Victorious Soldier: Portrayal of Militarised Masculinities in Sri Lankan Sinhala Pro-war Films

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No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country.

George S. Patton

The pioneers of a warless world are the youth that refuse military service.

Albert Einstein

Naturally, the common people don't want war ... but after all it is the leaders of a country who determine the policy, and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy, or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is to tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in every country.

Hermann Goering

In order to facilitate the recruitment process of military forces, the state adopted the ideal of the 'heroic warrior' when referencing the ordinary soldier. The term generally used to refer to any soldier was *Rana Viru* or War Hero. The 'heroic warrior' was attributed with qualities such as 'humanitarian', 'merciful', 'goodness', 'protectiveness' and 'benevolence' in popular culture media (in cinema, advertising and in popular newspaper discourse). For the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) masculinity on the contrary was constructed by these same media mentioned above, in opposition to the Sinhala soldier, with the characteristics of 'destructiveness', 'evil' and 'wickedness'. The polarised portrayal of the 'Sinhala hero' and the 'Tamil Villain' in pro-war films encourages the projection of the Sinhala soldier higher up in the masculine hierarchy. Connell argues that there are power relations operating not just between men and women, but among different masculinities as well (1995).

To become a 'hero', thousands of men paid with their lives or limbs. The purpose of depicting the soldier as an ideal masculine figure in the country is to justify the war to the local community and through that, to protect the then government from being convicted of war crimes. While justifying the war, post-war films depicted the process of '*Sinhalization*' in a subtle form.

This paper consists of four main sections: gendering war; militarized masculinities, Rambo and Commando Diyasena, films; shaping ideologies and Sinhala 'hero' and othering of Tamil Villain. Under the section of gendering war; militarized masculinities, it is discussed how a particular situation has been gendered in order to sustain the existing social structure and political economies. In the next section under the topic of Rambo and Commando Diyasena, I discuss how popular military masculinities have coupled with the mythical Sinhala Buddhist masculinity type. The section on films; shaping ideologies, discusses how films influence people. In the last section, pro-war films have been analyzed according to the theories discussed.

The following sample of Sinhala films mentioned below have been selected from the most-recent decade viz.2000 - 2011. Additionally, a few more films that do not belong to the above time period but which are strictly relevant to the theme are included in the sample. The films which do not belong to the time period of year 2000 – 2011 are selected because it is important to see the militarized masculine representation in post war era in the Sinhala cinema. Furthermore, a few films before the selected time period are also included due to their direct relevance to the theme and the influence they might have had, considering the actor and the director of the films, (*Gamini Fonseka*, Sinhala cinema *Sakvithi*[1]*).* The films selected to study are *Prabhakaran, Alimankada, Ira HandaYata and Sthuthi Newatha Enna,* which were war related films screened during the period of 2000-2011. Except for the film *Saroja,* all the war related films during the particular time period were considered. *Saroja* was not taken into account as it was categorized as a children's film. *Gamani* and *Selvam* are also included in the study as post war films related to war.

Gender roles are utilized to sustain the existing socio-economic structure. According to Hagemann, "after all, the gender order is a basic structure that runs through all areas of the economy, society and politics and links the individual with the collective and the 'personal' with the 'political'" (Hagemann, 2002: 04). Missionary schools established under colonial rule in Sri Lanka tried to produce gendered bodies to enhance economic productivity (De Alwis, 1997). While boys were educated and socialised for industrial work and blue colour jobs, girls were educated and socialised to support their working husbands through caring, obedience and household duties (De Alwis, 1997).

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1   King of Gods

As with every social structure and formation, war is constructed upon gender patterns. The fear of being wounded or killed is common to each and every living being. Still, boys enlist in military aware of the fact that they might get injured or killed. The reasoning behind this behavior is the legitimisation of gendering practices of war. Construction of female and male gender in relation to each other has been discussed by many scholars, including Cynthia Enloe. Enloe states that, while the influence of global political economy and international systems on the everyday life of women around the world is immense, women are invisible in the international structures and global political economy (2004). She draws examples from narratives of women from all over the world from different backgrounds and in particular, from her life story. In 'All the Men are in Militias, All the Women are Victims' she describes the story of a man, a Serbian soldier, sentenced to death by the Bosnian-Herzegovinian government for raping and murdering women. In this study she argues how the ideals of masculine behaviour are constructed in relation to femininity; "constructing ideals of masculine behaviour in any culture cannot be accomplished without constructing ideals of femininity that are supportive and complimentary" (2004:107). Enloe proposes that simplifying the problem results in a flawed understanding of the situation.In order to overcome that, subtle analysis of gender relations and constructions are needed. She states that labeling military masculinities simply as 'militia fighters' and recognising women simply as 'victims' would not do a proper analysis. However, in a war time, cultural construction of masculinity not only categorises males as 'soldiers', but also women as mothers of soldiering sons, whereas Enloe sees this as "valuing women chiefly for their maternal sacrifices for the nation" (2004:107). She tries to understand the discursive power patterns operating behind the Serbian 'rapist' 'soldier' and she understands the 'soldier' in a different perspective by locating him in different stages of his life; "Thus it would be a mistake to file Borislav Herak's experiences solely under 'militia fighter' or 'factory worker' or 'Sarajevan Serb'"(2004:104). Enole suggests that, "peacetime gender roles are mobilised for violent acts during war time, and their notions about masculinity and femininity will call for just as much serious attention as did that of the youth who pushed a cart by day and read pornographic magazines by night when life was peaceful in Sarajevo" (2004:118). Considering Borislav Herak only as a militia fighter regarding the case of rapeis simplifying the situation and narrowing down his gender role to one realm. Prior to his engagement with military as a fighter, he was a factory worker who used to read pornographic magazines at night, which objectified women as usable commodities. His masculinity was constructed through many networks including, political situation of the country, economy and cultural construction.

Enloe also discusses Christopher Browning's study about a group of working class men who were conscripted into a special police unit in World War II, who engaged in mass killings of Polish Jewish civilians (2004:110). In this particular study, Browning found that, to these policemen, killing unarmed civilians was not simply a matter of following orders from their superior officer, but also a matter of peer pressure from their own peer group which constituted their 'social world'. In this group, it was considered a positive quality to be tough enough to kill civilians and policemen avoided 'rupturing the bonds of comradeship that constituted their social world' (2004:113). The film *Sulanga Enu Pinisa*, which critiques the war, illustrates how the ideas of 'brotherhood' within the troop were used to harm a non-military masculinity by humiliating him. According to Enloe, masculine values seem to occupy a continuum of which violence and killing could be at one reachable end. As masculinity always seeks to be separated from femininity, military has been established as an ideal entity to perform the masculine characteristics: toughness, legitimised violence and risking the body. Kimberly Hutchings explores the connection between war and masculinity and contends that there is a functional relationship between masculinity and militarism,

because qualities like aggression and physical courage are defined as essential components of both masculinity and war (2008:389). As Jeganathan claims, zone of masculinity can easily become a space of violence, with the concepts of shame and fear (2000:39). The fear of being ashamed makes masculinity a possible space of violence. In order to avoid humiliation , men try to use violence and humiliate the 'other'. Searching to regain the lost self esteem due to being humiliated, men then practice violence. Jeganathan states that the vulnerability of self in social life results in loss of self esteem and equilibrium is obtained through violence (2000:47). War sets a legitimised ground to maintain the military masculinity. Battlefield is a legitimised space for violence that allows the soldier to risk the body. By risking the body the soldier sustains the self esteem that might be challenged by the 'enemy'. As stated earlier, zone of masculinity, which easily becomes a space of violence, has been used in gendering of war and forming soldiers. The masculine characteristics produced in daily activities have become supportive in constructing military male figures required by war. Pro-war films portray the soldier as a protector, but not as a killer though he ultimately is. The illustration of the soldier as a protector and not as a killer was legitimised through the process of gender construction in Sri Lanka. Gender construction in Sri Lanka is based upon the concepts of shame and fear. Both the genders are afraid of being humiliated and try to maintain the self-esteem without being shamed. To maintain their self-esteem, both men and women must play the gender roles as prescribed. This, in turn, maintains and legitimises the killing and violence under the label of 'protecting the nation'.

Sri Lankan masculinities are being influenced not only by the local idioms and local changes that occurred in the island, but also by the masculinity images manifested as the 'western masculinities' in the media as well as in films . Globalisation has helped the influx of global masculinity 'images' into the country. This section explores the ways in which western images of masculinity and local mythical masculinity images have united to create the soldier.

As suggested by De Silva, "Typified by the blurring of identities between the depiction of Commando Diyasena as a local hero and Rambo as an American hero, the Rambo icon seemed to imbue the Sinhala soldier with a new validity"(De Silva, 2007: 222). (I like the questions more than the sentence) It is important to examine the character of Commando Diyasena and Rambo and their role in constructing the image of the Sinhala soldier. This section explores the combination of two masculinity ideals from two different eras and two different contexts in order to construct the ideal image of a Sinhala soldier.

Prince Diyasena is a mythical character, appeared in Sinhala literature in the period of the Kotte kingdom: "One of the earliest known records of Prince Diyasena comes in the Parakumba Siritha of the Kotte era" (Prematunga, 2011). Prematunga states that,"This eulogy foretells that a great King will be born in Sri Lanka after a lapse of 2500 years from the birth of Lord Buddha, to preserve the culture and Buddhism of our country" (Prematunga, 2011). When a political instability emerges, people pray to Prince Diyasena to come and rescue the culture and Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In 2008, there was a commercial to raise funds for housing projects allocated for the three armed forces in Sri Lanka[2]. At the end of the commercial it says "There will be palaces for our prince Diyasena" (*Apage Diyasena Kumara Wenuwen Maduru Thanewa).* In this commercial, soldiers were symbolised as prince Diyasena, who is a mythical hero, said to have arrived after 2500 years of Lord Buddha's attainment of Nirvana (Prematunga, 2011).

Rambo, in turn, is an American hero, a character that appeared in films named *First Blood, Rambo: First Blood Part II* and *Rambo III.*[3] Rambo is a former United States Special Forces soldier

2   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4c0WtTCJTW8

3   http://onviolence.com/?e=303

served during the Vietnam War and who has come to Chicago to visit a friend.[4] He is portrayed with well-built muscular body and heavy weaponry. According to De Silva, the heavily armed figure of the "warrior hero" (*veerasebala*), dressed in smart combat outfits, manning checkpoints and roadblocks secured by sandbags and barrels, continued to receive great adulation (2007:222). This image of heavily armed warrior hero greatly resembles the image of Rambo from the *Rambo* films.

On one hand, prince Diyasena is a mythical character who comes to rescue the country, its religion and culture. The Sinhala soldier is a symbol for him. On the other hand, the Sinhala soldier is portrayed in pro-war films and commercials with heavy modern weaponry, who largely resembles Rambo, the American hero. Connecting two masculinity idioms, which differ strongly from each other, could bring large number of male youth under one canopy of 'warrior heroes'. Pro-war films illustrate this ideal masculine figure both armed with narrative of prince Diyasena (not logical), who is the protector of Sinhala Buddhist nation, and modern 'hero' Rambo. Films which critique the war dislocate both these ideals by deconstructing the virtue of 'bravery', by locating the soldier in a wider abject socio-political and economic background.

> "War ended physically. However, ideological wounds have not been addressed or healed. Post war films glorify the Sinhalese soldiers in the screen. The Sri Lankan government needs to glorify the victory of war in the Sinhala cinema and these films are projects of the government"[5]

Every social formation must reproduce two important things; the productive forces including labour power and existing relations of production (Althusser, 1971:128-130). To reproduce labour power, not only the skills but also the 'ideology' is important. In contrast to Marx's concept of state apparatuses, government, army, administration, police, court and prisons, Althusser has identified ideological state apparatuses such as religion, culture, family, politics and law (Althusser, 1971). Althusser identifies some of the basic differences between repressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus. As Althusser suggests, ruling ideology is heavily focused on the ideology of the ruling class (1971:151). In this context, films could be taken under communication as well as cultural. "To put this more scientifically, I shall say that the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words'"(Althusser, 1971: 133-134). Films also contribute to create this ideology.

> Of course, many of these contrasting virtues (modesty, resignation, submissiveness on the one hand, cynicism, contempt, arrogance, confidence, self-importance, even smooth talk and cunning on the other) are also taught in the Family, in the Church, in the Army, in Good Books, in films and even in the football stadium (Althusser, 1971: 156).

Capitalist society has evolved considerably. The information and communication technologies have developed and are developing into a state beyond people's control. Media invades the schools by introducing virtual learning. Media depicts religion and has TV and radio channels solely assigned to religious purposes. Thus religion and education both relies on media. Media itself has become an ideological apparatus by mutually connecting with other ideological apparatuses prevailing in the society. Film, an audio-visual media with high entertainment value, acts as an influential ideological apparatus. Walter Benjamin discusses about photography in relation to modern life.

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4 http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0083944/plotsummary

5 Director of a War film, Personal Interview, 26 August 2012

Although he discusses photography briefly, his argument focuses primarily on the revolutionary potential of film as a mode of mechanical reproduction. Benjamin reminds us how our conception and practice of art has changed due to films (2008:315). Benjamin argues that the rhythm of an era lies on the way people see the world (2008:315), "as Benjamin noted on numerous occasions, major historical shifts in our modes of existence (from agriculture to industrial, for example) are paralleled by equally dramatic changes in the very way we see the world" (2008:315). Benjamin understands that, the films are the most compatible mode of rhythm of modern life (2008:316). Since compatible with the rhythm of modern life, films are easy to use as an ideological apparatus.

In most parts of the world films are used as a medium of propaganda. In Germany, Nazi's used films as an influential medium for party propaganda. In the book, 'The Crowd, A study of the Popular Mind' (1895) Le Bon stated that "the masses think only in pictures, Images, rather than texts, were a means of reaching large audiences" (Tegel, 2007:01). One of the greatest films of Nazi propaganda is *'Triumph des Willens'* produced by Leni Riefenstahl in 1934, which is a propaganda piece about German society fighting against international oppression and rebuilding itself to a world power under the guidance of 'their hero', Adolph Hitler (William, 2010).

Depiction of Sinhala soldiers as 'heroes' and Tamil militants as 'villains' was the standard procedure adopted by Sinhala mainstream war-related films. In the Sinhala films referred to, there are two kinds of 'militarized masculinities': the 'good-humanitarian' and 'bad-evil'. The good-humanitarian militarized masculinity is often ascribed to 'protective Sinhala hero' while bad-evil militarized masculinity is ascribed to 'destructive Tamil Tiger villain'. The use of 'evil', 'destructive' villain type of masculinity on Tamil LTTE is to make the 'Sinhala hero' the center of interest. According to Enloe, structuring of military masculinities depends on the historical and political background from which that particular military masculinity emerges (1993:72). In Sri Lanka, a soldier is illustrated in Sinhala films as a 'good', benevolent', 'protective' and brave while Tamil LTTE is depicted as 'bad', evil' and 'destructive'. These films separate 'us' from 'them'. According to Peterson, 'the most familiar theme in war stories involves constructing the enemy as 'other': to distinguish "us" from "them," render others in some sense inferior, and thereby justify war as violence against "them" (Peterson, 2010:21). War is justified through the 'othering' of the enemy (or: through "othering" the enemy). Spike Peterson uses intersectional analysis[6] to understand 'feminisation as devalorisation' (Peterson, 2010:17). She refrains from just presenting the oppression of women under war and militarization or reduction of class/race relation simply to gender relations, but explores "how institutionalized hierarchies are *naturalised* by feminisation and thus are effectively depoliticised" (Peterson, 2010:17). She discusses how the different utilisations of 'feminisations' across cultures have facilitated 'othering' of enemy and justified colonization and invasion or declaration of war against them. She states that, "the most familiar theme in war stories involves constructing the enemy as 'other': to distinguish 'us' from 'them', render others in some sense inferior, and thereby justify war's violence against 'them'" (21). Colonial imperialism was justified through 'civilising the other' and military interventions were necessary to 'enlighten' and 'civilise' primitive, unruly (feminised) 'others' (Peterson, 2010:21). Femininity was constructed in relation to masculinities and located in the act of colonization and European nationalism. Peterson states that the "development of European nationalism and normalisation of bourgeois respectability produced an idealised model of femininity: pure, dutiful, and maternal" (2010:22).

Romanticising the maternal feminine did less to empower women than render them perpetual

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6   Intersectional Analysis is Analyzing the situation using different perspectives, in this case, author says she
     analysed the situation using feminist, queer, post-colonial, and critical race theories.

dependents. Feminine virtue and morality were best ensured by confining these qualities—and (bourgeois) women—to a private sphere of domesticity and assigning men the public-sphere responsibility of defending and protecting feminized dependents (Peterson, 2010:22).

Colonisers imposed these femininity and masculinity qualities on the 'other' and justified the act of colonisation as an act of rescuing colonial women from colonial men; "In this war story, the barbarity of 'other' men was proven by their (allegedly) oppressive treatment towards women, and this demanded the rescue of victimised females by honorable, civilised men. In short, the protection of idealised femininity justified wars by white men to save brown women from brown men"(Peterson, 2010:22). 'Othering' of enemy has been supported by the creation of 'femininity'. In the films that I discuss, one strategy utilised in portraying the Sinhala 'hero' and Tamil 'villain' is by illustrating the Tamils as oppressive to women.

However it is vital to study the manner in which these films have represented the Sinhala soldier as a 'good' person and the Tamil LTTE carder as a bad person. It is important to study the 'othering' of the enemy in these films and the tropes used by the film maker in order to do that. The topics below will discuss the process of 'othering' in detail.

Being protective towards women one of the forms of 'othering' is done through the portrayal of Tamil women oppressed by LTTE military masculinities and the Sinhala soldier as the savior of those oppressed Tamil women. Tamil women are portrayed in these films as oppressed by the LTTE and in need of rescuing. While the Sinhala soldier protects the 'vulnerable' women, members of LTTE who are oppressed through abusive acts and use the women as human bombs. For example, in the film *Prabakaran*, 'good-humanitarian Sinhala militarized masculinity' as well as 'bad-evil Tamil militarized masculinity' were depicted. The story consists of two main characters; a child soldier called '*Prabakaran*', and his sister. The LTTE trains this child to become a heartless soldier while training his sister to become a suicide bomber. Pregnant *Kamalini* (the sister) is married to a Sinhala male and carries his 'Sinhala' child. The LTTE needs *Kamalini* to become a suicide bomber and uses her pregnancy to accomplish the attack. The LTTE threatens *Kamalini* by saying that her brother will be killed if she refuses to execute the attack. The sole intention of the LTTE is to use *Kamalini*'s pregnant body to fulfill their objective. Sinhala men, including soldiers, treat *Kamalini* in a well-mannered way, with respect and affection. In one of the scenes, pregnant *Kamalini* walks on the street with a massive pain, due to her condition. An Army jeep stops by and gives her a ride. This scene portrays a protective Sinhala soldier sensitive and nurturing towards the pregnant woman, regardless of the fact that she is Tamil. On the contrary, the LTTE carders treat *Kamalini*'s wish to give birth to the child she carries; as betraying the '*Eelam*'[7] cause.

On 25 April 2006, a female suicide bomber hid a bomb under her maternity clothing. "A Tamil woman who had obtained a pass to attend maternity clinics at the army hospital within the army head quarters had come in with the bomb belt concealed under her maternity clothing" (Chandrapema, 2012:303). It was later revealed that the woman was actually pregnant (Lanka Library Forum).[8] The film *Prabakaran* has made an effort to recreate the story of the pregnant suicide bomber. The story tells that the pregnant body of the woman was used by the LTTE as a tool for the purpose of killing. It portrays the LTTE as destructive and as an inhumane terrorist organisation that valourised 'death' over 'birth'.

At the end of the film, before her delivery, *Kamalini*'s brother '*Prabakaran*' dies from a motor attack by LTTE when he tries to escape from LTTE captivity. *Kamalini* comes to know of

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7   Tamil nation which LTTE wanted to establish in the northern part of Sri Lanka.

8   http://www.lankalibrary.com/phpBB/viewtopic.php?t=2250&.

her brother's death and she walks on the road alone and sits on a culvert. Then the LTTE attempts to kill *Kamalini*, as she is a threat to the confidentiality of the organisation. The 'evil' militarised masculinity acts as an 'exploitative force' on women, while 'good' militarised masculinity acts as a 'protective force'. In this film, both LTTE and Sinhala army perceive the pregnant woman in a manner of biological reproduction. While LTTE intends to use her body for the purpose of destruction, Sri Lankan army tries to support her considering her pregnancy. Both narratives are located in patriarchal discourse. Sri Lankan army tries to protect the 'much vulnerable' pregnant female body, while LTTE tries to use the 'vulnerable and insignificant' pregnant female body as a tool for the purpose of killing: the patriarchal structure is in action. There are two analyses. On one hand, Sinhala soldiers fight to protect the 'mother Sri Lanka' or the motherland. Maternal qualities attributed to the land are strengthening the emotional attachment to the country. Soldiers are not merely protecting a physical thing, but protecting their country, which is only second to their mother. Thus, protecting a real mother who is pregnant brings the soldier closer to his goal of protecting the 'motherland'. The portrayal of the Sinhala soldier as the protector of *Kamalini* (the mother) and LTTE as the destroyer who attempts to kill *Kamalini* (the mother), locate Sinhala soldier in the 'heroic' end of the scale and Tamil LTTE carder in the 'villain' end of the scale. On the other hand, picturing *Kamalini* as a woman continuously subjected to physical abuse by LTTE masculinities and their intent to use her pregnant body as a bomb shows the 'brutality' of LTTE while the supportive Sinhala soldiers are portrayed as 'humane'. Thus, rescuing of Tamil women who are oppressed and abused by LTTE is obligatory.In order to do that, it is Sinhala soldiers who need to fight against LTTE and defeat them. The 'othering' of the enemy is done through gendering of war; based on the construction of masculinity in relation to femininity and women as vulnerable and in need of protection and men as saviors. The 'other', LTTE, fails in playing its gender role properly and thus they become 'monsters' and 'evil'.Therefore, Sinhala soldiers need to protect the oppressed Tamil women and establish their 'proper' gender roles as 'care givers', 'supporters' and most importantly 'vulnerable' and 'in need of protection'.

The film *Gamani* is directed by rear admiral Sarath Weerasekara. This film director entered the film industry with the title of 'rear admiral' and won an award at the *Derana* Film Awards for best direction. The film glorifies the war victory through the depiction of masculine characters skilled in indigenous martial arts. The audience of the film, which was released in year 2010, was mainly Sinhala people who were still celebrating the victory of war over LTTE. In the film *Gam*ani, a Sinhalese girl encounterse the LTTE and the result is death; she is stabbed by the LTTE carder. In contrast to this incident, a Tamil girl encounteres the civil security officers along with her father and younger sister and they are treated with much compassion by Sinhalese civil forces. One of the village soldiers gives his rain-coat to the girl to protect her from the rain. During interviews with audience, a student stated referring to the film, "The ideal man should respect women, I do not know whether it is effeminate (*ponnakama*) or not, but he should be a refuge to others. The Ideal man should not expect anything from others; he should take care of others. It is good when a man becomes a human".[99] The image of an ideal man constructed in the film and the image of an ideal man according to the university students are compatible. While two university students interpret an ideal man as such, one of the film makers states how the portraying of ideal man has been demanded by the audience after the end of war. "There is a vacuum in the country after the war. People are eager to know the real heroes. They need to see the stories behind the war. The film *Gamani* fulfilled that need. In this film, a man without any weapons defeats the armed LTTE enemies by his indigenous knowledge of martial arts. As one of the film directors stated, 'this is a

9   Sampath, Personal Interview, 24 September 2012.

joke' *(Meka wihiluwak).*[10] As per the statement, people have seen many heroes before the end of the war who failed to attain the level of being a complete hero during the period of war. However, with the termination of the war, 'soldier' has become matured and a 'complete hero' and people need to know the stories behind these 'real heroes' who completed their task.

The film *Alimankada* is centered on a Tamil female spy and a Sinhalese army captain. They meet each other because of an order given to the captain by his higher officer. The captain takes the girl with him in a jeep. However, they soon find themselves in the middle of a battle and heavy firing. They manage to escape but they are the only two who succeed in surviving the attack. The duo runs away from the battlefield having only each other for protection. The girl says she needs to meet the director of army intelligence in order to give him information about *Prabhakaran,* the LTTE leader. She says that they do not need *Prabhakaran* as their leader and that they just need to win the land for their people. The girl clearly supports the LTTE. But she continuously says that she needs to meet the director of army intelligence. On one hand, the story of the Tamil girl seems unreliable and just a strategy to meet the director of army intelligence. Nonetheless, the young woman admits that their hyper masculine leader is not 'good enough' to lead the LTTE and the freedom fight, although she belongs to the 'other' group. The film is about their journey to Colombo to meet the director of army intelligence. They encounter many obstacles on their way to the capital , moving through army as well as LTTE controlled areas. They cross Villpaththu national park. They speak to each other but never agree on anything and act as enemies, as in the popular discourse. The girl never allows the army captain to help her in anything. Then, in one of the scenes, they come across armed deserters, who abduct the Tamil girl. The army captain then goes alone to their hut and kills the deserters in order to rescue the girl. In the film, the faces of deserters were vaguely portrayed, but their their tropes are clearly represented as 'uncivilized' . Sinhalese army officer becomes the protector of the young woman, even though she is 'Tamil' and works for LTTE. He never attempts to take advantage of her when they are alone in the jungle. He protects her from animals as well as 'other' Sinhala men: the 'other' men are army deserters who are positioned much lower in the militarised masculine hierarchy.

There were a vast number of criminal 'evil' acts by Sri Lankan army officers that have been recorded by local and international monitors. In the last few months of the war, there were rapes and sexual abuses by the military. Tamil women were raped by soldiers. These have taken place in the camps of internally displaced persons in the *Vanni,*when Tamil people crossed the boundaries to government-controlled areas in the final phase of war (International Crisis Group Working to Prevent Conflict World Wide, 2011:26).[11]According to an old Tamil woman's account, when they tried to flee from the war prone area, they were forced to parade naked, forced to perform acts of sexual nature and were raped in front of their family members including their grandchildren (Amnesty International, 2011:11). The depicted image of the soldier in pro-war films is different to that of the reported story.

Personating Sinhala militarised masculinities as tough in battlefield but gentle in family life makes the Sinhala soldier a complete and balanced human being; Sinhala soldiers are brave in battle field in order to protect the country, but they are loving and kind when it comes to their family. As portrayed in the pro-war films, soldiers are kind hearted and dedicated to their partners.

Representation of militarised masculinities as protective towards children is another significant trait, which is sketched through pro-war films. Sinhala Militarised masculinities

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10 Director of a war Film, Personal Interview,26[th]August, 2012.

11 http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/217%20Sri%20Lanka%20-%20Womens%20Insecurity%20in%20the%20North%20and%20East%20KO.pdf

have been portrayed as 'protective' towards each and every person regardless of their ethnicity, while giving special attention to children. According to Tickner, the soldier is a "protector; he must show courage, strength, and responsibility and repress feelings of fear, vulnerability, and compassion" (Tickner, 1992:40). However; as Enloe suggested and as quoted earlier, shaping of military masculinity idiom depends on the political historical context in which they emerge. Thus, the Sinhala militarised masculine's behavior of being protective towards children is projected as a counter discourse of LTTE's practice of recruiting child soldiers. Children are adored and protected by Sinhala soldiers while LTTE uses child soldiers as fighters. While the next generation of the nation is protected by Sinhala soldiers, it is destroyed by Tamil LTTE carders.

Film *Prabakaran* is a story mainly about a child soldier and his sister. The LTTE abducts *Prabakaran* when he is in school and trains him to become a soldier. The film illustrates many instances where LTTE trains child soldiers. In one scene, child soldiers march holding their guns up in the sky shouting 'fight, fight and win the land of Elam' (*Satan Karaw, Satan Karaw, Elam deshaya dinaganiw)*. In another scene, pregnant *Kamalani* cries and asks a LTTE leader to allow her first to deliver her child and then to become a suicide bomber. He refuses her petition. There are also many scenes in which the child soldier *Prabakaran* cries and asks to leave the LTTE, saying he wants to play and go to school. There is a moment when the LTTE leader is irritated by the boy and inveighs him by pushing him away. He also cries remembering how he was abducted by LTTE while studying at school. In another scene, child soldiers set a claymore bomb by the roadside and start playing cricket displaying their lost childhood. *Prabakaran* and the other child soldiers escape from the LTTE captivity with other Sinhala soldiers who were under the LTTE captivity. Escaping army soldiers ask *Prabakaran* and the other children to stay there until they come with back-up forces. Before they leave, *Prabakaran* says, "Do not betray us" and the soldier answers , "I have children like you, do not worry." The child soldiers stay and are killed by the LTTE attacks right when the Sinhala soldiers come to their rescue . Although the soldiers were unable to rescue them, they did come to protect and save the children. While the Sinhala soldiers try to rescue the child soldiers when they were still in captivity, LTTE uses children as soldiers and unborn children as bombs.

In the film *Gamani*, a Tamil family moves to a Sinhala village.After they settle in the village, one of the village security officers comes to visit the little Tamil girl with some candy. At the end of the film, when LTTE attacks the village, this Tamil family leaves the village with other villagers in an attempt to escape, but on the way, the little girl loses her doll and returns to find it . One of the village security officers sees her, but suddenly a member of the LTTE captures the girl and holds her tightly, keeping a knife at her throat and demanding the Sinhala officer to drop the gun. The Sinhala officer drops the gun and moves backwards as ordered by the LTTE member, all to protect the Tamil child. The LTTE carder shoots the officer, allowing the child to escape from his grip and to run to the officer, who lies on the floor. The little Tamil girl then repeatedly blames the LTTE in Tamil and says that, "you cruel person, you shot my brother." Afterwards, the LTTE carder captures the girl again but another Sinhala officer shows up, shoots the man and rescues the girl.

In the film *Ira Handa Yata*, *Rakhitha* brings *Kiruba Devi*'s little daughter to Colombo for medical treatment, staying with her when she undergoes surgery and looking after her.

All these examples illustrate the protective nature of militarised masculinities towards children regardless of their ethnicity, which makes the Sinhala soldier different from Tamil LTTE.

In contrast to the LTTE, Sinhala soldiers are portrayed as humans with moral principles; Sinhala soldiers refrain from shooting people in the back. If there is a possibility of being captured by the enemy, Sinhala soldiers commit suicide. When Sinhala soldiers capture an LTTE member,

they do not kill, him but give him water and treat him right.[12]

Nomiyena Minisun is a film screened in the year 1994 and directed by one of the most renowned personalities in Sri Lankan Sinhala cinema: Gamini Fonseka. The film portrays an army lieutenant colonel, *Ranabahu,* who lives alone after sending his son and his Indian wife back to India, in order to protect them. The colonel refuses to go with his family, as his first priority is to protect the country. A young captain who is under the colonel's command and who is close to the colonel is captured by the LTTE in a battle. As there is no one to look after the young captain's pregnant fiancé, she is taken care of by the colonel. After some time, the colonel finds outthat the young army captain is still alive and goes to rescue him, but he dies in an attack by the Indian army on the LTTE base. The young army captain returns and reunites with his fiancé and baby son. In this film, the complexity of the ethnic problem behind the civil war is veiled by the glorification of 'soldier' as a 'God' and as 'immortal'. As the name of the film signifies, the divinity is attached to the solider as 'immortal' and it is expressed a couple of times across the film. In the beginning of the film, the background narrator says: "But when the fire of war is lit, soldiers who have limited training arrive[13] at the battlefield to protect the people who cannot fight; soldiers die for others[14] and exhale the last breath as heroes and become Gods in the afterlife." At the end of the film, during a funeral, the *colonel's* sister says: "People who died for their country do not die; they are immortal." In one of the scenes, a group of soldiers lead by the young captain captures an LTTE carder and gives him water. LTTE member asks why they don't kill him, and the captain replies: "We are soldiers, not butchers like you." In yet another scene, one of the Sinhala soldiers who has been attacked and severly injured by LTTE, commits suicide by shooting in his head with his own gun. Before he dies he says, "Do not eat leftovers although you are hungry, lion cubs do not eat grass– (*Kusagini hadunata indul nokaw, thanakola nubudithi sinha pataw)*". The 'braveness' attached to Sinhala soldier is manifestly shown in the film. Apart from that, the main character of the film, the colonel, who is played by the actor Gamini Fonseka, is depicted as a person full of benevolent qualities. He gives his name to the newborn child as the father of the child is missing. He brings the young captain's pregnant fiancé to his home and protects her as a father, but at the same time gives his name to the child she bores. Before the young captain's departure to the battleground, he tells his fiancé that, 'we are also human as anyone else, we have feelings too.' The film shows the 'bravery' as well as the human characteristics,such as protectiveness, and the caring nature of the soldiers.

In the film *Ira Handa Yata* a soldier (*Rakhitha*) and an Army Officer (*Mahasen*) are in a battle on a dark night, in a forest raging with fire. The army officer *Mahasen* is wounded and asks *Rakhitha* to leave him and take his message of love to his wife. *Rakitha* leaves the him wounded to get help, but gets caught by LTTE carders. *Rakhitha* tells LTTE carders about *Mahasen,* in order to have him rescued. Meanwhile, *Rakhitha* meets a few Sinhala soldiers who are kept as hostages by the LTTE. Then the LTTE finds *Mahasen* and takes him to the camp. The LTTE leader of that particular camp meets *Mahasen* and says that he is a practical man and that he does not have time to waste on meetings. He says to *Mahasen*, "you are married to one of our heroes' sister, we offer you to join the organization and I promise to bring your wife to you within two weeks." However, *Mahasen* refuses this offer. When *Mahasen* leaves the room the LTTE leader shoots *Mahasen* in the back. This scene symbolises the bravery of the Sri Lankan army officers; they do not betray the nation under any circumstance. They are depicted as 'heroes' representing 'good militarised masculinity' in contrast to the Tamil militants who have been depicted as 'evil', gawky, cowardly and lacking in principles, having shot an unarmed person on the back.

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12 http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=8088

13 Wadithi – Normally this word is use with Gods and Buddhist monks.

14 Anun jiewath karawannata thamun divi pudathi.

Sinhalisation is the process of assimilating other ethnic communities to the Sinhala community. There are three models for ethnic integration: assimilation, melting pot and cultural pluralism. The first one is mostly practiced by the United States, which was formed as a 'nation of immigrants' (Giddens, 2001: 256). The second approach does not promote the adoption of the pre-existing cultural patterns, but the creation of new ways through the interaction with the existing communities (Giddens, 2001:256). This approach allows everyone to participate in their cultural customs regardless of their ethnic situation as minorities or majorities, viewing ethnic minorities equal toany other group in the society (Giddens, 2001:256). However, in Sri Lanka, the process of assimilation is forceful. As northern Tamils are natives of the country, it is difficult to relate to the first model of assimilation. Obstructions to integrate the nation with Tamil people, imposed by the state, led the country to civil war. The Sinhala Only Act in 1956 initiated a breach in trust between Tamil and Sinhala people. After the protest against the Sinhala Only Act in Gall Face, led by Chelvanayagam, the tension between Sinhalese and Tamils intensified (Chandraprema, 2012:31). This was the aftermath of the effort of Sinhalisation by the Sri Lankan government through the Sinhala Only Act.

It is said that language is the base of any culture. Obstructive language implications discouraged Tamils to participate in the state as equal citizens as they were compelled to use 'Sinhala' in public spaces, which implies forced ethnic assimilation and Sinhalisation. The later alteration of this law did not help to rebuild the broken trust in the Tamil mindset. In 1958, the Tamils in the Northern part of the country who were eager to find the language equity questioned in 1956, reacted to the replacing of English lettering on motor vehicle registration numbers with the Sinhala letter 'Sri' by replacing the Sinhala letter with the Tamil letter for 'Sri' (Vittachi, 1958).[15] Aroused by these incidents, Sinhala mobs in Colombo defaced each and every Tamil letter they could find in the city on bill-boards, posters, etc. (Vittachi, 1958).[16] The failure of the state to secure minority rights pushed the country towards a war with incidents as the 1983 black July as an attempt to massacre Tamils. Ethnicizing higher education in the year 1970 by making the number of students qualifying for university entrance from each language proportionate to the number of students sitting for the exam in each language (Thangarajah, 2003) disturbed and discouraged the integration of Tamil community to the state. It forced the assimilation of Sinhalaness, which equals Sinhalisation. 'Sinhalisation' is a process executed for many years. This process has been accelerated after the end of the war in 2009. The place names in the North-East have been changed to Sinhala names. "Since 2006, nearly 100 village names have been changed from Tamil names to Sinhalese ones" (The Social Architects, 2012:17). Furthermore, the employment opportunities left for the Tamil youth in North and East are very little . In contrast to this, state soldiers were engaged in constructing cafés and restaurants under the presidency of Mahinda Rajapakse. These cafés and restaurants were run by soldiers. Further, under the presidency of Mahinda Rajapakse, soldiers were engaged in agriculture and various other businesses (The Social Architects, 2012:18) and the survival of Tamil people was obstructed. In addition it is expected that military families will be settled in North and East areas of the country. "In 2011, the State built 12,000 houses in Aanaivilunthan (Kilinochchi), Murukandy (Mullaitivu), Kokkavil and Palaly, Thellipalai (Jaffna) with the development assistance of China and is preparing to settle military families in these areas. The government is also building homes for Sri Lankan Navy families on 1,500 hectares of land in the Mankeni, in the Vahari area of Batticaloa district in the Eastern Province" (The Social Architects, 2012:19). These are the physical and material efforts of Sinhalisation. This Process of Sinhalisation has been supported and facilitated through Sinhala films such as '*Selvam*' and '*Gamani*'.

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15   http://tamilnation.co/books/Eelam/vitachi.htm

16   http://tamilnation.co/books/Eelam/vitachi.htm

The film *Selvam* was directed by Sanjaya Leelarathne, a famous film actor. He was a candidate for the ruling party back then (United People's Freedom Alliance)[17], defeated in the general election. The film was produced by Mohomad Mujahim. According to the ministry of Defense's web site, 'the film is based on the true ground witness of rehabilitation and resettlement of the Tamil people with the eradication of terrorism by our valiant forces'.[18] Furthermore, according to the defense web site, one of the main roles of the film was played by a rehabilitated LTTE carder and that is an important fact about this film. The main character is a little Tamil boy called *Selvam*. He is with his grandfather, since his parents have died in the war. His school class teacher asks him to call her mother. She says that she is the mother for all the children who do not have a mother. When the boy asks the teacher who his father is, the teacher says that President Mahinda Rajapakse is his father. The boy then becomes obsessed with Mahinda Rajapakse and beseeches the teacher and his grandfather, saying that he wants to see the 'King Mahinda'.[19] The little boy chants and hammers the idea of 'King Mahinda' into the minds of the audience, although there are no kings, since Sri Lanka is a democratic country. Nevertheless, the president has been elevated to the status of kingship by the film. The Tamil boy accepts the Sri Lankan president as its 'king'. It is interesting to note that the film was released in 2011 and the 18th amendment to the constitution was introduced in 2010. Presidential term limits were eliminated in the 18th amendment and the 'kingship' was further legitimised. In post-war Sri Lanka, democracy has become procedural. The substantive qualities of democracy have vanished. Sri Lanka has elections, a parliament and a president. Yet, by the 18th amendment to the constitution, presidential term limits have been eliminated, constitutional council has been replaced by parliamentary council and the role of the election commission has been restricted. According to the 18th amendment, President will seek the 'observations' from parliamentary council when appointing people to higher authorities in the country. However, failure of Parliamentary council to communicate with the President on the observations allows the president to appoint posts at his/her discretion. Unlike the constitutional council, parliamentary council consists of only of members of the parliament. 'Democracy' has become just a word. People are unaware of the distortion of democracy; instead they fantasise about a 'king'. Country leads toward a 'feudal system' by legitimising kingship and practicing nepotism. The film acts as a justification of this amendment. The Film depicts that the future Tamil generations accept President Mahinda Rajapakse as their 'father' and the little Tamil boy uses the word 'King' Mahinda when referring to President Mahinda Rajapakse. As mentioned before, the film is directed by Sanjaya Leelarathne, who was a strong supporter of the ruling party and a defeated UPFA candidate. The role of the teacher, the main female character in the film, is performed by Malani Fonseka, a talented Sri Lankan actress and, a national list member to the parliament at the same time. Chief guests at the launch of the film were Gotabaya Rajapakase, who was the former Secretary of Defense and brother of Mahinda Rajapakse and Ioma Rajapakse and Gotabaya Rajapakse's wife, former chairperson of the Seva Vantiha Unit of the Defense Ministry. This and the fact that the information on the film was published in Ministry of Defense's web site, clearly indicates the close relationship this film had with the former government.[20] Mentioning the film as belonging to the genre of 'documentary', using a rehabilitated LTTE carder as one of the main characters and publishing information on the Defense Ministry Website are all things that function to enhance the credibility of the film for the audience. The film *Selvam* is in fact almost a caricature of the manner in which film functions as an Ideological State Apparatus in relation to the war. In *Selvam,* the glorified masculine figure is the President Mahinda Rajapakse. The president

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17   United People's Freedom Alliance.

18   http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20111126_01

19   Mahinda raja balanna one.

20   http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20111126_01

of the country is the legitimised commander-in–chief for the three military forces of the country. The paternal qualities and 'kingship' have been attached to the president through a small Tamil boy, youth of the future.

The ideological 'Sinhalisation' is also done through the mass media. As an important component of mass media, films play a vital role in the process of 'Sinhalisation'. The discussed Sinhala war related films often associate 'good' with 'Sinhalaness' and 'bad' with 'Tamilness'. The previously discussed examples suggest that, in order to become 'good', Tamils have to become 'Sinhala'. 'Sinhalisatio*n*' is therefore a process. To become 'good', salvation from Tamilness is essential. *Selvam,* projects the image of fatherhood to the 'Sinhala King' Mahinda Rajapakse.

In the film *Gamani*, there is a particular scene in which a Sinhala teacher visits the home of a Tamil family where a young Tamil girl, her little sister and her father live. The Sinhala teacher brings some clothes for them and talks with the Tamil girl. The Tamil girl starts talking to the teacher in Tamil language, but gradually changes her language to Sinhala. They have a conversation about the ethnic crisis between Sinhalese and Tamils.

> Tamil Girl: Village people are very nice. They have lied to us. Sinhalese are very good. *(Me game minissu hari hondai, un apita boru kiyala thiyenne, Sinhala minissu hari hondai)*

> Sinhala teacher: Sister, how did you come to know that much about Sinhalese? (*Ochchara ikmanata oyaa sinhalayaa gena ochchara godak danagaththe kohomada nangi*)

> Tamil girl: It might take years to recognise one person but it does not take one second to understand how one ethnic group treats another ethnic group. (*eka manussayek handunaganna apita awurudu ganak yanna puluwan. Eth eka jaathiyak thawa jathiyakata salakanne kohomada kiyala andunaganna eka winadiyakwath yan naha*)

Sinhalaness has been glorified through a Tamil girl. The film conveys the idea that how Tamils themselves have identified the 'evilness' and 'wrongness' within their own community by saying that 'they have lied to us' and gradually changing the language to Sinhala indicates that there is no space for Tamils in this country but that they have to change and assimilate to Sinhala in order to survive. They can exist, but they are unable to participate in or perform their culture.

 "Films are influenced by the regime. After the victory of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, directors tried to create films in support of his regime"[21]. At one informal discussion with two female university students, it was stated that "the films like *Gamani* and *Selvam* are propaganda films. *Gamani* is much better than *Selvam* in the story line and other technical aspects. But the intentions of both films are the same. One may as well watch some advertisements used during the Presidential election period for President Rajapaksa than these films. The Director of *Gamani* says that this is the way he has built the civil security force, but we think this is propaganda. They just need to maintain the regime. The film *Ira Handa Yata* also comes under the same category. There could be humanistic instincts in army soldiers, but when the Army did something inhumane in films, the government did not hesitate to ban them"[22]. Another student stated that "artists create works in support of the Regime"[23]. The film *Gamani* justifies the war against LTTE. When interviewing one of the prominent directors in the country, he revealed how they were invited to direct the film *Gamani*, "we were invited by a government authority, and asked to direct a war film for the government. There were three of us. We refused it. Then the government produced this film with an army officer. This film is not directed by this army person, but by twelve assistant

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21 Tharindu, Personal Interview, 23rd September 2012

22 Achini,Umali. Personal Interview,3rd October, 2012

23 Malith, Personal Interview, 04th October 2012

directors. Government used these young assistant directors. However, the credit was given to rear admiral Sarath Weerasekara"[24]. The film *Gamani* was released during the time when the Sri Lankan government was about to be accused of war crimes internationally. At that time, The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Channel Four had released a video depicting war crimes of the Sri Lankan government (18 September 2011).[25] According to Prasanna Rajapakse who is one of the producers of the film, the film was a good response to the Channel Four documentary. The film made by Channel Four, 'Sri Lanka's killing fields' depicts how the Sri Lankan military forces attacked the hospitals situated in northern war free zone. These war free zones were established by the Sri Lankan government. According to the film, the attacks were not executed accidently but intentionally in several occasions. While this Chanel Four film emphasized the massive attacks against Tamil unarmed civilians by the government armed forces, Sinhala film *Gamani* depicts the brutal attacks of LTTE against Sinhala unarmed civilians. According to its producer Prasanna Rajapakse, the making of *Gamani* is a reaction to the Channel four film. People who got involved in the production of the pro-war film *Gamani* have used it to shape popular ideologies regarding both the war and the regime.

Films which critique the war or alternative cinema come under the category of 'third cinema'. Third cinema focuses its attention on political issues and competes with mainstream cinema to illustrate the different meanings behind social, economic or political issues. 'First Cinema conjures images of Hollywood movies, consumption, and bourgeois values; Second Cinema refers to European art house films demonstrating aesthetic, but not always political, innovation; Third Cinema takes a different approach to filmmaking, by subverting cinematic codes, embracing revolutionary ideals and combating the passive film-watching experience of commercial cinema'[26]. In her book 'Militarising Sri Lankan Popular Culture, Memory and Narrative in the Armed Conflict', Neloufer De Mel argues that Sri Lankan films which critiqued the war such as *Ira Madiyama and Me Mage Sandai,* directed by Prasanna Vithanage and Asoka Handagama respectively, belong to this category. She further states that these films encourage the viewer to understand the shaping of Sri Lankan society through militarisation (De Mel, 2007:222). For example, in the film *Me Mage Sandhai*, Handagama deconstructs the romanticised village, which was centered around Buddhist values but has been changed due to the long prevailing war and newly introduced political economies. According to De Mel;

> Handagama also challenged the romanticised, idyllic depiction of rural Sri Lanka as a timeless tight nexus of agricultural and Buddhist community for an understanding that decades of militarisation and globalisation had irrevocably transformed traditional patterns of life, alienated people from the land, and introduced new sexual, moral and political economies (2007:224).

The author focuses especially on the 'memories', which play a vital role in upholding, altering and contesting militarisation. Memories are preserved for the future. The production of militaristic values heavily relies on the 'memories' people have. Understanding the politics behind a memory and contesting it is important, as it is the only reference to history which will remain in the future.

> This book also foregrounds the labours of memory in upholding, altering and contesting militarisation. The use of historical memories, whether of past wounds, victories, heroes or legends and the public management of memory are key elements in the processes of militarisation (De Mel, 2007:17).

De Mel claims that memories are constructed through different methods and that in the end,

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24 interviewed by the author in Colombo, on 08/09/2012 stated that,

25 18th Sept7ember 2011: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hu1u3dPfI0o

26 http://thirdcinema.blueskylimit.com/thirdcinema.html

the official memory becomes the 'history'. Both LTTE and the Sri Lankan state preserve some memories as official for militaristic ends and erase others (De Mel, 2007:221). Encouraging official memory is facilitated by the pro-war films, while films which critique the war struggle with the 'official memory'. Sri Lanka's third cinema challenges the pro-war film and obstructs the making of 'official memory'. However, this paper discusses how mainstream cinema creates official memory through pro-war films.

Although killing is an illegal act, when it comes to soldiers, it is legal. It is pivotal to study this act of killing interpreted differently in people's minds and the manner in which the killing has been legitimized and become honorable and valiant in people's mind when it is done by the 'soldier'. As discussed earlier, the figure of the soldier is illustrated as a 'protector' while members of LTTE are illustrated as 'ultimate killers'. Demarcation of 'us' from 'them' is marked through the characteristics discussed above. Pro-war films actively participate in the process of 'othering' and most often the production of these films is done by people related to government at that time. The process of making the military a brave institution legitimised the killings and violence of the soldier and motivated men to actively engage in war. The process ends by victimising the men who go to the frontline to get killed or to kill. After as well as during the war, Sinhalisation took place in the country as a strategy of erasing 'Tamilness' and films too contributed to this process. Pro-war films were screened without banning, making them the official memory of the history and 'naturalising' the violence against 'other' by soldiers.

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