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Modernizing Composition

GARRETT FIELD

Composition

Sinhala Song, Poetry, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Sri Lanka

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Modernizing Composition

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Sinhala Song, Poetry, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Sri Lanka

———

Garrett Field

For Mom, Dad, Nayomi, and Sophia

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To make transparent the decisions I made in the English translations, I have transliterated in the endnotes the Sinhala-language songs, poems, and quotations. All the translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated in the endnotes or text. Except for proper and place names, I follow the common transliteration system for Sinhala. Vowels marked with a macron indicate long vowels (ā, ā̈, ī, ū, ē, ō). The retroflex consonants are indicated with a dot below (ṭ, ḍ). "N," "l," and "sh" have two forms—*mūrdhaja* and *dantaja*. The usage of one or the other depends on orthographic rules and conventions. The *mūrdhaja nayanna* (ණ) is transliterated as ṇ and the *dantaja nayanna* (න) as n. The *mūrdhaja layanna* (ළ) is transliterated as ḷ and the *dantaja layanna* (ල) as l. The *mūrdhaja shayanna* (ෂ) is transliterated as ṣ and the *dantaja shayanna* (ශ) as ś. The Sinhala umlaut appears in short form as ä and long form as ā̈. The prenasalized consonants are written as ňd, ňḍ, ňg, and mb. According to convention, I indicate the Sinhala "v/w" (ව) with *v* rather than *w*. The letter *aŋ* (ං) is written as n. The *gäṭapilla* (්‍ර) is indicated with ṛ and the *yansaya* (්‍ය) is transliterated as *ya*. However, when transliterating some words in which a *yansaya* is followed by a *yayanna*—such as කාව්‍යය—the *yansaya* is omitted and the word appears as *kāvya*.

Introduction

Mahagama Sekera (1929–76) was a Sinhalese lyricist and poet from Sri Lanka. In 1966 Sekera gave a lecture in which he argued that a test of a good song was to take away the music and see whether the lyric could stand on its own as a piece of literature.[1] Here I have translated the Sinhala-language song Sekera presented as one that aced the test.[2] The subject of this composition, like the themes of many songs broadcast on Sri Lanka's radio since the late 1930s, was related to Buddhism, the religion of the country's majority.

> The Niranjana River
> Flowed slowly along the sandy plains
> The day the Buddha reached enlightenment.
> The Chief of the Three Worlds attained samadhi in meditation.
> He was liberated at that moment.
>
> In the cool shade of the snowy mountain ranges
> The flowers' fragrant pollen
> Wafted through the sandalwood trees
> Mixed with the soft wind
> And floated on.
>
> When the leaves and sprouts
> Of the great Bodhi tree shook slightly
> The seven musical notes rang out.
> A beautiful song came alive
> Moving to the *tāla*.

> The day the Venerable Sanghamitta
> Brought the branch of the Bodhi tree to Mahamevuna Park
> The leaves of the Bodhi tree danced
> As if there was such a thing as a
> "Mahabō Vannama."[3]

The writer of this song is Chandrarathna Manawasinghe (1913–64).[4] In the Sinhala language he is credited as the *gīta racakayā* (lyricist). Manawasinghe alludes in the text to two Buddhist legends and a Sinhalese style of dance. The first legend is the story of the Buddha's enlightenment. The second is the tale of Sanghamitta, who brought a sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree to Sri Lanka to spread the Buddhist doctrine. In the final stanza Manawasinghe playfully suggests that the Bodhi tree's leaves, under which the Buddha achieved enlightenment, were delighted to find a home in Sri Lanka to the extent that they danced to a new *vannama* (Sinhala court song) called the "Mahabō Vannama" (The vannama of the Great Bodhi Tree).[5]

The English translation may convey useful information about the song's meaning. But it communicates little about the Sinhala-language text's formal features. Manawasinghe created a new poetic meter for this song. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Sinhala poets often wrote quatrains (four-line stanzas) with lines having an equal amount of syllabic instants, which are metrical units of time that scholars in the fields of phonetics and phonology term *mora*. Mora is known in Sinhala poetry as *mātrā,* which can be either light *(luhu, laghu)* or heavy *(guru).*[6]

Manawasinghe's poetic meter was new because his four stanzas diverged from the convention of four lines with an equal amount of mātrā. One could analyze Manawasinghe's lyric like this: the first line of each stanza has three phrases that are eight, eight, and ten mātrā. The second comprises two phrases that are five and ten mātrā, respectively. The third line has four phrases that are five, ten, five, and five mātrā, respectively.[7] Consider, for example, the mātrā groupings in the first stanza here. Each long vowel, indicated with a macron, counts as two mātrā:

Text of Stanza 1	Mātrā Structure
välitala atarē—hemihiṭa basinā—nēranjana nadiyē	8—8—10
gayāhisa—väḍasiṭa buduvuṇudā	5—10
tilōhimi—moksuva lada mohotē—samādī—bāvanā	5—10—5—5

The song's formal and semantic features surely factored into Sekera's judgment that Manawasinghe's composition could stand on its own as a piece of literature. One can conjecture further that Sekera's evaluation was influenced by the medium through which he contemplated the literary features of Manawasinghe's song lyric. In 1957 Manawasinghe had printed the radio song's text in a songbook (fig. 1).[8] When Sekera reflected on the literary qualities of Manawasinghe's creation,

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(**21**)

FIGURE 1. "Mahabō Vannama" (Vannama of the Great Bodhi Tree). Chandrarathna Manawasinghe, *Kōmala Rēkhā* (Colombo: New Lila Mudranalaya, 1957), 21. Courtesy of Udaya Manawasinghe.

Sekera's contemplation was likely akin to the experience of silently reading modern poetry in print.

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AND THE STUDY
OF SONG TEXTS

When I conducted research in Sri Lanka about the modern history of Sinhala song, I struggled to translate texts of radio songs like Manawasinghe's because of its literary lexicon, formal features, poetic syntax, and allusions to Sinhala Buddhist legends. I also struggled to understand Sinhala-language articles that asked questions about the literary aspects of such songs. Many of the articles began with the question, "what is song?" *(gītaya yanu kumakda?).* I expected such articles to focus on Sinhala "music." However, the authors would invariably define song in relation to poetry and then launch into content analysis of lyrics and poetry.[9]

"Lyrics and poetry?" I thought, "What does the relationship between lyrics and poetry have to do with making music?" I was trained in the academic discipline of ethnomusicology, a branch of knowledge that came into being in America in the 1950s due to a fusion between comparative musicology and cultural anthropology. Ethnomusicologists study how people make and experience music and why doing so is important to them.

One might assume that the production of song texts would occupy an important place in the scholarship of ethnomusicologists. The study of song texts had been a major issue in chapters 9 and 10 of Alan P. Merriam's seminal *The Anthropology of Music* (1964).[10] When I entered graduate school in 2006, however, interest in the study of song texts had waned in favor of the two traditional features of ethnomusicology: music analysis and ethnography.[11] Indeed, the challenge of ethnomusicology is to combine cultural anthropology's participant-observation with comparative musicology's music analysis.

Yet this challenge seems to have left little room for the focused discussion of song text. Translations and analyses of song texts, admittedly, do appear in articles and monographs written by ethnomusicologists. But ethnomusicologists tend to consider song texts worthy of analysis when analyzed *in relation to* musical sound or live performance.[12] Because ethnomusicologists tend to accord much value to the text-in-relation-to-music approach, scholars who aim to contribute to the field rarely devote sustained attention to song texts themselves.[13] Consequently, song lyricists are not a commonly discussed social actor in ethnomusicology.

When ethnomusicologists favor ethnography and music analysis over song texts, one problem may consequently arise: there exists a limitation on the kinds of questions that can be asked about the efforts of songwriters. Ethnomusicologists have seldom attempted to explain why, for example, songwriters at a particular historical juncture attempted to write literary instead of colloquial song texts.

To attempt to answer such a question, ethnomusicologists will need to develop critical methods that diverge from the standard approach of ethnography and music analysis.

The need for new critical methods is especially pronounced when confronted with the genre of radio song created in postcolonial Sri Lanka, because it is a type of song with an accompanying scholarly discourse that often places more emphasis on song texts than music itself (recall that Sekera argued that the measurement of a good song was to remove the music and judge whether the lyric could stand on its own as a piece of literature). Also, this genre of song was not intended for live stage performance.[14] Admittedly, there was the performance in the radio station's studio. Yet the purpose of this live performance was to create a unique aural experience transmitted by radio waves.

How did songwriters produce a unique aural experience? In the 1950s, when Manawasinghe was active as a songwriter, the common practice was to imitate an Indian film song melody but compose new Sinhala lyrics roughly according to the Indian film song text's long and short mātrā. In Sri Lanka the practice came to be known derogatorily as *vacana dānavā* ("putting words"). The term alluded to the idea that a Sinhalese songwriter merely had to put words onto an Indian film song's text like an unskilled mason clumsily puts one brick on top of another. *"Vacana dānavā,"* wrote Manawasinghe, "was a term used to describe how lyricists would take the words of a Hindi-language song and replace them with Sinhala-language words that sounded somewhat the same."[15] In this environment, most Sinhalese songwriters did not think of song as an elevated form of expression.

This context helps to shed light on why radio songwriters like Manawasinghe were eager to circulate their song texts through print: print possessed the power to poeticize. Print stripped away the sounds of music and bestowed on the ephemeral language of song a literary fixity. In other words, print transformed an aural experience of listening to music into a visual experience of reading poetry. Print also endowed the songwriter with authorship at a time when record labels did not print the names of lyricists on their gramophone records. Print clearly contributed to the conditions of possibility for Mahagama Sekera to take the music away and analyze the semantic and formal features of song texts.

What approach, then, does *Modernizing Composition* attempt to introduce to ethnomusicology? I seek to rethink the phenomenon of song texts through an interdisciplinary intervention. One can identify two forms of interdisciplinary scholarship: the theoretical and areal. Theoretical scholars analyze a subject studied in depth by colleagues in their home discipline, but they deploy theory from outside the discipline to illuminate an unseen facet of the subject. In contrast, areal scholars focus on a particular period and place to reveal a basis for comparison between seemingly disparate phenomena. *Modernizing Composition* is an example of the areal approach because the manuscript focuses on one period

and place—twentieth-century Sri Lanka—to compare song texts and poetry. I focus on song produced for theater, gramophone, or radio, as well as poetry crafted in metered quatrains or free verse.[16] In the following section I explain why my particular case study necessitated this dual focus.

"WHAT IS SONG?"

Given my training in ethnomusicology to privilege ethnography and analysis of musical sound, I felt frustrated that the Sinhala articles I was reading contained little information about musicians and music but much about lyricists, song texts, and poetry. I became more confused when I opened up books that claimed to analyze poetry but found exegeses of song lyrics instead. As I dug deeper, however, I started to pay closer attention to the Sinhala essays that asked, "what is song?" One such essay was Sunil Ariyaratne's introduction to the first anthology of modern Sinhala song lyrics.[17]

In the essay Ariyaratne attempted to answer the question, "what is song?" by describing the differences between song and poetry. Some differences were obvious to me: one person can write a poem. But a song needs a lyricist, composer, and singer. A poem is a reading experience. Song is an aural experience. Poems have no refrain. Songs do. Poems can be long. Songs must be under five minutes and usually have three or four sections at most. Readers of poems must read the text multiple times to comprehend the meaning. Listeners of song should be able to grasp the meaning after one hearing.[18]

These differences may seem obvious today. Nevertheless, they are distinctions with origins in the early twentieth century. Such distinctions became normal in South Asia and other world regions after the introduction of gramophone song at the turn of the twentieth century and the concomitant growth of publishers who printed modern poetry in vernacular languages.

Traditionally, in South Asia there were no clear distinctions between poetry and song. Literature tended to be experienced in ways that today are reserved for song: a poem was made known to the public when it was first recited from a written text for an audience.[19] Literature almost invariably meant poetry, and "poetry" in South Asia was a practice in which a performer usually sang texts rich in poetic meters, rhyme schemes, and musical styles. That is why, to take an example from East India, the Odia-language poet Fakiramohan Senapati wrote in his autobiography sometime in the 1860s that the ordinary literate people at that time were not used to printed works, especially to prose: "Whenever they [the literate people] tried to read the few Oriya [Odia-language prose] books in existence such as *Nitikatha* or *Hitopadesha,*" Senapati observed, "they would try to sing the words and express surprise and irritation at not being able to find the rhyme or metre."[20] On the one hand, then, Ariyaratne's song-poetry distinctions can be traced to the global onset of gramophone song at the turn of the twentieth century.

On the other hand, Ariyaratne discussed differences between song and poetry that were less obvious to me because of their roots in the lifeworlds of premodern Sri Lanka and South Asia. One song-poetry difference was specific to the Sinhala language itself, a language with traditions of poetry and criticism that date from at least the seventh century C.E.[21] Ariyaratne maintained that poets enjoy freedom when selecting lexicon, but lyricists must select certain types of words. Because lyricists should select lexicon that has a musical quality *(sugēya),* they ought to employ *svarānta vacana* (Sinhala words ending in a vowel) and refrain from *halanta vacana* (Sinhala words ending in a consonant).[22]

Ariyaratne also mentioned a uniquely South Asian distinction between song and poetry: songwriters should give pride of place to *śabda dhvaniya,* aesthetic sentiment derived from the *sounds* in language, whereas poets must accord prominence to *artha dhvaniya,* aesthetic sentiment derived from *meaning* in language. The distinction underscored Sri Lanka's historical connections with India: the terms *artha* (meaning), *śabda* (meaning-bearing sound), and *dhvani* (communication of aesthetic experience with language through the method of suggestion) were categories of analysis developed by Sanskrit grammarians and logicians of ancient India.[23] Sinhala songwriters and poets also commonly use the ancient Indian term *rasa* (sentiment; emotion evoked in the listener) in discussions of Sinhala song and poetry. In Sri Lanka these Sanskrit terms for literary analysis can be traced to the early centuries of the second millennium, when Sinhala poets began to craft poems sensitive to the Sanskrit philosophy of language and its tradition of literary criticism. Ariyaratne's multifaceted conception of the differences between poetry and song thus provide us with a compelling introduction to twentieth-century Sinhala-language song and poetry's layers of modern and premodern, as well as local, regional, and global influences.

I derived the principal questions that motivated me to write this book from the issues thus far discussed: Manawasinghe's poetic song lyric about the Buddha's enlightenment; the traditional nature of song and poetry in South Asia; and Ariyaratne's and Sekera's perspectives on song as an art form that must be considered in relation to poetry. The monograph's main questions are as follows: Why did Sinhalese lyricists compose poetic songs in the twentieth century? Why did Sekera contend that "a test of a good song was to take the music away and see whether the lyric could stand on its own as a piece of literature"?[24] Why did Ariyaratne define modern song in relation to poetry? If Ariyaratne thought it was crucial to study Sinhala song in relation to poetry, would it be fair for me to isolate song without paying attention to poetry? I became convinced that if I focused on song and kept poetry at a distance I would overlook something important, important not only to music history in Sri Lanka but also to the history of the performing arts and literature in modern South Asia.

MODERNIZING COMPOSITION AND THE
STUDY OF SONG AND POETRY IN
TWENTIETH-CENTURY SOUTH ASIA

Sinhalese lyricists, poets, singer-songwriters, and composers in twentieth-century Sri Lanka tended to hail from the Buddhist middle class. I use the term "Buddhist middle class" to refer to a wide cross-section of the Sinhala-educated population, which included teachers who worked in Sinhala-language schools, white-collar workers, bureaucrats, journalists, Buddhist monks, Ayurvedic physicians, village headmen, and small businessmen.[25] Because this monograph focuses on this demographic group, it enriches the literature concentrated in South Asian studies and ethnomusicology that considers the way the middle class nationalized and classicized music and literature in South Asia in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[26] In this study I subsume processes like nationalization and classicization under the umbrella term of *modernizing,* hence the title *Modernizing Composition.*

I define *modernizing* in this book as the process whereby members of a social group made a particular domain—literature, music, art, law, education, medicine, and so on—contemporary through what they believed to be the most relevant ideologies, methods, themes, and styles. Although I employ the word *modernizing,* I emphasize the idea of making cultural production contemporary, and I reject the term's association with now-discarded theories of modernization that suggested Westernization was inevitable and all encompassing. It is well known now that modernity and Westernization were never identical.[27]

Because modernizing the composition of song and poetry is the principle theme of this monograph, I must also define what I mean by the concepts of *modern* and *modernity.* Regarding the former, Sheldon Pollock has argued that *modern* and *premodern* are far from the absolute concepts that the terms themselves suggest: European modernity has premodern facets, and premodern South Asian cultural production displays modern features. Nevertheless, Pollock ultimately distinguishes the premodern from the modern based on the historical arrival of practices and theories from European expansion. I believe this is a helpful demarcation, and I consider the songs and poems analyzed in this book to be modern simply because they were created after the onset of colonialism in Sri Lanka.

Regarding modernity, this book could be described in one sentence as "an attempt to understand manifestations of modernity in a colonial and postcolonial society." It is now well understood that modernity was not a purely Western European process that all societies were destined to undergo. Britain's modernity is inconceivable without taking into account the countries it colonized. Likewise, India's modernity is equally as inconceivable without taking into account the material and ideological influence of colonialism.

Thus, many scholars in South Asian studies today accept Sanjay Subrahmanyam's definition, which describes modernity as "a global and conjunctural phenomenon, not a virus that spreads from one place to another. It is located in a series of historical processes [like colonialism] that brought relatively isolated societies into contact."[28] Although I would change the definition to read "a series of historical processes *and power relations* that brought relatively isolated societies into contact," Subrahmanyam provides us with a definition unburdened with Eurocentric assumptions.

Ethnomusicologists today also reject Eurocentric narratives regarding modern musical change. Such narratives were common in scholarship published in the late 1970s and 1980s. At this time scholars described musical traditions as autonomous entities that adapted to or survived the threat of Western impact.[29] This portrayal was a reaction against the earlier contention that non-Western and folk traditions were static systems. In 1976 Daniel Neuman suggested that an ethnomusicology of culture change would need to come to terms with Westernization.[30] In 1980 Neuman contended that the forces of Western modernity possessed the power to shatter tradition.[31] In 1985 Bruno Nettl countered that the spread of Western music created unparalleled diversity in music around the world.[32]

Eurocentric narratives about musical change shifted after ethnomusicologists grappled with scholarship concerning the reinvention of tradition and the field of postcolonial studies. In 2006 Amanda Weidman argued that South Indian classical music was not threatened by Western modernity but reinvented due to efforts of social actors to negotiate colonial modernity.[33] More recently, David Fossum, Rachel Harris, and Katherine Butler Schofield have published case studies that reveal how social actors engaged in canonization processes in Turkmenistan, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and North India, respectively, before the onset of modernization or European colonialism.[34]

I thus wish to suggest that the problem faced by ethnomusicologists and South Asian studies scholars is no longer a Eurocentric conception of modernity. This monograph is an attempt to steer dialogue in a different direction to address overlooked problems in the historiography of literature and the performing arts. The historiography tends to assume that it is natural to bifurcate the study of musicians and littérateurs into the two disciplines of ethnomusicology and South Asian studies. Yet the division of the study of music and literature into two disciplines, I contend, is problematic because it discourages the analysis of the relationship between song and poetry. The themes, imagery, and styles of Sinhala poetry and song developed in similar ways after the onset of gramophone song and the growth of religious, linguistic, and postcolonial nationalism. One thus begins to wonder whether the division of the study of music and literature into two disciplines tends to obscure rather than illuminate.

Perhaps an even more significant problem in the scholarship of contemporary South Asia is the routine failure to account for regions outside of North and South

India and for languages other than major ones, such as English, Tamil, Hindi, Bangla, and Urdu. It is thus easy to find secondary scholarship about North and South Indian classical music, Hindi and Tamil poetry, or Indian literature written in English, but scholarship about song and poetry from countries such as Sri Lanka, the Maldives, or Bhutan is sparse if not completely absent. Because Anglophone South Asian studies has tended to represent South Asia through the lens of North and South India, our understanding of literature and the performing arts throughout twentieth-century South Asia remains inadequate.

One aspect of the regional and linguistic biases in the Anglophone historiography of South Asian literature and the performing arts can be found in the received narrative that modern Indian and Western cultures are "similar but different." This characterization dominates scholars' attempts to challenge Eurocentric assumptions. Sumathi Ramaswamy suggests that Tamil-language devotion *(tamilpparru)* is similar to but different from the phenomenon known in English as "linguistic nationalism."[35] Francesca Orsini argues that the "Hindi public sphere" resembles but differs from the Western European public sphere theorized by Jürgen Habermas.[36] Dipesh Chakrabarty asserts that the poetic vision of Rabindranath Tagore drew on "imagination" similar to but different from the imagination of European poets. "Imagination," Chakrabarty argues, is a "mentalist" and "subject-centered category" inflected with the European thought of Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, David Hume, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Yet Tagore's imagination in his verse about Mother India is based on *darshan* (divine sight), an idea with no clear correlate in Western thought.[37]

Such studies are important because they challenge Eurocentric assumptions that elide differences between India and the West. Yet they remain inadequate because they tend to center the attention on the dyadic relationship between India and the West. Our understanding of literature and music in twentieth-century South Asia has thus remained somewhat blind to the power relations that existed *within* modern South Asia.

When the middle class in Sri Lanka set out to modernize song and poetry, they did not do so exclusively in relation to the West. Although the Western legacy in Sri Lankan song and poetry was admittedly a factor, Sri Lanka's geographic proximity to and historical connections with the hegemonic Indian subcontinent assumed increasing significance in the twentieth century. In this monograph I propose an asymmetric triadic model in which Sri Lankan songwriters and poets attempted to create works that responded both to the West and to North India, but more often directly to North India.[38]

Sheldon Pollock's theory of "cosmopolitan vernacularism" thus holds great relevance for this monograph. Although Pollock reserves the term for the exploration of premodern literature, this study asserts that the concept has relevance for the twentieth century too. Cosmopolitan vernacularism describes how actors deploy

a local language in new ways when they localize literature that is "superposed" and "cosmopolitan."[39] By "cosmopolitan" Pollock refers to an elite form of culture that travels outside its site of origin. By "superposed" Pollock describes what he identifies as the process of "superposition," when new local genres develop in reaction to dominating forms of preexistent literature.[40]

South Asian studies scholars and ethnomusicologists of South Asia tend to assume that in twentieth-century South Asia, superposition meant the development of new local genres in response to the impact of cultural production from the colonizing West. In Sri Lanka, however, the West was not the most dominant presence in songwriters' and poets' attempts to modernize song and poetry. The majority of Sinhala songs and poems in the twentieth century developed in reaction to North Indian influences. In the early twentieth century, Sinhalese playwrights modeled a new form of local theater *(nurthi)* from North Indian Parsi theater, while Sinhalese songwriters of gramophone song imitated the melodies and short and long syllables of Hindi film songs. In the 1940s a cultural movement (the Heḷa Havula movement) was created in opposition to North Indian cultural influence, and also Rabindranath Tagore (the first Indian Nobel laureate) began to impact Sinhala song and poetry. In the 1950s Sinhala songwriters modeled the radio opera on Sanskrit literature and North Indian classical music, while other songwriters adopted the theory of musical nationalism that Professor S. N. Ratanjankar brought to the island from North India.

RESEARCH

Given the thousands of Sinhala songs and poems that could be excerpted in a study about song and poetry in the twentieth century, one of the biggest challenges was to decide which works to translate and discuss. This book could have been written in an innumerable amount of ways. Thus, the excerpts should not be considered definitive. The excerpts I chose were those that left the greatest impression on me when I conducted research in Sri Lanka during the twenty-four months that passed between June 2009 and June 2011, in December 2014, and when I studied my sources back in the United States.

In Sri Lanka I listened to recordings in the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation's digital archives and gramophone archives and on compact discs released by SLBC. I also studied the songs as texts printed in compilations of song or Sinhala-language monographs and chapters in edited volumes that analyzed the lives and works of songwriters. Many of the examples of poetry found in this study were accessed in sources at the Sri Lankan National Library. Others I found in edited collections of poetry, such as those edited by P. M. Senarathna and published by Godage and Brothers as part of the book series titled *Colomba Kavi Sanhitā* (Collections of Colombo Poetry).

In addition to these sources, I gleaned insights into the works of song and poetry through interviews conducted with songwriters, poets, scholars, and composers; e-mail correspondences with poets and their family members; discussions with employees at the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation; and conversations with scholars at the University of Colombo, University of Peradeniya, and the University of the Visual and Performing Arts. I also attempted to broaden my knowledge by studying other writings that the songwriters and poets authored in Sinhala newspapers, magazines, literary journals, and books published between 1900 and 1965. These sources I accessed at the Sri Lankan National Archives and the Sri Lankan National Library.

TWO BASIC PREMISES

In this book I accept Herbert P. Phillips's basic premise that song and poetry are "refractions or distillations, rather than reflections or replicas, of the life and thought of the societies in which they are written." A refraction is a change in direction of a wave due to the particular medium through which it is transmitted. Songs and poems may be considered refractions because they depend as much on the author's social position, biases, and rhetorical motives as on the expectations of audiences and the cultural and historical contexts to which the writing refers. As a result, poets and songwriters create sources that can serve as windows into certain peoples' experiences of history. As Phillips writes about modern literary figures in Thailand, "They entertain or amuse; mobilize public opinion for social action; glorify, beautify, sacralize—and often desacralize—cherished beliefs or institutions; create cynosures for public attention and raise social consciousness; and crystallize new ways of looking at things, although typically what is being looked at is already quite familiar. However, underlying all these contributions is a single noetic purpose: to provide their readers with a codification of the world that is cognitively and aesthetically credible and, in so doing, to define what is right and wrong with the universe, what is consequential, and what should be remembered."[41]

Each social actor discussed in this study sought to accomplish at least one of these objectives and thereby asserted what he believed to be important. During the colonial period, for example, many poets and songwriters attempted to create cynosures for public attention and raised consciousness about the necessity of practicing the local religion and reforming the local language. At the end of the colonial period, which witnessed the commencement of World War II, poets and songwriters turned away from didacticism and entertained readers with romantic themes. In the postcolonial period poets and songwriters crystallized newer ways of looking at experience and sacralized or desacralized tradition by embracing or rejecting local folklore, North Indian culture, and modernist poetry.

Another basic premise of this book is that twentieth-century songwriters, poets, and their works existed within a context simultaneously local, regional, and global. The global features include worldwide events such as World War II and the shift from colonialism to postcolonialism, modular institutions such as radio stations and modern universities, historical processes such as Westernization and Anglicization, and ideologies such as nationalism found throughout the world. The local features of this context comprise phenomena such as domestic politics, Sinhala classical and folk literature, and Sinhala Buddhist religious practices and beliefs, as well as the styles of fellow songwriters and poets from Sri Lanka.

The regional aspects are related primarily to North Indian influences. As discussed earlier, songwriters drew on features of North Indian Parsi theater to fashion a Sinhalese form of musical theater; Sinhala poets and songwriters fell under the spell of Rabindranath Tagore's romanticism; a group of songwriters and poets fought against what they perceived to be the hegemony of North Indian culture; songwriters turned to Sanskrit literature for inspiration; and a North Indian professor impacted songwriters to believe that folklore was the ideal source for modern song. Absences speak as loudly as presences: as Tamil-Sinhalese relations worsened in the mid-twentieth century, Sinhalese songwriters and poets tended not to engage with South Indian culture despite a rich history of Sinhalese-Tamil musical interaction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tamil culture had deeply influenced nineteenth-century Sinhala drama *(nāḍagam)* and eighteenth-century Sinhala court song.

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES, BOOK OUTLINE, AND TERMINOLOGY

I employ two narrative techniques in this book: periodization and juxtaposition. Concerning the former, the chapters of this book are organized chronologically, according to the appearance of the primary examples. I am convinced that periodizing is valuable when one wants to explore how what happened in the 1910s and 1920s impacted the trajectory of song and poetry in the 1930s and 1940s, which then influenced the transformation of song and poetry in the 1950s and 1960s. I do not imply that the history of Sinhala song and poetry is a single-stranded chronology, nor do I make teleological assumptions that suggest what happened in chapter 6 was destined to occur because of what happened in chapter 1. But I do hope to highlight how, for example, the members of the Pure Sinhala Fraternity (chapter 2) and the writers of wartime romance (chapter 3) had tired of the poetry and song from the 1910s and 1920s (chapter 1). Periodization, I hope to demonstrate with this monograph, can function as a powerful and still-legitimate method to communicate to readers a sense of history's complicated twists and turns.

This monograph also relies on juxtaposition. Within each chapter I juxtapose works created by songwriters with contemporaneous poems composed by poets. The purpose of my juxtapositions is to explore dramatic similarities or differences that become perceptible when we consider how both groups questioned the norms of their respective art forms in terms of thematic content, imagery, and style and in relation to interrelated local, regional, and global contexts. I hope to show how Sinhalese songwriters and poets in the twentieth century tended to draw influence from the same contexts. Consequently, they either questioned the norms of their respective art forms in similar ways and for similar reasons (chapters 1, 2, 3, 5), or advocated the opposite of the contemporaries (chapter 4).

The book falls into two parts. The three chapters that make up part 1 focus on three movements that came into being in the years before independence in 1948. Chapter 1 analyzes how songwriters and poets encouraged the Sinhalese to return to Buddhism and reject Westernization. Here I attempt to explore an overlooked form of cultural nationalism, one fueled more by capitalism than the desire to cultivate patriotic sentiment or ethnic loyalty. Chapter 2 turns to the songwriters and poets who emphasized the importance of language over religion and launched their attack against North Indian influences. Chapter 3 centers on a school of songwriters and poets who rejected didacticism and sought to entertain their readers through works that engaged with Bengali, English, and French literature about romance.

Part 2 moves on to the songwriters and poets who rose to prominence after independence. They fashioned works for a country with a new complexion: sovereign and ruled by Sinhalese Buddhists. Chapter 4 investigates the emergence of two new genres that aimed to restore a measure of authenticity to Sinhala song and poetry through what I describe as *neoclassical* and *modernist* aesthetics, respectively. Chapter 5 turns to the way one songwriter and one poet asserted that the authentic culture of the Sri Lankan nation was rural folklore. Finally, chapter 6 details a stylistic volte-face of a poet-songwriter who aimed to transport readers to imaginary realms but later became disillusioned with art for art's sake and requested readers to disavow ethnic nationalism.

Some scholars may take issue with my use of the terms *neoclassical* or *modernist.* Perhaps they believe that such European terms should not be used to discuss Sri Lankan cultural forms. They may endorse the view, long championed by ethnomusicologists, that scholars should study local terminology in depth and avoid reducing these concepts to European terms. I too endorse this view, but with restraint. The problem is when scholars take this to an extreme and argue that ethnomusicologists should describe South Asian cultural formations only in South Asian cultural terms. This outlook in Anglophone studies, as David Washbrook contends, assumes the existence of an ahistorical and essentialist otherness in the consciousness of non-European peoples. Such an outlook wrongly assumes that this otherness lies beyond the conjunctural conditions of modernity and provides

the basis for "non-Western" cultures and societies.[42] Scholars endorsing such ideologies too easily forget that colonial modernity involved a series of historical processes and power relations that brought relatively isolated societies into a serious and ongoing engagement with modernism, cultural nationalism, and neoclassicism. I thus believe my use of these terms is appropriate. For example, I use the term *modernism* in chapter 4 to describe the verse composed by Sinhala poets such as Siri Gunasinghe, who measured themselves against the standards of excellence championed by modernist poets such as T. S. Eliot and Robert Frost.

Further, scholars who believe that the terms *modernism* and *romanticism* should not be applied to South Asian culture have failed to take note that a consensus is growing among scholars of modern Indian literature that the thematic development of Hindi, Urdu, and Bangla poetry was consistent to a considerable extent. I use the term *consistent* to refer to the transitions between 1900 and 1960 from didacticism to romanticism to modernism and social realism.[43] This monograph attempts to build on this consensus by revealing that as far south as Sri Lanka, Sinhala-language poetry developed along a comparable trajectory. To bear out this argument I first explore the didacticism of Ananda Rajakaruna (chapter 1) and Rapiyel Tennakoon (chapter 2). Then I analyze the romanticism of P. B. Alwis Perera and his colleagues (chapter 3). Finally, I turn to the modernism or social realism of Siri Gunasinghe (chapter 4), Gunadasa Amarasekera (chapter 5), and Mahagama Sekera (chapter 6).

Some may disapprove of the term *composition* in the book's title because it evokes Western musicology's traditional focus on the analysis of musical scores. Yet, in my judgment, the term nicely refers to the creation of both poetry and song. Today the fields of ethnomusicology and musicology share many topics and goals. I therefore see no reason to shy away from evoking a topic that is also central to Western musicology. I hope musicologists take interest in this study and adopt similar methodological approaches to Western poetry and song.

THE SPECTER OF THE CIVIL WAR

Scholarship regarding twentieth-century Sri Lanka has tended to focus on Sinhala Buddhism, politics, nationalism, violence, and the civil war (1983–2009). Readers who know Sri Lanka only as the site of ethnic conflict may expect this monograph to draw connections between the civil war and the primary sources discussed in this monograph—Sinhala song and poetry produced between 1903 and 1964. These sources, however, in my opinion, do not foreshadow that Sinhalese mobs would later commit terrifying acts of violence against Tamils in 1977 and 1983, acts that deepened the ethnic polarization and triggered the separatist desire to carve out a separate Tamil state. From my perspective it would be most appropriate to make conjectures about the specter of the civil war in a study of Sinhala song and poetry created in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Colonial Era

Nationalist Thought and the Sri Lankan World

This chapter unfolds in three sections. Section 1 explores how in the early twentieth century the songwriter John De Silva (1857–1922) and poet Ananda Rajakaruna (1885–1957) created Sinhala song and poetry in service of the Sinhalese Buddhist revival. I suggest that De Silva's songs and Rajakaruna's poetry can be considered characteristic of cultural forms created in the *first stage* of Partha Chatterjee's three-stage theory of anticolonial nationalist thought—*departure,* maneuver, and arrival.[1] In the moment of departure, elites familiar with nineteenth-century Western European concepts such as culture, nationalism, and progress used texts (essays, novels, dramas, poems, songs, etc.) to resist Westernization and advocate for religious, moral, or social reform, but they simultaneously maintained faith in English rule and did not attempt to question the legitimacy of British rule in South Asia. For example, in addition to De Silva's dramatizations of Sinhalese Buddhist history, he also staged Sinhala-language versions of Shakespeare's *Othello* (1909), *The Merchant of Venice* (1909), and *King Lear* (1913), and he published a book of children's poetry in 1919 that included a poem about the English flag.[2]

Section 2 turns to the Venerable S. Mahinda's political poetry of the 1930s. I read Mahinda's works as examples of Chatterjee's *second stage,* the moment of *maneuver.* The moment of maneuver happens when members of the middle class mobilize local elements of traditional culture to rally people against colonialism in the struggle for independence. Because Mahinda combined a Sinhala chronicle with a Sinhala lullaby to incite his readers into anticolonial rebellion, one can argue that his poetry should be considered an example of Chatterjee's moment of maneuver.

The final section of this chapter presents an instance of cultural production that deviates from Chatterjee's model. Through an analysis of Sinhala gramophone songs created in the late 1930s, I assert that Chatterjee's three moments are not capacious enough to detect the connections between cultural nationalism and cultural commodities. In other words, Chatterjee's insular model does not account for the way in which cultural nationalism and global capitalism became intimately related in colonial-era South Asia.[3] I attempt here to explore an overlooked feature of cultural nationalism, one fueled more by capitalism than the desire to cultivate patriotic sentiment or ethnic loyalty. Gramophone songwriters drew on the spirit of the moments of departure and maneuver, yet not for nationalist ends. Rather, they channeled the ethos of the moments of departure and maneuver into their song lyrics. Composers and arrangers then set these lyrics to already-composed melodies of popular Indian film songs. The goal was not nationalist but capitalist: sell records to make a profit.

Because I attempt in this chapter to draw on, criticize, and expand Chatterjee's model of nationalist thought, I must inform the reader that my primary sources diverge from those of Chatterjee. To trace out moments of nationalist thought the sources Chatterjee, a political theorist, focuses on are Bengali- and English-language essays written by one novelist, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, and two leaders of the Indian independence movement, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. These men were fluent in either Bengali, Gujarati, or Hindi but were also fluent in English and well read in the works of Western European social scientists and political theorists such as Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer, as well as orientalists such as William Jones, H. H. Wilson, Thomas Colebrooke, and Friedrich Max Müller. Chatterjee analyzes how Chattopadhyay, Gandhi, and Nehru's nationalist thoughts were different from but deeply rooted in or positioned against (in the case of Gandhi) such forms of post-Enlightenment scientific thought.

In contrast, to trace what I am also identifying as "moments of nationalist thought," the sources I study in this chapter are Sinhala-language theater songs, poems, and gramophone songs composed by librettists, poets, lyricists, and composers. There is no evidence to suggest that these individuals had read Comte, Mill, and Spencer or Jones, Wilson, Colebrooke, and Müller. But they did have contact with the ideas of *Indian* elites such as Gandhi and Nehru. Poets such as Rajakaruna and Mahinda, for example, praised Gandhi and Nehru in their poems.[4] In one poem Mahinda instructed his readers to pay attention to the words and actions of India's anticolonial leaders, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Vallabhbhai Patel:

Heroes like Gandhi, Nehru, and Patel
Fight day and night for independence.
Sinhalese brothers, listen to their words
And come forward for the island's national cause (v. 41)[5]

Ultimately, then, a major weakness in Chatterjee's argument, which has informed the works of many scholars in South Asian studies, is that he believed his study of Bengali and English sources had implications not only for India but also for nationalist thought in all colonial countries: "The theoretical structure of my argument must stand or fall at the general level, as an argument about nationalist thought in colonial countries and not as an argument about Indian nationalism."[6] Such an assumption is problematic because Chatterjee overlooked power relations within South Asia and assumed all intellectuals in South Asia had as direct experience with the West as did internationally renowned leaders like Gandhi and Nehru. The works of songwriters and poets from Sri Lanka provide a case study that contradicts Chatterjee's assumptions, because Sinhalese songwriters and poets often did not directly encounter post-Enlightenment notions and European cultural forms but encountered such ideas and forms after they had been interpreted by Indian elites.

A MUSICAL MOMENT OF DEPARTURE

To understand the moment of departure for Sinhalese nationalism one must search for revivalist efforts to create a new modern culture for a nation. Such an effort is evident in a Sri Lankan cultural movement referred to as the "Buddhist revival."[7] Historians of Sri Lanka have revealed how the revival became stronger in the mid-nineteenth century with the help of the first Sinhala periodical, printing press, and newspapers. Print culture created a public space in which Sinhalese Buddhists could respond to the Christian missionaries' attacks on their religion. The revival grew more persistent with the support of urban entrepreneurs who established voluntary organizations to propagate Buddhism.

Also contributing to the revival's success was the Buddhist monastic community, which adopted a more public and activist role. In the 1870s Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda (1823–90) organized societies, established a printing press, toured the island disseminating his message, and confronted Christian missionaries in publicly staged debates. Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumangala (1827–1911) helped set up a printing press and authored polemical works that rebutted the Christian missionaries' criticisms of the Buddhist religion.

The revival further expanded in the late nineteenth century because of two international organizations: Henry Steel Olcott's Buddhist Theosophical Society, which built a Buddhist educational system that rivaled the missionary system in Sri Lanka; and Anagarika Dharmapala's Maha Bodhi Society, which strove to propagate the Buddhist religion and reestablish Bodh Gaya in North India as a center for Buddhist pilgrims. (Bodh Gaya is where the Buddha is said to have achieved nirvana.)[8]

Dharmapala and his colleagues championed a form of ethnic identification called the "Arya-Sinhala" identity. "Sinhala" refers to the Sinhalese people, but the word "Arya" was a new appendage to designate the ethnic group. The "Arya" identity appealed to the urban Buddhist intelligentsia for a few reasons. First, they believed Prince Vijaya, the putative father of the Sinhala race, emigrated from a region in North India referred to in Sanskrit texts as the *arya*varta. Second, the word *arya* in the Pali language (the sacred language of Theravada Buddhism) connoted meanings like noble, worthy, and honorable. In Buddhist texts *arya* was an adjective used to glorify central concepts in the Buddha's teachings, like the four noble truths (catur*ariya* sacca) and the noble eightfold path (*ariya* atthangika magga).[9] Revivalists promoted the Arya-Sinhala identity in early journals such as *Aryaya* (The Aryan, 1909) and *Arya Sinhala Vamsaya* (The Aryan-Sinhalese lineage, 1912).

Scholarship on the revival tends to focus on religious reform and overlook the participation of songwriters and poets, social actors that also shaped the contours of the movement. Admittedly, John De Silva engaged with the revivalist issues that became commonplace, like edification, temperance, and education about Sinhalese history and Buddhism. Yet because De Silva became involved with these issues as a librettist (rather than as a Buddhist monk), one must also take into account the Indian theatrical innovations that inspired him.

The original inspiration for De Silva's musicals owed as much to the revival as to a pan–South Asian dramatic form known as the "Parsi theater." The word "Parsi" refers to the Zoroastrian community in North India, the community from which the creators of Parsi theater belonged. Parsis organized the first modern theater companies in South Asia and created a form of entertainment, performed in Gujarati, Urdu, or English, which was based on European dramas that divided plays into acts and scenes.[10]

In 1877, as the revivalists championed the Arya-Sinhala identity, a Parsi theater troupe from Bombay named the Hindustan Dramatic Company brought a new form of theater to Sri Lanka as well as the North Indian musical system of *rāga* and *tāla*.[11] The Parsi theater troupe presented two Urdu-language dramas with stories narrated with poetry, dance, and music. One was *Indar Sabha,* considered the very first Urdu-language drama.[12] In 1882 another troupe, K. M. Baliwala's Elphinstone Dramatic Company, presented *Indar Sabha* along with at least seven new musical dramas. The Parsi theater troupes from Bombay returned to Sri Lanka six more times between 1889 and 1913.[13]

The Parsi theater was perhaps the earliest modular form of popular culture in modern South Asia. Kathryn Hansen has written about the way that Parsi theater producers created a form of entertainment that appealed to a wide spectrum of urban audiences across the Indian subcontinent.[14] The Parsi theater also captivated audiences in Sri Lanka with its lavish stage designs, shiny costumes, new curtain technology, and songs with memorable North Indian melodies. Parsi theater melodies, in fact, contributed to the genesis of a new form of Sinhalese theater.

Playwrights began to create Sinhala-language scripts with songs set to melodies from the Parsi theater. Their musicals were called nurthi, from the Sanskrit word for drama, *nritya*.

Nurthi musicals show the confluence of the Parsi theater with the Buddhist revival, and the revival's promotion of the Arya-Sinhala identity. The first nurthi playwright, C. Don Bastian (1852–1921), would publish the first daily Sinhala newspaper, *Dinapata Pravurti* (The daily news, 1895) and establish a voluntary Buddhist organization named Gnanabhivriddhi (Development of Wisdom).[15] After seeing the Parsi theater of the Hindustan Dramatic Company, Bastian wrote and staged the first nurthi musical, *Rolina* (1877), a tale of a heroic princess who saves her husband's life.[16]

The Buddhist revival would become the dominant theme in the nurthi musicals of John De Silva. He was determined to use theater to resuscitate Sinhalese Buddhist culture, which he thought was rapidly disintegrating under the onslaught of colonialism.[17] De Silva was a lawyer by profession and would frequent Bastian's nurthi musicals. Like Bastian, De Silva set his lyrics to Parsi theater melodies.[18] His audience predominantly comprised the Buddhist middle class in Colombo, yet Christians too supported De Silva's productions. This is evident in the list of donors that De Silva listed in his diary.[19]

In 1902 De Silva established the Arya Subodha Drama Society to harness theater for the revival. To this end, his musical *Śrī Vikrama Rājasinghe* (The great king Vikrama Rajasinghe, 1906) valorized the life of the last Buddhist king prior to British colonization of the island. In the printed musical's preface, De Silva explained that he had established the drama society to loosen the grip of Western lifestyles on the Sinhalese and reunite them with their Arya-Sinhala Buddhist heritage. Other objectives De Silva held for the drama society were to put on display traditional Sinhalese customs and costumes, attack poor character traits, foster love for the Sinhala language, and refamiliarize the Sinhalese people with Sinhala music, which he believed was quickly disappearing.[20]

De Silva, however, did not suggest that Sinhalese folk music was disappearing because of rapid urbanization. Instead, he wanted to reacquaint the Sinhalese people with North Indian classical music. The preface he wrote in 1903 sheds light on his preference for Indian classical music:

> There is evidence that Indian classical music existed in ancient Lanka during the times of our Sinhalese kings. Consider where Sinhalese poets of the past took their poetic meters. A careful analysis shows that Sinhala poetic meters originally belonged to the system of rāga [Indian melodic modes] and tāla [Indian rhythm cycles] found in North Indian classical music. Take the famous Sinhala *samudraghōṣa* meter [quatrains, each line with eighteen syllabic instants]. . . . When you read texts on North Indian classical music you find that musicians performed the tāla *khyāla* with the rāga *pilu*. Our *samudraghōṣa* meter has the same structure of *khyāla* [a rhythmic

cycle with four eighteen-beat sections]. Since the poetic meter of our ancient poets is structurally similar to this tāla we can surmise that Sinhalese people had a sound knowledge of Indian classical music.[21]

De Silva believed that the eighteen syllabic instants found in the local *samudraghōṣa* poetic meter derived from an eighteen-beat North Indian rhythmic cycle, and he hypothesized that other Sinhala poetic meters originated in the tradition of North Indian classical music. Believing this to be true, he justified his own use of North Indian classical music as an authentic expression of the Arya-Sinhala cultural ethos.

Later in his career De Silva frowned on nurthi songwriters who imitated Parsi theater melodies.[22] He came to believe that nurthi songs should be original creations that drew on Indian classical music. Hoping to improve the music of his dramas, De Silva paid a well-known musician from western India named Visvanath Lawjee to come to Sri Lanka. De Silva and Lawjee developed a particular way of working together. Lawjee did not know the Sinhala language, so De Silva explained the scene to Lawjee in English. Lawjee drew on his knowledge of North Indian *rāgas* to compose a suitable melody for the scene. After Lawjee completed a melody, De Silva would compose Sinhala lyrics that matched the musical rhythm of Lawjee's new melody.[23] Lawjee would go on to compose the music of De Silva's most famous nurthi musicals. De Silva staged these musicals between 1903 and 1909.[24]

Arguably, De Silva and Lawjee's most well-known collaboration is "Dannō Budungē" (Abiders of the Buddha's dharma). De Silva featured the song in his musical *Sirisangabō Charitaya* (The character of Sirisangabō, 1903). Consider De Silva's song lyrics:

> *Sānghatīssā:* Behold in this mansion-like town
> Many monks adhering to the precepts
> Destroying their defilements
> And abiding by Buddha's dharma teachings

> *Sirisānghabō:* Like heaven on earth!
> The shade of the many monks
> Who travel by air
> Destroy hot sun rays

> *Gōṭḥābhaya:* I see flocks of ducks wading
> In deep ponds, where stems of
> Lotus and lily flowers
> Rise to the top[25]

The narrative of *Sirisangabō Charitaya* was derived from a tale out of the oldest historical literature in South Asia: the Pali-language *Mahāvaṃsa* of the fifth

century C.E. De Silva based *Sirisangabō Charitaya* on the story found in the thirty-sixth chapter of the *Mahāvaṃsa*. The thirty-sixth chapter is about a virtuous king named Sirisānghabō. He and two friends, named Sānghatīssā and Gōṭhābhaya, travel to the royal city of Anuradhapura to serve the Sinhalese king. "Dannō Budungē" described Sirisānghabō's, Sānghatīssā's, and Gōṭhābhaya's initial reactions as they walk through the entrance to Anuradhapura and behold the city.

De Silva thus aimed to praise the sacred qualities of the city of Anuradhapura, the capital of early Sinhalese Buddhist kingdoms. He described Anuradhapura as a heaven ("Like heaven on earth!"), an idea Sinhalese authors frequently used in classical Sinhala poetry. In the second stanza Buddhist monks travel through the air and cast a cooling shade on the people below. De Silva may have meant to allude to the fact that the compassion of Buddhist monks cools down the fear laypeople feel in the worldly existence, rebirth after rebirth.[26]

A POETIC MOMENT OF DEPARTURE

The moment of departure—the moment elites began to mobilize the arts for social, religious, or moral reform—occurred in Sri Lanka not only in musicals but in didactic poetry, too. South Asian studies scholars have documented how didacticism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became a primary feature of poetry in many South Asian languages. Karine Schomer discusses how Hindi poets of the early twentieth century (the Dvivedi poets) came under the influence of Mahavirprasad Dvivedi (1864–1938) and consequently changed the themes of poetry from religious to didactic.[27] Dvivedi poet Hariaudh's (1865–1947) *Priyapravās* (1914), for instance, reinterpreted the Krishna myth to encourage women to engage in social work. Similarly, Tamil and Telugu poets in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rejected eighteenth-century Tamil and Telugu poetry about sensual women and lovemaking. Like the Dvivedi poets they sought to make poetry a vehicle for social reform. Telugu poet C. R. Reddy (1880–1951), for example, reworked the erotic eighteenth-century Telugu poem "Bilaṇiyamu." In the original "Bilaṇiyamu" Bilhana falls in love with his student Yāmini. In Reddy's version *Nava Yāmini* (New Yamini), Yāmini admonishes him for his immorality and shows him the way to a virtuous life. Velcheru Narayana Rao attributes the moralist tendency in Telugu poetry to the manner in which the British Raj disseminated Christian or Victorian moral beliefs in the guise of a universal ideology about "civilized culture."[28] Telugu poets under the influence of this powerful ideology began to view premodern Indian literature as obscene.[29]

Given that Sri Lanka was a British colony like India, it is not a coincidence that Sinhala poets in the early twentieth century had come into contact with the same

Christian and Victorian moral beliefs and tended to utilize verse for didacticism and reform. Their works were as bound up with the Buddhist revival as was De Silva's theater songs. The poets of the early twentieth century are known as the "first-generation Colombo poets." They published in Sinhala-language newspapers that propagated the revival and disseminated their works through a wide range of new publications that included monthly journals, children's journals, and popular journals devoted exclusively to Sinhala verse.[30] Many of the first-generation Colombo poets were schoolteachers, headmasters, editors, journalists, or Buddhist monks. Many were active participants in literary societies, especially the All-Ceylon Poets' Congress, established to propagate Sinhala-language poetry.[31] The first president of the All-Ceylon Poets' Congress was Ananda Rajakaruna, arguably the most revered Sinhalese poet of the early twentieth century. In this section I explore Rajakaruna's poetic moment of departure through the lens of his didactic poems that advocated for temperance, spiritual purification, linguistic conservatism, and chastity.

In 1913 Rajakaruna completed a poem of 127 stanzas titled *Raja Sirit Mālaya* (The garland of kingly customs). He entered it into a poetry competition sponsored by the Colombo Temperance Society, the leading voluntary association that advocated that Sinhalese people abstain from alcohol. As Michael Roberts notes, "The temperance associations themselves were but one expression of the burgeoning Sinhala cultural renaissance and the associated thrust of Buddhist revivalism."[32] Rajakaruna won the top award in the competition. In the poem's opening stanzas, he idealistically praised Sinhalese ancestors who he claimed abstained from alcohol:

> Young and impressionable
> Sinhalese children:
> Study the garland of kingly customs
> To develop love for the nation
>
> Our great ancestors
> Who maintained the precious heritage of Sri Lanka
> Ordered us directly
> Not to drink alcohol. (vv. 1–2)[33]

During the late 1910s and early 1920s, Rajakaruna served as a teacher, headmaster, and then journalist and editor. While he was a newspaper editor for the *Sinhala Baudhayā* (The Sinhala Buddhist), a mouthpiece for the Buddhist revival, Rajakaruna authored a weekly column titled Danumäti Hāmi (Wise man). Like John De Silva in his nurthi plays, Rajakaruna in this column attacked Western ways of living and urged the Sinhalese to return to Arya-Sinhala Buddhist customs.[34]

Throughout the 1920s Rajakaruna published many didactic poems. Consider one stanza from a poem he published in 1921 in a monthly journal titled *Diniňdu Räs* (The sun's rays):

> We waste all the water of the ocean to clean our bodies.
> We use a whole mountain of things to beautify our body.
> Can we ever rid ourselves of defilements
> By beautifying our body? (v. 1)[35]

Here Rajakaruna criticized Sinhalese people who pampered their bodies, and he advocated for spiritual purification. He published the poem at a time when Sinhalese nationalists were critiquing Western consumer products like soaps, perfumes, and powders that had become popular. The same year Rajakaruna authored "Avavādayak" (A piece of advice) in a children's journal titled *Lamayingē Mitraya* (Children's friend). In this poem, he championed linguistic conservatism, finding fault with Sinhalese children who flippantly mixed Sinhala with English.

> Some children who do not know the Sinhala language
> Talk in English like it's a big thing.
> These children commit a grave offense
> And destroy our nationality (v. 1)[36]

Rajakaruna ridiculed their dialect in the next stanza. In my translation I have placed in italics the English words that Rajakaruna spelled out in Sinhala letters:

> "Tomorrow *Mrs. Vandebonair* might come"
> "*Ms. Johanna* might wear a short dress and go *shopping*"
> "He's a real *jolly fellow*" "*Victor, look at my piano*"
> See how they talk! Their accharu language is a travesty (v. 2)[37]

I present here the transliterated form of this poem precisely as Sinhala metered poetry appears in print, that is, with the final like-phoneme separate from the rest of the line. The English words are italicized:

> heṭa savasa mehē ēvī *misis vändebō*   *nā*
> koṭa gavom aňdan dän yay *ṣopin mis johā*   *nā*
> kadima *joli felō vicṭar lukäṭ may piyā*   *nā*
> kiyana säṭi balav "accāru" bāsen aňdō   nā

To mix the mother tongue with English, Rajakaruna argued, was like carelessly tossing together ingredients to make *accaru*, a mixture of pickled fruits and vegetables introduced into Sinhalese cuisine through the Sri Lankan Malay community.

   Similar to Hariaudh's and Reddy's moralist tendencies mentioned at the beginning of this section, Rajakaruna also expressed Victorian ideals about sexual mores in his poetry. Ralph Peiris, a sociologist of Sri Lanka, writes that in nineteenth-century Sri Lanka, sexual relations had been "considered more as casual and inevitable incidents in a person's life."[38] Yet by the 1920s British, Christian, and Victorian morals may have influenced Rajakaruna to compose a poem such as

"Kumaribambasara" (Young girl's celibacy, 1923). In the opening stanza he urged women to maintain chastity before marriage:

> Parental love allows her to grow into a maiden
> Like the moon that blossoms the water lily.
> Beautiful, her heart of gems and treasures is
> Unstained by lustful touches (v. 1)[39]

Rajakaruna's anxiety about women who stained themselves with lustful touches was a new concern for the Sinhala poet in the early twentieth century. It was a concern, along with temperance, spiritual purification, linguistic conservatism, and chastity, that marked the poetic moment of departure of Ananda Rajakaruna.

A POETIC MOMENT OF MANEUVER

Perhaps the most famous anticolonial poet in Sri Lanka was the Venerable S. Mahinda of Tibet. Rajakaruna's admirer and close colleague, Mahinda was born around 1901 in what is known today as Sikkim, the small Indian state in the Himalayan Mountains. Mahinda spelled his name in Sinhala as "Tibat Jātika Es Mahinda" to imitate the custom of naming a monk after his village.[40] It is possible that he identified himself as S. Mahinda of *Tibet* since he believed that many Sri Lankans knew of Tibet's Buddhist heritage.[41]

Because Mahinda's most famous poems were Buddhist-oriented didactic works that campaigned for independence, Sunil Ariyaratne suggests that Mahinda sought to link the Buddhist revival to the independence movement.[42] Indeed, Mahinda wrote some of his most famous poems to incite Sinhalese people into anticolonial action. I discuss three such poems in this section. Consider the first two stanzas of *Nidahasē Dähäna* (The trance of independence; n.d.). He assumed the voice of a military commander and ordered his Sinhalese readers to fight for freedom:

> What [horrible] fate [has befallen us]! We are still not awake.
> It is no use to jump around and hide in fear.
> It matters not whether we win or lose.
> If we do not go forward we will never achieve independence.
>
> Wherever you go, use your national voice like lightning
> Shed your sweat on the land of Lanka.
> Think seriously about independence and do not make jokes.
> Why can't you raise the victory flag of our nation? (vv. 1–2)[43]

In a similar poem, *Nidahasē Mantraya* (The independence mantra; n.d.), Mahinda used imperatives to urge the Sinhalese to struggle against colonialism.

> Look at [the ancient Sinhalese kingdoms] of Pollonnaruwa and
>   Anuradhapura!
> Consider the previous independence we enjoyed in those kingdoms.
> Raise your strong young voice.
> Go forward, stand up, and do not shut your two eyes. (v. 17)[44]

Here, Mahinda put in stark contrast the glory of the Sinhalese Buddhist past with the bleakness of the colonized present. He bestowed on his readers a heroic role that transcended the part they played in everyday life.

One of Mahinda's most popular nationalist poems was *Daru Nāḷavilla Hevat Jātika Toṭilla* (The national cradle, also known as the children's lullaby; n.d.). The main character in the poem was an unnamed Sinhalese mother, ostensibly Mother Lanka. At the commencement of the poem, Mahinda depicted her lulling her children to sleep with a well-known Sinhala cradlesong.[45] Because every line hereafter in *Daru Nāḷavilla* comprised twelve syllables like the lines of the lullaby, one may infer that Mahinda intended his audience to keep the lullaby in mind while reading the rest of the poem. The remainder primarily focused on episodes from the *Mahāvaṃsa* about the glorious Sinhalese past. The poem thus cleverly blended together a Sinhala lullaby with the stories of the *Mahāvaṃsa* chronicle.

Why did Mahinda use the heroes of the *Mahāvaṃsa* as characters in the text of a lullaby? One reason he mixed together the lullaby and the *Mahāvaṃsa* was that he sought to point to the disparity between the present as lived by Sinhalese mothers and children in colonial Sri Lanka and the putatively illustrious past as lived by the heroes of the *Mahāvaṃsa.* Pointing to this dissimilarity was one of Mahinda's strategies to incite his readers into anticolonial action.[46]

Thus, in some stanzas Mahinda alluded to the idea that the sleeping son—and, by extension, all sons of Sinhalese mothers—were continuations of the Sinhalese bloodline found in all the heroes of the *Mahāvaṃsa.* According to Mahinda, Sinhalese sons living in the colonial era were destined to take control of the island of Sri Lanka like the ancient Sinhalese heroes of the *Mahāvaṃsa.* But to do so they would have to battle against the British to gain for the island independence from colonialism. For example, when the mother rocked her son in the cradle she compared him to the first Sinhalese king of Sri Lanka, Vijaya. According to the *Mahāvaṃsa,* Vijaya conquered Sri Lanka with the help of his followers and became king. Here is the stanza that the mother sang to her sleeping son about Vijaya:

> As I rock my son [in the cradle]
> I remember how Vijaya
> And his retinue united
> [Our island known then as] Tammänna (v. 4)[47]

The poem also compared the mother to the ancient Buddhist monk Mahinda, the son of the Mauryan overlord Ashoka. According to the fourteenth chapter of the *Mahāvaṃsa,* Mahinda brought the Buddhist faith to Sri Lanka. Like Mahinda taught the Sinhalese the Buddhist doctrine, all Sinhalese mothers, Mahinda suggested, should introduce to their sons the teachings of Buddhism:

> When the Arahat Mahindu arrived
> The citizens of Lanka bent their heads.
> As he poured the highest teachings of Buddhism
> I will pour these teaching into you, my son (v. 11)[48]

Given the back-and-forth between anticolonial nationalism and Buddhist nationalism, one can understand why Sunil Ariyaratne would suggest that Mahinda's primary objective was to link the Buddhist revival to the independence movement.

A MUSICAL MOMENT OF COMMODIFICATION

I have thus far argued that Chatterjee's theory of the moments of departure and maneuver has clear correlates in the song and poetry of colonial Sri Lanka. In the concluding section of this chapter, I hope to reveal that one weakness of Chatterjee's theory of nationalist thought is that it does not account for the relationship between cultural nationalism and cultural commodities. The following section explores one instance of this relationship in the manner in which Buddhist revivalism made its way into the creation of Sinhala gramophone songs.

A few years after John De Silva's "Dannō Budungē" premiered in Sri Lankan theaters, talent scouts from gramophone record labels such as His Master's Voice (HMV), Odeon, and Parlophone came knocking at De Silva's door.[49] Record labels felt that nurthi songs like De Silva's "Dannō Budungē" were the most marketable for the local population. Nearly every song that labels in Sri Lanka released between 1906 and 1930 were songs from the nurthi theater. During this period gramophone players became status symbols of affluent homes in urban areas in Sri Lanka.[50]

When nurthi's popularity started to fade in Sri Lanka, however, so did gramophone records of theater song. Labels began to experiment in the 1930s with a genre they called *alut sindu* (new music). In 1930 the record label Parlophone released six double-sided *alut sindu* records.[51] Throughout the fourth decade powerful labels such as Parlophone, Broadcast, Odeon, HMV, and Columbia released a steady stream of this new genre. Many of these songs, like nurthi songs, revolved around issues related to Buddhism and edification. If nurthi songwriters like De Silva utilized song to strengthen the Buddhist revival, *alut sindu* songwriters drew on the sentiments of the revival to sell records.

Although the themes of these songs were predominantly culled from the revival, the melodies were taken from Indian film songs. Such "tune-borrowing" is known as *parody* in Western musicological discourse.[52] The moment Hindi- or Tamil-lan-

guage films premiered in Sri Lankan theaters, producers at HMV or Columbia took note of the trendy film songs. Both labels immediately introduced into the Sri Lankan market new Sinhala-language songs, albeit with the very melodies from these Hindi- or Tamil-language film songs. The majority of the new gramophone songs were thus musical imitations. Since imitation was the musical source for new music, the Sinhala-language word for tune was *anunāda,* which means "echo."[53]

Columbia and HMV would pay Sinhalese lyricists five to ten rupees to fashion new lyrics according to the tunes of popular Hindi- or Tamil-language film songs. The labels did not print the names of lyricists on their gramophone records; thus the names of many gramophone-era song lyricists are mostly unknown.[54] Lyricists would compose words loosely based on the film song's melody and its lyric's patterns of short and long syllables.[55]

Let us consider one concrete example. In 1940 the Hindi-language film titled *Bandhan* became the second highest grossing Hindi film that year. A very popular song in this movie was the patriotic "Chal Chal Re Naujawan" (Walk, walk, along, young one). After *Bandhan* premiered in Sri Lanka, the Columbia record label hired a composer to create a musical arrangement to the melody of "Chal Chal Re Naujawan." Columbia also hired a lyricist to compose new words to this melody, words that would be suitable for the Sinhalese Buddhist consumer. The final product was "Dul Sal Vanē Lakal" (The shining and beautiful sal tree in the forest). It was a song about the tree under which Queen Maya gave birth to the Buddha. The lyricist of "Dul Sal Vanē Lakal" not only transformed the patriotic Hindi composition into a Buddhist song but also adroitly imitated the short and long syllabic instants in the Hindi song text (ex. 1).[56]

EXAMPLE 1. Similar melody and short and long syllabic instants in the Hindi-language "Chal Chal Re Naujawan" and Sinhala-language "Dul Sal Vanē Lakal."

Columbia must have been happy with the sales of "Dul Sal Vanē Lakal," because they released another, "Dul Mallikā Kusum" (The shining jasmine flowers), set to the same film song melody. HMV also released their imitation of this Hindi song, titled "Tel Mal Pudā Vandim" (We'll worship, offering flowers and oil).[57]

In the heat of competition, Columbia and HMV imitated each other's successful Buddhist songs. In 1939, for example, Columbia released "Muni Nandana Sri Pāda Vandim" (We worship Muni Nandana's Sri Pāda). It was about a group climbing Sri Pāda, a popular pilgrimage site, where many Sinhalese Buddhists believe Lord Buddha visited:

> We worship Muni Nandana's [Lord Buddha's] Sri Pāda.
> We please our hearts and obtain peace, compassion, and joy
> While the sweet smell of liberation wafts around this Butterfly
>   Mountain.[58]

HMV subsequently put out a song with a similar title, "Sri Gautama Sri Pāda Vandim" (We worship Sri Gautama's Sri Pāda).

> We will worship Gautama [Lord Buddha] at Sri Pāda
> Wishing for the delightful comfort of the beautiful nirvana[59]

Labels in Sri Lanka did not try to hide the fact that they were producing imitations of Hindi or Tamil film tunes. On the contrary, record labels could sell more records if they notified in advertisements the specific film song from which the new Sinhala song had been built. In 1939 HMV put out a Sinhala song titled "Piṭa Dīpa Dēśa Jaya Gattā Ādi Sinhalun" (Our Sinhalese ancestors used to be victorious over other countries). The melody imitated the tune of a Tamil film song titled "Divya Darisanam."

"Divya Darisanam" had appeared in the then longest running Tamil-language film, *Cintāmaṇi* (1937). To market their product, HMV unabashedly advertised the Sinhala song as a "Rāga from *Cintāmaṇi*." The new song was among a batch of edificatory gramophone-era Sinhala songs. It ridiculed the "kalu-suddā" (lit. black-white), a pejorative for Sinhalese people who had embraced Western ways of living.

> Our Sinhalese ancestors used to be victorious over other countries
> But today our *kalu suddā* roll their tongues out toward Western
>   ways of life.
> They foolishly grin and wait at the ocean until food and dress arrive
>   from abroad.
>
> Our Sinhalese ancestors used to be victorious over other countries
> Now mothers eat imported rice from abroad.
> They are no longer accustomed to *herali batala* (jackfruit and sweet
>   potatoes). Because we have no milk in this country we import
>   milk power and give it to our children, who will perish[60]

The song advised Sinhalese people to return to Arya-Sinhala Buddhist customs and advocated strengthening the local economy. Such a song illustrated a form of local commercialism in which a sentiment of the Sinhalese Buddhist revival was itself revived as a song theme set to a catchy melody of a popular Indian film song. If John De Silva, Ananda Rajakaruna, and Tibet S. Mahinda composed song and poetry to cure various colonial-era illnesses that they believed afflicted their downtrodden people, gramophone songwriters sought to capitalize on the momentum of their projects.

   In this chapter I have endeavored to disclose several fundamental features of Sinhala song and poetry created during the colonial period of the early twentieth century. Its mode of existence was local, yet its conditions of possibility were cosmopolitan in regard to the spread of Parsi theater, the force of anticolonial nationalism, and the growth of the Indian film industry. In the following chapter, I return to the work of Partha Chatterjee to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of his widely accepted notion of the inner domain.

Brothers of the Pure Sinhala Fraternity

"By my reading, anticolonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power," writes Partha Chatterjee in *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-colonial Histories.* Before persons form anticolonial political movements, native intellectuals carve out unique spaces that Chatterjee designates the "inner domain." The inner domain is a realm of authentic culture that native intellectuals imagine to remain untouched by colonialism.[1] One of the main contributions of Chatterjee's theory is the way it assigns a new starting place—cultural reform—for conventional histories of colonial-era nationalism, histories that customarily begin with narratives about anticolonial movements and battle with the imperial power.

I accept the premise of the inner domain but disagree with the emphasis Chatterjee places on intellectuals of colonized nations who create inner domains in relation to Western hegemony. Chatterjee focuses on Bengali cultural nationalism and its complex interaction with Western culture. But he considers Bengal, the metropolis of the British Raj, to be representative of colonized nations.[2] In this chapter I continue to explore the colonial period but focus on an alternative school of scholars, poets, and songwriters to reveal how one cultural movement in Sri Lanka sought to define the nation, not in relation to the West but in opposition to North India.

THE LINGUISTIC PURISM OF MUNIDASA CUMARATUNGA

By the early twentieth century, native elites throughout South Asia had begun to consider their language as a spiritually unifying marker of cultural identity. As

early as 1891 Maratha nationalist B. G. Tilak campaigned to redraw boundaries of an independent India along linguistic lines. In 1920 Mahatma Gandhi acceded his support to create linguistic provinces for an independent India.[3]

Linguistic politics united the community but violently divided self from other. Although Hindi and Urdu are structurally the same, when South Asia's postcolonial era erupted with the 1947 partition of India, the *devanāgarī* script for Hindi and the *nasta'līq* script for Urdu helped justify the creation of separate Hindu (India) and Muslim (Pakistan) nations.[4] Many additional language crusades followed in South Asia, including the Bengali Language Movement of 1952, fasts-until-death for a separate Telugu state in 1951–52, Sinhalese mob attacks in retaliation to Tamil resistance to the 1956 Sinhala Only language act, Fateh Singh's fast-until-death in 1960 for a Punjabi-speaking state, agitations that divided the Bombay State along linguistic lines into Gujarat and Maharashtra, and Tamil riots in 1965 to protest against Hindi as the official language of India.

The modern history of linguistic politics in Sri Lanka begins with Munidasa Cumaratunga. Between 1922 and 1944 Cumaratunga sought to do for the Sinhala language what the revivalists had attempted to accomplish for the Buddhist religion. Cumaratunga believed that reforming, uplifting, and fostering loyalty for the Sinhala language would help bring independence to the Sri Lankan nation.[5]

Integral to his project was the fight for linguistic purism. Cumaratunga wanted Sinhala writers to reject all nonnative lexical items when using the native language. E. Annamalai writes that linguistic purism is caused by the "redefinition of power relations when the social order is undergoing change."[6] In Cumaratunga's case, one can add that linguistic purism can influence societal change. His purist project to remove Sanskrit and Pali influence from the Sinhala language was an integral aspect of his efforts to construct a new school of cultural nationalism that challenged the dominance of the Arya-Sinhala camp.

In 1922 Cumaratunga resigned from his position as an inspector of Anglo-Vernacular schools for the Department of Education. Between 1922 and 1942 he reconstructed classical works of Sinhala verse and prose. The Department of Education approved these texts, twenty-eight in total, to be used for public examinations at the time.[7] To reconstruct texts, Cumaratunga compared all the extant manuscripts of a work and rewrote lines to achieve what he believed to be the original, authentic, and "pure" version. His work reconstructing texts gave him expertise in morphology, syntax, parsing, lexical choice, phraseology, and orthography of authors and manuscript scribes. This expertise would help him later fashion a pure Sinhala linguistic register—one rid of not only Sanskrit and Pali but also Portuguese, Tamil, and English loanwords, as well as Sinhala colloquialisms.[8] During the period he reconstructed Sinhala texts he also published weekly editorials in his newspaper *Lak Mini Pahana* (The gem light of Lanka) that campaigned to standardize Sinhala grammar, urged Sinhalese politicians to speak in their

mother tongue (rather than English), and advocated that Sinhala grammar should be taught with the rigor in which English teachers taught English to Sri Lankans.[9]

The purist ideologies Cumaratunga brought to the study of Sinhala literature are evident in the introduction he wrote for his commentary on the twelfth- or eleventh-century work known as the *Muvadevdāvata* (Account of the Makhādeva Jātaka):

> Although there are many poems composed in Sinhala, Sinhalese people consider the most important to be *Sasadāvata* [Account of the Sasa Jātaka], *Kavsiḷumiṇa* [Crest-gem of poetry], and *Muvadevdāvata* [Account of the Makhādeva Jātaka]. The poetic diction in these works is chaste because Sinhalese poets composed these works before the [twelfth-century treatise on Sinhala grammar known as the] *Sidatsaṅgarāva* and therefore did not employ the "five transpositions" or use rhyme in two or three places in the lines of quatrains. . . . Errors of ignorant scribes have corrupted these works and impeded literary appreciation. . . . Scholars [like myself] who reconstruct these texts can easily tell which errors are because of a lapse or inadvertence. We have considered it appropriate, in the interest of young scholars, to produce a pure text of this poem as best we can.[10]

In this excerpt Cumaratunga listed three factors that he believed determined whether poetic diction was corrupt. First, it was corrupt if the linguistic register had been subject to the "five transpositions"—five types of diachronic linguistic change (modification in vowels, letters, words, case, and verbal conjugation) described in the twelfth-century treatise on Sinhala grammar, the *Sidatsaṅgarāva*. It was also corrupt if there was an excessive use of *eli väṭa,* the poetic technique whereby the final syllable in each line of the quatrain ended with a like-phoneme. Finally, it was corrupt if there were "errors resulting from the lapses of ignorant scribes," which referred to linguistic confusions, omissions, and additions, such as the mix-up of similar letters, misinterpretation of contractions, errors in translating words of general resemblance, wrong word combinations or punctuation, or substitutions of synonyms.[11]

George Thomas outlines an eight-stage process that language reformers often use to "purify" languages. "Recognition of need" and "identification of targets" are the first two stages.[12] One can say that Cumaratunga both recognized the need to purify the language found in various manuscripts of the *Muvadevdāvata* and identified fixable targets to produce a "pure text" of the poem.

One can see later stages in the purification process in an article Cumaratunga authored that sparked a literary debate that came to be known as the *Kukavi Vādaya,* or "Poetasters Debate." The debate was published in the journal *Swadēśamitrayā* (Friend of the nation) between June 1925 and December 1927.

> Out of the entire corpus of Sinhala poetry, the three works *Muvadevdāvata, Sasadāvata,* and *Kavsiḷumiṇa* are the flowers at the summit. . . . The soft words in

Muvadevdāvata are charming but its author had plundered meanings from the great Sanskrit poets. We do not, therefore, bestow great respect on this work. . . . In the *Sasadāvata* there are several places influenced by Sanskrit verse, yet these instances have only shadows of the Sanskrit words, not the exact copies. Shadows appear but the poetic diction is not corrupt. As it is said: [Sanskrit] "The poet imitates the shadow of another poet's meanings. The poetaster takes the meanings. The thief takes the words."[13]

That Cumaratunga's language ideologies were opposed to the Arya-Sinhala preference for Sanskrit-heavy Sinhala is evident in Cumaratunga's judgment that unmodified Sanskrit loanwords corrupted the poetic diction of pure Sinhala. He praised the same three works mentioned in the first excerpt of this section. Yet here he placed the *Sasadāvata* on a higher literary plane than the *Muvadevdāvata* because the *Sasadāvata* contained many Sanskrit "shadows," or *tadbhavas,* which are modified Sanskrit cognates that retain a Sinhala flavor. They are different from *tatsamas,* unmodified Sanskrit loanwords that Cumaratunga believed corrupted Sinhala.

Cumaratunga then alleged that Toṭagāmuve Śrī Rāhula (1408–91) did not deserve the title of "poet" because his masterwork, the *Kāvyaśēkhara* (Crown of poetry), was heavy in Sanskrit *tatsamas:* "The scholar who catches thieves with their stolen goods are criticized for having a crooked mouth. . . . Most Sinhalese scholars consider the *Kāvyaśēkhara* more distinguished than other classical poems. However, according to the Sanskrit phrase above, the author of the *Kāvyaśēkhara* does not deserve the title of "poet."'[14] Challenging the worth of the *Kāvyaśēkhara* was controversial. The Sinhalese intelligentsia held Śrī Rāhula's works in the utmost esteem. When Cumaratunga wrote in the excerpt, "The scholar who catches thieves with their stolen goods are criticized for having a crooked mouth," he was referring to himself as the "scholar who catches thieves," and Toṭagāmuve Śrī Rāhula, author of *Kāvyaśēkhara,* as the thief. The "stolen goods" was a reference to the Sanskrit *tatsamas* Śrī Rāhula used in *Kāvyaśēkhara.* Cumaratunga was criticized for having a "crooked mouth" because he idiosyncratically filled his writings with the *ä-kāraya,* the third letter of the Sinhala alphabet, which makes a "crooked" vowel sound like the "a" in "cat" pronounced in an American accent.

Cumaratunga believed that the ä-kāraya was the "purest" indigenous letter in the Sinhala language since it does not exist in practically any other South Asian language. He revered Guruḷugōmi's twelfth-century *Amāvatura* (Ambrosial water)— a narrative of incidents in the Buddha's life—because Guruḷugōmi heavily used the ä-kāraya letter and favored Sanskrit *tadbhavas* over *tatsamas,* which gave his poetic diction a distinctive *heḷa,* or "pure," Sinhala flavor.[15] Cumaratunga and his followers suffixed the ä-kāraya letter onto nouns to convey the genitive case, verbs for past participles, and prepositions to create emphatic and predication markers.[16]

DECONSTRUCTING *ARYA*

In 1941 Cumaratunga established the Heḷa Havula (Pure Sinhala Fraternity), an organization that aimed to promote the Sinhala language and reform its modern grammar according to the linguistic register found in Sinhala literature created between the twelfth and seventeenth centuries. Cumaratunga and his colleagues in the Heḷa Havula conceived of an alternative identity to the Arya-Sinhala model. One of Cumaratunga's closest colleagues in the Heḷa Havula was the poet Rapiyel Tennakoon (1899–1965), who deconstructed the Arya-Sinhala identity in an article he published in the *Helio* in 1941, titled "The Hidden History of the Helese":

> What a shame for us Helese, to have a section of our own countrymen who believe that they are the descendents of a gang of barbarian's robbers [Prince Vijaya and his retinue] from the Lata country! According to the Island-chronicles [such as the *Mahāvaṃsa*] the leader of this gang of robbers was a grandson of a highway robber who lived in a cave in the great forest region then known as 'lata vanaya' in South Guzarat *[sic]*. . . . Their ships, dispersed by the storm, lost their way in the open sea. Some of them, including the one in which the leader of the gang was on board, reached the island of the Helese. The crew, worn out by hunger and thirst, landed on the shore behind the jungle district, well known all over the ancient commercial world by the [ancient] name of [Sri Lanka,] Tommanna.[17]

Here Tennakoon challenged the heroic portrayals of Prince Vijaya championed by the Arya-Sinhala revivalists, disgraced Vijaya as a leader of a gang of barbarous robbers, rejected the belief that the Sinhalese were descendants of Vijaya, and suggested that the Sinhalese (the "Helese") were already on the island when Vijaya and his retinue arrived.

Tennakoon also attempted to deconstruct the Arya-Sinhala identity by critically tracing the term *Arya* in scholarly discourse:

> According to our modern writers, these Vadakkayas [Harassers] *[sic]* were the first Aryan settlers of the Helese island. I do not know what they mean by the word "Aryan." The Buddhist literature says that "Aryans" are those who had attained to the noble eight-fold path. But we cannot believe that our modern writers mean the same sin-proof holy beings by the recently coined word *Aryan.*
>
> The scholars who wanted to mention all the groups of the northern band of the fair-skinned human race in the world as a single family used the word *Aryan,* which is a word coined very recently in a German mint without taking into consideration that the very same name existed in ancient Indian literature to express quite a different meaning. But soon they saw that the word *Aryan* did not give a wider sense than that given by the ancient word "ariya." As the scope they wanted to cover by the meaning of the word *Aryan* grew wider they felt the want of a new word for the purpose. Then the scholars began to use the newly coined compound word *Indo-Aryan.* This new treatment made the patient more ill instead of curing him, for ancient "Aryans" were especially Indians. Then the scholars coined another compound word

> "Indo-Germanic" to give a still wider sense than that given by the former one. But the meaning they wanted to express by that word began to spread beyond its circle.[18]

"German mint" most likely referred to Max Müller's popularization of the concept of the "Arya" race. This idea fed into German linguist Wilhelm Geiger's widely praised linguistic studies (1897, 1899) that established the Sinhala language's Indo-Aryan roots. Geiger's linguistic categorization of *Indo-Aryan* further established the belief that the origins of the Sinhalese were North Indian, a belief shared by the Arya-Sinhala nationalists but fought against by the members of the Heḷa Havula.

CUMARATUNGA'S *HEḶA MĪYÄSIYA*

In 1942 Cumaratunga published *Heḷa Mīyäsiya* (Sinhala music). He intended to publish three additional volumes that treated rhythm and Sinhalese percussion instruments, but he passed away in 1944 at the age of fifty-three. *Heḷa Mīyäsiya* was a violin self-study manual, a collection of patriotic lyrics Cumaratunga wrote in the purist Sinhala, and a treatise that created theoretical foundations for a national system of music based on the singing of Sinhala poetry.

Thomas delineates two types of linguistic purism. "Offensive purism" attempts to force a radical departure from traditional usage. "Defensive purism" strives to stop the use of undesirable development.[19] Cumaratunga's post-1939 diction, which commenced with his publication of the *Subasa* (Good language) journal and was in full form in *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* was of the "offensive" type. It radically departed from common usage in the way it removed unmodified Sanskrit, Pali, English, Tamil, and Portuguese loanwords; employed the ä-kāraya; and introduced idiosyncratic purist replacements.

Thomas defines "replacement" as the provision of an acceptable alternative to undesirable linguistic elements.[20] Replacement is the sixth stage in Thomas's language purification process. The word *mīyäsiya,* found in the book's title, is one such replacement. Cumaratunga coined the term as an alternative for *sangīta,* the Sanskrit word for "music." *Mi-* means sweet or pleasant, and *-äsiya* denotes something heard, thus *mīyäsiya* literally means "sweet sound."[21] In his introduction to *Heḷa Mīyäsiya* Cumaratunga ridiculed the Sinhalese composers who studied classical music in North India and thought little of Sinhala music traditions: "When you mention 'Heḷa music,' a large group gathers around. These are the people who have studied singing and instrumental music in North India. They scoff, 'What vocal music do the Sinhalese have? What instrumental music? Sinhalese singing is like the lament we hear at funerals. What is Sinhalese instrumental music except the unpleasant thunderous sound of the bera drum [the traditional Sinhalese double-headed drum] that should be removed from the temple on Poya [the Buddhist holidays that occur on a full moon day] and even from hell itself!'"[22]

Cumaratunga also criticized composers who imitated the style of the first Asian Nobel laureate, Rabindranath Tagore: "Another shameful thing they do is to compose songs in the style of people like Rabindranath Tagore. What do our composers do? They listen to this type of song and imitate its meter and words and then trick all the foolish people who swoon."[23] Because Cumaratunga desired to free Sri Lanka from Indian cultural influence, he bestowed new Sinhala-language names onto the standard Indian terms for musical notes (sa, re, ga, ma, pa, da, ni). He designated the seven natural notes as *si, ri, gi, mi, pi, di, ni* and the sharp fourth as *mu,* and he used his favorite letter the ä-kāraya to name the flat second, third, sixth, and seventh as *rä, gä, dä*, and *nä.*[24]

Cumaratunga's critique of Sinhalese composers who believed in the superiority of North Indian music was connected to his attempt to reinterpret the *Mahāvaṃsa,* which claimed that the Sinhalese were originally from North India. As stated earlier, according to the chronicle, the Sinhalese had descended from the North Indian prince Vijaya in the fifth century B.C.E. Cumaratunga argued that the real roots of the Sinhalese were with the "Heḷas," the indigenous islanders whom Vijaya conquered. Yet Cumaratunga also looked to the *Mahāvaṃsa* chronicle for evidence of an ancient Sinhalese musical tradition untouched by India. He wrote this in the introduction to *Heḷa Mīyäsiya:* "After covering the Heḷa girl traitor named Kuveni with a cloth, Vijaya, the leader of the thieves, crept closer to the Heḷa abode. What were the Heḷas doing? They were pleasing their minds with singing, playing, and dancing. One would think Vijaya's heart softened from hearing such sweetness. But the Heḷas danced, sang, and played instruments not knowing that Vijaya would soon murder them."[25] Cumaratunga here referred to an episode narrated in the *Mahāvaṃsa:* Prince Vijaya could conquer the indigenous islanders because Kuveni the Heḷa queen betrayed her own kin, the "Heḷas." After spending a night with Kuveni, Vijaya heard sounds of music and singing foreign to him. He asked, "What does this noise mean?" Kuveni replied that the music was for a seven-day Heḷa wedding festival taking place in the city Sirisavatthu.[26] Vijaya and his retinue then went to Sirisavatthu, vanquished the Heḷas, and began to rule ancient Lanka. Cumaratunga believed that this very story in the *Mahāvaṃsa* gave evidence of an indigenous Sinhalese musical tradition.

Many of Cumaratunga's songs in *Heḷa Mīyäsiya* expressed the slogans of the Heḷa Havula. For example, this song lyric championed Cumaratunga's "triple gem" campaign that valorized the Sinhala country, nation, and language:

> For any country, except my country, the Heḷa country
> For any nation, except my nation, the Heḷa nation
> For any language, except my language,
> I will never bow my head, I will never bow my head[27]

In the early twentieth century the motto of Arya-Sinhala nationalism had been "country, nation, and *religion.*" Cumaratunga replaced religion with *language.*

Sandagomi Coperahewa writes that this replacement "reflects the growing importance of the language factor in Sinhala nationalism and politics in the late 1930s."[28] Indeed, between 1932 and 1942 Sinhalese politicians presented resolutions to the State Council to use Sinhala and Tamil, rather than English, in debates of the council and in the administration of justice.

Although Cumaratunga had no contact with the reformers of music and language in Tamil Nadu, his interpretation of Sinhalese origins, ideologies of linguistic purism, and musicological treatise paralleled the contemporaneous language and music movements in Tamil Nadu. Cumaratunga's conviction that the Sinhalese were not descendants of North Indians but originally indigenous islanders of Lanka inspired him to rename the Indian musical tones with Sinhala note names. Similarly, a pioneer of the Tamil music movement, Abraham Pandithar (1859–1919), created a body of exclusively Tamil music theory. Pandithar's music theory was based on his belief in the existence of the lost continent of Lemuria, wherefrom all Tamil speakers were said to have originated.[29]

Further, both Cumaratunga and the founder of the Tamil purist movement, Maraimalai Adigal (1876–1950), rejected their respective ethnic groups' putative Aryan roots. They based this refutation on what they believed to be the inherent uniqueness of the Tamil and Sinhala languages and each language's autonomy from Sanskrit. Both Cumaratunga and Adigal were not of high caste. One may infer that their positions as rural elites and to some degree "subalterns" in relation to the high castes affected their outlook in some way. Cumaratunga, however, did not publicly seek to empower the lower castes, as Adigal did in his Non-Brahmin Manifesto.[30]

Despite these commonalities between music and language reform in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan–Tamils became increasingly polarized within Sri Lanka in the 1940s. Tamil culture had deeply influenced early twentieth-century Sinhala gramophone music, nineteenth-century Sinhala drama (*nāḍagam),* and eighteenth-century Sinhala court song (vannama). Yet exclusory language policies in Sri Lanka in the 1940s began to create a conspicuous lack of cultural dialogue between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in Sri Lanka and India. In 1943, a year before Cumaratunga passed away, Sinhalese politicians enacted the first resolution to make Sinhala the only official language of the state.

From a wider vantage point, one might consider Cumaratunga's language loyalty as a Sri Lankan case of the large-scale shift in South Asia from language-as-medium to language-as-marker of ethnic identity. Sumathi Ramaswamy and Lisa Mitchell detail the way the Tamil and Telugu languages of South India came to constitute a defining characteristic of Tamil and Telugu individuals in the twentieth century.[31] Like the Tamil and Telugu language reformers whose campaigns contributed to this shift, Cumaratunga created a unique inner domain of Sinhalese ethnic identity with the Sinhala language at its heart.

Through the organization of the Heḷa Havula and publications like *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* Cumaratunga impressed on poets and songwriters the importance of his purist project of reform. The task of the remainder of this chapter is to come to terms with the way in which Cumaratunga exerted influence on the poetry of Rapiyel Tennakoon and songs of Sunil Santha, two members of the Heḷa Havula.

BAT LANGUAGE

In 1927 Cumaratunga was appointed principal of the teacher's training college in Nittambuwe. There he befriended Rapiyel Tennakoon, the history and geography instructor.[32] Tennakoon joined Cumaratunga's Heḷa Havula in 1942 and presided as president between 1949 and 1965.[33] Tennakoon read Cumaratunga's *Virit Vä-kiya* (Treatise on Sinhala poetic meters, 1938) and began to compose verse in the metered style prescribed by this book.[34] In two years Tennakoon had completed eleven long-metered poems, four of which comprised more than one thousand quatrains apiece.

Impressed, Cumaratunga published three of Tennakoon's long poems for Cumaratunga's book series Ruvan Väla (Chain of gems). Cumaratunga used the Ruvan Väla series to exclusively publish poetry by members of the Heḷa Havula. The series had commenced in 1936 with Cumaratunga's autobiographical long poem *Piya Samara* (Remembering Father). Tennakoon's poems were satirical and polemical. In *Hävilla* (The curse, 1940), he lampooned zealous religious practices, and in *Dā Vinaya* (Discipline of the nation, 1941) he satirized corrupt politics.[35]

The poetry written by members of the Heḷa Havula diverged in three ways from the style of the first-generation Colombo poets. First, the Heḷa Havula poets wrote in an erudite literary language that bordered on cryptic, a style that radically deviated from the easily understandable language of the Colombo poets. Second, they used a more expanded repertoire of meters. The Colombo poets wrote mostly *sivpada* (quatrains), with end-rhyme *(eli väṭa)* and an equal amount of *mātrā* (syllabic instants) per line. Yet Tennakoon favored *gī* meters, quatrains with uneven amounts of mātrā.[36] *Gī* was a meter common to Sinhala poetic works composed between the twelfth and seventeenth century, like the *Sasadāvata, Muvadevdā,* and *Kavsiḷumiṇa.* Because Tennakoon, along with his brothers in the Heḷa Havula, held these literary works in esteem, he was inclined to use *gī* meters. Third, Heḷa Havula poets appended commentaries onto their works of poetry. The Colombo poets did not append commentaries on their poems because the common reader could understand the meaning. Detailed exegesis, by contrast, was necessary for the Heḷa Havula poets, since they employed an arcane lexicon and commented on myths, current events, and biographical details through slight allusions, some of which could seem like inside jokes.

සිය බස් වඩුවෝ

FIGURE 2. "Siya Bas Vaḍuvō" (Developers of the native language), *Subasa* (1941): 61. *Clockwise from top left:* Rapiyel Tennakoon, Jayamaha Vellala, Ven. Warakagoda Silruwan, and Aryasena Anshuboda (who later changed his name to "Arisen Ahubudu").

The Heḷa Havula poets, some of whose pictures were featured in a 1941 issue of Cumaratunga's *Subasa* (fig. 2), adopted for their exegesis the precise format that Sinhala literary scholars used to interpret classical Sinhala literature. In the *anvaya* (word order), the commentator put the quatrain into sentence syntax. In the *vistara* or *padyartha* (description, meaning), the scholar explained the content. The *ṭippaṇi* (gloss) followed with an analysis of challenging terms or phrases.

It is against the background of Cumaratunga's Heḷa Havula movement that Tennakoon's first poetic work, *Vavuluva* (Bat language, 1939), holds significance. It was a long narrative poem that comprised 551 quatrains. Because Cumaratunga was enamored with this poem, he wrote a long introduction to *Vavuluva* that analyzed the work's aesthetics and characters. Cumaratunga claimed that *Vavuluva* could win a Nobel Prize if translated into English.[37]

One may conclude that Tennakoon wrote *Vavuluva* for two principal reasons. The first was to rewrite anti–Sri Lankan scenes in the Indian *Ramayana* epic. This becomes evident when one considers the narrative of the poem. *Vavuluva* revolved around a conversation between a male bat, Vavula, and female *drongo* bird, Kävidiya. Tennakoon may have gravitated toward fables because Cumaratunga had used anthropomorphic animal characters to criticize society in his fable-like *Magul Käma* (The wedding feast) and *Hin Säraya* (The subtle attack).[38]

Both Vavula and Kävidiya have a long Sinhalese ancestry that they trace back to ancient tribes in India and Sri Lanka. The two meet in the evening, when Kävidiya's husband is late to return home (vv. 1–21). After Kävidiya tells Vavula about her distinguished family lineage (vv. 22–45), Vavula reveals that one of his ancestors lived in the castle garden of Sita's father (Sita is the heroine of the *Ramayana*). This ancestor was later exiled to the south of India, where Rama (the hero of the *Ramayana*) and Lakshmana (Rama's brother) lived (vv. 55–59).

Readers of *Vavuluva* gained a different perspective on two Sri Lankan characters of the *Ramayana:* Ravana and his sister Surpanakha. Tennakoon attempted to redeem Surpanakha's character. In the standard version of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Ravana's sister Surpanakha is an evil woman who attempts to seduce Rama and his brother Lakshmana. After the brothers reject Surpanakha's advances, she attempts to kill Sita, but Lakshmana cuts off her ears and nose. Conversely, in *Vavuluva*, Surpanakha is a "beautiful" (*rūmat,* v. 61) and "friendly woman" (*yeheliyak,* v. 64). She does not flirt with Rama and Lakshmana; they crudely speak to her (vv. 65–70).

Tennakoon also tried to redeem the character of Ravana. In the standard *Ramayana,* Ravana tricks Rama and Lakshmana, abducts Sita to Sri Lanka, and demands she marry him. In Tennakoon's *Valuvuva,* Sita *wants* to go to Sri Lanka to meet Ravana, the great king of Sri Lanka (v. 78). When she is in Sri Lanka, Ravana valiantly *protects* her (vv. 110–24).[39]

The second reason Tennakoon seems to have written *Vavuluva* was to criticize and satirize the Royal Asiatic Society's Sinhala dictionary project, especially their

hire of linguist Wilhelm Geiger.[40] The very title of the poem was a humorous allusion to this project. To create the word "Vavuluva" Tennakoon combined the Sinhala word for *bat (vavula)* with the suffix *-uva.* The suffix *-uva* is found in the word *eluva,* which designates "pure or ancient Sinhala language." By combining *vavula* and *uva,* Tennakoon meant to convey the meaning "bat language."[41]

One year before Tennakoon published *Vavuluva,* the German linguist Wilhelm Geiger published *A Grammar of the Sinhala Language* (1938). The Sinhalese intelligentsia knew of Geiger because of earlier seminal articles he published about etymologies of roughly two thousand Sinhala words (1896, 1897). The Sinhalese intelligentsia, except for the members of the Heḷa Havula, had accepted Geiger's argument that the Sinhalese language had Indo-Aryan origins.[42]

Geiger and the dictionary's chief editor, Sir D. B. Jayatilake, had launched the dictionary project in 1926. It progressed at a snail's pace: part 1 of the first volume was published in 1935. The slow pace prompted Cumaratunga to publish a public letter in the *Helio,* the English-language journal of the Heḷa Havula. Cumaratunga volunteered his services to complete the dictionary in two years.[43] He was frustrated because the dictionary project was put under the guidance of Geiger, a foreign scholar who he felt sorely lacked in Sinhala fluency. To vent his frustration, Cumaratunga authored thirteen sardonic letters of criticism, published in both Sinhala and English, about Geiger's *A Grammar of the Sinhala Language.* In the ninth criticism, Cumaratunga attacked the credibility of Geiger's work and the new field of comparative philology. Geiger, Cumaratunga wrote, did not even know the basic pronouns in Sinhala:

> To Prof. Geiger ඒ [ē] and හේ [hē] means "he" "she" or "it." This must indeed have come as a result of some mysterious and rigid process of highly "scientific" research. ඕ [o] and හේ [hē] in Sinhala is equal to "she" in English! It will be ridiculous to argue to the contrary. One who knows the Sinhala language will require no argument at all to be convinced that it is absolutely untrue to say that ඒ [ē] and හේ [hē] means "she," and those whose limited knowledge of Sinhalese requires the thick cover "Comparative Philology" to protect it from the atmosphere, will never come out of their fortified shelter to face any kind of argument.[44]

In addition to these criticisms, Cumaratunga authored in English three "Open Appeals" in the Heḷa Havula journal *Subasa* to Sir D. B. Jayatilake as well as to the chair of the dictionary managing committee and the minister of education. In his appeal to the chair he wrote,

> Professor Geiger, the Great Authority of the Dictionary, does not know Sinhalese. His great Grammar, produced with the help of Mr. Julius de Lanerolle, clearly shows how lamentably defective his knowledge of Comparative Philology is so far at least as it deals with the Sinhalese language. A Dictionary compiled under the direction of such a doubtful authority can hardly be satisfactory however long may be the period it takes to materialize.

> To one who is already well-versed in the language, who needs not run from this end to the other end of the island to learn the etymology of one small word, who need not make a forced display of his erudition by coming out in the public over and over again with the etymology of a single word, that too unearthed by someone else, two years is quite ample to complete the most comprehensive Sinhalese Dictionary.[45]

In the twenty-seventh chapter of *Vavuluva* Tennakoon lampooned the dictionary project and sought to discredit Geiger's scholarship on the Sinhala language:

Chapter 27. The Arrangement of the Bat-Language Dictionary

> [Vavula:] The assembly gathered
> To protect the Buddhist order
> But commenced [instead]
> The compilation of the Bat-language dictionary
>
> Everyone in the group
> Examined the state of Bat-language
> And then entrusted
> The job of remedying the language to me.
>
> Therefore, on the following day
> I brought together
> All the Bat-language books
> And all the scholars of those books.
>
> My head was like the handle of a manual drill.
> It turned in one direction when reading these books,
> And in jerked in another when confronted
> With what scholars said about these works. (vv. 466–69)[46]

Jayanta Weerasekara's commentary on stanza 469 sheds light on the meaning of the phrase "head like a manual drill": "Glossary: 1. *burumayeka miṭa vilasin:* 'burumaya' is a manual machine to drill wood. To penetrate the wood one turns the handle of the drill in one direction and then in another. Tennakoon says that Vavula's head is like the motion of the handle of this manual drill. When Vavula reads books in the Bat-Language his mind and head move in a focused direction. Yet, when he reads the discourse of scholars on these works his head jerks in another direction [because he is outraged at what they say]."[47] Tennakoon's intention, then, was to wryly criticize foreign scholarship written about the Sinhala language, like Geiger's etymological studies, because Tennakoon believed these studies spread misinformation about the Sinhala language.[48]

It seems most likely that the character of the bat in *Vavuluva* was a satirical portrayal of the dictionary's chief editor, Sir D. B. Jayatilake, or at least of the members of the dictionary project who chose a foreign over a native scholar. As Jayanta Weerasekara's commentary for *Vavuluva* in stanzas 513–14 disclosed: "These two

stanzas reveal a surprising character trait of Vaṇula. He does not wish for his neighbors' help as long as he is alive. However talented his neighbors are he does not like to consult them. But he happily takes help from people from far away."[49] Cumaratunga echoed this sentiment in his introduction to *Vavuluva:* "Kāviḍiya inquires about Vavula's journey to Bintenne: 'Why Bintenne? Can't you learn about your own language from your own people?' No, no. Vavula likes to get help from foreigners much more than from his fellow countrymen. . . . Should not the fact that local scholars are willing to give help from the bottom of their hearts influence the bat to accept their offers? Alas, Vavula likes to worship foreigners . . . and would rather die than seek assistance from local scholars to complete a dictionary."[50]

PURISM AND THE MUSICAL SPHERE

Munidasa Cumaratunga did not only inspire poets. Cumaratunga also filled one songwriter with the desire to compose song that would make the members of the Heḷa Havula proud. In 1934 Rabindranath Tagore staged his opera *Shapmochan* (Curse redeemed) in Sri Lanka to critical acclaim. Inspired, a young Sinhalese Catholic teacher of music and drama named Baddeliyanage Joseph John persuaded his brother for a loan to study music at Tagore's school, Santiniketan. Joseph John raised more money by staging a performance of a Sinhala-language adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet. In 1939 he traveled to Bengal to commence his studies.

He trained for a year in North Indian classical voice, sitar, and orchestration and in Tagore's musical genre known as *rabindrasangit.* Joseph John then decided to pursue a more rigorous study of North Indian classical music. He secured financial aid from the Ceylon government and traveled to Lucknow to focus on Hindustani voice and sitar at the prestigious Marris College of Music.[51]

In the mid-twentieth century many Sinhalese Christians changed their anglicized names to Sinhala names. Around 1940 Joseph John adopted the stage name of "Sunil Shanti."[52] He later adjusted his name to "Sunil Santha." In 1944 he scored the highest marks in the first division sitar class, completed a bachelor's degree in music, and returned to Sri Lanka. The principal of the Marris College of Music, S. N. Ratanjankar, authored a letter of recommendation on behalf of Santha.

Back home, Santha's uncle, Father Moses Perera, gave Santha a temporary place to lodge. Father Perera was a member of the Heḷa Havula. He introduced Santha to Cumaratunga's writings. Santha began to feel that Indian music prevented Sri Lankan composers from creating a national musical genre.

Santha wrote this about his experience reading Munidasa Cumaratunga:

While in North India I transformed into a North Indian in my dress, language, customs, ideas, and every other facet. . . . Even when I was back in Sri Lanka, I behaved as though I were still in North India. I felt proud to forget all my Sinhalese ways and

act like this. When singing Sinhala songs, I would pronounce the words as though they were Hindi words. I considered the Hindi accenting of Sinhala words to be a great thing. In short, in every single activity I pushed my Sinhalese identity away and brought forward North Indian ways of being.

One day I directed my attention to a few Sinhala verses. I read them once, twice, and a third time. I knew the verses contained an important idea. . . . I felt transformed within. The stanzas that really penetrated my heart are these:

"On account of my country and nation
If I were I to go to war and kill enemies
And lose my life thereof
Will not my glory live for a hundred years?

If one lives confined in a stone cave
His life and name will never last
Sacrifice that life to the country and nation
Preserve your honor and remain undefeated

May I never see a Heḷaya [a Sinhalese person]
Two-footed but not doing any service
Working earnestly for the good of country and nation
Forget life's cravings for a moment"[53]

Santha read these three stanzas in Cumaratunga's *Heḷa Mīyäsiya* and felt purified of what he called his "Hindustani-ness": "I searched for other writings penned by this meritorious hand [Munidasa Cumaratunga]. Having found them, I read with great pleasure. This writer was successful in destroying all my useless ideas. I turned in a completely different direction. I felt that my 'Hindustani-ness' left me and went all the way back to India for good. Today there is nothing more important than my language, nation, and country.[54] Transformed, Santha now espoused Cumaratunga's motto of "language, nation, country" *(basa, desa, räsa)*.

The earliest reference one finds in regard to Santha's active involvement in the Heḷa Havula may be March 2, 1946. That day Santha sang the commemoration song at the ceremony for the second death anniversary of Cumaratunga. Santha had set a melody to a poem titled "Cumāratungu Samaru Gīya" (Cumaratunga commemoration song), composed by Heḷa Havula poet Amarasiri Gunavadu. The poem resisted easy comprehension due to its purist poetic lexicon. Consider this translation:

He had a might of intellect and devoted his life to the Triple Gem
He thrilled the hearts of all and made formidable enemies into cotton that wafts in the air
He showed the way of great seers, this God of Heḷa, our "Gem" Munidasa Cumaratunga
We will put your advice to use without rest and commemorate you every day[55]

Here, the "triple gems" again referred to Cumaratunga's slogan of "language, nation, country."

In 1946 Santha released his breakthrough hit "Ōlu Pipīlā" (The lilies have blossomed). He composed the lyrics and music and performed as the solo vocalist. The song became the first song that the Sri Lankan radio station Radio Ceylon, recorded onto a record.[56] "Ōlu Pipīlā" told a story about a young man courting a girl, Mala, near a village pond.

> O sister, the lilies, whiter than white, have blossomed and sway in
>   the field
> O sister, fair-skinned maiden, shall I pluck them and weave a flower
>   garland for you?
> Come in the water Mala and give me your hand
> We'll cut the flowers, weave garlands, and adorn ourselves[57]

Santha's lyrics evoked a lush village scene through the usage of definite articles, such as chains of *kūnis* fish and swaying white lotus flowers. He placed the refrain in the last line of each stanza: "We'll cut the flowers, weave garlands, and adorn ourselves":

> O sister, the unbroken chains of fish play lovingly
> O sister, the kūnis fish go jumping as if we have called them
> Mala, here is the flower I picked for you. This one is yours.
> We'll cut the flowers, weave garlands, and adorn ourselves
>
> O sister, I am ashamed to be defeated by your hands
> O sister, don't be in such a rush, let's wade slowly in the water and
>   pick lily flowers
> Mala, with the whiteness of the flowers on your body, you become
>   more stunning
> We'll cut the flowers, weave garlands, and adorn ourselves
>
> O sister, we have plucked and picked and now the flowers are heavy
>   in our hands
> O sister, let's go put them on the top of the mountain
> Mala, your younger brother is coming, let's go quickly
> We'll cut the flowers, weave garlands, and adorn ourselves[58]

The poetic quality of the song text in "Ōlu Pipīlā" could be said to reside in the lexical and phonemic parallelism. Take the famous first stanza and consider the careful attention Santha gave to repetition, assonance, and alliteration:

> ōlu pipīlā vela leḷa denavā sudaṭa sudē naṅgō
> ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā denna da sudu naṅgō
> ennä diyē bäsä mā hā dennä obē ata mālā
> ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā palaṅdimu api mālā

At the start of lines 1, 2, and 4, Santha uses the word *ōlu* (lilies). He places the word *naṅgō* (sister) at the end of the first two lines. In lines 2 and 4, he repeats the entire phrase of *ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā* (weave lotus and make garlands). He also employs vowel assonance in v*ela* l*ela* denavā (shaking in the pond), nel*ālā* m*āla* got*ālā* (weave and make garlands)**,** and in the third line:

> enn*ä* diy*ē* bäsä m*ā* h*ā*
> denn*ä* ob*ē* ata m*ālā*

Cumaratunga, one may infer, would have approved of the way Santha's song text in "Ōlu Pipīlā" employed subject-object agreement found in literary Sinhala. Cumaratunga had believed that standardizing a more literary grammar was an essential requirement for a *śiṣṭa,* or "cultured" society. Cumaratunga, Sandagomi Coperahewa writes, "used metaphors of law and society to define the relationship of grammar to language."[59] Consider this revealing statement made by Cumaratunga in 1938: "Just like a society without laws, a language without laws will plunge into confusion. The Sinhala language is facing a disaster. A course of action to prevent this is immediately called for. . . . [A standardized] grammar is utterly necessary for a cultured society."[60]

Taking these campaigns to heart, Santha employed in "Ōlu Pipīlā" the rare future tense (neuter/masculine and plural) suffix, *-ō* (-ෝ), for conjugating the verb root *yana* (go) into "yann*ō*."[61]

> Kūnissō uḍa pänä pänä **yannō** apa kändavā naṅgō [Sister, the
>   kunisso fish go jumping as if they have called us][62]

One finds another rare future-tense conjugation in Santha's song "Haṅda Pānē" (In the moonlight, 1947). He used the feminine future-tense suffix, *-ī* (ී), for conjugating the root *näla-* (to be lulled, to sway) into "nälävenn*ī*."

> ambiliyō kiyamin nälävenn**ī**   [She sways back and forth, singing,
>   O Moon!][63]

As with the previous example, this was a literary form that lyricists tended to not include in gramophone or radio songs. In addition, Santha, like the Heḷa Havula poets, added an ä-kāraya letter to words like *pänä pän**ä*** (go jumping), *näl**ä**vennī* (she sways), and *bäb**ä**lena* (shining), which gave his lyrics a pure-Sinhala touch.

Santha believed that his song lyrics with proper literary grammar could put the Sinhalese English-educated elite back in touch with their mother tongue. In the introduction to his songbook *Sunil Haṇḍa* (Sunil's voice, 1947), he remarked,
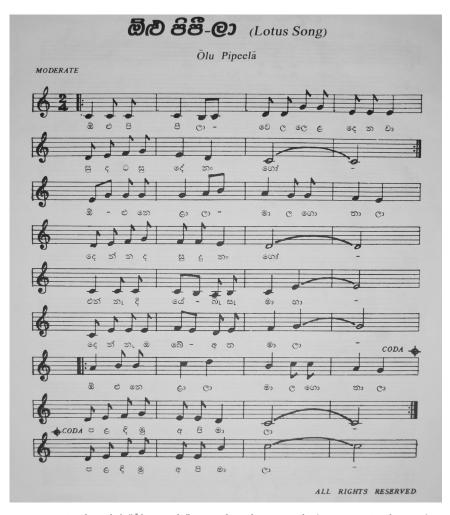
FIGURE 3. Sunil Santha's "Ōlu Pipeelā," in *Sunil Santha: Song Folio* (Rajagiriya: Santha, 1948), 3. Courtesy of Lanka Santha.

Those assimilated to Western food and drink, clothing, customs and habits, etc., have driven our language into the kitchen. These people are ashamed to talk in their mother tongue. . . . Some of them joke and say, "This is Sinhalese music." They then start to imitate *päl kavi* [hut poetry], *karatta kavi* [cart poetry], *sivpada* [sung quatrains], and *vannama*. . . . I find our current situation quite upsetting. This is why I brought out [my first songbook] *Ridī Valāva.* Must I say anything about the service I have rendered through the songs like "Ōlu Pipīlā" and "Haňda Pāne"? Those who gagged from distaste from the Sinhala language and gave prominence to English now happily sing these lyrics. Now they will familiarize themselves with songs in their mother tongue. This is one of the goals of my new music.[64]

He would later print two songbooks with English titles—*Sunil Santha Song Folio* (1948) and *Song of Lanka* (1950)—especially for the Westernized Sinhalese elite in Colombo. Because many members of high society had studied Western classical music, Santha transcribed the songs in Western notation. Instead of transliterating his songs into English script, he printed Sinhala script under the notation (fig. 3). It is striking to note how he used Western notation to appeal to the tastes of this class, yet simultaneously refamiliarized them with "songs in their mother tongue" by using the Sinhala script rather than a transliteration.

Just as Cumaratunga sought to remove North Indian influence from the Sinhala language, Santha greatly rid his songs of North Indian musical influences.[65] In his book *Dēśiya Saṅgīta* (National music), Santha lashed out against Sinhalese musicians who sang Hindustani music. He contemptuously labeled them *Sinhalastankārayō,* or "'Sinhalastan' [Sinhalese + Hindustan] crowd": "There is a reason why [Sri Lankan] national music and music education is bitter like a poisonous *kaduru* nut. There is a reason why everyone who trains in Indian classical music transforms into a Hindustani person and feels that our national music should be Hindustani music: these people have no affection, consideration, or love for their language, nation, or country."[66]

Santha had studied classical Indian vocal music and scored the highest marks in the first division sitar class at Marris College. Yet his music had a marked absence of Indian musical ornamentation. Sunil Ariyaratne emphasizes the influence of Santha's Catholic upbringing on his musical style: "Sunil Santha's voice was trained from childhood in Catholic music of the Church. . . . His voice sounded new to Sinhala music connoisseurs. It was uniquely different from vocalists like Sadiris de Silva, H. W. Rupasinghe, Don Manis Pattiarachche, N. Romlas de Silva, and even Ananda Samarakoon. These musicians who trained in North India used all the ornamentations like *kan svara* and *meend* found in Hindustani classical music. . . . Sunil Santha rarely used these ornamentations. He moved straight from note to note. He also pronounced the words better than the other Sinhalese musicians who trained in North India."[67] D. P. M. Weerakkody, however, stresses the impact of Cumaratunga: "Sunil Santha was influenced not only by Cumaratunga's linguistic style and philosophy but also Cumaratunga's views on music. Although at a later date Santha criticized the limitations of Cumaratunga's *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* initially the book appears to have made some impact on Santha. According to Jayantha Aravinda. . . . This impact explains the simplicity of many of Sunil Santha's melodies and the predominance of natural [unornamented] notes in them."[68]

Santha's compositions may also be said to typify what ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino has termed "modernist reform": reform of local arts based on "cosmopolitan" aesthetics, ethics, and worldviews.[69] Modernist reform describes the way in which musicians must maintain a unique local identity on the international scene. Santha's songs, very popular among the Sinhalese English-educated

elite, also appealed to the British on the island, because of his song's Western harmonies and catchy melodies. For example, Joan Eleanor Ramsbotham, daughter of the Ceylon governor general Herwald Ramsbotham, praised Santha's songs "Ōlu Pipīlā," "Kōkile Nāde" (The cuckoo bird's song), and "Haňda Pānē" in a personal letter sent to Santha in June 1951.[70] If we succinctly describe Santha's early compositional style, it would be that he set simple yet clever and catchy melodies based in Western harmonies to poetic Sinhala song texts.[71] These melodies are predominantly written in the major scale, accompanied by I, IV, and V harmonies set in 4/4 meters and performed by the upright bass and acoustic guitar.

SANTHA AND TENNAKOON'S "DUDAN'ODA BIŇDA"

Santha's Cumaratunga-style rejection of North Indian influences caused a controversy in 1952. In April Radio Ceylon rehired S. N. Ratanjankar—Santha's former principal at the Marris College of Music—to audition and grade Sinhalese musicians for radio posts. Ratanjankar had already visited the island once to audition musicians in 1949.[72] Santha boycotted the 1952 auditions and later controversially quit his post as an A-grade musician. During this time he wrote in protest to the *Lankādīpa* newspaper. In one article Santha expressed anger at station officials who refused to support local talent. Santha's complaints were similar to those that Tennakoon made in *Vavuluva* with regard to the officials who refused to hire Cumaratunga to edit the Sinhala dictionary. Santha felt that hiring Ratanjankar was a repeat of the Geiger controversy that Tennakoon lampooned in the final chapter of *Vavuluva*. Santha argued, "I do not believe that we should wish for a foreigner to come to Sri Lanka to advise us on how to create a national music just because we brought a German to advise us on the Sinhala language."[73]

By this time Santha and Rapiyel Tennakoon had released their new song, "Dudan'oda Biňda" (Kill this cruel creep). Tennakoon had originally published the text in the second chapter of his second long poem *Hävilla*. In the poem Tennakoon narrated the plight of a helpless village woman and satirized her fanatical religious practices. In the second chapter a thief steals the hens of the poor village woman, leaving her unable to earn a living. She makes a pilgrimage to the town of Kataragama and curses the man. She pleads with the god Kataragama to avenge the crime and destroy the criminal. Santha set music to this emotional scene.

Tennakoon's poetic verses from *Hävilla* are found in every compilation of modern Sinhala poetry that I have come across. One reason for the poem's popularity is that Tennakoon fashioned a unique poetic meter that oscillated between quatrains of six and twelve mātrā (syllabic instants). Another reason for the poem's success is the way it teemed with rhyme and alliteration, particularly with the *dayanna* letter "ද" (/d/), which I have set in bold font in the transliteration. These poetics helped

to intensify the woman's feelings of desperation, hatred for the man that destroyed her livelihood, and devotion to the god Kataragama.

> **d**u **d**a no'**d**a biṅ**d**a
> baṅ**d**a te**d**a kaṅ**d**a
> kaṅ**d**a **d**ev ra**d**a
> sāminē
>
> mage kukulā nāsū ekā
> dadaya obage pālu yakā
> tava eka buda dinak takā
> innaṭa iḍa no dī makā
>
> [Kill this cruel creep
> O splendorous wondrous
> King, Lord
> Kataragama!
>
> This bugger has destroyed my hens
> And plundered your totem.
> Destroy him before
> Next Wednesday's worship][74]

In the judgment of composer W. D. Amaradeva, Santha's music and pronunciation of Tennakoon's poetry further heightened Tennakoon's depiction of the woman's desperation, hatred, and devotion:

> Santha was able to transform Tennakoon's poem into a song of the highest level because he expertly utilized the medium of music. He infused into music the sounds like cursing, pleading, and crying that we hear in village settings. . . . His composition possesses national features distinct from the popular Indian way of singing. . . . [One can hear how Santha] gives extra emphasis to pronouncing the *dayanna* letter. He does so to evoke the woman's resolute state of mind and her abhorrence of the thief. After these three lines Santha composes music for the word "sāminē" that conjures a pleading woman making a vow to the deity of Kataragama with the highest humility and devotion.[75]

In the opening phrase Santha accommodates Tennakoon's alliteration of (mostly) three *dayanna* letters per poetic line, with melodic motives of mainly three repeated notes (BF#F#, EEE, D#D#D#, C#C#C, BBB) (ex. 2).

EXAMPLE 2. Three-note motives and three *dayanna* letters in Sunil Santha and Rapiyel Tennakoon's "Dudanʼoda Biṅda."

du **Da** no **Da** bin **Da** ban **Da** te **Da** kan **Da** kan **Da** dev_ ra **Da** sa - mi nē   -

In a revealing statement about his inspiration for the song's music, Santha criticized S. N. Ratanjankar's credibility as Radio Ceylon's music consultant. Because Ratanjankar had not resided in the village areas in Sri Lanka, Santha argued that Ratanjankar lacked in an intimate knowledge of the people's lives and behaviors and was thus not qualified to audition Sinhalese musicians for radio positions:

> I am accustomed to experiencing our village women's behavior when they lose something valuable. They curse the gods and take vows. I have often heard them raising their hands and saying in a thundering voice, things like "Oh God of Kataragama! Please just cut this criminals neck off!" When I was setting music to the poem "Kukulu Hävilla" . . . I followed the rhythm of this woman's plea.*
>
>   * I do not know whether S. N. Ratanjankar has heard our woman's cries, laments, and curses.[76]

To conclude, Cumaratunga and his followers, such as Tennakoon and Santha, constructed an alternative nationalist identity: one based on linguistic purism, opposed to the Arya-Sinhala interpretation of the *Mahāvaṃsa*, and hostile toward North India. If John De Silva and his colleagues (chapter 1) created an inner domain of song with Buddhism and North Indian classical music at the core and the West threatening from outside, Cumaratunga and his brothers in the Heḷa Havula created an inner domain of song and poetry with a pure Sinhala language at the heart and North India threatening from outside.

Santha's radio song and Tennakoon's poetry thus oblige us to rethink Partha Chatterjee's assertion that colonial-era South Asian nationalism "launches its most powerful, creative and historically significant project—to fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western."[77] Chatterjee assumes that there existed only two players in the development of South Asian cultural nationalism: the East and the West. I have tried to illuminate in this chapter how Santha's music turns Chatterjee's contention inside out: Santha used Western musical influences to fashion a modern Sinhalese national music that was not North Indian.

Wartime Romance

Chapters 1 and 2 center on songwriters and poets who participated in Sri Lankan movements that sought to politicize religion and language as symbols of Sri Lankan or Sinhalese identity. Sinhalese songwriters and poets fashioned their projects in relation or opposition to Western or Indian cultural influence. In this chapter I demonstrate that identity politics suddenly grew faint during World War II. During the war songwriters and poets grew weary of didacticism pertaining to religion and linguistic identity. Amid rapidly growing publishing and music industries, they turned toward romanticism to entertain the public.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Sri Lankans feared the Japanese would also bomb the British naval bases in Colombo.[1] Daily sirens announced citywide rehearsals to prepare for a similar strike. Protective bomb shelters and trenches were created throughout Colombo in case of an attack. The government ordered residents to place black paper over lamps in the evening to prevent enemy ships from locating heavily populated areas of the city.

Three months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese navy launched the Easter Sunday Raid, an air attack against the British naval bases in Sri Lanka. They bombed Colombo and killed thirty-seven Sri Lankan civilians. In September the British armed forces transformed a variety of Sri Lankan institutions into military bases. The Royal Air Force used the radio station as their base, and the armed forces took over schools, such as S. Thomas' College in Mount Lavinia, Colombo. The city became populated with soldiers from England, France, and India.[2]

Given Sri Lanka's political alignment with the Allied powers and the arrival of Allied forces to Colombo from England, France, and India, it is not a coincidence that the new forms of Sinhala song and poetry, what I am calling "wartime

romance," were indebted to works by famous English, French, and Indian poets and novelists. The Sinhalese poets and songwriters who drew on Indian or Western European ideas of romance likely sought to connect their writings, readers, and listeners to the imagined community of Allied nations.

As mentioned in chapter 1, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, British colonists inculcated Indians and Sri Lankans with Christian and Victorian morals, which the British disguised as universal mores of civilized culture. Velcheru Narayana Rao argues that Telugu poets consequently began to view physical love in premodern Telugu literature as obscene. Sudipta Kaviraj asserts that British Victorian morals also influenced the Bangla poetry and song of Rabindranath Tagore, who shifted conceptions of love from a *śṛṅgāra,* or erotic notion, found in traditional Sanskrit aesthetics to a more Victorian idea of conjugal love. Karine Schomer suggests that the *chāyāvād* (romantic) Hindi poets of the 1920s and 1930s subsequently assimilated into their style the poetry of the English romantics and Tagore. The *chāyāvād* poets created a "new kind of [Hindi] love poetry, in which lovers were portrayed as soul mates who could open their hearts to each other, share a sense of wonder, and experience through their love a mutual growth of personality."[3]

By the 1940s such trends also became evident in Sri Lanka. Major influences on song and poetry during this decade include the poetry of Tagore, nineteenth-century English poetry, and fin de siècle French romance. Sinhala songs and poems of the 1940s possessed a carefree quality that provided readers and listeners with experiences dissimilar from those afforded by the moralist songs and poems of the Arya-Sinhala (chapter 1) or Heḷa Havula songwriters and poets (chapter 2). Instead, the new romantic themes may have allowed young Sinhalese men and women to wistfully imagine a society free of caste-based marriages. Perhaps it also eased anxieties about perishing in an immanent Japanese air strike.

TAGORE, ROMANCE, AND GRAMOPHONE SONG

Chapter 1 discusses how the earliest Sinhala-language gramophone songs in Sri Lanka were recordings of nurthi songs, or songs that combined Buddhist revivalist themes with melodies from Indian (Hindi or Tamil) film songs. In the 1940s the new major influence was that of Rabindranath Tagore. In Sinhala song the legacy of Tagore can be found in the gramophone songs of Ananda Samarakoon (1911–62).[4]

Samarakoon had been working as a music teacher in 1934 when Tagore staged his opera *Shapmochan* (Curse redeemed) in Sri Lanka. At this time Samarakoon went by his Roman Catholic birth name, George Wilfred Samarakoon. Inspired by Tagore's opera, Samarakoon left for Bengal in 1936 to study music and art at Tagore's college of fine arts, Santiniketan.[5] Samarakoon studied art with Nandalal Bose and

music with Shanti Dev Ghosh. He returned to Sri Lanka after six months, converted from Roman Catholicism to Buddhism, and changed his first name to Ananda, a Sinhalese Buddhist name.[6]

One can only speculate about what caused Samarakoon to embrace Buddhism and change his name. Tagore's personal, intellectual, and artistic embrace of Hinduism perhaps led Samarakoon to want to disavow his Catholic namesake, which could have been said to represent Sri Lanka's colonial legacy. Maybe Samarakoon also felt a less Anglicized and more Sinhala name would help him become a singer-songwriter appreciated by the Sinhalese majority in Sri Lanka. Three additional influential Sinhalese composers of the 1940s changed their names in a similar fashion. In addition to Samarakoon, Baddeliyanage Joseph John adopted the name of Sunil Santha (chapter 2); W. D. Albert Perera modified his name to W. D. Amaradeva; and Eustace Reginald de Silva changed his name to Ediriweera (E. R.) Sarachchandra.

In 1939 Samarakoon signed a two-year contract with His Master's Voice (HMV) and made his first two gramophone recordings. The recordings were part of one hundred new Sri Lankan gramophone records produced through collaboration between HMV and Cargills, a powerful import and wholesale business.[7] HMV had become the largest recording company in the world.[8] Samarakoon set himself apart in the local music industry as the only Sinhalese artist whose records HMV classified as a distinct genre known as *kalātmaka gī* (artistic song).[9]

Samarakoon stated that in the realm of song his true *guru* (teacher) was Tagore.[10] It is thus not surprising that Samarakoon's two earliest recordings reveal the impact Tagore had on his compositions: Samarakoon composed new lyrics according to Tagore's melodies and the short and long mātrā (syllabic instants) in Tagore's song texts. Samarakoon thus created his earliest songs in the same way as his *alut sindu* predecessors (chapter 1). Sunil Ariyaratne discussed how this compositional practice tended to produce Sinhala songs with a strange mix of words. Example 3 indicates how Samarakoon set the lyrics of his song "Jana Säma Mana" (All the minds of the people) to the melody and short and long mātrā of Tagore's "Jana Gana Mana" (Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, 1911), which became India's national anthem. Samarakoon also arranged the lyrics of his second song "Balanna Sohoyuriyē" (Look, my sister) to the melody and short and long mātrā of Tagore's "Jodi Tor Dak Shune Keu Na Ase Tobe Ekla Cholo Re" (If nobody responds to your call then go alone, 1905).[11]

Although Samarakoon was under the spell of Tagore, he also began in 1939 to compose his own songs.[12] His original songs were unique because he sang the song, wrote the lyrics, and arranged and composed the music. These tasks usually required three people. Readers of this chapter may think lightly of such an accomplishment. I thus must emphasize that in the early twentieth century most Sinhalese songwriters did not possess musical knowledge to compose original melodies deemed suitable

EXAMPLE 3. Ananda Samarakoon's use of Tagore's melody and poetic rhythm.

Opening Phrase in Tagore's "Jana Gana Mana"

ja na ga na ma na a dhi na ya ka ja ya he bha ra ta bhagh ya vi na__ ta

Opening Phrase in Samarakoon's "Jana Säma Mana"

ja na sä ma ma na a dhi pa ti ye ni tu ti vē ra ki nu mä na va lak ma__ ta

for gramophone songs. It was not a taken-for-granted skill. Ananda Samarakoon and Sunil Santha had to travel to North India to learn how to use Indian rāgas and instruments to create a two- or three-minute gramophone song. As discussed in chapter 1, John De Silva even paid Visvanath Lawjee to travel from western India to compose rāga-based melodies for De Silva's nurthi theater productions.

In 1941 HMV released Samarakoon's "Enḍada Mänike" ("May I come, my gem?")—a song for which Samarakoon composed, arranged, and performed as the main vocalist. The song was a dialogue between a girl and a boy. Such "dialogue songs" forged links to the nurthi theater songs (see chapter 1) that had inspired the first gramophone recordings in Sri Lanka. Samarakoon may have thought that audiences accustomed to theater songs on record would prefer to purchase recordings that featured similar theater-style dialogues.

"Enḍada Mänike" was different, however, because of its focus on romance. Most gramophone songs at the time had texts that praised the Buddha or offered some form of advice.[13] Let us consider the scene that Samarakoon portrayed in "Enḍada Mänike." Here, the Indian goddess Saraswati assumes the disguise of a young woman. Enchanted, a young man attempts to woo her. He invites her to come into the river to pluck flowers:

> *Boy:* Mänike, may I come into the deep river to pluck *kekaṭiya* flowers?
> The *kekaṭiya* flowers in bloom are so beautiful, beautiful, beautiful
>
> *Girl:* Don't fatigue yourself, don't, don't, please, don't, don't, please, just stay on the riverbank
>
> *Boy:* The bending *kekaṭiya* flowers are so beautiful, beautiful, beautiful[14]

The dialogue takes on a shade of eroticism when the girl's white dress becomes wet. Yet the song remains charming, almost as if it was meant for children to perform:

> *Boy:* See, see, your white dress is getting wet from the waves
> Mänike's white dress is so beautiful, beautiful, beautiful
>
> *Girl:* Now I'm all wet, now I'm all wet, now I'm all wet, fine, it's no problem
>
> *Boy:* Mänike's white dress is so beautiful, beautiful, beautiful[15]

One cannot trace the melody of this song to works by Tagore, but the musical texture of "Eṇḍada Mänike" evoked the simple orchestrations of Tagore's Bangla songs. Samarakoon sang the vocal line above a constant drone played on a *tanpura,* and the only melodic accompaniment was a sitar that shadowed the vocal melody. The ensemble was rounded out with a tabla and tambourine. Further, Tagore's method of bringing folk sources into modern songs inspired Samarakoon, who made this remark in 1956: "Tagore . . . used folk poetry as a source [for modern song] in a way that did not compromise its [folk song's] natural traits. Tagore was influenced by Indian classical music but one can also hear in his music the qualities of Bangla folk poetry. . . . Taking as our model [Tagore's] Bengali music, we can also produce a form of Sri Lankan popular song. To do so, we must also use folk poetry as our base."[16] Samarakoon emphasized the importance of using Sinhala folk sources, yet in practice he seldom attempted to rework texts of Sinhala folk poems into modern songs. A folk quality in Samarakoon's songs, however, can be read in his use of colloquial Sinhala lexicon, which is a characteristic feature of *jana kavi* (folk poetry).[17]

"A change in poetic sensibility," Karine Schomer writes, "usually entails a change in diction as well."[18] For Samarakoon, a shift in sensibility in Sinhala song from Buddhist edification to romantic love necessitated a change in lexicon from the literary to the colloquial. Generally speaking, the Sinhala language has two main varieties: the literary and the colloquial. The literary is customarily used for written materials, public speeches, and television and radio news reports. The colloquial is the everyday language of the Sinhalese people. Before "Eṇḍada Manikē" was released, songwriters did not use the colloquial Sinhala adjective for "beautiful"—*lassanayi*—in gramophone songs. Songwriters favored more literary adjectives for beautiful like *ramya, suram, manōhara, siriya,* and *sōbana.* Perhaps the word *lassanayi,* with its colloquial tone, had never been appropriate because many of the older gramophone songs had Buddhist and thus sacred undertones. Samarakoon must have sensed that colloquial speech in secular love songs would make for a hit because in the first minute and ten seconds of "Eṇḍada Mänikē" he employed the word *lassanayi* twelve times.

Lassanayi was far from the only colloquial term in the song. Samarakoon utilized a variety of colloquial forms including the simple past, past-tense verbal adjective, and colloquial interjection. For instance, the boy sang, "*oho* lassanayi *oho* lassanayi *oho* lassanayi." The word *oho* is a spoken interjection that means "wow!" The girl told the boy, "Don't fatigue yourself, *anē* don't, *anē,* just stay on the river bank." *Anē* is another spoken interjection that here means "please!" Further, Samarakoon employed the colloquial past-tense verbal adjective in the phrase *pipichcha kekaṭiya mal (kekaṭiya* flowers *that have blossomed)* instead of the literary term, *pipunu.* And when the girl's dress becomes wet, Samarakoon described it with the colloquial simple-past term *temichcha* ("became wet") instead of the literary *temunā.*

Let us consider one final example emblematic of the shift in gramophone songs from didacticism to romance. After Samarakoon converted to Buddhism, he wrote

what he considered his first Buddhist song, "Vilē Malak Pipilā" (A flower in the lake has blossomed) because it featured a dialogue about rebirth.[19] Samarakoon stated that he felt inclined to write the song because he was studying Buddhist literature and reading debates about the subject of rebirth.[20]

Samarakoon may have described the composition as a Buddhist song, but one could also label the composition as a love song. The song opens with the same scenario found in "Enḍada Mänikē" (and in Sunil Santha's song "Ōlu Pipīlā"): a young boy hopes to pick a flower in the pond with the girl he loves. In Samarakoon's "Vilē Malak Pipilā" the boy tells the girl that the time is suitable to pick flowers because today is Poya, the Buddhist holiday that occurs on a full-moon day. They can pick a lotus flower and bring it to the Buddhist temple for worship:

> *Boy:*   A beautiful flower has blossomed in the lake. Let's go my Gem to pick it.
>   The man on the moon is peeping. Today is Poya my fair one, isn't it?[21]

Next, the girl expresses ideas about celibacy, ideas that revivalists like Ananda Rajakaruna (chapter 1) had advocated in poems like "Kumaribambasara":

> *Girl:*   Pick the flower and give it to me. I will offer it in worship to Lord Buddha.
>   My only wish is to be that pure flower.
> *Boy:*   Explain to me more about your wish.
> *Girl:*   My only wish is to be a flower in my next birth.
> *Boy:*   O my! Why do you think like this? What's the point of being a flower?
>   Would it be so bad to be a princess shining in splendor?
> *Girl:*   A pure and beautiful *[ramya]* flower is a valuable object in this world.
>   How can an impure human soul be greater than this?[22]

Rather than use the secular word for beautiful *(lassanayi),* Samarakoon chose the literary term *(ramya)* in the second-to-last line because the beauty the girl spoke of was related to chastity and Buddhist values. Samarakoon, however, departed from purely edificatory concerns when he alluded to the boy's erotic wish with this passage in the song: "In my next birth may I become the honey-bee that drinks the flower's pollen." The fact that the boy, in the face of a moral message, unabashedly communicated his sexual desires exemplifies the shift from didacticism to romance that took place in Sinhala gramophone song in the early 1940s.

TAGORE, ROMANCE, AND POETRY

The Sinhalese poets who rose to prominence during World War II are known as the "second-generation Colombo poets." Like Samarakoon, they grew weary of their predecessors' focus on Buddhism and edification. As Miniwan P. Tillakaratne argues, "Love finds a special place in the works of the Colombo poets of the forties. This tendency . . . came about as a result of some of the poets' keenness to free

themselves from the classicism of the first group of Colombo poets who held on to traditional Buddhist values to a great extent."[23]

The second-generation Colombo poets could be considered parallel with the Hindi *chāyāvād* poets who rejected the didacticism of the previous generation in favor of the romanticism of the English romantics and Rabindranath Tagore.[24] Consequently, the second-generation poets' depictions of love were often less related to the eroticism found in classical Sinhala or Sanskrit poetry and more along the lines of the romantic and sentimental type of love explored by the English romantics, Victorians, and Tagore. As Ranjini Obeyesekere explains, "Love poetry or poems evoking *śṛngāra rasa* (erotic mood) were a well-known feature of classical Sinhalese poetry. However, romantic sentimental love between young people, prior to, or unrelated to marriage, hardly ever occurs in the ancient poetry. It is evident that romantic or sentimental love as distinct from the love between man and wife, or mistress or courtesan, occurs for the first time in early modern [second-generation] Sinhalese poetry and can be directly related to the influence of the 19th century romantic poets; perhaps too to the 19th century novel."[25] Sudipta Kaviraj similarly describes Tagore's conception of love as a transition away from *śṛngāra rasa* (erotic mood) to the modern *prem,* the Bangla-language term for a more emotional and romantic love: "In the historical transformation of the discourses of love, Rabindranath Tagore was a principal performer and his work constituted a principal site of the transition from one aesthetic structure to another. In convenient shorthand, this change can be simply designated as a change from *śṛngāra,* conventionally translated as erotic love, to *prem* [emotional and romantic love]."[26]

Following Tagore's visits to the country in 1922, 1930, and 1934, Sinhala poets relished Tagore's English-language poetry books in wide circulation in Sri Lanka, such as *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings,* 1912), *Fruit Gathering* (1916), and *Stray Birds* (1916) and Tagore's collection of stories, *The Hungry Stones and Other Stories* (1916). For instance, poet H. M. Kudaligama (1918–73) translated three entries from *Stray Birds* into Sinhala quatrains for the poem "Mataka Saṭahan" (Memories), which appeared in Kudaligama's poetry collection *Ā* (She, 1948).[27] Wimalaratna Kumaragama (1919–62) composed the poem *Hapumalī* (1946), inspired by "The Home-Coming" in *The Hungry Stones and Other Stories.*[28] Novelist Martin Wickramasinghe (1890–1976) wrote an article for the *Dinamina* newspaper about Tagore's visit to Sri Lanka in 1934. To prepare, Wickramasinghe read E. J. Thompson's *Rabindranath Tagore: His Life and Works* (1921) as well as Tagore's *Fruit Gathering.*[29]

Tagore's impact on Sinhala poetry began with P. B. Alwis Perera's (1917–66) first book of poetry, *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* (The sugarcane arrow, 1942). *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* could be said to have inaugurated second-generation Colombo poetry because of its unprecedented exploration of romance and sentimental love. Perera prefaced the poem with this introductory paragraph: "Love is a covetous feeling from heaven that rises in the human heart! The European poets entered into the garden of literature

through nature's narrow path of love made of white sand. I too make such an ef-
fort with *The Sugarcane Arrow.* The great Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who
glimpsed life in both a rainbow and a tiny flower bud, stated that the poet sees the
whole world through such a narrow path. I have directly drawn upon Tagore's poetry
to enliven the truth of this statement."[30] It is difficult to determine precisely which
of Tagore's poems Perera reworked to compose *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna.* But one senses
Tagore's influence in the wording of this introduction. Perera stated that Tagore
"glimpsed life in both a rainbow and a tiny flower bud." Here, Perera might have
been alluding to an idea found in Tagore's *Stray Birds,* number 117: "The grass blade is
worthy of the great world where it grows."[31] The image of a "narrow path of love" that
leads into a garden could be viewed as reminiscent of Tagore's second entry in *Lover's
Gift* (1918), which described the gift of love as an unfathomable garden.[32]

When Perera published *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* in 1942, Tagore's English works had
not been translated into Sinhala.[33] We know for certain that Perera had read in
English Tagore's *The Crescent Moon* (1913), *Fruit Gathering* (1916), and *Lover's Gift
and Crossing* (1918). From *The Crescent Moon,* Perera translated "The Beginning"
and "The Champa Flower" into Sinhala poems, titled "Mavage Hangim" (Mother's
feelings), and "Sapumala" (The *sapumala* flower).[34] From *Fruit Gathering* Perera
translated the work's thirty-seventh poem about the Buddhist monk Upagupta
for his Sinhala poem "Abhicārikāva" (Prostitute).[35] In 1961 Perera authored a long
poem, *Keyas,* in memory of poet Sagara "Keyas" Palansuriya. In stanza 32, Perera
parodied the fourth entry of Tagore's *Lover's Gift,* which stated, "She is near to my
heart as the meadow flower to the earth:"

> He [Sagara "Keyas" Palansuriya] is near to the heart of the Sinhalese
> Like the meadow flower is to the earth (v. 32)[36]

Although Perera mentioned Tagore's name in the introduction to *Uk Daṇḍu
Dunna,* the work cannot be wholly reduced to Tagore's influence. *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna*
commenced with stanzas that evoked the classical Sinhala and Sanskrit model of
śṛngāra rasa. Such a nod to classical poetry prompted one literary scholar to char-
acterize the poem as a *śṛngārātmaka kāvya* (Sanskrit-style erotic poem) about the
eternal relationship between the poet and his lover.[37] In classical Sanskrit poetry
śṛngāra rasa was the *ādisasa* (first literary mood) employed to depict the erotic
relationship between Krishna and Radha.[38]

Perera began his poem with a scene that depicted the commencement of the
spring season, which he endowed with a royal feminine presence. The fanfare of
trumpet-like thunder and elephant-like rain clouds announced the arrival of spring:

> The lightning and thunderbolt-trumpets summon
> Elephant-clouds that drizzle gentle drops of rain
> The gods become pleased listening
> To the Spring Goddess sing songs (v. 1)[39]

In this stanza and the following, Perera's template for composing poetry about love was strikingly parallel with the classical *śṛngāra* idiom found in traditional Sanskrit aesthetics, where the splendor of nature was often reminiscent of feminine beauty.[40] Consider the second stanza:

> Her ponds and lakes overflow with water
> In her hair she has *dunukē, kolom,* and mango-leaf flowers
> In her grasses grow new plants like precious blue-green stones
> Her earth is like a queen that shines in splendor (v. 2)[41]

To intensify the beauty of nature's water, flowers, and plants, Perera described them as feminine body parts of the Spring Goddess. He continued to explore classical Sanskrit aesthetics in the following stanzas that introduced the Sanskrit literary characters of Kāmadeva (the god of love) and his consort Rati (the goddess of erotic delight). When the sun sets, Kāmadeva and Rati began to crave sexual pleasure:

> As the moon shrouds all with cool milky white light
> Kāmadeva embraces his wife Rati as if she is a pot of honey
> [They are] eager to make love in the range of hills perched
> Above the blue gem-like plantain forest (v. 7)[42]

Perera described Kāmadeva according to the standard iconography in Sanskrit-language stories: Kāmadeva wielded a sugarcane bow with a bowstring made of honeybees. His arrows were decorated with five different types of flowers: jasmine, *asōka,* white and blue lotus, and mango-tree:

> He fashions arrows from sugar cane,
> Fastens strings made of honeybees onto the bow,
> Tightens into a bundle arrows decorated with
> Jasmine, *asōka,* white and blue lotus, and mango-tree flowers (v. 8)[43]

As one accustomed to Sanskrit literature about Kāmadeva and Rati might expect, the scenes with Kāmadeva and Rati bristled with eroticism. When Rati galloped forward on her horse, for instance, the reader sensed that it was a symbol for the rush of lust.

> Rati mounts the back of the wind-horse.
> The ornaments on her thin waist tinkle
> When she makes the horse gallop
> Forward with her two spurs (v. 11)[44]

Given such classical imagery, where does one discern Tagore's influence? As discussed earlier, Kaviraj describes Tagore's conception of love as a shift away from *śṛngāra rasa* to the modern *prem,* the Bangla-language term for a more emotional and romantic love. (In Sinhala the Sanskrit and Bengali term *prem* becomes

prēma, prēmaya, or *pema.*) Although the beginning of the poem articulated *śṛngāra rasa*, later passages in *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* featured a *prem*-type of romantic love that Perera likely found in the writings of Tagore. Critics of the poem may have sensed this because they emphasized the way in which *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* was about feelings (*häňgim*). When describing the poem, Martin Wickramasinghe wrote, "P. B. Alwis Perera's *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* is a panegyric *(varṇanātmaka kāvyayaki)* inspired by Rabindranath Tagore. To awaken feelings [in the reader] Perera praises women and love." Likewise, literary scholar Wasantha Atukorale described *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* as "a mixture of feelings that flow from one's heart when happy from love and beauty."[45]

Such emotions begin to flow once Perera departed from the Sanskrit aesthetic model of *śṛngāra rasa* to introduce a first-person narrator. In stanza 15 the speaker becomes the target of Kāmadeva's flower-arrow:

> While Rati's sweet words flow like a river
> Kāmadeva stings me with an *asōka* flower-arrow
> And arrows decorated with jasmine and blue lotus flowers.
> I'm hurt from these arrow-flowers, poisonous like the stingers of
>   wasps (v. 15)[46]

Stung by cupid's arrows, the narrator is overwhelmed with emotion. He proclaims that his lover's eternal beauty resides in nature's clouds, flowers, and rivers:

> The eternal beauty possessed by my girlfriend's body
> Resides within the cloud-paintings that float in heaven,
> The trees and creepers, twigs and sprouts, and flowers in the month
>   of *navam*
> [And within] the river and ponds that praise my prosperous poetry
>   (v. 19)[47]

He praises her smile, which he compares to the golden rays of the sun that dispel the dark:

> My girlfriend's smile is like the
> Sun that destroys the darkness,
> Pours out the golden morning rays,
> And spreads the morning beams in the paddy fields (v. 25)[48]

He later asks his lover these sentimental questions:

> Sweetheart, where did you get this divine taste on your red lips?
> Is it from the bee honey that was collected by bee stingers?
> Is it from the aroma of the blossomed wild flowers?
> Is it from cold dewdrops that fall on the flowers and become the
>   nectar of heaven? (v. 189)[49]

To say *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna* was a mixture of only classical *śṛngāra rasa* and modern *prema* would, however, miss two additional characteristics—clichés and bawdiness—which marked a decisive break with Tagore's poetry. Regarding the clichés, one literary scholar argued that the poem suffered from *bolaňda prēmaya* (puerile or childish love) because of its monotonous clichés. Such hackneyed language was most pronounced in Perera's excessive use of terms of endearment, terms that literary scholar Ariya Rajakaruna described as *susum pada,* or "sighing words." Rajakaruna went as far as to list sixty-nine of these terms of endearment, such as: "Love gem; lover; pretty girl; gem; princess; sweetheart; my lovely; sweety; queen; my fountain; my moon dust; my rose; and my life."[50] Consider, for example, the nearly comical terms of endearment that commenced stanza 255:

> O fair skinned sweety! My milk droplet! My aromatic lump! (v. 255)[51]

Further, although Tagore subordinated sexual attraction to emotional companionship, Perera did not shy away from describing the feminine body. Perera compared his beloved's pinky finger to a pencil:

> Your small pinky is like a pencil (v. 93)[52]

He equated her breasts to rice-paper Japanese balloons:

> When [I see] people who turn around after seeing my lover's breasts
> I can somehow create a new metaphor:
> Are her breasts not like a couple of Japanese balloons
> Full of air and about to burst? (v. 95)[53]

And he described his lover's broad thighs as jackfruit:

> Nicely matured broad thighs like a jackfruit (v. 99)[54]

Perera's attitude communicated to the new generation of Sinhalese poets that Sinhala poetry could also be a lighthearted medium to express sexual desire and romance, topics that had been taboo for the first generation of Colombo poets and the Heḷa Havula poets. Before Perera published *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna,* moral and nationalist stakes were high in Sinhala poetry. As demonstrated in chapters 1 and 2, the Arya-Sinhala and Heḷa Havula poets used poetry as an ideological platform to campaign for the issues at the heart of their respective movements. In Perera's *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna,* poetry was now a marketable medium for a popular pastime.

FIN DE SIÈCLE FRENCH ROMANCE AND MIMANA PREMATHILAKA

During World War II late nineteenth-century French romantic novels translated into English were available to the Sinhalese reading public. Consider this excerpt from an autobiography of the Sinhalese novelist Martin Wickramasinghe:

When the British army landed in Sri Lanka during the Second World War the Sri Lankan government informed the managers of several secondary schools that they would have to handover the schools temporarily to the British armed forces. These school buildings became the bases of the British army. . . . One day, my friend Victor Karunaratna came to meet me and brought two sergeants who were temporarily staying at S. Thomas' College.

"They have no books to read," Victor said, "I told them that I'll request a book or two from Wickramasinghe. What we want are two erotic books to read for pleasure."

"I don't have books like that but I can give you a real erotic story. It is not an easy read though."

Karunaratna was familiar with Guy de Maupassant's erotic literature. I gave him [an English translation of] Anatole France's *The Red Lily* [1894]. It tells a story about a women and her paramour. When it was published, one critic wrote, "It is unfortunate that such an elderly and erudite scholar such as Anatole France would write such a lusty book."[55]

Wickramasinghe's friend and his two companions from the British army wanted to read something entertaining to take their minds off of the war. In Wickramasinghe's mind, the obvious solution was the nineteenth-century French novel *The Red Lily (Le Lys rouge).* It told a story about a passionate liaison between married countess Thérèse Martin-Bellème and sculptor Jacques Dechartre. The liaison turned sour when Martin-Bellème's former lover Robert Le Ménil became abusive and started to stalk the countess.

Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s poet Mimana Premathilaka (1918–65) published six works of Sinhala poetry that focused on the passions of romance. Some of these poems were graphic for their time, such as the long poems *Ādaraya* (Love, 1945), *Anangayā* (The Cupid, n.d.), *Rati Sāgaraya* (Ocean of lust, n.d.), as well as a small collection of poems titled *Āt Vū Prēmaya* (The love that drifted away, n.d.). Premathilaka would later publish *Pem Mānik* (Love gems, 1952), as well as Sinhala translations of E. Powys Mathers's *Coloured Stars: Fifty Asiatic Love Lyrics* (1918) and Guy de Maupassant's "An Honest Deal," which Premathilaka titled *Ananga Damanya* (Controlling the Cupid, 1949).[56] "An Honest Deal" is about a student who becomes obsessed with a prostitute-turned-actress. He follows her carriage home from the theater and lies outside of her house on the stone steps. She makes an "honest deal" with him: he can sleep with her one night. Then, he can no longer stalk her.

If Premathilaka translated Maupassant's short story, and if other French romance novels like Anatole's France's *The Red Lily* were available to Sinhalese intellectuals, one can speculate that the ecstasies and perils of passion in such literature made an impact on Premathilaka's romantic poems. Consider, for example, Premathilaka's pronouncement that prefaced the poem *Ādaraya:* "This is not a poem written to teach young girls and boys about the objective of love or the erotic mood *[śṛngāra rasaya].* I have written this to show how the love of a

girl is filled with more lust than the love of a boy."[57] In his preface to the poem, Premathilaka explained how the female character of the poem craved only *sexual* pleasure and had no use for *emotional* love: "The girl's goal is only to reach the summit of pleasure. One day she befriends another boy in a garden and forgets her lover. . . . She does not remember her previous lover at all except when she becomes pregnant from her paramour."[58] Meanwhile, her first boyfriend wanted something more than lust: "It was not because of a craving for lust that her first boyfriend loved her."[59]

What shall we make of Premathilaka's statements and portrayals? In Anatole's France's *The Red Lily* the character Jacques Decharte, who was a surrogate for the ideas of France himself, propounds a similar idea that a woman is by nature more inclined to sleep with men, while men are more inclined to want to remain with one woman:

[Decharte:]	"A woman cannot be jealous in the same manner as a man, nor feel what makes us suffer."
[Thérèse Martin-Bellème:]	"I do not know that. Why can not she?"
[Decharte:]	"Why? Because there is not in the blood, in the flesh of a woman that absurd and generous fury for ownership, that primitive instinct of which man has made a right. Man is the god who wants his mate to himself. Since time immemorial woman is accustomed to sharing men's love."[60]

If Premathilaka found inspiration in such ideas, he seemed to further want to vilify "promiscuous" women, an objective that diverged from authors like France and Maupassant. Consider Premathilaka's preface to *Rati Sāgaraya:* "Many people who find fault with love poetry often see the faults of the poet rather than those of his characters. Yet a poet writes about events that regularly happen in the world. Therefore, the fault ought not to be ascribed to him but to society. One who reads this poem will find it worthwhile if they direct their minds not toward the author but the undisciplined feminine character named 'Millie,' who behaves like the daughter of Cupid, giving her body to two young men."[61]

Both *Ādaraya* and *Rati Sāgaraya* ended tragically to teach the reader that "lustful" women would ultimately suffer miserable deaths. When the unnamed girl in *Ādaraya* becomes pregnant with the child of her new lover, he abandons her. She desperately tries to bring back her first boyfriend. But it is of no use. As the girl's baby grows in her womb she becomes depressed and commits suicide.[62] In *Rati Sāgaraya* Premathilaka may have aimed to explore the destructive effects of jealousy as found in *The Red Lily:* Millie has a boyfriend named Victor, who supports her and her mother. Yet she sleeps with two other boys, one whose name is Simon. One day Victor comes over to the house when Millie is on the bed with

Simon. Simon hides under the bed with a knife. When Victor lies with Millie, Simon jumps out and murders both of them (vv. 77–78). Millie's mother comes home and dies from a heart attack (v. 79).

Another aspect of Premathilaka's works that diverged from fin de siècle French romance is the way he wrote clichéd stanzas in these poems to titillate heterosexual male readers. He may have done so with the intent to sell books. Consider the following risqué verse from *Ādaraya,* where he portrayed a young woman pleading with her boyfriend to satisfy her sexual desires:

> O my master! You know of the immortal lake.
> It lies near my hill-like thighs and is the source of my river of love.
> So why will you not take pleasure in it?
> Dive deep and be destroyed by my love! (v. 54)[63]

In verse 54 Premathilaka describes her vagina as an "immortal lake" *(amara vila)* and a river of love *(pem gaṅga)* that ran by her hill-like thighs *(kaṅdu väni vaṭora).* Like Thérèse Martin-Bellème in *The Red Lily,* the unnamed girl in *Ādaraya* cared only about sexual pleasure and did not hesitate to cheat on her lover with another man, an encounter that Premathilaka described in verse like this:

> They look at each other with half smiles
> Sitting together, she tries to get him to like her
> Now the beak of the swan nudges the lotus buds
> They are immersed in the pain of pleasure (v. 67)
>
> . . . .
>
> They sigh as they finish making love
> After their faces collide they become red
> She hurts the young boy with her white teeth
> And gives to him her lovely two breasts (v. 69)[64]

The poem *Rati Sāgaraya* was also graphic for its time. It began with eight-stanzas devoted to a description of Millie's body. Consider the fourth stanza:

> This immature girl says sweet words
> That delight all the boys who come and go
> She wears a short skirt
> When the wind blows, her tasty area can be seen (v. 4)[65]

The reader subsequently learns that Millie's father was killed in a truck accident (v. 9). Millie and her mother become destitute (v. 10). A man who makes a good living from the black market named Victor falls in love with Millie (v. 11). He makes Millie and her mother's "poverty disappear like the sun evaporates the dew" (v. 12). But one day a boy in the neighborhood comes over and threatens Millie: if she does

not touch him, he will kill whoever walks into the house. Millie is attracted to his violent power:

> Seeing this young man's power
> She felt love for him, not fear.
> In that moment they felt a great [surge of] lust.
> She said this with a gentle smile:

> "Why must you be so rough?
> You don't have to force me.
> If you never cuddle me, the taste of love is not enough.
> Please drink the taste of love while sucking my lips" (vv. 16–17)[66]

Millie's language becomes wilder:

> "Let's be on the bed together
> Consoling each other, body on body
> If that isn't enough, we can go further to heaven
> Not only today, but everyday" (v. 18)

> . . . .

> "Why are you looking at the colors of my nipples?
> Can the color be scratched away? It is like that every day.
> If you squeeze my two breasts more
> It is OK, I won't feel pain" (v. 22)[67]

In Ariya Rajakaruna's well-known book of poetry criticism, *Nūtana Sinhala Kāvyaya* (Modern Sinhala poetry, 1962) Rajakaruna criticized Premathilaka for writing vulgar *(aślīya)* poetry in *Ādaraya* and *Rati Sāgaraya*. In Rajakaruna's judgment, Premathilaka had written *Ādaraya* and *Rati Sāgaraya* to sexually arouse the reader. Rajakaruna argued that Premathilaka had transformed the cultured erotic mood of the *śṛngāra rasa* into something distasteful to appeal to the baser instincts of the common reader.[68]

LOCALIZING VICTORIAN ROMANCE IN *SUDŌ SUDU*

Another form of literature available to Sinhala poets during and before World War II was the poetry of the English romantics and their eighteenth-century predecessors. As mentioned earlier, the romantics' sentimental depictions of love differed from the kind of erotic love portrayed in classical Sinhala or Sanskrit poetry. The Sinhalese poets of the 1940s became well acquainted with the romantics and Victorians because they studied in secondary school the works by Thomas Gray, Oliver Goldsmith, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, and Alfred Tennyson.[69]

Take, for example, the English translations of Premathilaka. He translated Elizabethan, Victorian, and romantic English verse into Sinhala poetry. In 1942 he translated Thomas Gray's *An Elegy in a Country Church Yard* (1751) into the poem *Sohon Bima* (Cemetery) and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (c. 1592) into *Yamunā.* He published in 1946 the poem *Devāni Ādaraya* (The second love), a composition based heavily on the narrative of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet.* Two years later Premathilaka adapted Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* (1770) into the poem *Pālugama* (*Deserted Village,* 1948) and in 1949 published *Kirihami,* inspired by William Wordsworth's *Michael* (1800).

Victorian poetry became a popular springboard for a new conception of romance in Sinhala poetry in 1943 after Sagara "Keyas" Palansuriya (1910–61) published the poem *Sudō Sudu* (Sweet, fair one, 1943). It was a work of 136 quatrains. Palansuriya adapted the story for *Sudō Sudu* from Alfred Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* (1864), an English narrative poem in blank verse. *Sudō Sudu* was one of the most popular second-generation poems of the 1940s. Quite unlike the erotic overtones in *Uk Daṇḍu Dunna,* the message of *Sudō Sudu* was "true love is selfless."

One of Palansuriya's main tasks in *Sudō Sudu* was to localize the British characters, places, and events in *Enoch Arden.* The three main characters in *Enoch Arden* were Annie Lee, who was the "prettiest little damsel in the port"; Philip Ray, the only child of a wealthy miller; and Enoch Arden, "a rough sailor's lad."[70] Palansuriya transformed Annie Lee into a widower's daughter named Hīn Mänikē (lit. "Skinny Gem") (v. 3). Palansuriya also changed the miller's son into Ṭikiri Baṇḍa, the son of a wealthy *rāḷahāmi,* or village headman (v. 2). He remade the sailor's son into Adiri, the strong son of a farmer (v. 2).[71] The poem focused on an innocent and mildly rivalrous love triangle that later becomes a more split-object love triangle because Hīn Mänikē is torn between her love for Adiri (who leaves to fight in World War II) and Ṭikiri Baṇḍa, who takes care of her when Adiri is assumed dead.

"New stories," Ronit Ricci maintains, "are often presented in localized form so that they seem less foreign."[72] Palansuriya strove to make *Enoch Arden* accessible to the majority of the Sinhalese who lived in rural towns and villages in the 1940s. He did this by transforming Tennyson's narrative at the moments it seemed too distant from the context of Sri Lanka. Consider the beginning of both poems:

Enoch Arden

> Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
> In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
> A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
> And high in heaven behind it a gray down
> With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,
> By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
> Green in a cuplike hollow of the down. (v. 1)

Sudō Sudu

> Katuroda village is in a rural setting
> Fertile and prosperous with land and mud.
> A scenic river runs through the village
> The market is found on the border of the village (v. 1)[73]

Ricci further suggests that one of the common strategies to localize a narrative is to relocate scenes within a local landscape.[74] Tennyson described a port in England, but Palansuriya detailed a Sinhalese village with a river running through and a *kaḍa maṇḍiya,* or marketplace, that traditionally sat on the border.

Palansuriya also made the poem accessible to people in rural towns and villages by using colloquial terms from the Sinhala language. Land *(goḍa)* and mud *(maḍa)* are commonly spoken metonyms for *chena* and paddy fields, respectively. This pair of words *(goḍa-maḍa)* has a special status in spoken Sinhala as a *yugala padayak* (set of paired words). *Yugala pada* are pairs of words with like-phonemes that refer to two objects found in one place (*haṭṭi-muṭṭi,* pans and pots) or related activities (*ihum-pihum,* cooking and cleaning).[75]

Sudō Sudu closely followed the chronological order of events in *Enoch Arden.* As did Tennyson, Palansuriya introduced the three main characters (vv. 2–3), narrated how they played together as children (v. 4), and related one incident: when the children play house, the boys fight over the girl's hand in marriage. She tells them not to fight and naively explains she will be wife to both. In *Sudō Sudu* Hīn Mänikē says innocently in colloquial Sinhala: "Don't fight. I'll be wife to both. You two are mine, isn't it? Let's play. What's all this commotion?" (v. 8).[76]

To make the romance suitable for the Sinhalese readers Palansuriya inserted a new scene into his poem: Adiri asks Hīn Mänikē's mother, Angohāmi, permission to marry her daughter. "The first and major localization [of new stories]," Ricci argues, "is achieved by the use of the familiar language and idiom, which immediately makes texts sound similar to that which is already known."[77] In this scene, Palansuriya employed colloquial dialogue to make the encounter in the village believable. When Adiri arrives to the house, Angohāmi greets him with the traditional greeting of "āyubōvan" (May you live long) (v. 22), and she says, "arumäkkē," village slang for "It's sure been a while."

> hari kalakin novä mē ḷamayā   däkkē
> mokada lamayo ada mē **aru   mäkkē** (v. 23)

> [It's sure been a while since I've seen this child, no?
> Why child, tonight, after such a long time?][78]

In *Enoch Arden* tragedy strikes after Enoch breaks his limb and becomes bedridden. His wife gives birth to a third child, who is deathly ill. In *Sudō Sudu* Adiri contacts malaria (v. 37) and Hīn Mänikē gives birth to a blind child (v. 40). In both

poems the families become destitute. In *Enoch Arden* Enoch receives an offer to work on a boat headed for China and leaves to support Annie and the children. The sick child dies, and Annie must bury the child without Enoch. In *Sudō Sudu* Adiri boards a ship to fight in World War II, and Hīn Mänikē devotes her life to her blind son. Hīn Mänikē receives a letter posted from Singapore saying that Adiri was shot and had his hand cut off (v. 52).[79] The reference to Singapore likely alludes to the fall of Singapore to the Japanese army in 1942, often considered the British forces' worst defeat in World War II. Soon after, Hīn Mänikē receives no more letters from Adiri. Despite his absence, Hīn Mänikě's love for her husband never wanes:

> No more letters arrive after some time.
> She does not know what happened to him.
> [Yet] like a full moon that rises each Poya day
> Her love for him is certain (v. 54)[80]

The final two sections in *Sudō Sudu* correspond to events in *Enoch Arden.* In *Enoch Arden* Philip Ray comes to the rescue to support Annie Lee. His love for her has not changed, so he cannot bear to see her suffer. He asks her to marry him, but she believes her husband will return. She asks him to wait for a year, then a month, and finally relents when she becomes convinced that her husband is dead. They marry and have children. The same scenario occurs between Ṭikiri Baṇḍa and Hīn Mänikē (vv. 56–117), except Palansuriya interjects a tear-jerking scene when Hīn Mänikě's blind son asks her to explain to him the concept of color (vv. 103–9).[81]

The romantic melodrama reaches its climax when Enoch Arden/Adiri returns to the village unrecognized. He has survived a shipwreck and lived ten years alone on an island. In both poems he goes home and through the window sees his wife, content with her new family. In this moment, he expresses selfless love for her because he cannot bring himself to disrupt her now happy life. On his deathbed, he asks the housekeeper to explain his plight to his wife so that she knows how much he loved her. *Enoch Arden* ends with a funeral of the "brave heroic man" attended by the whole village. In *Sudō Sudu* Hīn Mänikē, Ṭikiri Baṇḍa, and their blind son are seen by the villagers every day lighting a lamp at Adiri's tombstone, which is in the corner of the garden of Ṭikiri Baṇḍa's *valavva,* or ancestral home (v. 136).[82] Although literary critic Ariya Rajakaruna credited Palansuriya's *Sudō Sudu* for its innovative use of colloquial language, Rajakaruna also criticized Palansuriya's conclusion because it was more British Protestant than Sinhalese Buddhist: Sinhalese Buddhist villagers do not offer flowers at cemeteries for their deceased relatives.[83]

I have shown in the three chapters of part 1 how songwriters and poets in the colonial era aimed to produce works that would contribute to Arya-Sinhala nationalism, Hela-Sinhala nationalism, or wartime romanticism, respectively. In part 2 I turn to the postcolonial period and inquire into the ways Sinhala song

and poetry of the 1950s and 1960s differed thematically, aesthetically, and politi-cally from the colonial-era trends. Momentous political, societal, and institutional changes marked the 1950s and 1960s. How did these configurations factor into the production of new songs and poetry? When songwriters and poets strove to create works that were artistically relevant, were their efforts characterized by support of, dissent against, or disinterest regarding the watershed moments that characterized the period?

The Postcolonial Era

4

Divergent Standards of Excellence

The historiography of the postcolonial period in Sri Lanka overwhelmingly discusses how the Sri Lankan government began to systematically espouse a vision of a majority nation of Sinhala-speaking Buddhists after S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike became the fourth prime minister in 1956.[1] The vision of a Sinhalese Buddhist nation reflected the very constituency who had mobilized to vote Bandaranaike into power. The 1956 election was the first election in Sri Lanka determined by the strength of a nearly unanimous vote by the Sinhalese Buddhist masses.[2] Between 1956 and 1965 the Buddhist rural voter became, to a much greater extent, the arbiter of Sri Lankan politics.[3]

As if to reward his supporters, Bandaranaike established the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1956. The ministry offered state funds to assist in the revival of Sinhalese art, literature, and Buddhism. Two months after his victory Bandaranaike assuaged the vociferous campaigns for "Sinhala Only" and enacted the Official Language Act, which switched the state language from English to Sinhala. The act stipulated how to change the language of the bureaucracy to Sinhala within four years and six months.[4]

One fact often omitted from the historiography of this period is that the Official Language Act was passed only one year after Sri Lanka became a member of the United Nations. The internal political and sociolinguistic transformation of Sri Lanka in the late 1950s was not isolated from external forces, such as what Immanuel Wallerstein describes as the "gravitational force" to join the world-system of nation-states.[5] For most countries, joining the United Nations was impetus to maintain certain naturalized features of nation-states. Within the world-system, for example, every nation would necessarily comprise a majority that possessed a

national culture, history, economy, territory, and language. In Sri Lanka's case Bandaranaike likely believed that elevating the language of the majority, Sinhala, to the status of official language was as progressive a step as nationalizing the economy.

Within the country Bandaranaike's staunch support for Sinhalese Buddhist culture appealed to a wide cross-section of the Sinhala-educated population, which included Buddhist monks, Ayurvedic physicians, village headmen, teachers who worked in Sinhala-language schools, landed peasants, and youth educated in the Sinhala language, as well as Sinhalese journalists, minor officials, notaries, petition writers, and small businessmen.[6] The poets and songwriters discussed in part 2 hailed from these segments of the population, predominantly a Buddhist middle-class group. In English this demographic group is often referred to as the rural elite, revivalist elite, or rural intelligentsia.

Although it is well known within Sri Lankan studies how Bandaranaike's Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism favored the Sinhalese, discriminated against Sri Lanka's minorities, and ignited ethnic conflict among the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils, Anglophone scholars have only begun to investigate Sinhala radio song and poetry composed in the immediate aftermath of Bandaranaike's victory and enactment of the Official Language Act. Regarding song, Anne Sheeran explores the "gradual dominance of Sinhala interest at Radio Ceylon" and argues that a great deal of the discourses that the radio station produced about Sinhala music in the 1950s focused on the idea that the Sinhalese lacked their own unique style of music. Jim Sykes suggests that when the Sinhalese elites at the radio station fashioned Sinhala music, they excluded not only minority communities but also the music of the *berava,* the low caste of Sinhalese Buddhist ritual musicians who performed a sophisticated form of music and dance. According to Sykes, elites at the radio station tacitly discriminated against the *berava* and propagated the idea that their music was a form of Sinhalese "culture," but not a suitable source for new Sinhalese "music."[7] Sykes's and Sheeran's studies are important because they emphasize the discourses and practices of exclusion that accompanied the creation of Sinhala radio music. Yet they are insufficient because they do not provide translations of songs produced at this time. Lacking analyses of the texts of Sinhala songs at a pivotal moment in the history of Sri Lanka is problematic for Sri Lankan studies and scholars interested in the comparative study of cultural production in twentieth-century South Asia.

In this chapter I explore how the late 1950s witnessed the emergence of two genres of Sinhala song and poetry that had no precedent in Sri Lanka: the radio opera and free verse. The inventors' new terms for these genres—*gīta nāṭakaya* (radio opera) and *nisaňdäs kāvya* (free verse)—symbolized the originality of their creations. Gīta nāṭakaya, a musical genre created specifically for radio broadcast, marked a distinct break with nurthi and gramophone song, while nisaňdäs kāvya announced a rupture with first- and second-generation Colombo poetry.

Gīta nāṭakaya and nisaňdäs kāvya were more elite than they were popular. The men who composed the first radio operas and poems in free verse were not motivated to sell their works for commercial gain. They produced these forms of song and poetry for the idealistic sake of "raising the standards" of Sinhala song and poetry. The inventors of these genres were highly educated and award-winning intellectuals, and the Sinhalese audience they wrote for was the educated constituency. As will become clear in this chapter, the two genres were difficult to appreciate without training in (Sinhala and English) literature or (North Indian classical) music.

In what follows I juxtapose the lives and works of the pioneers of the radio opera, Chandrarathna Manawasinghe (1913–64) and Wimal Abeysundara (1921–2008), with the life and work of the creator of Sinhala free verse, Siri Gunasinghe (b. 1925). The chapter commences with an analysis of the aesthetics in Manawasinghe's, Abeysundara's, and Gunasinghe's earliest works. I subsequently attempt to explain their aesthetic differences and similarities through the lens of their education, institutional base, and criticisms of their predecessors' song and poetry.

Theoretically, the chapter is concerned with a process that Sheldon Pollock terms "cosmopolitan vernacularism." As discussed in the introduction, cosmopolitan vernacularism describes how actors deploy a local language in new ways when they localize literature that is "superposed" and "cosmopolitan." "Cosmopolitan" refers to an elite form of culture that travels outside its site of origin. "Superposed" alludes to the process of "superposition," when new local genres develop in reaction to dominating forms of preexistent literatures.[8]

In Pollock's case study cosmopolitan vernacularism is a relatively uniform process: after the first millennium, regional poets throughout South Asia facilitated the superposition of Sanskrit literary aesthetics and techniques onto their respective regional language and thereby gave birth to new premodern vernacular literatures in languages such as Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Gujarati, Newari, Nepali, and Sinhala.[9] The case of cosmopolitan vernacularism in the gīta nāṭakaya and nisaňdäs kāvya is different because one finds in these genres attempt to follow *two* divergent standards of excellence, which I label "neoclassical" and "modernist," respectively.

The neoclassical aesthetic measured itself against models of excellence from North Indian medieval Sanskrit literature as well as North Indian art music. The modernist aesthetic sought to be comparable with the English verse of poets like T. S. Eliot and Robert Frost. Inspired by Ezra Pound's credo to "make it new" modernist Sinhala poets searched for value in undervalued areas of experience in Sri Lanka.[10] This chapter is therefore a clear example of the triadic model of influence in which Sri Lankan songwriters and poets attempted to create works that responded both to the West and to India.

NEOCLASSICAL AESTHETICS IN THE RADIO OPERA
Manawasinghe's "Manōhāri"

In the United States the adjective *classical* is often used to describe Greek and Roman literature, as well as European art music. In Sri Lanka, however, educated Sinhalese people often accord a similar status to Sanskrit literature and North Indian Hindustani music. To describe the aesthetic Manawasinghe and Abeysundara championed in their radio operas—Sanskrit literature, Indian mythology, and Hindustani music—I thus use the term *neoclassical* for the way that the radio operas sought to mobilize such classical forms for the present.

Sri Lanka's national radio station, Radio Ceylon, aired the first radio opera on December 8, 1955. Its author, Chandrarathna Manawasinghe (fig. 4), titled it *Manōhāri,* the name he gave to the fictional princess character.

The radio opera was Manawasinghe's attempt to convey the feeling of a *dēva katā,* mythological stories about Hindu gods found in Sanskrit literature.[11] The story of *Manōhāri* was mythological in the sense that each character in the radio opera represented a natural force in the universe. Consider the opening scene:

> Narrator: Bestowing onto nature anthropomorphic forms, Chandrarathna Manawasinghe has composed a *dēva katā* in song. To facilitate understanding, we will first present to you a list that explains what the characters of this musical drama represent:

Princess Manōhāri	[represents]	Universal Beauty
King Jagatpati	[represents]	The Universe
Sōma Kumaru	[represents]	The Moon
Divāpati	[represents]	The Sun
Soldier Beams	[represents]	The Rays of the Sun
Manōhāri's Servant Hēmantā	[represents]	The Misty Season[12]

On the left side are characters and their roles: Manōhāri is the princess, Jagatpati the king, Sōma Kumaru is Manōhāri's lover, and Divāpati is her groom-to-be in an arranged marriage. On the right side, one finds the forces of nature that each character represents. Manōhāri represents universal beauty. Jagatpati symbolizes the universe. Sōma Kumaru signifies the moon. Divāpati personifies the sun.

Because each character symbolized a force of nature, character interactions further suggested such forces at play in nature. When Sōma Kumaru (the moon) and Divāpati (the sun) fought over the hand of princess Manōhāri (the beauty of the universe), their clash simultaneously appeared to represent the passage from night to day. In this way, the radio opera contained elements of a poetic flight of fancy that Sanskrit theorists referred to as *utprekṣā,* a literary device often involving anthropomorphosis, in which one maintains a "dual" awareness to identify the

FIGURE 4. Chandrarathna Manawasinghe, c. 1950s. Courtesy of Udaya Manawasinghe.

unreal as real.[13] Consider, for instance, the opening song that introduced the four main characters of the radio opera:

> Alluring and famed daughter
> Of Old King Jagatpati,
> The Gandharva deity
> Manōhāri

> Was to marry the Majestic
> Mighty one, Victorious
> In all lands, known as
> Divāpati.

Disliking Divāpati's rough nature,
Soft Manōhāri
Remained in constant love with
Sōma Kumaru.

Hēmantā
A maidservant
Holding a royal position,
Consoled Manōhāri[14]

In the first stanza Manawasinghe described Manōhāri as the daughter of King Jagatpati. At first glance the description seemed to explain that the King was the princess's father. Manōhāri, however, represented the beauty of the universe. Her father Jagatpati was that universe. The concept of "father," then, had more conceptual complexity: a father begets his daughter like the universe "begets" beauty. An educated listener, familiar with such allusion in poetry, could experience these dual meanings while listening to the radio opera.

Further possible dual meanings can be read in the next scene. Here, Manawasinghe may have meant for the rendezvous between Princess Manōhāri (universal beauty) and her lover, Sōma Kumaru (the moon), on the castle verandah of King Jagatpati (the universe) to symbolize, in a broad fashion, the aesthetic beauty of the moon in our universe:

| Narrator: | Manōhāri and Sōma Kumaru's passionate rendezvous on the verandah of Jagatpati's castle. |

Sōma: My Manōhāri
           Renowned daughter of Jagatpati,
           In my eyes you shine
           O Gandharva deity!

Manōhāri: Dearest Sōma,
           The birds silent in the night
           Now rise singing song
           In the morning light

Sōma: Just a glimpse of your tender face
           And flowers smile in bloom.
           Who could alight from a *pädda* boat
           Wade alone in the floret lagoon?

Manōhāri: I will leave with you and depart from castle lands.
           How can I possibly bear
           To be alone when
           My heart is in your hands?[15]

When the Soldiers of Divāpati (rays of the sun) threatened to end the rendezvous of Manōhāri (universal beauty) and Sōma Kumaru (the moon), one can imagine at the same time that beauty and the moon must "separate" when the morning rays of the sun come out:

> Sōma: Then let us not delay! As Divāpati Soldier Beams
>   Take post on the castle floor
>   Once the conch reaches our ears
>   We will not get out the door[16]

Behind Manawasinghe's enjoyment of Sanskrit verse and Indian mythology—which found ample expression in *Manōhāri*—was also a belief that North Indian culture formed a foundation for Sinhalese literature. In a radio lecture he delivered circa 1957, Manawasinghe remarked, "The [Sinhala] poetic tradition has been greatly influenced by Sanskrit literary culture. [Sanskrit literary characters such as] the Brahmin, the cupid, and the goddess Saraswati are routinely found in Sinhala verse."[17]

Wimal Abeysundara's "Niṣādī"

Wimal Abeysundara, Manawasinghe's successor at Radio Ceylon, also wrote about the links between Sinhalese and Indian culture. He asserted that ancient connections between music cultures of India and Sri Lanka could be parsed out through study of Sri Lankan historical literature, such as the Pali-language *Mahāvaṃsa,* written in the fifth century c.e.; and the *Cūḷavaṃsa,* composed in the thirteenth century. Abeysundara wrote, "Culturally, one cannot separate Sri Lanka from India. Studies have proven that our cultures have been connected for more than 2500 years. It is not incorrect to say that musically, too, the same applies. Sinhala sources like the *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Cūḷavaṃsa,* as well as classical Sinhala literature, clearly illustrate ancient links between Sinhala music and Indian classical music."[18]

Abeysundara's knowledge of Indian classical music was based on research he conducted in North India in the late 1950s and early 1960s. His research culminated in his 1963 publication of an encyclopedic five-volume tome, *Sangīta Sanhitā* (Music compilations). The work covered ancient Indian music *(sangīta purāṇa),* Indian song *(gīta vēda),* North and South Indian instrumental music *(vādya vēda),* Indian dance *(nr̥tya vēda),* and Indian aesthetics and modern Indian music *(bharata bhāṣya).* There were prior publications in Sinhala on Indian classical music, such as M. G. Perera's 1933 *Gīta Śikṣaka.* But nothing was comparable in scope or breadth to this study, nearly two thousand pages long. Organizing his bibliography according to language, he cited forty-four Sanskrit primary sources and Pali texts such as the *Mahāvaṃsa,* as well as a plethora of modern sources in Hindi, Sinhala, and English.

Abeysundara channeled his interest in North Indian music into his first radio opera, *Niṣādī,* which aired around 1958. As Abeysundara noted, the thematic inspiration for the radio opera was the biographies of North Indian classical musicians: "I composed 'Niṣādī' with a strong love of Indian classical music. The libretto is an original work of fiction. I read the ancient biographies of great Indian classical musicians like Narada, Hanuman, Bharata, Kohala, Dattila, and Matanga, as well as the biographies of later musicians like Jayadeva, Swami Haridas, Tansen, Amir Khusrou, Gopala Nayaka, Baiju Bawra, Vilas Khan, and Mira Bhai. The foundation for composing 'Niṣādī' is based on the influences I obtained from these biographies."[19] Abeysundara's readings ranged from the mythological stories of Narada—the Vedic sage who was a master of the ancient Indian *veena*—to the iconic thirteenth-century figure of Amir Khusrou, who, legends state, introduced the sitar into North India.

Abeysundara summarize the plot of *Niṣādī* in this way:

> There once lived an artistic young man named Manjula who desired to obtain training in classical music. Although he went to various teachers, he felt unsatisfied. He decided to travel to Brindavan to try to study music with the sage Tumbaru. Tumbaru of Brindavan had reached the brink of musical knowledge. He could even successfully perform miracles using music. Manjula is now traveling to Brindavan to study with this sage. If he gets the opportunity to study with Tumbaru, he knows that he too will become a master of music.
>
>   While journeying in the jungle, Manjula comes to the bank of the river, and sees seven "note princesses." Mesmerized by their tonal beauty, he falls in love with the youngest, Niṣādī. Madly in love with Niṣādī, he starts to sing a song. However, [because he lacks serious musical training, his singing has a negative effect and] Niṣādī immediately falls dead to the ground. Manjula and the other six princesses gather around Niṣādī and start crying. Tumbaru hears the crying, comes to the riverbank, and starts singing. In an instant Nishadi wakes up from death. At her request, Tumbaru accepts Manjula as a disciple. Nishadi and Manjula depart for Tumbaru's hermitage in Brindavan.[20]

In the radio opera's opening song Abeysundara praised the attributes of Sarawasti, through a fusion of Sanskrit literary motifs and Sinhala poetry. For instance, here is the Sinhala lyric found in the chorus:

> hānsa vāhini gītadhāri vandanā svara gum gumāvī
> gīta mānasa rāja hansī oba soyā mama āmi āmī[21]
>
> [Queen of Song alight upon the *Hamsa* swan!
> I search and search for your abode, where sound reverberates]

An analysis of these lines of poetry reveals Abeysundara's thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and Sinhala literature. He glorified the goddess Saraswati, as she is classically portrayed in Sanskrit literature. Abeysundara's use of the word *mānasa* in

the phrase *gīta mānasa rāja hansī* can be interpreted in at least two ways. *Manas* can denote "mind." Here Abeysundara may have meant to say that Saraswati possesses the very mind of song *(gīta mānasa).* But he also could have used the word in its other meaning, referring to the *manas sarovar,* a Sanskrit literary term connoting the sacred Himalayan lake created by Brahma, which is the summer abode of Saraswati's vehicle, the swan. In that sense, the protagonist in *Niṣādī* would be saying that he is searching for Saraswati's abode.

Such literary lexicon is not the only the reason I refer to the gīta nāṭakaya as a "neoclassical" art form. The poetic meter and music are also factors. Abeysundara composed the text of this song in a meter he described as being a "blend between a Sanskrit poetic meter and a Sinhala poetic meter used to recite *raban pada.*"[22] (*Raban pada* are verses customarily recited by women who simultaneously drum on the large *raban* frame drum at Sinhalese New Year festivals in April.) Given the fact that mastery of poetic meters was one important way in which Sanskrit poets displayed their poetic prowess, it is not surprising that Abeysundara displayed his own erudition through songs written in poetic meters that he created.

The neoclassical aesthetics of the gīta nāṭakaya can also be studied in terms of the North Indian art music featured in Manawasinghe's and Abeysundara's radio operas. Composer P. Dunstan de Silva, for instance, set Manawasinghe's songs in *Manōhāri* to various North Indian rāgas. De Silva, a flutist, was the third Sinhalese musician (after Lionel Edirisinghe and Sunil Santha) to receive a Sangeet Visharada degree from the Marris College of Music in Lucknow.[23] Lionel Edirisinghe composed the music for Abeysundara's *Niṣādī.* Edirisinghe was the first musician from Sri Lanka to obtain the Sangeet Visharada from Marris College. Edirisinghe had also spent nearly thirteen years in North India, studying Hindustani classical music under the guidance of sitarist Ravi Shankar's well-known teacher, Allaudin Khan.[24]

Concerning the musical setting for *Niṣādī,* Abeysundara explained,

> Because *Niṣādī* is based on a subject pertaining to classical music, I felt that the songs should reflect the topic and be of the highest quality. Lionel Edirisinghe set the libretto to music. I have named the main character Niṣādī, after the seventh note of the Indian musical scale: sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, *ni.* Therefore, those who know [Hindustani] music well can hear how Edirisinghe chose raga melodies that emphasize this note. He has composed songs based on the ragas from all eight *melas* [families of North Indian rāgas], i.e., *Yaman, Bilawal, Khamaj, Bhairava, Purvi, Marwa, Kafi, and Asavari.*[25]

Abeysundara described how Lionel Edirisinghe created the music of *Niṣādī* by exploiting the musical uniqueness found in the eight major families of Hindustani rāgas. Abeysundara even named the heroine of the radio opera—*Niṣādī*—after the seventh note of Indian music, *ni.* To symbolize this character, Edirisinghe composed music that emphasized this note.

MODERNIST AESTHETICS IN SINHALA FREE VERSE

I have demonstrated how the cosmopolitan vernacularism of Manawasinghe's *Manōhāri* and Abeysundara's *Niṣādī* could be described as neoclassical because of the manner in which they channeled into local song cosmopolitan forms like Hindustani art music and literary devices and imagery from Sanskrit literature. The cosmopolitan vernacularism in Siri Gunasinghe's poetry was quite different because Gunasinghe drew on the English-language verse of modernist poets from England and the United States. In this section I analyze Gunasinghe's first book of poetry, *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa,* which literally means "Bloodless, Fleshless Bones."[26]

Siri Gunasinghe was surprised when critics asked whether he modeled the five-part suite in *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa* after T. S. Eliot's five-part structure in *The Waste Land.* Gunasinghe admits that he found Eliot's *The Waste Land* inspirational. However, the fact that *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa* contained a suite of five poems like *The Waste Land* was a coincidence. Be that as it may, Hemamali Gunasinghe wrote this to me about her husband: "In the late 1930s and early 1940s when he [Siri Gunasinghe] was developing his interest in creative writing, poetry, and criticism, Eliot was a colossus in the literary world, stimulating and firing up writers and critics."[27]

Gunasinghe designated the style of his free-verse poetry as nisaňdäs kāvya, which literally means "poetry without meter."[28] Nisaňdäs kāvya was free from not only poetic meters but also other defining features of Sinhala poetry, such as quatrains and *eli samaya* (a like-phoneme at the end of each line of a quatrain). Gunasinghe considered his poetry as a type of *kāvya* but his style contradicted the very definition of the term *kāvya,* a definition that had never before been so powerfully questioned in Sri Lanka. *Kāvya* was supposed to be an aesthetically rich composition in poetic meters. Sagara Palansuriya had written even as late as 1951 that one defining feature of *kāvya* was *gītavat bava* (nature of song).[29] What Palansuriya meant was that *kāvya* was a form of expression articulated in poetic meters, which created rhythms and imbued poetry with the nature of song.

Gunasinghe's free verse also had no parallel in Sinhala poetry with regard to tone, syntax, lexicon, and even orthography. Gunasinghe sought to make literary Sinhala more colloquial in orthography. He did not use the *mūrdhaja* letters in Sinhala. The *mūrdhaja nayanna* (ණ) and *layanna* (ළ) were used only in written language and pronounced the same way as the *dantaja nayanna* (න) and *layanna* (ල). Gunasinghe used only the *dantaja* letters in an effort to reduce the difference between spoken and written Sinhala.

Gunasinghe's *nisaňdäs* poetry was thus very controversial, especially the five-poem suite that opened *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa.* One reason was that his language had close connections with Western "prior texts" at a time in which Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism was at a high pitch. A. L. Becker designates "prior texts" as an "aggregate of remembered and half-remembered prior texts, which are there to be evoked."[30] Gunasinghe's verse sparked heated debates because Sinhala intellectuals expected poets to borrow or elaborate on prior texts in the form of well-known tropes of

figurative language from Sinhala or Sanskrit poetry.[31] Sinhala poets could intensify the metaphors but never overthrow them. The situation, it appears, was similar to the scenario of Sanskrit poetry that Yigal Bronner describes: "Even in the absence of an explicit and thorough theory of what can be compared with what, Sanskrit writers came up with a relatively closed set of subjects and standards of comparison that could be paired. Informed by this shared notion of aesthetic and moral decorum, readers could immediately tell an unsuitable combination, such as the comparison of a faithful servant with a dog rather than with a friend, or a firefly with the sun rather than with a lamp."[32]

Gunasinghe was an avid reader of Sinhala verse, wrote his doctoral dissertation about Sanskrit treatises, and taught Sanskrit literature at the University of Ceylon. He thus intimately knew the tropes that the traditional literati expected poets to employ. Instead, he introduced images undervalued in Sinhala literary culture. Hemamali Gunasinghe, for instance, explores how Siri Gunasinghe worked with the image of a cigarette at a time when no Sinhala poets had made any such attempt.[33] In the poem "Kāntāraya" (The desert), for instance, a burning cigarette symbolized burnt-out hope. In the poem "Noliyavena Kaviya" (The poem that defies writing, 1958), Gunasinghe compared whirling smoke rings from cigarettes to the poetry that whirled in his mind. In the poem "Pilun Gaňda" (Stale odors), Gunasinghe wrote,

> No amount of cigarette smoke
> Will ever halt that stench.

Here, Gunasinghe criticized the "futile attempt (of phony pundits) to mask the stale stench (of regurgitated learning) with cigarette smoke (a veneer of sophistication)."[34]

Gunasinghe also subverted previously entrenched symbolic associations in traditions of Sinhala and Sanskrit poetry. In the poem "Ambalama" (The wayfarer's rest, 1958) Gunasinghe used the "image of a wayfarers' rest not to symbolize transience as is done traditionally, but to signify poverty of thought." In the poem "Iňdul Vatura" (Dishwater, 1958) he wrote about education, but not to stress its importance. He criticized people who worship mere fact finding:

> The human intellect is a kitchen,
> Its dishwater, Education.
> Groveling there, I lap it up.[35]

Most Sri Lankan readers' first encounter with Sinhala free verse was with the first poem in *Bleached Bones,* "The Invisible Light":

> Shattering the darkness
> Just like yesterday
> Why haven't you risen yet
> My diurnal eyesore?[36]

The unidentified narrator posed this question to the sun, calling it a "diurnal eyesore" *(magē dainika äs rudāva)*.[37] This metaphor puzzled readers accustomed to Sinhala poems that spoke of the sun to convey positive messages about the beautiful morning. The sun had never been described in Sinhala poetry as a daily eyesore. Because Gunasinghe's metaphor did not evoke any Sinhala-language prior texts, one year after *Bleached Bones* was published, novelist and scholar Martin Wickramasinghe wrote, "When there exist many other synonyms for sun to choose from in the Sinhala language, scholars would certainly agree that this is not an effective metaphor."[38]

In the next lines, Gunasinghe created another idea that also had no precedent in Sinhala literature. He likened the narrator to a helpless snail in a shell who must avoid the painful sunlight:

> Letting the mosquito swarms drone on
> Swaddled in darkness
> As within a snail's shell
> I lay waiting
> For the earth's second day
> To come streaming down.[39]

Because Hemamali Gunasinghe has clearly translated these lines, readers of this English translation can today accept as mere background information the fact that the narrator lets the "mosquito swarms drone on." The mosquitoes function as a symbol of the cruel external world. But the ambiguous Sinhala-language word order in these lines confused even the most adept readers, like Wickramasinghe, who thought Gunasinghe was attempting to symbolize the darkness as a drone of mosquitoes. Wickramasinghe even went as far as to suggest to Gunasinghe how to rewrite this phrase for clarity.[40]

The narrator knows that darkness will soon give way to dawn. He waits in dread because the sunlight will soon pain his eyes. The darkness, on the other hand, comforts him.

> The light awakens terror,
> The glare torments the eye.
> No shape or beauty can I see
> In anything;
> Nothing has beauty or shape
> To see.
> To ward off the piercing light
> With my hand I shield
> My eyes.[41]

The darkness, though, is more than just comforting: the narrator desperately cries out for its embrace:

> Hold me, hold me
> Tenderly hold me,
> Darkness, my only love,
> Hold me tenderly.[42]

In a personal communication, Siri Gunasinghe contrasted the narrator's desire for escape in *Bleached Bones* to the character in Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (1923), who many readers interpreted as wanting to escape death.

> The speaker in "The Unseen Light" [The Invisible Light] implores the darkness, his only love/beloved (sondura) . . . to engulf/embrace him, since "the light" terrifies him. Like [Robert] Frost's speaker in "On Stopping by Woods . . . ," the speaker in this excerpt too is seeking escape, but not necessarily death.[43]

Gunasinghe placed his poem in dialogue with the interpretation that Robert Frost's "On Stopping by Woods" is about a desire for death. Yet if the character wanted escape, yet not from death, as Gunasinghe wrote, what kind of escape did he desire? It seems that the character sought to escape from the cruel outside world. Many scholars of modern Sinhala literature have proposed various interpretations about the character's hatred of light but love for darkness. Wickramasinghe maintained that the character's predicament symbolized the victory of ignorance (darkness) over wisdom (the sun). Dipachandi Abeysinghe argued that the sun represented difficulties in life and thus Gunasinghe meant to draw attention to how people hate to face their problems. Tissa Kariyavasam contended that the narrator could not stand to face the harsh truth (the sun) of his past, present, and future. Piyasili Wijegunasinghe interpreted the scenario as a broad symbol of the tragic experience of modern humans in the industrial age of capital.[44]

What we do know for a fact is that Gunasinghe's narrator spoke in a coded language filled with suggestions about the futility of life. Consider this later stanza:

> In the bitter cold of life,
> The whole body shivers, chattering,
> Like a cat slipped in a stream.
> The mouse has scuttled across.[45]

Gunasinghe illuminated the symbolism in this explanation: "The 'wet cat' image in 'The Unseen Light' . . . is a familiar metaphor for someone in distress when out of his/her element. As you know it is generally believed that cats don't like water and they are terrible swimmers. In the cat and mouse image in the poem the cat—cold and wet—out of his element—has also lost its quarry; the mouse, stereotypically the hapless victim, has successfully evaded its hunter. The metaphor is an attempt to create the image of one beaten down and defeated by the (numbing) vagaries of Life."[46] Because Gunasinghe's poetry required this type of decoding, Gunasinghe's

contemporary Gunadasa Amarasekera derogatorily designated his works as *gūtha tēravili* (mysterious puzzles).[47]

In the final image Gunasinghe alluded to a quotation from the fifteenth-century *Lōvāḍa Saṅgarāwa* (The world's welfare) written by the Sinhala poet and Buddhist monk Vidagama Maitreya, who sought to transmit the Pali-language scriptures through Sinhala verse:

> "The dog gnaws at bleached bones
> And finds no satisfaction"[48]

But Gunasinghe subverted the message:

> "The dog gnaws at bleached bones"
> And finds satisfaction.[49]

I give Hemamali Gunasinghe the final word about this revision:

> The last two lines of the final part, "Rebirth," quote the final couplet of the classical [Pali-language] verse that inspired the title, creating a form of closure, but with a twist. The original metaphor (for life and humanity) says "dogs gnaw at bleached bones but find no satisfaction in it [*no labannē*]." Siri has changed it to read "find satisfaction"—[*läba gannē*]. You will see the absence of quotation marks around these two words. This questions but does not reject the conventional view of the futility of life, yet does not give up on life. There is still some sustenance there though meager; the choices are not black and white.[50]

For what reasons and in what ways did the creators of Sinhala free verse and the radio opera produce these divergent forms of cosmopolitan vernacularism? To answer this question I now attempt to account for their differences through a comparison of their education, institutional base, and criticisms of their predecessors' song and poetry.

EDUCATION

The issue of education explains, to a great extent, the reasons for Manawasinghe's and Abeysundara's neoclassical tendency compared with Gunasinghe's modernist aesthetic. The former had schooled in Buddhist institutions. Manawasinghe studied at four Buddhist temples, and Abeysundara at one of the country's major Buddhist educational centers *(piriveṇa)* for monks and laymen. Gunasinghe, in contrast, studied at one of the top English secondary schools in Sri Lanka.

Manawasinghe was born in a village named Puwakdandawe, in southern Sri Lanka. In 1924, at the age of eleven, he was ordained as a Buddhist novice monk at one of the major temples in the village, the Panchathūpārāmaya Temple.[51] While residing at the temple, he nurtured his literary talents. He read medieval Sinhala poetry composed by poets who lived between the fourteenth and seventeenth cen-

tury, such as Toṭagāmuve Śrī Rāhula, Vidagama Maitreya, Karatoṭa Dharmarāma, Kirama Dhammānanda, and Alagiyavanna Mukaveti. Manawasinghe described the temple as a hub for the study and discussion of Sinhala poetry.[52] His formal education was diverse, ranging from studies in the languages of Sanskrit and Pali to Sinhala astrology to the composition of Sinhala poetry. His first teacher of Sinhala poetry was the Venerable Saranankara, the head priest at the Varanagiri residence for monks in Yatigala, in southern Sri Lanka. Manawasinghe would also visit the second major Buddhist temple in the village, the Panthārāmaya Temple. Here, he studied Sanskrit *ślōka* (verse) with Ven. Mulgirigala Nandarama.

Manawasinghe's appreciation of Sanskrit literature is reflected in an autobiographical vignette that details an encounter he had with a woman from Bengal after he transferred from the Panchathūpārāmaya Temple to a temple nearby the Kirivehera Temple in Kataragama. She sang Sanskrit verses, which had a spellbinding impact on Manawasinghe:

> Surrounding my temple, the large forest in Kataragama was a beautiful place. I roamed along the banks of the river, under the shade of the Kubuk trees, in the middle of the forest, far away from human contact. There was a small hermitage here that some referred to as "little Kataragama," although it was hardly a village or even a house for that matter. There I had the opportunity to meet a young Bengali woman who sat by the banks of the river playing the sitar with delicate fingers. She sang Sanskrit verses from Jayadeva's [twelfth-century] *Gītagovinda* (Govinda in song). I closed my eyes and devoted my full attention to experiencing the rasa of the Sanskrit verses she sang.[53]

Manawasinghe's education was not, however, limited to poetry, Sanskrit, Pali, and Buddhism. A facet of his sensitivity to letters and sounds chosen for radio operas can be traced to the 1930s, when Manawasinghe was living at the Aṅgurukāramulla Temple in Negombo. At this time he was reading widely on Ayurvedic medicine and the occult practices of Sinhala mantras and developed a reputation as a talented writer of *set kavi* (verses intended to produce well-being) and *vas kavi* (verses intended to curse or harm).[54] Such poems are composed according to "occult theories" of the Sinhala language. According to the twelfth-century *Sidatsaṅgarāva,* for example, letters could be grouped into three categories: those associated with hell, the realm of humans, and the divine. *Set kavi* always begins with a letter from the divine category.[55] Many Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka patronized Manawasinghe to write such poems. His patrons believed his verses took effect immediately after being recited. For example, Manawasinghe wrote this *vas kavi* to curse a man named Sumanatis:

> O Dadimunda, the god who blows fire,
> Strangle the throat of my enemy Sumanatis
> And leave him dying

Manawasinghe created this *set kavi* to heal the sickness of a man named Somakirti:

> Please help Somakirti get well and give him a long life.
> For his mind and body, give him peace and banish all the
>   astrological defects.
> Please give him all the blessings and heal all of his pain[56]

Abeysundara, like Manawasinghe, had a traditional Sri Lankan Buddhist education. He was one of the top students at the Vidyodaya Pirivena. In 1959 Vidyodaya Pirivena became the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, one of two Buddhist universities created by an act of Parliament. While Abeysundara was a student at Vidyodaya, the institution was a Buddhist center for higher education, where monks and laity obtained what the British referred to as an "oriental" education, an education with a curriculum traditionally focused primarily on Pali, Sanskrit, and Sinhala grammar and reading and secondarily on topics such as *śastric* medicine, computation, and astrology.[57]

At Vidyodaya Abeysundara studied Sanskrit, Pali, and Sinhala, as well as Hindi. He won an award of distinction and graduated with honors in 1948 at the age of twenty-seven. Abeysundara also studied English at Ananda College, Aganuvara Lawrence College, Olcott College, and Pembroke College. Abeysundara would later complete a master's degree at Vidyodaya's competing Buddhist educational center, Vidyalankara, and win an award for his high score on the notoriously difficult Prāchīna Paṇḍita Vibhāgaya (Oriental Scholars Exam).[58] Abeysundara's and Manawasinghe's classical studies in Sanskrit, Pali, and Buddhism—and in Abeysundara's case, an interest in Hindi and north Indian culture—clearly shaped their radio operas themes, lexicon, and even music.

Gunasinghe, in contrast, studied at one of the most prestigious English secondary schools in Sri Lanka: Mahinda College in Galle. He learned Sanskrit and Pali, but English literature was also a major part of his education. Regarding his study of Renaissance-era and contemporary English literature, Gunasinghe remarked, "While I was a student at Mahinda College in Galle, I studied the poetry collections, novels, and other writings of John Milton, William Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, D. H. Lawrence, and James Joyce."[59] Outside of school, Gunasinghe would regularly meet with his friend Edwin Ariyadasa to read and converse about the modernist works of Eliot, W. B. Yeats, Auden, and Ezra Pound.[60] Note how the syllabus had changed: whereas the second-generation poets (see chapter 3) had studied the romantics and Victorians, Gunasinghe read in secondary school the works of the modernists.

Meanwhile, Gunasinghe was equally passionate about the works of second-generation Sinhala poets. Before Gunasinghe sat for the advanced-level exam to gain admission to the University of Ceylon (Sri Lanka's only university at the time),

he had already read the works of many second-generation Colombo poets, such as P. B. Alwis Perera, Sagara Palansuriya, Mimana Premathilaka, John Rajadasa, and Wimalaratna Kumaragama.[61] Gunasinghe's unique literary perspective appears to have stemmed from his comparative perspective on Sinhala and English poetry, as he stated in an interview: "Taken as a whole, what these [Sinhala-language] works were about were descriptions of beautiful things like flowers, butterflies, the moonlight, rainbows, waterfalls, flowing rivers, and women. OK, that's fine. Yet after reading English poetry I understood the qualities that [second-generation Colombo] poetry did not possess."[62]

In 1945 Gunasinghe gained admission to the University of Ceylon and continued his study of Sanskrit language and literature. He graduated with first-class honors in 1948 and was appointed as a lecturer in the Sanskrit Department in 1949. In 1951 Gunasinghe was awarded the University of Ceylon Arts Scholarship and the government of Ceylon's University Scholarship for postgraduate studies abroad.[63] He began studying at the School of Oriental Studies of the University of London but was dissatisfied with his adviser and transferred to the Université de Paris (the Sorbonne). He wrote his dissertation in French about Indian painting techniques as explained in the Sanskrit-language *śilpa* (arts and crafts) manuals. In France Gunasinghe was exposed to the latest European trends in the arts while he was working on his dissertation between 1951 and 1955.

When he returned to Sri Lanka from Paris in 1955, he resumed work at the University of Ceylon, but this time at the new campus in Peradeniya. He described his initial experience: "My first experience of Peradeniya was a full house of students and dons behind the granite ornate doors of the Arts Theater. They were watching a famous movie, a Kurosawa or a Satyajit Ray, I cannot remember. . . . It was exciting. I thought that Peradeniya was avant-garde and not too far behind Paris (at least as far as the cinema was concerned), which I had left only two weeks back after five years."[64] That Gunasinghe felt Peradeniya to be as avant-garde as Paris because of the availability of cosmopolitan films by Akira Kurosawa and Satyajit Ray further highlights his modernist sensibility compared to his contemporaries' neoclassical outlook.

INSTITUTIONAL BASE

Another factor that contributed to the neoclassicism or modernism of Manawasinghe, Abeysundara, and Gunasinghe was the institutions at which they gave birth to the Sinhala radio opera and Sinhala free verse, respectively. Manawasinghe and Abeysundara worked for the government radio station, whereas Gunasinghe created his style of free verse as a lecturer in the Sanskrit at the University of Ceylon, graduate student in Paris, and professor of Sanskrit at the Peradeniya campus. Let

us look more closely at the cultures of these institutions in the 1950s, beginning with the radio station.

The political climate of the 1950s that privileged the Sinhalese Buddhist rural intelligentsia (and discriminated against non-Sinhalese Buddhists) set the stage for Sinhala music reform at the state radio station, Radio Ceylon.[65] Although directors of the station since the 1930s had instituted various projects to improve the quality of musical programming for the Sinhala-, Tamil-, and English-language stations, it was in the 1950s when a new emphasis on developing Sinhala music came into being. It was the first time the directors of the radio station hired Sinhalese producers, lyricists, composers, and vocalists to fashion Sinhala music anew rather than Sri Lankan music.[66] Such changes were far from insignificant: at the time radio was quickly becoming the most widespread and powerful form of media entertainment in the country.[67]

The new emphasis on developing Sinhala music commenced after M. J. Perera was hired as the first Sinhalese director of Radio Ceylon in 1952. He launched a project that aimed to nurture Sinhalese cultural heritage through radio programming. Perera wrote, "Those in charge of the development of music, drama, literature, and poetry in a country like Ceylon, have a very serious responsibility at this time. I am thinking in this context particularly of the Sinhalese section of the public because that is the section, which is specially confined to this Island, and for whom no standards can be set up by anybody from abroad." Perera believed that the Sinhalese lacked great traditions of music and drama: "We have no traditions in music or drama. . . . Therefore, this broadcasting station, which can cater to this section of the people, has a responsibility."[68] Perera arranged meetings to establish standard criteria for "developing" Sinhalese music. In 1954, for instance, producers of the Sinhala-language division of Radio Ceylon, along with members of the Department of Radio Broadcasting and the Department of Education, as well as representatives from the State Arts Institution (Lalita Kalā Āyatanaya), and Lankan Arts Commission (Lankā Kalā Maṇḍalaya), reached a unanimous decision that the musicians who should be tasked to raise the standards of Sinhalese music would have to possess a strong grounding in both North Indian classical and Sinhala folk music.[69]

In the thick of discussions about such reform of Sinhala music, Perera, along with the director of the Sinhala station, Tewis "Meghaduta" Guruge; and the music director of the Sinhala station, P. Dunstan de Silva conceived in 1955 of a new type of radio song. It would combine an operatic-type libretto with the music of North Indian rāgas.[70] Guruge called it a gīta nāṭakaya, which literally means "song drama." The term is often translated into English as "radio opera." Guruge invited Manawasinghe to write the libretto of the first radio opera, which would become *Manōhāri.* Later Abeysundara was selected to follow in Manawasinghe's footsteps.

The university, however, was Gunasinghe's institutional base. As early as 1949, the year Gunasinghe was appointed as a lecturer in the Sanskrit Department, he

published his first free-verse poem "Āpasuva" (The return, 1949) in *Aruna,* the journal of the University Sinhala Society. Before he departed for the School of Oriental Studies in 1951, he published his second free-verse poem "Īye Soňdura" (Yesterday's love) in *Aruna.*[71]

While Gunasinghe was abroad, the scholar and playwright E. R. Sarachchandra was hired in 1952 at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya. Due to Sarachchandra's leadership, the arts faculty became a center for Sinhala literary experimentation. After commencing to work at Peradeniya, Gunasinghe sensed that the new works of art that people like Sarachchandra were producing at the university was influencing not only the Sinhala-educated population but also the English-education sectors of society: "[The new forms of art that came out of Peradeniya University] made the Sinhalese intellectuals see their culture in newer and truer lights. But equally importantly, if not more so, it made the English-only section of Sri Lankan society take note of a [Sinhala Buddhist] culture, which many in that sanitized environment did not know existed."[72]

Gunasinghe designed the costumes of Sarachchandra's groundbreaking drama, *Maname,* which premiered in 1956. *Maname* is routinely cited as a landmark in Sinhalese drama and, more generally, in Sinhalese arts of the twentieth century. Reflecting on Gunasinghe's Westernized friend's reaction to Sarachchandra's drama, Gunasinghe made this revealing statement: "When we (I say we because originally it was the Sinhalese Drama Circle of the University of Peradeniya, now forgotten, that was involved) were doing *Maname,* a friend of mine belonging to the English-only Colombo society asked me: 'I say, what is this, I hear you all are doing a thing called Maname,' pronouncing the second 'A' as in father and the final 'E' silent as if Maname was a French word. That is how blissfully ignorant some of them were."[73] Gunasinghe's friend lacked knowledge in the Sinhala language and culture to such an extent that he thought the final syllable in the word "Maname" was pronounced with a silent "e" as it would be in French. Such assumptions proved in Gunasinghe's mind the ignorance of the English-speaking Sinhalese community in Sri Lanka. One senses that Gunasinghe's friend had come to realize that something unique was happening at the University of Peradeniya. The university context, it appears, fostered a climate that encouraged Gunasinghe to experiment in literature and ultimately spark a literary controversy in twentieth-century Sri Lanka through his free verse.

CRITICISMS OF PREDECESSORS

In this chapter I have centered on how and why the aesthetic championed by Gunasinghe was different from that of Manawasinghe's and Abeysundara's. Yet one similarity must be emphasized before the chapter's conclusion: all three men desired to raise the standards of their respective art forms.

Gunasinghe's desire to raise the standards of Sinhala poetry can be traced to an English article he wrote in 1950, titled "The New Note in Contemporary Sinhalese Poetry." The "new note" in Sinhala poetry, Gunasinghe argued, had been struck by P. B. Alwis Perera's *The Sugarcane Arrow* (see chapter 3). Gunasinghe praised Perera for creating images that "have a compactness and a precision which make them adequately evocative." Yet Gunasinghe concluded that the *The Sugarcane Arrow,* like "most of the contemporary [Sinhala-language] verse, displays no stamp of real experience, but details out an idealized world, where the authors find inspiration and solace."[74]

Gunasinghe likened the relationship between *The Sugarcane Arrow* and its reading public to the relationship between a bright doll and a child. Perera, Gunasinghe argued, cared only to construct a dreamscape with the aid of poetic devices such as rhyme, assonance, and alliteration. In consequence, Perera had reduced poetry "to mere verbal music and sentimental weeping." Even worse, Perera had shirked his duty to contemplate the modern world. Gunasinghe wrote, "Whenever the facts of life stand up before him, he shrinks from them and wishes he were born in a lotus-petal or on the lips of a woman."[75]

Not only Perera but also most second-generation Colombo poets, Gunasinghe suggested, suffered from a "common tendency . . . to escape from the worries of life and seek solace in the most abstract ideas about nature and her mysterious ways." Gunasinghe wrote,

> Most of the contemporary poets live in an impossible dream world, where one finds only moonlight, cool waters, flowers, music, and love. . . . For the last ten years, the same metaphors and similes have been used in the same context, with a slight twist here and there, and they have ceased to be lively for the reader, and are almost turned barren. This is mainly due to the fact that the writers lack sincerity in their expression for the most part. The poets could have very little sincerity as they have had to deal with themes, which have had the least immediacy to their experience for they were drawn from an idealized dream world.[76]

Gunasinghe claimed that second-generation poems lacked in "authenticity" because they never dealt with experiential reality. Gunasinghe thus felt inclined to turn away from romanticism towards a modernist poetic idiom, which he felt was more meaningful.[77]

Manawasinghe and Abeysundara leveled comparable critiques against Sinhala gramophone song. In 1957, in the preface to his collection of songs lyrics, *Kōmala Rēkhā* (Lovely line of destiny), Manawasinghe criticized songwriters who composed Sinhala words to Indian film song melodies. He based his criticism on the grounds that the lyrics were hackneyed, the tunes Indian imports, and the lyrics and tunes failed to even match properly. Manawasinghe likened such lyrics to metal foil added to brass to make it shine: "A lyricist cannot create a powerful song just by playing around with stock words like 'gentle,' 'shiny,' 'moon,' 'sky,' 'beautiful,' 'fascinating,' 'lovely,' 'love,' or 'wonderful.' Words like this are just decorative

material like shiny metal foil. We import brass [the melodies from Indian film songs] and apply our shiny foil [lyrics] to it." The final product in Manawasinghe's humorous account was a style of music so detestable that it was like the loud noises farmers produced to drive away animals that damaged their crops: "Such songs are a nuisance to the ear like the scare-away clappers that drive birds out from lands that farmers cultivate. . . . Will anyone feel genuine love listening to songs with words such as 'My fresh love,' 'My sweetheart,' or 'Oh my baby'?"[78]

Further, in Manawasinghe's judgment, the Sinhalese lyricists who carelessly set words to Indian melodies had failed to select words and themes that matched the emotion embedded in the melody's rhythm and tempo: "Sinhalese lyricists do not consider whether or not their lyrics have any connection with the tempo, melody, or rhythm of the tune. In Indian songs we find that the rhythm mirrors the joyful words. . . . However, Sinhalese lyricists put sad words to a happy melody. Or let's say a sad song was popular in India. Our musicians write a love song to that sad melody." Radio listeners were thus prevented from experiencing the true power of song. Manawasinghe asked, "Will anyone truly feel devotion from hearing words like 'I'll fall at your feet,' 'I'll worship you until I achieve nirvana,' or 'I will loyally serve you'?"[79]

In the 1950s it was still a common practice to compose new lyrics to Indian film song melodies. The practice, as I mentioned in the introduction, was called *vacana dānavā* ("to put words"). The term suggested that Sinhalese songwriters only had to put words onto an Indian film song's melody like an unskilled mason clumsily puts one brick on top of another. Manawasinghe described the process like this: "*vacana dānavā* was a term used to describe how lyricists would take the words of a Hindi-language song and replace them with Sinhala-language words that sounded somewhat the same."[80] Sunil Ariyaratne explains that such lyrics functioned as a kind of "lacquer" applied to the melodies of film songs.[81] Abeysundara portrayed the emergence of the radio opera precisely as a response to the imitative trend in Sinhala radio songs: "Until very recently our singers were accustomed to singing lyrics set to already-composed melodies found in Hindi films. Composing original lyrics, or original music was a rare phenomenon. . . . Most of the singers were singing imitations of Hindi film songs. Having their primary objective to create a song form with national features, Radio Ceylon suspended the following of Hindi film songs and inaugurated a new form of Sinhala music. The pioneering result was the Sinhala radio opera."[82]

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I explored divergent instances of cosmopolitan vernacularism in Sri Lanka through the prism of two postcolonial aesthetic tendencies. One faced North India. The other looked toward England and the United States. The creators of the gīta nāṭakaya measured it against the standards of Sanskrit literature and

North Indian classical music. The creator of nisaṅdäs kāvya sought to make his poetry commensurate with English and American modernist verse. The role of education and institutional bases cannot be overestimated as factors that influenced the contrasting styles.

The next chapter chronicles the emergence of a creative practice akin to social realism. I use the label "social realism" to characterize the works discussed in chapter 5 because their creators argued that village culture was the authentic site of the Sri Lankan nation. We shall see how social realists in the 1950s drew on the poetic meters, lexicon, and grammar from village folklore or literary sources created between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, and how they infused these features with new semantic material in an attempt to create art for "the people."

For the People

Until the mid-1950s Sinhalese poets and songwriters hesitated to create modern works based upon premodern Sinhala-language folk or literary traditions. They tended to regard such traditions as unsuitable sources for present-day expression. Lyricist Madawala Ratnayake (1929–97) and poet Gunadasa Amarasekera (b. 1929) altered this tendency. They drew on folk and literary traditions and infused into song and poetry formal features such as poetic meters, lexicon, and grammar. Ratnayake and Amarasekera discovered these attributes in orally transmitted folk poems *(jana kavi)* as well as in compositions that court poets or Buddhist monks etched on palm-leaf manuscripts between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Yet Ratnayake's and Amarasekera's formal revolution is just one part of the story. Equally fascinating is the relationship between the semantic content of their new works and the semantic contents of the original sources on which they drew. Sometimes they made a slight twist to the meaning of the original. Other times they replaced it altogether. The songs and poems studied in this chapter are therefore instances of what Michael Riffaterre calls *intra*textuality, "where the intertext is partly encoded within the text and conflicts with it because of stylistic or semantic incompatibilities."[1] That is, Ratnayake's and Amarasekera's poems and songs simultaneously evoked and departed from Sinhala folk and literary sources.

Why did Ratnayake and Amarasekera feel compelled to preserve old forms but create new meanings? They came to believe Sinhala poetry and song would need to possess relevance for "the people," whom they predominantly defined as Sinhalese Buddhist villagers. Yet why art-for-the-people in the *late 1950s?* One important reason for this shift is the fact that 1956–65 was the period when the Sinhalese

rural voter became, to a much greater extent, the arbiter of Sri Lankan politics.[2] From the standpoint of the sociopolitical fabric, then, it makes sense that Ratnayake and Amarasekera reformulated song's and poetry's purpose, content, and audience with rural Sinhalese people in mind.

Such a project was confined not only to song and poetry: consider Ratnayake's first novel, *Akkara Paha* (The five acres, 1959). The novel is about a Sinhalese Buddhist boy, Sena. He is born into a family of farmers. His parents send him away to the city of Kandy to receive a prestigious English education. The story documents Sena's rude awakening when he is forced to adjust to life in the city. In a defiant concluding act, Sena disavows the city, returns to the village, marries his village sweetheart, and takes up farming. Ratnayake prefaced the novel in this way: "After I moved from the city back to the village, I began to feel that national development, regardless of historical period, begins with those who hold the nation's most fundamental occupation—farmers."[3] As this quotation implies, the central idea discussed in this chapter is the belief that farmers—and, by extension, the *villages* where they work and the *folklore* they know—have value for the Sri Lankan nation.

RATNAYAKE'S RADIO SONG

The 1950s was the decade in South Asia when state and institutional politics became inextricable from linguistic nationalism. In southern South Asia we find this evident in the Tamil and Telugu populations in South India and the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka.[4] Given that 1950–56 witnessed a peak in Sinhala linguistic nationalism (the Official Language Act was passed in 1956), it is not a coincidence that this sentiment found its way to the national radio station, Radio Ceylon. In the early 1950s the station began to hire professional Sinhalese songwriters to compose literary songs in the Sinhala language. In 1953 Radio Ceylon appointed a commission that recommended hiring "scriptwriters" (songwriters) for the Sinhala-language channel of the radio station.[5] In my judgment, only after the radio station began to give stable jobs to Sinhala poets tasked with writing literary songs did the Sinhalese public began to consider the lyrics of Sinhala song as a form of literary expression.

In chapter 4 I discuss how the political climate in the 1950s privileged the Sinhalese Buddhist rural intelligentsia and created conditions ripe for the reform of Sinhala music through the radio opera. The emphasis on developing *Sinhala* music led to the creation of another form of music as well. Station officials hired Sinhalese lyricists, composers, and vocalists to create a genre of music that came to be known as *sarala gī* (light song). *Sarala gī* is often translated into English as "light-classical song" because of its orchestra of sitars, violins, tablas, flutes, sarods, and guitars.[6]

Sarala gī was a Sri Lankan genre of Sinhala radio song, but similar musical changes were happening at the national radio station in India. The use of the

Sinhala word *sarala* (light) most likely stemmed from the category of "light music" created by B. V. Keskar at All India Radio (AIR). Keskar was India's minister of information and broadcasting between 1950 and 1962. He used the English phrase "light music" to name a genre of music that could counterbalance popular film music. In 1953 Keskar created light-music units at various AIR stations that hired classical musicians and poets to create two radio songs a week.[7]

Hired in 1954, Madawala Ratnayake was one of the first to hold the position of scriptwriter. He was thus a major force in the creation of *sarala gī*. At this time, he had not yet published his popular novel *Akkara Paha,* but he was known by the Sinhala reading public as early as 1948 for the poems he regularly contributed to popular Sinhala poetry journals such as *Dēdunna* (The rainbow) and *Mīvadaya* (Beehive). In addition to composing songs, Ratnayake's duty was to review all song texts before they were broadcast. If he felt the lyrics of a particular song were inappropriate, he would request the scriptwriter to edit the words and resubmit for review.[8]

Amid mounting evidence, it appears that radio stations throughout South Asia were new sources of patronage to poets in the twentieth century.[9] We know that radio stations hired poets to write songs, produce programs of original songs, provide guidance on how to draw on the literary tradition of a particular regional language, and "raise the standards" of modern song in the regional language. In English these jobs were called "scriptwriters," "producers," and "advisers." Consider a few examples outside of Sri Lanka: in the 1930s the Bengali poet Kazi Nazrul Islam composed songs for All India Radio, Calcutta.[10] In 1942 All India Radio in Delhi hired the Urdu poet Miraji as a scriptwriter.[11] In 1950 the Hindi poet Bhagwati Charan Verma served as an adviser in Hindi to the All India Radio in Lucknow. As Shrilal Shukla writes, "All India Radio became Akashvani in independent India. It did not mean a change in nomenclature only, but an effort to bring about a qualitative change. Many eminent Hindi writers were appointed as either Hindi advisers or producers. This began with the appointment of Shri Sumitra Nandan Pant."[12] In 1956 the Kannada poet Dattareya Ramachandra Bendre began to work as an adviser for the Dharwad station in Karnataka.[13]

Ratnayake's first radio show was titled *Jana Gāyanā* (Folk singing, 1955). For the program, Ratnayake attempted to use folk song *(jana gī),* considered unsophisticated by urbanites at the time, as a cultured source for an evening radio show.[14] The program consequently popularized the concept of *jana gī,* a term that referred to the same body of texts collectively referred to as jana kavi. The difference was that the term *jana gī* placed more emphasis on the *performance* of these texts. Ratnayake described the program like this:

> *Jana Gāyanā* consisted of five radio programs based on Sinhala folk songs. In some of these broadcasts, the radio program consisted of several sections. Some were limited

to a half hour like our first show, 'Ṭikiri Liya' (Village Damsel). . . . We experimented with the tunes of folk songs and wove a storyline in between songs . . . to bring folk song to the listeners. In the style of *churnika* [prose sentence that expounds on the purport of Buddhist *gātha,* a verse from the Pali canon of Theravada Buddhism], I joined the songs to each other in a story. This was part of my attempt to preserve the values of the village and rural life.[15]

The Sinhala press criticized *Jana Gāyanā* for "destroying" folk music. Ratnayake stopped the program.[16] Yet in 1957 he restarted the show with the composer W. D. Amaradeva, and it received critical acclaim.[17] Arguably, the populist shift in politics in 1956 created favorable conditions for the positive reception of Ratnayake's attempt to preserve the values of village life.

From a broader perspective, Ratnayake's interest in folklore partook in an ideological movement spreading among musical elites in South Asia at the time. Musical nationalism came to Sri Lanka from North India mainly through S. N. Ratanjankar. As discussed in chapter 2, Ratanjankar was the principal of the Bhatkhande Music College in Lucknow. Ratanjankar had first visited Sri Lanka in 1949 to audition Sinhalese musicians for radio posts. In April 1952 M. J. Perera, the director general of Radio Ceylon, invited Ratanjankar back to the island to audition musicians and advise the station on how to best fashion a Sri Lankan national music. Ratanjankar also auditioned 716 people who applied to work as musicians for the radio station.[18]

During his visit to Sri Lanka, Ratanjankar gave a lecture in English at the Royal Asiatic Society, titled "The Place of Folk Songs in the Development of Music." He expounded on the antiquity and purity of folk music. He encouraged Sinhalese musicians to create a modern song based on folk poetry and folk music. His concerns, then, were the familiar concerns of "musical nationalism"—the incorporation of folk elements into art music to evoke national sentiment, preserve tradition, and venerate a disappearing rural way of life.[19] Ratanjankar believed true Sri Lankan music was found in the villages. He appealed to musicians to create a refined modern music based on folk song: "The proper DESHI SANGEET [*sic,* local music] of Lanka is in its villages. The Vannams, Astakas, the Sivupadas, the Stotras, the Pirits are the proper DESHI SANGEET of Lanka. They are still retained in their traditional forms. But much refined music can be built upon the basis of these. I have already pointed out one or two instances, which supply the basis for full-grown melodies that can be treated and composed on artistic lines."[20] In his speech at the Royal Asiatic Society, Ratanjankar singled out certain forms of Sinhala music that he deemed worthy sources for modern song: vannama, *sivupada,* and *strōtra.* In what follows, I explore how Ratnayake and Amaradeva modernized these forms by using them as sources for radio songs.

Ratanjankar's musical nationalism and policy-like recommendations struck a deep chord with Ratnayake and Amaradeva. Ratnayake noted the importance

of Ratanjankar's suggestions, and he chided those who were not up to the task: "A few people understood the importance of Ratanjankar's speech. In them, a desire was born to create compositions that preserve national traits of the Sinhalese. Others blindly lost their way. We wonder whether that was because they did not have the capacity to carry out a systematic research into the syllables of folk poetry."[21] W. D. Amaradeva also spoke highly about Ratanjankar's message:

> S. N. Ratanjankar, who came to Sri Lanka to audition musicians for the radio, gave a speech about thirty-five years ago. It stated that we, the Sinhalese, had not created a complete musical form that we could call our own. . . . We possess a folk music that possesses native features that ought to be fused into Sinhala music. Using Sinhala folk music to create a Sinhalese musical form would partake in a time-honored praxis of musicians around the globe. . . . There is no other form of music as suitable as folk song to please our people who have grown up in the Buddhist religion and are used to a more moderate way of life.[22]

Ratnayake reminisced about the kinds of folk genres he drew on for the show *Jana Gāyanā.*

> W. D. Amaradeva returned to the island after training in North Indian music. I then restarted the program with his assistance. We modeled our songs on folk song. The first one we created was 'Ran Van Karal Säleyi' [The golden paddy sways] for the radio program 'Ṭikiri Liya.' In later radio programs . . . we would showcase songs influenced by the *vannama, bali kavi, goyam kavi* [sung poetry for farming], and *nelum kavi* [sung poetry for cultivation].[23]

The first genre Ratanjankar mentioned in his speech at the Royal Asiatic Society was the vannama, songs originally commissioned by King Narendrasinghe, the last Sinhalese king of Kandy (r. 1707–37).[24] The king solicited a Buddhist monk to compose poetic verse. He hired a Tamil musician to set these verses to South Indian rāga-based melodies.[25] Many of the vannama texts describe the behavior of animals, while others narrate stories of deities, like Sakra, Ishwara, and Ganesh.[26]

As Ratnayake stated in the previous quote, the first song aired on the *Jana Gāyanā* program was titled "Ran Van Karal Säleyi." He had produced the song from a particular vannama known as the *Turaṅga Vannama* (Vannama of the Horse). The original text tells how Prince Siddhartha mounted the back of his beloved horse, Kanthaka; departed from the royal castle; jumped across the Anoma River; and renounced the world to become the Buddha.

Beyond its Buddhist theme, the text of the turaṅga vannama also had a unique rhythmic feature, known as *tānama* in the Sinhala language. Tānama is a spoken rhythmic pattern using syllables like *tat, ta, nat, ne,* and *na.* In the case of the

turaṅga vannama, the particular pattern is "tat tat ta nat ta ne na / tat tat ta nat ta ne na / tat tat ta nat ta ne na / tā nā." When recited, it creates a ten-beat rhythmic pattern, notated in the figure:

EXAMPLE 4. Tānama in the turaṅga vannama.

tat tat ta nat - ta ne na   tat tat ta nat - ta ne na   tat tat ta nat - ta ne na   tā   nā

It is well known that Ratnayake sought to evoke this tānama as the rhythmic structure in his song lyrics. This is demonstrated by the comparison in the figure between the tānama of the turaṅga vannama (meas. 1–4) and the song text (meas. 5–8).[27]

EXAMPLE 5. Rhythm of the tānama in the turaṅga vannama compared with the rhythm of Madawala Ratnayake's "Ran Van Karal Säleyi."

tat tat ta nat - ta ne na   tat tat ta nat - ta ne na   tat tat ta nat - ta ne na   tā   nā

ran van ka ral - sä lē   san sun ka min - ba ra va   sil gat si tin - yu tu vu   ka ta sē

The use of the tānama as the rhythmic basis for the text calls to mind what Michael Riffaterre terms "connectives," or "words and phrases indicating on the one hand, a difficulty—an obscure or incomplete utterance in the text—that only an intertext can remedy; and, on the other hand, pointing to the way to where the solution must be sought."[28] In this case, one could extend Riffaterre's notion of connectives to include devices like tānama because Ratnayake used the tānama as a "connective" that would point the listeners of the new song to the old intertext.

Ratnayake retained the tānama of the turaṅga vannama, but the meaning of the lyrics in "Ran Van Karal Säleyi" departed in theme. The text of the turaṅga vannama depicted an episode of Siddhartha's story of renunciation. Ratnayake's song, in contrast, portrayed a village in the midst of a prosperous paddy harvest. Consider the first three stanzas of the song. The simile of the first stanza conceptually linked ripened paddy with a Buddhist woman: the ripened paddy hardly sways in the wind like the steady mind of the woman barely wavers when she observes *sil,* the precepts of Buddhism.[29]

> The golden paddy sways
> With profound calm
> Like the woman who observes the precepts.

In the gentle breeze,
The paddy husks shake, and the village
Blossoms in happiness.

Because of overflowing reservoirs and rivers,
The paddy fields are flowering
Sadness drifts away[30]

Amaradeva's musical setting of this stanza further enhanced the textual imagery because a group of vocalists performed the song and their voices called to mind real-life villagers. Amaradeva also included an *udäkki* folk drum in the orchestration to reinforce the mental association with the village.

From a local political perspective, "Ran Van Karal Säleyi" was well suited to Sri Lanka post-1956 because the imagery articulated populist and nationalist sentiments. Ratnayake referenced ancient manmade "overflowing reservoirs" and flowering paddy fields and alluded to the existence of Buddhist temples where a woman observes the Buddhist precepts. The imagery of tank, temple, and paddy field *(väva, dāgäba,* and *yāya)* is striking because in the twentieth century Sinhalese cultural nationalists popularized these three elements as authentic markers of Sinhalese culture.[31] Tank, temple, and paddy field represented the ethos of Sinhalese culture in the nationalist imagination.

Ratnayake and Amaradeva created radio songs from not only the vannama but also other genres like *sivupada* (folk song based on quatrains with end-rhyme) and *strōtra* (panegyric), which Ratanjankar singled out as important local forms of music. For instance, Ratnayake wrote "Bamareku Āvayi" based on *sivupada* verse recited for rituals to propitiate deities and ward off bad planetary influence. In "Min Dada Hī Sara," he experimented with the language and meaning of a fifteenth-century Sinhala panegyric. Let us now examine these two songs.

In 1964 Ratnayake and Amaradeva's song "Bamareku Āvayi" (A bee came) aired on Ratnayake's radio program Swara Varna (Tone Colors). The song lyrics in "Bamareku Āvayi" called to mind poetry sung in village rituals that propitiated deities, especially the *kohomba kankariya,* which was performed to appease deities believed to reside in the Sri Lankan city of Kandy.[32] Here are the stanzas that Ratnayake reworked for "Bamareku Āvayi":

ahase gosin ahase sängavunā**dō**
polove gosin väli yata sängavunā**dō**
mūde gosin rala yata sängavunā**dō**
leda kala dēvatā kotanaka giyā**dō**

ahasē gosin ahasē sängavunat **varen**
polowē gosin väli yata sängavunat **varen**
mūde gosin rala yata sängavunat **varen**
leda kala devata kotänaka giyat **varen**

Did you go hide in the sky?
Did you go hide under the earth?
Did you go hide under a wave in the sea?
Deity of sickness, where did you go?

Although you hide in the sky, come here
Although you hide under ground, come here
Although you hide under a sea wave, come here
Deity of sickness, wherever you go, come here[33]

When we compare the diction with the song lyrics of Ratnayake's "Bamareku Āvayi," it becomes clear that Ratnayake evoked the *kohomba kankariya* stanzas in two ways.

bamareku āvayi nirita	digēya
hada pāruvayi miyuru	rasēya
mal paravūvayi sōketi	bōva
kandulu gälūvayi elō	gäbēya
sīta himē lenakata	pivisunā**dō**
āta epita giri kulakata	giyā**dō**
māta mepita mē adehima	lagī**dō**
dāsa anduru vī mā tani	vunā**dō**
salamin sumudu podi attatu miyuru saren	
nala mudu suvanda vindagannata giyat **varen**	
bala binda damā hiru yanavita avara giren	
balamin pipunu mal päni bonu risiva **varen**[34]	

First, Ratnayake crafted the song as a *sivupada* (quatrain with end rhyme). Second, his song lyric employed the same grammatical constructions found in the recited poetry, like the literary question marker, *-dō,* which I have bolded in both examples, and the colloquial imperative word for "come here," *varen,* also in bold in the two excerpts. Further analysis reveals that the diction of the song simultaneously evoked other village rituals, like the *bali* ritual, performed to minimize or ward off bad planetary influence.[35] Consider the suffix *-ēya* at the end of lines 1, 2, and 4,

bamareku āvayi nirita	dig**ēya**
hada pāruvayi miyuru	ras**ēya**
mal paravūvayi sōketi	bōva
kandulu gälūvayi elō	gäb**ēya**[36]

Noting this particular suffix, composer W. D. Amaradeva writes, "Most of the songs of the radio program 'Swara Varna' were composed according to folk materials. Madawala Ratnayake has penned the song lyrics of 'Bamareku Āvayi' closely

aligned with Sinhala folk poetry. Here he has been influenced by the *bali* ritual. That is why one finds the diction of this ritual in the song. 'Dig*ēya*,' 'ras*ēya*,' and so on, are examples of this."[37]

The meaning of the text added another layer. Recall how the song "Ran Van Karal Säleyi" simultaneously evoked the formal features of the tānama of the turaṅga vannama but departed from the text's original meaning (a story of Prince Siddhartha's renunciation) to tell a story of a prosperous village harvest. Similarly, Ratnayake's "Bamareku Āvayi" was not about appealing to gods to avoid astrological danger. It was reminiscent of Sinhala folk poems in which a bee and a flower symbolize a man and woman. The song was an allegory about a woman who is pleasurably "stung" by a man but "withers" in sadness because he has left her.

> A bee came from the southwest
> Stung the heart with the sweet *rasa.*
> Now the flower withers from sadness.
> Tears overflow and I feel like I am in another world

If the intertexts of Ratnayake's and Amaradeva's "Bamareku Āvayi" were *sivupada* quatrains from the *kohomba kankariya* and *bali* rituals, the source for the song "Min Dada Hī Sara" was a fifteenth-century *strōtra,* or panegyric titled *Pärakumba Sirita* (Account of King Parākramabāhu VI, c. 1415). Although the author is unknown, scholars believe that he was a poet in the court of King Parākramabāhu VI.[38] Consecrated in 1411, Parākramabāhu was the last king to unite the entire island under the sovereignty of one Sinhalese king. The poem comprised one hundred and forty quatrains, many of which were meant to be recited along with drums and other instruments used at the court to accompany dancers.[39]

Pärakumba Sirita is narrated almost exclusively from the standpoint of an omniscient narrator who elaborately extols the ancestors of King Parākramabāhu and glorifies the events of his life.[40] Stanzas 127 through 129, however, are exceptions, because they are told from the perspective of the king's courtesan. In stanza 129 she pleads with the king to pay her a visit in the evening:

> Bandā min dada mada aravindā sarala sara　　　yāne
> mandā nila turaṅguṭa negemindā viyowaga nan　　vāne
> chandā nalalesa viya neta nindā noladimi tani　　yāne
> kandā vare pärakum naranindā sakisaṅda saṅda　　pānē

> Hoisting the fish flag, and preparing the bow with the lotus arrow,
> Cupid comes on the horse of soft breezes fanning the fire of separation.
> The moon is like fire. I could not sleep with my eyes closed all alone
>   on the bed.
> Good friend, please summon King Parākramabāhu here in the
>   moonlight.[41]

The stanza details the courtesan's romantic frustration. The cupid and his equipment are metaphors for her erotic love. The cupid hoists his flag *(min dada),* prepares his "lotus arrow" *(mada aravindā),* and rides into the courtesan's room on the horse of gentle breeze *(manda nila turangu).* The lotus arrow has pierced her heart, that is, she has now fallen for King Parākramabāhu. She tells her friend *(sakisaňda)* to summon the king *(pärakum naranindā)* to visit her at night. And she blames her frustrating love experience on the breeze and moon because they make her burn with love. Although the cool breeze is usually a relief from the hot evening, it exacerbates her burning feelings of lust. The moon comes to symbolize her burning love: she complains, "the moon is like fire" *(chandā nalalesa viya).*

Ratnayake and Amaradeva based the song "Min Dada Hī Sara" (The Cupid's arrow, 1964) on this particular stanza. Whereas in "Ran Van Karal Salē" and "Bamareku Āvayi" Ratnayake evoked the formal features of the intertext but departed from the text's original contents, he accomplished the opposite in "Min Dada Hī Sara." That is, he abandoned the strictures of the original stanza's formal features but embraced the semantic content of the original. One finds in the song a similar scenario of the courtesan in *Pärakumba Sirita.* Consider the refrain:

> mindada hī sara vädī sälena hada
> nanvana duk gī obata ähenavada
> chandana mal aturā äti yahanata
> kanda kapā pāyan ran pun sanda

> [Do you hear my sad song
> From my heart that quivers from the Cupid's arrow?
> The sandalwood flowers are scattered on the bed
> Oh moon, please rise beyond the hill!][42]

The first half of this chapter has attempted to reveal the ways in which Madawala Ratnayake reformulated the rhythms, lexicon, diction, and semantic content of Sinhala folklore and court song to produce modern radio songs that would appeal to the Sinhalese Buddhist population. In the next half of this chapter, I turn to Ratnayake's contemporary, Gunadasa Amarasekera, to explore how he experimented in similar ways in the realm of poetry.

AMARASEKERA'S POETRY

Gunadasa Amarasekera's *Bhāva Gīta* (Meaningful song, 1955) was a collection of thirty-eight poems. It caught the attention of the reading public because it was the first modern collection of Sinhala poetry to experiment with the characters, scenarios, sentiments, and sometimes even the syntax and lexicon of jana kavi.[43] The first and second generations of Colombo poets had rarely considered jana kavi or even the lived experiences of villagers as suitable sources for new poetry.[44] Yet

Amarasekera believed that such poetry could resonate with the modern-day experiences of the Sinhalese. He informed his readers in the preface to *Bhāva Gīta* that it was necessary to create a new style that could dynamically reflect the "real life of the people" *(sajīva janakāyaka gē bhāvika jīvitaya):* "Artists ought to not be afraid to find a new path for Sinhala poetry and raise it to an elevated position. We need to create a dynamic poetic tradition that can illuminate the real life of the people. This book is an effort to fulfill this necessity."[45] Amarasekera believed it was crucial for modern Sinhala poets to absorb the tradition of folk poetry and channel it into contemporary works:

> Young poets can gain much from a critical appreciation of our folk poetry, which has been flourishing from the Kandy and Matara [eighteenth- and nineteenth-century] periods as tributaries that branched off from the mainstream of Sinhala poetry when it came to a halt during the Kotte period [fifteenth century]. These tributaries had been fed by the folk poets down the ages and, as a result of their contact with the living speech, retained what is viable in the main stream of our poetry. The task for a major poetic talent today is to unify these viable elements and create the poetic diction needed for the present. In other words, poets should strive to make the tributaries that branched off converge to form the main stream once again.[46]

Four poems in *Bhāva Gīta* stood out as endeavors to present portraits of village culture. In "Aluten Pareyi Joḍuwak Ävillā" (A new pigeon couple has come) Amarasekera evoked the folk belief that two pigeons that come to live in a house bring a spell of good luck for the family of that residence.[47] The narrator of the poem is a small child delighted because the pair of pigeons has come to roost on the rafters of her house. The narrator in "Uṅduvap Ävillā" (The month of Unduvap has come) is a male villager who praises nature during the months of December and January but also becomes sexually aroused, for the moon reminds him of his lover's face.[48] In "Vakkaḍa Baṅdimu" (Let's construct an opening in the dam), village men thank the gods for bringing rain that cools their bodies as they toil in the hot sun to create a hole in the dam to let off water from the paddy fields.

The fourth poem in *Bhāva Gīta* that sought to depict the life of villagers was "Aṅdura Apē Duka Nivāvi" (The darkness will soothe our sadness). The poem reworked one particular stanza, translated here, that is found in a subcategory of jana kavi known as *karatta kavi* (cart poetry), traditionally recited by carters who drove bullock carts.[49]

> Leading the cows of this cart,
> I beat the cow to avoid the grasslands.
> I see the Haputale Mountain ranges and sigh:
> "Drag the cart O sinner-cows and head to Haputale!"[50]

The carter believes his cows suffer because of the karma they accumulated from the sins (*pav*) of previous lives. The *eli samaya,* or end-rhyme, of this *karatta kavi*

stanza is achieved by simply ending each line with four present-tense colloquial verbs (in bold). I present the transliterated form of this poem here as Sinhala metered poetry appears, that is, with the final *eli samaya* word separate from the rest of the line.

taṇḍalē denna depalē	**dakkanavā**
kaṭukälē gāle nolihā vada	**denavā**
haputalē kanda däkalā **baḍa**	**danavā**
pav kaḷa gone ädapan haputal	**yanavā**[51]

Dakkanavā means to lead, *denavā* to give, *baḍa danavā* to sigh, and *yanavā* to go. All four words, as do all colloquial Sinhala-language verbs in the simple present tense, end in the suffix *-navā.* Because each foot ends with *-navā,* the like-phoneme(s) necessary for *eli samaya* is produced. Constructing *eli samaya* with verbs in the simple present tense is especially common in folk poetry, perhaps because such syntax imitates standard word order in Sinhala (subject-object-*verb*), thereby allowing Sinhala speakers to easily understand the meaning of the poem.

Amarasekera depicted in "Aňdura Apē Duka Nivāvi" a similar scenario to mirror the previously cited *karatta kavi* stanza. The carter, for example, was also one who believed his cows suffered because of their karma.

It is because of karma that we have to suffer like this
This is what Lord Buddha taught in order to eradicate suffering[52]

Amarasekera also utilized colloquial language, as found in the *karatta kavi* poem. In the first couplet of his poem we find the colloquial terms for the words "like" *(vagē),* "body" *(änga),* and "very" *(harima)* (in bold), as well as *eli samaya* with colloquial Sinhala-language verbs in the simple present tense, that is, those that end with the suffix *-navā.* Amarasekera, however, went a step further: he shortened the final syllables of the simple present-tense verbs—*enavā* is to come and *dänenavā* is to feel—from a long *-vā* to a short *-va* (in bold) because speakers tend to end simple present-tense verbs with a short vowel.

yaman kaḷuve gedara yanna, kanda uḍin aňdura	ena**va**
umbaṭa **vagē** mage **änga**ṭat **hari ma** viḍāvak	dänena**va**
Let's go Kaluwe, take us home as darkness creeps over the mountains	
My body feels very tired like yours[53]	

Amarasekera also sought to create poetry for "the people" in *Bhāva Gīta* through a particular poetic meter he called the *pas mat virita* (lit. meter having five syllabics).[54] He discovered the meter, known earlier as *vṛitta gandhi,* in various genres of folk poetry, including *tovil* stanzas sung to cure diseases related to demonic possession, and in the *Sihabā Asna* and the *Kuveni Asna,* poems that narrated the origin

legend of the Sinhalese people.[55] The meter has twenty syllabics per line with a cae-sura after every five. Amarasekera claimed the meter's structure had a deep-rooted compatibility with the Sinhala language and was "ideal for expressing contemporary experience."[56] He powerfully employed the *pas mat virita* meter to imitate the sound of rain in the five-syllable onomatopoetic phrase (chi-chi-ri-chi-ri) featured in the poem "Vässa" (The rain). Consider Ranjini Obeyesekere's translation:

> Chi-chi-ri-chi-ri, chi-chi-ri-chi-ri dripping from morning
> Falling in endless drops, penetrating, spine chilling,
> Roads and lanes, leaves and trees in grey mist smothering
> The rain rains, the rain rains, all day unceasing[57]

In 1961 Amarasekera published his third collection of poetry, *Amal Biso.* In the preface to the second edition he strove to link the folk ethos in *Amal Biso* to the works featured in *Bhāva Gīta.* Yet one fundamental difference existed between the two collections of verse: "If *Bhāva Gīta,*" Amarasekera suggested, "was a journey I took unconsciously toward the tradition of Sinhala poetry, *Amal Biso* was a conscious journey."[58] Amarasekera had become conscious of the historically important role played by folk poets in the seventeenth century.

Amarasekera believed that the so-called Sītāvaka period (1530–1620) commenced a dark age in Sinhala poetry. After the Portuguese annexed the Sītāvaka court in 1594, they not only demolished Buddhist temples and gave prestigious government positions to Roman Catholic converts but also suppressed Sinhala-language literary expression and dismantled the system of courtly patronage to learned Sinhala poets.[59] Amarasekera noted how court poetry disappeared to such an extant that we know of only one active Sinhala court poet during the period: Alagiyavanna Mukaveti.[60] Amarasekera thus argued, "Our scholarly poetic path did not evolve in the seventeenth century. Our last scholarly poet was Alagiya-vanna Mukaveti."[61]

The Sinhala poets who carried forward the tradition at this dark time, in the judgment of Amarasekera, were the *folk poets,* figures who never received the recognition they deserved. Therefore, the common assumption that scholarly classical poetry ("great tradition") and so-called unlearned folk poetry ("little tradition") existed at two fundamentally opposed ends was false. As Amarasekera wrote, "We cannot conceive the great tradition *(mahā sampradaya)* and little tradition *(cūla sampradaya)* as separate entities."[62] He believed, rather, that the histories of literature and folklore together constituted one literary history, because after the Portuguese put an end to courtly patronage of learned Sinhala poets, many of the messages of scholarly poetry came to be transmitted through folk poems. Amarasekera wrote, "The folk poet drew on his own everyday language to make for himself more concrete the language of the erudite poet, a language about which he had little knowledge. This is evident in [orally transmitted] works like the *Vessan-*

tara Katāva (The story of Vessantara), *Yasōdara Vata* (The legend of Yasodhara), *Saṅda Kiṅduru Kava* (The poem of the Satyresses), and *Pattini Hॕlla* (The tale of Pattini), as well as in the *Bali Tovil* verses [sung to cure demonic possession]. The folk poets did not create scholarly works of poetry. Yet they were successful poets because they unconsciously carried forward our tradition."[63]

Vessantara Katāva, Yasōdara Vata, Saṅda Kiṅduru Kava, and *Pattini Hॕlla* are part of a subset of popular folk poems known colloquially as *gämi kavi katā* (village narrative poems).[64] If anonymous folk poets were indeed the ones who carried on the tradition of Sinhala poetry through such orally transmitted poems at a time when the court poets had died out in the seventeenth century, Amarasekera felt justified to deliberately draw on the sentiments, diction, and style of these poems in his new book, *Amal Biso.* He maintained the conviction that folk poetry was relevant, despite the fact that many of his contemporaries denounced folk poetry as a source that prevented poets from engaging with the complexities of contemporary life.[65]

For example, in *Amal Biso* Amarasekera displayed his mastery of one genre of Sinhala jana kavi through the poem "Āla Vaḍana Raban Kavi" (A raban poem that nourishes love). As the title indicates, Amarasekera turned to *raban pada,* verses customarily recited by women in villages who would simultaneously drum on the large *raban* frame drum at Sinhalese New Year festivals in April. Amarasekera started the poem with a tānama, the same type of rhythmic pattern that we encountered earlier in this chapter:

> tam denā tanena tanena tanena tānenā[66]

Because the tānama provided the firm rhythmic basis for the diction of *raban pada,* Amarasekera attempted to use it as the foundation for the seven stanzas of "Āla Vaḍana Raban Kavi." The unusually tricky challenge he faced was to create a meaningful poem while simultaneously mimicking the nineteen-beat rhythm of the tānama, particularly its subgroups of five, three, three, three, five (notated in the first line). And he had to produce *aga mula eli samaya* (like-phonemes at the end *and* beginning of a line) with the syllable *na.* Consider how the first line of poetry—*de nuvanā saraya obē dilena gini genā* (the essence of your two eyes is its flame)—matched with the tānama.

EXAMPLE 6. Rhythm and like-phonemes in tānama of *raban pada* compared with rhythm and like-phonemes in Gunadasa Amarasekera's "Āla Vaḍana Raban Kavi."

The message of the poem, a man's attempt to console and then seduce his lover, almost takes back seat to the formal strictures of rhythm and rhyme rooted in the *raban pada*.

The book *Amal Biso* is titled after a long poem of the same name. Amarasekera began "Amal Biso" with precisely the kind of language and tone that one hears in village narrative poems, a language easy to understand and capable of capturing the attention of an audience.[67]

> Once upon a time there was a lake.
> And in the lake lived demons.
> They spit fire like lightning
> And they devoured any animal they saw.
>
> A flower one day blossomed in the lake.
> It was small but smelled nice.
> It had a face that resembled a flower.
> It was not really a flower, but a small child.
>
> A princess was born out of this flower.
> Her form and her beauty were just like that flower.
> Her scent wafted a far distance.
> The demons couldn't yet see her. (vv. 1–3)[68]

He crafted the poem in the style of time-honored village narrative poems, yet the semantic content of the poem was a response to critics' arguments that folk poetry prevented poets from engaging with the complexities of modern life. "Amal Biso" was an allegory about a contemporary issue yet to be broached in the realm of Sinhala verse: the enforcement of chastity. Society, Amarasekera thought, stigmatizes women who act on their craving for bodily pleasure before marriage. Yet repressing this desire, he believed, brings horrible consequences. Amarasekera contended that however much parents imprison their daughters at home and scare them with stories about evil men, such strategies could not destroy bodily urges. Instead of blaming innocent women for acting on their natural urges, Amarasekera maintained that the whole societal system was to blame. Societies, he argued, should not vilify women who desire intimacy, because lust is an integral part of human life.[69] He prefaced the poem with words to console a woman who has suffered by the hands of society:

> Do not weep, Wimala.
> I know what happened is humanity's fault.
> I will announce this so that the whole world hears.[70]

The allegory revolved around a beautiful little girl, Amal Biso, who is born from a flower in a lake filled with demons (vv. 1–3). It is the duty of the swan-women of the lake to prevent Amal Biso from falling prey to the demons of the lake (v. 4). Amal Biso represents young women, the demons symbolize men, and the swan-

women overprotective parents. The swan-women imprison Amal Biso in a golden mansion on a snowy peak of the Himalayan Mountains (vv. 5–8), narrate horrifying stories about the demons (vv. 13–26), and construct a golden tree (v. 28), where three parrots stand guard and give Amal Biso advice (vv. 29–30). Perhaps the parrots represent her superego.

Amal Biso longs to feel the touch of the demons (v. 39), dreams about opening the door of the golden mansion to meet them (vv. 41–48), and even cracks open the door to peep outside (vv. 49–50). Then one day a demon comes to the golden mansion to entice her to open the door (vv. 67–68). The parrot tells her to keep the door shut (vv. 70–72). The demon becomes angry and burns the first parrot to death (v. 73). The demon comes again. This happens two more times (vv. 74–93). Finally, the demon returns a fourth time, and there are no parrots to advise Amal Biso against opening the door (v. 99). In the climactic concluding stanzas that narrate Amal Biso opening the door, Amarasekera ended six stanzas (vv. 101–5, 111), like the two translated here, with the word "opened."

The golden door of the palace she	opened
With desire in her mind she	opened
To the voice of the demon the door she	opened
The door Amal Biso	opened (v. 101)
The golden door of the palace she	opened
The sandalwood door she	opened
To the voice of the demon the door	opened
The door Amal Biso	opened (v. 102)[71]

Then the demons gruesomely kill her (vv. 112–14). The last two lines of the final stanza ends with the message of the preface:

Pouring tears of sadness, do not cry my girl
My sweetheart, I'll explain your innocence so that the whole world hears (v. 115)[72]

This chapter sought to elucidate the way in which one lyricist and one poet in postcolonial Sri Lanka attempted to modernize song and poetry by channeling formal and semantic features of folklore and classical literature into their compositions. At times they emphasized the formal features of the prior texts. At other times they emphasized intratextual semantic features. Such movements were not confined to Sri Lanka and may have occurred in many places in South Asia in the mid-twentieth century. For instance, regarding Bangla literature, Sudipta Kaviraj writes, "From the 1940s, due to radical influences, there were attempts to accord *literary* recognition to folk traditions, which had been treated with indifference if not contempt by the early creators of high Bangla. This is reflected in an interest in the recovery and inventorization of Bāul songs and tales told by grandmothers."[73]

In Sri Lanka Amarasekera and Ratnayake were the first to emphasize that new poems and songs had to reflect the lives of Sinhalese Buddhists raised in villages.

The preceding two chapters explored how the Sinhalese rural intelligentsia responded in song and poetry to the new political and sociolinguistic climate, owing to the watershed general election and the Official Language Act of 1956. In the final chapter before the conclusion I continue to focus on this moment. I analyze the way one songwriter-poet benefited from the political and sociopolitical shifts of 1956 but grew disillusioned with parochial nationalism and campaigned to fashion a more tolerant society.

Illusions to Disillusions

The first page of this monograph introduces the reader to the lyricist and poet Mahagama Sekera (1929–76). Sekera argued that a test of a good song was to take away the music and see whether the lyrics could stand on their own as a piece of literature. In this final chapter I focus on the stylistic volte-face of Sekera and thus organize the chapter into two sections.

Section 1 investigates song and poetry that Sekera published between 1958 and 1963. The objective of this section is to reveal how Sekera wrote song and verse to transport Sinhalese readers to fictional realms that transcended objective reality. To substantiate this observation I examine four areas of Sekera's oeuvre that reveal his preoccupation with the fictional narrative templates: (1) poetry and song that reworked Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam* (1859); (2) poetry and song that drew on notions of the imagination that can be traced to English romanticism; (3) radio song that expanded the narratives of Sinhala folk poetry; and (4) theater song that constructed new fictional worlds based on Sinhala legends.

I argue that one reason Sekera was drawn toward apolitical fiction between 1958 and 1963 was because he felt no need to criticize the state. He was empowered by the 1956 general election and the Official Language Act. It had not yet dawned on him that the "Sinhalization" of the country would result in the discrimination against and marginalization of the Tamil minority.

Why was Sekera empowered? He became empowered because he found secure employment with a government institution that did not exist prior to S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's victory. In June 1958 Sekera was hired as a Sinhala-English translator for the Department of Official Languages, a new government department that Bandaranaike had established in 1956 to implement the Sinhala Only Act. Second,

Sekera became empowered when Sinhala became the official language. Sekera's first nineteen years (1929–48) were spent living in a British-controlled country where fluency in the colonizer's language, English, was necessary to gain employment in government, politics, medicine, and law. At this time nearly 90 percent of the population, however, could not speak or write in English with literacy, defined as the ability to write a short letter and read the reply.[1] During the colonial era the British did not recognize Sinhala, the language of the majority, as an official language. Many members of the Sinhalese intelligentsia in 1956 thus believed that the Sinhala Only Act represented the dawn of a new "age of the common man" *(podujana yugayak).*

In 1960 Sekera continued to find state support for his creativity, when he began working as a songwriter for the national radio station, Radio Ceylon. By that time composer and vocalist W. D. Amaradeva had commenced his post as the conductor of the station's Sinhala Music Orchestra. Amaradeva and Sekera launched a popular radio program, Madhuvanti. Calling their program Madhuvanti, after an Indian classical *rāga* (musical mode), perhaps reflected their desires to produce a form of art song. To create songs for Madhuvanti, Sekera revised his poetry into song texts through modifications in structure, syntax, lexicon, and morphology. Composer W. D. Amaradeva then set many of Sekera's song texts to music, music that often blended North Indian classical music with Sinhala folk song. Amaradeva sang his musical settings of Sekera's song texts as the main vocalist. Many of the song texts analyzed in this chapter were those Sekera wrote for the Madhuvanti program.

The second section of this chapter turns to the volte-face and offers a reading of Sekera's first work of free verse, which he wrote in stream of consciousness and published in 1964. I suggest that Sekera had grown disillusioned with ethnic nationalism, industrialization, and his earlier poetry's lack of political engagement. In his first work of free verse he thus requested readers to resist ethnic or linguistic nationalism, reflect on the pros and cons of industrialization, and create a multiethnic utopia. One reason Sekera's switch from illusions to disillusions is significant is that it provides evidence that there was a voice of dissent within the Sinhalese intelligentsia at the moment in which Sinhala linguistic nationalism became the state's dangerously divisive language policy.

ILLUSIONS

Rubáiyát songs

In 1958 Sekera published in the journal *Rasavāhini* a translation of one of the most cosmopolitan English poems of the twentieth century: Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam.* Sekera's poetic translation consisted of forty-five stanzas composed in nonrhyming quatrains. Each line had sixteen syllabic instants, or

mātrā. Sekera skipped over a total of thirty-two stanzas in the original, combined two stanzas into one (vv. 25 and 26), and jumped out of order a bit.

Originally published in 1891 at the peak of the British Empire, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam* was the most frequently published English-language literary work in the twentieth century.[2] Within twentieth-century South Asia, Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát* was arguably not only the most translated poem but also the poem translated into the highest number of Indian languages. South Asian poets translated the work from English into at least eleven languages.[3] In Hindi alone poets published as many as fifteen translations of Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát* between 1930 and 1958, including twelve between 1931 and 1939. The immense popularity of the poem in North India was demonstrated by the fact that Harivansh Rai Bachchan's adaption, *Madhushala* (The house of wine, 1935) was reprinted fifty-four times and sold more than one hundred thousand copies.[4]

After Sekera published his first translation in 1958, he continued to experiment with the poem. He authored a parody of the famous eleventh stanza in his first book of poetry, *Vyangā,* and crafted three lyrics of *Rubáiyát*-inspired songs aired on Madhuvanti in the early 1960s. In the first song, "Gī Potayi Mī Vitayi" (A book of verse, a flask of wine), Sekera reinterpreted Fitzgerald's well-known eleventh stanza. The original eleventh stanza is written here:

> Here with a loaf of bread beneath the bough
> A Flask of wine, a Book of Verse and Thou
> Beside me singing in the wilderness
> Oh Wilderness were Paradise enow[5]

In this quatrain the wine, book, and woman transformed the frightful wilderness into a paradise. In Sekera's song text, by contrast, he conceived the wine and book as metaphors. As evident here, he professed his love for the "book of [her] eyes" and the "wine of [her] lips":

> A book of song, a flask of wine
> Give me neither.
> What I want is in your possession:
> The book of your eyes and
> The wine of your lips.[6]

In Sekera's second *Rubáiyát*-based song, "Oba Mā Turulē" (You in my embrace), he returned to the eleventh verse. If "Gī Potayi, Mī Vitayi" was a parody of the eleventh stanza, "Oba Mā Turulē" sought to convey its original message. Here is a translation of Sekera's refrain:

> When you sing in my embrace
> The jungle becomes a heavenly kingdom for me
> O heavenly princess![7]

Sekera drew further on *Rubáiyát*'s eleventh stanza for the opening lines of the first verse in "Oba Mā Turulē":

> [I] take in hand a flask of wine and book of verse
> In the blue shade of this thicket of trees[8]

He then mixed in Fitzgerald's thirty-seventh stanza:

> Ah, fill the Cup:—what boots it to repeat
> How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
> Unborn To-Morrow and dead Yesterday
> Why fret about them if To-day be sweet![9]

When one compares Fitzgerald's original thirty-seventh stanza with the next two stanzas of Sekera's song, it becomes clear that Sekera expanded Fitzgerald's thirty-seventh stanza into the following two quatrains:

> If our life is sweet today
> Why lament the corpse of yesterday?
> If our life is sweet today
> Why strain for an unborn tomorrow?
>
> There is no need to say it again:
> Time's two feet creep on.
> Please bring to me without delay
> Your flask of wine filled to the brim[10]

In his third *Rubáiyát*-based song, "Galā Bahina Jaladhārāvak Sē" (Like a flowing current of water), Sekera based the opening stanza on the fourth line of the *Rubáiyát*'s twenty-eighth stanza, in which the narrator proclaims, "I came like Water, and like Wind I go." My translation of the Sinhala refrain is found here:

> Like the flowing current of water,
> [Life] surfaces and comes here
> Like the wind of the desert
> [Life] departs and goes away from here[11]

Sekera then reworked Fitzgerald's twenty-ninth stanza. Here is Fitzgerald's original twenty-ninth stanza:

> Into this Universe, and *why* not knowing,
> Nor *whence,* like Water willy-nilly flowing:
> And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
> I know not *whither,* willy-nilly blowing.[12]

The narrator in Fitzgerald's version, ostensibly Omar Khayyam himself, admitted ignorance in the face of questions about the origins of life. Sekera simplified the idea in this way:

> From where has [life] come?
> Why has [life] come?
> Where does [life] go?
> No one knows[13]

The Imagination-Woman

Further evidence that Sekera had no desire before 1964 to write poetry that engaged in politics or societal critique can be gleaned from poetry he authored about the imagination. Consider, for example, "Sankalpanaya" (Imagination), the title of the opening poem that Sekera published in his first book of verse, *Vyangā* (Allusion, 1960). Literary historian W. A. Abeysinghe makes the following crucial observation about the poem: "When we study this poem carefully, we find that the poet is not calling out to his lover. He is addressing the imagination that is growing within him."[14]

That is, in the poem, the character of "you" was a feminine personification of the narrator's imagination. The first six lines are translated here:

> Flowing and flowing
> Along my stream of thoughts
> You reach my heart
> From the waves of faraway seas,
> From lonely gusts of mist that drape cold crags,
> From chilly sloping brooks and tear-soaked valleys[15]

The poet longed to be united with the imagination-woman, who could bend the real world's laws of perception:

> Poring over a book in bed
> I glimpse your name between the printed letters.
> If I hear a sound, I hear your voice.
> I unconsciously paint your figure.
> We are once more not two:
> You are me and I am you.[16]

Mahagama Sekera may have derived "Sankalpanaya" from passages in Kahlil Gibran's *The Voice of the Master* (trans. 1958), a book that Sekera purchased in 1960, the year he published *Vyangā*. For example, in the lines translated earlier one finds echoes of this passage from Gibran's *The Voice of the Master*: "From the days of my youth, I have been haunted, waking and sleeping, by the phantom of a strange woman. I see her when I am alone at night, sitting by my bedside. In the midnight silence I hear her heavenly voice. Often, when I close my eyes, I feel the

touch of her gentle fingers upon my lips; and when I open my eyes, I am over-come with dread, and suddenly begin listening intently to the whispered sounds of Nothingness."[17] Sekera modified the poem "Sankalpanaya" into a Madhuvanti song with a refrain that referred to the imagination as "Maidens of Thought":

> Flowing on and on
> Maidens of Thought
> From the world of dreams
> Maidens of Thought
> Flowing on and on[18]

In addition to Gibran, it is possible that Sekera personified imagination as an oth-erworldly woman because he was influenced by a notion of the creative act that can be traced to the second generation of English romantic poets. In 1816, for example, Percy Bysshe Shelley authored "Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude" about a hero who takes a symbolic "voyage" to discover a maiden, whose "voice was like the voice of his own soul / Heard in the calm of thought; its music long / Like woven sounds of streams and breezes." As noted by Stephen Gurney, a scholar of romantic poetry: "She is at once an emblem of that intellectual beauty on whose trace the poet is driven and a personification of the imaginative faculty that awak-ens the poet's nostalgia for that nameless something which the 'Preface' [in "Alas-tor; or, The Spirit of Solitude"] describes as 'all of wonderful, wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture.'"[19] Gurney adds that the imagination-women would reappear in Shelley's poetry as the character Asia in *Prometheus Unbound,* Emily in *Epipsychidion,* Urania in *Adonais,* and the lady with the green thumb in *The Sensitive Plant.*[20]

Equally fascinating is the way in which Sekera's poetry called to mind earlier poets of other South Asian languages who were also influenced by romantic poets and who popularized the same idea in their respective languages. Consider, for example, the late nineteenth-century Marathi poet, Krishnaji Keshav Damle "Ke-shavsut," who wrote similar poetry in 1891 and 1892. Keshavsut titled one poem "Kalpkatā," which translates to "Imagination," as did Sekera's "Sankalpanaya." Phil-ip C. Engblom, a scholar of Marathi literature, writes this about Keshavsut: "Dur-ing the next two years [1891–92], Keshavsut wrote [in Marathi] several more alle-gorical sonnets on the themes of poetry and the poet, with titles such as 'Kalpkatā' (Imagination) and 'Kavi' (The Poet). . . . In these poems he developed a kind of ro-mantic myth to express his new ideas about the creative act: hence his concern for representing such themes as the divine source of inspiration and imagination, the worship of the muse, and the misunderstood poet.[21] The fact that Sekera had no contact with Keshavsut but wrote poetry about the same theme culled from Kahlil Gibran and English romanticism is evidence of the deep influence of English lit-erature throughout South Asia in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Let us consider two further examples from Sekera's early poetry that portrayed the poet as a dreamer who longs for the blessings of the imagination, which was personified as an ethereal woman. Sekera published two additional poems in *Vyangā* on this theme: "Māyā" (Illusion) and "Saraswati." Saraswati is the Hindu goddess of the imagination. In the poem "Saraswati," Sekera personified the imagination as this goddess. The poem depicted a poet who lays alone in bed at night. When he thinks of Saraswati, she sparks his creative energy:

> While the world is still asleep
> In the thick darkness
> Lazily lying alone on the bed
> I open the windows of my eyes.
> I wait for you and think about you
>
> One thousand poetic thoughts are
> Spontaneously conceived in my heart[22]

Saraswati comes to the poet in a dream and gives him a kiss. Now blessed, the poet's mind again brims with creativity:

> At that moment you approach
> My bed of sleep in the form of a dream.
> When you kiss me, you bestow
> The sweet gift of poetic talent
> . . . .
> One thousand poetic thoughts are
> Again spontaneously conceived in my heart[23]

Compare this poem with the following three lines from Keshavsut's ode to Saraswati in his 1892 Marathi-language protosonnet "Śabdānno! Māgute yā!" ("O words! Come back!"):

> Where I plucked flowers off the wishing tree, and, bowing, offered
>   them to Sharada [Saraswati]
> My heart's realm spontaneously grew intoxicated with the sound of
>   the words
> And in the dream I cast the entire prosaic world into the sorry
>   depths![24]

In both poems the poet's heart spontaneously overflows with poetic ideas after interacting with Saraswati, who may be considered analogous to the Western Muses of the romantics.

The same theme can be found in Sekera's poem, "Māyā" (Illusion, 1960). Here, four women named "Lust," "Gold," "Wisdom," and "Fame" attempt to seduce the narrator. The narrator turns them down. Such women can provide him only

temporary comfort. He is looking for a woman he can love forever. Ultimately, a woman from the realm of the imagination named Māyā says this to the narrator:

> "My name is Māyā.
> I am a star shining in the firmament.
> No one can come near me
> For I am like the line of the horizon,
> Seen from the wide sea.
> I am the mirage of the sea.
> I live in the imagination and
> Come to you like a dream.
> Do you not love me?"[25]

She is the only woman whom the narrator can love forever:

> "I love you
> I love you
> All this time I was looking
> Only for one girl: You.
> You are the only girl
> Whom I can love forever"[26]

Expanding Narratives of Folk Poetry

Based on the previous two subsections, it may be clear enough that Sekera's early poetry, inspired by Victorian and romantic poetry, was apolitical in that it sought to immerse readers in a fictional world. To further cement my argument that Sekera had no interest in societal critique before his first work of free verse of 1964, I analyze in this subsection two poems in which Sekera expanded on the basic narrative templates found in Sinhala jana kavi (folk poetry). Like many of his contemporaries in the late 1950s and 1960s, Sekera found inspiration in genres of Sinhala folk poetry. In the wake of the post-1956 "social revolution," Sekera was part of a group of Sinhala poets who championed a romantic nationalism that viewed Sinhala folk poetry as a viable source for new poetry.

For example, Sekera found inspiration in *kamat kavi,* a type of verse that Sinhalese farmers traditionally recited to ensure a successful harvest. The recitation was part of a cultivation rite performed on the *kamata,* the area where grain was separated from the plant. The quatrain here is a translation of a well-known example of *kamat kavi:*

> Draw the paddy in the upper fields,
> The paddy in the lower fields,
> And the paddy in the lofts and barns,
> To fill this *kamata*[27]

In Sekera's poem "Kekaṭiya Mal," which was also the text for the Madhuvanti song titled "Ihala Velē," Sekera reused the traditional *kamat kavi* meter of twelve syllabic instants and reworked the imagery that revolved around the upper field closest to the irrigation tank *(ihala velē)* and the lower field farthest from the tank *(pahala velē)*. Consider the first two stanzas in "Kekaṭiya Mal":

> In the upper fields
> Amid bundles of *diyahabarala* flowers
> Dark black braids fall beyond her chest.
> She bends to the earth. Who is that
> Picking edible green leaves?
> . . . .
>
> In the lower fields the paddy is fallow,
> Desolate and teeming with weeds.
> Lonely all by myself
> I plow the paddy.
> Your distant face
> Appears in my thoughts[28]

In the low and fallow field the farmer works alone. He sees a beautiful woman at work in the distant high field. The farmer returns to his solitary work. But the image of the woman's face appears in his mind. Suddenly rain comes, *kekaṭiya* flowers bloom, and the rainwater irrigates the paddy fields:

> The new rain fills the tank
> Kekaṭiya flowers come up to the surface,
> Bending and waving this way and that.
> The water of the lake irrigates the field.[29]

The final images of the composition are of ripened paddy and the farmer, who calls out to his "sister" (referring to the same beautiful woman) to bring *ämbula,* the rice that she would carry in a *vaṭṭiya* (open basket) on her head to feed the workers in the field:

> The paddy ripens, from green to milky white.
> On the day of the golden harvest,
> Bring some *ämbula,* sister, and
> Come to the field![30]

Sekera liked to write literature with a double meaning.[31] One could think that the final two stanzas translated earlier ("The new rain" and "The paddy ripens") portrayed the *imagination* of the farmer who plowed alone. More specifically, Sekera may have meant for the new rain and the golden harvest to symbolize the joy the farmer feels in his daydream about the girl that appeared in his mind. After Sekera

mentioned that the face of the distant girl appeared in the farmer's mind, Sekera did not clearly connect the mental image of the girl to the new rain that filled the tank. Sekera leaves open the possibility that the mind of the man plowing alone wandered from seeing the girl's face to imagining what it would be like to spend his life with her.

Also grist for Sekera's mill was the diction and sentiments of *päl kavi* (hut poetry), the verses that Sinhalese men traditionally recited throughout the night in small watch-huts to drive away forest animals that might trample the paddy fields. Here is a well-known stanza in translation:

> In lovely lonely fields the big grain ripens
> Tormenting beasts and elephants wild I drive away
> Protect me gods, it is this rice that I exist on
> But because I'm poor, in watch-huts I spend my days[32]

In the Sinhala stanza the poetic meter is the *samudraghōṣa* meter of eighteen syllabics, and one also finds *eli samaya,* a poetic technique whereby the final syllable in each line of the quatrain ends with a like-phoneme. The hut watcher vividly situates the listener in his context by referencing his surroundings, dangerous job, faith in divine protection, and poverty.

Sekera styled his poem-song "Dukaṭa Kiyana Kavi Sivpada" (Quatrains sung for sadness) after *päl kavi* by employing the *samudraghōṣa* meter with *eli samaya* and telling a narrative pervaded with the sentiment of loneliness. The reader is transported to a fictional world where a farmer takes his *verandah* mat to the paddy field to rest. When the farmer glances at the design of the mat, he remembers his lover's hands that wove it. Flooded with sadness, a poem comes to mind:

> I take the *verandah* mat to the field
> Spread it on the loft and lay down.
> The two hands that wove the design come to my mind.
> The sadness in my heart inspires the poem I start to sing.[33]

The weaver was his *nāna,* the daughter of his father's younger sister. The farmer would traditionally be expected to marry her. The farmer is painfully reminded of her absence when he sees the flowers and parrots return in the spring:

> Just to knit a flower garland for your neck
> From the seasonal flowers that bloom on the fence
> The parrots of the jungle still come near
> To hear you sing *sivpada* [recited quatrains][34]

Fictional Templates from Sinhala Legends

Between 1960 and 1963 Sekera was also busy writing theater songs. He wrote songs for his own musicals: *Swarṇatilakā* (The tale of Swarṇatilakā, 1959), *Kuṇḍalakēśī*

(The tale of Kundalekesi, 1961), and *Hansa Gītaya* (The swan song, [1960–69?]). He also wrote songs for dancer Chitrasena's popular ballet *Karadiya* (Sea water, 1961) and Gunasena Galappati's play *Mūdu Puttu* (Sons of the sea, 1962).[35]

In 1961 Sekera completed a full-length musical, titled *Kuṇḍalakēśī*. Composer Somadasa Elvitigala (1925–90) set Sekera's script to music, and P. Walikala produced the musical that year at Colombo's Havelock Theater. Sekera based his musical on the legend about the woman named Kuṇḍalakēśī. This particular legend was written down in the thirteenth century by the Buddhist monk Dharmasena Thera in the collection of Buddhist stories known as the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* (The jewel garland of the true doctrine).

It is possible that Sekera's earlier work as an English-Sinhala translator influenced his desire to compose a musical like Kuṇḍalakēśī. Five years earlier Sekera had translated Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The White Company* (1891) into Sinhala and titled it *Dhāwala Senankaya* (1956). Conan Doyle wrote *The White Company* when England's colonial regime was at its peak of power. His story was an adventure novel that glorified the chivalry of the British during their fourteenth-century struggles with France over territories that would eventually be incorporated into the French kingdom. The novel was a "commentary on the [British] fourteenth century seen through nineteenth-century eyes" and also "an act of love for England, a profession of faith in the chivalric code."[36] Likewise, *Kuṇḍalakēśī* was a commentary on the thirteenth century in Sri Lanka seen through Sekera's twentieth-century eyes. Let us compare the beginning of the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* with the verse Sekera composed:

> In the city of Rajagaha there lived a very beautiful young woman of noble family. She was about sixteen years old and extremely attractive. Young women of that age are often intoxicated with their youth and are sexually attracted to men. To prevent any loose behavior, her parents shut her up in a room on the topmost floor of a seven-storied palace, with only a serving maid to attend on her. It was as if she was imprisoned for being born beautiful.
>
> [One day] a certain young man caught thieving was being dragged to his execution. His hands were tied behind him and he was being whipped as he went. Hearing the commotion the young noblewoman looked out of her top story room. She saw the youth being taken for execution, fell in love with him, wanted none other for a husband, and refused all food taken to her bed.[37]

I have translated Sekera's poem in rhyme to give a sense of his stanzas with end-rhyme:

> Commentator:
> There once lived a callous rogue in Rajagaha town
> Was so rough that in his heart could a stone be found
> One glance of his great shape seen from balcony above
> Suddenly a smitten Princess fell so deeply in love[38]

Beyond transforming the prose into poetry, he also experimented with new perspectives. For example, he replaced the omniscient narrator of the original *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* with a singing troupe, commentator, and executioners.

> Singing Troupe:
> When two from different worlds attempt to join together
> There is a love in which a break lies in the nether
> In the love that seemed eternal quickly hate does fill
> The hands that saved a life will be the hands that kill
>
> . . . .
>
> Commentator:
> Now I'll weave a poem that tells a great old tale
> When you listen if I slip up please don't stand and yell
> The time is right to begin, let us no further delay
> With your consent we'll raise the curtain and begin this play
>
> . . . .
>
> Executioners [marching in a procession to the top of a hill where the thief will be pushed off]:
>
> We raise our swords and say,
> "Where are the thieves today?"
> We shook with fear before
> Today all that is no more
> We'll push him off the hill
> For innocents he killed
> Sacrifice him to death
> Put all our troubles to rest
> Those who have gathered a lot
> Forget that in death there's not
> Chance to take wealth along[39]

The most popular song of *Kuṇḍalakēśī* was "Anna Balan Saňda" (Come see the moon). To write this song, Sekera elaborated on an unelaborated scene in the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya:* the walk of the princess and thief to death mountain. Dharmasena Thera mentioned this walk only briefly in the following passage:

> "Wear your best clothes and adorn yourself in your richest ornaments," he [the thief] said, "And since it is a pleasure trip, let's leave all your relatives and kinsmen behind." Determined to win his steadfast affection, she did exactly as he wanted. When they arrived at the foot of the rock, he said, "Dear One, from this point on only you and I should proceed. We must not take our retinue. If many people accompany us there, they will be sure to dirty and litter the sacred area, and it will be impossible to stop them from doing so. Therefore, let just the two of us go. Besides, the offering is for

the gods, so you yourself should carry it." She did just as he suggested. *The thief accompanied her to the top of the rock from which robbers are hurled.*[40]

The only reference to their solitary walk is this sentence: "The thief accompanied her to the top of the rock from which robbers are hurled." Sekera, however, created a possible fictional world within the constraints of the legend: the thief and princess sing a love song duet while walking together up the mountain. At this point the princess does not know she is being tricked. The thief is trying to keep her calm before he attempts to murder her at the mountaintop. In the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* Dharmasena Thera focalized the story through only Kuṇḍalakēśī's perspective. In "Anna Balan Saṅda," however, Sekera introduced the perspective of the thief as well.[41] In the song the otherwise dangerous forest becomes a romantic setting for the couple. It is filled with the aroma of flowers and vines on trees that entwine like two lovers in an embrace:

> Thief:
> See the white chilly river
> Flowing from the moon and
> Allaying your heart's sadness.
> The aroma of the white sandalwood trees
> Fuses with the song of the *kokila* bird
> Beautiful is this bedroom of a forest,
> Which whispers endearing words
> And pleases the queen's ears. . . .
>
> Princess:
> The creepers are like lovers
> wrapped around each other
> with love and affection.[42]

Lubomir Doležel terms such a literary process "literary transduction." Doležel defines literary transduction as a supplementary fictional world that authors construct, which provides new perspectives and fills in gaps from the "protoworld."[43] The protoworld in our case is the way that Dharmasena Thera narrated the legend in the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya*. In this literary transduction our experience is newly focalized through the perspective of the thief and the princess.

In the first half of this chapter, I have argued that between the years 1958 and 1963 Sekera fashioned poetry and song that drew influence from Victorian and romantic poetry as well as Sinhala folk poetry and legends. One might argue that Sekera's interest in folk poetry and legends was a form of cultural nationalism. I would counter that Sekera's goal was not to cultivate patriotic sentiment and ethnic loyalty or to disseminate a nationalist message that emphasized the greatness of the Sinhalese past. He was interested, rather, in expanding on narrative templates that he discovered in his study of legends and folk poetry. In the next

section I discuss the ways in which Sekera began to write free verse that was the antithesis of his earlier works.

DISILLUSIONS

With the 1964 release of *Maknisāda Yat* (The reason is) Sekera began to publish poetry that in five ways radically diverged from his earlier work. First, the phrasing in his early poetry had been terse and most often crafted in strict poetic metrics; the phrasing in *Maknisāda Yat* was in unconstrained stream of consciousness. Second, the average length of the poems Sekera wrote between 1958 and 1963 was two pages; *Maknisāda Yat* lasted seventy-nine pages and had no internal organization, that is, separate chapters or individual poems with separate titles. Third, Sekera based a great deal of his early poetry on Sinhala or English literature; *Maknisāda Yat* drew attention to the idiom of colloquial Sinhala. Fourth, Sekera invested the works of his earlier period with a fictional sensibility; *Maknisāda Yat* was more factual and political. Fifth, in his earliest works, Sekera professed his love for the imagination, which he portrayed as an otherworldly woman; in *Maknisāda Yat,* however, he now declared the most beautiful entity in the world to be the sad human heart.

When one considers Sekera's preface to *Maknisāda Yat,* it becomes clear that Sekera started to believe in 1964 that poets who aimed only to immerse readers in a fictional realm were far less important than poets who sought to refashion society:

> The poet told society:
> "I'll break you into pieces
> And mold you anew."

> That caused society to laugh.

> Society told the poet:
> "I'll break you into pieces
> And mold you anew"[44]

Sekera not only bestowed onto the poet the responsibility to reshape society but also asserted that industrializing society was callous enough to break even the most optimistic of poets. In what follows I analyze three key aspects of *Maknisāda Yat:* (1) Sekera's criticisms of nationalism and campaigns to create a utopian multicultural world, (2) Sekera's humanist transformation, and (3) Sekera's reflections on the drawbacks of industrialization.

> *Maknisāda Yat* commenced with this bewildering scene:
> In a little bit
> Tomorrow
> Becomes today.

Tock. Tock. Tock. Tock
Steel shoes step
Up and up the cement steps
To the doorway and
Impatiently pace.

[The voice of Today:] "Open the door Open the door"
Knock. Knock. Knock.

[The sleeper:] "Who is it? Who is it?"
"Me!"
"Me who?"
"Today!"
"Where's yesterday?"
"Yesterday went to the past"
"Now you look here, you come early in the morning
And interrupted my dream.
I was in the illustrious past
We had driven away those nasty Tamils
And united all of Lanka!
Let your eyes behold Anuradhapura [the ancient Sinhala kingdom]
With *stupas* and temples like the great mountains of the
    Himalayas."[45]

A voice of "Today" wakes up a sleeper. The sleeper, in my reading, represents a nationalist who harps about a glorious past. The past refers to a time when the ancient Sinhalese kings in Anuradhapura resisted invasions from South India and created a Buddhist kingdom replete with temples and *stupas,* the massive mound-like structures that contain Buddhist relics. In addition to criticizing nationalism, Sekera simultaneously meant to bring into the picture the theme of industrialization, because Today wears *steel* shoes and walks up *cement* steps.

   The voice of Today responds to the sleeper and argues that it is useless to cling to the past, because everything is changing:

"You are inebriated by the past.
The fallen stone pillars are now abandoned.
Grass grazes over the moonstones.
The ancient tanks are broke and sunk in the mud.
The past is dead and rotting in the ground."[46]

The voice of Today then relays to the sleeper the Buddhist message of impermanence. This act may have reflected Sekera's own belief in the Buddhist philosophy of *anitya,* or impermanence:

"Even if you try to protect [all this]
You can't keep this up.
The winds of time
Have uprooted the tree of the past.
You can't replant it
Even if you put it in soil, it is useless.
Tālavatthu kathan"[47]

"Tālavatthu kathan" is a phrase in Pali, the sacred language of Theravada Buddhism. It literally means an "uprooted Palmyrah tree" and symbolizes the destruction of passions and defilements.

If the voice of today represented Sekera's own voice, one can reasonably conclude based on the next passage that Sekera wanted the country to change in 1964 in regard to its escalating Sinhalese ethnic chauvinism. In the following passage Sekera portrayed a meeting between all the communities of Sri Lanka. As a new day dawns, they met at the top of Adam's Peak, a mountain in Sri Lanka that is a pilgrimage site for all Sri Lankan communities. The Buddhists believe that the "footprint" at the top is the Buddha's. The Hindus take it as the footprint of Shiva. The Muslims and Roman Catholics believe it is Adam's footprint.

[The voice of Today says to the sleeper:] Open your door and look!
In a moment more sunrays will dawn.
Because of the sun's great service
There will be paradise
On the summit of
siripā kaňda [Sinhala-Buddhist term for Adam's Peak]
sivanoli pādam [Tamil-Hindu term for Adam's Peak]
bābā ādamaleyi [Muslim and Christian term for Adam's Peak][48]

Sekera then represented each religious community of Sri Lanka with its own greeting:

"Good morning, Christine"
"Vaṇakkam Nadaraja"
"Vaṇakkam Mohammad"
"Āyubōvan"
This is the truth.[49]

"Good morning Christine" represents the Christian community. The Tamil-language greeting of "vaṇakkam" symbolizes the Tamil-Hindu population. "Mohammad" signifies the Tamil Muslims, and the final greeting, "āyubōvan" (may you live long), is the greeting of the Sinhalese Buddhists.

In 1963 the Sri Lankan government had restated its plan to make Sinhala the sole official language of the country. The Tamil Federal Party responded with a

social and economic boycott.[50] It is significant that Sekera, a leading Sinhalese art-
ist and intellectual, wrote this passage precisely at a point when the state was im-
posing the Sinhala language on minorities.[51] The passage provides evidence that
one prominent member of the Sinhalese intelligentsia was critical of linguistic na-
tionalism when it became the dominant and divisive ideology of the state.

Another major theme of the poem is Sekera's personal transformation from a
lover of the imagination to a lover of "the human." He begins by describing the
imagination-woman he used to love:

> When I feel your warmth
> And you mine
> A memory rises up in my mind
> Like a moon that dawns in the day.
> I remember the woman whom I loved
> A few days back.
> Unlike you, she is different.
>
> Sapphire are her two eyes.
> Red lotus are her two lips.
> Hair like the peacock's feathers.
> Rainbow eyebrows. . . .
> Her gait is nicer than an angel who has descended to the earth[52]

According to my interpretation, the woman with sapphire eyes represented the
imagination-woman that Sekera praised in the poems "Sankalpanaya," "Saraswa-
ti," and "Māyā." By 1964 Sekera no longer loved her. He now found true beauty in
the realm of human beings. In the next passage Sekera revealed why he titled the
poem *Maknisāda Yat* (The reason is):

> More than her, I love you.
> The reason is:
> You are a human like me.
> You are made out of flesh, blood, and bones
> You have the human qualities of compassion, jealousy
> Selfishness, and anger.
>
> You are not created from gold, silver,
> Pebbles, gems, or pearls.
> You are bones, flesh, veins, blood,
> Vomit, feces, intestines, uterus
> Sweat, tears, and marrow.[53]

In this passage Sekera articulated an ideology comparable to humanism, the
school of thought that attaches prime importance to humans rather than the

supernatural. Sekera announced that he loved the human being because he shared with all humans the same corporal and emotional facets. In the next passage he concluded that it is the human being's heart in sadness that possessed the highest level of beauty:

> What is most fascinating
> In a body like this,
> Is the beauty that resides in the heart.
>
> Beauty.
> I have searched for it everywhere.
> In the paintings of George Keyt
> In the songs of W. D. Amaradeva
> In the sculptures of Tissa Ranasinghe
> In the Avukana Buddha statue
> . . . .
> Finally I found beauty.
> It is in the human heart.
> However rough that heart is,
> Some day
> When tears are flowing
> Take into your palm
> The heart, moist from the tears of compassion.
> It shines like a diamond.
> Please take a look.
> At that moment
> There is nothing as beautiful as that
> In the entire world.[54]

There are a variety of ways to interpret Sekera's humanist transformation. First, when one considers the vexed relationship between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils, one is reminded of the way in which nationalists often espouse majoritarian ideologies in the guise of universalism. Yet I do not think Sekera meant to cloak Sinhala nationalism in a universalist ideology. On the other hand, one could argue that Sekera meant to suggest that the Sinhalese, Tamils, and all people in the world are united through shared humanity. Perhaps this was his intention. From a narrower perspective another reading would be to stress that Sekera sought to distance himself from his earlier interests in romantic poetry that valorized the imagination.

The last facet of *Maknisāda Yat* I wish to discuss is Sekera's investigation of the transformation of the village and workplace. Regarding the village, Sekera wrote a scene about a bus ride in Sri Lanka from Colombo to Kandy. Someone in the bus feels proud to be passing by his or her village:

> This is the village where I was born
> The village of my parents
> The village of my ancestors[55]

He or she remembers it fondly:

> In the golden paddy fields, a flock of honeybees plays lovingly.
> The tender paddy has made golden rows.
> The village lasses stand in rows in the tender paddy.
> They sing while removing the weeds.
> [This is] the village![56]

But another voice interrupts the dreamer and challenges this vision:

> You see your village in a dream and weep [tears of joy]
> But go there for real and see the actual village!
> It does not have that astonishing quality
> That you saw in your dream.[57]

The new voice argues that the real village is much different:

> The [village] stream has become nearly invisible
> It flows lethargically because it is blocked with moss
> The land is bald headed.
> The meager plants struggle to come up.
> Factories rise up everywhere.
> [The villages are now] little cities.
> [With] Moonshine.
> [and] Brothels.[58]

If industrialization was negatively impacting the villagers, Sekera believed that the urban office workers were no less afflicted. In the next major section of the poem, Sekera analyzed the life of the city workforce. When the sun rises it announces it is time to leave the village and travel to the city office. Even nature is in tune with the workings of industrial capitalism:

> The sun says,
> "Now it is time
> To go to the office,"
> And slowly dawns.[59]

In a later scene Sekera wrote about an anonymous masculine office worker. The man leaves his village to work far away in the city. At work he begins to daydream about his wife or girlfriend. In the middle of his reverie the startling ringing sound of the telephone awakens him:

[The office worker thinks] If I close my eyes for a moment
I can see in my mind
An image of her thin long face
She is smiling and laughing loudly. . . .

In the middle of the field
Through the blue hill expanses
Flocks of *kokku* birds
She is bathing
The cloth sticks to her body. . . .

Ring! Ring! Ring!

Hello? Hello?
Damn it!
Yes, yes.
The stock is finished.[60]

The telephone startles the dreamer back into reality. When one reflects on this scene, it appears connected to the various scenes in *Maknisāda Yat* that play with the idea of sleeping and waking up. In the opening scene, for example, the voice of Today knocks on the door of a sleeper, shatters his nationalist dream of the past, and asks him to face the present. One could read this last excerpt in a similar way: Today, in the form of the telephone ring, wakes up the office worker from his reverie about the village. Yet one crucial difference, in my reading, marks these two scenes. In the first example, the voice of Today is the protagonist who wakes up the deluded nationalist. In the workplace scene, however, the sleeping worker is the protagonist while the ringing telephone seems to be a symbol of the demands for unlimited capitalist accumulation.

In this chapter I demonstrated how Sekera sought to rework Victorian, romantic, and Sinhala verse. I suggested that he felt no need at this time to write political poetry because he was pleased with the state: he had found government employment as a translator due to the creation of the Department of Official Languages. I then argued that one reason Sekera shifted from illusions to disillusions was that he realized that the dominance of Sinhala linguistic nationalism in the polity was marginalizing Sri Lankan minorities and dangerously dividing the country. Sekera's utopian visions of a multicultural paradise coupled with his humanist transformation circulated widely among readers of Sinhala poetry in the 1960s. Such poetry strikingly contrasted with the government's increasingly chauvinistic policies and decisions that further disenfranchised the Sri Lankan Tamils. It is significant that Sekera employed free verse, the modernist genre of poetry par excellence, to articulate his disillusions with linguistic nationalism as well as urbanization, for it suggests that there was an alternative Sinhala public sphere in the late 1950s and early 1960s, one that was of a markedly different complexion than the political discourse.

Conclusion

Modernizing Composition has sought to demonstrate how Sinhalese songwriters and poets modernized song and poetry in response to colonial and postcolonial formations. In this conclusion I wish to consider what their responses can articulate about common frameworks and theories one encounters in scholarship in the disciplines of South Asian studies and ethnomusicology. I also attempt to identify shortcomings of this monograph and describe three academic projects to which I hope to have contributed.

The onset of postcolonial studies impacted an entire generation of scholars in South Asian studies and ethnomusicology to devote research to the impact of colonialism and power relations between social actors from South Asia and the West. The history of Sinhala song and poetry in twentieth-century Sri Lanka offers food for thought to this academic movement, but it also directs attention onto overlooked links within South Asia. I focused this monograph on one intra–South Asia relationship hitherto not taken into serious consideration by ethnomusicologists or South Asian studies scholars: connections between Sri Lankans and North Indians.

Readers of *Modernizing Composition* may contend that the monograph's attempt to draw attention to intra–South Asian connections is problematic because it obfuscates how these connections have deep roots in colonialism and orientalism. The persuasiveness of this argument, in my judgment, is weakest when one focuses on Sinhala song and poetry created in the mid-twentieth century. The strength of this argument, however, grows stronger when one focuses on the song and poetry produced in the early decades of the twentieth century.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, one finds ties between John De Silva's (chapter 1) Sinhala-language theater song, Hindustani music, and orientalism.

In 1903 De Silva employed the Indian musician Visvanath Lawjee to compose Hindustani music for the Parsi theater. To my knowledge, when De Silva employed Lawjee, De Silva had not heard of reformers like Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore (1840–1914), who was striving to create a national system of Indian notation to put Hindustani music on par with European classical music.[1] At this time Lucknow's Marris College of Music—an institution that played a key role in the classicization of Hindustani music—had not yet been established. Given these circumstances, we can assume that the reason De Silva developed interest in Hindustani music was not because he was impressed with its emerging classical status.

Why, then, did De Silva hire Lawjee and also hypothesize that Sinhala poetic meters originated in the tradition of North Indian classical music? In my interpretation, De Silva justified his use of North Indian classical music because he believed it articulated the ethos of the Arya-Sinhala identity. It is well known among scholars of Sri Lanka that Sinhalese reformers fashioned the Arya-Sinhala identity in dialogue with Henry Steel Olcott's brand of Buddhist orientalism. One therefore must concede that De Silva's interest in North India was intimately tied to his embrace of orientalist thought.

If I can convincingly trace the formation of De Silva's and Lawjee's intra–South Asian connection to orientalism, why does *Modernizing Composition* emphasize the importance of intra–South Asian relations? The reason is that the majority of Sinhala songs and poems in the twentieth century were direct responses to North Indian influences. Sinhalese songwriters and poets often did not directly encounter post-Enlightenment ideas and European cultural forms. Rather, Sinhalese songwriters and poets often came into contact with such ideas and forms through North Indian elites who reinterpreted and popularized them in South Asia.

Chapter 1, for example, examines how Sinhalese playwrights fashioned a new form of theater (nurthi) based on North Indian Parsi theater, and Sinhalese gramophone songwriters imitated melodies and short and long syllabic instants from North Indian film songs. Chapter 2 documents how the Heḷa Havula movement of the 1940s came into being to oppose North Indian cultural influence. Chapter 3 centers attention on the manner in which Rabindranath Tagore impacted Sinhalese songwriters and poets to fashion compositions with Victorian-tinged notions of romance. Chapter 4 turns to the 1950s, when Sinhala songwriters channeled Sanskrit literature and North Indian classical music into the radio opera. Chapter 5 investigates how one songwriter championed the musical nationalism that Professor S. N. Ratanjankar brought to Sri Lanka from North India.

If scholarship in South Asian studies and ethnomusicology has remained somewhat blind to the historical salience of modern intra–South Asian relations, so too have scholars in these disciplines tended to overlook the role played by commercialization in the social and national reform of music and literature.[2] The history of Sinhala song and poetry brings to light that at some moments *reform* drove commercialization, but

at other moments *commercialization* motivated reformist projects. Consider, for example, the *alut sindu* genre of gramophone songs (chapter 1). *Alut sindu* songwriters drew on the sentiments of the Buddhist revival to sell records. The reverse was true in the case of Sunil Santha (chapter 2): linguistic nationalism inspired Santha to engage in a commercial project that would accomplish the goals of the Heḷa Havula to elevate the Sinhala language, standardize its modern grammar, and encourage the Sinhalese English-speaking elite to speak in their mother tongue.

The radio station needs mention here: it was the institution that fostered conditions of possibility to utilize song for the dual purpose of reform and commodification. Social actors in Sri Lanka held various opinions about how radio song could be used to accomplish national and commercial goals. The case of Sunil Santha is again noteworthy because his reformist aspirations conflicted with the commercial goals of the radio station's administration. As a result, Santha boycotted the 1952 auditions and later quit his post as an A-grade musician. Scholars of radio in South Asia will need to explore further how and why did the institution with the power to produce and disseminate the sonic aspects of music and language become a crucial site for the coming together of national and commercial interests.[3]

Modernizing Composition also bears on the way aesthetic and affective modes of communication might function as crucial forces, in what Jürgen Habermas has termed the "public sphere." Texts of songs and poems surely contribute to democratic communication in ways that differ from rational discourse. Modes such as didacticism (chapters 1–2), romanticism (chapter 3), and neoclassicism, modernism, and social realism (chapters 4–6) perhaps opened up for the Sri Lankan reading and listening public new spaces for debate in Sri Lanka's democracy. A kind of "affective public sphere" is most evident in chapters 1 and 2, which document how colonial-era Sinhalese songwriters and poets reworked song and poetry into forms of quasi-rational discourse, platforms to empower the colonized community by advocating for the importance of Sinhalese Buddhism and the Sinhala language. The songwriters and poets discussed in chapters 1 and 2 played leading roles in Sri Lankan movements that aimed to politicize religion and language as markers of personal identity in relation to the West and North India.

Other moments in the history of Sinhala song and poetry seem distant from the public sphere: consider the wartime romance of World War II (chapter 3). In this case, it might be best to ask how wartime romance created contemporary spaces for the reading and listening public in which to they could relate anew not only to themselves, their ethnic group, and their nation-state, but also to their allies in World War II. In chapter 3 I contended that wartime songwriters and poets drew specifically on ideas about romance that had become popular in three countries allied with Sri Lanka during the war: England, France, and India.

Readers of part 2, "The Postcolonial Era," may feel inclined to ask where scholars should draw the line between individual expression and historical event.

Questions remain, for instance, regarding the relationship between the production of Sinhala song and poetry and the politics of Sinhala-ization after 1956. While it is certainly important to study the production of song and poetry to understand the rise of Sinhala linguistic and ethnic identity, I found myself unable to reduce my research findings to this framework because my particular primary sources in part 2 possess varying degrees of closeness to the politics of Sinhala-ization.

Consider, for instance, the radio opera (chapter 4). Chandrarathna Manawasinghe's and Wimal Abeysundara's radio operas were state-sponsored creations disseminated on the nation's sole radio station at the moment when the state was attempting to redefine the country as a Sinhala Buddhist nation. But the radio operas were also fictional flights of fancy with strong North Indian influences. Does this suggest that political regimes have use not only for *overt* forms of nationalist art but also for *covert* forms that seem to champion art-for-art's-sake ideologies? Or might the phenomena of these radio operas suggest that there are cracks and slippages in the reach of state power? Maybe the new political regime did not care to control the radio opera for its benefit? When I sought to explain the divergent aesthetics in the radio opera and free verse, I felt it was more appropriate to emphasize biographical details over the political transformation of the country in 1956. I argued that the contrasting standard of excellence in the radio opera and free verse was intimately related to the creators' different education, institutional base, and shared endeavor to raise the standards of their respective art forms.

At the same time, one cannot completely exclude historical events from these instances of individual expression. Manawasinghe, Abeysundara, and Siri Gunasinghe knew they were fashioning song and poetry for a country with a new complexion: sovereign and ruled by Sinhalese Buddhists. They did not adopt neoclassicism and modernism in an apolitical vacuum. They adopted these aesthetic modes in response to a necessity they perceived: the need to raise the standards of Sinhala song and poetry. Perhaps one could characterize the logic of such thinking like this: if the Sinhalese were now the dominant majority in the democratic country, Sinhala song and poetry would have to be powerful as well.[4]

One can identify a variety of limitations of this study. These limitations include the absence of studies of song and poetry in earlier periods, later decades in the twentieth century, and coeval moments within South Asia. Many questions thus remain: How did developments in the nineteenth century factor into the twentieth? How did simultaneous movements in song and poetry in South Asia parallel or diverge from the Sinhala examples? How did the history discussed in the pages of this book factor into the new constellation of Sinhalese songwriters and poets who radicalized Sinhala song and poetry in the 1970s?

In 1971 approximately ten thousand Sinhalese Buddhist youths revolted to overthrow the government and its ruling class of Colombo-based, English-speaking statesmen and stateswomen, who had received their higher education in England.

The insurgent youths were underemployed or unemployed. They were village-based, Sinhala-speaking, and educated in village high schools *(maha vidyalaya),* national technical colleges, or national universities. They tried to seize state power in one day without any outside assistance. The insurgency inspired radical forms of Sinhala song and poetry, which future studies will need to address.

The absence of women in this monograph raises further questions. To my knowledge, between 1900 and 1965 there were no visible female songwriters in Sri Lanka. During this time, however, women such as Rukmani Devi had achieved success as gramophone vocalists, and others were giving voice to the concerns of women in the realm of poetry. In the early twentieth century female poets authored verse for a publication titled *Kiviyara* (The poetess), and during the 1950s they contributed to a monthly poetry magazine titled *Kiviňdiya* (The poetess). What does an absence of female songwriters but presence of female vocalists and poets articulate about gender norms in twentieth-century Sri Lanka? Why were women authors of poetry but not song?

I hope this book will ultimately contribute to three projects. The first project is to bring into dialogue the study of South Asian music and literature. The study of South Asian music falls under the purview of ethnomusicology. The examination of South Asian literature occurs in South Asian studies. This academic separation has consequences: scholars have rarely taken notice of connections between song and poetry. *Modernizing Composition* has sought to overcome disciplinary fragmentation, because it examines the shared history of Sinhala-language song and poetry in twentieth-century Sri Lanka.

The second project is the attempt to bring into conversation postcolonial studies with the philology of regional languages in South Asia.[5] Postcolonial studies tends to privilege English-language sources and overlook South Asian language and literature.[6] I do not claim that South Asian regional literatures are more authentic repositories of culture than English-language texts. But we bypass South Asian languages and literature at a price. Our puzzles are missing important pieces.

Last, I hope this book plays an instrumental part in the endeavor to expand the scope of South Asian studies onto overlooked regions and languages in South Asia. I am convinced that histories of song and poetry from regions such as the Maldives or Bhutan and underrepresented languages such as Dhivehi and Dzongkha would shift the focus of the historiography of cultural production in South Asia from the well-studied relationship between India and the West to more understudied connections. The success of *Modernizing Composition* will depend on whether it inspires scholars to write such histories of cultural production in South Asia from the perspective of such lesser-known regions and languages.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Mahagama Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Nopaḷa Gīta,* ed. Ranjit Amarakirti (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1984), 21: "vena vacana valin kiyatot gīta prabandhaya sangītayen ven karala ivataṭa aragena balapuvāmat, sāhitya kṛtiyakin läbena vidiye rasayak eyin läbenna ōnǟ."

2. The Sinhalese speak Sinhala, a language of about fifteen million speakers. Sinhala is classified as an Indo-Aryan language. Sinhala and the Dhivehi language of the Maldives are the only Indo-Aryan languages spoken south of the Dravidian-language belt of South India. For this reason, linguist James W. Gair describes Sinhala as an Indo-Aryan "isolate." Colin P. Masica similarly designates Sinhala and Dhivehi as "non-contiguous" Indo-Aryan languages. See Gair, "Sinhala, an Indo-Aryan Isolate," *South Asian Review* 6, no. 3 (1982): 51–64; and Masica, *The Indo-Aryan Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22.

3. The song is titled "Mahabō Vannama" (The Bodhi Tree vannama). Chandrarathna Manawasinghe, *Kōmala Rēkhā* (Colombo: New Lila Mudranalaya, 1957), 21:

> välitala atarē—hemihiṭa basinā—nēranjana nadiyē
> gayāhisa—väḍasiṭa buduvuṇudā
> tilōhimi—moksuva lada mohotē—samādī—bāvanā
>
> himakaňdu väṭiyē—sītala sevanē—candana turu—pihirā
> häpī ena—malmuva rada rasinē
> suvaňda musu—kōmala mada pavanē gäṭilā—pāvenā
>
> satsara naňgalā—ṭika ṭika selavī—sirimahabōhimigē
> manōhara—palupat aturikiḷī
> naṭāgiya—tālehi rasa näňguṇā sarāgī—jīvanā

saṅgamit meheṇī—dakuṇē sākā sirilaka gena ādā
siṭama tava—mahamevunā uyanē
naṭayi koḷa—vannama lesa mahabō sumīrī—nādenā

4. W. D. Amaradeva (b. 1927) is the song's composer, arranger, and vocalist.

5. Vannama were Sinhala songs commissioned for the royal court of King Narendras-inghe, the last Sinhalese king of Kandy (r. 1707–37). Although the vannama were originally vocal compositions, the king's court musicians used the song's rhythms as the basis for a new Kandyan dance style with roots in the Sinhalese ritual dance, the *kohomba kankariya.* See Almut Jayaweera, "Vannamas: A Classical Dance Form and Its Musical Structure," *the world of music* 46, no. 3 (2004): 51.

6. *Luhu* equals one *mātrā,* and *guru* equals two *mātrā.* M. W. S. De Silva suggests that the system of *mātrā* in Sinhala poetry has three tiers, as demonstrated here (V = short vowel, C = consonant, VV = long vowel):

One *mātrā:*	V, CV
Two *mātrā:*	VV, CVV, VC, CVC
Three *mātrā:*	VVC, CVVC

When one transliterates, it is standard to indicate long vowels with a macron (ā, ǟ, ī, ū, ē, and ō) and short vowels without the macron. On the *mātrā* system of Sinhala poetry, see M. W. S. De Silva, "A Note on Syllable-Quantity in Sinhalese Metre," *University of Ceylon Review* 17 (1959): 51–53. See also Rebecca S. Letterman, "A Phonetic Study of Sinhala Syllable Rhymes," *Working Papers of the Cornell Phonetics Laboratory* 9 (1994): 155–81.

7. In the second, third, and four stanzas, the third line can be interpreted as composed of groups of five, fifteen, and five mātrā.

8. Manawasinghe, *Kōmala Rēkhā.*

9. In the Sinhala language, the term for "song" is *gī* or *gītaya* (ගී, ගීතය). "Poetry" is called *kāvya* (කාව්‍යය). Common words for "song lyric" are *gī padamālā* (ගී පදමාලා), *gīta racanā* (ගීත රචනා), and *gēya kāvya* (ගේය කාව්‍යය).

10. See Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 165–208.

11. For example, many consider Bruno Nettl's *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-Three Discussions* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015) to provide an up-to-date portrait of the field. There are thirty-three chapters in the book. None of the chapters discuss song texts themselves as an area of inquiry.

12. Hundreds of articles could be cited as examples of the text-in-relation-to-music approach. Here I cite four studies that focus on music of South Asia: Regula Burkhardt Qureshi, "Tarannum: The Chanting of Urdu Poetry," *Ethnomusicology* 13, no. 3 (1969): 425–68; Qureshi, "Musical Gesture and Extra-Musical Meaning: Words and Music in the Urdu Ghazal," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 43, no. 3 (1990): 457–97; Richard Widdess, "Text, Orality, and Performance in Newar Devotional Music," in *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature, and Performance in North India,* ed. Francesca Orsini and Katherine Butler Schofield (Cambridge, UK: Open Book, 2015), 231–48; and Richard K. Wolf, "The Musical Lives of Texts: Rhythms and Communal Relationships among the Nizamis and Some of Their Neighbours in South and West Asia," in Orsini and Schofield, *Tellings and Texts,* 445–84.

13. There are welcome exceptions to this situation, such as in Steven Feld's *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), ch. 4; Jane C. Sugarman's *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Presba Albanian Weddings* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997); Aaron A. Fox's *Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); David A. McDonald's *My Voice Is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); and David Dennen's "Words into Music: A Study and Translation of Kabisūryya Baḷadeba Ratha's *Kiśoracandrānanda Campū*" (PhD diss., University of California–Davis, 2014).

14. Live stage shows of Sinhala radio songs became commonplace in Sri Lanka only in the 1970s, a period that this book does not cover.

15. Manawasinghe, *Sāhitya Rasaya* (1969; Boralesgamuwa: Dasa Desa Mudranalaya, 2009), 131: "mē 'vacana dānava' yanuven häǹdinvennē hindi gītayaka ē hindi vacanavalaṭa samāna lesa kiyavena vacana ṭikak yedīmayi."

16. In the book I am concerned mostly with producers and production. This is not a study about consumers and consumption. I thus concentrate to a great extent on songwriters' and poets' lives and works and to a lesser extent on audiences and the discourses audiences circulated. Regarding music, I do analyze "music itself" in transcriptions, but only in situations when I feel that analysis of musical sound is needed to clarify my arguments.

17. Sunil Ariyaratne, *Nūtana Gēya Kāvya Sanhitā* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2005), 21–40.

18. Ibid., 37, 39–40.

19. Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 84–85.

20. Fakiramohan Senapati, qtd. in Pragati Mohapatra, "The Making of a Cultural Identity: Language, Literature, and Gender in Orissa in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries" (PhD diss., University of London, 1997), 115–16.

21. Charles Hallisey, "Works and Persons in Sinhala Literary Culture," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia,* ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 690.

22. Ariyaratne, *Nūtana Gēya Kāvya Sanhitā,* 38.

23. Harold G. Coward and K. Kunjunni Raja, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: The Philosophy of the Grammarians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 5–6, 28.

24. Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Nopaḷa Gīta,* 21.

25. Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere contend that Sri Lanka's Buddhist middle class first came into being in the late nineteenth century, due to factors like the increase of migration to Colombo and smaller cities like Galle and Kandy; the establishment of universal free education; the spread of Western-type education; and the English-educated Sinhala elite's adoption of the Protestant value system, which then spread to the villages. See *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 6–11, 202–12.

26. On music, see Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Eriko Kobayashi, "Hindustani Classical Music Reform Movement and the Writing of History, 1900s to the

1940s" (PhD diss., University of Austin at Texas, 2003); Anna Schultz, *Singing a Hindu Nation: Marathi Devotional Performance and Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Lakshmi Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Amanda Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). On literature, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 149–79; Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth-Century Banaras* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Mohapatra, "Making of a Cultural Identity"; and Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

27. S. N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129, no. 1 (2000): 2–3.

28. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Hearing Voices: Vignettes of Early Modernity in South Asia, 1400–1750," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 99–100.

29. See Margaret Kartomi, "Review: The Western Impact of World Music, by Bruno Nettl," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 19 (1987): 117–20; Bruno Nettl, *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaptation, and Survival* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1985); Daniel M. Neuman, "Towards an Ethnomusicology of Culture Change in Asia," *Asian Music* 7, no. 2 (1976): 1–5; Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980).

30. Neuman, "Towards an Ethnomusicology," 2–3.

31. Neuman, *Life of Music*, 223–29.

32. Nettl, *Western Impact*, 3.

33. Weidman, *Singing the Classical.* See also Garrett Field, "From Threatened by Modernity to Reinvented by Modernity: The History of the History of Indian Classical Music, 1980–2006," *Ethnomusicology Review* 15 (2010): 1–6.

34. David Fossum, "Westernizing Reform and Indigenous Precedent in Traditional Music: Insights from Turkmenistan," *Ethnomusicology* 59, no. 2 (2015): 202–26; Rachel Harris, *The Making of a Musical Canon in Chinese Central Asia: The Uyghur 12 Maqam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); and Katherine Butler Schofield, "Reviving the Golden Age Again: 'Classicization,' Hindustani Music, and the Mughals," *Ethnomusicology* 54, no. 3 (2010): 484–517.

35. Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

36. Orsini, *Hindi Public Sphere.*

37. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe,* 175, 173.

38. Gombrich and Obeyesekere make an analogous observation regarding the Westernization and Hinduization of modern Sinhala Buddhism. The "Indian impact" on Sinhala Buddhism, though, was the influence of Śaiva Hinduism practiced by Sri Lankan Tamils. See *Buddhism Transformed,* 12, 49–56.

39. In Pollock's own words, "cosmopolitan vernacular" is "that register of the emergent vernacular that aims to localize the full spectrum of literary qualities of the superposed cosmopolitan code." *Language of the Gods,* 26.

40. Pollock, *Language of the Gods,* 26, 283. On superposition, see Sheldon Pollock, "Literary History, Indian History, World History," *Social Scientist* 23, nos. 269–71 (1995): 125.

Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin uses the terms *superculture*, *subculture*, and *interculture* to theorize a similar process in regard to Western musical forms. Slobin's theory in comparison to Pollock's notion of cosmopolitan vernacularism encompasses a broader array of factors. See *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1993).

41. Herbert P. Phillips, *Modern Thai Literature: With an Ethnographic Interpretation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 27, 4.

42. David Washbrook, "The Global History of 'Modernity': A Response to a Reply," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 41, no. 3 (1998): 298.

43. A. Sean Pue, *I Too Have Some Dreams: N. M. Rashed and Modernism in Urdu Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 12, 21–25, 42–43.

CHAPTER 1. NATIONALIST THOUGHT AND THE SRI LANKAN WORLD

1. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 50–51.

2. Sunil Ariyaratne, ed., *Mahinda Prabhandha* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2005), 99.

3. On the relationship between cultural nationalism and global capitalism, see Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

4. Ananda Rajakaruna praised Gandhi in two poems titled "Mahatmā" and "Gandikijeyi! Jeyi! Jeyi!" See *Ānanda Sampravēditaya,* ed. Wimal Abeysundara (Colombo: Rajayē Mudraṇa Nitigata Sansthāva, 1990), 533, 729.

5. Ariyaratne, *Mahinda Prabhandha,* 54:

    gan dī, nēru, pātel ā̃ vīrava   rō
    in dī nidahasaṭa diva rā̃ karati a   rō
    kan dī un basaṭa sinhala sohōvu   rō
    dän dī pē tibena jātika väḍaṭa va   rō

6. Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought,* 50.

7. On the Buddhist revival, see Ratnasiri Arangala, *Nūtana Sinhala Sāhityaye Prabhavaya: 18–19 Siyavashi Sāhityika Pravaṇatā Piḷibanda Adhyayanayak* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2004), 56–100; Anne M. Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism and Modernity in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 199; George Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988); K. N. O. Dharmadasa, *Language, Religion, and Ethnic Assertiveness: The Making of Sinhalese Nationalism in Sri Lanka* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 87–114; Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Kitsiri Malagoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750–1900: A Study of Religious Revival and Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Gananath Obeyesekere, "Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon," *Modern Ceylon Studies* 1, no. 1 (1970): 48–63; and Michael Roberts, "For Humanity: Dharmapala as Crusading Bosat," *Journal of Asian Studies* 56, no. 4 (1997): 1006–32.

8. Dharmadasa, *Ethnic Assertiveness,* 97, 108–9.

9. Ibid., 144–45.

10. Kathryn Hansen, "Languages on Stage: Linguistic Pluralism and Community Formation in the Nineteenth-Century Parsi Theatre," *Modern Asian Studies* 37, no. 2 (2003): 383.

11. Sunil Ariyaratne, "Hindusthāni Gīta Anukaraṇaya saha Sinhala Gītaya," *Sanskruta* 17, nos. 1–2 (1983): 54–55.

12. Kathryn Hansen, "The *Indar Sabha* Phenomenon: Public Theatre and Consumption in Greater India (1853–1956)," in *Pleasure and the Nation: The History, Politics and Consumption of Public Culture in India,* ed. Rachel Dwyer and Christopher Pinney (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 2003), 79.

13. Ariyaratne, "Hindusthāni Gīta Anukaraṇaya," 55, 59.

14. See Hansen, "*Indar Sabha* Phenomenon," in Dwyer and Pinney, *Pleasure and the Nation,* 76–114; Hansen, "Languages on Stage"; and Kathryn Hansen, *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theater of North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), ch. 3.

15. Dharmadasa, *Ethnic Assertiveness,* 127.

16. Ariyaratne, "Hindusthāni Gīta Anukaraṇaya," 59; Weejeratna Patiraja, *Sinhala Nāṭya Vanśaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2007), 51–56.

17. Wimal Dissanayake, *Sinhala Novel and the Public Sphere* (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2009), 69.

18. The influence of Parsi theater melodies on nurthi is demonstrated by the fact that nine songs found in six different nurthi musicals in the 1880s were imitations of the melody from the most popular *Indar Sabha* song, "Rajahumayi Kavmaka." One such musical featured five different song lyrics set to this tune. See Ariyaratne, "Hindusthāni Gīta Anukaraṇaya," 56–58.

19. Nira Wickramasinghe, *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age: A History of Contested Identities* (London: Hurst, 2006), 81–82.

20. W. Dissanayake, *Sinhala Novel,* 67.

21. John De Silva, qtd. in Sunil Ariyaratne, ed., *Jōn Da Silvā Nurti Nāṭya Ekatuva: Prathama Bhāgayai* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1992), 119: "lakdiva pera sinhala rajadaruvangē kālēdī sangīta śāstraya manāsē pävatuna bavaṭa sākṣiyak nam dänaṭa apa atarē pavatina sinhala kāvya prabandhayangē vṛtta kohen aran tibena ēvā däyi parīkṣākara balanakala ē vṛtta uturu indiyāvē hindu janayā atarē ada dakvā māhäṅgisē pavatina viśāla madhuramanōhara sangīta śāstrayaṭa ayat rāgatāla balā sādā tibena bavayi. mīṭa udāharaṇa vaśayen sälalihiṇi sandēśayē samudraghōṣā namin prakaṭavu vṛttaya dakvami. mema vṛttaya hindu sangīta śāstrayehi peṇena 'pilu' nam rāgayayi. eya kiyavīmēdī dakvana kālaya 'tāla' namin prakaṭayi. mema samudraghōṣā vṛttaya pilu rāgayaṭa ayat "khyāla" nam tālayayi. mesē apē kavpotvala dakvana siyalu kav hindu sangīta śāstrayē peṇena rāgatāla dekaṭa piṭin noyana bävin apē purāṇa sinhala janayā hindu sangīta śāstraya hoňdākāra däna geṇa siṭi bava häňgīyayi."

22. Sunil Ariyaratne, ed., *Jōn Da Silvā Nurti Nāṭya Ekatuva: Dvitīya Bhāgayai* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1992), 15.

23. Sunil Ariyaratne, phone interview with the author, Sri Lanka, July 15, 2011.

24. Ariyaratne, *Jōn Da Silvā: Prathama Bhāgayai,* 20.

25. Ibid., 126–27:

> sānghatīssā: dannō budungē śrī dharmaskandhā
> pēvī rakiti soňda sīlanibandā
> klēśa nasnā bhīkshū ättēya bō sē
> rahatun nivasanā pāya prakāsē

sānghabō: būlō matē mē devlō pāvā sē
pēnā mepura muni śāsana vāsē
erdiyen yannāvū nek rahatungē
sevanälleni hiru raśmīya bhangē

gōṭhābhaya: mānel nelum hā ōlu puṣpādī
ättē pokunuvala bō jala pādī
sēru pantī pantī pīnati bō sē
anurādha nagaraya dän penē ossē

26. Mahagama Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Nopaḷa Gīta,* ed. Ranjit Amarakirti (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1984), 7–8.

27. See Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chhayavad Age of Modern Hindi Poetry* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7–19.

28. Velcheru Narayana Rao, *Twentieth-Century Telugu Poetry: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 292, 291.

29. On didacticism and social reformism in nineteenth-century Tamil literature, see Sascha Ebeling, *Colonizing the Realm of Words: The Transformation of Tamil Literature in Nineteenth-Century South India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 165–203.

30. Revivalist newspapers included Anagarika Dharmapala's Mahabodi Society's *Sinhala Baudhayā* (Sinhala Buddhist), Piyadasa Sirisena's *Sinhala Jātiya* (Sinhala nation), and D. W. Wikramarachchi's *Swadēśamitrayā* (Friend of the nation). Revivalist monthly journals include *Dharmadvajaya* (Flag of dharma), *Diniňdu Räs* (The sun's rays), *Lankā Mātā* (Mother Lanka), and *Lankā Sēvakayā* (Servant of Lanka). Popular children's journals at that time were *Lamayingē Mitraya* (Children's friend) and *Sinhala Lamayā* (Sinhala child). The journals devoted to poetry were *Kavīndraya* (Poet), *Kāvya Mālinī* (Poetic stanzas), *Kiviyara* (Poetess), *Sinhala Kav Kiruḷa* (Sinhala poetry bird), and *Śrī Dharma Śrī* (Illustrious dharma) The reading public was expanding. Three hundred new Buddhist schools were established by 1907, which led to a significant increase in literacy. By 1911 the number of literate females had multiplied by five, while the number of literate males doubled, as compared with the numbers thirty years prior. See N. Wickramasinghe, *Modern Age,* 76–77.

31. The All-Ceylon Poets' Congress was known in Sinhala as Samasta Lankā Sinhala Kavi Sammēlanaya.

32. Roberts, "For Humanity," 1012.

33. Ananda Rajakaruna, *Ānanda Sampravēditaya,* 567:

lada bolaňda lī	laya
sihala daruveni lō laya	
raja siritmā	laya
igena paturav jāti	ā laya
lakarada isuru	lada
utumō poraṇa mana naňda	
mat pän no bona	leda
sirit niyamaya kaḷō eka leda.	

34. Praneeth Abeysundara, "Ānanda Sampravēditaya: Kavi Sirita," in *Ānanda Sampravēditaya,* ed. Wimal Abeysundara (Colombo: Rajayē Mudraṇa Nitigata Sansthāva, 1990), 17.

35. Ananda Rajakaruna, *Ānanda Sampravēditaya,* 588:

> na hā   siyalu diyakaǹda siv sayu   rē
> ma hā   merase suvaǹdada kara tava   rē
> pa hā apavituru noma vana ata   rē
> va hā kayehi guṇa dakineda? kava   rē

36. Ananda Rajakaruna, *Ānanda Sampravēditaya,* 589:

> sihala basa nodat yam yam lamō ingrisīyen
> doḍati maha jagattän men ovungē vilāsē
> vihiḷuvaka peṇennā ē poḍittaṇta vūyē
> barapatala väräddday jātiyan in näsīyē.

37. Ananda Rajakaruna, *Ānanda Sampravēditaya,* 589.

38. Ralph Peiris, qtd. in Carla Risseeuw, "Gender, Kinship, and State Formation: Case of Sri Lankan under Colonial Rule," *Economic and Political Weekly* 27, nos. 43–44 (1992): 46–54.

39. This translation is adapted from "Chastity," trans. K. B. Sugatadasa, in P. Mallagoda, ed., *Kolamba Kavi Yugaya* (Piliyandala: Samasta Lanka Sinhala Kavi Sammelanaya, 1981), 4.

40. H. L. Seneviratne, e-mail message to author, January 31, 2016.

41. Ariyaratne, *Mahinda Prabhandha,* 17–18, 180; P. Abeysundara, "Ānanda Sampravēditaya," in Rajakaruna, *Ānanda Sampravēditaya,* 37.

42. Ariyaratne, *Mahinda Prabhandha,* 82.

43. Ibid., 40:

> mona karumaya da tava ähäruṇu bavak   nähä
> päna päna biya va muḷu vädumen palak   nähä
> dinumat päradumat kōkat kamak   nähä
> enu idiriyaṭa nätahot nidahasak   nähä
>
> gi ya giya täna di jātika heṇa haǹḍa ma   taḷav
> si ya gata rihiri lakbima tema temā   heḷav
> e ya nidahasa ya sitamin hära vikaṭa   iḷav
> di ya dada diyata nanvanu bäri mokada?   bolav

44. Ariyaratne, *Mahinda Prabhandha,* 50:

> ba la vu!   poḷonnaru anurāpura pede   sa
> si ta vu!   päväti nidahasa mehi pera dava   sa
> na ǹga vu! tava tavat tar sara taruṇa go   sa
> va re vu!   yamavu! näǹgiṭivu! no piyavu! de ä sa

45. Ariyaratne, *Mahinda Prabhandha,* 66:

> doyi doyi doyi doyiya babō
> bayi bayi bayi bayiya babō
>
> [sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, my baby
> rock, rock, rock, rock in the cradle, my baby]

46. On this idea, see Steven Kemper, *The Presence of the Past: Chronicles, Politics, and Culture in Sinhala Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 16–17. As Kemper writes, "nationalist talk requires an asymmetry between noble ancestors and their successors, for 'nationalists' such as Dutugamunu brought glory to the 'nation,' and the uncertainty of whether his descendants will do as well gives actions carried out in the name of nationalism their peculiar compulsion" (12).

47. Ariyaratne, *Mahinda Prabhandha,* 66:

vijayatumā tammän	nē
pirivara sen samagin	nē
siṭi säṭi dän sihi ven	nē
magē putā näḷaven	nē

48. Ariyaratne, *Mahinda Prabhandha,* 67:

lak väsiyan kerehi nä	mī
arahat maha mihiňdu hi	mī
pevuve utum sadaham	mī
puta numbaṭat povami e	mī

49. Information about gramophone songs is drawn from Sunil Ariyaratne*, Grämafōn Gī Yugaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2009).

50. N. Wickramasinghe, *Modern Age,* 4. In India theater songs were also the first genre championed by the gramophone industry. The first musicians to record music in India sang theater songs in 1902 for a representative from Gramophone and Typewriter who had visited Calcutta. The first musicians to record in South India also sang Tamil theater songs. On early gramophone recordings in India, see Gerry Farrell, "The Early Days of the Gramophone Industry in India: Historical, Social, and Musical Perspectives," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 2 (1993): 34; and Stephen Hughes, "Music in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Drama, Gramophone, and the Beginnings of Tamil Cinema," *Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 1 (2007): 5.

51. Ariyaratne, *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya,* 38.

52. On parody in North Indian recorded music, see Peter Manual, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 131–52.

53. Ariyaratne, *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya,* 98, 44, 100.

54. Sunil Ariyaratne lists thirty-three gramophone songs composed by unnamed lyricists between 1930 and 1935. See *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya,* 54. Nandana Karunanayake notes, however, that an Ayurvedic doctor named M. W. N. S. Wijayasuriya composed most of the lyrics for HMV, while U. D. Perera produced the majority of song lyrics for the Columbia label. See *Broadcasting in Sri Lanka: Potential and Performance* (Colombo: Centre for Media and Policy Studies, 1990), 287.

55. Sunil Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1988, 89–90.

56. The first four syllables in the Hindi song are "cha" + "l" + "cha" + "l," and the first four syllables in the Sinhala song are "du" + "l" + "sa" + "l." The next few words are loosely connected, as both add up to six syllabic instants. In the Hindi song we have ("re" + "na" +

"u" + "ja" + "wa" + "n" = six syllabics), while the Sinhala song has ("va"+ "ne" + "e" + "la" + "ka" + "l" = six syllabics).

57. Ariyaratne, *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya,* 101–2.

58. Ibid., 187:

> muni nandana siri pāda vaňdim
> samanala kandē vihidena mōkṣa sugandē
> śrī śāntī karuṇā guṇa ānandē läbilā

59. Ariyaratne, *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya,* 155:

> śrī gautama śrī pāda vaňdim samanala kandē
> abhinandana säpa patamin sundara nirvāṇē

Other popular Buddhist songs of this period were about Buddhist legends like Lord Buddha's mother, Mahamaya Devi; wife, Yasodhara; son, Rāhula; and characters from the *jataka* stories like the Great Anepindu, who accrued merit because he gave away all his possessions as a form of *dāna* (alms giving). Songwriters also wrote lyrics about Sinhalese Buddhist historical figures like the kings Dutugamunu and Sirisangabo—characters about which John De Silva had written nurthi musicals—as well as about the Sinhala poet Toṭagāmuve Śrī Rāhula and modern heroes of the revival like Anagarika Dharmapala. See Ariyaratne, *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya,* 79.

60. Ariyaratne, *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya,* 165:

> piṭa dīpa dēśa jaya gattā ādī sinhalun
> piṭaraṭa siritaṭa diva dik karalā
> ape sinhala kaḷu suddā
> kanṭa aňdinṭā piṭaraṭin enaturu
> muhudaṭa data niyavannā
>
> heraḷi batala ṭika nupurudu ammā
> raṭa hālē bata kālā
> kiri näti hindā raṭa kiri dīlā
> sinhala daruvo marannā

CHAPTER 2. BROTHERS OF THE PURE SINHALA FRATERNITY

1. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6.

2. Ibid.

3. Robert King, "Language Politics and Conflicts in South Asia," in *Language in South Asia,* ed. Braj B. Kachru, Yamuna Kachru, and S. N. Sridhar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 317.

4. Christopher R. King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1994), 250.

5. For a complete bibliography of Munidasa Cumaratunga's works, see H. Ariyadasa, ed. *Cumāratunga Munidāsa Grantha hā Lēkhana Nāmāvaliya* (Maharagama: Jatika Ad-

hyapana Ayatanaya, 1988). On Cumaratunga, see Arisen Ahubudu, *Cumāratungu Äsura* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1957); Sandagomi Coperahewa, "Purifying the Sinhala Language: The Heḷa Movement of Munidasa Cumaratunga (1930s–1940s)," *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (2012): 857–91; Coperahewa, *Visi Vana Siyavasē Sinhala Bhāṣā Vyavahāraya: Samājavāgvidyātmaka Adhyayanayak* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2010), 156–66, 229–41, 276–95; Coperahewa, *Bhāṣānurāgayē Dēśapālanaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1999); Gevindu Cumaratunga, ed., *Suvahas Naya Manäsi Isivarayāṇō: Cumāratunga Munidāsa* (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2004); K. N. O. Dharmadasa, *Jātyanurāgaya: Samāja Śāstriya Vimarśaṇaya* (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2007); Dharmadasa, *Language, Religion, and Ethnic Assertiveness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), ch. 7; Wimal Dissanayake, "Purism, Language and Creativity: The Sri Lankan Experience," in *The Politics of Language Purism,* ed. Björn H. Jernudd and Michael J. Shapiro (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989), 185–96; and S. G. M. Weerasinghe, ed., *Munidasa Cumaratunga Expository,* vol. 1 (Maharagama: National Institute of Education, 1994).

6. E. Annamalai, "Movement for Linguistic Purism: The Case of Tamil," in *Language Movements in India,* ed. E. Annamalai (Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Language, 1979), 36.

7. Coperahewa, "Purifying the Sinhala Language," 865.

8. W. Dissanayake, "Purism, Language and Creativity," in Jernudd and Shapiro, *Politics of Language Purism,* 191. See also Ananda S. Kulasuriya, "Sambhāvya Grantha Sanskaraṇaya hā Cumāratunga," in *Suvahas Naya Manäsi Isivarayāṇō: Cumāratunga Munidāsa,* ed. Gevindu Cumararunga (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2004), 83.

9. Other salient issues that Cumaratunga wrote about in these weekly editorials include the stigmatization of the Sinhala language, blind worship of English, challenges facing the Sinhala education system and teaching staff, the need to empower the village, British exploitation of Sri Lankan economic resources, and the disgraceful character of those who curried favor with the British. See *Lak Mini Pahana Katu Väki* (1934–36; repr., Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2006).

10. Munidasa Cumaratunga, *Muvadev Dā Vivaraṇaya* (1922; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1991), 1: "sinhala bhāṣāyen nirmita vū bohō kāvyayan äta da kāvyatilakaya hevat sasa dāva, kav siḷu miṇa hevat kusa dāva mē muvadev dāva yana mohu śrēṣṭhtha panktiyehi lā gaṇanu läbet. sidat saṅgarā nam vū vyākaraṇa granthaya nipädāvīmaṭa perä rachita vū heyin pas peräḷiyen da detun tanhi eḷi sama kirīma ādī vyartha prayatnayen da atyanta kāluṣyaṭa no pämiṇiyä vū padasamūhayen samalankr̥ta vana bävin mē kāvya trayayehi vāgmālāva pariśuddha vä pavatī . . . avyakta lekhakādīn gē bhrama pramādīn vū doṣayen dūṣita vä pävätma movun gē rasa vindanayaṭa ek bādhāveki . . . sinhala kavi kesarīn gē prayogayan suparīkṣakārī vä balana kalä śiṣṭa vyavahāraya iṅdurā data häki bävin tatpathānugata vūvanaṭa nam 'mē bhramayen vū dōṣaya yä, mē pramādayen vū dōṣa yä' yi dänä gänma duṣkara no vē. e heyin mē kāvya śakti pramāṇayen nirmalatvayaṭa pamuṇuvä ādhunika sangrahayak kaḷa mänävä yi mehi lā vyāpr̥ta vūmha."

11. Ananda S. Kulasuriya, "Cumaratunga's Editions and Commentaries to Sinhalese Classics," in *Munidasa Cumaratunga Expository,* vol. 1, ed. S. G. M. Weerasinghe (Maharagama: National Institute of Education, 1994), 33.

12. George Thomas, *Linguistic Purism* (London: Longman, 1991), 84.

13. Cumaratunga, qtd. in Jayanta Weerasekara, *Kukavi Vādaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1938), 4: "muva dev dā, sasa dā, kav siḷu miṇi yana tuna sakala sinhala kāvyayan aturehi mudun mal vä pavatī . . . muva dev dāva komaḷa vū pada yedumin atiramaṇīya vatudu sanskṛta mahā kavīn gen pähärä gat arthayan gen yukta bävin mahat gouravayaṭa apātra veyi. sasa dāyehi ätam *[sic]* sanskṛta padyayan hā maṇḍak samāna vū artha äti kihipa tänek äti. e tanhi penenuyē sanskṛta padyarthayan gē chhāyā mātrayeki; sampūrṇārthaya no vē. me sē chhāyā mātraya gat ada ē kavitva dūṣaṇaya piṇisa no väṭē. kiyana lada mä yi . . . [Sanskrit quotation and gloss follows] . . . kavīhu hudu chhāyāmātraya ganit. anarthaya gannē kukaviyeki. padaya hevat vachanaya gannā soreki."

According to Vinnie Vitharana, the origin of the Sanskrit verse ("kaviranuharatichhāyā– marthan kukavi: padan chora") quoted by Cumaratunga is unknown. See "Kāvya Vichārayehi la Cumāratunga Nirnāyaka," in *Suvahas Naya Manāsi Isivarayāṇō: Cumārarunga Munidāsa,* ed. Gevindu Cumararunga (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2004), 348n3.

14. Cumaratunga. qtd. in Weerasekara, *Kukavi Vādaya,* 4–5: "dän me baṇḍu sorun baṇḍut samaṅga allā gat viṭä sora kama allu ayagē kaṭa äda bava kiyā . . . kāvya śekharaya sesu kav potvalaṭa vaḍā usas lesa bohō aya salakati. mē asthān gouravayeki. perä däkvuṇu ślokārthhayē paridi nam kāvya śekhara kartṛhu haṭa ayat vanuyē 'kavi' nāmaya no vē."

15. For excerpts from the *Amāvatura* that illustrate Guruḷugōmi's use of the ä-karaya letter, see Coperahewa, *Visi Vana Siyavasē,* 72.

16. G. Cumaratunga, *Suvahas Naya Manāsi Isivarayāṇō,* 444–47.

17. Rapiyel Tennakoon, "The Hidden History of the Helese: IV," *Helio* 9–10 (November 1, 1941): 77.

18. Ibid., 77–78.

19. Thomas, *Linguistic Purism,* 149.

20. Ibid., 93.

21. Munidasa Cumaratunga, *Heḷa Mīyäsiya* (1942; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1999), 5. See also Jayanta Aravinda, "Cumāratunga Munidāsa hā Sinhala Sangītaya," in *Suvahas Naya Manäsi Isivarayāṇō: Cumārarunga Munidāsa,* ed. Gevindu Cumaratunga (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2004), 420.

22. M. Cumaratunga, *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* 5: "heḷa mīyäsiyak saṇḍahana viṭä sennō bohō veti. damba divin gäyum väyum igenä oda dakvannō yä ohu. "heḷayäṭa kavara gäyum da? kavara väyum da? hat vaḷahamekä dī men väläpena haṇḍa näṅgīma yä ohu gē gäyuma. ara bohō dā nänvena, pansalinut maha nirayenut bähärä ekakuṭa, bihisuṇu lesa mut mihiri lesa noväṭähena heṇa bera haṇḍa yä ohugē väyuma."

23. M. Cumaratunga, *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* 8: "tava da maha noviḷi kameki. riviṇduru nā ṭahakuruvan vännō un gē bas niyaraṭa huru koṭā gī baṇḍit. me raṭa gättō kumak keret da? e gī balā virita hiṅgati, aruta hiṅgati, pada hiṅgati, gī yä yi maha vihiḷu aṭavā dī amanayan mat karavat."

24. M. Cumaratunga, *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* 9.

25. Ibid., 6: "kuvēṇiya nam dā-dorohovu (jātidrōhi) heḷa gähäniya gē saḷu konekin vä- sum läbä, heḷa nayuvan nasannaṭa vijaya nam hora deṭuvā e dā soren ḷan vaddī, heḷayō kumak keremin unnōda? gäyumen väyumen näṭumen mana pinavamin unnāhi yä. sora deṭuvāku gē ḷaya moḷok vē da mihirekin? ehet aviyak no däkä, muvin gī genä, atin väyi genä, payin räṅgum genä siṭi heḷayō mihiriyen mä maru muvaṭa vannō yä."

26. Wilhelm Geiger, *The Mahāvaṃsa; or, The Great Chronicle of Ceylon* (1912; repr., New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2003), 57.

27. M. Cumaratunga, *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* 63:

> mā desa heḷa desa vena kisi desakaṭa
> mā räsa heḷa räsa vena kisi räsakaṭa
> mā basa heḷa basa vena kisi basakaṭa
> mē hisa no namami no namami kisiviṭa

28. Coperahewa, "Purifying the Sinhala Language," 883.

29. Amanda Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 169.

30. See K. Kailasapathy, "The Tamil Purist Movement: A Re-evaluation," *Social Scientist* 7, no. 10 (1979): 23–51.

31. On Tamil, see Sumathi Ramaswamy, *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891–1970* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). On Telugu, see Lisa Mitchell, *Language, Emotion, and Politics in South Asia: The Making of a Mother Tongue* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).

32. Anandapiya Kudatihi, *Kavi Sayura: Kiviyuru Rā. Tennakōnun gē Siyalu ma Kāvya Grantha Ägäyumeki* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1996), 11.

33. Shri Nat Gannevatte, "Räpiyel Tennakōn: Divi Säriya hā Kavi Pabanda," in *Vavuluva,* by Rapiyel Tennakoon (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2006), 8.

34. Nita Tennakoon, "Magē Tāttā," in *Kavi Sayura: Kiviyuru Rā. Tennakōnun gē Siyalu ma Kāvya Grantha Ägäyumeki,* by Anandapiya Kudatihi (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1996), 313. Rapiyel Tennakoon acknowledged in verse the influence of Cumaratunga's *Virit Väkiya*'s on his own poetry. See Cumaratunga Munidasa, *Virit Väkiya* (1938; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2000); and Rapiyel Tennakoon, ed., *Vavuluva* (1939; Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2006), 97.

35. For *Hävilla,* see Upul Shanta Sannasgala et al., *Set Kaviya: Nūtana Kaviyē Asirimat Vindanaya* (Nugegoda: Sanhinda Vichara Sahityaya Sanhita, 2001), 126; for *Dā Vinaya,* see Kudatihi, *Kavi Sayura,* 39–62.

36. Gannevatte, "Räpiyel Tennakōn," in R. Tennakoon, *Vavuluva,* 10.

37. Munidasa Cumaratunga, "Vivisuma," 1939, in *Vavuluva,* by Rapiyel Tennakoon (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2009), 39–92, 90.

38. Cumaratunga published these stories in his newspaper, *Lak Mini Pahana* (The gem light of Lanka), between 1934 and 1935.

39. Cumaratunga had written a similar heroic portrayal of Ravana six years earlier in book 4 of his *Śikṣāmārgaya* series, a Sinhala-language primer for schoolchildren. See Munidasa Cumaratunga, *Śikṣāvatāraya sahita Śikṣāmārgaya* (1933; repr., Colombo: Sanskrutika Katayutu Departamentuwa, 2009), 11–14.

40. Kudatihi, *Kavi Sayura,* 17.

41. M. Cumaratunga, "Vivisuma," in Tennakoon, *Vavuluva,* 41.

42. M. W. S. De Silva, *Sinhalese and Other Island Language in South Asia* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1979), 29.

43. Munidasa Cumaratunga, "Our Aim," *Helio* 1 (August 29, 1941): 2.

44. Munidasa Cumaratunga, "Professor Wilhelm Geiger's A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language: Critically Examined by Munidasa Cumaratunga (Articles IX)," *Subasa* 11 (November 27, 1939): 155.

45. Munidasa Cumaratunga, "An Open Appeal to C. H. Collins Esq. (B.A., C.C.S.), Chairman, Managing Committee, Sinhalese Dictionary," *Subasa* 19 (March 18, 1940): 289–90.

46. R. Tennakoon, *Vavuluva,* 183:

27. vavulu bas säkäsuma

sasuna rakvannaṭa
muḷu devana lada sabayen
sidu vuṇē nam vavuluva
sakas kärumä'rämbīmeki.

e sebē siyallō
vimasā balā vavuluva
piliyam yedīmaṭa nisi
pavarālū ha mā haṭa.

e heyin vavuluvē
siyalu pat pot samaṅgin
ugatunut ek tänakaṭa
muḷu gänvīmi pasu dinā.

balat e mä pat pot
ugatun vadan vimasat
buruma kaṭuyekä mīṭa sē
ma hisa dãṭaṭa bämäviṇi.

47. Jayanta Weerasekara, "Vivaraṇaya," in *Vavuluva,* by Rapiyel Tennakoon (Boral-asgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2006), 342: "ṭippaṇi:-1. burumayekä miṭa vilasin—burumaya nam lī vidina āyudhayeki. eyin līyak vidina viṭä ehi hisa varak ē ataṭa yeyi; varak mē ataṭa yeyi. magē hisa da me sē dãṭaṭa bämävunē yä. pot pat balata hisat hitat ek atakaṭa ädeyi. ugatun gē bas vimasata ē anek atakaṭa nämeyi."

48. Shri Nat Ganevatte, interview with the author, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, September 11, 2011.

49. Weerasekara, "Vivaraṇaya," in R. Tennakoon, *Vavuluva,* 354–55: "mē padya dekin vavulā gē itā puduma guṇayek heḷi veyi. hē asal väsiyaku gē upakāra divi äti tek no patayi. ko taram samartha asal väsiyan vuva da un äti bavak hō dakinnaṭa nokämättē yä. ehet bähärin nam udavuvak läbīmaṭa ohu gē nokämättek no vē."

50. M. Cumaratunga. "Vivisuma," in Tennakoon, *Vavuluva,* 44–45: "käviḍiya bintäni gamana gänä noyek dã vimäsuvā yä. 'häyi, bas mal (Dictionary) *[sic]* ädiya säpäyīmaṭa siya pedesin vahala läbiyä nohäki da? näti, näti. ehet siya pedesehi vūvan gen vahala labanavāṭa vaḍā piṭin mä vahala läbīmaṭa vavulāṭa risiyeyi . . . vavulā 'asal väsi vavulan gē vahala divi tek' no patayi. 'idin unaṭa piṭu balayak denu risiyetot ma patulā naḷala dī äyi eya nopiḷiganvannē? Vavulā bintänna ä duru raṭekä kavaraku haṭa . . . daṇa bimä änä väṅdīmaṭa kämäti yä. ehet siya pedesehi ugatun gē vahalin vadan malak nima karanuvaṭa väḍiyen divi nimenu däkmaṭa risi ättē yä."

51. This institution later became the Bhatkhande Music Institute.

52. Gregory Pranandu, "Nävum Sagayu Magakata Pilipan Diviyaka Jīvana Tatu Bindak," in *Heḷa'mbarä Sunil Sanda,* ed. Gregory Pranandu and Alfred Nelson (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2009), 17.

53. Sunil Santha, "Dēśiya Sangītaya," in *Sunil Samara,* ed. Vinnie Vitharana (Rajagiriya: Santa Samajaya, 2001), 22–23: "mā da indiyāvaṭa gos ṭika kālyekin sampūrṇa indiyānuvaku bavaṭa parivartanaya vu bava kiva yutu ya. ăṅdumen, basin, siritin, adahasvalin hā an häma anśayekin da indiyānuvaku bavaṭa perāḷunu mā . . . indiyāvē siṭa mehi ā pasu da "mā" jīvat vuyē sampūrṇa indiyānuvaku lesaṭa ya. sinhalaya bohō duraṭa amataka vu bavat, dannē hindustāna bavat kīma "maṭa" edā loku āḍambarayak viya. sinhala gī gāyanayē dī da sinhala vachana hindustāna lesin śabda kirimat, sinhala kathāvē dī hindustāna pada ăṅdīmat maha loku vāḍa häṭiyaṭa "mama" situvemi. koṭin ma kiyatot häma kāraṇayeka dī ma sinhalakama passaṭa tallu koṭa hindustāna kama idiriyaṭa gănīma loku ma kama häṭiyaṭa hitā gatimi.

dinak ek sinhala gī peḷakaṭa magē äs yomu viya. eya varak kiyavimi. devarak kiyavimi. tevarak kiyävimi. ehi kisiyam harayak äti bava maṭa däni giyē ya . . . mā tuḷa loku venasak äti vannaṭa vu bavek däniṇi. ē gī peḷen mä sitaṭa tadin kā vädi giyē pahata penena gī tunayi:

'ma-ge raṭa ma-ge däya	nisā
yuda vädä saturan	nasā
ma divi giyat maṭa	e sā
yasa veda siyavas	vasa
siṭiya da gal gehi	vädī
paṇat namat yeyi	siṅdī
e paṇa raṭaṭa däyaṭa	dī
nama räkä-lavu no	pärädī
raṭaṭa däyaṭa hita	dapā
maṅdakaṭa divi loba	lopā
kaḷa meheyak näti	de pā
heḷayeku däkumat	epā'"

Santha quoted these stanzas from M. Cumaratunga, *Heḷa Mīyäsiya,* 85.

54. Santha, "Dēśiya Sangītaya," in Vitharana, *Sunil Samara,* 23: "me gī peḷa liyu pinvatā gē atin liyävuṇu tavat yamak äddäyi soyā bäluyemi. soyā gatimi, kiyävīmi, tada älmekin kiyävīmi. etek mā tuḷa kā väṅdi pävati puhu adahas siyalla ma sun kära damannaṭa ē pinvatā gē pāṇa hoṅḍaṭa ma samat vu bava däniṇi. mama iṅdurā ma venas atakaṭa perāḷuṇemi. magē īniyā "hindustānakama" hindustānayaṭa ma giyā sē däniṇi. ada magē desaṭat, magē räsaṭat, magē basaṭat vaḍā loku vu an kisivak mi piṭa näta."

55. I thank an anonymous reviewer for the *Sri Lanka Journal of Humanities* for suggesting this English translation. Sunil Santha, *Guvan Totilla* (1948; repr., Rajagiriya: Santha, 2000), 10–11:

> giya giya atä pā mahimaya moḷayē
>> divi heḷa tunu   ruvanē
> demin̆da satapā dapa rupu daḷayē
>> puḷuna mä kaḷa   pavanē
> maha rusi maha pā guru devi heḷayē
>> munidasuna'pa   ruvanē
> oba uvadesu'pā nidi räkä me ḷayē
>> samaramu siyalu   dinē

Such songs are referred to in Sinhala as *pudgalābhivādana* (individual commemoration).

56. D. P. M. Weerakkody, "The Melodies of Sunil Santha," in Vitharana, *Sunil Samara,* 283.

57. Sunil Santha, *Heḷa Ridī Valāva* (1947; repr., Rajagiriya: Santha, 2006), 5:

> ōlu pipīlā vela leḷa denavā sudaṭa sudē   naṅgō
> ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā denna da sudu   naṅgō
> ennä diyē bäsä mā hā dennä obē ata mālā
>> ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā
>> palaǹdimu api mālā

58. Santha, *Heḷa Ridī Valāva,* 5:

> väḷa no kä̆ḍī pem keḷimin yannō danḍi päṭavu   naṅgō
> kūnissō uḍa pänä pänä yannō apa kaǹdavā   naṅgō
> menna malak mā neḷuvā onna obeyi ē mālā
>> ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā
>> palaǹdimu api mālā

> mā paradinavā oba gē dä̆ṭaṭa maṭa lajjayi   naṅgō
> hemihiṭa hemihiṭa neḷamin yamu kō kalabala äyi   naṅgō
> ōḷu malē suda gahalā oba ruva vä̆ḍi veyi mālā
>> ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā
>> palaǹdimu api mālā

> neḷuvā neḷuvā baraṭa mä neḷuvā baraṭa barayi   naṅgō
> mēvā ärägenā vaṭapil kandaṭa yamu da itin   naṅgō
> anna malli mehi enavā yamu yamu hanikaṭa mālā
>> ōlu neḷālā māla gotālā
>> palaǹdimu api mālā

59. Coperahewa, "Purifying the Sinhala Language," 869.

60. Munidasa Cumaratunga, *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1938), ka (ක) [pages numbered according to the Sinhala method]: "rītiyak nītiyak näti jana samājaya

men mä bhāṣāva da avulin avulaṭa väṭeyi. sinhala bhāṣāvaṭa mē vipattiya ebī siṭī. vaḷakana prayatnayak dän mä vuva manā yä . . . śiṣṭa vū jana samājayē bhāṣāvaṭa vyākaraṇaya atiśayin avashya yä."

61. On future-tense conjugation in literary Sinhala, see James W. Gair and W. S. Karunatilaka, *Literary Sinhala* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 244–45.

62. Santha, *Heḷa Ridī Valāva,* 5.

63. Ibid., 27. This analysis is indebted to Shri Premadasa Alavattage, "Prastāvanāva," in *Ōlu Pipīlā: Sunil Sānta Rachita Gīta Padamāla,* by Sunil Santha, ed. Shri Premadasa Alavattage (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2009), 11–40; and Vinnie Vitharana, "Pasuvadana: Sunil Santhage Gi Pabadumhi Penena Bhasha-Sahitya Lakshana," in Santha, *Ōlu Pipīlā,* 101–10.

64. Sunil Santha, *Sunil Haṇḍa* (1947; repr., Rajagiriya: Santha, 1999), 4: "kǟm-bim, äňdum-päläňdum, yǟm-īm, sirit-virit ādī häma deyak mä aparadiga pannayaṭa puhuṇu vä siṭi apē bohō denā taman gē basa muḷutän geṭa dakkä dämū ha. mavu basin katā kirīma ovunaṭa mahā maňdikamek viyä . . . ätämhu saradamaṭa men, päl kavi, karatta kavi, sīpada, vannam ādiya 'sinhala sangītaya' yi kiyamin gayannaṭa paṭan gat ha. ehet ēvā nikamaṭa kīvā vinā in satuṭu vū bavek nam no peniṇi. karuṇu me sē pavatnā atarä ridī valāva pahaḷa viyä. 'ōlu pipīlā,' 'haňda pānē' väni gīvalin sidu vū meheya mama mä kumaṭa kiyam da? 'appiriyāva' nisä 'okkārayaṭa' ā heḷa pada dän yasa raňgaṭa ara ingirisi kaṭin piṭa veyi. mavu basin gī kīmaṭa dän ohu purudu veti. ma-gē *[sic]* mē 'alut sangītayen' mä balāporottu vū karuṇu aturin ekeki."

65. That said, Santha did compose a few songs in Indian rāgas. For instance, his "Rāma Vällapilla" (Rama's lament) is composed in Bhairavi rāga (Nishoka Sandaruwan, interview with the author, Colombo, Sri Lanka, January 3, 2012).

66. Santha, 1953, qtd. in Vitharana, *Sunil Samara,* 25: "apē 'sinhalastān' sangītakārayanaṭa dēśiya sangītaya yannat jātika sangītādhyāpanaya yannat vaha kaduru men titta vīmaṭ, apē dēśiya sangītaya lesa piḷigata yuttē hindustāna sangītaya ma yäyi häňgīmak äti vannaṭat ē nisä ē sangītaya hadarana siyalu dena 'hindustānin' bavaṭa peräḷī sadahaṭa ma esē ma innaṭat hētuva ovun kerehi apē raṭaṭat, apē jātiyaṭat, apē basaṭat yantamin hō sälakillak, älmak, ādarayak näti vīma yi."

67. Sunil Ariyaratne *Śrī Lanākawē Kaṇḍāyam Sangītaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2002), 18–19: "ohugē haňda, bāla kālayehi paṭan dēvasthāna sangītayen śikṣita ya . . . sunil sāntayangē mē haňda, sinhala sangīta rasikayanṭa mahat apūrvatvayak gena dunnē ya. eya—sādris da silvā, H.W. rūpasinha, don mānis paṭṭiārāchchi, än romlas da silvā ādīngē matu no va ānanda samarakōnungē haňdaṭa pavā hātpasin venas viya. bhāratīya sangītayen śikṣita tatkālīna gāyana śilpīngē gī, kaṇ svara—mīṇḍ ādī gāyana alankāravalin yukta vūyē ya . . . sunil sānta, siya gīvala dī me baňdu gāyanālankāra bhāvita kaḷē kalāturakini. ohu svarayakin svarayakaṭa itā ṛju lesa gaman kalē ya. evaka siṭi bhāratīya sangītayen śikṣita ätäm gāyakayanṭa vaḍā hoňdin vachana uchchāraṇaya kaḷē ya."

68. Weerakkody, "Melodies of Sunil Santha," in Vitharana, *Sunil Samara,* 287.

69. Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 16.

70. This letter was printed in Vitharana, *Sunil Samara,* 358.

71. Ariyaratne, *Śrī Lanākawē Kaṇḍāyam Sangītaya,* 18.

72. That year Ratanjankar bestowed an A-grade onto five musicians: Lionel Edirisinghe, Ananda Samarakoon, Deva Surya Sena, Sunil Santha, and S. Amarasinghe. See D. M. Colombage, *Guvan Viduli Vanśaya* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1980), 83.

73. Sunil Santha, "Apē Dēśiya Sangītaya Kumakda?" *Lankādīpa,* May 5, 1952, 8: "sinhalaya piḷibaňda upades gänīmaṭa jarmaniyen kenaku mehi genvū nisāma sinhala sangītayak nipadavīmaṭat piṭaraṭin pihiṭa pätīma gäna magē viśvāsayak näta."

74. Sinhala song cited in Sunil Santha, *Miyäsi Mihira* (Rajagiriya: Santha, 2003), 41–42.

75. W. D. Amaradeva, "Ägäyuma: Heḷa Gī Maga Mal Gänvū Sunil Sāntayō," in Santha, *Miyäsi Mihira,* 3–4: "mē gītaya vigraha kara bälīmē dī sunil sāntayan visin sinhala gämiyan atara daknā läbena des täbīm, yädīm, häňḍīm väni avasthāvala dī naňganu labana nāda latā mänavin ukahā gena gämi nādavaliya tuḷa pävati prākṛtika lakṣaṇa abibavā yamin parisamāpta gītayak sakasā gena äti säṭi heḷi vē . . . prachalita bhāratīya gāyana prakārayan gen ven vī käpī penena svādhīna vūt, dēśiya vūt lakṣaṇa matu karamin siyum rasayak jananaya vana gītayak nirmāṇaya kara äti säṭi vimasanu vaṭī . . . dakāranta pada ghaṭanāvē dhvani sampattiya avadhāraṇaya vanasē uchchāraṇa raṭāva meheyavā äti ākārayen paḷi darannā gē chitta santānayē dädi bavat dvēṣī bavat monavaṭa nirūpaṇaya vē. yathokta pādatrayaṭa anaturu va ena 'sāminē' yana koṭasa sangīta sandarbhayaṭa purudda ättē yadina tänättā visin kaňdadev radunaṭa bhakti purassara va hā bägäpat va kerena āyāchanaya gāyana latāven mūrtimat vana ayurini."

76. Santha, "Dēśiya Sangītaya," in Vitharana, *Sunil Samara,* 30: "apē gamē goḍē gähänun vaṭinā yamak näti vu viṭa karana, kiyana dē devvaruṇaṭa pali gahana häṭi, bāra baňdina häṭi mā hoňḍaṭa däka purudu yi. 'anē kataragama dev hāmuduruvanē, mē aparāde karapu ekā gē bella ḷagin ma käḍilā palayan' väni dē däṭ naňgä maha haňḍin gänu kaṭin kiyävena viṭa ē ekkama nägena latāvat mama hoňḍaṭa asā purudu ättemi. 'kukuḷu hävilla' namäti 'kataragamē' gīyaṭa tanuva dämmē dī mā anugamanaya keḷē . . . ara gähäniya gē muvin näňgena latāva yi.* * ratanjankar mahatā apē gamē goḍē gänun gē häňdim välapīm pali gäsim kotaram duraṭa asā däka purudu äddäyi mama no danimi."

77. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.

CHAPTER 3. WARTIME ROMANCE

1. See Angulugaha Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā: Adyatana Kāvya Nirmāṇa Piḷibaňda Vimarśanayak* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2012), 27; D. M. Colombage, *Guvan Viduli Vanśaya* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1980), 35–37; and Lloyd Rajaratnam Devarajah, "Ceylon's Pearl Harbour Attack: How Allied Forces Thwarted the Japanese Attempt to Invade Lanka 68 Easters Ago," April 11, 2010, www.sundaytimes.lk/100411/Plus/plus_26.html.

2. Nandana Karunanayake, *Broadcasting in Sri Lanka: Potential and Performance* (Moratuwa: Centre for Media and Policy Studies, 1990), 101.

3. Velcheru Narayana Rao, *Twentieth-Century Telugu Poetry: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 291; Sudipta Kaviraj, "Tagore and Transformations in the Ideals of Love," in *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History,* ed. Francesca Orsini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 161–82; Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chhayavad Age of Modern Hindi Poetry* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 30.

4. Rabindranath Tagore's impact throughout South Asia deserves comparative study, for in the midst of Westernization in twentieth-century South Asia, Tagore stood out as the only composer and poet native to South Asia who was revered and imitated by poets and songwriters from Nepal in the north to Sri Lanka in the south.

5. Since 1928 Sri Lankan composers and artists had been traveling to Bengal to study at Santiniketan. See Sunil Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1988), 16.

6. Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 17.

7. Ibid., 18. At this time, HMV and Columbia were competing against each other with their own unique rosters of music directors, lyricists, and about twenty gramophone vocalists. Typically, the songwriter would hand over lyrics to the music director, who had just learned a melody from a popular Hindi- or Tamil-language film song. The music director would proceed to create arrangements and lead a group of musicians in an orchestra that accompanied a main vocalist.

8. Peter Manuel, *Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 38.

9. Sunil Ariyaratne, *Grämafōn Gī Yugaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2009), 84.

10. Ananda Samarakoon, *Siḷumiṇa,* May 6, 1956, 6, cited in Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 92.

11. Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 89–90, 18–21.

12. For examples of Samarakoon's early songs, see Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 98–99.

13. Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 92.

14. Sinhala song text cited in Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 207:

> pi. enḍada mänikē mamat diyambaṭa kaḍanna kekaṭiya mal
>   oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho pipichcha kekaṭiya mal
> gä. mahansi vannaṭa epā epā ane epā epā ane innako gan ivurē
> pi. oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho nämichcha kekaṭiya mal

15. Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 207:

> pi. onna onna raḷa pāraṭa temenava mänikege sudu sēlē
>   oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho mänikege sudu sēlē
> gä. temichcha dän oho temichcha dän oho ēkaṭa kamak nätē
> pi. oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho lassanayi oho mänikege sudu sēlē

16. Samarakoon, qtd. in Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 189: "tāgōr kaviňdu jana kaviyaṭa ma nava paṇak dī ehi gäb va äti dēśīya ūruva no nasina paridi häḍa gäsī ya. bhāratīya śāstrīya sangītayehi ābhāsaya läbūvada ehi vanga ūruva raňdā pavatī . . . bengālayē prachāraya vī äti janapriya sangītaya ādarśa koṭa gena apaṭa da lankāvē janapriya sangītayak nipadavā gata häki ya. meya janakavi padanam koṭa gena kaḷa yuttaki."

17. Wimal Dissanayake et al., *Sinhala Jana Kavi Sangrahaya* (1975; repr., Colombo: Adhyapana Prakashana Departamentuva, 2009), xvi–ix.

18. Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma,* 66.

19. Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 96.

20. Samarakoon, qtd. in Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 97.

21. Sinhala song text cited in Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 216:

pi.   vilē malak pipilā kadimayi—ara neḷaṇṭa yamu mänikō
      haňdahāmī ara ebī balannē—ada novä pōy sudō

22. Sinhala song text cited in Ariyaratne, *Ānanda Samarakōn Adhyayanaya,* 216:

gä.   denna e mala maṭa neḷalā—muniňduṇṭa karami eya pūjā
      kara mā sita äti eka prārthanā—pirisidu vū e mala neḷā

pi.   kiyanna maṭa eya pahadālā—oba—sitehī ē prārthanā

gä.   ena jātiyēdī kusumak ventayi—magē ekama pätumā

pi.   äyida anē oba e lesa sitannē—kumaṭada kusumak vīlā
      kumārikāvak vīmaṭa narakada—rū siriyen dilenā

gä.   ramya kusum no kiḷiṭivū—vaṭinā vastuvaki lōkē
      kaḷuṭin piri mē manuṣyātmē—kelesada hoňda malaṭa vaḍā

23. Miniwan P. Tillakaratne, *Modern Sinhala Poetry of Sri Lanka: A Critical Assessment* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1993), 24.

24. On *chāyāvād* poetry, see Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma;* David Rubin, trans., *Of Love and War: A Chayavad Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Harish Trivedi, "The Progress of Hindi, Part 2: Hindi and the Nation," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia,* ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press), 990–99. On Tagore and romanticism, see V. A. Shahane, "Rabindranath Tagore: A Study in Romanticism," *Studies in Romanticism* 3, no. 1 (1963): 53–64; Ellen Goldberg, "The Romanticism of Rabindranath Tagore: Poetry as Sadhana," *Indian Literature* 45, no. 4 (2001): 173–96; and Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Romantic Archives: Literature and the Politics of Identity in Bengal," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (2004): 654–82.

25. Ranjini Obeyesekere, *Sinhala Writing and the New Critics* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1974), 26.

26. Kaviraj, "Tagore and Transformations," in Orsini, *Love in South Asia,* 162–63. In this article, Kaviraj attributes Tagore's shift toward *prem* to the influence of Bengali novelist Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838–94), who came to feel that the *śṛngāra rasa* was monotonous and degrading.

27. Hiniduma Sunil Senevi, *Kolamba Kaviya saha H. M. Kuḍaligama* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2000), 94–95. The three entries from *Stray Birds* are numbers 179, 199, and 247.

28. A. M. G. Sirimanna, "Nūtana Sinhala Kāvyayē Baṭahira Ābhāsaya," in *G. B. Sēnānāyake Prabhāshanaya,* ed. Ranjit Amarakirti Palihapitiya et al. (Kotte: Sri Jayawardenepura Vishwa Vidhyalaya, 1985), 167.

29. Martin Wickramasinghe, *Upandāsiṭa: Bāl Viya, Taruṇa Viya, Mäda Viya* (1961; repr., Nawala: Sarasa Samagama, 2011), 280.

30. P. B. Alwis Perera, *Pī. Bī. Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* ed. P. M. Senaratna (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2009), 20: "ālaya vanāhi devlovin minis hṛdayaṭa pahaḷa vū mātsayarya häňgīmaki! bohō viṭa avaradiga kaviyā sāhitya sēvaya piḷibaňda uyanaṭa pivisiyē svabhāvika soundayarya namäti sudu väli aturana lada ālaya namäti paṭumāvatini. uk daňḍu dunna īṭa tuḍu dun vǟyamak pamaṇaki. 'paṭu māvataka alpa darśanayen kaviyā sakala lōka dhātuva daknēya' yi dēdunneka hō mal käkulaka jīvitaya sǟnga vū vanga mahā kavi ravīndanat tāgōr

tumā paḷa kaḷēya. mehi samahara tänaka däkvena adahas etumāgē ma kāvyakin udurā gannā laddē ema prakāśayē satya avussā gänīma piṇisaya."

31. Rabindranath Tagore, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore: Poems,* ed. Sisir Kumar Das (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994), 410.

32. Tagore, *English Writings,* 195: "Come to my garden walk, my love. Pass by the fervid flowers that press themselves on your sight. Pass them by, stopping at some chance joy, that like a sudden wonder of sunset illuminates, yet eludes. For love's gift is shy, it never tells its name, it flits across the shade, spreading a shiver of joy along the dust. Overtake it or miss it forever. But a gift that can be grasped is merely a frail flower, or a lamp with a flame that will flicker."

33. The earliest book in the Sinhala-language related to Tagore was a biography titled *Tagore Charitaya* (The Life of Tagore, 1947), written by Ven. Sumangala Himi. The earliest translations were William Alwis's translation of Tagore's *Crescent Moon* (1913), titled *Adasanda* (1954); and H. D. Ananda Gunasekara's translation of Tagore's *Gitanjali* (1912), titled *Gitānjali: Namaskāra Geetha* (1959). See Sandagomi Coperahewa and Buddhini Ramanayaka, "A Bibliography of Rabindranath Tagore's Works in Sinhala," *Remembering Rabindranath Tagore: 150th Anniversary Commemorative Volume,* ed. Sandagomi Coperahewa (Colombo: University of Colombo, 2011), 128–31.

34. Perera published these two poems in *Lamayinge Surapura* (The heaven of children, 1946). W. A. Abeysinghe, "Pī. Bī. Alwis Perērā Kāvya Nirmāṇa Adhyayanaya," in *Pī. Bī. Alwis Perērā Ekatu Kaḷa Kavi: Prathama Bhāgya,* ed. W. A. Abeysinghe (Maradana: Samayawardhana Pothala Samagama, 2007), 65–69.

35. Perera published "Abhicārikāva" in *Sobā Dahama* (*Nature,* 1942).

36. Tagore, *English Writings,* 195; P. B. Alwis Perera, *Pī. Bī. Alwis Perērā Ekatu Kaḷa Kavi: Prathama Bhāgya,* ed. W. A. Abeysinghe (Maradana: Samayawardhana Pothala Samagama, 2007), 947:

> poḍi taṇa malak men ḷan vī siṭi   bimaṭa
> ḷan viya raṭē mahajanayā gē   ḷämaṭa

37. W. Abeysinghe, "Alwis Perērā Kāvya Nirmāṇa," in Perera, *Alwis Perērā Ekatu Kaḷa Kavi,* 14, 16, 20.

38. Kaviraj, "Tagore and Transformations," in Orsini, *Love in South Asia,* 164–65.

39. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 21:

> sena haṅda naḷā viduliya kälmen kä   ňdū
> mēkuḷu ätun vagurata väsi mada bi   ňdū
> vasat kal rajiňdu pavasana gī sin   ňdū
> asamin okaňda vana viṭa vana devi la   ňdū

40. Kaviraj "Tagore and Transformations," in Orsini, *Love in South Asia,* 166.

41. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 21:

> pas piyumen pokuṇu vil diya utura   nnī
> dunukē—koḷom—amba mal, varaḷehi gä   nnī
> taṇa bim veraḷu miṇi väni nava päla du   nnī
> mihiliya räjiniyaka siri gena babalan   nnī

42. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 22:

dävaṭī ratī dev duva nam päṇi hä	liyē
kiri diya men vähena sītala saṅda e	liyē
ramba vanayaṭa ihaḷa nil miṇi kaṅdu rä	liyē
yannaṭa kāma devi särasuṇi mal ke	ḷiyē

43. Catherine Benton, *God of Desire: Tales of Kāmadeva in Sanskrit Story Literature* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 16; Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 22:

mī mäsi välak amuṇā vara poṭaṭa ä	da
uk daṅḍuven tanā gena dunu maṅḍala ka	ṅda
däsaman asōkā nil heḷa upuḷu mä	da
amba mal rägena in ītala miṭiya bä	ṅda

44. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 22:

sītala sulabha piḷibaṅda diva turaṅga pi	ṭa
nägemin ratiya hiṅduvā gena peraṭu ko	ṭa
san kaṭuven pahara dī asu duvana vi	ṭa
kala hasa nada gäniṇi äya hiṇa kikiṇi vä	ṭa

45. Martin Wickramasinghe, *Nava Padya Sinhalaya* (1957; repr., Devala: Simasahita Tisara Prakasakayo, 1992), 35; Wasantha Atukorale, "Uk Daṇḍu Dunna," in *Pī. Bī. Alwis Perērāgē Kavi,* ed. Nandasena Ratnapala (Maradana: Ratna Pot Prakashakayo, 1966), 1.

46. Sanskrit authors have portrayed Kāmadeva's arrows with the power to arouse passion since as early as the *Atharva Veda* (c. 1000–500 B.C.E.). Benton, *God of Desire,* 110; Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 23:

äya muva giren rasa bas gaṅga galana vi	ṭa
viddā ohu asōkā mal hīya ma	ṭa
dāsaman sära da nilupul sära ekatu ko	ṭa
pelamin yalidu visa dala biṅgu rähän po	ṭa

47. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 23:

situvam valāyehi suramaga duvana i	bē
navaham kusumhi da turuliya rikili go	bē
kavisam paṭaṭa tuti dena gan pokuṇu gä	bē
mage pem vatige no märena rū sapuva ti	bē

48. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 24:

vinā sayaṭa pat vī ganaṅdura mä	ruṇi
vanā udaya vela atarin räs ku	ruṇi
kanā hū lamäṇi aruṅa'ḷu roda pi	ruṇi
sinā sen vänna mage no biṅdena ta	ruṇi

49. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 48:

> soňduriyani! tige surat deto'laga me väni
> > diva rasayak koyi   ndō
> biňgudalini nägi pokuru mi yusa räňdunu
> > mudu paṭalaya kere   ndō
> vanamalini mini mutu ähiňda gat suvaňda
> > suṇu rasa käṭiyaki   ndō
> sisilapini biňdu yutu kusum mata väṭunu
> > ama biňduvaka veti   ndō

50. Ariya Rajakaruna, *Nūtana Sinhala Kāvya 2* (1962; Nugegoda: Piyasiri, 2004), 6.

51. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 24: "sudu pem vatiya! kiri binduva! suvaňda pi ḍa!" See also Atukorale, "Uk Daṇḍu Dunna," in Ratnapala, *Pī. Bī. Alwis Perērāgē Kavi,* 27.

52. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 34: "pän salkūru meni tige poḍi äǧilla dē." See also Ariya Rajakaruna, *Nūtana Sinhala Kāvya 2, 4.*

53. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 34:

> saman malige piyayuru däka nävata härī
> tabannemi alut uwamak kohoma harī
> pälennaṭa itā lanwuṇu sulan pirī
> japan bälum yugaḷeka yanu nowe da? sarī

See also Nandasena Ratnapala, "Häňdinvīma," in *Pī. Bī. Alwis Perērāgē Kavi,* ed. Nandasena Ratnapala (Maradana: Ratna Pot Prakashakayo, 1966), ix.

54. Perera, *Alwis Perērā Kāvyāvalī,* 35: "kos geḍiyak vageyi nisi puḷulukula wäḍi."

55. M. Wickramasinghe, *Upandāsiṭa,* 332–33.

56. E. Powys Mathers's translations were not confined to Sri Lanka. They also influenced the Urdu poet Miraji (1912–49), who translated erotic works from Mathers's *Eastern Love* volumes (1927–30). See Geeta Patel, *Lyrical Movements, Historical Hauntings: On Gender, Colonialism, and Desire in Miraji's Urdu Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 48.

57. Mimana Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī,* ed. P. M. Senaratne (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2009), 100: "meya taruṇa taruṇiyanṭa prēmayē paramārthaya hō sīmāntika śṛngāra rasaya hō igänvīmaṭa liyana lada kāvyayak nevē. meya liyana laddē taruṇayakugē ādarayaṭa vaḍā taruṇiyakagē ādaraya rāga chētanāven piri itirī pavatinu bava penvīmaṭaya."

58. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī,* 100–102: "ägē paramārthaya rāga chētanāva mudunpat kara gänīma pamaṇi. in pasu hadisiyē ma ek dinak vanayakadī venin taruṇayeku hamuvīmē dī ā ohu samaga mitra vī pemvatā amataka karayi . . . ohu matak vūyē daru gäbak sora sämiyā nisā äti vū pasuvaya."

59. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī,* 101: "taruṇayā pem kaḷē metaram ugra rāgachetanāvakin nova."

60. Elizabeth Emery, "Art as Passion in Anatole France's *Le Lys rouge,*" *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 35, nos. 3–4 (2007): 643; Anatole France, *The Red Lily (Le Lys rouge),* trans. Winifred Stephens (Paris: Maison Mazarin, 1905), 205.

61. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī,* 176: "prēma kāvyayanhi dos daknā bohō denā kaviyā gē dos vinā kāvyayaṭa ätulat charitayangē dos no dakī. kaviyā liyanuyē lōkayē sāmānya vaśayen siduvana puvataki. eheyin varada ohu atē nova ättē samājaya at-erahiya. mevāni kāvyayak kiyavīmehidī pota liyū tänättā gāna nova, taruṇayan dedenakuṭa siya śarīraya käpakara madana diyaṇiyak men häsirena—aśīlāchāra "milī" nämäti strīn gāna kiyavannā sita yomu kaḷa hot prēma kāvyayakin prayōjanayak atvenu niyataya."

62. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī,* 116.

63. Ibid., 110:

> himiyani! magē mē loku pem gaṅgaṭa mu   la
> kaṅduväni vaṭora asalin äti amara vi   la!
> eya däni dänī äyi tavamat noganu pa   la?
> kimidenu! nahanu! ehi yaṭayanu! pemini da   ḷa

H. L. Seneviratne (e-mail message to author, January 31, 2016) suggested that here Premathilaka imitated verse 39 in Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (c. 1952):

> "Fondling," she saith, "since I have hemm'd thee here
> Within the circuit of this ivory pale,
> I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer;
> Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale:
> Graze on my lips; and if those hills be dry,
> Stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie."

Excerpted from H. T. S. Forrest, *The Original "Venus and Adons,"* by William Shakespeare (London: Lane, 1930), 36.

64. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī,* 111–12:

> bäḷum balā dedenama maṅdahasin a   ḍa
> äḷum barava ḷaṅga siṭi min da ohu mä   ḍa
> neḷum pohoṭṭuvakaṭa hansayaku tu   ḍa
> käḷum peḷum ätivama gillavana hä   ḍa!

> . . . .
> achala keḷiya susumin nima karana la   dī
> kamala muhuna ratu viya ekinekaṭa vä   dī
> davala dasan paharin taruṇayage ri   dī
> komala lalana äge piyayuru yavala ma   dī

65. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī,* 177:

> koṭa gavumakin särasuna mē boḷaṅda e   kī
> yana ena atara salelun tuṭukaranu hä   kī
> piṭakaranaṭada tuḍu dena hoṅda mihiri vä   kī
> sulaṅge hamana viṭa rasavat hariya da   kī

66. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī*, 178–79:

däka mē taruṇi sav bala taruṇayage ga	tē
biyaṭat vaḍā ādarayak ätiva hi	tē
ätikara mohotakadi hoňdaṭama ratiye ma	tē
melesin kīya maňdahasa raňdavamini va	tē

"sära äyi oya taram siṭa gatiyen piya	vī
karadara kaḷa yutuda oya väḍakaṭa noni	vī
huratal kara nosiṭa ādara rasa madi	vī
ura ura mage detola pem rasa bonu mäna	vī"

67. Premathilaka, *Mīmana Prēmatilaka Kāvyāvalī*, 179:

äňda uḍa ekaṭa api dedenama iňdimi	nna
baňda mata baňda velā hirakara sänase	nna
eda madinam tavat eti dev lova ya	nna
ada pamaṇak noveyi oba sadahaṭa e	nna

. . . .

monavaṭa balanavada tanapuḍuvala pā	ṭa
iruvaṭa yayi da? eya ohomayi hämadā	ṭa
piyovuru yuvala nam tava tada keruvā	ṭa
varadak nähä riduma dänunet nähä ī	ṭa

68. Ariya Rajakaruna, *Nūtana Sinhala Kāvya 2,* 83–85.

69. R. Obeyesekere, *Sinhala Writing,* 25. See also Sirimanna, "Nūtana Sinhala Kāvyayē," in Palihapitiya et al., *G. B. Sēnānāyake Prabhāshanaya,* 162.

70. Alfred Tennyson, *Enoch Arden* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), 4.

71. Sagara Palansuriya, *Sagara Palansūriya Kāvyāvalī,* ed. P. M. Senaratne (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2009), 86.

72. Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 247.

73. Tennyson, *Enoch Arden,* 3; Palansuriya, *Sagara Palansūriya Kāvyāvalī,* 86:

goḍa maḍa dekama saru sāra ya pala	baraya
kaṭuroda gammāna taramaka piṭi	saraya
ē gama mädin galanā gaňga mana	haraya
kaḍa maṇḍiya pihiṭiye gama keḷa	varaya

74. Ricci, *Islam Translated,* 247.

75. In verse 9 he uses another *yugala padayak* when he describes how Hīn Mänikē excelled at *mähum getum* (sewing and knitting).

76. Palansuriya, *Sagara Palansūriya Kāvyāvalī,* 87:

"gahagannaṭa epā dennāṭama	biriňda
vennam umbalā dennama magē	noveda
sellam karamu äyi mē kalabala	mokada?"
kiyamin sänasuvā sumihiri bas	boḷaňda

77. Ricci, *Islam Translated,* 247.

78. Palansuriya, *Sagara Palansūriya Kāvyāvalī,* 89.

79. Ibid., 91, 93.

80.   Palansuriya, *Sagara Palansūriya Kāvyāvalī,* 93:

kalak gata viya liyumak näta ā   yē

ā no ma danī ohu haṭa monavada vū   yē

punsaňda vage nagina pasaḷossaka pō   yē

äyaṭa säkak näti ālaya himiyā   yē

81. Ibid., 100–101.

82. Ibid., 105.

83. Ariya Rajakaruna, *Nūtana Sinhala Kāvya 2,* 88, 92.

CHAPTER 4. DIVERGENT STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

1. K. M. De Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (1981; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 626; K. N. O. Dharmadasa, *Language, Religion, and Ethnic Assertiveness: The Making of Sinhalese Nationalism in Sri Lanka* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 239–60; Neil DeVotta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 73–142; Chelvadurai Manogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 41–49; W. Howard Wriggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 228–70, 326–69.

2. After independence in 1948 the United National Party ruled for the next eight years. During this period, the Sinhalese Buddhist population's frustration with the UNP began to boil over. UNP party members were criticized for allowing British military bases to remain on the island, failing to remove "His Majesty's Service" from government stationery, adopting a Westernized lifestyle and dress, and caring more about pounds sterling than the Ceylon rupee. See Michael Roberts, ed., *Exploring Confrontation: Sri Lanka Politics, Culture, and History* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic, 1994), 311–12.

3. K. De Silva, *History of Sri Lanka,* 525–26.

4. W. A. Wiswa Warnapala, *Civil Service Administration in Ceylon: A Study in Bureaucratic Adaptation* (Colombo: Department of Cultural Affairs, 1974), 270, 296.

5. Immanuel Wallerstein, "The National and the Universal," in *Culture, Globalization, and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity,* ed. Anthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 96.

6. James Manor, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 250; Warnapala, *Civil Service Administration,* 243; Roberts, *Exploring Confrontation,* 298; Tarzie Vittachi, *Emergency '58: The Story of the Ceylon Race Riots* (London: Deutsch, 1958), 19.

7. Anne Sheeran, "White Noise: European Modernity, Sinhala Musical Nationalism, and the Practice of a Creole Popular Music in Modern Sri Lanka" (PhD diss., Washington

University, 1997), 178–82; Jim Sykes, "The Musical Gift: Sound, Sovereignty, and Multicultural History in Sri Lanka" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2011), 179, 181–82.

8. Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 26, 283.

9. Ibid., 288–94, 380–88.

10. Ezra Pound, *Make It New* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934).

11. Udaya Manawasinghe, interview with the author, Boralesgamuwa, Sri Lanka, February 5, 2012.

12. Sunil Ariyaratne, ed., *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1991), 114:

> kathanaya: svabhāva soundaryaya mūrtimat koṭa śrī chandraratna
> mānavasinha mahatā gāndharva
> dēva kathāvak gītayaṭa naṅgayi. mē gītamaya nāṭya hā
> sambandha vistara obē tērum
> gänīmē pahasuva saňdahā api paḷamuva idiripat karamu.
> sōmakumari—chandrayā,
> manōhārī—jagat soundarya, . . . jagatpati—lōkaya,
> divāpati—sūryaya, . . . kiraṇa bhaṭa
> hamudāva—hiru räs, . . . hēmantā—hēmantā ṛtuva.

Additional characters included The City of Vasanta (The Spring Season); Dark Clouds (Rain Clouds); The City of Sarada (The Autumn Season); Samīrana the Messenger (The Wind); and The Prince of Heat (The Summer Season).

13. On *utprekṣā,* see David Shulman, *More Than Real: A History of the Imagination in South India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 56–60.

14. Ariyaratne, *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha,* 114–15:

> poraṇa jagat pati raju gē
> manōhāri namin pataḷa
> rūbara diyaṇiyak vunā
>   gadamba dev kulē
>
> dik vijayaṭa namagena siṭi
> teda bala äti divā patiṭa
> manōhāri pāvā dena
>   lesin särasunā
>
> divā patige häḍi däḍi gati
> nokämäti siyumäli kumariya
> sōma kumaru samaga nitara
>   pemin pasu vuňā
>
> māligayē nila mehevara
> karavana hēmantā nam
> raja dāsiya manōhāri
>   kumari sänasuvā

15. Ariyaratne, *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha,* 115–16:

kathanaya: jagatpati raja bhavanaya tuḷa manōhāriyagē hā soma
kumarugē prēma sangamaya

(Song in Rageswari: Flute—Introduction)

sōmakumaru: isurumat dev
gadamba kulayē
jagatpati raja diyaṇiyē
magē netvala
uḷela oba veyi
manōhāri kumariyē

manōhāri: soma kumaruni
apē mē pem
räyē suvayaṭa iḍa tiyā
nihaňḍa vī siṭi kurullō
avadiveti gī gayā

(Interlude)

sōmakumaru: siyalu mal kän
pubuduvana mudu
sinā raňdi obē muva balā
amā vila mal
pāruven bäsa
kohoma yannada pā naňgā

(Interlude)

manōhāri: mamat emi oba
samaňga yannaṭa
māligāven piṭavalā
magē hadavata
rägena yana koṭa
kesē innada tani velā

16. Ariyaratne, *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha,* 116:

sōmakumaru: diva pati gē
kiraṇa sebalō
vāsalē dän muḷu detī
ohuge sak haňḍa
äseyi ḷan vī
yanna nam ada iḍa näti

17. Chandrarathna Manawasinghe, *Sāhitya Rasaya* (1969; repr., Boralesgamuwa: Dasa
Desa Mudranalaya, 2009), 27: "kavi samaya häṭiyaṭa salakana upamā rūpakā ādiya siyal-
lama gena ättē vēdaya anugatavayi. maha bambu, anangayā, siri sarasavi, ādin ehi lägum
gena siṭinavā."

18. Wimal Abeysundara, *Sangīta Sanhitā* (1963; repr., Colombo: Gunasena, 2001), 1089: "sanskṛtika sambandhatā atin lankāvat bhāratayat ekinekaṭa venas kaḷa no häki ya. eyi sambandhaya avurudu de dahas pan siyayakaṭa väḍi kālayak siṭa pavatnā bava granthārūththa sādhakavalin oppu veyi. sangītaya atin da mema sambandhaya me sē ma yäyi kīma anuchita novē."

19. Wimal Abeysundara, *Niṣādī: Nava Sanskaraṇaya,* ed. Praneeth Abeysundara (1959; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2010), 180: "ma visin niṣādī liyana laddē, bhāratīya śāstrīya sangītaya kerehi äti däḍi bhaktiyekini. mehi vastuva sankalpitayeki. ādi ma yugayehi nārada, hanuman, bharata, kōhala, dattila, matanga, ādi sangīta viśāradayan gē charitāpadāna samālōchanaya kirīmen pamaṇak nova, madhya kālīna yugayehi pahaḷa vū jayadēva, svāmi haridās, tānsen, amīr khuṣrū, gōpala nāyaka, bāyiju bāvrā, vilās khān, mīrā bāyi ādi viśiṣṭa sangītañyan gē charitayan kiyāvīmen da läbū ābhāsaya niṣādī rachanayehi pasu bima viya."

20. W. Abeysundara, *Niṣādī,* 191.

21. Ibid., 193.

22. Ibid., 167.

23. Sunil Ariyaratne, *Gāndharva Apadāna 4: Sōmadāsa Elvitagala saha Dunstan Da Silva* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1997), 88.

24. D. M. Colombage, *Guvan Viduli Vanśaya* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1980), 63; W. Abeysundara, *Sangīta Sanhitā,* 1095–98. The music for the radio opera was performed by the Sinhalese orchestra at Radio Ceylon, led by Edwin Samaradiwakara. The Sinhalese orchestra consisted of xylophone, sitar, sarod, flute, upright bass, violins, and tabla. The melodic instruments performed brief instrumental introductions and interludes and accompanied the vocal melody in unison or octaves.

25. W. Abeysundara, *Niṣādī,* 180: "sangītamaya vastuvak padanam koṭa gena liyāvuṇu bävin niṣādī gē svara rachanā usas tatvayeka pävätta yutu bava säläkiṇa. mema gīta nāṭakayaṭa sangītaya sapayana laddē, sangīta viśārada layanal edirisinha visini. mema gīta nāṭakayē kathā nāyikāva niṣādī vana bävin, mehi gītavala niṣādaya behevin yedī äti bavat nī prabala rāgavala pihiṭuvā svara rachanā rachanā koṭa äti bavat niṣādī asana, sangītaya gäna dänumak äti kavarakuṭa vuva da avabōdha vanu ättē ya. yaman, bilāval, khamaj, bhairava, pūrvī, mārvā, kāfi, āsāvari yana mēla aṭaṭa ayat rāgavalin niṣādī gē gī aṭa nibandha koṭa tibē."

26. Hemamali Gunasinghe has translated the title to *Bleached Bones* (2012). See Siri Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā: Siri Gunasinghe; Selected Poems (with Translations by Hemamali Gunasinghe)* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers), 234–47.

27. Hemamali Gunasinghe, e-mail message to author, May 20, 2014. The five titles of the five-poem suite that commenced *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa* are "Nopenena Eliya" (The invisible light), "Penena Aňdura" (The visible darkness), "Malavungen" (From those dead), "Kāntāraya" (The desert), and "Punarutpattiya" (Rebirth).

28. Gunasinghe was not the first Sinhala poet to experiment with poetry akin to free verse. In 1946 G. B. Senanayake published *Paligänīma* ([Revenge], 1946; repr., Colombo: Gunasena, 1964) and with it eight works that could be considered free verse. But Senanayake defined his works not as free verse but as a "special form of composition on the border between prose and verse." See Rohana Wanshatilake, *Siri Gunasinghage Padya Kāvya Nirmāna Pilibanda Adhyayanayak* (Warakapola: Arya Prakashakayo, 2009), 26. Again in

1954 Senanayake experimented in this free-verse style in his translation of Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam* (1859). Martin Wickramasinghe also tried his hand at free verse with his translations of medieval Pali-language verses written by ordained female Buddhist monks in the collection titled *Tērī Gī* (Poems of senior female Buddhist monks, 1952). The reading public accepted all these works without protest.

29. Sagara Palansuriya, "Hăňdinvīma," in *Padyāvalī,* ed. Sagara Palansuriya (1951; repr., Colombo: Gunasena, 2013), xii.

30. A.L. Becker, *Beyond Translation: Essays toward a Modern Philology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 286–87.

31. Nimal Sedara, *Viplavakārī Kalākaruvā: Siri Gunasinha* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2012), 64–65.

32. Yigal Bronner, *Extreme Poetry: The South Asian Movement of Simultaneous Narration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 48.

33. Hemamali Gunasinghe, "Coming Home: Sound and Symbol in Siri Gunasinghe's Poetry," in S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* xliii.

34. S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* xliv.

35. Ibid., xxxviii, 66.

36. Ibid., 234; Siri Gunasinghe, *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa* (1956; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1998), 21:

> aňdura sunu visunu kara
> īyē vage
> äyi tavamat nonaginnē
> magē dainika äs rudāva

37. It is not clear whether the narrator is a man or woman.

38. Martin Wickramasinghe, *Nava Padya Sinhalaya* (1957; repr., Devala: Simasahita Tisara Prakasakayo, 1992), 114.

39. S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* 234; S. Gunasinghe, *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa,* 21:

> nada devamin maduru rāne
> golubeli kaṭuvaka tula men
> aňdura perava gena hiṭiyē
> galā väṭena tek ma tamayi
> maha polovehi
> deveni davasa.

40. M. Wickramasinghe, *Nava Padya Sinhalaya,* 113–14.

41. S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* 234; S. Gunasinghe, *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa,* 22:

> ālōkaya biya gena deyi
> nilankāre äs pelavayi
> kisi ma deyaka häḍak ruvak
> penenna nā̃; penenna kisi
> häḍak ruvak kisi ma dēka
> ättet nā̃
> ālōkaye sära nivanna
> atin vasā gami äs deka.

42. S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* 234; S. Gunasinghe, *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa,* 22:

> velāgan velāgan
> anē mā velāgan
> aňdura, mage eka ma eka
> soňdura, mā velāgan.

43. Siri Gunasinghe, e-mail message to author, November 26, 2013.

44. M. Wickramasinghe, *Nava Padya Sinhalaya,* 114; Dipachandi Abeysinghe, *Siri Gunasinha saha Nūtana Sinhala Kāvya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2000), 54–55; Tissa Kariyavasam, "Nūtana Sinhala Kāvyayehi Prabhavaya Gäna Adahasak," in *Maḍavala Ratnāyaka: Sāhitya Nirmāṇa Vimarśaṇa,* ed. Samantha Herath (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1997), 98; Piyasili Wijegunasinghe, "Siri Gunasinhage Kāvya Nirmāna Pilibaňda Vimarśanayak," 1974, in *Siri Gunasinha Upahāra Lipi Sangrahaya,* ed. Jayanta Amarasinghe (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2012), 303–4.

45. S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* 236; S. Gunasinghe, *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa,* 23:

> jīvitaye hītalin
> mulu äňga ma vevulavayi
> gaňga väṭunu balaleku lesin
> mīyā gaňga etara giyā

46. S. Gunasinghe, e-mail message to author.

47. Gunadasa Amarasekera, *Sinhala Kāvya Sampradāya* (Boralasgamuva: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2009), 194.

48. Angulugaha Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā: Adyatana Kāvya Nirmāṇa Piḷibaňda Vimarśanayak* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2012), 169. On the *Lōväḍa Saňgarāwa,* see C. E. Godakumbura, *Sinhalese Literature* (1955; repr., Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries', 2013), 211–12; Charles Hallisey, "Works and Persons in Sinhala Literary Culture," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia,* ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 741; and Stephen C. Berkwitz, *Buddhist Poetry and Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 141–45.

49. S. Gunasinghe, *Mas Lē Näti Äṭa,* 54:

> "mas lē näti äṭa balu leva kannē
> kus pirumak palayak" läba gannē

50. H. Gunasinghe, e-mail message to author.

51. Information on Chandrarathna Manawasinghe's life is drawn from Chandrarathna Manawasinghe, *Kōmala Rēkhā* (Colombo: New Lila Mudranalaya, 1957), i–x; and Ariyaratne, *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha,* 1–32.

52. Manawasinghe, *Kōmala Rēkhā,* iii.

53. Ibid.: "kuḍā kataragama namin dannā ehet gamak hō geyak näti vana petehi gal talā uḍin semin divena diya rället däkumkaḷu vū ganterehi us bima mata ekala kuḍā asapuvek viya. siyumäli äňgili sitārayē tat uḍa duvavamin virāma līlā sahita va gīta gōvindayē saku gī vayamin siṭi vanga sirimatiya maṭa daknaṭa läbuṇē mehi dī ya. päraňi mihiri saku gīvala rasaya sit purā viňdannaṭa avasthāvak sälasuṇē ya. inpasu bohō dinayanhi ira mudun samayē kumbuk turu yaṭa hīl hevaṇē sihin välitalāvē paḷiňgu pähäti diyaväla ayinē hiňdagena

sitāraya vādanaya karamin kiyana ägē saku gīvalaṭa savan dī siṭi magē net suvadāyaka lesa semin piya vī giyē ya."

The *Gītagovinda* (Govinda in song) is a Sanskrit poem composed by an Indian poet known as Jayadeva, a Vaishnava Brahman who lived in what is now the state of Orissa, in the twelfth century. We know Manawasinghe studied this Sanskrit poem because he references the work in lectures delivered on the aesthetic appreciation of literature and music broadcast for Radio Ceylon in 1957–58. Manawasinghe, *Sāhitya Rasaya,* 5, 28. On the *Gītagovinda,* see Jesse Ross Knutson, *Into the Twilight of Sanskrit Court Poetry: The Sena Salon of Bengal and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 72–88.

54. Ariyaratne, *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha,* 9.

55. Hallisey, "Works and Persons," in Pollock, *Literary Cultures in History,* 741.

56. Sinhala verses cited in Ariyaratne, *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha,* 9.

57. On the curriculum at Vidyodaya in the nineteenth century, see Anne M. Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism and Modernity in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 46–68.

58. Ahungalle Wimalajiwa Tissa Nahimi and Pulasti Abeysundara, eds., *Aseniya Kusum: Vimal Abhayasundara Abhinandana Granthaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2007), 493–94.

59. Gunasinghe, qtd. in Sedara, *Viplavakārī Kalākaruvā,* 29.

60. Ratnasiri Arangala, "Siri Gunasinghe's Contribution to Literature and the Arts," in S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* xxv.

61. Sedara, *Viplavakārī Kalākaruvā,* 31.

62. Gunasinghe qtd. in Sedara, *Viplavakārī Kalākaruvā,* 31.

63. Arangala, "Siri Gunasinghe's Contribution," xxiv.

64. Siri Gunasinghe, "From Colombo with Love to Peradeniya," in *University of Ceylon/ University of Peradeniya Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1942–1992* (Peradeniya: University of Peradeniya, 1992), 32–33.

65. Established in 1924, Radio Ceylon is today the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). The SLBC is the oldest radio station in South Asia. On the history of the radio station, see Nandana, Karunanayake, *Broadcasting in Sri Lanka: Potential and Performance* (Moratuwa: Centre for Media and Policy Studies, 1990); and Colombage, *Guvan Viduli Vanśaya.*

66. At this time the state also began to patronize Sinhala Kandyan dance. See Susan A. Reed, *Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual, and Politics in Sri Lanka* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 132–37.

67. Television and cassettes would begin to transform the music industry in the 1970s.

68. M. J. Perera, qtd. in Karunanayake, *Broadcasting in Sri Lanka,* 201–2.

69. Colombage, *Guvan Viduli Vanśaya,* 107.

70. Wimal Abeysundara, "Sinhala Gīta Nāṭaka Purāṇaya," in W. Abeysundara, *Niṣādī,* 386–87; Ahungalle Arunatilaka, "Creativity of Sinhala Opera," 1959, in W. Abeysundara, *Niṣādī,* 448–49.

71. Arangala, "Siri Gunasinghe's Contribution," in S. Gunasinghe, *Sēpālikā,* xxiv.

72. Ibid., 34.

73. S. Gunasinghe, "From Colombo with Love," in *University of Ceylon,* 34–35.

74. Siri Gunasinghe, "The New Note in Contemporary Sinhalese Poetry," *Observer Annual* (1950): 70, 73.

75. Ibid., 73.

76. Ibid., 73–74.

77. In the mid-twentieth century other poets in South Asia had similar reactions to romanticism. Consider the case of N. M. Rashed, the first to create free verse in the Urdu language. A. Sean Pue writes, "romanticism was the immediate touchstone for the formal experimentation that led to [Rashed's] *āzād nazm* [Urdu free verse]." *Have Some Dreams,* 20.

78. Manawasinghe, *Kōmala Rēkhā,* viii.

79. Manawasinghe, *Sāhitya Rasaya,* 130–31, ix.

80. Ibid., 131.

81. Ariyaratne, *Mānavasinha Gīta Nibandha,* 2.

82. W. Abeysundara, *Sangīta Sanhitā,* 1099. See also W. Abeysundara, *Niṣādī,* 40, 48.

CHAPTER 5. FOR THE PEOPLE

1. Michael Riffaterre, "Syllepsis," *Critical Inquiry* 6, no. 5 (1980): 627.

2. K. M. De Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (1981; repr., Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 525–26.

3. Madawala S. Ratnayake, *Akkara Paha* (1959; repr., Colombo: Gunasena, 2011), v.

4. One should not assume, however, that affective ties to language in South Asia always became linked to institutional politics in the twentieth century. Regarding this point, see Farina Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 185.

5. Nandana Karunanayake, *Broadcasting in Sri Lanka: Potential and Performance* (Moratuwa: Centre for Media and Policy Studies, 1990), 116.

6. Anne Sheeran, "Sri Lanka," in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music,* vol. 5, *South Asia: The Indian Subcontinent,* ed. Alison Arnold (New York: Routledge, 1999), 972.

7. David Lelyveld, "Upon the Subdominant: Administering Music on All-India Radio," *Social Text* 39 (Summer 1994): 121.

8. Sunil Ariyaratne, interview with the author, Kahapola, Sri Lanka, March 25, 2012.

9. The burgeoning film industry also began a source of patronage.

10. Basudha Chakravarty, *Kazi Nazrul Islam* (New Delhi: National Book Trust India, 1968), 39.

11. Geeta Patel, *Lyrical Movements, Historical Hauntings: On Gender, Colonialism, and Desire in Miraji's Urdu Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 61.

12. Shrilal Shukla, *Bhagwati Charan Verma,* trans. Tripti Jain (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994), 32–33.

13. G. S. Amur, *Dattatreya Ramachandra Bendre (Ambikatanayadatta)* (Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1994), 15.

14. Ratnayake's fascination with folklore was not unprecedented. Prior to independence Deva Surya Sena had made attempts in the 1920s and 1930s to perform Sinhala folk songs on the radio and for British audiences. Ratnayake's project was different from Sena's for two reasons: (1) Ratnayake's efforts were part of a broader state-sanctioned project in

postcolonial Sri Lanka, and (2) Ratnayake used Sinhala folklore as a source for *new* Sinhala-language radio songs. On Sena, see Jim Sykes, "The Musical Gift: Sound, Sovereignty, and Multicultural History in Sri Lanka" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2011), 179.

15. Madawala S. Ratnayake, *Ṭikiri Liya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1992), 9.

16. Madawala S. Ratnayake, *Gīta Prabandha* (Colombo: Pradipa Prakashakayo, 1977), 9–10.

17. Ratnayake, *Gīta Prabandha,* 10; Karunanayake, *Broadcasting in Sri Lanka,* 293.

18. Karunanayake, *Broadcasting in Sri Lanka,* 292.

19. Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 190.

20. S. N. Ratanjankar, "Folk Songs and Music," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon,* n.s., 2 (1952): 119.

21. Ratnayake, *Gīta Prabandha,* 9: "ratanjankar paṇḍitumāgē mē prakāśaya niyama andamin tērum gat kihipa denekuṭa pamaṇak apē jātika lakṣaṇa ārakṣa vana andamē nirmāṇa kihipayak hō bihi kirīmē śaktiya atvuṇi. tavat samaharek andhakārayē ataraman vū ha. ovunaṭa eväni tattvayak udāvannaṭa ättē, mātrā piḷibaňda vidhimat parīkṣaṇayak karagänīmaṭa bärikamakin däyi viṭeka apa tuḷa kukusak päna nagī."

22. W. D. Amaradeva, *Nāda Sittam* (Colombo: Lakehouse Investments Samagama, 1989), 65–66: "apē ma yäyi kiva häki anga sampūrṇa sangītayak häḍa gäsī näti bava mīṭa tispas vasarakaṭa pamaṇa pera guvan viduliya śilpīngē vargīkaraṇayak saňdahā lankāvaṭa pämiṇi mahāchārya ratanjankar mahatā kaḷa prakāśayen da tava duraṭat pähädili veyi . . . sinhala sangītayaṭa gäb viya yutu dēśaja lakṣaṇa piḷibaňda va pramāṇavat avabōdayak labā gänīmaṭa taram pohonā jana sangītayak apa satu va tibīma viśēṣayen avadānaya yomu viya yutu karuṇaki. mē nisā ma sinhala sangīta sampradāyak goḍa naňgā gänīma anya vidēśīya raṭavala sangītavedin visin sambhāvita bava kiva yutu ya . . . alpēchchatāva väni guṇāngayan agayamin sähällu divi pevetakaṭa huru vuṇu, budu samayen śikṣaṇayak läbū janatāvak ranjanaya kirīmaṭa uchita sangīta nirmāṇayehi lā āvēśayak läbīmaṭa, sinhala jana sangītaya taram hitakara anya mūlāśrayak ät däyi sitīma pavā asīru ya."

23. Ratnayake, *Gīta Prabandha,* 10–11: "uttara bhāratīya sangītaya mänävin häḍärū W. D. amaradēva mahatā divayinaṭa pämiṇi pasu, kalin atahära dämū 'jana gāyanā' väḍa saṭahana ē mahatāgē sahāya ätiva mama nävatat ärambuvemi. tālānurūpa apē jana gī, gāyanā vana ākārayaṭa aḷut rachanā sakas koṭa, anga sampūrṇa gāyanā lesat nirmānatmakavat idiripat kirīmayi, mehidī apa atin keruṇē. mē gī ekatuvē mulinma saňdahan vana 'ranvan karal' nämäti gīya, 'ṭikiriliyā' yanuven nirmāṇaya kerunu väḍa saṭahan māḷāvē paḷamuväni gītayayi. vannam, balikavi, goyam kavi, neḷum kavi väni gāyanāvala mūlika nāda säläsma mata . . . idiripat kaḷemu."

24. I do not know why Ratnayake considered the vannama, created for a royal court, to be a subcategory of *jana gī.* Perhaps with the passage of time, Ratnayake felt confident in 1957 to conceive of these seventeenth-century works produced originally for elite consumption as a type of *jana gī.*

25. C. de. S. Kulatillake, *Melody Metre and Rhythm in Sinhala Music* (Colombo: Sinhala Music Research Unit, Sri Lanka Broadcasting, 1976), 23–24.

26. These pieces were originally vocal compositions, but the king's court musicians used the rhythmic texts as the basis for a new Kandyan dance style that had roots in the *kohomba kankariya,* a Sinhalese ritual dance. On *kohomba kankariya* and its impact on Kandyan

dance, see Susan A. Reed, *Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual, and Politics in Sri Lanka* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

27. Amaradeva intensified the effect of Ratnayake's lyrics by employing the extant melody believed to have been composed by the Tamil musician for the king. This melody can be heard in the first three lines of the song lyric.

28. Michael Riffaterre, "Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive," in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices,* ed., Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 58.

29. Observing *sil* typically begins with a visit to the temple and the recitation of the *pan sil* (five precepts). The day is spent listening to *bana katā* (sermons), reading *gātha* (Pali verses) or *ślōka* (verse), and practicing meditation. While observing *sil* one should not sit on chairs, lie on a bed, or chat with others. People who observe *sil* wear white clothes and refrain from eating meat.

30. Sinhala text cited in Ratnayake, *Ṭikiri Liya,* 10:

> ran van karal säleyi
> sansun kamin barava
> silgat sitin yutuvu kata sē
>
> maňda suḷaňga hā samaňga
> baňda salana viṭa gamada
> pem mal udā karati satosē
>
> gan hō jalen pireta
> govi bim palin susädi
> duk domnasin ivata ädunā

31. Jonathon Spencer, "Writing Within: Anthropology, Nationalism, and Culture in Sri Lanka," *Current Anthropology* 31, no. 3 (1990): 286.

32. More specifically, "Bamareku Āvayi" evoked one comedic interval of the *kohomba kankariya* known as the *guruge mālāva* (garland of the teacher). Here, a dancer acts as a teacher from South India who speaks with a Tamil-language accent. Another dancer, or drummer, plays the straight man, a Sinhala person who asks the man questions. Samantha Herath, "Janasāhityayen Pōshita Gīta Sāhityayak," in *Maḍavala Ratnāyaka: Sāhitya Nirmāṇa Vimarśaṇa,* ed. Samantha Herath (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1997), 234; Reed, *Dance and the Nation,* 63. On *kohomba kankariya,* see Mudiyanse Dissanayake, *Kohomba Kankari Kavi Sāhitya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1998); Mudiyanse Dissanayake, *Kohomba Yak Kankariya saha Samājaya* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1988); and Reed, *Dance and the Nation,* 23–73.

33. Text of the Guruge Mālāva cited in Samantha Herath, "Janasāhityayen Pōshita Gīta Sāhityayak," in Herath, *Maḍavala Ratnāyaka,* 234.

34. Ratnayake, *Gīta Prabandha,* 68.

35. Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Cult of the Goddess Pattini* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 46.

36. Sinhala text cited in Ratnayake, *Gīta Prabandha,* 68.

37. W. D. Amaradeva, *Gī Sara Muvarada: Mataka Manpeta Digē Piyasaṭahan,* ed. W. A. Abhesinghe (Colombo: NJCT, 2007), 52–53: "svara varṇa väḍasaṭahanaṭa yodā gänuṇu gīta

bohomayakma jana gī āra äsuru kaḷa ēvā. maḍavala ratnāyaka mema gītaya liyā tibennet, apagē sinhala jana gītaya samipa lesa äsuru karagena. ätta vaśayenma, ohuṭa ābhāsaya läbila tiyenne balikamvalin. ē nisā mehi balibas vahara daknaṭa läbenavā. disēyā äsēyā ādī pada nidasun häṭiyaṭa idiripat karanna puḷuvani."

38. K. D. P. Wikramasinghe, *Pärakumba Sirita,* ed. K. D. P. Wikramasinghe (Colombo: Gunasena, 1970).

39. C. E. Godakumbura, *Sinhalese Literature* (1955; repr., Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries', 2013), 222.

40. Ibid.

41. Translated by Wikramasinghe, in *Pärakumba Sirita,* 284.

42. Sinhala text cited in Ratnayake, *Gīta,* 58.

43. Angulugaha Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā: Adyatana Kāvya Nirmāṇa Piḷibaṅda Vimarśanayak* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2012), 204. Scholars have yet to address the question of how forms of recited Sinhala poetry came to be subsumed under the all-inclusive and seemingly natural categories of jana kavi and *jana gī.* I do not attempt to tackle this question here but simply note that by the 1950s the term *jana kavi* had become widespread, and littérateurs came to see jana kavi as a subject worthy for academic study.

44. Sagara Palansuriya did attempt to evoke village experiences in *Sudō Sudu* but did not attempt to rework Sinhala folk poetry. Further, one literary critic faulted Palansuriya for portraying scenes that would never truly happen in a village. See Ariya Rajakaruna, *Nūtana Sinhala Kāvya 2* (1962; repr., Nugegoda: Piyasiri, 2004), 88.

45. Gunadasa Amarasekera, *Bhāva Gīta* (1955; repr., Boralesgamuwa: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2009), vii: "sinhala kāvyaya usas tatvayakaṭa gena ēmaṭa nam alut man sevīmehi kāvyakaruvan biya no viya yutu ya. apaṭa avaśya va ättē sajīva janakāyaka gē bhāvika jīvitaya heḷi kaḷa häki prāṇavat kāvya sampradāyak äti karagänīma ya. meya da sälakiya yuttē ē abhilāṣaya iṭu karagänīma vas gannā lada prayatnayak lesa pamaṇaki."

46. Gunadasa Amarasekera, *The Contemporary Sinhala Literary Scene* (Colombo: Nation, 1972), 9–11.

47. Amarasekera, *Bhāva Gīta,* 78.

48. Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā,* 246.

49. Ibid., 196. Amarasekera wrote this poem in mostly couplets rather than quatrains, the common structure of *karatta kavi.*

50. Sinhala stanza cited in Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā,* 196. Also cited in Wimal Dissanayake et al., *Sinhala Jana Kavi Sangrahaya* (1975; repr., Colombo: Adhyapana Prakashana Departamentuva, 2009), 126.

51. According to Miniwan P. Tillakaratne, this stanza can be dated roughly to the end of the nineteenth or early twentieth century. See *Janakaviya hā Sinhala Sanskṛtika Lakṣaṇa* (Gangodawila: Dipani Prakashakayo, 1971), 20.

52. Amarasekera, *Bhāva Gīta,* 38:

> karume tamayi paḷisan dennē apa gē mē   vidiyaṭa
> budu hāmuduruvo kivvē ēka tamayi duka nivanṭa

53. Sinhala verses cited in Amarasekera, *Bhāva Gīta,* 38.

54. Amarasekera's attention to meters prompted Wimal Dissanayake in 1966 to label Amarasekera and his followers "The Rhyme and Metre School." See Ranjini Obeyesekere, *Sinhala Writing and the New Critics* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1974), 82.

55. Amarasekera, cited in Sajitha Prematunge, "Of Politics and Poetics," *Daily News,* June 8, 2011, http://archives.dailynews.lk/2011/06/08/art01.asp.

56. Amarasekera, qtd. in P. B. Meegaskumbura, "Sinhala Language and Literature since Independence," in *Sri Lanka's Development since Independence: Socio-economic Perspectives and Analyses,* ed. Weligamage D. Lakshman and Clement A. Tisdell (New York: Nova Science, 2000), 164; Prematunge, "Of Politics and Poetics."

57. R. Obeyesekere, *Sinhala Writing,* 105. Sinhala text cited in Amarasekera, *Bhāva Gīta,* 48.

58. Gunadasa Amarasekera, *Amal Biso* (1961; repr., Boralesgamuwa: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2009), v.

59. Stephen C. Berkwitz, *Buddhist Poetry and Colonialism: Alagiyavanna and the Portuguese in Sri Lanka* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 35.

60. On the works of Alagiyavanna Mukaveti, see Berkwitz, *Buddhist Poetry and Colonialism.*

61. Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* v: "apē viyat kavi maṅga 17 vana siyavasin pasu va kālayat samaṅga pariṇāmayaṭa pat no vī ya. apē antima viyat kaviyā alagiyavanna mukaväṭi veyi."

62. Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* v: "podu jana sanskṛtiyakaṭa urumakam kiyana apaṭa mahā sampradāya, chūla sampradāya yanuven ven koṭa däkviya häki sampradāya dekak nomäti yi."

63. Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* vi: "dänumen, vidaghda bhāvayen aḍu apē jana kaviyā ara viyat kavi basa tamāṭa gōchara vana paridi yodā gattē ya; siya kaṭa vahara anuva yodāgattē ya. mē yugayē liyävuṇu vessantara katāva, yasōdara vata, saṅda kiṅduru kava, pattini hālla ādi vū nirmāṇa maṅgin men ma bali tovil kavi ādiyen da meya däkagata häki yi." In Ranjini Obeyesekere's brief history of Sinhala literature, she characterizes along very similar lines the role of folk poetry during this transitional moment in Sri Lankan history. See *Sinhala Writing,* xxvii.

64. Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā,* 202–4.

65. Wimal Dissanayake, *Enabling Traditions: Four Sinhala Cultural Intellectuals* (Boralesgamuwa: Visidunu Prakashakayo, 2005), 115.

66. Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* 126.

67. Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā,* 203.

68. Sinhala stanzas cited in Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* 47:

ekamat eka vilak   ätī
e vila rakusu arak   gatī
viduru se gini   vihiduvatī
duṭuva satek   kādamatī

e vila malak haṭa   gattā
suvaṅda saṅdun   suvaṅdättā
malak sadisi muva   ättā
malak no veyi e   siṅgittā

malen upan mē   kumariya
häḍen ruven malak väni   ya
yodun saṅdun suvaṅda   isiya
yakun nuvan lā nohäki   ya

69. Dhamminda Himi, *Sinhala Kāvyayē Nava Pravaṇatā,* 203, 249–50.

70. Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* 46:

> vimalā aṅḍā novälapenna.
> oba atin sidu vūyē minisat bavaṭa himi varadak bava
> mama danimi. mama eya lovaṭa äsena sē kiyannam.

71. Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* 65:

> ruvan vimana dora   äriyā
> lobin site dora   äriyā
> rakusu haṅḍaṭa dora   äriyā
> amal bisō dora   äriyā
>
> ruvan vimana dora   äriyā
> saṅdun vimana dora   äriyā
> rakusu haṅḍaṭa dora   äriyā
> amal bisō dora   äriyā

72. Amarasekera, *Amal Biso,* 67:

> perā kaṅḍuḷu dukina tävī aṅḍā novälapenna   liyē
> me mā lovaṭa äsena lesin kiyan nidos tigē   ḷayē

73. Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia,* ed. Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 554.

CHAPTER 6. ILLUSIONS TO DISILLUSIONS

1. Robert N. Kearney, *Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1967), 56.

2. John Roger Paas, "'Under Omar's Subtle Spell': American Reprint Publishers and the Omar Craze," in *Fitzgerald's "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam,"* ed. Adrian Poole et al. (London: Anthem, 2011), 127.

3. On translations of Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam* into South Asian languages, see Sisir Kumar Das, *History of Indian Literature, 1911–1956: Struggle for Freedom; Triumph and Tragedy* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1995), 51–54; Amaresh Datta, ed. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature,* vol. 5 (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1995); Harish Trivedi, *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India* (Calcutta: Papyrus, 1993), 29–52; and Harish Trivedi and Susan Bassnett, "Introduction: Of Colonies, Cannibals and Vernaculars," in *Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice,* ed. Harish Trivedi and Susan Bassnett (London: Routledge, 1999), 1–18.

4. Trivedi, *Colonial Transactions,* 48, 51.

5. Edward Fitzgerald, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (New York: Illustrated Editions, [1859?]), 42.

6. W. D. Amaradeva is the song's composer and vocalist. Mahagama Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Gīta* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1972), 58:

> gī potayi
> mī viṭayi
> ē dekama maṭa epā
>
> yuga nayana gī potayi
> rata lavana mī viṭayi
> mā paṭana gī potayi mī viṭayi
> oba satuyi

7. W. D. Amaradeva is the song's composer and vocalist. Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Gīta,* 59:

> oba mā turulē gī gayanā vēlē
> mē vanaroda maṭa svarga rājyayayi
> suranganāviyanē

8. Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Gīta,* 59:

> surā viṭayi gī potayi atin gena
> turu vadulē nil sevaṇällē

9. Fitzgerald, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám,* 94.

10. Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Gīta,* 59:

> ada apa jīvita sumihiri vē nam
> maḷa īyē gäna äyi ḷatavennē
> ada apa jīvita sumihiri vē nam
> nipan heṭa gäna äyi vehesennē
>
> yali kiva yutu nã
> kālaya yanavā depā yaṭin ringā
> genenu mänavi maṭa
> pamā novī dän
> obē surā vita puravālā

11. W. D. Amaradeva is the song's composer and vocalist. Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Gīta,* 49:

> galā bahina jala dhārāvak sē
> matu vī mehi enavā
> kāntārayen ena pavanak sē
> piṭa vī min yanavā

12. Fitzgerald, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám,* 78.

13. Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Gīta,* 49:

> koyi siṭa dō āyē
> kumakaṭa dō āyē
> kotanata dō yannē
> kisivaku nã yannē

14. W. A. Abeysinghe, *Mahagama Sēkaragē Kāvya saha Gīta Nirmāṇa* (Battaramula: Samira Prakashana, 2005), 12.

15. Mahagama Sekera and K. Jayatilake, *Vyangā* (1960; repr., Colombo: Pradipa Prakashakayo, 2005), 9:

> galā ennē—galā ennē
> magē situvili dahara ossē
> āta muhudē rälla mädden
> sīta kaňduväṭi—pāḷu mīduma
> sīta kaňduräli—sōka kaňduḷäli
> keren matu vī galā ennē
> magē hadaṭa vetaṭa ennē

16. Sekera and Jayatilake, *Vyangā,* 10:

> potak kiyavata vätira yahanata
> peneyi obe nama akuru atarin
> haṇḍak näňgetot savanna naḷavana
> obē kaṭahaňḍa äseyi etänin
> aňdina situvama obē häḍa ruva
> labā äta mā nodänuvatvama
> ekeku misa api novamu dedenek
> obeyi mā—yaḷi obama vemi mama

17. Kahlil Gibran, *The Voice of the Master,* trans. Anthony R. Ferris (1958; repr., New York: Citadel, 1970), 14.

18. Sekera's song lyric can be heard on track 6, "Galā Ennē Kalpanāvē," on the compact disc titled *Madhuvanti-1,* produced by the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.), Colombo, Sri Lanka:

> galā ennē galā ennē
> kalpanāven anganāvō
> sihina lōken galā ennē
> kalpanāven anganāvō
> galā ennē galā ennē

W. D. Amaradeva is the song's composer. He and Sujatha Attanayake are the main vocalists. For a slightly modified version of this lyric, see Mahagama Sekera, *Mahagama Sēkara Nopaḷa Gīta,* ed. Ranjit Amarakirti (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1984), 106.

19. Stephen Gurney, "Byron and Shelley," in *English Romantic Poetry*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004), 304; Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Alastor; or, The Spirit of Solitude," in *The Complete Poetical Works of Shelley,* ed. George Edward Woodberry (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1901), 33.

20. Ibid., 35; Stephen Gurney, "Byron and Shelley," in *English Romantic Poetry,* ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004), 304.

21. Philip C. Engblom, "Keshavsut and Early Modernist Strategies for Indigenizing the Sonnet in Marathi: A Western Form in Indian Garb," *Journal of South Asian Literature* 23, no. 1 (1998): 51.

22. Sekera and Jayatilake, *Vyangā,* 45:

> gana aňdurē mama denet kavuḷu hära
> alasava vätirī tani yahanē
> oba gäna sitamin balā siṭinnemi
> muḷu lova nisalava nidana velē
> dahasak kavi kalpanā magē
> sitehi eviṭa piḷisiňdeyi ibē

23. Sekera and Jayatilake, *Vyangā,* 45:

> ekeṇehi oba sihinayaka vēśayen
> ninda samaga yahanaṭa avudin
> mā simba kavikama piḷibaňda sumihiri
> dāyādaya maṭa uruma karayi
> . . . .
> dahasak kavi kalpanā magē
> hadehi yaḷit piḷisiňdeyi ibē

24. Translated by Philip C. Engblom, in Engblom, "Early Modernist Strategies," 51.

25. The Sinhala phrase Sekera used for term "imagination" was *sihina lōkaya,* which literally means "world of dreams." Sekera and Jayatilake, *Vyangā,* 27:

> "magē nama māyāyi
> āta ahasē dilena
> tārakāvak lesaṭa—
> āta muhudē penena
> sitijayē ima lesaṭa—
> kisi kalaka kisivekuṭa
> laňgā viya nohäki vana
> miriňgu muhudin epiṭa
> sihina lova vasana mama—
> sihinayak sē āmi
> obaṭa älmak nätada"

26. Sekera and Jayatilake, *Vyangā,* 27:
> "mama obaṭa ādareyi
> mama obaṭa ādareyi
> metek kal mā sevū
> ekama gähäniya obayi
> sadā kal pem kaḷäki
> ekama gähäniya obayi"

27. Sinhala stanza cited in H. C. P. Bell, "Sinhalese Customs and Ceremonies Connected with Paddy Cultivation in the Low Country," *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 8, no. 26 (1883): 53:

> ihala velē tibena bäta
> pahala velē tibena bäta
> aṭu koṭuvala tibena bäta
> äda puravan mē kamata

Sekera himself cites a very similar stanza in his dissertation on rhythm in Sinhala verse and prose. See Mahagama Sekera, *Sinhala Gadya Padya Nirmānayanhi Ridma Lakṣaṇa* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2007), 70.

28. W. D. Amaradeva is the song's composer, and Lionel Algama is the vocalist. Mahagama Sekera, *Sakvā Lihiṇi* (1962; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2005), 94:

> ihala velē ismattē
> diya habarala mal gollē
> nīla varala ḷamäda helālā
> bimaṭa nämī oya kavdō
> palā nelannē
> nīla nuvan dālavarin
> vässa vasinnē
>
> pahala velē puran velā
> val bihi vī giya hēnē
> mama taniyama kānsiyen
> kumbura koṭanavā
> āta inna umbē mūna
> hitē äṅdenavā

29. Sekera, *Sakvā Lihiṇi,* 94:

> nava vässaṭa väva pirilā
> kekaṭiya mal uḍa ädilā
> ē ataṭayi mē ataṭayi
> nämī vänenavā
> ē vaturen vela saruvī
> goyama pähenavā

30. Sekera, *Sakvā Lihiṇi,* 94:

> nīla goyama kiri vädilā
> ran asvan neḷana dāṭa
> naṅgō apaṭa ämbul aran
> velaṭa varennē

31. On Sekera and double meaning, see Garrett Field, "'Handa Eliya' (the Moonlight): Mahagama Sekera's Experimental Prose," *Sagar: A South Asia Research Journal* 21 (2013): 16–27.

32. Translated by Ranjini Obeyesekere, in *Sinhala Writing and the New Critics* (Colombo: Gunasena, 1974), 102. The original Sinhala stanza is cited in Wimal Dissanayake et al., *Sinhala Jana Kavi Sangrahaya* (1975; repr., Colombo: Adhyapana Prakashana Departamentuva, 2009), 23:

> lassana himavatē mā vī päsennē
> duk dena ali ätun pänna harinnē
> räkmen deviyanē vela bat budinnē
> duppatkama nisayi mama päl rakinnē

33. W. D. Amaradeva is the song's composer and vocalist. I thank Ravinda Mahagamasekera for making suggestions to improve this translation. Sekera, *Sakvā Lihiṇi,* 83:

> pilē pädura hēnaṭa aragena   enavā
> elā pädura mässē ehi   sätapenavā
> raṭā wiyapu at deka maṭa   sihiwenavā
> hitē dukaṭa etakoṭa kavi   kiyawenavā

34. Sekera, *Sakvā Lihiṇi,* 84:

> umbē karaṭa mal mālā   gotannaṭa
> madu mal pipenavā hēnē väṭa digaṭa
> umbē kaṭin gī sīpada   ahannaṭa
> tavamat girav enavā pera puruddaṭa

35. For a comprehensive list of Sekera's dramas and literary works, see H. M. Moratuvagama, ed., *Mahagama Sēkera saha Kalāva* (1978; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2002), 190–94.

36. Donald J. Harvey, introd. to *The White Company,* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1962), x.

37. Translated by Ranjini Obeyesekere, *Portraits of Buddhist Women: Stories from the Saddharmaratnāvaliya* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 117.

38. Mahagama Sekera, *Hansagītaya saha Venat Nirmāṇa* (Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 1996), 11:

> vyākhyāyaka:
> sorek vīya pera rajagaha   puravara
> galak sēma hita hädi dädi   eḍitara
> pasak ohuge ruva däkalā   ādara
> sitak kumariyaṭa upanayi eka vara

39. To make the executioner's song more intense Sekera switched meters from quatrains having end-rhyme and sixteen mātrā per line to a set of fourteen lines, each having fourteen mātrā divided into two groups of seven. Notice, also, in the transliteration the close attention Sekera paid to consonance and assonance (bolded). Sekera, *Hansagītaya saha Venat Nirmāṇa,* 12:

> yā deka nã rata norata   bäňdennē
> ādarayē näta mal pala   gannē
> ādaraya ma vayirayaṭa   härennē
> bērū ata yali maru gena   ennē
> . . . .
>
> vyākhyāyaka:
> kiyami puvata ema pada bäňda kav   kara
> asan varada äta kuḷuṇen duru   kara
> räňgum paṭan gannaṭa kal iḍa   hära
> devanna kaḍatira harinaṭa   avasara
> . . . .
>
> vādaka pirisa:
> h**ella** kaḍu gena—m**ella** nova siṭa
> ko**lla** kã dana koyida bala ada
> asä na**ma** ga**m**—niya**m** janapada
> bi**ye**n vevulā gi**ye**ya pera dina
> g**al** kuḷen ada—t**all**u karamuva
> billa koṭa mū—mārayā ha**ṭa**
> bi**yaṭa** pat si**ta**—rä**yaṭa** niňdi nä**ta**
> **ē da** so**ru** ada—**vē da** ma**ru** maṭa
> ē vu uvadura—vī ya keḷavara
> nomäta min pasu—saturu uvaduru
> **vas**tu äti kala—**räs** va siṭi aya
> **as** va go**s**—nila**mäs**sekut näta
> mārayā veta yanne nihaňḍa va
> koyida bala ema dakṣakam ada

40. Translated by R. Obeyesekere, *Portraits of Buddhist Women,* 119 (emphasis mine).

41. A year earlier Sekera had published "Rata hā Norata" (Lust and disgust) in *Vyangā* (1960). "Rata hā Norata" consisted of two streams of consciousness from the perspectives of Kuṇḍalakēśī and the thief. Sekera employed a colloquial Sinhala dialect so that the reader in 1960 could relate to the scenario. See Sekera and Jayatilake, *Vyangā,* 48–51.

42. I thank Ravinda Mahagamasekera for making suggestions to improve this translation Sekera, *Hansagītaya saha Venat Nirmāṇa,* 22:

> anna balan saňda ran täṭiyen
> sudu sīta gaňgul galanā
> hada sōka tävul nivanā.
> chandana pallava kōkila kūjana
> sangītayē päṭalī //
> sundara mē vana gulma yahan gäba
> ādara bas kiyanā—haňḍa—
> dēvini! kan pinanā.
>
> atpasuren turu pembarayan baňda
> baňdā senē sitinī
> liya väl päṭalī gosini

43. Lubomir Doležel, *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 199–226.

44. Mahagama Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat* (1964; repr., Colombo: Godage and Brothers, 2007), v:

> "mama numba kaḍā biňda damā
> alutin nirmāṇaya karami" yi.
> kaviyā samājayaṭa kīya.
>
> ebasaṭa samājayaṭa hinā giyēya.
>
> "mama numba kaḍā biňda damā
> alutin nirmāṇaya karami" yi
> samājaya kaviyāṭa kīya.

45. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 1–2:

> tava sulu mohotin
> heṭa
>
> ada veyi.
>
> ṭak. ṭak. ṭak. ṭak.
> yakaḍa pāvahan payalā
> näňgagena näňgagena simenti paḍipela
> istōppuvē kärakeyi.
> ivasillak nomätiva
>
> dora ärapan dora ärapan
> ṭak. ṭak. ṭak.
>
> kavuda? kavuda?
> mama!

mama kiyanne?

ada!

kō īyē?

īyē giyā atītayaṭa

balapan umba ävidin pāndarin
käḍuvā magē hīna

mama hiṭiyē atīta śrī vibhūtiiyen.

häḍi demalut palavā hära
sirilaka eka sēsat kara

balav deäsa hära anurāpura nuvara
himav kulu sadisi maha dāgäb vehera.

46. Moonstones are decorative semicircular stone slabs that were popular in ancient Sinhala kingdoms. Their depictions represent the cycle of rebirth. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 2:

tavamat umba innē
atītayē abin matin
jarāvāsa gal kanu äda väṭilā
saňdakaḍa pahana uḍa taṇa koḷa väṭilā
vã kaňdu biňdī maḍa vaturē erilā
atītaya märī polovaṭa dirālā

47. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 2:

rakinnaṭa häduvat
rakinna bā eya
atītayē maha äṭuvan vū gasa
kālayē suḷaňgin mulinidirī giya
nävatat bā buma päla karavannaṭa
pohoraṭa lūvat malakaḍa kã mola

tālavatthu kathan

48. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 3:

dora äralā balapan
pāyayi tava mohotin nava hiru räs
ira sēvaya karamin
siripā kaňdu muňdunin
sivanadi *[sic]* pādam
pārādīsaya
bāvā *[sic]* ādam maleyi

49. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat*, 3:

> gud mōnin kristīn
> vanakkam nadarājā
> vanakkam mohomad
> āyubōvan
> ätta tamayi.

50. Robert N. Kearney, "Ceylon: A Year of Consolidation," *Asian Survey* 4, no. 2 (1964): 730.

51. Neil DeVotta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 128.

52. The term *your* may have referred to Sekera's wife, Kusumalatha Suraweera, whom he married in 1963. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 6:

> oben māt
> magen obat
> uṇusum vī siṭinā viṭa
> daval pāyana saňda men
> yantam maṭa matak venava
> īyē perēdā davasaka
> prēma kaḷā gähäṇiyakaṭa
> obaṭa vaḍā äya venasya.
>
> iňdunil ägē deäsa
> ratupul ägē detola
> varala sikipil
> debäma iňdusäv
> . . . .
> gamanin nāliya parayana. . . . *[sic]*
> mihi baṭa suraňgana.

53. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat*, 7:

> īṭa vaḍā mama obaṭa ādareyi
> maknisādayat:
> oba mā men minis kenek,
> mas lē äṭa naharin sädi
> dayāva, īrṣyāva
> ātmārthaya, kōpaya
> minisat gati guṇa äti.
>
> mē śarīraya nam muttekin mäṇikakin
> marāvekin pabaluvekin ranekin
> ridiyekin nimiyē noveyi.
> äṭin masin naharin leyin
> vamanin asūchiyen
> baḍadivin dalabuyen
> ḍayadiyen pūsāyen kaňdulin saňda midulen

54. George Keyt is a Sri Lankan painter; Tissa Ranasinghe is a Sri Lankan sculptor. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 7–8:

> e baňdu vū kayak tuḷa
> obagē hadavata väni
> sundaratvayak tibīma
> asiriyakya
> sāma tänama mama sevvemi
> sundaratvaya kotäna vēdäyi
> jōrj kīṭ gā sāyam ätulata
> amaradēva gā gīyaka
> tissage siva pratimāvaka
> avukana anurāpura naṭabun mäda
> . . . .
> antimēdi maṭa hamuviya
> minisāgē hada tula eya
>
> kotaram däḍi hadak vuvada
> yam davasaka
> dayā diyen ārdra vī
> kaňduḷu salana mohotak äta
> viduru minak sē babalana
> ē hadavata
> ē mohotehi atlaṭa gena
> balanu mänava
> mē mihipiṭa kisima deyak
> ē taram sundara näta.

55. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 13:

> meyayi mā upan gama
> mavu piyan upan gama
> mī mutun upan gama

56. I thank Ravinda Mahagamasekera for making suggestions to improve this translation. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 13:

> ranvan ipanällē ranchu gäsī
> mī mässan pem keli kelī
> nilvan lā goyamē pēli sädī
> gam däriyan
> gī gayamin val nelāpu . . .
> gama!

57. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 13:

> gama hīnen däka gama gäna aňḍannē
> gamaṭa gohin gama häbahin bala!
> hīnen topa daknā
> chamatkārayak ehi näta

58. I thank Ravinda Mahagamasekera for helping me to translate this passage. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 14:

> äsaṭa nopenena alasa gamanin
> pāveyi pāsi pirī hiravunu äla.
> hisa bū gā taṭṭa bimen
> päla avadiva avaṭa balayi
> päkṭēriya avaṭa mäveyi
> kuḍā nagara
> kasippu
> ganikā nivāsa

59. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 18:

> opīsi yanṭa kal
> velāva dän hariyi
> kiyā semen semen
> erat udāva eyi.

60. Sekera, *Maknisāda Yat,* 26–27:

> mohotak äsa piyū kalaṭa
> magen bohō āta vehesena
> ägē sihin digaṭi muhuna
> satuṭu sinā koksan suda
>
> magē dā̃sē mävī peneyi. . . .
>
> vel eli madden
> nil kaňdu yāyen
>
> kokku rā̃n rā̃n rā̃n
> gal amunen piyambā
> gal amunen
> nāna ägē
> nitamba älunu diya reddē
> rälla vagē
> lā goyamē nilla vagē
> krīn krīn krīn krīn
> halō! halō!
>
> thu
> ov. ov.
> sṭok ivarayi.

CONCLUSION

1. On Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, see Charles Capwell, "Music and Nationalism," in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music,* vol. 5, *South Asia: The Indian Subcontinent* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 431–40; and Charles Capwell, "Marginality and Musicology

in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta: The Case of Sourindro Mohun Tagore," in *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusicology,* ed. Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 228–43.

2. There are welcome exceptions to this trend. See Francesca Orsini's discussion of popularity and commercial viability in Hindi literature. *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920–1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 52–89.

3. I thank Amanda Weidman for framing the issue in this way.

4. Unlike the radicals who rose to prominence in the 1970s, Sinhalese songwriters and poets in the 1950s and 1960s never used song and poetry to make *direct* interventions in politics.

5. On this matter, see Sascha Ebeling, *Colonizing the Realm of Words: The Transformation of Tamil Literature in Nineteenth-Century South India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 250.

6. Deepika Bahri, *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 20.

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