

# **Introduction**

## **Making meanings**

### **An introduction to the genesis of the book**

This book aims to look at the ways and means by which Sri Lankan feminist activist researchers inhabit, engage with, represent and construct the multiple realities of women and society through research. In particular, it explores ways of meaning-making for the political, ideological and ethical purposes of promoting individual and social change. However, it does so with the understanding that the possibility of representing and constructing complete knowledge of realities is highly problematic and debatable; and that the ultimate aim of social transformation is equally incomplete and relative. Given the play of subjectivity and human capacity, knowledge can only be partial and situated, rather than transcendent (Haraway 1988), and social action conditional and pragmatic. The following sections of the Introduction will acquaint the readers with its topic and structure, give definitions of concepts and terms, and provide rationales for the book. As introductions from a modernist perspective,<sup>1</sup> they will presume to offer a formal beginning to the book and an epistemic construction of my assumptions; while from post-modern<sup>2</sup> perspectives, they will construe fragments of my understandings, subjective positionings and hegemonic authority.