

## SKYSCRAPER BEING A PHALLUS

### *An interpretation on skyscrapers as a reflection of the phallic nature of political authorities in post-independent Sri Lanka*

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**Abstract:** Architecture can be charged with sexuality. It becomes masculine or phallic in several ways and the skyscraper is phallic, predominantly because of its verticality that reminds the erected penis, in other words; phallus. On the other hand, "Phallus" is one of the key concepts in psychoanalysis. Jacques Lacan defined the concept of "phallus" as not merely the male organ of the erected penis but as the symbolic object of the mother's desire and patriarchy. The political decisions based on economic and political power, which are 'phallic', are the real reasons behind the skyscraper. The study focuses on the BOC tower, built after the economic reforms and establishment of the executive presidency in 1978, and the Lotus Tower, built after the end of the civil war in 2009. The hypothetico-deductive research framework is used to conduct this research, and a hypothesis was developed as 'the political skyscrapers in Colombo are Phallic not only because of their form, but also because of the politico-ideological intentions behind them'. By analyzing archival data with discourse analysis method, showing the nature of the political decisions and responses of the people towards these skyscrapers, the study shows that the Lotus Tower is built in a post-war patriarchal political atmosphere and the BOC tower is built in a constitutional dictatorial political atmosphere. Both these political backgrounds are predominantly "phallic", hence these skyscrapers not only become phallic in their form but also by becoming the phallic object of desire/lack and the object of patriarchy in Lacanian sense. The framework of the study can be further applied to understand the politics and the gender of architecture.

**Keywords:** *Hegemonic architecture, Phallic architecture, Phallic skyscraper, Post-independent Sri Lanka, Sexuality of architecture*

## 1. Introduction

Sex symbolism has been there throughout the entire history of humankind. Images of the phallus, in other words, male genitals were commonly used by civilizations throughout history and also around the world. It often symbolizes the ideas of masculinity, power, and fertility.

In architecture, both space and form have been used in a sexual sense. Whether it was used consciously or unconsciously, the signification of certain sexed images is common and similar throughout the world. For instance, the form of the tower, known as a phallic form, was used from ancient times to modern times as a signification of power.

Discussing the times of modernism, the building type of skyscrapers appeared with the economic and technological changes of the industrial revolutions followed by the cultural revolution of modernism, and therefore, the bigger, wealthier, and more industrial cities in the western world started to be crowded with skyscrapers. Especially in the feminist discourses, skyscrapers are accused to be an image of masculine ego, predominantly for having a phallic image. Many scholars argued that cities are overwhelmed with the masculine ego and its phallic verticality is not for the sake of economic necessity but for the fulfillment of the psychosexual need of possessing 'bigger things' as expressions of masculine power.

This expression of power comes from within the capitalist economic system and bourgeois political power. Hence, financial corporations, governments, and states use the skyscraper as the impression of their economic and political ideology. Political regimes in many countries and cities use architecture to express their political power, not to mention the phallic skyscraper. These skyscrapers showcase not only the political power but also the sexual nature of political and economic power.

Post-independent Sri Lanka, however, has gone through several dramatic and contrasting political incidents, events, political and ideological shifts, and crises. Like any other country in the world, Sri Lanka also has used architecture for political purposes, throughout the written history of 2500 years of the country. The first commercial

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and modern skyscraper appeared in Colombo, after the politically and culturally decisive events took place in 1977. Since then, governments and regimes have built skyscrapers according to their ideology.

## 2. Methodology

The hypothetico-deductive research framework is used to conduct this research, and a hypothesis was developed as 'the political skyscrapers in Colombo are Phallic not only because of their form, but also because of the politico-ideological intentions behind them'. The hypothesis was developed by going through the literature on psychoanalysis, ideology, architecture & skyscrapers. Archival data on the two case studies and their respective political atmospheres were analyzed with a discourse analysis method.

Part one of the study establishes the notion of skyscrapers as objects of desire/lack and patriarchy described in Lacanian psychoanalysis, rather than a visual representation of a phallus. Part two explores the nexus between architecture and political ideologies in relation to Sri Lankan architecture.

The focus of it is on the decisive politico-ideological changes that caused the rapid growth of skyscrapers in Colombo, how they affect, maintain, demonstrate or support the political ideology of the time, and how it can be understood as a psychosexual phenomenon. These can appear as two study areas, but yet, the behaviour of the psyche behind political decisions and ideology is inevitably crucial. I argue that psychic phenomena are the underlying cause behind the politico-ideological decisions to build skyscrapers. Therefore, the study will mainly focus on the psychosexual aspect of the skyscraper and its economic and political sides as by-products of sexuality.

The case studies were selected among, 1.) Habitable structures that are 100m+ in height (The projects, which consist of two or more towers are considered a single building.), 2.) Being architecturally iconic at the time, 3.) Buildings commissioned by important state-owned entities, after a significant political event. The evidence was gathered from books, newspaper articles, reports, journal articles, web articles, photographs, advertisements, research papers, interviews, YouTube videos, etc. Other than that, election policy statements and government-sponsored propaganda magazines were referred to understand politico-ideological intentions.

## 3. Phallic Symbolism and Sexuality of Skyscraper

From the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Rome, the vertical obelisks were demonstrations of the power & conquer of empires. Great empires and kings, from west to east, acknowledged their military and ideological power by locating these obelisks over the territory around the globe as monuments. The long thin form of the obelisk resembles the phallus, not the penis.

The sexual nature of the obelisk remained up to date and widely used both in a sexually provoking sense and in demonstrative occasions and events. The best example is that the obelisks were used in AIDS informative programs, promoting condoms by dressing the obelisks in a condom-like dress (figure 1).



Figure 1; the obelisk in Sydney Hyde Park dressed with a cloth that looks like a condom.  
(Source <https://www.mmo-champion.com/threads/1957923-Giant-condom-in-Sydney>)

One of the prominent critiques against skyscrapers, was that it resembles the penis and masculine ego. Feminists saw that the skyscraper has the same elements as the penis (in its erected stage), starting with a base, a shaft, and a tip on the top. It resembles the phallic erection and penetration, and the light that comes out of the skyscraper & powerful lights that light up the skyscraper looks like a penis ejaculating light into the night sky (Hayden, 1977).

The people on the ground become the spectators of the skyscraper and the massive skyscrapers are standing over the people and they need to look up to see the top of them. Henri Lefebvre (1991) sees this as 'arrogant verticality', which is an object to display that conveys the impression of authority in the visual realm of the people; of

each spectator (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 98). Phallic skyscrapers reflect the values of the patriarchal monopoly of private property, which formed to benefit the male head of the family (Weisman, 2000, p. 1). The masculine image is legitimized in the city and has spread all over the field of architecture, and these images are emblems of a male-dominant, patriarchal society (Lico, 2001).



Figure 2; Anita Stekel with one of her Giant Women paintings  
(Source; <https://palianshow.wordpress.com/2019/01/27/anita-steckel/>)

Dolores Hayden (1977) sees the skyscraper as seduction and rape. She argues that in the American judicial system, rape has often been presented as seduction, suggesting that either aggressor “couldn’t help himself” or the victim “really wanted it”. She sees the developer (political/economic authority) as the aggressor, the city, and the rape victim (as in the case of rape). She argues that in the late 19th century, the competition for heights, with the boost of technology, took the offices and conference rooms to the top of the buildings, so they could look down and see how the enterprises dominated the city. The obelisks and towers represented military conquests in the past the skyscraper represented economic conquest. In the same way, these obelisks and columns ideologically integrated with the war & patriotic death, the skyscraper reflects the fecundity and generative power. Hayden suggests that this is a metaphor for sexual power (Hayden, 1977).

#### 4. The Meaning of ‘Phallus’

‘Phallus’ is one of the key concepts discussed in the discipline of psychoanalysis and constantly pops up in various theories. The word ‘Phallus’ is been used to signify the male genitalia (the penis), especially in its erected stage. It derives from the Greek word ‘Phallos’. Sigmund Freud puts a significant amount of attention on the phallus in his Oedipus & Castration complexes as a symbol in human psychosexual development and Jacques Lacan follows the footsteps of Freud to extend this psychoanalytical discourse. The Lacanian theory is a significant foundation for all the post-structural gender theories. Hence, for this discussion, Lacanian interpretations will be the key to the architectural interpretation of the “symbolic system of the Phallus”.

Phallus is a signification that is strongly bonded with the ideas related to the father. The system of signifiers leads to the ideas of patriarchal relationships (Hook, 2006, p. 77). Phallic symbols vary drastically according to the context. For example, in the Oedipus complex, Freud argues that the child attempts to be the privileged and loved object of the mother, and at the same time he becomes a rival with the father to become the ‘object of desire of the mother’ (Boothe, 2017, p. 2), and in this case, the child himself becomes the phallus (Hook, 2006, p. 71). In Lacanian sense, wealth, accomplishments, or even the children can be used as phallic objects by the parents (adults) (Hook, 2006, p. 80). Therefore, the ‘phallus’ in Lacanian terms is, a ‘signifier that designates all binary difference’ but not a bodily organ; a penis (Luepnitz, 2002, p. 226). In this symbolic system, the ‘Phallus’ is an anchoring point, that helps to generate meaning (Rae, 2020, p. 17).

##### 4.1 SKYSCRAPER AS ‘PHALLUS’

The skyscraper makes its mark of being a phallic image by its form. Scholars and also business figures have agreed upon the notion of the skyscraper as an outcome of the masculine ego and financial desire. Donald Trump claims “Ego is a very important part of the building of skyscrapers ... It’s probably a combination of ego and desire for financial gain” (Ali, M. & Armstrong, P., 1995). Phallus, desire, and ego are key concepts in psychoanalysis, and to understand the relationship between these concepts with architecture, it’s important to revisit the realm of the psyche, the behaviour of the human unconscious, and sexuality, which is the inevitable driving force behind the entire history of civilizations.

##### 4.1.1 Skyscraper as the phallic object of representing “Lack”

The phallus is a signifier of the sense of completion. As Luepnitz, (2002) describes, the Lacanian idea of the phallus is the ‘wish to completeness’, but it always remains unachievable. Lacan identifies this phenomenon as ‘the lack’. Everybody wants to be the phallus but no one can have. Further, wealth, accomplishments, or children for their parents are phallic objects (Luepnitz, 2002, p. 221).

The urban skyscraper, in general, is an outcome of a massive concentration of wealth. The companies behind the creation of the skyscrapers put in a great amount of capital, and see the building as a "money-making machine", expecting to gain maximum profit from the limited land plot. Thus the skyscraper is a "sign of modern capitalism" (Parker, 2013). A city is a place of competition for companies to go higher, to become the 'most accomplished and achieved'.

Deyan Sudjic (2005 as cited in Parker, 2013), sees bigger as the 'desire' of the little men. What is the desire here? Lacan identifies the phallus as the object of lack. First, the phallus always remains outside of the child's reach, and thus it becomes the imaginary object of the mother's desire. The child tries to be the mother's object of desire, however, he does not know what it is, in other words; the phallus remains enigmatic.

On the other hand, from the mother's perspective, the phallus is what she desires, the object of her satisfaction which she never comes to possess and she never gets to satisfy her desire. Hence it becomes both the signifier of lack and the signifier of desire (Hook, 2006, p. 71).

The skyscraper is not only about the attraction of the desire of the local spectators but also for the attraction of foreign investments. As the anthropologist Aihwa Ong condemns, the will or desire for the creation of skyscrapers as 'Skyscraper megalomania' and highlights the fact that the 'Skyscraper megalomania' is not only about attracting foreign investment but also the political desire to be recognized, by the world (Graham, 2016). This notion brings the skyscraper back to the Lacanian reading of the phallus as the signifier of lack. According to Lacan, men need 'to be seen by others or the things that make desirable for others as 'having it' or 'possessing it' (Hook, 2006, p. 80). This 'it' is nothing other than the Phallus that signifies wealth, accomplishments, money, and power.

These outcomes of economic success, or the modern face of the city; skyscrapers, ultimately end up being the fetish object of the people. These skyscrapers are representative signs of the city for advertisements, promotions, or postcards. For architects, planners, and authorities, the newly formed skyline with new skyscrapers becomes a fetish obsession (Kaika, 2010).

#### 4.1.2 Skyscraper as the phallic object of representing Patriarchal Domination

From ancient periods, the institutions that were/are correlated with power can be briefed into three parts; be religion, politics, and economy (Michielan, 2016). The concepts of 'power' and 'governance', as Michielan (2016) says, are central to the king or ruler, whose power is father-like in nature. Further, he says, in architecture the patriarchal power rests in creations of 'high, size and splendor'.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) sees verticality and political arrogance as close to the phenomenon of a tower. The phallic image is an ideal representation of masculine power and ego, he says, the political and economic power makes the 'architectural phallus' erected. Lefebvre further describes that the Phallic tower will be a concentrated space of power, force, and violence, where they are concentrated into a triune; God, father, and Leader. He emphasizes the metaphor of the nature of male and female genitals and architectural space; in which the female genitals resemble the world, low and hidden, and the phallus, erected with ego and power (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 262). The patriarchal character is metaphorically visible in architectural space where the low-rise buildings (female space) lay near the tower as they are to seduce the tower of strength, statue, and strategy (Dovey, 1999, p. 110).

The modernity of America needed this sort of a 'phallic-centered patriarchy' to symbolize its muscular and heroic notion (Graham, 2016). The 20th-century skyscraper stands on the big, erected masculine ego of American modernity, and the identity and quality of life of humans faded under the competition for domination and individual skyscrapers (Weisman, 2000, p. 1).

In psychoanalysis, Lacan described this scenario as "the name of the father" (nom-du-père in French). At some point in a child's growth, he realizes that he cannot be the object of "mother's desire" and start to give up the attempt of being the phallus. He has to move (unconsciously) from the imaginary phallus (of being the mother's desire) to a symbolic dimension. And the child is forced to enter a symbolic realm, or a set of structures (Hook, 2006, pp. 76-77)(Hook, 2006, pp. 76-77). In the socio-political world, the great guide towards desire; the figure of the mother is substituted by politicians and public figures, and they are the ones to tell people how to desire (Senūta, 2014). The phenomenon of "the name of the father", is described as the father as a 'figure of law'. It is an abstract form of paternal patriarchy, which imposes laws and prohibitions, and the concept of "the name of the father" is the link between Lacanian ideas of "Phallus" and "the father" (Hook, 2006, p. 77). Hook (2006) further explains that the idea of a father, should not necessarily be the actual father, or even a person, but the symbolic concept of the agency of law.

This concept is crucial for the discourse of patriarchal domination in architecture; especially the skyscraper. We already know that the phallic form of the skyscraper, replicates the 'real phallus', and on the other hand, signifies the psychic desire and lack embodied in the phallic image. Apart from the desire of corporations for skyscrapers, the patriarchal nature of skyscrapers guides us to understand the role of the government and the authorities of legislation as the nuclei of power. And they become the 'father', the 'privileged one' to possess the Phallus.

## 5. Architectural manifestation of ideology and the power of monumentality

Manfredo Tafuri (1969) identifies architects as agents of politics. Architecture, he says, needs to accept its politicization and continue to search for advanced solutions at acceptable levels, for this, however, ideology plays a decisive role (Tafuri, 1969, p. 9). Yet, architecture is the most politically underrated or unrecognized medium of art. Fredric Jameson explains that the political content of architecture is allegorical, just like art. Architecture, according to Jameson is 'inert'. He identifies that architecture is the most repressed among all the forms of art. Every other art form demands at least a minimal reading while architecture is to be lived in or moved around in, and because of the same reason, political reading is ignored (Leach, 1997, p. 225).

Architecture has always been the symbol for objectifying authority, which is the actual imagery of society (Kaika, 2010). The monumentality in architecture, of course, is purely the reflection of political propaganda (Curtis, 1996, as cited in Sklair, L. & Gherardi, L., 2012). It is evident that, from ancient periods to the 20th-century ideologies of Modernism, Nazism, or Fascism, and extending to post-war era ideologies, monumentality in architecture was a well-used instrument to express the political ideology of the time (Sklair, L. & Gherardi, L., 2012). Its priority is to symbolize the ideology and values of the dominant groups, and as an instrument of state propaganda (Curtis, 1983).

## 6. Case study analysis; Architectural manifestation of the dictatorial powers in post-independent Sri Lanka.

The governments of post-independent Sri Lanka had various political orientations. Sometimes it was right-wing and sometimes it was left-wing. And also they changed their ideology, according to changes in ideological trends at the time as liberal capitalism, socialism, populism, or nationalism. The shift of the economy from an open economy to a closed economy and from a closed economy to an open economy (free market capitalism) seems to stand out in pre-2000 Sri Lanka. After 1977, the prominent policy of the economy of both left-wing and right-wing parties remained in the free market economy policy, with interventions according to the regimental ideology.

### 6.1 THE SKYSCRAPER UNDER THE CONSTITUTIONAL DICTATORSHIP - BOC TOWER

As a result of the failure of Sirimavo Bandaranayake's left-wing government, the leader of the opposition J.R. Jayawardene, who had a British liberal political orientation, capitalist economics, and constitutional law (Rajapaksha, n.d.), recorded a ground-breaking win of 5/6 in the 1977 general election. However, Prime Minister J.R. Jayawardene brought in the 1978 constitution and eventually became the 1st executive president of Sri Lanka. With the power given to the executive presidency, JR was awarded a stable, powerful, and independent position with expectations of a prosperous future. Despite the expected better and prosperous future from the executive president with his enormous power, JR created a 'constitutional dictatorship' around him (Rajapaksha, n.d.). JR charged himself with imagery of righteous kingship taking the motto of dharmishta samajayak (translated as "a righteous society") and culminating it with a Buddhist moral value penetrating the Sinhala Buddhist conscience, and utilizing the cultural capital that has grown around it (Fernando, 2013). JR was excited with the given power and ended up delivering the famous statement "the only thing that I am unable to do with the power vested upon me by this constitution is that transforming a man into a woman and a woman into a man".

However, the economic expansion was well-sensed by many industries including the banking industry. Bank of Ceylon, a government organization, had a good time with the economic expansion and the banking of the private sector also improved. BOC also had to develop its capacity to compete with them. The bank had to update its technology and introduced new elements like a Foreign Currency Banking Unit (FCBU) in 1979. A new 32-storied tower was proposed in Colombo Fort symbolizing the expansion and development of the bank and its capacity (Chandrakumara, 2014).

The form and extreme height of the building (at least at that time) penetrated the people's conscience. They even nicknamed the building pittu bambuwa because it resembles a traditional food-making instrument. The building stood tall alone above the low-rising heritage city, surrounded by a few modern-style multi-story hotels and government buildings in the 80s until the twin tower of the World Trade Centre (WTC) rose next to it. The building well suited with the motto of the bank; Jathiye Mhan Tamba, translated as the great lighthouse of the nation.

This portrays Tafuri (1973 as cited in Kaika, 2010)'s notion of iconic architecture as being commissioned as a symbolic expression of economic supremacy under financial instabilities across the globe. Kalpana magazine suggests that a young woman who made a cake structure inspired by the BOC tower (figure 3) mentioned that she stared at the tower from Galleface, until her eyes hurt (de Silva, 1987). BOC tower has become a 'fetish' and also a prominent feature of the city and for the bank. People have taken the building so desirably, and it became the trademark for the bank.

The phallic form of the building is significant, and at the time of its completion, it is further pronounced because of the lack of tall structures at that time. The cylindrical main tower is partially built on a base. The building's advertising campaigns highlighted the fact that the other buildings in the surrounding appear much smaller because of the significant height of the building, saying "the new BOC home stands tall majestically making the surrounding buildings look like dwarfs" (de Silva, 1987). These notions reflect the intention for egoistic masculinity through phallic

verticality by making the building a 'must-see-object'. This exhibiting act of showing one's superior wealth and power is of course the 'phallic ego' (Morris, 1992) and it becomes the 'Phallus' itself for signifying wealth and accomplishments (Luepnitz, 2002).

This expansion of banking activities and its new image were well suited to the overall attempt at the phallic aspect of the commercial accomplishments. It is indeed an exhibitionist act of phallic ego and politically well blended with the dictatorial phallic image of J.R. Jayawardena. His government's extroverted political vision was properly merged with the bank's attempt to be globalized. In Althusserian terms, now it is evident that behind the creation of the skyscraper, the political state apparatus is functioning as a centre apparatus. It dominates or, in other words, hypnotizing the people on the ground level with ideology. Not only that but also the psycho-sexual drive of a lack, desire, and patriarchy are functioning unconsciously behind these State Apparatuses, for the first skyscraper of the country.



Figure 3; a cake structure inspired from the tower.  
(Source; de Silva, 1987)

## 6.2. THE POST-WAR OBELISK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SINHALA-BUDDHIST KINGDOM - THE LOTUS TOWER

After several political incidents, especially with the rise of the Tamil separatist militia, the need to highlight the nationalist power came into discussion. The nationalistic movement called *Jathika Chinthanaya* emerged in southern Sri Lanka in 1980. Several intellectual figures took the lead in the movement, and they gave intellectual support for the ethnic-nationalist movement of the south against the ethnic-nationalist groups of the north. Mahinda Rajapakse emerged as the political face of the nationalist ideology in the mid-2000s, and at the beginning, he had much support from many political groups except the right-wing liberals. *Jathika chinthana* movement was an enormous support to the regime of Mahinda Rajapakse, providing intellectual and moral confidence, putting president Rajapakse in the position of 'the saviour of the Sinhala-Buddhist cause' (Dewasiri, 2018).

After a series of long and complex political incidents and international involvements, the Rajapakse government achieved a military defeat of the LTTE. After the war, however, instead of looking for consensus-based peace settlement policies, the government introduced a series of institutional and constitutional changes, aiming the peace and Sinhalese domination of the state (Jayasundara-Smiths, 2013, p. 191) was the 'orgasmic moment' of nationalism in Sri Lanka (Gunaratne, 2020).

Common Sinhala-Buddhist opinion before 2005 was that the Sinhala-Buddhist elite ruling class had surrendered ideologically and politically and the arrival of Mahinda Rajapaksa solved that tension and all elements of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism involved in bringing Mahinda Rajapaksa to power. After the war, a propaganda campaign was carried out, highlighting the parallels between King *Dutugemunu*, who was born in the south and re-established the Sinhala kingdom in Anuradhapura, killing the South Indian king Elara and president Rajapaksa (Dewasiri, 2013). Other than that, other campaigns were highlighting the establishment of kingships like poster campaigns and propaganda songs like *Ayobowewa...Maharajaneni* (roughly translated as long live the great king) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6CMv7zqaxc>, n.d.), in 2010 that shows president Rajapaksa as the 'great king' who saved the nation, and in 2015 election campaign he is presented as the father (*appachchi*) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPCTNhN3BLA>, n.d.).

Simultaneously to the government's attempt of demonstrating power through urban design project (Katugaha, B.H.M.R.I. & Botejue, W.P.S., 2019), the government proposed to build the tallest tower in South Asia called the Lotus Tower in 2011. The Lotus tower is a tourist telecommunication tower, the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TCRSL) being the client. Construction of this 350m tall tower started in a hurry in 2012, but after several controversial political events and decisions, the construction was completed in 2019.

Richard Boothby (1991 as cited in Michielan, 2016) suggests that the power lies in its height, size, and splendid architectural creations. He further describes that in the Middle Ages the king was the father of the fief, and in the Freudian sense, the higher power is related to a phallic king and father. After such a significant event of ending the war and the ideological preparation to concentrate power, the leader's image needs to be heroic and



muscular to maintain a sense of victory. The phallic obelisks, nevertheless, stand for the imagery of war, military conquest, and patriotic death (Hayden, 1977), and the Lotus Tower perfectly fulfils the need for an after-war phallic monument of military conquest and patriotic death. Additionally, the tower symbolizes a Lotus, commonly referred to in Buddhist culture and literature as a symbol of purity, self-liberation (nirvana), etc.



Figure 4; a cutout addressing president Rajapaksa as 'the king for the next 60 years who ended 30 years of war'.  
(Source; Sunday times 2009 June 21- <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/090621/>)

Building the Sinhala-Buddhist symbols is establishing the Sinhala-Buddhist realm. Stimulating the Sinhala-Buddhist ideology means undoubtedly addressing the majority of the country. According to Deleuze & Guatarri's theory of "A Thousand Plateaus" facility means the figure of the White male" (in a western context), which means the figure of the majority (Morris, 1992, p. 4). The tourists-telecommunication towers provide a 'face' in the landscape of a city and that face has a "correlated great importance". These towers act as a "must-see" objects that dominate the city and it populates the city (Morris, 1992, p. 5). The Lotus Tower, as a symbol of a phallic king, and a symbol of purity in Buddhist culture certainly addresses the majoritarian Sinhala-Buddhist hegemony. Applying Deleuze & Guatarri's theory, when the face of a landscape is the face of the majority, the Lotus Tower cannot avoid being the face of the Sinhala-Buddhist face.



Figure 6 Figure 3; Lotus Tower lit up at night.  
(Source; <https://www.dailynews.lk/2019/10/03/tc/198703/new-life-new-beginning>)

## 7. Conclusion

The study proves that the famous mock of the skyscraper being "phallic" is not merely for its phallic form. It is phallic because of the phallic nature of political decisions behind it in psychoanalytic interpretations. Especially in Sri Lankan socio-political realm, the political ideology behind the creation of the skyscraper shows a powerful dictatorial political intention followed by a seeking of perpetual recognition. Thus, the study can conclude that there are two ways that the skyscraper becomes phallic other than by having a phallic image and masculine character. Those are;

1. It is a manifestation of the dictatorial political and/or economic power backed up by the Ideology; skyscraper as the phallic object of patriarchy.
2. It is an expression of lack/ desire to be recognized and to showcase achievements symbolically; skyscraper as the phallic object of lack/desire.

Throughout the study, Dolores Hayden's (1977) notion of "the skyscraper reflects the sexuality of the people who commission, design and use" repeatedly came into discussion. This study could manifest the sexuality of the people who commission it and use it and the sexual nature of the ideological decisions. Although it is completely fair for one to blame or condemn the skyscraper as 'phallic' or 'masculine' or even as a waste of money, it is a result of a complicated sexual desire or instinct of possessing bigger things. Therefore it is a matter of having the political and economic power to build phallic skyscrapers, and as Hayden's (1977) 'rape' metaphor suggests, "they couldn't help themselves!"

The study can be further extended to the skyscrapers of different ideologies under different regimes in different socio-political contexts & countries to see whether they are ideologically phallic. And this can be extended to the skyscrapers, which do not reflect phallic silhouettes but are masculine in their character to test and understand the ideological reasons behind them.

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