

## *Things Fall Apart* from a Sri Lankan Perspective

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In 1958, ten years after gaining independence from almost 500 years of colonial rule, things fell apart in Sri Lanka.<sup>1</sup> The two major ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, no longer seemed capable of functioning harmoniously within the nation state. During this year, the ethnic tensions that had escalated after the Sinhala Only Act in 1956 came to a head, and the Tamils and Sinhalese were involved in what turned out to be a series of violent encounters.<sup>2</sup> After a decade of relative calm, the 1970s witnessed a gradual increase in militancy among Tamil youth groups, resulting in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) becoming the dominant militant group among the Tamils. The riots of 1983 further exacerbated the conflict between the two ethnic groups, resulting in armed conflict between government forces and militant groups.<sup>3</sup> Until 2009, the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE continued, claiming several thousand lives on both sides. Now after sixty years, the ethnic violence appears to have subsided with the defeat of the LTTE in May 2009, but in retrospect it is evident that things did fall apart in 1958.

What we now see are two different nationalisms, one Sinhala and Buddhist, and the other Tamil and secular, asserting their claims within a single nation state. There is, naturally, no dearth of studies and opinions on how this deterioration came about and how the various problems can be fixed.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, literary representations of the current political situation have become more the norm than the exception, and if they have not, particularly in English, reached a wide readership, at least their presence is a gesture in the right direction. The literature written in the last three decades, in English and in the local languages—namely, Sinhala and Tamil—have focused almost exclusively on the political scene. Some of

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<sup>1</sup> The nationalist question involving the Sinhalese and Tamils goes back to colonial times, if not much longer, but it is possible to assert that the riots in 1958 mark a crucial moment in the political history of postcolonial Sri Lanka.

<sup>2</sup> The Sinhala Only Act was intended to make Sinhala the sole official language in Sri Lanka. This decision alarmed the Tamils who organized various forms of protest against the government. The Act was revoked in 1987 when both Sinhala and Tamil were declared national and official languages, although the impact of this legislation in 1956 was immense.

<sup>3</sup> In July 1983 thirteen soldiers were ambushed and killed in Jaffna, a city in the northern part of Sri Lanka. This incident was followed by extensive violence against the Tamils in various parts of Sri Lanka.

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Arasaratnam (1986), Bandaranayake (1979), Jeganathan and Ismail (1995), Seneviratne (1997).

the major authors associated with writing in English, including Michael Ondaatje, Carl Muller, Shyam Selvadurai, Romesh Gunesequera and Chandani Lokuge, have moved away from the social realism of the earlier decades to focus their attention on the relation between politics and individual or collective lives.<sup>5</sup> There is a striking resemblance between the political frame of this corpus and the literature produced in Nigeria in the years before and after the Biafran War.<sup>6</sup>

My objective in this paper is to focus on the significance of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in relation to Sri Lanka's postcolonial political history, and more specifically to its cultural and literary history.<sup>7</sup> *Things Fall Apart* is not simply a canonical text in African and postcolonial literature. It remains a very relevant text in Sri Lanka, as significant for its evocation of a way of life as it is for revealing a myth-making process that promotes a certain kind of destructive nationalism while masquerading as a form of primordial entitlement. The story of Okonkwo has a particular resonance in the Sri Lankan context, and *Things Fall Apart* could well be read as an allegorical narrative about postcolonial Sri Lanka. It is possible to argue that if in 1958, when the novel appeared, its title seemed like an ironic reference to the conditions in Nigeria, it is also possible to claim that the novel can be read today almost as allegory, as a cautionary tale about the politics of exclusion and the dangers of misguided heroism. Of course, Achebe's novel goes beyond the life of Okonkwo to lament the collapse of a way of life, and that too is relevant in both South Asia and Sri Lanka.

In the late 1960s, and certainly in the early 70s, *Things Fall Apart* was read as a standard postcolonial text in Sri Lanka, and the English honours curriculum in the various universities had just begun to include major texts from what was then called Commonwealth Literature.<sup>8</sup> Achebe and Wole Soyinka were seen as canonical authors together with, for example, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, although the first two were seen to be dealing with experiences that were, to some extent, foreign to South Asian history. In relation to Achebe's novel, an obvious point of comparison was Leonard Woolf's *The Village in the Jungle* which, although it was written several decades earlier, and by an Englishman who served as a magistrate in Sri Lanka, was assumed to be somehow closer to the spirit of *Things Fall Apart* than anything that had been written since

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<sup>5</sup> Representative texts would be Michael Ondaatje, *Anil's Ghost* (2001); Carl Muller, *Colombo* (1995); Shyam Selvadurai, *Funny Boy* (1997); Romesh Gunesequera, *Heaven's Edge* (2002); Chandani Lokuge, *Turtle Nest* (2003).

<sup>6</sup> It is possible to draw a comparison between the making of modern Nigeria and the first few decades of its postcolonial history with the history of Sri Lanka. The major difference is that ethnic rather than tribal affiliation was the cause of conflict in Sri Lanka.

<sup>7</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958; 1988).

<sup>8</sup> The curriculum in Sri Lanka was largely made up of British authors, and English literature often meant British literature. It was in the late 60s and early 70s that postcolonial authors came to be included in the curriculum.

then in English or in Tamil.<sup>9</sup> *The Village in the Jungle* thus became a kind of honorary postcolonial text in that it demonstrated an in-depth understanding of rural conditions in Sri Lanka and an empathy with the local population.

Unlike the District Commissioner in Achebe's work, Woolf was, both in his novel and his diaries, much more aware of the shortcomings of colonial rule and the potential for rupture among the ethnic groups. In the afterword to the 2005 edition of Woolf's novel, Christopher Ondaatje writes that the novel "shows a remarkable, deep empathy for the hard lives of poor Sinhalese jungle dwellers and their psychology, and gives a devastating portrayal of the irrelevance of the colonial regime to their needs and world" (201).<sup>10</sup> In retrospect, however, the irony of the comparison is obvious, since *Things Fall Apart* was written at least partially as a response to colonial representations of Nigeria. It was written on the eve of independence, when a colonial invention called Nigeria had come into being. As Neil ten Kortenaar puts it, "Nigeria, a colonial territory that did not correspond to any precolonial political entity but that was created within living memory by brute force so absolute that it could style itself as peace-making, was about to be reestablished as a modern sovereign and democratic state requiring the consent of all who live within its borders" ("Chinua Achebe," 88). Woolf, on the other hand, was writing after the entire country had been brought under British rule in 1815 and the idea of Sri Lanka as a nation was seen as both natural and necessary.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the comparison between the vision of a colonialist in Sri Lanka and a postcolonialist in Nigeria is instructive, largely because Woolf was perhaps the first writer in English to use the village as a dominant trope in writing from Sri Lanka. His title draws attention to the idea of a village at a time when nationalist leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi were beginning to discover the importance of villages. Woolf does not see the village he depicts as fully human, but he recognizes the uniqueness of the village.<sup>12</sup> Unlike Umuofia, Woolf's village had already been touched by the city and by colonial authority. As the narrator states: "The villagers owned no jungle themselves; it belonged to the Crown, and no one might fell a tree or clear a chena in it without a permit from the Government. It was through these permits that the

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<sup>9</sup> Leonard Woolf, *The Village in the Jungle* (1913; 2005). Strangely enough, it was during this time that Woolf's novel was "discovered" in Sri Lanka.

<sup>10</sup> Woolf arrived in Ceylon in 1904 and worked as a civil servant and magistrate for seven years. He returned to London in 1911. He began writing his novel the same year, and it was published in 1913. For more information, see Christopher Ondaatje, *Woolf in Ceylon* (2005).

<sup>11</sup> Although the British had defeated the Dutch and taken control of the maritime areas in 1795, the entire country did not come under their rule until 1815.

<sup>12</sup> The manner in which Woolf describes the villagers is very different from the kind of description one encounters in Achebe. For example, Woolf writes: "They look at you with the melancholy and patient stupidity of the buffalo in their eyes, or the cunning of the jackal. And there is in them the blind anger of the jungle, the ferocity of the leopard, and the sudden fury of the bear" (*Village*, 15).

headman had his hold upon the villagers” (27). Nonetheless, Woolf offers a complex reading of the rhythm of village life.

During the last several decades much has been written in English using the village as a motif in literature, but for the most part the village has served as a site of Orientalist imagining. While some attempts have been made in the recent past to project the village with a greater sense of authenticity, for the most part English writing in Sri Lanka has remained urban in its orientation.<sup>13</sup> The village was a constant presence in the literature of the 60s and 70s, particularly in the fiction of Punyakante Wijenaik and James Goonewardena, but villages have been constructed as the antithesis of the corruption and decadence of the urban scene rather than as complex, functioning units with a multi-faceted infrastructure.<sup>14</sup> Woolf’s novel is not simply about a village. Like Achebe’s work, it asserts the importance of seeing the village as the centre of culture, as a self-sufficient unit that could govern and sustain itself in ways that were meaningful. Both Achebe and Woolf, not unlike Gandhi in India, recognize the significance of the village as an alternative to the scope of the nation. Admittedly, Woolf’s vision is bleak. Ultimately he sees the inhabitants of his village—Baddegama as it is called in the novel—incapable of surviving in a complex world, and he ends the novel with the collapse of the village. Apart from the fact that villages do disappear, the fact that Woolf offers a bleak closure does not detract from the depth of understanding he brings to the village. Very much like Achebe, Woolf is wary of assuming villages to be homogeneous units, and while no village is totally hermetic in their fiction, they are conscious of how villages may have existed in precolonial times. And that is precisely why the comparison with Achebe remains valid. In fact Achebe’s depiction of the village is of particular interest to the political history of the decades leading to the independence of Sri Lanka, when both the Sinhalese and the Tamils, in very different ways, used the idea of the village to further their nationalist agendas. Had *Things Fall Apart* been written in Sri Lanka, using a Sri Lankan village as a backdrop, it would have been a logical sequel to all the political stances that used the village as an important trope.

In an interview with Jonathan Cott, Achebe says that he prefers the village to the nation:

My world—the one that interests me more than any other—is the world of the village. It is one, not the only, reality, but it’s the one that the Igbo people, who are my people, have preferred to all others. It was as if they had a choice of creating empire or cities or large communities and they looked at them and said, “No, we think that what is safest and best is a system in which everybody knows everybody else.” In

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<sup>13</sup> A case in point is Tissa Abeysekara’s *Bringing Tony Home* (1998), a text that completely steps aside from politics and concerns itself with the rural scene.

<sup>14</sup> For instance, novels such as James Goonewardena’s *A Quiet Place* (1968) and Punyakante Wijenaik’s *The Waiting Earth* (1966) are evocations of village life. While they are not without some merit, it is evident that these novels are fundamentally essentialist in their depictions of rural life.

other words, a village. So you'll find that, politically, the Igbos preferred the small community. (77)<sup>15</sup>

In some senses, *Things Fall Apart* is about constructing and imagining the village in ways that create an alternative to the more inclusive nation state. It is interesting that Achebe conflates the tribe and the village, suggesting that the two complement each other. Achebe does not idealize the village; in fact, the flaws in the village ultimately pave the way for its destruction. But he sees the village as an organic unit that has the potential to sustain itself. It is this aspect that we do not often see in post-Woolf English writing in Sri Lanka. Literature in the local languages is often much more adept at invoking the village in ways that are historically grounded.

Literature in Tamil from Sri Lanka has been more sensitive to the need to what was once called "the smell of the earth."<sup>16</sup> Starting as early as the 1930s, Tamil leaders were aware of Gandhi's strategy of advocating a village-based model in opposition to British ideas of a modern nation state. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*<sup>17</sup> was read with considerable interest in Sri Lanka and this, combined with the fact that Tamil speaking areas in Sri Lanka were predominantly village oriented, helped to shape the thinking about using the village as a preferred model in anti-colonial struggle. Particularly in the 50s and 60s this sensibility was often flaunted by turning to the villages, although the writing itself was shaped by Marxist aesthetics that saw the village in relation to class and caste structures. Many of these writers, and that includes K. Daniel and Dominic Jeeva, came to their writing with a strong belief in Marxism and with a deep understanding of villages.<sup>18</sup> The worlds they created consisted of villages and these writers, whose sense of national politics was underscored by Marxism, were deeply conscious of the caste hierarchies in villages. The

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<sup>15</sup> I would like to thank Neil ten Kortenaar for drawing my attention to this essay.

<sup>16</sup> This phrase refers to the expectation among readers that literary texts, particularly when dealing with villages, must reveal a strong sense of authenticity. For the purpose of this essay, I do not discuss writing in Sinhala although some of the finest writers, including Martin Wickremasinghe, wrote in Sinhala. Since I have a much greater familiarity with literary history in Tamil, I draw attention to it.

<sup>17</sup> M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (1909; 1997). Written on board a ship during Gandhi's return trip from England to South Africa, this relatively small book encapsulates a number of ideas that remain central to Gandhi's conceptual understanding of colonialism, tradition, village society, and self-rule. Although Gandhi does dwell specifically on the idea of the village in *Hind Swaraj*, much of his thinking is shaped by the idea of the village. In a letter dated October 30, 1909, written to Lord Ampthill, Gandhi states: "To me the rise of the cities like Calcutta and Bombay is a matter of sorrow rather than congratulation. India has lost in having broken up a part of her village system" (*Hind Swaraj*, 139). As late as 1945, he writes in a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru: "You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all every man lives in the world of his dreams. My idea village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against any one in the world" (*Hind Swaraj*, 150).

<sup>18</sup> Both are prolific writers whose fiction documents the plight of the oppressed and marginalized people in Tamil society.

villages that they created were underscored by a belief in a unified nation state. There was a strong tendentious element in their writing, but they were ultimately concerned with the life of the village. The villages then had already been transformed by modernization and, in any event, these writers were more interested in perceiving the village through the lens of certain modernist categories. The framing of villages was such that no real attempt was made to see the village as a locus of culture, as a self-sufficient unit. It is conceivable that many of the writers of the 50s and 60s were themselves the children and grandchildren of those who belonged to self-sufficient villages, but what they projected as villages were often on the periphery of towns where the effect of modernization was already visible. That said, the notion of an idyllic village continues to haunt the imagination of Tamil writers; although I do not wish to dwell on that in any detail, I would like to make the point that the genealogy of such imagining is probably different from the impulse behind the essentialism of village representation in English writing which Rajiva Wijesinha once so aptly described as the “village-well syndrome” (72).

Special reference must be made to a text titled *Nilakilli* by A. Balamanoharan, which appeared in 1973. A minor classic of sorts, this novel is set in the villages of the Vanni region in the Northeastern part of Sri Lanka.<sup>19</sup> The author himself belongs to this region and his depiction of the villages is quite unlike anything else in Tamil literary history. A pioneering work in many respects, the world he creates is minimally affected by the urban scene; for the most part, the lives of the villagers work in close harmony with the land and the landscape. The world of *Things Fall Apart* and the ethos of *Nilakilli* are similar in many respects. The social structure of the latter does not fall apart at the end, but it is affected by the city in the same way that Achebe’s village is influenced by colonial values.

Despite the obvious relevance of the social frame of *Things Fall Apart*, the novel itself was often read and taught in relation to the binarism of centre and periphery. It is not altogether surprising that for many of us in Sri Lanka it was difficult to read *Things Fall Apart* outside of postcolonial resistance. To say this is not to discount the importance of a set of concerns that relate directly to colonialism and the possibility of recuperation. In fact, the second and third sections of Achebe’s novel are directly concerned with the gradual hegemony of colonial presence. Some of the questions we asked then, and some of the concerns that continue to preoccupy critics, may have a great deal to do with postcolonial discourse as it was then understood. Land and landscape were not seen as particularly important in the novel, and since the authenticity of ethnographic detail was taken for granted, the text was not seen as artifice. For many readers, *Things Fall Apart* was written in the mode of classic

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<sup>19</sup> The Vanni has been prominent in the news recently since much of the conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan army took place in this area.

realism, and within that mode it was difficult to recognize that Achebe was re-imagining a particular era from the standpoint of the 1950s.

It is important to recognize that the text is artifice, and its textuality is a significant aspect of its meaning. In Achebe's later novels, particularly *Anthills of the Savannah*, the self-reflexivity is more apparent, but it would be counterproductive to read *Things Fall Apart* simply as a referential text that simulates the reality of a particular phase of the country's history. Unlike *Anthills of the Savannah*, *Things Fall Apart* does not flaunt its counterrealism, but it would still be a mistake to assume that the latter is purely referential. It is in the combination of both—the referentiality of colonial Nigeria and the artifice—that the novel acquires its particular strength and becomes quite central to the experience of Sri Lanka.

A translation of *Things Fall Apart* was published in Tamil under the title “Destruction” by N.K. Mahalingam, himself a Toronto-based writer, who had also served as a teacher in Nigeria for many years.<sup>20</sup> It was the remarkable similarity that he perceived between the two cultures that prompted his translation. For me, it was his translation that suddenly brought to the surface the relevance of the novel in numerous ways. In fact the translation of proverbs and truisms worked so well and so easily in Tamil, that the translated version seemed perfectly naturalized. There are particular rituals and customs that were clearly alien, and certain dimensions of Igbo life were foreign to Sri Lanka. But that said, *Things Fall Apart* now seemed to be, in some fundamental ways, an approximation to Sri Lankan life. Despite the fact that caste rather than tribe was a constitutive unit in Tamil society, the similarities between Umuofia and the average village in the Tamil areas were striking.

Specifically, there were dimensions of the village ethos, or the ontological framing of villages, that seemed both relevant and very similar. The villages of Sri Lanka, particularly in the early decades of the last century, were similar to Achebe's depiction in the way they maintained hierarchies with a sense of individual rights. The sense of interdependence, the responsibility of those who were given authority, the courtesies and civilities that were observed, the deep commitment to the land—all these had striking parallels.

A text such as *Nilakilli*, particularly because it depicts a village that had been largely untouched by modernization, reveals the kind of self-sufficiency and inter-dependence that *Things Fall Apart* often demonstrates. It is a way of life that appears to have been, for the most part, under represented in twentieth-century literature, both in Tamil and English. In historical terms, the conditions were not always similar. Colonialism in Sri Lanka had begun in 1505 with the arrival of the Portuguese, and the maritime areas were the first to come under colonial influence. Nonetheless, given the insularity of villages, there were many that were largely untouched by external influences, and they demonstrated a kind of governance that had evolved over several centuries.

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<sup>20</sup> N.K. Mahalingam, *Sithaivugal* (1998).

There is a very poignant moment in *Things Fall Apart* when the *egwugwu* is unmasked by Enoch. Soon after, the novel states:

That night the Mother of the Spirits walked the length and breadth of the clan, weeping for her murdered son. It was a terrible night. Not even the oldest man in Umuofia had ever heard such a strange and fearful sound, and it was never to be heard again. It seemed as if the very soul of the tribe wept for a great evil that was coming—its own death. (152)

We do not have in Sri Lankan literature, particularly in English and Tamil, such a record of the destruction of a way of life, and this novel is a reminder of the major gaps in our literary and social histories. The closest we have to this scenario is the destruction of Baddegama at the end of *The Village in the Jungle*, although Woolf, with all his empathy, does not capture the sense of a village as a social and economic unit that had flourished for centuries. Literary history in Sri Lanka is very different from the tradition of oral and written literature in Nigeria, and that might have something to do with our failure to produce an Achebe in English or in Tamil.

But there is always the danger of treating texts as anthropological and ethnographic data. One of the temptations and dangers of such reading is that much time gets spent affirming or denying the claims made by the text. Even recently, anthropologists have offered different perspectives on Igbo social structures, particularly on the role of women and patriarchy. One is reminded of the recent work of Nkiru Nzegwu, for instance, which points to a very different perception of gender relations in Igbo society. Nzegwu argues that the patriarchal structure that Achebe takes for granted is a distortion of gender relations as it existed during that time.<sup>21</sup> While these are relevant for particular kinds of analyses, for the present purpose I am more interested in the artifice of the text, in the way that the novel deliberately and self-consciously charts the story of a hero, introduces a period of exile, and in the process of doing so raises fundamental questions about how such narratives come into being and how they shape historical trajectories.

*Things Fall Apart* begins with a portrait of a hero. The first paragraph is about the making of a hero, who is the very antithesis of his father Unoka who, when he was taken to the Evil Forest to die, takes his flute with him. Okonkwo's fear of living in the shadow of his father is what drives him to make several crucial mistakes, including having a hand in killing Ikemefuna. Before the event, he is warned by Ezeudu, who tells him: "That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death" (55). Okonkwo chooses to disregard him, and that begins the process of his gradual destruction and sets in motion a narrative of fathers and children. Okonkwo is too individualized to be anything other than a metonymic figure, but it is equally true that he is regarded with so much respect in the

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<sup>21</sup> Nkiru Nzegwu, *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture* (2006).

village precisely because in a curious way he represents the collective fantasy of a people.

It is not an accident that the novel begins and ends with Okonkwo, since one of the central concerns of the text is the nature of heroism – its construction, its origins, and its genealogy. If Okonkwo has no choice but to take his own life at the end, it is not entirely because the village betrays him. He is the victim of his own self-fashioning. Okonkwo fails to make a distinction between the kind of courage that strengthens the collective and one that exalts the individual. Okonkwo's heroism reveals a myth-making process that is not unknown in Sri Lanka. One of the more enduring myths of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is the myth of Duttugemunu and Ellala, two kings, one Sinhalese and the other Tamil, who, several centuries ago, fought for control of the land, and the latter was defeated. Depending on which side you are on, the myth gets formulated to serve an ideological purpose but, in any construct, the fundamental issue is one of heroism.<sup>22</sup> The effects of such myth-making are difficult to gauge, but they are real, nonetheless, and they have social and political consequences. I would attribute the rise of the LTTE as a militant organization in Sri Lanka to be at least in part a consequence of the process by which the Tamils were made out to be cowardly, compliant, and incapable of physical combat. The leader of the LTTE, V. Prabhakaran, fashioned himself as a hero in precisely opposite terms. He was seen as a self-made man, totally fearless, determined to recreate the glory of the Tamils in precolonial times. And even among the Sinhalese, the myth-making process has been so strong that leaders have seen themselves as warriors and conquerors rather than as democratic leaders of a nation state. Since groups justify their claims to authority through primordial myths, the narratives of heroism and unbroken continuity become inevitable. *Things Fall Apart* is about the construction of such a hero, and the price that not only Okonkwo but also his community must pay in order to recover from the destructive potential of such myth-making process.

One of the more frustrating aspects of the myth of heroism is that it insistently devalues everything that is seen as counter to so-called manliness. It is of considerable significance that, in *Things Fall Apart*, those who stand outside this trajectory are shown in their full humanity. Even Okonkwo is made to admit grudgingly that courage can be displayed in other ways, as when his wife follows the priestess to save her daughter, despite the warning against it. It is when these “other” voices are suppressed or ignored that social structures lose their capacity to sustain themselves. Within the artifice of the *Things Fall Apart*, these alternative structures come across as attractive and necessary, although ultimately incapable of averting the disaster. The novel drives home what Sri Lankan

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<sup>22</sup> This myth has been quite central to ethnic relations. Although the legend has been interpreted in various ways over the years, the origin of the tale goes back to the famous Buddhist chronicle *The Mahavamsa*. For a more detailed account, see *The Mahavamsa*, tr. Wilhelm Geiger (1912).

moderates know all too well: to stand outside a subjective and essentializing nationalist rhetoric is to be perceived as cowardly or indifferent. Achebe's novel charts a particular kind of egalitarianism that was as important for Nigeria as it was for Sri Lanka.

*Things Fall Apart* is about the beginning of colonial rule, and it was written on the eve of independence as a way of coming to terms with the past. Sri Lankan literature, at this time, had little to offer by way of historical analyses. In many ways, it is a pity that in Sri Lankan literary history a novel like *Things Fall Apart* did not get written. Now it is much more difficult to write such a novel. Had we perceived the significance of Achebe's text, maybe we might have given a little more opportunity to villages, conceived as they are on a human scale, to follow their own paths and not have focused instead so relentlessly on the nation. And we may have been a little more cautious about violence, about myth-making and readily embracing the structures of modernity, and a little more aware of the danger of walking on the edge of a precipice.

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