Contents

Map of Sri Lanka	x_{l}
Site location map	xii
Reconstructed site map	xiii
Preface and Acknowledgements	xv
Chapter 1	
Introduction	1
Why 'victims'?	2
Women as an analytical category	3
Children as an analytical category	4
Nature of research and methodology	2 3 4 5 8
The village now and then	8
Violence in the village	11
Ethics of doing research in sites of violence?	13
Chapter 2	
A Synoptic History of the Institutionalisation	
of Political Violence in Southern Sri Lanka	17
The first insurgency	18
1982-1991: The bitter years of violence	20
The underground years	21
The southern insurrection of 1987–1989	23
Combating violence with violence	26
1992-2001: A change of course	27
Chapter 3	
Shifting Between Disturbing Spaces and	
Discourses: Stereotyping Sinhala Womanhood	32
Boundaries, honour and morality	37
Discourses, heard and unheard	39

Contents

Chapter 4	
Femininity, Widowhood and Sexual Harassment	44
Widowhood	47
Sexual harassment	55
Rukmani's story	56
Gossip, a way with words	58
Chapter 5	
Victim and the 'Institution of Marriage':	
Crossing New Boundaries	60
Thinking of re-marriage	62
Loyalty to the dead husband	65
Formal proposals	66
Extended sexual relationships	69
'Marrying our Mothers'	71
Chapter 6	
Parenthood	75
Children as a coping mechanism	76
Dual roles in being single parents	80
Role playing and taking the role of being a parent	85
Imagining our Father	88
Chapter 7	
Religion as a Mechanism of Coping	91
Buddhism and its impact on the post-terror period	92
Spirit religion and possessions: oracles, anjanam eli and exorcisms	97
Chapter 8	
Formal Organisations as Modes of Coping	101
Family Rehabilitation Centre (FRC)	103

	Contents
Chapter 9	
Truth Commissions	
as a Viable Healing Measure?	108
The politics, mechanisms and expectations of	
truth commissions	108
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission	
in South Africa	110
Truth Commission in Sri Lanka	111
The image of the commissions	113
Compensation	115
Dealing with the past	119
Chapter 10	
Concluding Thoughts	123
Notes	127
Bibliography	132
Index	144