previous group mentioned working as freelance writers for one or another of the publications of Wijeya Newspapers, notably *Daily Mirror*. Some of the other publications referred to are *Lanka Woman* and *Hi*; two local magazines again aimed at Sri Lankans. With over 5,000 dealer outlets in the country, the organisation reports that they record the highest annual turnover among newspaper publishing. According to their website:

Wijeya’s publications meet Sri Lanka’s cultural and linguistic diversity. Our English newspapers and publications include dailies such as the Daily Mirror and Financial Times and the weekend paper Sunday Times; magazines such as the society journal *Hi!* *Lanka Woman* and *Guys Only* (Wijeya Newspapers, 2010).

Daily Mirror, for instance, which many of the respondents either contribute to or have done so in the past has been established in 1999 and is a national English daily newspaper¹¹. *Hi!* And *Lanka Woman* are both monthly magazines, the former being a society magazine that ranges between features on events, happenings, cuisine, interior, travel, leisure and lifestyles whereas *Lanka Woman* caters to women, containing components such as fashion and beauty, family, food, health, events and travel. The initiation of these magazines in Sri Lanka reflects what is often referred to as the 20th century tabloidization of journalism in the West considered as the newspaper's major contemporary alteration (Conboy, 2010). The tabloid, the most influential sub-genre of journalism in the West, opened up newspapers to a broadly working-class readership in congruence with popular culture in a world increasingly becoming dominated by popular entertainment values. Conboy (2010) states that this brought about "increase in news about celebrities, entertainment, lifestyle features, personal issues, an increase in sensationalism, in the use of pictures and sloganized headlines" (Conboy, 2010, p.30). However, In the case of Sri Lanka; given the social dynamics of the English language, the readership of these tabloid influenced magazines differs to that of the West. These Sri Lankan magazines published by the newspaper publishers in particular, albeit targeting a local clientele are, in a sense both gender and class-oriented. Whereas the newspapers reach a wider readership for those who have the ability to use the English language, the magazines produced by these publishers cater to a different readership further distinguished by lifestyle, taste and habit. This is highlighted through an introduction to a particular issue of the *Hi* Magazine in 2016 available on an online magazine repository. This offers an overview of the contents of the magazine and an impression on the type of readers it targets. Accordingly:

Over the years, *Hi!!* has documented the fashion progression of the glitterati of Sri Lanka, and those of the diaspora with a discerning eye. We have covered all the red carpet events, launches, the most exclusive parties and galas, keeping a look out for those who

¹¹ The circulation figures of these publications are not made available to the public as the company withholds all such information.

continuously make headlines - those who have that innate sense of style (Magzter, 2019).

I argue that terms within this excerpt such as “with a discerning eye”, “innate sense of fashion” or “exclusive” point in the direction of drawing distinctions or classifying based on aspects such as lifestyle and fashion led by taste. According to Bourdieu (2010), “taste...classifies the classifier” (Bourdieu, 2010, p.xxix) words and adjectives “classify and qualify persons or objects” (p.470) creating oppositions between ‘beautiful’ or ‘ugly’ ‘distinguished or vulgar’ reflecting the underlying social order and the opposition between the “elite” and “mass”. This sheds light on social distinction and how cultural tastes and interests are socially valued, and hence cultivated and reinforced by individuals and institutions that are influential (Bourdieu, 2010). The readership of these materials is also gendered in some cases, particularly in the case of the *Lanka Woman* magazine. One of the respondents was the Editor-in-Chief of the *Lanka Woman* magazine. During her interview, Irene described the readership of *Lanka Woman* which had commenced as a newspaper but had recently been converted into a magazine. She explained:

Actually, the readership for *Lanka Woman* is kind of probably most of the younger women. Not only professionals I know for a fact that lots of housewives read this because I get feedback from them. Mostly, of course, it’s the English-speaking crowd. People who can read and understand the language (Interview with Irene, 2018).

Irene stated that even though the magazine reaches remote corners of the Island, they have not yet conducted any readership surveys to determine if this wide-circulation is worth the effort and cost as not many women from remote areas read English and expressed her intention of organising such a survey. She added that the magazine comprises of segments on health, beauty, fashion, travel, food and nutrition but that she intends on adding a technology section. Having stated this, Irene argued that she does not believe a women’s magazine should be restricted to traditional segments such as beauty, cooking or fashion. She also shared her recent achievement of an agreement drawn with SriLankan Airlines to make *Lanka Woman* available inflight for all First and Business Class passengers. Stating that in future issues

the magazine would carry stories with an international readership in mind, Irene added:

This is a great achievement for all of us, and SriLankan Airlines told me that this means that the magazine will be seen by 4.5 million passengers per year, so that is a huge reading audience. That's not only Sri Lankans, so I will try to include a bit more information on Sri Lanka (Interview with Irene, 2018).

As in the previous case, the fact that the magazine caters to First and Business class travellers denotes significant implications on the social standing of readers. This once again brings to light the link between class, tastes and lifestyles wherein different fractions of the dominant class distinguish themselves through the types of capital that are the sources of their privilege and through various manners, habits and lifestyles that assert their distinction (Bourdieu, 2010). Hence, travelling in business class, interest in red carpet events, exclusive parties or latest fashion trends are some of these aspects. While emphasising the lack of stringent borders between these groups or classes Bourdieu reiterates that:

in this universe of continuity, the work of construction and observation is able to isolate (relatively) homogeneous sets of individuals characterized by sets of properties that are statistically and 'socio-logically' interrelated, in other words, groups separated by systems of differences (Bourdieu, 2010, p.256).

As such, Bourdieu maps out the geography of social space and identifies the conditions of its reproduction through class as reflected through capital/resources and class as lifestyles. As such, the factors noted earlier on these publications by the newspaper companies shed light on the differences between readers of magazines and those of newspapers. The perceptions and experiences of writers on writing for English newspapers as opposed to the two above magazines, emphasised this further, substantiating that they target a more extensive, average local readership that could read and understand English, beyond the foreign tourist, expatriates and a very limited English-speaking elite class discussed in the previous chapter.

Kamani, who writes for *Daily Mirror*, stated that they are always advised by their editor to write in a reader-friendly manner for newspapers and to assume that the reader knows nothing. Furthermore, Tania's statement about travel writers who work for English newspapers in Sri Lanka elaborates this further:

They need to be grounded. And also give what their readers want not just to cater to the exclusive two per cent of Colombo society. When they are writing, and when they are going to places they need to write about places most people can go to and be honest about them (Interview with Tania, 2018).

Likewise, the travel journalists discussed matters pertaining to the selection of subjects they write about and the decisions involving which factors to include and which not to and the associated considerations such as the cost-conscious reader. Discussing the task of writing hotel reviews, which according to these participants was a significant constituent of travel sections within newspapers, Tania claimed that unlike some writers she never writes about a place that she does not visit. She explained that during these visits, she avoids the most luxurious or expensive experiences under the presumption that this is not what her readers can afford. Claiming that "the Sri Lankan newspaper readership is very cost-conscious so there's no point me writing about a five-star hotel when they can't afford it", she elucidated further:

Because my readership who go there will never get a chance to even peek into a presidential suite they are going to be treated like normal people. So, I want to experience that treatment rather than enjoy their most exquisite cuisine and write about it knowing jolly well that they are never going to get that because for me it's kind of like misleading (Interview with Tania, 2018).

This further demonstrates the distinction between the readership of the magazines and newspapers, which also divides the readership and could be conceptualised based on information and entertainment. This also attests to the fact that the journalistic travel stories are produced with a specific group of readers in mind (Bell, 1991; Cotter, 2010). According to Gans (2009), in the West, the news has culturally contracted into two focal types: the elite news

media and the popular ones, the latter which include regular size and tabloid newspapers as well as magazines and electronic and digital news media (Gans, 2009). A third type consists of the old sensationalist and semi-fictional tabloids and their tabloid TV equivalents, which are better classified separately as “entertainment news”(Gans, 2009). Nonetheless, even though there are several levels of taste underlying this distinction, all these media are alike as long as they are produced by professionals and as such by fairly similarly trained journalists.

As such, the travel journalists all stressed that they are advised by their editors to maintain concise and straightforward writing to make their work more accessible. Irene, relating her first experiences as a writer over two decades ago before she became an editor, reminisced how she was advised by a senior journalist when she was working on her very first article:

What Robert said to me was always keep your language simple so that people understand you. And I still follow that rule. And I think you know, no matter how big the words you know people should be able to understand you while they read (Interview with Irene, 2018).

In other words, journalists are socialised to approach their work in particular ways (Cotter, 2010) and “writing or reporting well and attending to an audience...are organising principles that create coherence within the profession”(Cotter, 2010, p.8). Tania, the only writer who emphasised on some of the constraints of the field and not being able to write freely, particularly in terms of language use, expressed her discontent arguing:

In my time, we were always right up to learning new words, right? And we were told you read because you are going to learn new words. When I use a new word, my editor tells me, why are you using these words? People don't know what they mean they'll have to take out the dictionary (Interview with Tania, 2018).

Having voiced this, Tania also continued to explain that this was associated with current trends in “an era where people read pictures and look at the text” (Interview with Tania, 2018). She identified platforms such as Instagram and various other social media, where the current generation needs to be

continuously engaged and entertained and as a result the increasing demand for newspapers to keep the reader interested and involved. Tania stated that increasingly newspapers are also shifting to a trend of listing; for instance, ten places to visit in a particular city or five best places to dine etc. She also highlighted that question and answer style of writing is also becoming somewhat prevalent, all of which alludes to broader trends and the changes in the field of journalism globally, which I mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Therefore, travel-related writing that defines this category reflect the differences in socio-economic readership of newspapers as opposed to the magazines that different types address different audiences and therefore have distinctive aims (Jucker, 2012). In other words, the different groups of readers are characterised by their resources or capital, which includes economic capital but also cultural capital such as knowledge of English, lifestyles or tastes. Readership is also influenced by globalisation and transformations in wider society which is reflected in journalism based on advancements in technology as cited by Tania but is followed by the inevitable flows of information and professional logics that accompany them. Reese (2007) for example in an evaluation of the dramatic changes to the practice of journalism as a result of technology intertwined with globalisation deliberates that new digital media connect the world and blurs the distinctions between the professional and citizen (Reese et al., 2007). Accordingly, instead of competing against them, professional media tend to take citizens into account and accept their efforts. Hence, blogging and other social media have begun generating interconnecting dialogue between the professional and citizen (Reese, 2010). Thus, both can express themselves and be potentially received anywhere in the world. This factor is made further explicit within the next chapter on the Sri Lankan travel bloggers where I argue that the authors raise some of the social, economic and political issues of destinations increasingly becoming scarce in journalistic travel writing. Thus, through the new media more broadly, individuals and social movements can advance projects and push further by building their autonomy against more established or deep-rooted social institutions (Reese, 2010).

6.4 Negotiating the Agency of the Travel Journalist

Foremost, the writers that form this category of travel writing all consider themselves journalists rather than travel writers. The main reason for this is that they contribute to a wide range of genres within a broader framework of journalism and as required by their editors /employers. However, the social backgrounds of these writers are the same as those of the first category of writers examined in the previous chapter. Peter, one of the participant journalists with over ten years' experience in the field of English journalism in Sri Lanka, shed light on this when he stated:

There is this thing in Sri Lanka when it comes to the writing business. There is this class...when it comes to English, there is this class. And that class is well maintained. I'm not saying I agree with this, but I know as a fact even in the newspaper business that English medium journalists, they enjoy this sort of elite status (Interview with Peter, 2018).

This again brings to the fore the nexus between social class and English. As already emphasised in Chapter Five, only those of a particular class and with the cultural capital and class habitus could become English writers and journalists in Sri Lanka. This could be further elaborated through the personal histories of travel journalists. Tania, for instance, born overseas but educated in Sri Lanka had started her education at Overseas School of Colombo – a private international school targeted mainly at foreign expatriates and diplomats with access to less than 1 per cent of Sri Lankans. She had then moved to Methodist College Colombo after which she had continued her education both in Australia and the United Kingdom. Kamani had also studied at an international private school in Colombo – The Royal Institute, one of the earliest of the kind in Sri Lanka whereas Lucy had also had a privileged education at an elite government school, Vishaka College for girls in Colombo. As duly elaborated over the previous chapter, as a result of this background, the travel journalists have also had a privileged upbringing with access to English knowledge, resources and experience mainly through family and education. Formal education is also directly related to practices such as reading in English that these writers all emphasised as habits they embraced

from a very early age. Irene, Editor of the *Lanka Woman* magazine, underlined reading in English as a critical influence that facilitated her career in journalism:

I can say that my writing has probably been inspired by my avid reading since I was a little girl. Reading was the main hobby; and even at the time of schooling I was a member of the British Council and the public library Colombo; and every little space I got I used to get on the bus go there spend the day at the library - and even the American centre - and bring a heap of books back home and reading was such a joy (Interview with Irene, 2018).

Irene, as well as Tania, had schooled in Sri Lanka during the early 1980s and 1990s when the British Council played a significant role regarding the access to English books, films and culture for urban Sri Lankan youth. At a time when materials such as books and international magazines in the English language were not so prevalent either for sale or reference or were costly, many children of urban families at the time paid the price to become members of the British Council which had branches in both Colombo and Kandy. The oldest international cultural relations organisation, the British Council was founded in 1934 and has opened offices across the world after 1938. According to the British Council, a significant part of the aim of its establishment has been “to create in a country overseas a basis of friendly knowledge and understanding of the people of this country, of their philosophy and way of life” (The British Council, 2018). The American Centre associated with the US Embassy in place in Sri Lanka since the early 1950s has a similar agenda comprising of event space to experience American culture together with books, audio-visual material and educational activities. Even though two branches of the centre have been established in Kandy and Jaffna in 2004 and 2011 respectively, the opportunity was solely available for residents of Colombo until then. As such, this also links to the argument made over Chapter Five on how the emergence of English as an academic language has implications for a colonial form of imperialism. This sheds further light on how language becomes an instrument through which a hierarchical structure of power is propagated and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’, and ‘reality’ (Ashcroft et al., 1989) become formed.

A few of the respondents from this category also highlighted the influence of immediate and extended family in inculcating the habit of reading in English as well as setting examples. This has been, for instance, concerning their career choices reflecting the importance of extended family in the socialisation of children and the direct impact these family members have not only in the upbringing but also in their education and career choices. Tania, for example, mentioned that both her parents worked for British Airways having resided in the United Kingdom while she was growing up. She elaborated on her having been educated in Colombo staying with extended family. She stated:

I had an aunt who was the chief librarian at the British Council, she was like one of the first women to be appointed as a chief librarian; and also, I grew up away from my parents with cousins who were much older than me. And one cousin used to always win prizes at Vishaka¹², and her prize-winning books were kept in a suitcase under the bed. So, because I didn't have anybody to play with books were like my playmates (Interview with Tania, 2018).

Tania also considered it necessary to mention how the aunt she alludes to above later returned upon completion of a Fullbright Scholarship¹³ to work at the Evening Observer newspaper. She explained that this and several other family members involved in journalism, writing and poetry naturally influenced her to become a journalist. Quite similarly, Irene also recollected similar familial inspirations when she described her entry into the field. She emphasised how her father had encouraged them to read as children primarily through the purchase of weekly English newspapers, which points again to the significance of English newspapers as a language learning tool for many Sri Lankans as mentioned by Tania. Irene also discussed an uncle whose influence was according to her, very important:

¹² Elite government girls' school

¹³ Established concurrent with the American Centre for the promotion of mutual understanding between the U.S and Sri Lanka through shared academic and professional exchanges.

Also, my father's elder brother was an engineer in Nigeria. When he came to stay with us, we all stayed in one big house, which was my grandmother's. We always saw him reading. He was always reading; he even walked to the bathroom with a book. And while he was eating, he was reading. And we as children me my brother and sister we copied him. He was like a hero to us. Even after he was gone, we would like to eat our meals reading a book, and I think that helped us so much and all that information that we gathered helped us along the way (Interview with Irene, 2018).

Likewise, the narratives of both Tania and Irene are examples of the impact of social milieus of these writers, as also emphasised in the previous chapter, and how they internalise their respective externalities that shape their habitus to become English language journalists. They demonstrate the fact that the journalists derive from a privileged position of a very few urban, families concentrated in Colombo with access not only to educational opportunities both within and outside the country but also better career possibilities and exposure to Western culture. This also echoes the privileged positions of both Sinhalese and Tamil elites who embraced the imperial agenda during the British colonial era. As such, and as mentioned before, knowledge of English paved the way for an elite few to higher positions in the colonial administration, and they were in turn provided with the appropriate training to undertake professional and administrative services for the colony (Sivasundaram, 2013).

The influence of the British Council or the American Centre sheds further light on the impact of colonialism and the relations established between the West and the Rest as evaluated by Hall (1992). The contact not only meant that the differences between these societies and cultures from the West were the standard against which the West's achievement was measured, but it is within the context of these relationships that the idea of the West was formed and made meaningful (Hall, 1992). Accordingly, this "West and the Rest" discourse had significantly impacted Enlightenment thinking that there was *one* path to civilisation and social development and that all societies could be ranked or placed early or late, lower or higher, on the same scale. Hence, I argue here that underlying the knowledge, culture and language that establishments

such as the British Council endeavoured to instil in countries such as Sri Lanka lies this idea that the West was the model, the prototype and the measure of progress; leading to the celebration of the Western progress, civilisation, rationality and development (Hall, 1992).

The major incentives towards the acquisition of English by the Sri Lankans are therefore made quite clear. As illustrated by Fernando (1977), even though the original motives of the Sri Lankan middle class in acquiring the language were primarily social and economic, once English had become the language of some of these Sri Lankans both domestic and social, it had acquired emotional associations stimulating a certain language loyalty. Fernando elaborates:

Some of these Anglicized bilinguals went to the extent of flaunting a claimed lack of proficiency in the vernacular mother tongue. Such a claim, since it was accompanied by a near-native control of English, associated the speaker with the sought-after English culture while simultaneously dissociating him from the despised local counterpart. English and the vernaculars were thus used in complementary spheres, English being always reserved for administrative, professional, intellectual and the socially more prestigious areas (Fernando, 1977, p.344).

On the other hand, as explained by Cannadine (2002) this draws on how the British – like all post-Enlightenment imperial powers – had positioned themselves at the top of the scale of civilisation and achievement (Cannadine, 2002). The British had thus ranked all other races in descending order beneath them based on their relative merits and demerits and as stated by Cannadine (2002) “during the period 1780 to 1830 they increasingly embodied these views in imperial institutions and codes” (Cannadine, 2002, p.5). However, according to the author, this mode of imperial ranking and imaging was not only grounded on the Enlightenment perspective of the intrinsic inferiority of dark-skinned peoples but also notions of metropolitan – peripheral analogy. He adds that Britain being a hierarchical society where those at the top were also those who wielded power, when Britons turned their attention to the rest of the world they colonised, it was with these perceptions of how society was

and how it should be administered, very firmly embedded in their minds (Cannadine, 2002, p.11).

Thus, as maintained throughout this thesis, I argue that these writers take on their journalist roles already equipped with a particular class habitus influenced by Western ways of thinking, habits and lifestyles. However, given that they as writers are involved in a worldmaking role, this links to the fact that those who worldmake perceive the world from “standpoints that are important to that ‘authorising’ management, mediating agency or engaged individual” (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, pp. 202-203). This is based on the understanding that representational assemblages these journalists, in turn, help create are generally constructed upon “received narratives” revered by the interest groups, subpopulations or society which the management bodies, meditative agency or the individuals themselves associate. What is more, these worldmaking significations are often not consciously-held. Here, the worldmaking agency, mediating body or actors are “complicit with others from the past” often unaware that any particular inscriptive influence is at work (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.203) the substantiating of which I undertake through an analysis of travel journalist representations through the subsequent section.

As deliberated so far, these specific individuals bring with them these transposable dispositions fashioned by the fluency of the English language, Western lifestyle and culture that are the first rungs on the ladder towards becoming English language journalists. However, as a distinct field with its own principles and standards, becoming a journalist also requires interaction with the actual field of journalism and formal training to internalise its various norms and conventions. In Bourdieu’s words journalists are thus “all the more inclined to adopt standards in the production process (“keep it simple, keep it short”)....to the extent that those who better represent these standards occupy higher positions” (Bourdieu, 1998, p.71). To begin with, the Sri Lankan travel journalists highlighted the lack of higher educational opportunities and prospects for professional development in Sri Lanka for potential English language journalists. Kamani, a much younger respondent, compared to Tania, Lucy, Peter or Irene stated that she currently follows a Master’s degree

in Mass Communication at a Sri Lankan university because there is no other institution in Sri Lanka to study journalism at the postgraduate level. Elucidating that she had no prior experience or knowledge in the field when she first joined the *Daily Mirror* newspaper, she explained that having followed a degree in psychology at a private university in Colombo the options for postgraduate study in journalism were scarce, and the only other option was to travel abroad. She explained:

I'm a self-taught journalist if I put it to proper words. There are limited facilities for a journalist to become a professional journalist in Sri Lanka. There are diploma level courses, but unless someone ends up at a Uni like Kelaniya or the Sri Palee Campus¹⁴ in Horana, those are the only two places that offer postgraduate studies in journalism (Interview with Kamani, 2018).

However, she asserted that at the same time, there was no guidance or opportunities for training/learning in travel writing. Kamani claimed "actually, for me, I just write about my experiences. The paper was okay with it, and I eventually developed my own style" (Interview with Kamani, 2018).

As a result of this challenge, the writers have resorted to other means of familiarizing themselves with the norms and standards of the field of journalism. Tania, having lived abroad (in the United Kingdom) for 20 years before beginning a career in journalism in Sri Lanka communicated how she looked up to international sources for guidance. She elaborated on how she watched the international news as well as travel documentaries to learn words and phrases to use in her writing. She added:

I read a lot of British newspapers so sometimes I think...okay, how do they do it? (...) I think what I can learn from those writers; I mean senior international writers; what can I learn from them, and then I kind of see how they write, and then I try to incorporate that (Interview with Tania, 2018).

¹⁴ The Western Campus of the University of Colombo The Sri Palee Campus was established in 1996 to proffer undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the fields of performing arts and mass media.

She also emphasised, demonstrating some level of frustration, on the declining quality of journalism in Sri Lanka because of the lack of quality writers. She asserted that this was mainly since many newspapers currently hire inexperienced school-leavers as journalists, which in turn affects their quality of writing. On the contrary, Irene, her contemporary but with more administrative responsibility, being an editor of a magazine argued that with increased access to the Internet and international sources available at the press of a button, the quality of journalism has improved considerably in Sri Lanka. Having asserted this, Irene admitted that she too looks up to international magazines for inspiration in lining up each monthly issue. She claimed:

I get a lot of knowledge because I read magazines and I am constantly reading or listening to BBC; and I also read the Economist I read the Women's Weekly, the Woman's Day; and you know, every time someone comes I get a heap of magazines from the UK for instance and from Australia. I try to keep track of what's going on globally. I mean I don't want to stick to just the same old pattern that's been going on I want to expose our local readers to a vast area of knowledge and information while giving our Sri Lankan authentic feel of it as well (Interview with Irene, 2018).

Kamani, who has become a journalist much later than the two others has had no international exposure aside from the British and American education curricula she has followed at school and undergraduate levels. Speaking about the influences on her writing and the sources or writers she looks up to for inspiration she cited the *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib* local magazines. As also highlighted in the previous chapter, Kamani commended the high standard of these magazines, identifying them as an excellent platform for learning to write travel stories for newspapers. She claimed that *Serendib* magazine was her "go-to place for research" (Interview with Kamani, 2018) providing good examples for first-time writers. She praised the magazine stating that it is "very unique and international" (Interview with Kamani, 2018). As mentioned before, this is mainly in line with the authority and high regard that these magazines hold in the Sri Lankan context.

On the one hand, the establishment of Journalism in Sri Lanka and the claims by local journalists shed light on how Western models of news and journalism continue to be followed and adopted. As reiterated within the literature, newspapers were established throughout the British empire, both for the overseas British bureaucrats and people in business and for local elites (Nerone, 2013). Following this metropolitan news practices were appropriated by local elites as in the case of Sri Lanka. According to Nerone (2013), dominant journalism, unlike the broader terrain of news practices, was a targeted export. Western journalism had begun to be imported into developing nations at the beginning of the 20th century. This also took place when students from these countries attended Western journalism schools such as in the case of D R Wijewardene mentioned earlier in the chapter – returning to write textbooks, start newspapers or found journalism schools. As stated by Nerone:

Working through international institutions like the new United Nations, through private organizations like the international wire services, through non-governmental organizations like Freedom House, and through national governmental efforts, modern journalism was presented to the world as a one-size-fits-all trigger for market expansion and democratization (Nerone, 2013, p.451).

On the other hand, the attestations by these local journalists also highlight the more recent privileging of Western knowledge and ways of thinking. The dynamics of the colonial epoch examined earlier re-emerged and rematerialized post-independence and particularly the period after the economic liberalisation of 1977, a period of privatisation and transnational corporate expansion increasing neo-colonial globalisation tied in with global capitalism which I emphasised in Chapter Five. These conditions offered further ground for contemporary journalists' inclination to adopt general principles and values of the field. This is the implication within a process where dominant Western networks set the agenda for smaller, regional players that monitor their content and adopt these models of production. As such, new or regional platforms represent universalisation of Western journalism and "an increasing homogenization" is seen in the structures and content of journalism around the world (Cottle, 2009, p.29).

Thus, in the section that follows through a discussion of what constitutes journalistic travel writing in Sri Lanka, I will explore some of the ways in which this particular group of travel journalists abide by these accepted, international norms and standards of the field of journalism practised through travel journalism in Sri Lanka.

6.5. Worldmaking through a Journalistic Gaze

Stating that journalism is a site of “specific and specifically cultural model” that “produces and imposes on the public a vision that is grounded in the very structure of the journalistic field” (Bourdieu, 1998, p.2) Bourdieu adds that it equally imposes on journalists through a system of overlapping constraints and controls. These professional ethics of journalism are crucial to its effects on the work of journalists, mainly led by its social function. The society-centric view of journalism is foregrounded on theories of society and recognises journalism as a platform for information exchange and interaction, which enables both democracy and enlightened citizenship as its characteristic features (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003; McGaurr, 2013; Rosenkranz, 2016). This is mainly brought out through the following discussion with regards to the way of writing and associated statements given by the participants of this study. In this section, therefore, I attempt to argue that travel is the subject matter of these journalists’ work just as business, healthcare, politics or education. I use relevant examples from their writing to establish that unlike in the previous category of writing, what a travel journalist seeks to achieve is to engage readers by making significant news and information that is simple to understand, matter-of-fact and interesting according to when, where and how it is needed. This is based on the premise that “the travel journalist’s method is always journalistic: an informed neutral searching for the best available version of the truth” (Greenman, 2012, p.3).

However, this credibility of journalists is often questioned when their reports are proved otherwise - inaccurate or unreliable - through openly verifiable information that tourists/travellers use to make travel decisions. Mackellar and Fenton (2000) for instance, claim that often the excessive costs of travelling to a destination to report on it has resulted in all-inclusive national, regional and

tourism-operator programmes “to entice media to visit a destination and maximise the publicity that can be gained” (Mackellar and Fenton, 2000, p.255). Rosenkranz highlights the connection between travel journalism and Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) representing hotels, cities or entire countries. This nexus, he asserts, commenced decades before the current transformation within the field of journalism. Explaining this further, he states:

Some travel journalists get information and pitches from DMOs or are accepting resources such as airline tickets, hotel accommodations or organized tours, so-called familiarization trips (FAM-trips). The governance of these practices has long been a key issue in the professional ethics of travel journalists (Rosenkranz, 2016, p.60).

According to McGaurr (2013), this reliance of travel journalists on hosted itineraries and complimentary travel, accommodation, meals and activities from the government or tourism industry brings into question their ability to be detached and independent as journalism requires (McGaurr, 2013). Within the following two sections, I will discuss evidence of some of this in the Sri Lankan context. I do so through an examination of a sample of journalistic travel writing in an attempt to substantiate these broader journalistic norms and prevailing public relations trends present within these examples that direct the way they represent Sri Lanka.

6.5.1. Information, Fact and Public Service Orientation

Literature maintains that what fundamentally differentiates travel journalism from travel writing is the latter’s observation of principles or elements of journalism which according to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2003) are independence, ethics, timeliness, substantiality and public service orientation (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003). Tuchman (1978) in an exploration of news as construction of reality defines news as offering the readers “what they want to know, need to know and should know” (Tuchman, 1978, p.1). Even though the author alludes to news journalism, McGurr contends that these qualities might also be expected of travel journalism (McGaurr, 2013). According to journalism

literature, even though travel material in what purports to be journalism need not be as timely as traditional news, it should offer potential travellers the vital information they should and need to know about a place or event they may want to visit. In so doing, it would be presenting the public with useful, factual information.

I place significance on some of these elements as being the most discernible properties that defined the work of this group of Sri Lankan travel writers against the previous and the next. One such crucial factor was the consciousness of these actors on their role as journalists and not as travel writers. Hence, some of them noted how their work was a service rather than a form of employment. Kamani asserted this when she stated:

For me journalism is not just a career it's a service for the people so if my articles can help someone out or make someone aware about something they don't know that's where I think I have achieved my goals. So, I think in that sense, I like writing features on topics that people have no clue about. People rely on media to find actual facts, but sometimes media is so distorted that people end up believing those distorted facts, so it's my responsibility to give out the best and accurate information (Interview with Kamani, 2018).

These sentiments that emphasise the importance of fact and information and public service demonstrate this difference in writing. As underscored by scholars, an individual working/writing for a newspaper even though they engage in travel-related writing, is first a journalist and hence abide by the principles among which "public service orientation" is significant (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003). Thus, irrespective of the story a travel journalist's purpose and method is always journalistic, these writers have to consider any work they do journalistically, gathering and verifying information as well as using methods available to journalists such as consultations with correspondents, interviews, secondary sources, data, as well as observation (Greenman, 2012). Discussing their means of accessing facts and information, Kamani stated that if she is assigned a travel article about Kandy, she will use the newspaper's correspondent:

We have a really good correspondent in Kandy who is 90 years old he still travels to Colombo to give us news. He is one person who knows every nook and corner about Kandy. He is my go-to research person in the area (Interview with Kamani, 2018).

Also, Sri Lankan English newspaper travel sections include at least one travel story about a city or destination abroad. Some of the writers stated that these articles are not always created in the understanding that their readers would visit these places. It was instead with the intention of sharing experiences with a reader who would otherwise not encounter the opportunity to visit these places. Tania, for instance, discussing some of her articles for the newspapers based on her foreign travels argued that “most people in Sri Lanka apart from a certain stratum, don’t get the chance to travel abroad. And I think if I see something, I should always share what I see. I feel not obliged, but I feel I should share it with people who don’t have that opportunity” (Interview with Tania, 2018) I argue that this once again is a demonstration of the public service orientation of journalistic travel writers.

Another significant characteristic that marked their writing is its difference from the previous category in terms of what is said and how it is said. Journalistic travel writing is understood to be restricted to a more linear structure, factual rather than descriptive with more information in place of poetic/romantic elaborations characteristic of travel writing examined in the previous chapter. I argue that this is as a result of the journalistic training received by these writers whose internalisation of the norms and conventions of this field apply to their writing overall. I present, for instance, the example of the Kandy Esala Perahera, journalistic travel accounts of which are quite distinct from tourism writing. As explored throughout the previous chapter the latter is marked by rich elaborations, romanticised, historicised descriptions and the over-use of intensifiers and adjectives a style identified by tourism writers as ‘flowery’ or ‘whimsical’. However, in journalistic travel writing these are replaced by verifiable facts and information on the historical and cultural significance of the Esala Perahera. These accounts are presented in a simple straightforward language and are inclined more towards affording knowledge/information rather than making the cultural procession seem glamorous and attractive

through words to entice more visitors to the event and thereby the city of Kandy. Since the newspapers are distributed locally, the articles also mainly target domestic visitors. What immediately follows is an excerpt from an article about the Kandy Esala Perahera which appears in the *Serendib* magazine:

Countless dancers and drummers in the thousands, ponderous tuskers and elephants numbered in the hundreds and more, breath life to the reverberating annual pageant of the hill capital Kandy. While it's easy to be entranced by its rich exuberance, the days and months preceding the pageant is one of feverish preparation, laborious hours of work and invoking of age-old arts and crafts (Nanayakkara, 2012).

In contrast, the following extract also about the Perahera is taken from a similar feature found in the *Daily Mirror* newspaper:

This pageant will be made more colourful with exciting cultural events like traditional drummers, caparisoned elephants, dancers from various traditions and singers. This year's Esala Perahera will consist of more than 53 caparisoned elephants including 14 elephants from the Sri Dalada Maligawa...This event can be considered as a valuable effort made to safeguard the cultural values of the country, specially preserving the Kandyan tradition (Sooriyagoda, 2013).

Whereas both excerpts represent the cultural procession, the latter corroborates journalistic standards substantiating the purpose of a journalist, which is to report and to make important news and information interesting. The first excerpt endeavours to make the event seem more attractive to the reader through the use of intensifiers such as “reverberating” “entranced” “rich” or “exuberance” thereby spectacularising the event to attract visitors. The second quote on the other hand, albeit focusing on the same subject uses very little such intensifiers and offers as much information as possible such as the number of elephants. Therefore, I argue that the latter corresponds to the ‘news style’ in journalism. According to Broersma (2007), the news-style is often implemented using an information model, through which journalists place

emphasis above all else, on the transmission of information. As a result, they tend to “favour the rational, empirical ideals of objectivity, balance, fairness and neutrality” (Broersma, 2007, p.xvi) as opposed to an inclination towards literature, reflection or opinion. This also results in journalism attempting to distinguish itself from the literary field by concentrating on facts and information, which makes this writing lack “prejudice, colour or style” (Matheson, 2000, p.565). As such, journalistic writing has little to do with literary talents but is organised primarily in accordance with journalistic conventions “a skill anyone could learn”. “Through socialization...journalists relate to shared sets of rules – sometimes laid down in style guides – which structure their stories” (Broersma, 2007, p.xiv). McNair (2005) also elaborates this stating that in agreeing to pay the price of a newspaper a reader is purchasing what they believe to be a reliable account of the real beyond their immediate experience mediated through the professional skills of a journalist combined with the resources of the relevant journalistic organisation. As such, he reiterates that:

The journalist, like the novelist and the historian in their different ways, tells stories, but the former’s stories are presented to potential audiences as factual, rather than fictional, artistic, or scientific...To have value as information, journalism has to be accepted as true, or at least an acceptable approximation of the truth (McNair, 2005, p.30).

This motive to “inform” or “report” or provide Sri Lankans with an honest account of the places or events they write about is reflected in the representations that Sri Lankan travel journalists create.

This inclination towards simplicity, fact and information can be further explored through a journalistic travel narrative about the tea estate sector in Sri Lanka, another subject discussed at length over the previous chapter. In the latter, I explored the way in which the tea industry is portrayed intertwining the beauty of tea plantations with its heritage through accounts on “the delightful world of tea” (de Silva, 2017a). These narratives often reminisce the British planters and their service to the tea industry and the advent of the industry in colonial times. They frequently refer to the scenic tea plantation landscapes

surrounded by the rolling hills and the colonial bungalows with open verandas. For instance, in an article about the Ceylon Tea Museum in Kandy De Silva elaborates:

After an enthralling adventure in the fascinating world of Ceylon Tea, the visitors are served a cuppa at the Ceylon Tea Museum Café. Be it a rich hot tea or flavoured iced tea; one can relish the brew of their choice at the café while enjoying the picturesque views of cold mountain peaks as well as tea fields (de Silva, 2017b).

The travel journalist's take on the tea industry is very similar, albeit the simplicity of language, factualness and richness of information. In one of a series of articles written about tea estate bungalows for the *Lanka Woman* Wijemanne (2007) writes about the Dambetenna tea estate and its colonial bungalow and the following excerpt illustrates the importance of fact and information:

1511 meters above sea level the estate has an extent of 800 hectares and has a labour force of 1560. The longest tea factory in Sri Lanka is at Dambetenne estate. The estate is famed worldwide for the famed "Lipton Seat" ...a spot which is at an elevation of 6200 feet (Wijemanne, 2007, p.68).

As such, the latter gives precedence to fact and precision in figures, as in the previous case of the Kandy Perahera whereas tourism writing is adorned with imaginative tropes commonly employed to attract visitors. However, while these stories are characteristically journalistic as illuminated so far there are occasions when the journalists also employ an imperialist gaze and draw on the colonial history and the 'heroic' British tea planters rather frequently. For instance, this could be identified in the same story cited above. The highlight of the narrative for Wijemanne is Thomas Lipton who, she writes, started to build the estate bungalow in 1890. She states quite early in her story that "the estate is famed worldwide for the famed "Lipton Seat" from which legend has it, that Thomas Lipton supervised his estate and also where he had his breakfast" (Wijemanne, 2007, p.68).

In this sense, as deliberated by McNair (2005) journalism is not and never could be reality in the absolute sense, but a version of the reality constructed according to rules, codes and conventions associated with journalistic discourse. I argue therefore, that the Sri Lankan travel journalists employ a 'journalistic gaze' through which certain notions and information is filtered (Urry et al., 2001). In other words, a gaze of a particular professions or an institution is the way in which its members learn to see and to project versions of reality. Consequently, the 'journalistic gaze' also plays a part in privileging certain persons and their inheritances while subjugating or repressing which indicates the worldmaking role of travel journalists (Hollinshead, 1999).

However, whilst journalistic writing is distinguished by the factors stated above, I argue that there are instances where journalistic travel writing approximates tourism writing. This is particularly relevant to the fact that travel journalists have to cater to the entertainment sector. It is argued that the travel journalist serves not only a market for news and information of some of the world's largest industries but also a market for entertainment about journeys to "hidden" "unexplored" destinations. As such, the former is journalism in the public interest and the latter journalism that addresses audiences and consumers; whereas the former is associated with low market orientation, the latter relates to high market orientation (Greenman, 2012, p.8). Notably, it is asserted that for the travel journalist it cannot be either/or, but both. It is argued that there is often a tension between these two components and as mentioned above this market-orientation is what elicits the influence of public relations on journalism forming a relationship between the tourism industry and its efforts at attracting travel journalists to destinations the implications of which is discussed with further detail in the following section.

6.5.2. Public Relations Orientation

The exponential growth in travel journalism over the second half of the 20th century would not have been possible without the support of tourism public relations (Mackellar and Fenton, 2000) both corporate and government. By the 1980s Visiting Journalists Programmes (VJPs) offering hosted visits had become a routine component of the agendas of tourism organisations

(Gladwell and Wolff, 1989). These programmes often comprise of special events organised to generate news. Known by a range of names such as 'press tours', 'travel writer or media familiarisation tours', 'famils' or 'freebies', they are designed to invite a variety of journalists to a particular site to experience a tourism product and provide media exposure for a specific destination (Dore and Crouch, 2003).

Governments play an even more significant role in tourism public relations with regards to promoting a destination either as a country, region or a city – mainly through VJPs (Dore and Crouch, 2003; Gladwell and Wolff, 1989). This is also relevant to Sri Lanka as elaborated by the Director of Public Relations – Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau who asserted “we run a very active journalist programme” where “we provide everything, and their job is to do a write-up”. He elaborated further:

So, if you take the local media first, they are important because tourism needs to be taken to the grassroots level. That's why we are depending on the local media to say what we do. It could be an event to promote tourism locally, or it could be an event to promote tourism internationally. So, either way, and that's why local media is important. So, we arrange press releases on a regular basis, we arrange press conferences, on a regular basis to keep the media informed of what is going on (Interview with Senevirathna, 2018).

As emphasised by the above statement, government tourism promotion efforts make no secret of the fact that their VJPs are premeditated to achieve positive coverage of their destinations. It was highlighted through the discussion with the Sri Lanka Tourism official that this is accomplished by providing journalists with a range of logistical support, information subsidies, free accommodation, free travel and guiding services, which substantiate that these programmes are associated with marketing and public relations efforts in international tourism markets.

Even though government public relations programmes were rarely mentioned, corporate promotional programmes surfaced throughout the discussions with the journalist participants of this study. For instance, as soon as travel writing

was referred to these respondents immediately cited 'hotel reviews' stating that they are often obliged to write these for a certain clientele. Upon observation of some of the newspaper travel segments, this was confirmed as they were frequented by reviews of various hotels or restaurants all over Sri Lanka along with features about places/locations abroad. Kamani detailed that commonly a travel article would consist of things to do at a particular site and places to dine. For an example of a typical travel story, she immediately cited a hotel review and emphasised:

If we work on a hotel, we have to look into aspects like accommodation, cuisine, facilities and all that. So, for me, I think the destination, the hotel, the service, everything together would make a good piece of writing. If it's a destination, then it should mostly be to do with things you can do there (Interview with Kamani, 2018).

However, what is noteworthy about these public relations efforts - both government-related as expressed by the Director of Public Relations and private - is the implicit promotional intention underlying these. In an early article published in the 1980s titled *Confessions of the Travel Writer*, Alderson (1988) considers the experiences of travel writers and reporters in the United States. He discusses therein the pressures placed by travel editors on travel writers as a result of attempts by companies in the travel industry to obtain publicity. Based on first-hand knowledge, he states that too often writers comply or are forced by their editors to comply, even when the writers' experience of a destination or tourism product has been unfavourable or adverse. The author concludes asserting "to my eyes the fact remains that most travel writing simply dishonours our free-press" (Alderson, 1988, p.28).

In a similar vein, the Sri Lankan journalists also emphasised a particular frustration with the pressure to be entirely 'positive' in their representations of the country with regards to these public relations endeavours. As in the case of tourism writers, they argued that this hinders any attempt to create an honest, holistic account of Sri Lanka. The bloggers or activist writers (examined in the next chapter) notably argued that some of the aspects popularly considered as "negative" such as overcrowding, pollution or the day

to day struggles of the economically disadvantaged are some of the factors that characterise Sri Lanka. This was equally emphasised by some of the travel journalists. Tania elaborated this through examples of the experience writing hotel and restaurant reviews:

I've noticed because Colombo is so small, sometimes you fear offending. For example, with the magazine we know the owner of X hotel, we know the owner of the Y hotel, and when we go and do the reviews I'm told we can't antagonise those people, we can't get angry with those people, so sometimes it's a real battle for me because I'm thinking okay I'm now writing about them in really positive terms when in fact the service was not very good (Interview with Tania, 2018).

Lucy is another writer who had similar experiences. Elaborating on her series of articles on tea estate dwellings she contributed to the *Lanka Woman* magazine she noted how the team of journalists were often provided free accommodation by the tea estates they wrote about. In one of her narratives titled *Winds of Namunukula Sweeps through Tanacomb Estate* Lucy opens her article with a few vital information about the location, land extent, elevation, the tea production and history of the bungalow and tea estate (as do all her narratives in the series) before describing the bungalow to the reader. In this latter task, she narrates:

The bungalow in the afternoon sunlight looked like a picture out of a British Home & Garden journal. The setting looked so very British....most of the plantation bungalows were built by the early Scottish planters, to match their own Scottish housing styles, maybe to feel "at home" in a foreign land thousands of miles away (Wijemanne, 2008, p.61).

This is an example of an instance where journalistic travel writing inclines towards tourism writing with the public relations orientation, bringing into play historical, romantic and colonial connotations to illustrations of the tea plantations and surrounding attractions and accommodations. This focus on the positives and silencing of issues or negativity within destinations is further

discussed in the subsequent chapter on travel blog writing, which contrasts with tourism writing. On the topic of journalism, however, Fürsich (2003) asserts that genres of writing that systematically ignore the social, economic or political issues of destinations do not qualify as journalism. As such, she illustrates an understanding of journalism quite similar to that established by Hartley (1996) who claims that “the most important component of its system is the creation of readers as public, and the connection of these readerships to other systems, such as those of politics, economics and social control” (Hartley, 1996, p.35). In this sense, the worldmaking role of travel journalists also reflect the privileging or lifting of particular elements and silencing or omitting others due to various reasons discussed such as global trends in journalism or through the requirement of destination or event promotion which was also predominantly discussed over the previous chapter. As a result, a particular outlook becomes entrenched or dominant over other potential interpretations or perspectives (Hollinshead et al., 2009). This highlights the constitutive worldmaking role carried out by these travel journalists led by certain conventions and orientations or trends of the field of journalism.

Similarly, another theme that surfaced through the discussions with travel journalists is the employment of ready-made copy issued by public relations practitioners or the use of available online resources to write about places or events. Literature posits that the rise in the use of public relations material by journalists occurs with increasing workloads, expenses, changes in work practices and is to do with the transforming relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners to one of ‘exchange’ rather than ‘conflict’ (Lewis et al., 2008). For instance, foreign travel is somewhat expensive in Sri Lanka. Therefore, Irene who is involved in the production sphere of a local magazine was inquired about the feasibility of arranging travel articles outside the country, as it was observed that the *Lanka Woman* magazine carries one such feature each month. Irene responded that the company has the means to finance writers and photographers when they travel within Sri Lanka. However, for articles that feature places outside the country, she stated that they usually either commission freelance writers who live in various countries

or obtain features from writers who write about their personal journeys abroad. She explained:

They are not based on actual travel. For a few months, I did my own experiences of countries. I usually have to get the writers to research and do some articles...but it's always better for writers to get a first-hand experience of the place which will be then an excellent article. For instance, I did a piece on New York City where I haven't been, but we've been so inspired by New York city through media, you know movies and everything. We seem to know about New York City, but then, there may be little things that we cannot research and write about (Interview with Irene, 2018).

Irene then pointed out one of the core influential factors in the preparation of a monthly issue: the budget. She explained that the newspaper company – being a private publishing enterprise - allocates a specific budget each month. Thus, even though she has the possibility of making suggestions that exceed the allocations, she noted that revenue must be a priority and deciding factor. “I want the magazine to sell more, to get more ads. Right now, we are doing quite well with ads, but I want to make *Lanka Woman* a household name” (Interview with Irene, 2018) Irene stated. These examples of considerations that reach beyond the capabilities of the reader to those of the publisher demonstrate that journalism is often torn between serving the public and private profit with the rise of modern mass media, the proliferation of private newspaper publishers and intense competition. Bourdieu (1998), for instance, asserts that market pressures pose substantial constraints on the field of journalism of which the legitimisation is dependent upon recognition by the public at large (Bourdieu, 1998). However, this public acceptance is measured by numbers of readers and therefore, in the final analysis by sales and profit.

Bourdieu argues that some of the above-discussed transformations within the field of journalism in this chapter are important owing to the central position of the journalistic field within the broader field of power. Accordingly, on the basis that fields are closely intertwined and journalism is a core mediator among all fields, journalism, in particular, has become more commercialised and therefore more ‘homologous with the economic field’ (Benson and Neveu,

2005, p.6). He asserts that these transformations have produced a convergence among all fields, pulling them closer to the commercial pole in the broader field of power (Bourdieu, 1998; Benson and Neveu, 2005). Accordingly, to understand the field of journalism, one should critically evaluate its degree of autonomy and within the field the degree of autonomy of the publication that a journalist writes for. This is determined for instance, in the case of a newspaper through the proportion of its income that is derived through the State from advertisers etc. However, even though the field of journalism is a very “weakly autonomous field” Bourdieu maintains that to understand it:

one cannot understand what happens there simply on the basis on knowledge of the surrounding world: to understand what happens in journalism it is not sufficient to know who finances the publications, who the advertisers are who pays for the advertising, where the subsidies come from, and so on. Part of what is produced in the world of journalism cannot be understood unless one conceptualizes this microcosm as such and endeavours to understand the effects that the people engaged in this microcosm exert on each other (Benson and Neveu, 2005, p.33).

Therefore, as in the case of tourism writing which was explored in Chapter Five, these discussions demonstrate how certain conventions, principles and relations of a distinct field along with its trends and transformations combine with cultural capital and class habitus of the agents in determining the representations that they each create. These writers, bring with them certain preferred dispositions or socialised subjectivities into their travel journalist positions within the field of journalism, which in turn further shape their habitus and practices as a part of their roles. All this work together in shaping not only the way these writers see and represent Sri Lanka through selected storylines with emphasis on fact and information but their worldmaking representations also become stamped with what is important, scenic or beautiful (Hollinshead et al., 2009) from the standpoint of the field of journalism.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter explored the second distinct category of travel writing identified through this research project. It, therefore, distinguished this type of travel writing in English by its close alignment to journalism and the inherent self-identification of the authors as freelance journalists. Approaching its analysis through the progressive development of journalism within colonial and post-colonial Sri Lanka, I once again substantiated – as in the previous chapter – the crucial role of the English language which binds the local English newspaper readership and English language writers through their privileged position, taste, habit and lifestyles within the upper echelons of Sri Lanka's social class strata.

Therefore, upon ascertaining the definition 'travel journalism' and identifying the respective agents as travel journalists early on in the chapter, I subsequently emphasised their similarity in social positioning to tourism writers of Chapter Five. This was led by the understanding that individuals' predispositions, assumptions, perceptions, judgements and behaviours are a result of a long-term process of socialisation primarily in the family (Benson and Neveu, 2005) – as demonstrated through the personal histories of these individuals. It was emphasised how their early experiences are determined by their location in the social class structure as part of the new urban middle class in Sri Lanka. Habitus or socialised subjectivity (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) is further shaped by formal and professional education, particularly cultural capital such as competence in the English language, particularly given the postcolonial context of Sri Lanka. As such, I foremost presented the particular historical trajectory by which these social agents arrive at their journalist positions.

Once within the field of journalism, I presented how these individuals are expected to follow the established conventions of the field to sustain and be successful in their roles. As a result, their travel writing is characterised by journalistic news-style writing marked by simplicity of language and matter-of-fact, information-led expressions as opposed romanticised, historicised promotional writing of the previous category. Therefore, I argued that

journalistic travel writing is influenced not only by principles of journalism that the latter have internalised once they become positioned within the field but also by wider trends and transformations within the field. One such example was the writers' belief that journalism is a public service (Rosenkranz, 2016; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003; McGaurr, 2013), which impacts decisions on the selection of places, events or information and in the drafting of storylines which influence the way Sri Lanka is represented. This was exemplified by the journalists' consideration of the cost-conscious local reader. Secondly, I discussed the shifts in journalism with commercialisation developing a tendency to have a mutual relationship with government and corporate tourism public relations (Lewis et al., 2008; Mackellar and Fenton, 2000; Gladwell and Wolff, 1989) which also has its influence on the writing and in turn the representations within travel related writing. I argued that journalistic writing thereby converts into a form of promotional writing as explored in the previous chapter, which once again renders the representations overly positive, romanticised or historicised.

I conclude this chapter conceptualising the representative, worldmaking role of travel journalists of Sri Lanka combining the concepts of habitus, capital and field. I emphasise how one's tastes, habits lifestyles and interests - such as reading in English - determine one's social position based on the way they are seen to be legitimate, respectable, worthy or socially approved. The resulting class habitus - dispositions - that the writers take to the field of journalism are vital foundations for them to become journalists. Up to this point, these individuals are identical to the writers discussed in the previous chapter. Nonetheless, once they become journalists, these specific dispositions interact with the norms, conventions and expectations of the field of journalism, represented by the editors who ensure the rules of the field are adhered to. The journalists are therefore inclined to adopt and internalise these standards in order to be accepted and legitimized as journalists and thereby engage in their worldmaking roles shaping what is known about the places or events they write about. The journalists' engagement with the field of journalism and prior professional training further conditions their habitus through the internalisation of accepted ways of being a journalist. These, in

turn, generate practices that support the preservation of the conventions of the field (Bourdieu, 2000, p.143).

Chapter 07

The Worldmaking Role of the Travel Blogger

7.1. Introduction

Chapters Five and Six investigated the first two types of travel writing and writers encountered through this study. As such, I critically analysed two distinct types of travel writing produced within two sites or fields of cultural production. I presented the way in which each category represents Sri Lanka and the influential social contexts and mechanisms underlying these representations. This chapter is an enquiry into the third category of travel writing, evidently divergent in its style and to some extent, purpose. In this chapter, I present some of the dominant characteristics of this group of writers who identified themselves as travel bloggers, effectively using the Internet as a platform to publish their travel narratives but on a more independent, personal capacity. As in the previous two chapters, I present the way in which they represent their experiences of travel and the places, people, events and culture of Sri Lanka, which they believe to be authentic. As such, I examine the critical, worldmaking role that they play in shaping what is known about the country its people, places and culture combined with an exploration of some of the social mechanisms which influence them to write the way they do.

The chapter begins with an introduction to the online travel blog originated in the West and presently being used globally (Lee and Gretzel, 2014). This constitutes an examination of some of the most characteristic features of contemporary travel blogging followed by an investigation of the Sri Lankan context and the attributes of the emerging young local traveller who also blogs. Then, I consider the type of travel this group of writers engage in and promote through their writing, offering what they identify as a more authentic, ethical and meaningful alternative to tourism. I, therefore, I present this group of writers as embracing anti-touristic attitudes and seeking authentic experiences. Their representations of the country are thus examined in contrast to writing for tourism or journalism. I discuss the tourism/travel dichotomy that is illuminated through the bloggers' writing and perceptions,

made explicit through the role they play as “travellers” as opposed to “tourists” and their promotion of the former through a critique of the latter.

Characteristic of the worldmaking role of this third type of travel writing is the bloggers’ projection of various inherent issues and difficulties associated with the places, people or events that they encounter through their travels; whereby they endeavour to create new, other or potential knowledges of Sri Lanka. As a result, I then shift towards an examination of bloggers as activists and the employment of an ‘activist gaze’ through which they filter these understandings. Based on the premise that their stories view the world from particular inherited standpoints, I then present throughout the chapter how this gaze is constructed through already stamped concepts and practices such as backpacking, volunteer tourism, community-based tourism and other established and alternative forms of tourism popular in the West. Finally, I bring together the writers’ social positioning in the Sri Lankan class system, which shapes their habitus access to cultural capital and privileges affording them their worldmaking agency to create through their blogs a distinctive representation and knowledge of the country leading to a different version/vision of Sri Lanka.

7.2. The Travel Blog

As an Internet application with mounting popularity Lee and Gretel (2014) define blogs as “online personal diaries or journals which are frequently updated web pages listed in reverse chronological order” (Lee and Gretzel, 2014, p.37). Originating in the United States from “*weblog*”, most blogs contain text, others constitute both text and photographs and yet others showcase additional multimedia content. Significantly, as they are publicised online, blogs offer access for anyone to read or view. However, in spite of their personal status, blogs do provide the additional capacity for interaction; with the opportunity for readers to make comments and for blog authors to engage in self-presentation through various practices and interact with people from diverse sociocultural worlds (Wenger, 2008; Lee and Gretzel, 2014; Pan et al., 2014).

Existing literature identifies some of the common motivations for blogging as entertainment, information, social interaction, self-expression, passing time and professional advancement. Bloggers may have diverse objectives and be led by equally diverse motivations for maintaining their blogs and working to various agendas (Gregg, 2006). However, they are often seen to play the role of citizen journalists where they work as publishers not only in creating their own content online but also distributing that content. In this capacity, they can also play the role of investigator and provocateur through their writings. Malleus and Slattery (2014) argue that blogs are also significant as a form of cultural production providing a platform for self-representation where individuals can write about their own life experiences providing a forum for self-expression (Burgess, 2006; Malleus and Slattery, 2014).

Van Nuenen (2015) emphasising on the continuous mutation and variation of the blog from static blogrolls to microblogs to social media profiles argues that this makes it somewhat difficult to distinguish what the formal boundaries of a “blog” are. However, in any form, they are still a widespread and influential mode of communication within which travel blogs constitute 28 per cent (van Nuenen, 2016, p.195). In this sense, travel blogs can be both forums as well as individual entries that revolve around planned, current or past travel and are commonly written by tourists and travellers to report back to families and friends about their experiences during trips (Pühringer and Taylor, 2008). As such, travel blogs have proven to be an essential source of information, offering a platform to share opinions and provide recommendations and advice. Prospective travellers base their trip decisions led by these accounts and most importantly, their image of destinations. As scholars in the areas of consumer psychology, marketing as well as sociology have paid increasing attention to the value of narrative and storytelling in communicating people’s experiences, travel blogs have also been increasingly recognised as a powerful medium of communication within travel and tourism (Litvin et al., 2008; Schmallegger and Carson, 2008; Pan et al., 2014).

As such, according to recent literature, blogs have not only obtained widespread popularity, but their mounting usage among consumers has triggered the interest of corporations along with tourism organisations that

have begun using blogs in their marketing agendas. As a result, blogs have been identified as the online version of word-of-mouth, and have been identified as eWOM or the informal communications that target consumers through Internet-based technology associated with the usage or features of certain goods and services or their sellers (Litvin et al., 2008; Tseng et al., 2015). Therefore, marketing through blogs promises opportunities for direct, interactive communication and thus has become crucial and of great interest to businesses (Pan et al., 2007; Pühringer and Taylor, 2008; Huang et al., 2010; Volo, 2010; Lee and Gretzel, 2014).

Travel or tourism-related blogs about Sri Lanka are in abundance on cyberspace. With the increasing popularity of the country as a tourist destination since the termination of the civil war in 2009, there has also been an increase in the number of international travellers who share their experiences in the country using blogs and other social media platforms. The use of blogs by Sri Lankan travellers and blogs written by Sri Lankans living locally, however, is a very recent phenomenon. The popularity and spread of Internet usage in Sri Lanka are demonstrated through the number of Internet connections that have increased from 202,348 connections in 2007 to 4,920,554 in 2016 (mobile internet connections have also been added from 2010) (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2017, p.164). However, since the Internet facility is still somewhat fresh to Lankans and restricted to major cities and the proximate outskirts, the Sri Lankan blogger as well as the Sri Lankan, blog user, are not only predominantly young but are also distinctively from the new urban middle-class background mentioned in both previous chapters. As such, they have, on the one hand, had the same privileged education in urban elite or private schools in Colombo or the suburbs with access to and the competence in the English language. On the other hand, they have also had access to the same lifestyles, habits explored in the previous chapters with opportunities to travel from a very young age, and Internet resources to share their experiences online. I discuss this further in more detail as follows.

7.3. Negotiating the Agency of the Travel Blogger

This chapter is built on understandings derived from interviews conducted with five independent travel bloggers as well as writers engaged in previously discussed forms of writing who were inclined later towards personal blogging. The perceptions of the bloggers are combined with three existing blog sites NadeePaws, *Three Sugars in my Tea* and *NatnZin* that four of the bloggers maintain. Based on the conversations with these predominantly young, educated writers who are from a similar social class background - just as the writers of previous chapters - it was understood that there is a trend among such groups to engage in what they identified as “conscious” or “responsible” travel. Their trips are far from long-term as all of them engage in full or part-time employment. Travelling around the country during their leisure time, these writers use the often-erratic Sri Lankan public transport and are prone to be in search of the unexplored and unknown, non-touristic destinations, sojourning with residents of small communities, thereby experiencing local cultures about which they write stories and share via their online blogs. Apart from Kandy and the tea heritage which was discussed with these independent bloggers, two of their preferred and frequently visited and cited places in Sri Lanka were Mirissa in the southern coast and Ella situated in the hill country District of Badulla. The former is a small town in the Matara District in the South of Sri Lanka, frequented by tourists, having begun as a backpacker enclave, popular for its nightlife, cheap accommodation and activities such as whale and dolphin watching. The latter has recently acquired similar status and popularity, among backpackers from the West, both of which have encouraged a trend among local well-to-do urban youth to travel to these destinations.

In the following sections, therefore, I begin to conceptualise the travel blogger as distinct from the previous two categories of Sri Lankan travel writers. This is not in terms of the socialisation, education or class habitus that brings them to their writing roles, which, as mentioned before, is identical with the two groups of writers discussed previously. Instead, they are characterised by their writing and representations of Sri Lanka that they create, which they believe are ‘authentic’ and contrast with the two types of writing discussed so far. Therefore, I investigate this group and the resultant representations of Sri

Lanka they create asserting that they attempt to produce new or potential knowledges about the places, people and events they write about through their travel blogs.

7.3.1. From Tourism Writing to Travel Blogging

Information conveyed through travel blogs differ markedly from other forms of tourism communication and marketing information created and circulated by companies and destinations. The independence of authors and the spontaneity of the commentaries and observations allow for reporting of both positive and negative experiences, whereas marketer driven communications are biased towards the positive attributes and features of places and experiences (Volo, 2010). For instance, the Director of Public Relations of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) who represents institutional tourism in Sri Lanka, explained their somewhat clear-cut promotional role stating “we need to ensure that we give the right message to the world. When I say the right message, I don’t mean the true picture but highlight the positiveness, not the negativity of it” (Interview with Senevirathna, 2018). Above all, this statement underscores tourism’s critical role in the economic development of a country such as Sri Lanka. As mentioned in Chapter Five, tourism is a vital source of state revenue in the current era of globalisation. This statement points to the way in which iconic images are created with a strong sense of visual meaning, providing tourists with a view of the destinations to enhance tourist consumption (Cohen, 1988a). Moreover, it illustrates tourism as a means of creating a positive national identity for foreign consumption with the expectation that this would also increase foreign investment (Lepp and Harris, 2008). This also substantiates Keith Hollinshead’s claim on the powerful agency of tourism as a political, constitutive force whereby management agencies or other mediating bodies work to emphasise certain dominant or favoured representations of people, places or pasts “over and above other actual or potential representations of those subjects” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.430). Given this, I argue that travel writing by the independent bloggers is an example of the latter “actual or potential” representations of Sri Lanka. As such, through this chapter, I attempt

to explore the underlying social mechanisms that direct or influence their ways of seeing and worldmaking distinctive from the two previous cases.

To begin with, many of the travel writers interviewed expressed their understanding of the difference between tourism writing as opposed to blog-writing, the latter which they often associated not only with honesty, independence, freedom and pleasure, but also responsibility, ethics and authenticity. Amali, a Co-editor at a citizen's journalism platform linked to a research and advocacy organisation, commented on tourism-related writing in Sri Lanka stating:

Commercial tourism writing is just massively surface level and...it is always missing the harsh reality. And people will say, oh! We don't have to talk about the problems we should focus on the good things, but I think that makes it incomplete (Interview with Amali, 2018).

As such, these bloggers approached their understanding or notion of what constitutes an authentic account of the country. Natalie, who works as a content writer for an international agency, has long been involved in travelling for pleasure, and during the time of the interview had only just begun blogging. Natalie affirmed that just as the writing that her employer produces, most Sri Lankan travel magazines are commercially driven and hence their content work solely to accentuate what she identified as "the nicer side of Sri Lanka" (Interview with Natalie, 2018). Natalie identified this as an effort to attract international tourists, gain profit and earn tourism revenue. She also proclaimed that this form of writing does not reflect the country as it is, that this is not the "actual Sri Lanka one should get to know" (Interview with Natalie, 2018).

The bloggers' critiques of published content of mainstream tourism bring to the fore the divergence between tourism writing and travel blog writing. Scholars such as Robinson (2004) who examine the role of travel writing in resonance with the cultural contexts for travel and tourism, argue that travel-related communication and literature have discourses that alternate between the personal, picaresque style of travel writing to the inherently impersonal or even commercial language of tourism promotion (Robinson, 2004; Azariah,

2012). Dann (1999) identifies the latter as marked by a distinct “tourist discourse”, authoritative, impersonal and euphoric (Dann, 1999). Drawing on both semiotic analyses of tourism and content of promotional material created by the tourist industry Dann highlights that tourism, in the process of promotion as well as in the accounts of its practitioners and clients, has a discourse of its own (Dann, 1996). Such tourist discourse is not limited to promotional material alone, and may, in fact, be present in travel writing as pointed out by the participants of this study and demonstrated specifically in Chapter Five. However, the primary intention of the language of tourism is to persuade, attract, encourage and seduce millions of people into becoming tourists and in doing so control their attitudes and behaviour (Salim et al., 2012). Hence, as explored widely in the Chapter Five through the historicised, romanticised writing that emphasises certain attributes and silence or represses others, it has been established that persuasiveness is the essential element in tourism writing which is essentially monologic, unidirectional, and authoritarian (Azariah, 2012; Cohen, 1988a) all of which the bloggers stressed.

Evidently, the bloggers interviewed, most of whom had contributed to tourist discourse at some point in their careers, expressed their distaste and dissatisfaction with this form of writing. One young traveller, for instance, stated, “we are not always the seas and breeze, and there’s ethical reporting at least in personal capacities” (Interview with Anna, 2018). Anna currently works for a reputed new Sri Lankan digital media organisation that has been made popular through social media. She expressed her willingness to work/write for this media platform as it is “focused on giving a lot of in-depth, contextualised content; informative content...not influenced by its advertisers and maintains quality and integrity over everything else” (Interview with Anna, 2018) as opposed to other mainstream media. She also articulated her belief that writing for a commercially driven organisation requires one to dwell on enhanced positives, whereas in her current position she has the freedom to bring up what she identified as a “holistic depiction”. Debating this further, she stated:

Sometimes yes, I do focus on the positives a lot when there are positives and when it's a nice uplifting story; but if it was a place where there's a lot more that people should be aware of when they are travelling to that place I would also always add those; like here is the issue at this place be aware of it when you're travelling basically just be a conscious traveller (Interview with Anna, 2018).

Anna's sentiments also shed light on the public service orientation of journalistic writing discussed in Chapter Six, where the representations are shaped by the requirement of the writer to inform, advise the potential traveller. Harriet, who used to be a travel writer for one of the publishing organisations discussed in Chapter Five but has since then engaged in blog writing contrasted writing for this organisation with what she contributes to her personal travel blog:

When you're writing by yourself for yourself, then it's much more honest I feel, and you can say exactly what you experienced and what you felt. For one thing, my state of mind is different. Like I'm not always thinking that someone else is going to read it, and these are going to be their requirements (Interview with Harriet, 2018).

Explaining this further, this participant distinguished between an article she had written about the Kandy Esala Perahera while she was a commissioned writer and an article she was working on for her blog during the time of the study. She asserted that in the case of the former she was assigned to write about how the elephants are dressed, the resulting product she thought was a typically positive, romanticised, glorified representation of the event. Harriet's perception of elephants she then revealed, has shifted since. She elaborated:

Over the years you know - I haven't written for a long time, it happened a long time ago - between that time, and now I have learned a lot about elephants and how they are domesticated and all the controversy about it, and so this article is turning into something else. Now, I'd rather write about the controversial stuff (Interview with Harriet, 2018).

On the one hand, I argue that the issues Harriet highlights even though having long existed within the country became labelled a 'controversy' in Sri Lanka particularly with the advent of International Non-Governmental Organisations post-1977 creating and popularising thereby discourses of conservation and wildlife activism within the country. The increasing access of the public to the Internet has also helped disseminate these ideas further and educate the Sri Lankan public on these issues. On the other hand, the shift in the writer's perception demonstrates the symbolic conflicts of everyday life - the struggle between symbolic systems to impose a view of the social world (Bourdieu, 1977). As deliberated by Bourdieu these struggles over the perception of the social world take place on a subjective level by trying to change categories of perception and appreciation of the social world (Harker et al., 1990).

The bloggers all expressed sentiments similar to those of Harriet. Heather, for instance, had worked as a newspaper reporter prior to becoming a travel writer and had experienced reporting on various natural disasters, crime, poverty, inequality and political issues in Sri Lanka. She conveyed how upon taking up travel writing soon after, she recognised the contrast in the writing and had felt her travel accounts were "fake, one-sided" portrayals of the country. Amali illustrated how she gained the opportunity to travel through her employment at the research and advocacy think tank. She explained how her work involved documenting the organisation's community development endeavours within disadvantaged areas around Sri Lanka. She had recently been appointed as the co-editor of their contributor based civil society, citizen journalism platform. Amali noted that the main task of the latter is "to tell stories that don't get told in the mainstream media" (Interview with Amali, 2018). As such, she conceded how, albeit her prevailing passion for travel, her work had considerably influenced her experience of travel and ways of seeing the country. She deliberated:

I mean the whole time it has basically been researching and following up case stories in communities that the organisation works with across the country and kind of finding out ways to communicate that; because those are the untold stories. And also, on my personal time I do a lot of travelling and I think one bleeds into the other, which makes me think that if I didn't work here would I experience the country in the same way, but definitely it does inform a lot of travelling I do; it definitely informs the way I read other travel writing because I find myself getting angry at a lot of the depictions that I see around (Interview with Amali, 2018).

These examples all attest to how these writers have inherited or inculcated with their standpoints about the country which feeds into their representations of it and thereby the worldmaking role they play. This is combined with the working of their new urban middle-class habitus and cultural capital. Their privileged education and class habitus have also afforded them the prospects to work for local and international NGOs or as English writers, for instance. Through interactions with these respective fields, they have once again internalised certain standpoints or ways of seeing. For example, all participant bloggers except two had begun travelling as a part of their respective employments. Whether it had been part of writing for travel magazines, newspapers, research institutes or NGOs, this is how these writers had first experienced independent travel aside from travelling with their families during holidays. Likewise, the bloggers had all begun expressing their personal, independent views of what they see first through platforms such as Instagram or Facebook. The urge to portray the often silenced aspects such as poverty, pollution or other socio-cultural issues has also been reinforced, in the case of some participants, due to rules and restrictions against incorporating these aspects into their writing by an editor or employer. They emphasised how this, above all, made them reflect and sought to expose these on a personal level.

7.3.2. The Blogger as an Anti-Tourist Traveller

The discussion on the distinction between tourism writing and blogging and negotiating the positives and negatives of destinations discussed above brings to the fore another underlying theme. This is the traveller/tourist debate or the tourism/travel dichotomy and how the bloggers represent an attempt to escape from the world of tourism and venture into the world of travel. Many of the bloggers interviewed expressed their allegiance to independent travel and their aversion to tourism. It was Paul Fussell's work *Abroad* (1980) that marked the apex of the travel/tourism dichotomy through the author's successful endeavour in highlighting the authenticity of travel and deploring its replacement by tourism. According to Fussell, the history of modern travel has transitioned from exploring towards travel and finally to tourism (Fussell, 1980; Mewshaw, 2005; Azariah, 2012). Nonetheless, as emphasised by Robinson (2004), researches such as the present, unravel that despite Fussell's lament that "we are all tourists now" travel writers still often struggle to maintain their distance from the tourist hordes and their status as solitary explorers and advocates of "real adventure", experience and arbiters of taste (Robinson, 2004).

O'Reilly (2015), for instance, illustrates that specific content and narrative techniques are applied to describe a travel experience as opposed to a touristic one. Accordingly, and as explored within the literature, a tourist is generally seen as the most pejorative from the perspective of the independent traveller. Tourism implies following the herd and mass travel is considered as lacking in the values often idealised by the travellers. Tourists are seen as not independent and or adventurous and not attempting to explore 'off the beaten track' and desiring mediated experiences as they do not want to get to know a place, local people or their culture (O'Reilly, 2005). Being a traveller, on the contrary, is positively valued and the word embodies ideals of independence, mobility and freedom, which suggests that the journey itself is the focus and not arriving at the intended destination. As such, specific content and narrative techniques are employed to describe a travel experience, as opposed to a touristic one. Evidently, all this creates a discourse associated with the narration of travel, which is distinct from tourist discourse. McCabe (2005)

critiques the conceptual category of tourist within literature on typologies of tourists and tourist experiences. He emphasises the importance of broader social discourse of tourism in shaping the way individuals define their own experiences and the way in which the term tourist is imbued in contemporary perceptions with “a culturally derogative and negative connotation” (McCabe, 2005, p.86). The author claims that all travellers, whether package tourists or long-term backpackers, have a natural tendency to identify their own experiences as unique and authentic.

This travel/tourism dichotomy and the discourses associated with the narration of travel manifest themselves through the writing presented by the local travel bloggers. Their resentment towards mass tourism and tourists and eagerness to become travellers was distinctively made evident during the interviews and was further solidified through their writing. Amali, for instance, in her blog post *Illustrated Travel Diary: The Hill Country* writes about an experience at a roadside Hindu temple, and she states, “the inside, as any kovil, is ornate and embellished with colourful detail. I can wander about in silence until a group of tourists walk in, loud in their exclamations, so I run out” (De Sayrah, 2015). Nat, the photographer of the blog *NatnZin*, related how as a Sri Lankan born in Saudi Arabia he used to understand and experience his country through the few trips made with his family as a young adult. He explained this as follows:

When you go with family it’s like you go in a van you stop by this coffee shop, you get down, you drink, you get back into the van you go to a tourist place, you click a photo from the van...they are that kind of travellers, which I am not (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018).

Nat stated that he saw the “real” Sri Lanka, the “other side” (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018) when he met Zin, who born in Sri Lanka had lived in Kandy her whole life until she discovered her passion for travelling. On their ‘about us’ page the bloggers narrate how they met in a backpacker’s hostel in Colombo and how Zin changed Nat’s perception both of ‘travelling’ and the country. Anna, who contributes travel articles for an emerging digital media organisation, expressed her fears on tourism’s adverse effects on certain places in Sri Lanka still untouched by tourism. She asserted “So when I write about places sometimes I’m not sure whether I want to write about those

places because then they are going to be picked up by mainstream people... not mainstream people but people who are going to go there and just spam it with their tourism" (Interview with Anna, 2018). These instances also illustrate McCabe's claim that individuals will inevitably and predictably construct their activities and experiences as anti-touristic (McCabe, 2005). This notion of setting one and one's experiences and activities apart from others could also be tied to class classification and 'distinction' in a Bourdieusian sense where these attitudes may be connected to placing oneself at an upper hierarchical level and distinguishing oneself from those they want to avoid (Bourdieu, 2010; Jacobsen, 2000; Buzard, 1993). Jacobsen (2000), for instance, affirms how it is often believed by anti-tourists that the capacity to have an authentic experience is proportional to the number of tourists present (Jacobsen, 2000, p.287).

Therefore, intrinsically tied to the tourist/traveller dichotomy and the anti-tourist attitudes of these travel bloggers is the widely acknowledged concept of authenticity which stems from the work of McCannell (MacCannell, 1973; 1976). MacCannell asserted that the modern individual living in a heavily industrialised, mechanised modern world is continuously in search of a pure, original or unpolluted whole (Noy, 2004, p.85). In other words, they seek a meaningful existential desire that affords the individual's identity with a richer and fuller experience of being that is bestowed a higher proportion of realness. Therefore, the judgement of authenticity is based on whether the place, people or experience is consistent with the traditions of pre-modern society (Zhou et al., 2015). Thus, inauthenticity is often associated with tourism deriving from its commercialisation of the spheres of society including culture, customs, rituals, costumes or festivals which become touristic commodities produced, performed or staged for the consumption of tourists (MacCannell, 1973); and "the term "tourist" is increasingly used as a derisive label for someone who seems content with his obviously inauthentic experiences" (MacCannell, 1973, p.592). Thus, through their evident anti-tourist attitude explained thus far, the Sri Lankan travel bloggers seem to be in search of the authentic. The way in which they seek authenticity and how they attempt to distinguish themselves

through what they identify as 'authentic' experiences and narratives will be discussed in further detail within the next subsection.

7.3.3. Seeking Authenticity

In the Western context, the search for greater authenticity is associated with long-term independent travel, which has progressively shifted from being a rare, unusual activity to a rite of passage linked to ideals of youthful freedom, personal development and fulfilment (Cohen, 1973; Wearing and Deane, 2003). Travelling for months or at times years, long-term travel ranges from young people taking a gap-year before further study or work to those who travel to escape drudgery, personal problems or responsibilities. As discussed within the literature review, two example forms of travel that provide alternative, authentic experiences to the mainstream are backpacker and volunteer tourism, the motivations of which often overlap (Ooi and Laing, 2010). O'Reilly (2005) argues that long-term international travel on a low-budget has been facilitated through economic and political developments brought about by globalisation giving rise to what is identified as 'backpacker' culture globally. According to Welk (2004) with their prestigious self-image and neo-colonial view of the 'Native', the Western backpackers favourably position themselves against the commercialised mass-tourist, constructing the category of the 'anti-tourist' (Welk, 2004).

Even though the travellers of the present study engage in neither long-term nor international travel, some of the characteristics of their travelling reflect certain significant features of Western backpacking and Volunteer tourism. Some of these can be identified as anti-tourism, low-budgets, low levels of advanced planning, the absence of fixed timetables, and openness to change in plans or itinerary and the search for unusual out of the way places and experiences (O'Reilly, 2005; Scheyvens, 2002). Also, because of the tendency for backpackers to consume fewer resources through their desire to spend less, they arguable leave a lighter footprint on the environment than the mass tourist (Scheyvens, 2002). Therefore, the positive impact on the host environment is often emphasised, particularly where this is closely aligned with volunteer tourism whereby the travellers consciously make a positive contribution to the host community (Ooi and Laing, 2010).

This long-term independent travel culture derives from Cohen's (1973) "hippie" or "drifter" travel to places like India common during the 1960s and the 1970s. Accordingly, a "drifter" shuns any connection with the tourist establishment, lives with the local people immersed in local culture and above all this type of young traveller according to Cohen is "a child of affluence on a prolonged moratorium from adult, middle class responsibility, seeking spontaneous experiences in the excitement of complete strangeness" (Cohen, 1973, p.89). These features reflect the profiles of the travel bloggers of this study and the ways in which they experience travel. Zin, for example, who is from Kandy, had taken up travelling after dropping out from a state university and according to her "shattering her parents' dream" (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018). She related how the parents had induced her to study biology at school against her will when she preferred the arts and humanities. Zin had no choice but to abide until completing school, after which she had revolted by leaving home to arrive in Colombo to stay at a backpackers' hostel. This is where she had made a friend who had convinced her to travel. Zin added that even though she had at the time of the interview begun a Humanities degree at a private institute in Colombo studying English Literature and Sociology, her parents continue to express their disapproval of her life choices and often tell family and friends that she is still at the state university. She continues travelling to remote places in Sri Lanka, usually on impulse with little planning or prior organising, using public transport and community-based, low-budget accommodation. While writing about the beauty of these destinations they frequent, she and her partner Nat also feel that it is their responsibility to protect these places, help the host communities and ensure they share the message of sustainability amongst their readers.

The travels that these bloggers recount contain aspects that are unheard of in tourism and carry a sense of remoteness, adventure and inaccessibility. In a blog post titled *Illustrated Travel Diary: The Hill Country*, on her travel blog, *Three Sugars in my Tea* Amali writes about some of the remotest places in the hill country districts of Kandy, Matale, Hatton, Ella, Badulla among others. Her blog, like most other travel literature, does depict the beauty of Sri Lanka.

In this post, she eloquently paints through her words a picture of the journey to the Sri Lankan hill country:

The drives to and around the hill country are some of the most beautiful the country has to offer. I know mountains are the standard for solid, but the scenery is thrillingly unpredictable in the way that the peaks suddenly give way to lakes and rivers, the way a plateau can suddenly hurtle down in a 90-degree drop (De Sayrah, 2015).

However, within her portrayal of some of the attractive, scenic destinations of Sri Lanka depicting what Natalie identified as the “nicer side to Sri Lanka”, Amali also narrates her travel experiences to distant corners of the country, some even inaccessible due to the lack of proper roads or bridges, which she does not hesitate to emphasise. It is evident that Amali seeks to raise awareness among her readers of places in the hill country that are unheard of or untouched by tourism. In doing so, she sheds light on the day to day difficulties of people, mainly the tea estate workers who dwell in these regions. In her blog post Amali writes about Kandy stating that “there are parts of Kandy that a lot of us won’t know, identifying the city by the standard landmark spots in the city” (De Sayrah, 2015), referring to predictable tourism discourse. Amalie adds:

We’ve felt the distance of the journey, just how long the road is from the town, and when the people begin to tell us of all the hardships they’ve faced, it makes the journey seem longer. The bright lights of Kandy and *Hantana*¹⁵ light up around the mountain, so high up they seem to ring the peak, yet those living so close to the summit have a different kind of story to tell (De Sayrah, 2015).

The phrase, “a different kind of story to tell” encapsulates the overall attitude and work of these travel bloggers in contrast to those explored in the previous two chapters. Similarly, discussing her travels, Natalie also commented on her search for places that are untouched by tourism. Elaborating on one such experience, she stated:

¹⁵ A mountain range south-west of the city of Kandy

If they had built that road, there would be more tourists coming in, and nobody has even heard of Ussangoda park. I travelled with two of my friends they are also very into that kind of thing, so we go to like the most farthest of places (Interview with Natalie, 2018).

Therefore, one criterion through which these Sri Lankan travel writers understand, or identify authentic places are those “untouched” and “unspoiled” by tourism often located in rural, but nonetheless touristic regions (Noy, 2004, p.85). As elaborated by Riley (1988) “the less traveled route and more difficult way of getting there has a high degree of mystique and status conferral” among young independent travellers (Riley, 1988, p.321). According to the bloggers, they seek to achieve through their independent blog posts a means to convey in their own words travel experiences of a more “wholesome” nature, where there is ample time to explore, no time constraints nor impending deadlines or editorial requirements and standards to meet. Natalie explained why this form of travelling is more enriching than that of tourism writers when they are commissioned to write about a place:

It’s two different areas of writing I guess; I don’t like this resort type of thing. I tried it once. I went to like a posh place like for Rs. 30,000 a night or whatever and people don’t even look at you. But I’ve stayed at *gewal*¹⁶ in a village in *Matale*¹⁷ where there was no place to stay, no B&Bs even you know, and we slept on the floor, we ate what they gave, and we got to give them some money. So that’s the kind of traveller that I am. I have a friend too she does beautiful pieces about the real problems at the ground level of Sri Lanka, and for me, that is the ideal type of travelling (Interview with Natalie, 2018).

Natalie identified her ideal type as “budget travelling” and explained that this allows her to learn much more about Sri Lankan life, culture and traditions. Natalie also argued that choosing village level accommodations or local homes during her travels directly benefits these remote, rural communities of Sri Lanka. She added that this allows her to help community-based

¹⁶ Houses

¹⁷ A district in the central province

businesses such as offering advice on marketing, setting up websites or social media profiles. These actions and perceptions of the travel bloggers, also point in the direction of volunteer tourism as its ideals are based on making a positive contribution to the social, natural and economic environment of places they travel to where both the volunteer and the host community gain from the experience (Ooi and Laing, 2010). As such, these are some of the ways in which the bloggers attempt to escape the passivity and commercialism of tourism and seek authenticity. (Hulme and Youngs, 2002; Azariah, 2012).

These young travellers' journeys are associated not only with a travel narrative of the external voyage to an authentic destination, but also a self-change narrative which is internal (Noy, 2004). Participants bloggers of this study also affirmed the effect that their travelling and writing has on themselves as being very profound and personal. Amali, for instance, writes in the introduction page to her blog *Three Sugars in My Tea* about her travels:

They change me – I believe my experience travelling, for work or pleasure, helps me to understand the world and myself more; what it needs to be better, what I need to be a better person for it (De Sayrah, 2018).

As in this case, it is argued that often covert within the centre of backpacker narratives lies the selves and identities of these travellers. Underlying the activities and accomplishments within their travel stories is “a moment constructed as formative or transformative of their self and identity” (Noy, 2004, p.79). Thus, self-change and identity are a vital component within travel narratives of backpackers, involving unique experiences of authenticity (Noy, 2004). For bloggers such as Amalie or Natalie, authentic locations and peoples are those untouched or unspoiled by tourism in rural Sri Lanka such as the unknown tea estates of Kandy, for instance. Therefore, in these instances, they not only seek places and people that are authentic but also “hot authenticity”, which means that at the same time they seek their authentic selves (Noy, 2004).

Similarly, Nat and Zin explained that through their blog, they also endeavour to promote a “different kind of travel” (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018). They

understand this to be “a kind of travel that is the best way to see the real meaning of people’s lives; where you get to see how people live, their struggles and actually get a feeling about the reality” (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018). This demonstrates their motivation, which, according to MacCannell (1973), is led by a “desire to see life as it is really lived”. Accordingly, he argued that in tourism, social reality is afforded a sense of mystification. These writers also seem to believe that social reality sustained through mystification may be false reality associated with conning (MacCannell, 1973, p.591). Therefore, they expressed their efforts to provide a “true” representation of Sri Lanka. They asserted that they offer a non-whitewashed, non-edited version of the destinations and people they encounter, which they identified as “real” or “authentic”.

For instance, the blog *NatnZin* contains a post titled *Why We Choose to Travel Despite the Chaos*. This blog post is created around a typical train journey from Kandy to Colombo, exposing the harsh realities faced by the day-to-day commuters. In this article, the bloggers attempt to draw parallels between what is often depicted in tourism writing about Sri Lanka and their own experience, which they represent as being imprinted with ‘chaos’. For instance, they begin with what tourists usually post on social media to shape people’s expectations of a country. They state, “what we see on Instagram are, people, in flowy maxis, sipping a king coconut in an isolated beach while the tiny caption says: *life in paradise*. Or a tropical fruit basket overlooking an infinity pool where it says: *how breakfast in an island looks like*” (Nathan and Zinara, 2017b). Here they allude to characteristic tourism writing explored in Chapter Five. Quite in contrast in what follows they represent Sri Lanka in a different light; the non-touristic day to day aspects or the untold mishaps that are repressed and hidden beneath the gloss that is created by tourism. They describe their train journey as follows:

When we boarded the next train to Colombo one hour later from Peradeniya Junction, we sort of had an idea about how tedious our journey would be. It was, to the date, the most crowded train we've ever taken. We were sandwiched. Squashed, almost! The train stopped at many stations it wasn't even supposed to stop at. That, too, twice, for more than 20 minutes. And all thanks to humidity, our clothes smelled "we need perfume. A lot! Bottles!" After 3 and a half hours barely standing on a train and being shouted at to move where there is 'space,' when there was none at all, we made it to Maradana (Nathan and Zinara, 2017b).

The narrative continues to explain how their difficulties prevail upon their arrival in the form of road closures due to Labour Day rallies leaving them no choice but to walk a distance. "And so, we walked. Along with the rally, along with those who thank the politicians for the 'glorious version of Sri Lanka' now we have. We walked until we found a tuk. A tuk in which the meter is 'broken' and the driver charged 250 extra for an Rs.150 trip to the hostel" (Nathan and Zinara, 2017b) they describe their experience with playful irony. The bloggers express how these are not unusual circumstances for the Sri Lankan commuter. However, the message they convey through their writing is that there is more to Sri Lanka than what tourism writing often tends to represent. They close the article with a somewhat positive note:

And here, we sit in the corner table of Clock Inn Colombo, sipping an instant noodle soup. Talking about all the memorable moments we had despite the chaos. About how we'd never see and walk on an old iron bridge if we never made the tedious journey...And even if we've to stand on a train for six long hours and eat vadai for one whole day with no chilli, we'd never trade the feeling of travel for anything else. And in travel, the joy lies in the journey. Not quite with the destination (Nathan and Zinara, 2017b).

During their interview, Nat and Zin explained the reason for using public transport for their travels as not only an effort at travelling on a low-budget but also as an attempt at being responsible travellers. They asserted that while on the one hand this reduces the carbon footprint and helps save the

environment, on the other it is one indisputable way of understanding the culture of Sri Lanka and grasping “the real meaning of people’s lives. You get to see how people live, their struggles and all that and to actually get a feeling about the reality” (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018). Again, as in the previous examples through the repetition of the words “real”, these writers attempt to express that what they experience and write about is authentic.

These examples all exemplify the significance of the theme authenticity, where the participants often use the words ‘real’ or ‘actual’ to refer to the experiences of travel. “Authenticity” is a term grown ambiguous from varied uses but was applied in the museum originally and has been extended to tourism. Thus, “authenticity connotes traditional culture and origin, a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique” (Wang, 1999, p.50-51). In an objectivist sense according to scholars such as MacCannell (MacCannell, 1973), it refers to an intrinsic property or quality that makes it possible to distinguish between genuine and fake, production and reproduction and original and copy (van Nuenen, 2016). In terms of MacCannell’s thesis, about truthfulness and sincerity in contrast to feigning, one could argue that the travellers seek out the untruthful and false front region that hides the real selves of the individual. This leads to the polarity of social life into what is taken to be intimate and “real” which is covered by what is thought to be “show”. This is particularly relevant in that these bloggers assert they write and represent “the other side of Sri Lanka”.

Having discussed this group’s experiences as travellers, it is also essential to focus on their role as writers/bloggers. Thus, not only do these participants experience what they identify as authentic Sri Lanka, but as bloggers, they express what they encounter through their writing. Nat and Zin stated that one of the main intentions of blogging about their travel experiences it is to make prospective travellers, both local and foreign, aware of certain places in Sri Lanka, as well as aspects of Sri Lankan destinations that are otherwise undisclosed in tourism literature or popular sources of information. Natalie also argued “for me, it is more a form of...experiencing travel and writing it to let people know” (Interview with Natalie, 2018). Natalie endeavours to inspire readers to travel and change their perceptions or the way they see and

experience Sri Lanka. She added, “there’s a lot of things that people can do as writers; there’s a lot of shifting of mindsets that we can do through our writing which I don’t really see in these big brands, the magazines and newspapers” (Interview with Natalie, 2018). This sheds light on the constitutive role of these writers over what is known about Sri Lanka and blogging as “a vehicle for the mediated articulation of identity and aspiration” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.428). In this sense, I also argue that within this agency to offer, new or potential knowledges of the country, lies an agenda to play an activist role, which I detail in the following section.

7.4. Worldmaking through an Activist Gaze

Even though a significant amount of research has been conducted on blogs, blogging and bloggers, relatively little work focuses on the impact of blogs and their influence as a political force. As noted by some scholars, blogs enable the democratisation of production (Baumer et al., 2011). It is thereby understood that rather than a few large corporations or publishing houses producing all available content, virtually anyone with an Internet connection can become a producer (Baumer et al., 2011). Farrell and Drenzer (2008) argue that bloggers do not appear to be very powerful compared to other actors in domestic politics – specialised interest groups, political action committees, government bureaucrats etc. – and there is no ideological consensus among participants, and it is almost exclusively a part-time enterprise undertaken as a passion rather than for money. Despite the constraints, it is the general understanding that blogs play an increasingly significant role as a forum of public debate, with knock-on consequences for the media, politics and policy (Farrell and Drenzer, 2008). It was observed that the travel bloggers of Sri Lanka while sharing their travel narratives and personal experiences also make an effort to draw the readers’ attention to certain social issues particularly associated with tourism and travel. Shaw (2012), for instance, identifies this as “discursive activism” (Shaw, 2012). This section attempts to explore how these writers use their platforms to engage in some form of activism for specific causes.

7.4.1. Focus on Poverty and Inequality

As already highlighted earlier, whereas other categories of writers consciously avoid negativity in their portrayals as they strive to ‘promote’ rather than disclose problems, one of the vital and distinguishable characteristics of the writing and representation by bloggers is their showcase and scrutiny of poverty and inequality within some of the Sri Lankan places they write about. For instance, in Chapter Five, the representation of the tea heritage in commercially driven magazines was discussed as being about the scenic views, the rolling hills, the tea gardens and predominantly a romanticised colonial past lauding James Taylor- the father of Ceylon tea and the British planters. Here, I attempt to shed light on how travel bloggers see and represent the tea estate sector, underscoring some of the grave issues experienced by the estate dwellers. As such, I argue that they give voice to some of the challenges faced by the estate workers due to poverty and inequality and critique how tourism has recently begun to exploit this for profit.

The Mountain People is an article about the hill country of Sri Lanka where the writer Natalie’s focus lies in an area in Badulla. Here, while elaborating on the beauty of the Sri Lankan mountainous regions, she comments on the difficulties of the tea estate workers in Sri Lanka. The writer begins her blog post with images similar to those created in tourism writing describing to the reader the beauty of the surroundings and indicating some of the must-visit places and activities:

But out here, where the mist rolls down the streets on all fours, in the belly of Sri Lanka, that’s all you see. If you look to the skies, you’re greeted with majestic mountains that loom over you like giants with white halos over their heads (NadeePaws, 2015).

However, she soon diverts the readers’ attention elsewhere to the focus of her story stating “but my journey there wasn’t only about the places, but the people...people living within the mossy layers of these mountains, almost forgotten” (NadeePaws, 2015). The large-scale tea industry and the 40-year-old small tea holdings in the southern parts of the country have earned some of the most undisputed economic achievement in Sri Lanka (Jolliffe and

Aslam, 2009). As such, and as emphasised earlier in the thesis, the 150-year tea heritage is one of the most emphasised and promoted aspects of Sri Lanka, particularly by the tourism industry. As discussed in Chapter Five tea heritage tourism in Sri Lanka is driven by nostalgia for the past (Jolliffe and Aslam, 2009) and a desire on the part of the tourists to experience forgotten cultural landscapes and relive them in the form of tourism at least temporarily (Caton and Santos, 2007, p.371). People who are nostalgic about the old ways of life attempt to relive them through heritage tourism. Jolliffe and Aslam (2009) distinguish tea estates in the hill country as significant among Sri Lanka's diverse developed attractions. They identify some of the abundant resources for supplying to the tea-related tourism experiences as nature walks in tea gardens, character accommodation in former tea factories, tea planter bungalows, tea museums, tea tasting and retail in cafes overlooking tea gardens not to mention tours of producing tea factories (Jolliffe and Aslam, 2009).

However, the successes of the tea sector has not been as promising for the plantation workers, identified as living under remarkably poor socioeconomic conditions (Chandrabose and Sivapragasam, 2011). What is more, as voiced by the travel bloggers, neither does the tourism industry that increasingly use the plantation workers and their lives to promote tourism in Sri Lanka. Natalie, Anna and Amali are three of the bloggers typically concerned with exposing stories of such people to travellers, making readers aware of the lives of these people beneath the colourfully clad, smiling pictures scattered predominantly on tourist brochures and websites. In her narrative, *The Mountain People*, Natalie states:

Hidden within the many layers of the hill country and away from the towns are the estate workers, living or rather, existing. I say existing because I didn't see much of 'living' going on there. The roads leading down to the estates are barely walkable and pass as roads only because there is no other platform for the people to walk on. There were houses – no – rooms, measuring 10 x 10 ft, crammed into each other and sometimes housing almost ten individuals in each family. Boys and girls marry young aged sixteen, and they too join the clans in these tiny houses. Water runs in their pipes once every three days sometimes, with rainwater flooding their homes most of the time (NadeePaws, 2015).

In an evaluation of the estate-dwellers, the Up-country Tamils, who constitute most of the labour force involved in the plantation economy of Sri Lanka, Neubert (2016) cogently argues that underlying the “frustrating marginalization” (Neubert, 2016, p.360) and the consequential challenges faced by these people lies the early British-enforced control through biopolitical administration. He argues that such arrangements within the tea plantations continue to structure life not only within their confines but extended beyond the plantations to the lives of Up-country Tamils who no longer work there (Neubert, 2016). It was during the early 19th century that the British colonisers first imagined the capitalist economic possibilities in the forests of the hill country paving the way for rapid and relatively inexpensive growth of coffee plantations for which Tamil labour from South India was imported, after the failure of which tea was introduced. These early British planters had endeavoured to create a labour force of bodies removed from all familiar, cultural and environmental contexts, maximising control and efficiency for plantation profit, making an effort to transform their bodies into “disciplined and docile cogs in the plantation mechanism” (Neubert, 2016, p.363). Neubert elaborates that even the housing was a means of controlling this labour force. Building on this, Atukorala (2009) asserts how the British had designed the line room (estate-dwelling) limited to an area of about 100 square feet. He argues that today little has changed and that it is estimated that 76 per cent of the approximately 800,000 estate residents is living in homes of 400 square

feet or less inclusive of one or two rooms and a kitchen (Atukorala, 2009). Likewise, tea being a perennial crop that requires maintenance year-round, the initially transitory labour force had become a permanent fixture in the hill country of Sri Lanka. It is also argued that the colonial notion that quality tea required 'nimble fingers' for plucking the bud meant that women and children had become a desired part of the labour force. As such, labour within these plantations had eventually become and until present remains defined by strict gender divisions between men's work and women's work (Jayawardena, 1984; Atukorala, 2009; Neubert, 2016).

Natalie sheds light on this issue in her blog articles as she moves on to elaborate a few specific cases about tea pluckers, all women (see Figure 7), and their intriguing life-stories tainted with struggle, the battles they face to access the very facilities that those in the cities consider as basic: health, education, roads etc.



Figure 7: A woman picking tea leaves (Abeysooriya, 2017)

Through these individual narratives, Natalie highlights one of the most critical issues in the country, often ignored. She emphasises the fact that even though over 50 per cent of the plantation workforce is constituted by women making their contribution to the economy significant, they are lower-paid than men, restricted to unskilled tasks, have been excluded and oppressed at the

decision-making level in the social, economic and political spheres (Jayawardena, 1984). Therefore, in addition to discussing poverty in the tea estate sector which is manifest in dimensions such as poor health and access to healthcare, or inadequate housing and educational opportunities (Gunetilleka et al., 2008) Natalie as well as Amali, through their blogs also comment on some of the persisting gender inequalities that exist within the sector. They discuss how women are compelled to work more both in terms of time and volume but denied adequate health facilities and the right to reproduction, leadership even at the grass-roots level in an entirely patriarchal plantation social structure. Natalie states, for instance:

Sri Lanka is evolving rapidly. Or at least the few major cities including Colombo are. We have roads and fancy buildings and education and jobs and houses and whatnot. But not many of these 'evolutions' have graced the lives of these people. They woke up and went to sleep in the same place and have been doing so for many years (NadeePaws, 2015).

Here, Natalie once again traces the issue of inequality, of development and the adverse effects of urbanisation; the fact that from an economic and cultural standpoint this phenomenon has surfaced from the spread of capitalist development and by-products of uneven development. One could also argue that her words relate to the concept of power. Poverty is often associated with powerlessness, and poverty definitions that go beyond quantitative monetary income-indicators usually involve notions of disempowerment in political, cultural and social terms (Steinbrink et al., 2012). The last sentence, in particular, alludes to the plight of estate-dwellers as a consequence of colonialism. The plantation system established by the British constituting the institutional arrangements surrounding the production and marketing of tea is characterised by a social system which was stratified along ethnic lines as a result of the importation of labour. As mentioned above, the plantation system was operated by the British as an enclave with most services needed by the labour force offered within the boundaries of the estate binding the workers to the estate and blurring the boundaries of work and home (Gunetilleka et al., 2008; Neubert, 2016). Today, the estate population is made up of the

descendants of these early migrant workers whose primary source of employment continues to be restricted to the plantations. As a result of some of these structural impediments welfare for these populations have been historically separated from mainstream endeavours carrying the inequalities into the future (Gunetilleka et al., 2008).

Natalie also brings to the fore the language issue that exists in the country. She states that this continues to cause disparities in the country with a knock-on effect on a chain of other difficulties. The writer claimed that whereas to the rest of Sri Lanka, the language issue is about whether the country should have two national anthems, it is far graver for tea plantation workers; “to the extent that they can’t communicate to a doctor about their illness or write a letter of complaint to the government officials about an issue or even communicate to the authorities about a crime like rape or theft” (NadeePaws, 2015). Natalie concludes her article imploring the travellers to understand this diversity of the country, which makes Sri Lanka what it is. She indicates that to understand the country, one needs to “understand what lies in the heart of Sri Lanka”.

Sri Lanka has two major ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and the Tamil. Even though both groups have their origins in India, within Sri Lanka, they have developed their own distinct identities differentiating themselves in terms of language, religion, ethnic origin culture and ancestral territory. However, as Herath (2015) notes, language policy and planning in Sri Lanka as in many other former colonies has been primarily shaped by and continues to be overshadowed by its history of colonial rule (Herath, 2015). British language policies prompted what Skutnabb-Kangas (1998) terms “linguicism”, i.e., the unequal distribution of power to speakers of a specific language over speakers of other languages (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998, p.10) which was mentioned in the two previous chapters in terms of the power associated with English and the establishment of the Sri Lankan middle class. Following independence, the Sinhala language remained the sole official language of the country for 40 years during which Tamil continued to be a regional language in the North and the East, causing difficulties for the Tamils functioning in the official domains within the rest of the country. The postcolonial status and functions of the two

main Sri Lankan languages, Sinhalese and Tamil, is one of the main factors that also lay at the heart of the country's ensuing ethnic conflict (Herath, 2015).

Amali also discussed another critical issue within the tea-estate sector: of the tourism industry exploiting the tea plantation workers further. She pointed out in the interview that the latest trend at star class hotel chains is to offer tourists the opportunity to experience the lives of tea plantation workers. She explained:

There's this one thing that is really horrible where you can dress up as a tea plucker and pluck tea for the day or something. That kind of plays on the notion that "oh I am having this experience that allows me to connect with the local people". So, it makes you think that you are having a local person's experience. You are having a less than surface connection, but this is outright exploitation (Interview with Amali, 2018).

Amali critiqued this latest trend within tea heritage tourism that has currently developed into offering international tourists the opportunity to reside in houses/huts designed like those of the estate workers (albeit with all facilities) within the same communities. She as well as Anna who voiced out against this argued that this was the tourism industry capitalising on the tourists' desire to see and experience the authentic tea estate and "life as it is really lived" (MacCannell, 1973, p.592). This further highlights how the subjugation of the South Indian Tamils continues to take place through the tourism industry, where they are caught in the objectifying gaze of the "Westerners" through enslaving external conceptions perpetuated by tourism (Hollinshead, 1992).

The bloggers' interpretation of the tea estates, in terms of poverty and inequality, point in the direction of the numerous links already drawn by scholars between tourism and poverty. Examples from within this canon of thought comprise of poverty tourism identified as "poorism" - a recent market niche which involves travel to impoverished parts of the world (Crossley, 2012). Even though tea estate tourism is a current niche to Sri Lanka tourism, getting a "taste of real-life" by exploring the people and landscapes that manifest squalor and poverty, outside the standard tourist itinerary, has today

become a priority for many tourists across the world. They are broadly identified through various terms such as “slum tourism”, “favela tourism” or “township tourism” depending on the different regions of the world (Dyson, 2012; Frenzel, 2014; Freire-Medeiros, 2009).

Contemporary poverty tourism had begun in South Africa in 1991 over the final struggles of apartheid where tours to townships and non-white areas in major cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg had been arranged (Nisbett, 2017). The origin of favela tourism is linked to the Earth Summit on Environment and Sustainable Development in Rio and was introduced by Marcelo Armstrong in 1992. More relevantly and close to home, slum tourism had begun with tours to the Dharavi slum in Mumbai initiated by Reality Tours and Travel in 2005 (Freire-Medeiros, 2009; Dyson, 2012; Basu, 2012). The United Nations defines a slum as a place where people have insecure residential status. This means that they do not hold a legal title to their property nor the land that it sits on. Slums are illustrated as having inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, poorly built housing and overcrowding (United Nations, 2016). Provided these factors, therefore, it is appropriate to argue that even though they are situated far from urban centres, the type of tourism within tea estates currently developing rapidly in Sri Lanka is a form of slum tourism.

According to Dyson (2012) slums, in particular, feature heavily not only in recent academic work but also in popular books, films and on television, and these mainstream presentations have considerably influenced the shaping of potential tourist perceptions of slums (Dyson, 2012). Amalie’s critique of this new kind of tourism developing and becoming increasingly popular in the Sri Lankan estates can also be traced back to concerns about the ethics of slum tourism raised by various scholars. Accusations of voyeurism are levelled against these forms of tourism, and it is heavily criticised and morally judged primarily by the media (Steinbrink et al., 2012).

Poverty tourism also has affinities with the more established volunteer tourism, the distinction between which lies in the level of tourist involvement in attempting to reduce poverty (Crossley, 2012). In terms of the latter, there is also pro-poor tourism, where tourism is used as a means of poverty alleviation.

In the blog post titled *Illustrated Travel Diary: The Hill Country*, the tea estate dwellers of Gampola - in Kandy - were widely discussed by Amali. However, the writer opens her narrative as follows:

The children are decked in colourful clothes, specks of colour on an otherwise wholly-green landscape. I'm sitting on a rock as the talk commences and, naturally curious as kids are, they're inching closer. One photo turns into another, and before I know it, they're dragging their friends-sisters-brothers-baby siblings before me to have their photos taken. Something about seeing them smile the way they do, even if they've so little to live with every day, is wonderful. Their mothers are shy, smiling from afar, just having come home from a long day's work in the hills (De Sayrah, 2015).

The discourses emerging from the writing by bloggers is of alternative tourism such as poverty tourism or more specifically, slum tourism or community-based tourism; and as made evident by the above excerpt, volunteer tourism where young travellers seek to combine the altruistic satisfaction of volunteering with 'real' travel experiences. Wearing (2001) defines volunteer tourists as "those individuals who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment" (Wearing, 2001, p.1). However, it is argued that these seemingly selfless contributions to local communities and people may, in fact, be attempts at enhancing their own image (Gray and Campbell, 2007; Wearing, 2001; Ooi and Laing, 2010). Therefore, Ong et al. (2014) perceive that volunteer tourism:

is reflective of the prevailing desire among a growing cohort of consumers to avoid conventional mass tourism with its negative connotations and to connect pleasure-oriented travel with a conscious search for meaning, thereby supplementing consumption with a tangible contribution (Ong et al., 2014, p.1).

The blogger's reflections on children also bring to light the fact that children are essential signifiers in the development and volunteer tourism industries to

create the desired effect on target audiences. Thus, such images have often become coded for humanitarianism. The 'starving baby' image is often accused of demeaning suffering children by exploiting their dignity and, when read as a spatial metaphor, of demeaning entire geographical areas or in other words, representing certain parts of the world as pathetic and helpless (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Manzo, 2008). Based on these ways of seeing employed by this last group of Sri Lankan travel writers and the discourses that emerge through their writing, I argue that these writers employ an "activist gaze" in constructing their versions or representations of Sri Lanka. This is based on their constant referral to and emphasis on problems associated with these destinations such as poverty or inequality and the need for 'community development' and their conscious efforts at shifting mindsets and bring about social change.

Therefore, I contend that the writers of this category partake in a hegemonic developmental discourse which has implications in colonialism and imperialism. As elaborated by Meari (2017), the British colonial administrators devised the term "community development" in an attempt to develop mass education and social welfare in the colonies (Meari, 2017). Accordingly, the British colonial administrators and theorists coined the term 'community development,' "out of their endeavour to develop 'mass education' and 'social welfare' in the colonies, in accordance with the colonial rule's 'dual mandate to "civilize" while exploiting'" (Meari, 2017, p.508). The self-interested political motives underlying Britain's concern with the social and community development of the colonised subject was foregrounded in their fear of the implications of independent self-government in colonies. It is, therefore, argued that Britain and its imperial successor, the USA, thus used community development programmes for colonial and neo-colonial political, economic and ideological goals and to disguise counter-insurgency activities. Such programmes aimed at encouraging capitalist 'free market' economies, reorganising the former colonies according to the interests of Western Imperial powers and promoting favourable ideologies and attitudes.

Aside from poverty, social deprivation and inequality, the Sri Lankan travel bloggers also shed light on and elevate several other issues. Prominent

among these are the adverse effects of mass tourism in Sri Lanka, as well as the cost of tourism development to its environment and wildlife, emergent within the blog posts as well as discussions with the participants of this category both of which will be examined in detail in the sections that follow.

7.4.2. Social Impacts of Tourism Development

Similar to travel bloggers such as Natalie and Amali raising issues of poverty and inequality, *NatnZin* is a travel blog that underscores several significant impediments associated with the development of tourism in the country. Among the two bloggers' main themes are how some of the traveller-focused destinations in the country have welcomed unbridled market forces and are consequently being overwhelmed by unsustainable development in the name of short-term profit. They bring the readers' attention for instance, to two places that were initially traveller-focused, mainly backpacker enclaves but are becoming increasingly popular and transformed into new destinations for the conventional mass tourism market: Ella and Mirissa. In terms of the latter, the blog post titled *Nine Reasons Why We Dislike Sri Lanka's South Coast*, plays a particular role in projecting a counter-narrative to popular beach tourism often portrayed within tourism writing. This is based on one of their own experiences in Mirissa (see Figure 8) during the off-season when there are fewer tourists.



Figure 8: Mirissa beach Sri Lanka (Paulis, 2019)

The writers illuminate the issue of overcrowding not only of tourists but the saturation of services that crop up to serve the volumes of incoming tourists. Featured on one particular photograph posted on the blog is a signboard at the beginning of one small bi-lane that connects the main road to the beach, listing all the hotels, restaurants, guesthouses, homestays adding up to almost 70 (see Figure 9).



Figure 9: A list of hotels/guesthouses/villas in one tiny street towards the village-side in Mirissa (Nathan and Zinara, 2017a)

The writers lament that as a result, local life, culture and traditions are fast fading, giving way to countless small businesses where “every house is a guesthouse, and every twenty-something young man is either a surf instructor or a beach boy”. They add:

We agree that tourism has brought them a source of income. But when every wee house turns into a hotel/resort/guesthouse solely to earn money, discriminate locals and treat the travelers with no proper hospitality, it's a big NO-NO. See: this isn't bashing about locals who run guesthouses. The foreign-run resorts and luxury 'hotels' are cringe-worthier. We wonder how local life used to be before the tourism industry took place in the island (Nathan and Zinara, 2017a).

Substantiating the gravity of the situation that the bloggers emphasise, a few months after their post on Mirissa, in May 2018, it was reported amidst extensive public debate that the Department of Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management together with the Sri Lanka Police tore down the unauthorised structures of 23 hotels and restaurants on the Mirissa beach (De silva, 2018). These establishments had gradually expanded their properties without obtaining prior permission and had neglected the demolition notices served on them on more than one occasion leading not only to the sudden loss of livelihoods to owners but also causing unemployment to many. Nat and Zin take a similar view on the popularity of tourism in Ella (see Figure 10), which has also been a very recent phenomenon in Sri Lanka. This was a subject that was extensively discussed during their interview.



Figure 10: Nine Arches Bridge, Ella, Sri Lanka (Cornelissen, 2019)

They argued that Ella is fast approaching the condition of Mirissa, with problems such as overcrowding, pollution and detriment to local culture. Elucidating this further, they compared their trip to Ella in 2015 with their most recent visit, stating how the locality is rapidly transforming. Nat described his night-time experience of Ella as follows:

When I was in Australia when you go to a restaurant say at the Sidney Darling Harbour, you see all white people. Everyone's partying, and everyone's drinking. That is the same I felt in Ella. I didn't see any Sri Lankans. It has actually become a foreign place. It was packed with foreigners, all the roads, all the restaurants were packed with foreigners. So, the local community people are trying to make a living by selling something (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018).

They also argued that some of the most beautiful beaches or places of the country are restricted to the pleasure of international tourists through the establishment of luxury or boutique hotels that do not accept locals. As such, they elaborated how tourism development adversely affects local livelihoods such as fishing when large areas are restricted to communities to make way for luxury resorts. Nat and Zin further stated how the large-scale restaurants that are increasingly being opened in and surrounding these areas are not benefiting the communities. Hence, through their blog, they attempt to raise awareness among travellers of the advantages of "going local" and visiting small road-side restaurants and cafes, instead of opting for these luxury restaurants and global hotel chains.

The bloggers' outcry reflects some of the prevailing social impacts of the development of beach tourism already widely discussed through literature since the 1970s when the phenomenon took over Europe for instance, in countries such as Spain or Turkey and later in the developing world (Parsons, 1973; Ap, 1990; Urry et al., 2001; Gu and Wong, 2006; Chen and Teng, 2016). Accordingly, social impact studies have been considered crucial, as support for tourism development within host communities and has been recognised as a fundamental precondition for a sustainable industry. As such, grounding tourism development on sustainability principles have been widely appreciated among scholars, governments and the industry itself (Tovar and Lockwood, 2008; Deery et al., 2012).

On a different note, some of these characteristics of tourism development emphasised by the bloggers also have links to some critical facets of Asian tourism exposed by Westerhausen (2002) in his work *Beyond the Beach*.

Here, the author explores the consequences of Western travellers in Asia as portrayed in the successful novel *The Beach* by Alex Garland and its subsequent movie adaptation. Westerhausen asserts as demonstrated in *The Beach*, how Western travellers often venture out into the world seeking novel or hitherto unspoiled destinations but become themselves agents of change by initiating a process that frequently leads to a “hostile takeover” of these destinations by conventional mass tourism. Since the 1970s, when counter-cultural alternative tourism first became popular (Cohen, 1973), the sector has grown into a multibillion-dollar business. Mirissa and more recently Ella in Sri Lanka are two such locations attracting young Westerners desiring to leave their way of life through long-term travel and opportunity for personal growth, adventure and self-testing at an affordable price. However, in regions such as Asia, a pattern has developed where otherwise viable alternative tourism structures are often destroyed as soon as the touristic potential of a destination becomes recognised. Westerhausen contends that unplanned growth and the cannibalisation of existing forms of tourism are guaranteed outcomes of the laissez-faire approach to tourism planning that prevails in many destinations in the developing world (Westerhausen, 2002).

7.4.3. Cost of Tourism to the Environment and Wildlife

Another consequence of over-crowding and mismanagement of destinations that the Sri Lankan travel bloggers emphasise, especially Nat and Zin, are some of the hostile effects that tourism often has on the environment. As evidence, the post *Nine Reasons Why We Dislike Sri Lanka's South Coast* carries two photographs of litter-strewn roadsides with visible signs of non-degradable plastics. These bloggers state that with the tourism industry “taking over the island as never before” (Nathan and Zinara, 2017a) pollution is one of the most adverse consequences the country does and will increasingly encounter in the future. They also highlight issues such as coastal-erosion becoming graver with time. They argue, for instance:

What might have brought the tourists here? What might have opened up the tourism industry in the South Coast? The beaches. Those sandy far-stretched beaches once existed. Now, there's only a little of it. Kudos, humans, you've killed it. There's coastal erosion. Plenty of it. Some parts have become narrower than ever that in some years, the waves may wash you over as you're sitting in a Matara-Weligama private bus (Nathan and Zinara, 2017a).

These phrases bring to the fore the activist gaze being employed and the writers' efforts at "shifting of mind-sets" that Natalie mentioned as the purpose of her blogs. Another essential cause the bloggers all expressed their concern on is animal welfare and protecting the wildlife of Sri Lanka. One such topic, also mentioned before that was brought up regularly by the writers during the interviews was the issue of the elephants – considered endangered and protected. Sri Lanka is home to 10 per cent of the wild Asian elephants. The controversy surrounding the animals in the Island is that not only are they considered a valuable resource for their commercial use or non-use but also conversely a pest and therefore a threat to the local farmers (Bandara and Tisdell, 2003). The animal-human conflict is a dominant issue within the rural areas of the country, but above-all elephants are a target-species for wildlife-based tourism in Sri Lanka (Ranaweerage et al., 2015). Within the centre of the controversy lies the highly touristic elephant orphanage in Pinnawala close to Kandy (see Figure 11). Home to more than 100 wild elephants allegedly abandoned from the wild or injured the visitors are offered the opportunity to watch the animals being fed and bathed in the nearby river.



Figure 11: Elephant Orphanage Pinnawala (Faiz, 2018)

The travel bloggers expressed their disapproval of this, stating how the animals are harmed through overcrowding or being tortured in the process of being controlled and pacified. Nat and Zin, for instance, noted how they do not write about such places and how they attempt to raise awareness among others such as foreign bloggers on these issues and to discourage visitors to such sites. Nat, stated that these places should be closed. He argued:

And whenever someone posts pictures, bloggers tell them not to because they chain the legs of these elephants. They keep saying that they get these elephants from the wild that they are injured and that they rehabilitate them, keep them there until they get better, but I don't think that's happening. They are just making money out of them (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018).

Cultural events such as the Kandy Esala Perahera are other instances where elephants are widely used and harmed as also stressed by Harriet when she shared her experiences on being asked to write a story about how the tamed elephants are dressed and prepared for this procession. Apart from this, the bloggers noted wedding tourism, where tourists are offered elephant-rides as part of traditional ceremonies that are no longer practised by locals. Overcrowding in national wildlife parks (see Figure 12) was also widely discussed by Nat and Zin during their interview where they shed light on the

harm this causes to natural surroundings and the behaviour of the wild animals. Zin explained one incident that took place in a wildlife sanctuary:

There was a bunch of jeeps that went into the place to get the best photos all of them with their cameras sticking out you know waiting for the best photo. Elephants wanted to cross, but they couldn't because of these jeeps. You need to maintain the ecosystem as well as help the tourists enjoy. You can't send in 20 jeeps and expect coexistence at the same time. You have to have a limit (Interview with Nat&Zin, 2018).



Figure 12: Udawalawe National Park – image of an elephant through a vehicle (Sidaraviciute, 2019)

The environmental impacts of tourism development are another widely discussed topic in literature. The adverse effects of tourism development to the environment are frequently linked to an increase in pollution levels, the destruction of natural resources and the degradation of vegetation and wildlife (Gladstone et al., 2013; Mbaiwa, 2003; Nyaupane and Thapa, 2006). As noted by Reynold and Braithwaite (2013), there has been a growing concern for conservation and the well-being of the environment over the past two decades. This, they argue, has caused a closer relationship between the environment and tourism mainly through several phases. As such, the two have been understood as an integrated whole, working together as well as in disharmony and opposition (Reynolds and Braithwaite, 2001). Similarly, Gauthier (1993)

asserts that from the perspective of tourists there has been an increase in the desire for interaction with the natural environment and increased value being placed on animals in the wild as opposed to those in captive or semi-captive situations (Gauthier, 1993) which is reflected in the local bloggers' concern for wildlife.

The last few sections illuminated the nature of the representations or the vision of Sri Lanka that these travel bloggers attempt to create. In respect to this, in her blog post *The Mountain People*, Natalie alludes to the activism projected through their writing and the conscious worldmaking agency of this group of writers. In bringing her narrative to a close Natalie makes a statement about how she attempts to change the perspective of the reader or the prospective traveller:

There wasn't much I can do. I can't change the rules. I can't change policies. Me holding up a board in Lipton is not going to change anything...What we can do is, take back what we learned from these people and make sure it reaches other people. People like you (NadeePaws, 2015).

The activist gaze of these bloggers is encapsulated in this last quote which also brings out the travellers' role as bloggers in enlightening the readers, potential travellers and society in general. This demonstrates their conscious engagement in worldmaking; or in other words their "active-projection or aware-agency" (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.431) in emphasising certain elements over others associated with the places and people they encounter (Hollinshead et al., 2009). As such, I argue that they shape the way Sri Lanka is seen and experienced by creating a new or potential version of the country counter to the dominant, preferred version of Sri Lanka discussed in Chapter Five.

Finally, the overall themes emerging from the participant travel bloggers' writing and perceptions discussed over the last few sections echo some of the most debated areas within the political economy of tourism development globally and in the developing world precisely. Some of the issues they raise are the significant discontents of modernity and globalisation, which

maximises the interests of multinational corporations and corporate elites, causing income inequalities in developing countries (Goldberg and Pavcnik, 2007). One central underlying theme therein is the deep-seated contrast between the city and the country, which, according to scholars such as Raymond Williams (1993) reaches back into classical times. The above accounts, especially blog posts such as *Hill Country* or *The Mountain People* reflect such powerful feelings that have been generalised on rural life not only as home to a natural way of life, peace, innocence but also backwardness, ignorance and limitations all of which the writers emphasise. On the contrary, the bloggers epitomise the city, which Williams asserts has gathered the idea of “an achieved centre: of learning, communication and light” (Williams, 1993, p.9). At the same time, the writers also reveal the worldliness, the ambition of the city, especially the exploitation of both man and nature which occurs in rural Sri Lanka; and the way in which the innocent and traditional order is increasingly being invaded and destroyed (Williams, 1993, p.64), in this case by international tourism.

It was in the 1960s with the exponential growth of tourist numbers that tourism was placed on the global agenda. Soon the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) was established in 1970. Amidst this broader economic context, strengthened by the dominant understanding that tourism was a labour-intensive industry beneficial to all involved, the idea of tourism as a means for economic development took off ground. Consequently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for instance, endorsed international tourism as part of structural adjustment and poverty reduction strategies imposed on heavily indebted countries. Thus, concurrent with the continuous and rapid growth of tourist numbers international agencies such as The World Bank, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), European Union (EU) or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) along with bilateral development aid agencies invested in and promoted tourism as a tool for development. However, the overemphasis on economics overshadowed the equally important social and environmental dimensions, some of which the travel narratives by the Sri Lankan travel bloggers emphasise. Critics and

particularly anthropologists have pointed out that tourism is not a cure-all noting that despite the discernible economic benefits tourism also affects value systems, traditional lifestyles, labour division, family relationships, individual behaviour, community structure, ceremonies and creative expressions (Cohen, 1984; Smith, 1989; Rátz, 2002).

Moreover, the cases of both Ella and Mirissa portrayed by the bloggers reflect tourism brought out as a dynamic force that homogenises societies as part of the process of commodification and consumption inherent in modern capitalism discussed by a range of previous scholars (Meethan, 2001; Reid, 2003; Mowforth and Munt, 2008). Again, among the problems raised are environmental sustainability and social wellbeing. Sustainable tourism has been widely debated and underpins the significance of local communities engaging in tourism as a significant contributory factor in community development and poverty reduction (Lasso and Dahles, 2018; Anderson, 2015; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008; Gascón, 2015). Therefore, it has been explored how tourism can be a double-edged sword, because of which livelihoods may be enhanced but also disrupted with adverse impacts on the environment when tourism infrastructure is developed without full consideration of their long-term effects (Zapata et al., 2011; Anctil and Blanc, 2016). For instance, the case of Mirissa as pointed out by the bloggers Nat and Zin is connected to controversies about coastal tourism development. Across the world, investment decisions regarding coastal tourism development are at odds with long-term sustainability, creating issues such as the absence of solid waste management, pollution, loss of marine biodiversity, drop in seawater quality that have ultimately impacted the attractiveness of local tourism (Anctil and Blanc, 2016; Fortuny et al., 2008). In this sense, broadly, the issues that these local writers raise, such as poverty and inequality, overcrowding, loss of local culture or threats to the environment are constructed upon already stamped notions. They can all be related to the widely discussed adverse effects of tourism, capitalism and corporate globalisation and the way they impact the social structure and social relationships in general across the world and mainly rural communities. Reid (2003) argues that globalisation has led to the disempowerment of people

living in many communities globally due to the absence of policy options available to the nation-state to protect them from the negative consequences of transnational tourism organisations. This, in turn, affects social and political stability because of their demands for the removal of market impediments regardless of the social and environmental costs (Reid, 2003).

Therefore, this enhanced focus of Sri Lankan bloggers on local communities, I argue, foreshadows the recent calls for ethical tourism that originated in the West stemming from all the above understandings. Baptista (2012), for instance, argues that more recently, the general antipathy towards tourism have led to appeals for the incorporation of development of pro-poor principles by the tourism sector. Commenting on community-based tourism, which some bloggers mentioned, Baptista argues:

Although the term emerged during the 1990s and has been widely used since then, there is no single and unanimous definition of 'community-based tourism'. Its definition has been blurred by commonplace ideas of promoting welfare for so-called rural, poor and economically marginalized populations (Baptista, 2012, p.129).

I argue that the present group of writers derive from the same social background to the groups of writers profiled in the previous two chapters. They have had the same privileged education opportunities, exposure to the English language, Western culture and lifestyles and other cultural resources that provide them with the Internet literacy, for instance, to set up and maintain their blogs. They use their independence and freedom of expression in maintaining these personal platforms. Nonetheless, in spite of their independence and freedom of thought and their ways of seeing I argue as before that "nothing is ever seen nakedly or found to be naked in and of its own raw/pure/original self"(Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432). As demonstrated throughout this thesis, I maintain that the representational repertoires created by these bloggers view the world from certain standpoints which are built upon constructed narratives important for these writers, those they associate, society or subpopulations they become part of (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018).

In this sense, provided their position in the new urban middle class, they have been exposed to the media-fed Western ways of thinking considered as politically correct which to some scholars, is an indication of cosmopolitanism – practising the institutions and ethics of world citizenship (Pieterse, 2006). The interviews with these bloggers confirmed that they had been engaged - through their employment (or their parents, family, friends and associates) – within international NGOs and civil society organisations functioning in Sri Lanka and hence conversant in some of the discourses I have emphasised throughout the chapter. Natalie, Anna and Amali, for instance, all have been exposed to a culture of the Third Sector of Sri Lanka. Amali, having started her travels while working for the Colombo-based research and advocacy organisation, has been heavily influenced by its terminology, concepts and culture. She, in turn, has influenced her friends Natalie and Anna. Natalie's mother, who also works for the NGO sector as well as being a journalist, has been a strong influence on her. Similarly, Zin revealed that she had begun an Environment Science degree at a state university upon the completion of her schooling, where her way of thinking may have been influenced towards environmental sustainability. These examples demonstrate how engagement in a particular field or the association of those who do impact their habitus through which they acquire the standpoints on which their 'activist gaze' is constructed.

Further, in terms of the class habitus of these bloggers and their internalisation of NGO discourse I reflect on Petras (2007), who argues that globally, NGOs have become the latest means of upward mobility for the ambitious, educated classes. With significant economic and political power over the so-called "progressive world" marking their presence in both rural and urban sites in Asia, Latin America and Africa, NGOs are seen to be frequently linked in dependent roles with their principal donors in Europe, the US and Japan (Petras, 1999). Emphasising that NGOs currently engage in the same function as the imperial ruling classes of "control and ideological mystification" the author deliberates that "NGOs foster a new type of cultural and economic colonialism - under the guise of a new internationalism" (Petras, 1999, p.434). Explaining the way this new colonialism works, Petras asserts that projects

are designed based on guidelines and priorities of the imperial centres and their institutions, which are then "sold" to the communities. As such, concepts such as gender equality, community based-tourism or sustainable development, some of which the bloggers are conversant in, derives from NGO discourse, relatively new to societies such as Sri Lanka.

Therefore, authenticity or inauthenticity, the frames of inequality, environment and wildlife conservation or sustainable development through which these bloggers shape their representations of Sri Lanka are a result of their internalised dispositions. In other words, the way in which the agents act or negotiate within these social surroundings or lived experiences are based on the habitus, or internalised objective realities constituted in the course of collective history (Bourdieu, 2010; Harker et al., 1990). The ontological assumption underlying this is in Pierre Bourdieu's terms the fact that:

all knowledge of the social world is an act of construction implementing schemas of thought and expression, and that between conditions of existence and practices or representation there intervenes the structuring activity of the agents, who, far from reacting mechanically to mechanical stimulations, respond to the invitations or threats of a world whose meaning they have helped to produce (Bourdieu, 2010, p.469).

As such, the cognitive structures through which social agents implement their practical knowledge of the world, are 'internalised' social structures. Accordingly, it is the experience of a particular class condition which distinguishes a given location in social space and marks a specific set of dispositions upon the individual.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter examined the last category of travel writers in Sri Lanka distinctively identified through this study, whose writing differ from tourism writing and travel journalism explored in the two previous chapters. As travellers, this group was seen to embody the freedom and independence lacking in the two previous categories. Through their experience and work

emerged a discourse of travel which was seen to contrast with that of tourism discussed widely throughout Chapter Five. I argued how the travel bloggers rejected tourism and tourism-related writing as distinctively persuasive, impersonal unidirectional and fake and expressed a clear anti-tourist outlook. Instead, they offered an alternative form of travel and representation of Sri Lanka, which they believe is not only “wholesome” and ethical but also real or authentic.

The chapter elaborated how these writers drift from their metropolitan centres to the periphery. They travel in search of authentic places and experiences as well as their authentic selves. On the one hand, it was argued that their representations, contrary to other types of travel writing, elevate the inherent problems or issues within the places they travel to such as poverty and inequality, environmental pollution and the adverse effects of tourism development. On the other hand, I also demonstrated how these bloggers embody the enthusiasm and willingness to make a difference in the lives of the marginalised, the poor or the discriminated that they meet in remote communities. These bloggers make a conscious effort to shift the perceptions of readers about Sri Lanka, shaping how the country and its places are experienced. Thus, I emphasise their employment of an activist gaze and thereby their constitutive worldmaking agency in offering “new” ‘other’ or ‘potential’ knowledges of Sri Lanka (Hollinshead et al., 2009) and producing a different version of the country to the previous two types of representations.

However, based on the understanding that worldmaking representations are never raw and derive from “already-stamped notions of what is important, scenic or beautiful” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432) I argued that the alternative ways of experiencing the country that the Sri Lankan travel bloggers offer, derive from pre-existing Western concepts such as ‘backpacking’ “pro-poor tourism” or “volunteer tourism”. What they adopt are these already stamped Western discourses about tourism, humanity, social change or development, as well as blogging - the tool with which they raise their arguments. I argued that the writers had internalised these a part of their urban middle-class habitus, cultural capital and exposure to Western lifestyles, and knowledge through a privileged education. Therefore, the way they

perceive the world through travel is carried out according to Western-centric canons of understanding. As elucidate by Hollinshead, “those who worldmake (each and every one of us!) are already aesthetically conditioned and politically pre-imbued with what is worth seeing and celebrating” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432). Therefore, I maintain as in the previous chapters that the way these bloggers see Sri Lanka and the resultant representations they produce is a coming together of their particular class habitus or “internalised externalities”, cultural resources and lifestyles they have been exposed to and the standards and conventions of various fields they or their associates have interacted with (Bourdieu, 2010).

Chapter 08

Conclusions and Implications

8.1. Introduction

This thesis was a critical enquiry into the influential, worldmaking role of the English language travel writer and the associated social implications within the understudied South Asian context of Sri Lanka. Harnessing conceptualisations of tourism worldmaking, which have burgeoned over the first two decades of the 21st century, this thesis specifically focused on travel writing as an everyday activity that has inextricably been tied to travel and tourism for centuries (Blanton, 2002). Through a contextualised understanding of Sri Lanka as a former colony which has become an increasingly favoured and frequented destination for tourists, the study capitalised on tourism's intimate relationship to post-colonialism, reflective of the duality between the coloniser and colonised and associated structures of knowledge and power (Hall and Tucker, 2004). It thereby examined the sphere intertwining thoughts and discourse, of "engaged concepts and received worlds," where inherited or fabricated character of the places, people, pasts and present of Sri Lanka was considered (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.209).

Thus, it has not only been a scrutiny of the dominant categories of representations or visions/version of Sri Lanka therein produced but also and most significantly, an in-depth analysis into the writers as socially embedded agents within the broader social, political, economic and cultural fabric of Sri Lanka, moulded by their embodied subjective dispositions and locations in society (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). As such, on the one hand, it enriches the established understanding of the declarative value of tourism and the power of representations and their role in shaping the way the world is seen and experienced (Hollinshead, 2004). On the other hand, it illuminated the critical interplay between the narrating self and the world they help shape. In doing so, it catalysed awareness on the social inculcation of writers and their agential meaning-making of received narratives, innovatively negotiating the

hitherto maintained dichotomy between structure and agency in the study of travel representations.

Thus, the thesis follows a growing inclination to consider tourism as part of an intricately complex social system, integral rather than extraneous to contemporary culture and social life (Franklin and Crang, 2001; Cohen and Cohen, 2019; Meethan, 2006). The work derives from the recent surge in focus on tourism as an inherently social, cultural phenomenon, from across the broad spectrum of the humanities and social sciences (Meethan, 2001; Hollinshead, 2004; Pritchard and Morgan, 2001). It is mainly built upon tourism being considered as a “value-added” industry relying on the production of difference (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Conceptually, and more precisely in its focus on the creation, purpose and meaning of ‘tourism knowledge’ this study is central in its contribution to the critical stance in tourism studies. Following this “values-led, humanist perspective” in tourism enquiry, it illuminated unaccounted and neglected ways of knowing (Morgan et al., 2018; Hollinshead, 2013) which disturbs dominant and established approaches to tourism enquiry that often institutionalise management and marketing led business models. Therefore, at the centre of this critical study on travel and tourism has been the consideration that the travel writer rather than merely representing the particular local context of Sri Lanka, its culture and populations, inscribes and projects these very places, people, pasts through their declarative and worldmaking agency (Hollinshead, 2004; Hollinshead et al., 2009; Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). It substantiated the constitutive power of tourism to privilege or favour certain representations over and above other or potential representations. Above all, these considerations shed light on the social significance of travel writing as a world-shaping or world-making force of social production with primacy in the acquisition, distribution and production of knowledge (Hollinshead et al., 2009). Methodologically, it accounted for the study’s personal reflexive stance in considering the researcher’s awareness of her presence within the contours of the research and interaction with the researched, revolving through insider-outsider spaces in the construction of knowledge once again in adherence to the critical tourism studies paradigm.

The thesis was presented as the answer to the following research questions: 1) Who are Sri Lankan travel writers? (2) How do they represent Sri Lanka through their writing? (3) What are the social mechanisms underlying these representations? And finally (4) Why are these representations created the way they are? As such, it encapsulated three distinctive categories of representation constituting multiple gazes that all characterise divergent thoughts and discourses and socially learned ways of seeing and standpoints. It then supplemented these understandings with a sociological evaluation of the processes of 'inculcation' underlying these distinct types of writing, representation and their creators: professional tourism writers, travel journalists and travel bloggers. Through this concluding chapter, I synthesise the key findings of this research and bring the entire cohort of writers and their worldmaking role and agency in conversation with each other as answers to the above research questions.

8.2. The Representative and Worldmaking Value of Travel Writing

Foremost, in its engagement with distinctive representations or visions/versions of Sri Lanka created and projected, this thesis was premised on the representative value of tourism which came to be understood and investigated substantially since the 1990s (Hollinshead, 2004). As discussed within the review of literature, this derives from the recognition that space and place are socio-cultural constructions rather than physical locations and that tourist spaces and places need to be symbolically differentiated from the ordinary and mundane and contrasted as extraordinary (Meethan, 2001). Spearheaded by these understandings, images of places, people and culture created through various media such as television, websites, brochures or advertisements have been studied for their power to shape expectations of travellers and thereby to construct these very places, people, cultures or pasts, particularly concerning touristic marketing of these subjects.

This thesis specifically focused on one such medium - travel writing, the production and influence of which has not been adequately investigated under sociological scrutiny. The literary by-product of travel constituting a compelling

urge to describe journeys to new and unexplored destinations travel writing entertains a long and rich history. In bestowing through written text and images distant and foreign destinations to readers at home, it has inherently been tied to early Western exploration and colonial expansion (Edwards and Graulund, 2011; Pratt, 1992; Blanton, 2002; Holland and Huggan, 1998; Thompson, 2016). More recently, its pre-eminence in the selection and production of place in and through tourism following discursive patterns have come to be gradually recognised (Holland and Huggan, 1998; Galasiński and Jaworski, 2003; Simmons, 2004; Thompson, 2016). As such, travel writing has been understood to have sustained an imperialist perception by which the enthusing otherness of foreign or non-European places, populations and their pasts have been presented (Holland and Huggan, 1998). Most significantly, Edward Said's Orientalism has been instrumental in connecting travel writing to the colonial project reinforcing its place as a primary source within and for postcolonial studies (Lindsay, 2016; Stone, 2018). This substantiates its criticality to the understudied, non-Western, postcolonial context of Sri Lanka, having been under European influence between 1505 and 1948 and thereafter gaining and increasing in popularity as a tourist destination. This nexus between tourism and postcolonialism is predominantly scrutinised through the first of three versions of Sri Lanka projected through travel writing representations examined through this thesis as answer to the first of its research questions. As follows, I briefly condense the three types of representations thereby encountered.

The first form of representation produced by Sri Lankan travel writers, identified as 'tourism writing' was examined in Chapter Five through a critical inquiry into some of the exemplary travel narratives published in *Explore Sri Lanka* and *Serendib* magazines. As a result of its intrinsic link to tourism, this version of the country thereby weaved was demonstrated as working chiefly within the broader field of international tourism being marked by an underlying agenda to promote the country to the potential global tourist. This was seen as being tied to building a national brand image for Sri Lanka (Youn Kim and Yoon, 2013) or as emphasised by Bell and Lyall (2011) as part of an effort by which "nations globally communicate versions of themselves that enhance

their image and foster international interest for trade and tourism” (Bell and Lyall, 2002, p.171). Therefore, this category of writing is grounded on competition between destinations within an international marketplace where each strives towards attractive and unique representations to display a country’s diversity and complexity (Fesenmaier and MacKay, 1996; Keskitalo et al., 2017). I established this as the reason these particular representations fail to capture entire beliefs, ideas and impressions that writers hold of the destination, where certain aspects are richly celebrated or even spectacularised while others are omitted or repressed (Fesenmaier and MacKay, 1996; Hollinshead et al., 2009).

I argued that the writers employed to produce this particular type of representation or version of Sri Lanka consciously engage a Western way of seeing and promotional gaze (Urry, 2001) pre-arranged and structured by centuries of images built upon messages of colonialism (Said, 2003; Echtner and Prasad, 2003). The examined narratives were seen to elevate the natural landscapes, history and culture through a romanticised, historicised or glorified frame, substantiating the preservation of the traditional, and “othering” in tourism grounded in Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978; Hall and Tucker, 2004). As such, the link between tourism and memory manifested itself most evidently within the representation of tea heritage tourism, where tea-related cultural landscapes were seen to be preserved as embodiments of collective memories commodified to attract tourists (Marschall, 2012). I argued that these writers, as part of promoting the tea heritage works to instil in the reader nostalgia for a lost past or better place. Nostalgia is a crucial point of conjunction in the tourism-memory nexus by means of which heritage tourism often promises an escape from the hectic rhythm of the mundane, quotidian to a different place or time (Bendix, 2002; Marschall, 2012). It was thereby demonstrated the way in which tourism writers add values of “pastness” or produce “hereness” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p.153), difference or indigeneity to places and practices no longer occupied or functioning to ensure they survive (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

As such, on the one hand, I substantiated Urry’s conceptualisation that going away and ‘gazing’ at the myriad places, people or the culture they encounter,

the travel writer not only 'looks at' but rather classifies, orders, shapes the object of the gaze. This is undertaken through a particular filter of notions, expectations and desires (Urry, 1990; Urry and Larsen, 2011) that they have been socially inculcated into. On the other hand, this encapsulated the preservation of the traditional and fixing of destinations firmly in the past under a promotional gaze in an attempt to create and maintain a distinction or 'otherness' for the benefit of the tourist. In the process, professional tourism writing employs its own language of promotion stamped by persuasive, unidirectional tourism discourse. The study affirmed how tourist ways of seeing are distinct from other representations given that places are reinvented, reproduced and reshaped according to the image of tourism creating its own discourse within this act of promotion (Dann, 1996). This also brings to the fore the "‘fantasmatics’ or the workings of the imagination as part of “global tourism image-making, rhetoric mongering, and discourse articulations” that Hollinshead alludes to in relation to tourism as a force of social production (Hollinshead, 1998 in Salazar, 2012, p.869).

The chapter also examined the association between the power and legitimacy held by tourism-related publishers that produce this form of representation within the field of tourism promotion. I argued how through their exercise of this authority the tourism writers consciously mobilise a particular version of Sri Lanka and silence, overpower others. As a result of this very authority, the representations these writers create in turn become favoured, dominant and legitimised. This argument established the worldmaking agency of tourism in the selection and production of place and space (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.430). Based on this I also reflected on this entire process amidst a broader drive for profit and tourist revenue and how travel writing also becomes an integral element of economic production driven by market demand (Keul and Eisenhauer, 2019). As such, this reflected how tourism becomes contrived or illusionary brought on through the need to promote and as part of a process of commercialisation. As elaborated earlier in the thesis, this also affirmed how tourism writers are part of a process through their exoticised, romanticised representations of the country whereby tourism becomes a closed, self-perpetuating arrangement of illusions (Boorstin, 1992).

Chapter Six conceptualised the second category of representation constituting travel journalism characterised by its association to the field of journalism and largely domestic readership. Here, I examined the employment of a journalistic gaze led by norms, principles or conventions of the field of journalism through which journalists filter their notions about the country and shape their writing and representations. In other words, these writers abide by their duty to report on "things as they are" as journalists, as part of the public service precept of journalism to offer the reader vital, useful and factual information about places, people or culture (Tuchman, 1978; McGaurr, 2013; Greenman, 2012; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003). Thus, I argued that the writers' self-identification as journalists and their work as providing a public service, influence their delivery of information-rich features of places, cultures or events that are more accessible and familiar to locals. As a result, journalistic writing was also illustrated as largely impersonal entailing a flat, linear structure or chronological reporting of events with factual descriptions entirely outside the mind of the traveller, again eliminating the feelings, perceptions and beliefs of the writers (McGaurr, 2013).

However, it was also postulated through this chapter that an increased market orientation elicits the influence of public relations - both corporate and government - on journalism forming a relationship between the tourism industry and its efforts at attracting travel journalists to destinations events and establishments for media exposure and publicity (Dore and Crouch, 2003). As a result, the promotional agenda once again surfaces whereby certain spectacularised, decorated representations of these places are formulated building on the Western gaze of tourism discourse discussed above. Consequently, the writing becomes characterised by persuasive and unidirectional writing and exoticised romanticised representations. This affirmed that representations created within travel journalism are a result of a complex combination of journalistic values and practices, broader trends and transformations within the field as well as commercial imperatives rather than individual choices. Finally, considering the ways in which Sri Lanka is represented in English newspapers is profoundly tied to the use of language, I combined the Sri Lankan English writer and reader in a discussion of the

significance of the English language within a postcolonial setting. I formed links between the establishment of journalism and the early Western colonial influence in Sri Lanka and the significant implication this has to social class which will be taken up for further evaluation in the subsequent section.

The third category of representations encountered through the study was presented in Chapter Seven encompassing a version of Sri Lanka classified as travel blog writing. These narratives were presented as independent, personal accounts reflecting thematic concerns and writers' own philosophical biases and preconceptions rather than romantic or spectacularised descriptions of places, people and events. The representations created were portrayed as inclusive of elements and spaces of Sri Lanka that are otherwise hidden or silenced within dominant tourism writing and ordinarily not celebrated. Some of these include the tea estate workers within tea heritage tourism, pollution and over-tourism associated with beach destinations or the domestication and torture of elephants within cultural events such as the Kandy Esala Perahera. These narratives were seen to encompass both beauty of nature and landscapes combined with the hardship, struggle and adversities borne by residents and the surrounding environments. Therefore, I argued that these writers employed an 'activist gaze' filtered through notions such as human rights, environmental conservation, wildlife protection, cultural preservation etc. led by their eagerness to bring about social change which shapes their writing and representations.

Underlying this particular gaze are notions pertaining to travel and anti-tourism surfacing persistently. The writers were seen to propagate a discourse of 'good versus bad' by placing themselves and their experiences as culturally and personally rewarding, environmentally friendly, and socially benevolent for local host communities (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2003). With close proximity to Cohen's 'drifters' the bloggers were seen as venturing the furthest away from the beaten track and accustomed ways of life, rejecting the ordinary tourist experiences as fake immersing themselves in host communities (Cohen, 1972) in search for the 'authentic'. Thus, they projected articulations on tourism and the presence of tourists as resulting in a loss of genuine, real culture. Here, I also shed light on the bloggers' notion of authenticity which

they associate with travel and reject tourism as inauthentic. I argued that this reflects the MacCannellesque thesis that tourism leads to the commoditisation of spheres of life in society that destroys their authenticity (MacCannell, 1973; Cohen, 1988a). The bloggers' reflections attest to local places and culture being transformed into touristic commodities and services produced or performed for touristic consumption. They were therefore, seeking authenticity in places "untouched" and "unspoiled" by tourism often located in rural hard to reach regions (Noy, 2004; Riley, 1988). As such, their representations, on the one hand, enlighten the reader of the myriad social and economic issues associated with the places and populations that they encounter and thereby channel conscious, responsible and ethical travel. On the other hand, and most significantly they work to inventively offer a new, potential version of Sri Lanka, of its places, people and culture (Hollinshead et al., 2009).

Upon the identification and elaboration of the three distinct types of representations of the country created by Sri Lankan travel writers, the thesis then examined these representations in association with the theoretical debates into their declarative power and world-shaping, world-making capabilities. Thus, the diverse ways through which travel writing produced by local writers work as more than mere representations of its places, people or culture but arguably as also having the power to make, re-make or de-make these very subjects was thereby explored (Hollinshead et al., 2009). Through an investigation into all three distinct types of representations, I substantiated the critical worldmaking role that travel writers play whereby different visions or versions of the country are ultimately created and projected, across which the readers and potential travellers ultimately understand, know and experience the country.

I established that tourism writers channel the authority of the organisations they work for to reproduce, through the engagement of a promotional gaze, deep-rooted colonial discourse and Western ways of seeing that have been passed down for centuries. They are engaged in "projective promotional activities [that] privilege particular dominant/favoured representations" (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.430) in the context of marketing Sri Lanka to the world as part of international tourism promotion. This substantiated the

inventive power of tourism and its contribution to the production of society and space (Meethan, 2001; Hollinshead et al., 2009). The travel journalists engaging a journalistic gaze driven by the rules, conventions and standards of journalism were seen as being involved in reporting factual information about places, people and events of Sri Lanka that in turn lead to another distinct version of Sri Lanka. For instance, the writers' conviction that journalism is a public service (Rosenkranz, 2016; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2003; McGaurr, 2013), was seen to influence their judgements on the selection of places, events or information to write about. This was seen as shaping their storylines, in turn, impacting the way Sri Lanka is represented. On the contrary, I corroborated the "active projection or aware-agency" (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.431) of the third category of writers – the travel bloggers were seen as inventively and consciously involved in creating new, other or potential representations of Sri Lanka. Thus, I substantiated that as part of this worldmaking role these are not merely representations but incorporate a process of selecting, organising, classifying, channelled through the employment of different gazes thereby making, re-making or de-making the country, its places, populations, past or culture.

Accordingly, the thesis substantiated the two main capacities through which the representative and worldmaking power of travel writing function within the context of Sri Lanka. Foremost, it illuminated the capacity or ability of travel writing through the power, authority and agency of tourism to emphasise or highlight a particular preferred version of Sri Lanka while simultaneously using this very authority and power to silence or overpower other or unwanted interpretations of these very places, people or pasts. Secondly, I shed light on the engagement of the creative and inventive agency positively by individual travel bloggers on a personal capacity, using their own perspective to manifest new, fresh or corrective visions or perspectives about people, places and pasts of the country. Therefore, this declarative influence of travel writing was examined as having a constitutive function over knowledge about destinations around Sri Lanka, its places, people, culture or pasts (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.428).

However, these understandings on the way Sri Lanka is represented by different groups of local travel writers and the creative, worldmaking power of these representations does not sum up the conceptual contribution extended through this study. More significantly, it also incorporated the different standpoints or ways of seeing underlying the three constructed gazes constituting the different versions of Sri Lanka. It encapsulates the way in which the writers receive these through interactions with various organisations, interest groups, subpopulations or society that they associate (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). In the following section, I present the conclusions derived from this exploration of this process of 'social inculcation'.

8.3. Inculcation: Allusions to Worldmaking and Social Class

As elaborated thus far, this study portrayed three distinct ways in which Sri Lanka is represented by local English language travel writers and the critical representative and worldmaking value of these versions they construct of the country. Conceptualisations of tourism worldmaking derive from Nelson Goodman's initial understanding, applied mainly within the sphere of art and aesthetics in the 1970s. Goodman's interpretation in this sense is useful in its assumption that the world we - or in the present case the travel writers - experience, is always already made from other worlds. In Goodman's own terms "worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand: the making is a remaking" (Goodman, 1978, p.6). Accordingly, perception is affected by interpretations that are made through habit, culture and theory, where a line between the actual nature of an experience and the description of it given by the subject is not drawn. Nünning et al. (2010) engaged in expanding or supplementing the Goodmanian framework through their collected work *Cultural ways of worldmaking* also assert that he aimed to "explore the process involved in building a world out of others" (Nünning et al., 2010).

In this sense, Hollinshead et al. (2009) appropriate into tourism the Goodmanian interpretation that representations rather than merely copying reality, are in fact a manufacturing force; that "the eye comes always ancient to its work observed by its own past and by old and new insinuations of the

ear, nose, tongue, lungs, heart, and brain” (Goodman 1969 cited in Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432). Most insistently, for Goodman, those who represent reality in art or those who arrive at judgements about aesthetics are not self-powered or do so by acting alone but in fact work as compliant members of “a complex and capricious organism”. Borrowing from this, Hollinshead et al. (2009) suggest that those who represent reality in the context of travel and tourism do so in a similar fashion. As presented in the chapters leading up to this, they are pre-programmed in their gaze and engage in a worldmaking role having been “already aesthetically conditioned and politically pre-imbued” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432) with what is important, worth seeing, writing about and celebrating; “regulated organically by (carried) prejudice and by (inherited) notions of need”. They assert thus that acts of worldmaking are acts of “inculcation” (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018).

However, through this study, I expanded on this very notion; a relatively neglected area of conceptualisation within the worldmaking theoretical framework. I did so, by examining the above mentioned ‘complex and capricious organism’ that the Sri Lankan travel writers are entwined in and attempted to scrutinise the different structural influences this afforded on their agency and the subsequent process of negotiation. As part of this, I discussed the moulding of embodied dispositions identified as habitus or socialised subjectivity alternatively identified by Pierre Bourdieu as a “structuring principle” that enables agents to negotiate continuously transforming situations and circumstances (Bourdieu, 1977, p.95). I elaborated how these are acquired through the influence of diverse social settings working as “subjective adjustments” to external constraints, positions and circumstances. Therefore, it was crucial to examine the way in which these writers live and work within certain social contexts, structures or settings and consider their personal histories and family settings, tastes, lifestyles and education. In other words, I evaluated the social worlds that pre-exist representations (Bourdieu, 2010) investigating the “external constraints bearing on interactions and representations” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.11). This scrutiny combining insights on habitus, capital and field led to significant implications of social class that underline the variations in representations by Sri Lanka the

travel writers and the worldmaking role they play through their distinctive forms of writing.

As such, I scrutinised all three categories of English language travel writers as social agents embedded within much broader social, contextual mechanisms all of which were seen to significantly shape their subjectivity and in turn influence their worldmaking agency. In the process, one of the most crucial factors illuminated was the critical nexus between travel writing, the English language and social class in Sri Lanka. This was illustrated through the resemblance in personal histories, family backgrounds and cultural capital that each writer is exposed to from childhood. These findings led to a single social class and the understanding that travel writing is a 'privilege' constrained to this particular class background and habitus. Following Hettige (1996) on social class in Sri Lanka, I associated all these writers as deriving from the new urban middle class which emerged out of the economic liberalisation of the country in 1977 (Hettige, 1996).

Dissecting their shared class background, I emphasised how the writers have all been exposed to the same privileges and influential resources identified as cultural capital. These were seen as the primary factors and foundation underlying not only their aspirations to have become travel writers but also their ensuing success and adjustment to the position and writing role. I discussed some of the other class-based aspects that the writers have in common. They consist of shared lifestyle, tastes and habits such as reading in English, access to Western literature and culture. I evaluated the role played by institutions such as the British Council or the American Centre, that have helped instigate familiarity with Western culture, lifestyles and tastes among these writers from an early age, all distinctive signs that classify them as being part of the new urban middle class (Hettige, 1996).

One such significant aspect laid out over the relevant chapters was education in elite primary and secondary schools and how this has contributed to their competence in the English language. Accordingly, I argued how these writers had all attended a select number of private and government elite schools, including some that were established during the British colonial period maintaining high standards of the English language, often as a medium of

study (Gunasekara, 2015). Also associated with this is their opportunity to study and appreciate English Literature as a subject, a privilege restricted to these schools, not accessible to a majority. Based on this example, I underlined the power and authority of language arguing the parallels between the emergence of English as an academic discipline and the 19th-century colonial forms of imperialism (Batsleer, 1985; Ashcroft et al., 1989; Hall and Tucker, 2004). I discussed the significant role that schools play in conserving cultural pasts and social and cultural inequalities such as class (Bourdieu, 2010; Savage, 2015). Elaborating on established associations between English language and class in Sri Lanka, I considered how language becomes a medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is established and perpetuated (Ashcroft et al., 1989; Hall and Tucker, 2004). Demonstrating the way that English had become a significant contextual element in the formation of class in Sri Lanka during and post-British colonial era (Gamage, 1997; Fernando, 1977) I illustrated how the acquisition of English by Sri Lankans from early on provided opportunities for an elite class to form. The knowledge and understanding of English granted individuals access to higher positions within the British colonial administration and with this, the pertinent training to carry out professional and administrative services for the colony (Sivasundaram, 2013). This affirms that within the context of Sri Lanka “the study of English and the growth of the Empire proceed from a single ideological climate” (Ashcroft et al., 1989, p.4) that the development of the former is inherently tied to that of the latter.

I further postulated through the study that the dynamics of the colonial era recurred and rematerialised following the economic liberalisation, leading to continued neo-colonial globalisation in tandem with global capitalism (Punchi, 2001; Little and Hettige, 2014). The travel writers irrespective of the category of writing they engage in were presented as being part of the first generation being raised in such a social system, thereby having been exposed to and socially inculcated into the practice of world citizenship, its institutions, norms and ethics (Pieterse, 2006). They have, as a result, developed a cosmopolitan view, consciousness of the world and class habitus, enabling them to become travel writers in English.

Two groups of writers work in professional capacities. As such, I argued how dominant social institutions are structured in favour of those who already possess the suitable economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2010; Savage, 2015; Harker et al., 1990). On the one hand, educational institutions are structured to privilege those who possess cultural capital as internalised transposable dispositions from the dominant cultural fraction, as most of the schools attended by the writers admit students from privileged backgrounds (Little and Hettige, 2014). The general enthusiasm, particularly of this middle class to educate their children in elite schools and in the English language, which was also alluded to within the thesis, illustrates this further. This also illuminated the awareness of these families of prospects for their children and the fact that people come to want and value what is objectively allocated to them. On the other hand, I demonstrated that reputed publishers embedded within a broader framework of tourism or journalism are also structured in such a way that they seek candidates with the same criteria, particularly fluency in English both written and verbal to be able to deliver to a standard that meets the requirement of the respective fields. In the case of tourism writing, for instance, the suitable candidates are expected to represent Sri Lanka to a predominantly international readership that meets a global standard. Having been readers of reputed Western publications such as National Geographic or Lonely Planet and having studied English literature, the Classics and proficient in the language of tourism promotion, these individuals, in turn, become the natural choices of these organisations and engage consciously in their worldmaking role writing and representing the country under the influence of rules and conventions of the field.

On this note, the thesis also posited that the differences in writing and representation made evident through distinctive categories as highlighted above and versions of Sri Lanka produced therein are also influenced by these various fields. I conceptualised fields as sites or contexts; “autonomous social microcosms” that together make up the “social cosmos”- “spaces of objective relations” home to “specific logics” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.97). Within these structured spaces, positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of resources or “capital”. I proposed that travel

writing, therefore, is a field in itself as much as tourism promotion, tourism or journalism. As such, I presented a field as a site of “a specific and a specifically cultural model” that impose upon its members through a system of constraints and controls (Bourdieu, 1998, p.71). I substantiated Bourdieu’s claim that positions within a field are determined by the possession of capital by actors; those who better represents the codes of ethics, standards of each field become legitimised in their roles and occupy higher positions within (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). As such, I argued how travel writer positions are located, struggle and gain authority within each field constituting its own standards and rules of practice. This, in turn, plays a significant part in equipping the Sri Lankan writers with further cultural literacy, or the cultural capital shaping their transposable dispositions (*habitus*). This contributes towards their success or failure in their professional travel writing capacities and adjustment into their worldmaking roles. Above all, this positioning acquires for them the legitimacy or the authority as professional members in the fields of Sri Lankan tourism/travel promotion, journalism and thereby travel writing.

Therefore, I maintained that the worldmaking agency of these travel writers is a negotiation of the rules and standards of fields combined with trends and broader transformations, the social history and cultural capital of individual writers or the dispositions they bring to the field, which all work in tandem. In other words, the privileged social position of the writers supports their acquisitions of cultural capital, which fashion their *habitus*. They, in turn, take these dispositions to the various fields under which they undertake their travel writing. These fields have already established their own standards, rules or principles. Engagement in these fields further conditions the *habitus* of individuals that, produces practices perpetuating the conventions of the fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). As such, I illustrated how within the context of travel writing, one’s tastes, habits lifestyles and interests - regulate one’s social position based on the way they are seen to be legitimate, respectable, worthy or socially approved. I argued that these are reinforced by fields such as tourism or journalism.

In contrast to tourism writers and travel journalists, I conferred that travel bloggers work independent of any professional constraints and were presented as entertaining conscious or aware agency, whereby they attempt to create new, potential versions of the country. Nonetheless, based on the premise that worldmaking representations are never raw and are built upon already-stamped notions of what is important, scenic or worth celebrating, I argued that they draw on already established notions of alternative forms of tourism such as backpacking, volunteer tourism, pro-poor tourism, sustainable or community development, all concepts deriving from the West. I asserted that they have internalised, or been inculcated into these understandings as part of their class habitus and cosmopolitan citizenship, through exposure to media-fed Western ideology. For instance, they have worked in or have associated family and friends working within International NGOs or the Third Sector which made a presence in Sri Lanka also following trade liberalisation in 1977.

In this sense, substantiating the claim that “social reality exists, so to speak, twice in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside agents” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.127) I demonstrated how travel writers, receive, inherit or are inculcated into ways of seeing and standpoints - “held designations or expressions about culture, heritage, nature, whatever” (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.204) through internalised “systems of dispositions” (habitus), cultural capital, and interactions within fields. I emphasised how they then negotiate the myriad external constraints, consequently playing a significant worldmaking role through their travel writing. This, I argue, is an “act of instillation” whereby they create - based on the held expressions - a version or vision of Sri Lanka that they gradually project or inscribe shaping the way the country is seen, experienced and known.

8.4. Implications and Significance to Tourism Studies

As a South Asian, postcolonial destination, it is believed that Sri Lanka had the opportunity to become one of the most significant tourism destinations in the region immediately following independence in 1948 (Fernando et al.,

2013). However, these opportunities were generally unexploited on a number of occasions as a consequence of unfitting economic policies but mainly due to political violence and war that subsumed the country for over three decades. At the immediate aftermath of the civil strife in 2009 the former government identified tourism development as one of the key sectors to drive the country's economic growth and initiated a five-year tourism development strategy, as a part of which marketing and promotion were identified as fundamental (Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, 2010). The consequent boost in tourism advertising, marketing and publishing including travel writing, was chiefly led by corporate bodies such as BT Options discussed within this study. Sri Lanka soon marked an unprecedented boom in tourism with the number of tourist arrivals escalating from 447,890 in 2009 to 855,975 in 2011 marking a record in the country's history of tourism (Fernando et al., 2013).

Provided this context, a study of this nature is not only crucial but is timely in its scholarly illustration of the powerful role of the travel writer. Its aptness also lies in the strategic location of Sri Lanka, an Indian Ocean island nation located in the south-eastern tip of India in close proximity to regional powers and prominent maritime routes. Geopolitically the effects were felt throughout history particularly in terms of the European colonisation since the 16th century. However, irrespective of this significance and the country's popularity more recently as a tourist destination Sri Lanka has received relatively very little scholarly attention compared to other such Asian contexts abundantly researched and investigated in association with tourism such as Thailand, India, Vietnam or Cambodia. Therefore, primarily this study contributes to the critical tourism studies canon of thought in its illumination of this particular context of Sri Lanka. In doing so, it extends knowledge on the constitutive role of constructed representations in the form of travel writing and their power in shaping the way the country is seen, understood and experienced both internationally and locally innovatively focusing not only on written text but their creators and the social, cultural, political and economic contexts from within which this takes place.

In this sense, this study not only moved away from the routine and conventional business and marketing approaches in the exploration of travel

representations but at the same time inventively transcended the dichotomy of structure and agency on account of which it primarily achieves its significance and criticality within the field. As a part of this, the thesis occupied critical discussions on the nature of knowledge and its production (Mair, 2013). It illuminated particularly some of the neglected ways of knowing in tourism and their meaning as a force for social production (Morgan et al., 2018). As such, the criticality of this research project is also maintained by virtue of its engagement with the broader social and cultural contexts within which this discussed knowledge production takes course situating and broadening the research scope of travel representations. In terms of the implementation of this research project, my reflexive stance as a researcher also lends itself to the critical stance, in that I was able to reflect on my transition from preconceived notions and understandings gained as a former local tourism writer to a researcher, acknowledging my presence and position within this research project (Ali, 2013).

Theoretically, the study significantly contributes to tourism studies in a number of ways. Foremost, in terms of the three distinctive ways locally produced travel writing represents Sri Lanka within the context of tourism promotion, journalism and finally through the perspective of independent local traveller, the study strengthens theoretical insights on the tourist gaze. Through the distinctive, constructed gazes: the promotional gaze, the journalistic gaze and the activist gaze it substantiates the social and discursive nature of travel concerning not only the actual experiences of the travel writer but also the production of places for consumption. Thus, using the concept the thesis demonstrated how seeing is socially pre-arranged reflecting existing social arrangements or broader objective structures and links to a more intricate social framework. Thus, the writers were seen to 'gaze' at the places, people, events and pasts and classify, order and shape the object of their gaze through a particular filter of notions, expectations and desires (Urry, 1990; Urry and Larsen, 2011). However, it did not simply reflect how the gaze reinforces existing status hierarchies and is entirely led on pre-arrangement in terms of what is worth seeing and what is not. Instead, by employing the concept of the tourist gaze by John Urry, it also attempted to bring to the fore the concern for human agency within tourism

studies, highlighting the subjectivity of the Sri Lankan travel writer and their negotiation of the various structural influences in constructing multiple versions of the country (MacCannell, 2001; Urry, 2001).

Moving on from socially pre-imbued ways of seeing of the writer, power of travel writing as a force of social production was critically evaluated through the theoretical framework of tourism worldmaking. This effectively builds on the work of Nünning et al., on the worldmaking power of media, and narrative genres such as biographies, historiographies, travelogues whereby knowledge is stored and organised and negotiate meaning in everyday life and “function as cultural ways of worldmaking” (Nünning et al., 2010, p.20). More significantly, the study advanced tourism worldmaking as an approach or an angle of vision whereby travel writers do not solely reflect a fixed world out there for the benefit and pleasure of those who travel or tour. Instead, it demonstrated that whether it is a projected people, place or past travel writing “commonly makes, de-makes, or re-makes those very populations, destinations and heritages” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.429). In other words, this study offered significant insights on the epistemological means by which these writers work productively in collaboration with other industries and inscriptive mediators to signify places and destinations through particular forms of consciousness over and above alternative visions of that place/space (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

However, most significant in its contribution to the field, this study crucially pioneered the application of the notion of “inculcation” or “installation” in association with tourism worldmaking. Hollinshead et al. in extending Goodman’s conceptions into tourism studies argue that “the manufactured realm of representation depends not so much upon initiation or illusion, but upon *inculcation*” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432). They assert that tourism practitioners who engage in acts of worldmaking rarely do so in a fresh or virginal sense but are “always pre-programmed in their gaze” (Hollinshead et al., 2009, p.432); that worldmaking endeavours are neither innocent nor neutral and that each and every worldmaking act or projection ‘inculcates’ towards some form of held consciousness. As such, they draw on Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1998) notion of tourism as an industry of

consciousness, where places and spaces in tourism are 'made' in collaboration with the inscriptions or projections by various other place making partners (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Accordingly, tourism representations and the visions or versions they, in turn, produce work as a force of "held-consciousness" as acts of denotation, advancing, manufacturing or correcting "held designations or expressions" (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.204) about places, people culture or pasts. Thus, the authors concede that worldmaking representations view the world from certain standpoints important to the worldmaking individual, authorising management or mediating agency. These standpoints, affirm the authors, are constructed upon received or inherited narratives. However, even though they present worldmaking as constituting acts of inculcation they do not expand further on this inherently social process.

Through this particular case of Sri Lankan travel writing and writers, I illuminated and enlarged this notion of worldmaking as "inculcation", drawing upon the field of cultural production by Pierre Bourdieu. The thesis, therefore, having foremost established travel writing as an act of worldmaking effectively scrutinised the process of "inculcation" or the inheritance of constructed narratives underlying the three dominant types or categories of representations examined through the promotional, journalistic and activist gazes. This was successfully undertaken through an investigation into the travel writers, their cultural histories including aspects such as education, lifestyles habits, interests and tastes. Employing such a perspective not only demonstrated the interplay between tourism representations and the external world of class history and social practice (Harker et al., 1990) but the thesis also extended knowledge on the nexus between worldmaking and social class upon the identification of participant travel writers all hailing from a particular urban middle class. It thereby shed light on the association between their worldmaking role and the cultural resources such as the elite education and English language that have shaped a specific class habitus or socialised subjectivity (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In this sense, the study contributes significantly to the critical tourism studies paradigm by affording a compelling alternative to dealing with the duality of objectivism and

subjectivism (Harker et al., 1990; Yang, 2014; Wacquant, 2001; Webb et al., 2002). As such, one of the crucial elements of this thesis was being able to transcend this dichotomy and examine the dialectical relationship between structure and human agency (Wacquant, 2001) within the study of travel representations.

This negotiation of the dichotomy between existing structural hierarchies and the agency of the travel writer was the mainstay in terms of this study's theoretical significance in the investigation of travel representations. This challenge was innovatively grappled through the employment and extension of the hitherto unexplored concept of 'inculcation' within the framework of tourism worldmaking in conjunction with the Bourdieusian conceptual triad habitus, capital and field. Employing habitus as the writers' subjective knowledge and understanding of the world, contributing separately to the reality of the world, I substantiated that this knowledge has genuine constitutive power and is not merely a reflection of the world. In doing so, I argued that this practice of travel writing is continuously informed by a sense of agency but that possibilities of agency must be understood and contextualised in terms of its relations to fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Thus, it derives from the original concept of Goodman (1978) that distinct worlds – or more traditionally identified as 'world-views' or 'standpoints' in the present thesis – are made from others; that *worldmaking* acts are routinely rather *worldremaking* ones (Nünning et al., 2010). As such, the thesis postulated that the work of these travel writers, their acts of worldmaking are not merely a secondary process by means of which inherited, inculcated cognitions are simply re-projected (Taunton, 2010; Nünning et al., 2010; Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018). Instead, it illuminated how travel writers engage in acts of place creation whereby pre-existing worlds or standpoints are altered/shaped by the subjective dispositions of the writers coming into contact with characteristic elements of the setting or fields of creative articulation in each instance of fresh projection.

8.5. Recommendations for Future Research

At the threshold of the second decade of the 21st century, it is vital that social scientists, particularly tourism researchers investigating the largest industry involving human mobility, engage in critical conversations about tourism's integral role in how we see, make and experience the world considering the plurality of cultural difference, human practices, positions and insights (Morgan et al., 2018). On account of this, the present study investigated travel writing, a ubiquitous, yet taken for granted everyday activity within travel and tourism largely understudied for its critical social role in shaping knowledge about different regions of the world. It thereby combined sociological scrutiny of dominant representations produced and their constitutive and worldmaking role. At the same time, this particular study illustrated the discernible social implications of worldmaking as "an act of inculcation" built upon certain inherited narratives whereby a particular vista, vision or version is "firmly inscribed" (Hollinshead and Suleman, 2018, p.203).

As such, this research is able to add to the critical tourism literature on some of the worldmaking capacities of travel writing as cultural production and the underlying implications examining the dialectic working of structure and agency. As a part of this, considerable focus was made on implications of social class to tourism worldmaking in Sri Lanka with allusions to the position of the English language. However, due to time and resource constraints, the significance of gender in association with tourism worldmaking was left unexplored. Sri Lanka is a context where women in the labour force have been remarkably low and stagnant over the past few decades, and men's participation has been twice as high (73.2%) as that of women's (34.3%) (Department of Census and Statistics - Sri Lanka, 2018). However, this study has shown a strikingly high number of young women opting to become travel writers and organisations purposively seeking and recruiting women for these roles. I, therefore, see further capacity for understanding distinct ways of seeing and the construction of the gaze in relation to gender and exploring the worldmaking in light of travel writing and gender as having further potential scope for future research.

Furthermore, albeit the examination of worldmaking implications of various fields such as journalism and tourism through this study, I particularly prioritised on the role of human agency over technological agency. Thus, there is potential to broaden the investigation bearing in mind the implications of various outlet modes such as digital media and traditional print outlets. As such, given the time and resources, I would explore the use of different outlet modes or platforms and how they affect worldmaking, considering the travel writers not as isolated social agents but as being part of socio-technical assemblages that may have different implications on their constitutive role. This ties in with the nexus between mobility, technology sociality and the evolving context of new mobile and media technologies. All of these have already been under scholarly investigation extending to insinuations of 'hybrid geography' combining digital and physical landscapes, 'interactive travel' and affordances (Larsen, 2008; Molz, 2012). However, the implications of these to worldmaking have not so far been considered.

The world is increasingly and more firmly being interconnected given the dynamics of globalisation, global capitalism and ease of travel. As such, the way people acquire knowledge about places, people or the world at large is gradually shifting through the expansion of mass media and the proliferation of digital technologies, the Internet and smartphones. Practices such as travel writing are yielding progressively to Internet-based social media platforms such as Instagram (Fatanti and Suyadnya, 2015) as part of tourism being mediated through social media and network sites. According to current reports, more than 20 per cent of all international travellers use social media as a source of information (Wang and Alasuutari, 2017). Instagram for instance, is a novel form of multimodal travel writing where "in the radically participatory framework of social media, authors-cum-users enact the mediatised travel performances they no longer read about in books but scroll through with their thumbs" (Smith, 2018, p.173). It has gained in popularity among travellers around the world in place of conventional travel writing or blogging. This also brings to light the increasing significance of the photographic image, its production and circulation in place of text in the way that non-Western, contexts are being understood, seen and experienced.

Therefore, provided these emerging trends, there is also scope for further study of worldmaking through novel forms of travel writing.

The aspect of photography and its relevance to a study of worldmaking is critical. The present thesis on the interplay between individual writing performances and the broader structural hierarchies and cultural discourses could be further strengthened to a discussion not only on the element of images and photography but also design and layout. Incorporating the overall production components of travel writing into a worldmaking lens would also be influential, particularly within a professional setting such as tourism or journalism. This becomes integral with the centrality of vision in tourism and the intensely visual world we inhabit where our experiences, expectations and appreciation are deeply influenced by the routine engagement with an overwhelming number of circulating images (Urry and Larsen, 2011). This is even more significant with the shifting changes in photography and its connection to travel. At a time when photographs are increasingly taken and distributed over mobiles - the ubiquitous everyday technology of the 21st century (Larsen, 2008) - converging photography with computer networks including editing/design software and social media, insights into the worldmaking role of the travel photographer and graphic designer could also be very promising. Based on my experience and inside access to the production settings of professional travel writing, I have obtained certain understandings that the cultural history, class background, gender, education, interests, habits, tastes and lifestyles of the English language travel writers, - some of which were predominantly discussed throughout this thesis - are distinct from those of the travel photographers, the graphics designers or the creative directors of the field. Given this scenario, a study on the representations of Sri Lanka produced by these parties combined and the underlying agency and social implications and inculcation of each of these groups of tourism practitioners would prove valuable.

Fundamental to the already cited proliferation of digital technology and the increasing global connectivity are elements of acceleration and mobility. The concept of 'mobilities' within tourism literature encompasses a variety of spatial as well as temporal practices inclusive of immersive modes of travel

and ethical relations conjectured on the desire to connect in certain ways but also disconnect in others (Fullagar et al., 2012; Norum and Mostafanezhad, 2016). For instance, there is increased enthusiasm for slow tourism conceptualised in relation to the ethos of sustainable tourism and environmental consciousness (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011). This also embodies qualities of rhythm, pace, tempo and velocity produced within the sensory and affective interplay between the traveller and the world. Given this, the temporal element of place representation also becomes a significant possibility of examination. The temporal themes that emerge in the travel accounts already studied, particularly within the narratives of travel bloggers in terms of their production of knowledge and means of connecting with Sri Lanka differently through alternative means could be further strengthened in line with the worldmaking thesis conceptualising not only the spatial and discursive but also incorporating the temporal elements therein.

Finally, appropriating the concept of literary worldmaking emphasised by Grabes (2010), worldmaking “takes concrete shape only in the act of reading” (Grabes, 2010, p.48). Hence, a study of the worldmaking role of the travel writer should be complemented by an investigation into the role of the reader. This could commence with the notion of ‘held consciousness’ exploring how a reader has also already been inculcated into notions, worldviews or standpoints before the reading begins. Thus, there is scope for the exploration of this entire process combining the interaction between the two domains of the writer and the text with the reader and how “the information sequentially taken from the text during reading takes course on the background of what is already known by the reader” (Grabes, 2010, p.47) leading to more complex yet comprehensive understandings of the process of worldmaking to which this PhD has made an important contribution.

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Appendix 1

List of Interviews – 19th February 2018 to 03rd June 2018

Harriet - Former professional travel writer, the interview was conducted on 19th February 2018

Pricilla - Former professional travel writer, the interview was conducted on 22nd February 2018

Thelma - Former professional travel writer, interview was conducted on 22nd February 2018

Tania - Travel journalist, interview was conducted on 23rd February 2018

Natalie - Independent travel blogger, interview was conducted on 23rd February 2018

Mary - Former professional travel writer, interview was conducted on 24th February 2018

Kamani - Travel journalist, interview was conducted on 07th March 2018

Irene – Editor of local magazine, interview was conducted on 09th March 2018

Kate - Former professional travel writer, interview was conducted on 15th March 2018

Heather - Former professional travel writer, interview was conducted on 25th March 2018

Anna - Independent traveller (about to start blog), interview was conducted on 26th March 2018

Amali - Independent travel blogger, interview was conducted on 09th April 2018

Andrew - Professional travel writer, interview was conducted on 10th April 2018

Senevirathna - Director PR, Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, interview was conducted on 05th May 2018

Lucy - Travel journalist, interview was conducted on 23rd May 2018

Peter - Travel journalist, interview was conducted on 25th May 2018

Nat and Zin – Two independent travel bloggers (Zin is the writer and Nat the photographer), interview was conducted on 03rd June 2018

Appendix 2

List of Travel Literature used as Primary Data Cited within the Thesis

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