

ISPP Virtual Seminar Series – Asia-Pacific Region March 2022

Organizers: Ying-yi Hong, Diwa Malaya Quinones, Peter Beattie, Idhamsyah Eka Putra

Date: March 25 (Friday) at 1-3 pm (Bangkok Time / 11.30 am – 1.30 pm Sri Lanka Time/ 2-4 pm Hong Kong Time)

Host: Ying-yi Hong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Speaker: Ramila Usoof, University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka

Talk Title: *Becoming Bad Boys: Changing Identities and Political Projects*

Join Zoom Meeting

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Meeting ID: 916 0338 5115

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Abstract

Groups often have chosen characters who epitomise what it means to be a member that particular collective. They become symbols of the group's identity. These characters are idealized and standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour are judged based on them. This paper attempts to examine how these characters are chosen to represent the group. It questions whether this is an organic or political process, arguing for the latter. Taking the example of recent political developments of Sri Lanka, the current work tries to delineate how the Sinhala Buddhist identity rooted in the historical narratives around the Just King Dutugemunu was replaced by the narrative of the King Ravana and the *Yakkas* (loosely translated as demons). The paper contrasts these characters and attempts to decipher what it means for the shape and form of Sinhala Buddhist identity and its interactions with other communities in this conflict prone island.

Speaker Bio

Ramila Usoof earned a doctorate in Psychology with a specialization in the psychology of peace and violence from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in the US. Currently, she works at the Department of Psychology, University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka. Her research interests broadly focus on intergroup conflict and its aftermath. On one hand she tries to understand the moral underpinnings of conflict asking the question why is harm possible in such settings when in general harm is considered to be a severe moral transgression. On the other hand she also focuses on the aftermath of conflict, particularly focusing on psychosocial wellbeing of communities that have experienced war and the role of memory in post war settings.

Links:

Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=VlmZ5eQAAAAJ&hl=en>

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1353-0820?lang=en>

Scopus: <https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=36449712000>