

Public Postures, Private Positions:

***Baila* and Sydney Sri Lankans**

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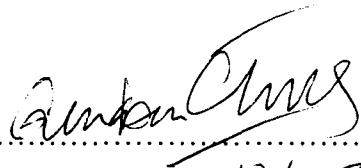
SUMMARY

Sri Lankan *baila* is a hybrid cultural form, a multi-cultural fusion of melodic, lyrical and dance elements. After offering a personal preface that explains my interest in examining the diasporic usage of *baila* in Sydney, my first challenge is to provide an account of *baila*'s pre-diasporic social history and to introduce the flavour and characteristics (musicological, lyrical and semantic) of *baila* to the reader. These challenges have drawn me to a slightly less than conventional structure, including a review of the literature across several chapters. But the structure is one that is a logical choice in addressing my goals. My 'Introduction' will serve the essential purpose of providing a social historical backdrop for Sri Lankan *baila*, from the genre's sixteenth-century beginnings to its use in the Sri Lankan diaspora in the twenty-first century. A typology of meanings of the *baila* to various groups will be introduced in this chapter, positioning diasporic usage. A musicological and lyrical analysis will be conducted in Chapter One, in order to provide a description of *baila*. My objective, introduced at the end of the social history, is to ascertain the usage of the *baila* in the Sri Lankan diasporic community in Sydney with a view to throwing light on ambivalent attitudes toward the music and dance genre, will require the development and use of an interview-based research methodology. Preparing for the development of methodology, Chapter Two will discuss music, community and the character of Sri Lankan diaspora in Sydney. Importantly, it will draw on Nietzsche in elaborating on the notion of a false dichotomy (important because of post-colonial belief patterns in Sri Lanka,) which I believe may explain a Sri Lankan migrants' use of *baila*.

I will develop the notion of false dichotomies into a framework of analysis in Chapter Three and describe my methodology for researching the Sri Lankan expatriate community in Sydney. In Chapter Four I will discuss my interviews with migrants drawn from more and less Anglicised categories of Sri Lankans. I will discuss my interviews with the children of migrants in Chapter Five, before discussing my findings, in relation to my objective and identifying areas for future research, in Chapter Six.

Certification

This is to certify that I, Gina Ismene Shenaz Chitty, have not submitted this thesis for a higher degree at any other university or institution and that all my references have been acknowledged in the Bibliography.

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(Date)  NOV 28 - 2005

Acknowledgements

The completion of a thesis project is a major event signified by the bound thesis. The bound thesis does not reveal the unbound supporting roles played by others. My supervisor, Professor Philip Hayward has, over the years, provided sound guidance for which I am grateful. Dr Estelle Dryland, Honorary Associate of the Department of Anthropology, has read my first draft and made extremely valuable comments.

An interest in music was first instilled in me by my father, the late Senator and Professor Doric de Souza. My mother, Violet, now resident in Sydney, and my father were both leading figures in the newly created university community of independent Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). My interest in scholarly pursuits and literature, was influenced by them.

My partner, Naren, and children, Sabina Alexa and Grischa George, have also helped in this long process, by being there for me.

Many Sri Lankans gave liberally of their time in interviews.

To all these good people I would like to say that the bound thesis also signifies my thanks.

PERSONAL PREFACE

Sri Lanka was a European colony from the first decade of the 16th Century to the middle of the 20th Century. The Portuguese ruled the maritime provinces for approximately a hundred and fifty years (1505¹-1655), followed by the Dutch, who held sway over these areas for a period of similar duration (1655-1796) until they gave way to the British at the end of the 18th century. It was only in 1815 that a European power, the British, gained control over the island in its entirety, including the hitherto unassailable mountain kingdom of Kandy. The British departed from Ceylon on February 4, 1948. In 1972, the state adopted a republican constitution but continued as a member of the Commonwealth. The new republic reclaimed the old name of Sri Lanka

Among Sri Lanka's colonial inheritances are Roman Catholicism from the Portuguese, the Roman Dutch legal system from the Dutch, and a plantation economy and parliamentary system from the British. The British in Ceylon, as in other parts of the world, drew the elite into an Anglophile circle sustained by a 'public' (private) school system. The Anglophile national elite, having had suffrage and legislative experience from the 1930s onward, assumed full political control at independence. This personal preface addresses the Anglophile national elite and its elitism and is important because the story of the *baila* is riddled with snobbery and complex class posturing and 'distanciation'.²

My grandfather, Armand de Souza (1874 – 1921), had been sent by relatives, from his native Goa, to Ceylon to be taken care of by an uncle, Dr Lisboa Pinto (the Honorary Consul of the United States in Ceylon) on account of his having been orphaned. He was educated at Royal College and rose meteorically to become the editor of the Morning Leader, an English language newspaper, taking up positions against the British government. My grandfather is reported as having

...sprung from an ancient Brahmin family [one that] first converted to Catholicism at the point of the sword by the Portuguese Conquistadores in circa 1537...was born in the mountainous hamlet of Assagaum, in the territory of Goa...[He] founded the Ceylon Morning Leader ... [and] created a well informed public opinion.³

Armand de Souza was gaoled by the British for his role in promoting universal franchise, but was released in response to popular clamour. “His editorial advocacy for constitutional reform was of a unique feature. It can be safely said that he laid the foundation of the political life of the Ceylonese”.⁴

The LSSP or Lanka Sama Samaja Pakshaya (Lanka Socialist Party) was Ceylon’s first political party. It was a Trotskyite group that was formed in 1933, twelve years after the untimely death of Armand de Souza, around an English-speaking Ceylonese intellectual elite, many of whom had been sent to England for tertiary studies. Philip Gunewardena, N. M. Perera, Leslie Goonewardene and Colvin R. de Silva (‘Uncle Philip’, ‘Uncle N. M’, ‘Uncle Leslie’ and ‘Uncle Colvin’ to me) returned to Ceylon from their studies in the West to form the LSSP. N. M. Perera and Leslie Goonewardene studied at the London School of Economics under Harold Laski. Colvin R. de Silva studied at King’s College. Philip Gunawardena studied at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Wisconsin at Madison and at Columbia University in the United States.⁵ My father, eighteen when the LSSP was formed, is described by Erwin as “another brilliant individual” who “had been sent on scholarship to study English literature in London ... [and] had a plum academic position waiting for him when he returned”⁶. Speaking about the election of 1936, Erwin describes that the new LSSP politics was

completely new. Before that, politics was the preserve of the elite, discussed on a breezy verandah in Cinnamon Gardens and court chambers at Hultsdorf. The fact that upper-caste, English-educated Ceylonese were appealing to lowly villagers as brothers and sisters was unprecedented.⁷

My father followed in his father’s liberal footsteps, journeying further to the left into the Marxist world of dialectical materialism. He joined the LSSP and became a member of the politburo of this party of Fabian socialists. He did get the plum job, referred to by Erwin, after graduating - lecturer in English at the University of Ceylon. He was resident at the Peradeniya Campus. Most contemporary public servants who went to Peradeniya at the time recall him as a Marxist theoretician, those, that is, who attended his extra-curricular classes on Marxist theory. Even Esmond Wickremasinghe, who was later to become the right-of-centre publisher of the Lake House newspapers after marrying the proprietor, and who courted Miss Wijewardene at my father’s campus home, began as a member of the LSSP, drawn in through my father’s classes. His son, Ranil Wickremasinghe, has twice served as UNP Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (2003).⁸

At Independence, my partner's family (landed proprietors and lawyers), on the other hand, was associated with the right-of-centre United National Party (UNP), a political party that formed the first government of independent Ceylon under Don Stephen Senanayake. My partner's aunt, Lady Corea, was married to a minister in the first cabinet. My father's party, which was in Opposition, was led by Uncle N. M. Later, from 1960 to 1965 and 1970 to 1977, the 'nationalising' LSSP was a partner in coalition governments with Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike's 'nationalist' Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). In the first government, my father was a member of the Senate, voting for its abolition as the new republican constitution was put in place. In the second government, he was permanent secretary to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

My family moved to Colombo in 1969 and I continued my schooling at Ladies' College, Colombo. I have recounted all of this because the story of the *baila* is riddled with snobbery and complex class posturing and 'distanciation'.⁹ My father, who was caught up in the class struggle in Sri Lanka, led a class war against his own class. As a Trotskyite, he was egalitarian in his behavior toward the workers: they would be invited to sit at our dining table or in our drawing room, behavior that would have been unheard of in homes that were not associated with a worker's party.

In a very real sense, in my case the "personal is the political".¹⁰

There was, however, a remarkable gulf between the cultural interests of a group of my father's comrades who I shall call the 'LSSP aesthetes' (mostly academics) and those who were not (mostly workers, but also some party leaders). The LSSP aesthetes were a cultural elite, though not uncontested by cultural nationalists, within this group. Philip Gunawardena was not one of the LSSP aesthetes. He "was born into a prominent family of rural Sinhalese landowners.....the headman of his village.....He had contempt for the Ceylonese elite who aped the ways of the white men".¹¹ Despite his dislike of the cosmopolitan Ceylonese elite who had learnt the ways of transnational capitalism in the colonial period, Gunawardena was very enterprising. When he was in New York "Philip set up a business in Manhattan to import rubber from his father's plantations – an impressive achievement for a youth of 24".¹² Gunawardena recruited my father into the LSSP, but the two men were very different. The former ruled through his strong personality while the latter preferred the theory of dialectical materialism to rule.¹³ Eventually

Gunawardena took the view that my father was “rebuilding the party in his own image” by relying on “young college students who were attracted to the LSSP’s heroic image” rather than on workers.¹⁴ This conflict and other related ones, perhaps coloured by Gunawardena’s views on the Ceylonese elite, led to the splitting of the LSSP in two.

All of my parents’ friends were English-speaking Ceylonese who were taken up by the romance of Marxism and were members of the LSSP. They were mostly professors at the Peradeniya campus and devotees of the great European composers and modern painters, particularly the impressionists and cubists. They were equally devoted to the *oeuvre* of a famous local painter, George Keyt,¹⁵ whose paintings had been exhibited along with those of Picasso in Europe. However they had little interest in the music of Sri Lanka. Philip Gunawardena would have shown contempt for the LSSP aesthetes for their aesthetics and the LSSP aesthetes would have reciprocated in good measure. Interestingly, the celebration of this high culture in a communal form came into being in the 1960s, during a period of high Sinhalese nationalism. In this period there were *soirees* held each week in the homes of the LSSP aesthetes, most often on P4 days.¹⁶ I remember that as a young girl I listened to live performances of artistes, singers, pianists and other instrumentalists, some amateurs and others professionals, as well as to recorded music, at P4s. Very often, the performances were preceded by lectures about the particular works, debates ranging from complex issues related to whether or not particular opus numbers of works were accurately catalogued, or whether a particular Beethoven sonata was accurately placed in sequential order, and conflicting thoughts and theories related to such placements.

My father would often give lectures on particular composers and performances at these events. The excerpt below, written by Professor Valentine Basnayake, describes these musical evenings.

Performing was done by individuals or groups which included on one occasion a string quartet from Colombo and on another occasion a popular singing group from Negombo. Lecture-demonstrations came from members like Doric de Souza and Herbert Keuneman. The expatriate community in the University were active members in P4. Unusually a meeting could be held at another venue than Dr. Bibile’s residence.

This was the case, for example, with a meeting on oriental music presented by the painter George Keyt; this meeting was held in the picturesque residence of Professor S. B. Dissanayake in Bahirawakanda, Kandy. The P4 group began in 1968 and ended in 1974, and Professor Bibile himself died abroad in 1975.¹⁷

My early childhood was spent in my parents' home on the campus of the University of Peradeniya where I was exposed to Western classical music at an early age, at the aforementioned weekly *soirees* and on other occasions. My father, who spoke about classical western music at these performances, also organized regular workshops on Marxist theory: as well, he organized workers' education classes. I recall marching as a little girl in May Day parades along with my father's Trade Union allies, evidence of the sort of class contradiction that ran through the post colonial Sri Lanka in which I grew up.

The P4s were a private space wherein the university LSSP aesthetes celebrated their high cultural identity. It has to be said, however, that in different spaces they had different identities. They would join the land-owning, mercantile and professional elites ('money elites') at social clubs such as the Eighty Club and the Twentieth Century Club in Colombo. They would also join workers in May Day parades. Around the age of three or four I was exposed to the *baila*, a hybrid musical genre, constructed through the marriage of Portuguese rhythm and lyrics composed in an English-Sinhala *patois*, through my interaction with servants with whom I was left all morning while my parents worked at the university: my mother was the University Librarian. The driver used to squat on the cement floor outside the kitchen, chewing on a betel leaf and listening glumly to radio broadcasts of Sinhala music, *baila*, and other forms of local fare. A taciturn individual, he never hummed or showed any visible signs of enjoyment of the music. Neither did he show any visible signs of irritation when the young Tamil kitchen maid made disparaging comments in Tamil and Sinhala about his demeanor, often insinuating that he had a 'deadpan face' or was an 'old rat bag.' The Tamil maid would bustle around the kitchen, humming the popular Sinhala *baila* song, '*Hai, Hooi, babi archchigeh bicycle eka*'. I remember asking her what '*hai hooey*' meant and she laughingly replied that these were words used exclusively by men folk and never in mixed company; women folk were best advised not to concern themselves either with the meanings associated with these words or the accompanying rude gestures. Her risqué demonstrations of winks, wails and wiggles would make me howl with laughter. An older woman, the cook, would glare belligerently at the kitchen maid and admonish her: '*Mona baliyak der mey kiyanne? Noodakinwath*'.¹⁸ She would protectively remove me from the corruptive presence of the younger woman. The cook's words cannot be directly translated

into English without a loss of meaning. A good idiomatic rendition would be: “What manner of filth are you spouting? Get away!”

I was intrigued by the word *baliyak* and soon assumed that this was the worst word in the Sinhalese language, with the second worst being *noodakinwath*. When I was alone with the younger servant woman, I remember asking her if these words were the worst words in the language, and she went into peals of laughter and replied “*naaa.....walige, kakka, soo,....okkoma katha wachana*”. This translates as “No... tail, poo, pee...[are] all ugly words”. She then sang these words “*kakka – baliya - walige - soo*” to a popular *baila* rhythm and beckoned me to dance with her. She would continue her performance, slipping into a verse of a popular *baila* song, using the following string of profanities as the refrain.

kakka baliya walige soo

kakka baliya walige soo

The word *soo* would end alternately, first on a high note, and then, after another verse, at a lower pitch.

Another exponent of *baila* music was the Sri Lankan curator of the Royal Botanical Gardens of Peradeniya, the erstwhile headquarters of Lord Louis Mountbatten’s South East Asia Command (SEAC). The curator, a pleasant little man with moustaches and a secretive manner, visited my parents from time to time. He would sit on the edge of his chair, leaning forward and looking somewhat anxious. His favourite phrase was “you know, certain-certain people, say certain-certain things....[pause, eyes roll around]...which are not, you know, quite the things I should repeat, but nevertheless....[pause, draws in breath]...I will tell you”. After dutifully imparting the local gossip and intelligence about other ‘suspicious matters’, he would begin to feel comfortable. Having earned his relaxation, it was time to sip his beer and lean back in his arm chair. Quite unabashed, at this juncture, he would proceed to regale us with his repertoire of what he called “classical *baila* songs”. His special song, which had many verses, celebrated a village lass, who was being seduced with promises of life in the big city.

Yamuko babi, lassana me kolomba balanne

Oya dakunu kakula perata thabala “chak chak gala”¹⁹

The opening stanza makes humorous references to the thudding sounds (*chak chak*) of the soles of the shoes worn by the unsophisticated village lass, who has just received her first pair of shoes and is becoming accustomed to wearing them.

Baila was also a popular music genre, which school children and university students reveled in on coach trips. As a teenager attending Ladies' College Colombo, I remember numerous coach trips on which these songs were sung, but only after the proverbial barrel of Western songs had been rolled out and scraped. The songs sung on these occasions included the usual English and American campfire songs such as the following:

Beautiful brown eyes.

Oh my darling, Oh my darling, Oh my darling Clementine. You are lost and gone forever, dreadful sorry Clementine.

Hang down your head Tom Dooley.

Home on the range.

Pack up your troubles.

Row, row, row your boat.

She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes, when she comes

The onset of *baila* represented a sea change in mood, rather like the point at which the singing around a campfire crosses from wholesome to bawdy. Many girls, who had sung the popular English songs lustily, withdrew at this point. However, there were Sinhalese songs such as '*Selalihini Kohul*', '*Handapana*' and '*Tikiri, Tikiri, Tikiri Liya*' that were gentle and melodious, clearly of refined quality. Only the most diehard language snobs would refrain from singing these songs. Similarly there were English songs that were either full of double *entendre* or were just plain risqué. These were not sung by the more demure girls.

In the seventies and eighties, teenagers from Colombo's exclusive national schools, all of which were private with the exception of the prestigious government-owned Royal College, would begin their parties with the western popular rock music of the day. For curfew parties held during the 1971 Che Guevarist insurgency,²⁰ drawing room furniture would be moved aside, and expensive versions of traditional mats would be placed on the carpeted or parquet floors to create a rural ambience. The teenagers themselves would wear pricey batik versions of village clothes (sarongs) instead of the denims and other western attire that constituted their workaday apparel.

The evenings would progress (deteriorate, some would say) from the funkier of rock and pop songs, i.e. ‘classics’ from the earlier rock and pop eras, such as songs by the Beatles and Elvis Presley, through to a ribald *baila* standard such as “ *Hai Hooi Babi Archchige bicycle eka* ”.²¹

The whole batik sarong party exercise is worthy of deeper scrutiny, for there is an element of social distancing²² from as well as identification with working class and rural Sri Lanka in the behavior. A comparison that can be drawn here is the LSSP elites’ aesthetic distancing from and political proximity to their proletarian supporters. Many of the teenagers who frequented those dances, which as I have suggested mostly took place in the seventies, are now part of the Sri Lankan diaspora living in cities such as London, Melbourne, New York, Sydney, Toronto and Washington, D.C. This is partly because the coalition governments of the 1960s and 1970s, to which the LSSP belonged, had closed the door to the import-dependent high living of the privileged classes of Sri Lanka. A capitalist government, led by Junius Jayewardene, reversed the country’s economic policies in 1977, but not until after the rural Sinhala Buddhist majority had been politically awakened. The new post-1977 capitalism resulted in the formation of an Anglo-neutral or even Anglophobe Sinhala Buddhist middle class.

In 1982 my partner was posted to Washington D.C., as a diplomat. I took the opportunity of our sojourn in Washington D.C. to complete a Bachelor of Music degree at George Washington University and start a Master of Music degree at American University. I also had the opportunity to give solo classical piano recitals. As diplomats, we were caught up in the swirl of diplomatic life as well as the life of the expatriate community of Sri Lankans in the Washington D.C. area; thus I was able to observe the behavior of the expatriate group at community functions and parties. Historically, it had been the Sri Lankan upper classes that traveled. Up to the 1960s they had enjoyed privileged lives so they did not migrate; they only began to migrate as a result of the socialist policies of the 1960s and 1970s. Because of the immigration policies of the United States, the Sri Lankans who migrated to the United States tended to be professionals (doctors, economists, kindergarten teachers, for example). In Washington D.C. there were several migrants who had come to the United States by way of the Embassy, the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The World Bank/IMF group had codified an expatriate culture by the 1980s, which included living in the suburb of Bethesda, immediately north of the District of Columbia, in Maryland. Another feature was the iconic celebration of the work of

George Keyt, the Sri Lankan artist referred to earlier. The Bethesda Sri Lankans, most of whom had attended private schools and the Royal College, tended to hail from a variety of backgrounds, equalized by education. The *baila* was played at the Sri Lankan Association of Washington D.C. dances and at some private parties outside the Bethesda circle.²³

My partner completed his diplomatic tour of duty in 1987. In 1988 we decided to migrate to Sydney in order to distance ourselves from the violence that was destabilising Sri Lanka at the time. I began to teach piano in Sydney, and during this time I had the opportunity to observe the functions of the Sri Lanka Association of New South Wales and the old girls'/old boys' associations of Ladies' and Trinity College, my old school and that of my partner, during our years in Sri Lanka. In Sydney, as in Washington, the Sri Lanka Associations, battered by the ethnic conflict in Colombo, had by 1990 lost their attraction for expatriates from private schools. Alumni of various schools, meanwhile, had formed their own multi-ethnic school associations, the old school ties proving stronger than ethnic bonds. In the 1980s and beyond, because of the family immigration policies of Australia and the rising Sinhala middle class in Sri Lanka, the great majority of the members of the Sri Lankan Association of New South Wales tended to hail from the new middle classes who appeared to be great lovers of *baila* music and dance.²⁴

Despite their different ways of responding to it, the *baila* is a cultural icon for all classes of Sri Lankans - in a way in which a George Keyt²⁵ painting is not. Ownership of a George Keyt painting signifies membership of an elite; art-historical knowledge of Keyt's work places one among a small group of connoisseurs. Does participating in the *baila* signal the reverse, that the participant is an 'ordinary' person? Such a concept should go down well in a country such as Australia where there is a self-image of a classless society.

As a member of the Sri Lankan diaspora in Sydney, I began to ask such questions in my own mind about the *baila* and what it means to various groups.²⁶ These questions developed into my doctoral thesis project. By selecting this topic I have been able to move from my moorings in classical Western music to popular Sinhalese music. I enjoy the *baila* tremendously as a form of popular music. The fact that I have chosen the *baila* as the subject of a Ph.D. project indicates that I am not negatively prejudiced or at any rate have overcome any cultural prejudices that

would have compelled me to distance myself from *baila*. I am interested, however, in understanding attitudes of many Sri Lankans toward *baila*. In this project I look at the behaviour of Sri Lankan migrants in Sydney and that of their children.

This has been a rewarding journey, certainly one of serendipity.²⁷

¹ This current project will be completed 500 years after the arrival of the Portuguese in Ceilao, as they called Sri Lanka.

² Bertolt Brecht's 'distanciation' or 'alienation' resonates with my usage. Brecht used 'distanciation', through use techniques such as song to ensure that an audience does not empathise with particular characters or become engrossed in the story in a way that they become blind to its political connotationst. A discussion of the term appears at the beginning of Chapter Three.

³ "Biography: Mr. Armand de Souza". *The African Times and Orient Review*, June 1913, pp. 405-406

⁴ S. A. Tharmavarathan. *Sketch of the Life and Career of Armand de Souza*. Colombo: Star Press, 1922. p. 12.

⁵ Wes Erwin in *Against All Odds* (at press), pp. 20 – 27. Erwin sent me the manuscript to read in 2004.

⁶ Wes Erwin notes that the socialist caucus in Ceylon formed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) in 1935 with Philip Gunawardena as leader. *Op. Cit.*, p. 38.

⁷ Wes Erwin *Op. Cit.*, p.39.

⁸ My partner recalls Ranil Wickremasinghe at dance parties at the homes of Ladies' College girls in Colombo in the late 1960s. His recollection is that Ranil Wickremasinghe spent his time discussing politics with Senaka Senanayake, the nephew of the then Prime Minister, Dudley Senanayake. Ranil Wickremasinghe's uncle, on his mother's side, was Senanayake's Finance Minister and was later to become President J. R. Jayewardene. Jayewardene was also the uncle of my partner through marriage. My grandfather, the Editor, knew my partner's grandfather. Both Jayewardene and an uncle of my partner were in the first cabinet under Senanayake's father. These relationships illustrate the compactness of the Anglophile group in Sri Lanka in the 1960s.

⁹ Bertolt Brecht's 'distanciation' or 'alienation' resonates with my usage. Brecht used 'distanciation', through use techniques such as song to ensure that an audience does not empathise with particular characters or become engrossed in the story in a way that they become blind to its political connotationst. A discussion of the term appears at the beginning of Chapter Three.

¹⁰ "The Personal And The Political: The Wisdom of Keeping Them Separate" by Mary Anne Cohen. Available at <http://www.bastards.org/bq/bq9/personal.htm>

¹¹ Wes Erwin *Op. Cit.*, p.19.

¹² Wes Erwin *Op. Cit.*, p.22.

¹³ Wes Erwin *Op. Cit.*, p.103.

¹⁴ Wes Erwin *Op. Cit.*, p.104.

¹⁵ George Keyt was a member of a 'good' Dutch Burgher family who abandoned his Dutch Burgher wife (Gaugin-like) and went off to live in a Sinhalese village, taking on a village mistress. This village lady was a relative of my mother's cook and used to visit her. She sold me an Indian temple cloth Keyt had gifted to her before he abandoned her for another village lady. Keyt's sister Peggy was married to an old family friend, the art collector Harold Peiris. "In 1954, his work was exhibited at the ICA, London by Sir Herbert Read and afterwards this exhibition travelled to the Art Institute, Rotterdam. His work is to be found in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, as well as various public and private collections in India and Sri Lanka." Available at www.chez.com/suriyakantha/Archive10.htm. See also www.lanka.net/gallery/paintings/heritage/keyt.html.

¹⁶ Mrs Bandaranaike's Sinhala nationalist party insisted on replacing the western week with weeks based on phases of the moon. A Full moon day was known as a *poya* day. Weeks were constructed in relation to four segments between *poya* days. The days related to lunar phases were called P-days. P4 was the fourth day after a P-day.

¹⁷ *Midweek Review* 24 July 2002. Newspaper article available at origin.island.lk/2002/07/24/midweek03.html

¹⁸ Sinhalese folk that I quizzed about these terms said that *Baliya* meant 'thing' but could also refer to 'Devil Mask'. *Noodakinwath* was said to be a colloquial exclamation.

¹⁹ Join me, baby-o, to see beautiful Colombo. You should put step forward with your right foot first and 'put on' 'chak- chak' [sounds].

²⁰ The North Korean-backed new left National Revolutionary Party or Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) launched an armed insurrection against Mrs Bandaranaike's Coalition Government that included members of the Trotskyite and Communist parties.

²¹ "Heigh –ho! Grandma Bubby's bicycle!"

²² For a discussion of this term, beyond simply being 'distancing', see the beginning of Chapter Three.

²³ Sri Lankan expatriates domiciled in different cities take on, quite naturally, something of the temperament of long-standing residents of the area. In the 1980s, the Bethesda-based Sri Lankan physician would display his home to visitors with much greater subtlety than the California M.D. The Bethesda circle followed the typical Washington diplomatic dinner format of two drinks in the basement bar, dinner in the dining room and coffee and liqueurs in the drawing room. It was through these visits that members of the circle were able to appreciate each others Keyt

paintings and Persian rugs. The Hollywood physicians would begin a visit with a guided tour which included some obligatory stops: the custom-tagged Rolls Royce or similar luxury car, the 'industrial kitchen', the Jacuzzi and the view of Hollywood in the valley below.

²⁴ My partner, who attended a dance organized by the Sri Lanka Association of Washington D.C. in 1995, was told by the president that the composition of the community had changed in the D.C. area: there were far more members from the new Sinhala middle class. Dalrene Arnolda, guest singer at the dance and noted singer of western popular songs, had been a musical celebrity in Sri Lanka in the 1960s. She was later to tour Asia and the Middle East. At the Maryland. dance she had sung a large number of Sinhalese pop songs and *bailas*, having learnt in the Middle East, that was what the Sri Lankan expatriates (new Sinhala middle class and working class) wanted. While the newer migrants, including university students from the University of Maryland, were satisfied by her performance, the Bethesda circle was far from satisfied, wanting Dalrene's old Sixty's standards for nostalgic reasons.

²⁵ See reference number 14.

²⁶ *Baila* is a relatively under researched area, in the past and in contemporary times. There are few printed articles about *baila*. However there is considerable interest in *baila* among Sri Lankans across the world and there is much that is written about it on the internet.

²⁷ The term 'serendipity' refers to the art of making pleasant discoveries by accident. Horace Walpole 'discovered' the word after a visit to Serendip (Ceylon), so we are indebted to this English author for coining the term. In one of his 3,000 or more letters, on which his literary reputation rests, and specifically in a letter dated January 28, 1754, Walpole writes that "this discovery, indeed, is almost of that kind which I call Serendipity, a very expressive word." Perhaps the word itself came to him through serendipity. Walpole formed the word on Serendip, an old name for Sri Lanka. He explained that this name was part of the title of a "silly fairy tale called The Three Princes of Serendip. As their Highnesses traveled, they were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of ... One of the most remarkable instances of this accidental sagacity (for you must observe that no discovery of a thing you are looking for comes under this description) was of my Shaftsbury, who happening to dine at Lord Chancellor Clarendon's, found out the marriage of the Duke of York and Mrs. Hyde, by the respect with which her mother treated her at table." Available at <serendip.brynmawr.edu/serendip/about.html>