

A narrative analysis of Muslim identity in H.C.N de Lanerolle's *Fifty-Fifty*, *The Senator* and *The Return of Ralahamy*

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This study examines the narratives of Muslim identity in a trilogy of H.C.N de Lanerolle's political satires - *Fifty-Fifty*, *The Senator* and *The Return of Ralahamy* - through the framework of narrative theory. These works form the earliest constructions of Muslim identity in Sri Lankan literature in English and play a vital role on the discourse on Muslim identity in the Sri Lankan English literary space. Though many studies have examined identity in Sri Lankan literature and other studies have theorized on the formation of Muslim identity in the socio-political and historical contexts of Sri Lanka, there is a paucity of critical engagement on the role of Sri Lankan literature in English in the construction of narratives of the Muslim community. This study intends to fulfil this gap through the commencement of a narrative analysis of Muslim identity in the aforementioned satires. Somers and Gibson's mechanisms of narrative construction (*relationality, temporality, sequence and place, causal emplotment and selective appropriation*) are employed to identify the *public narratives* of the sole Muslim character in the trilogy, Hadjiar Abdul Hameed. Through the *public narrative* of Hadjiar in each satire, *public narratives* of Muslim identity in each satire is inferred. The introduction to each satire and historical commentary of Muslims suggest that the playwright was influenced by *meta narratives* of Muslim leadership in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the *meta narrative* of a unified Sri Lanka through the unity of all ethnicities and audience expectations. This paper argues that the *public narratives* in the trilogy configure Muslim identity as one dimensional and lacking in nuance.

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