



Original Article

A Fragmented Self in Domestic situations in the selected Poems of Jean Arasanayagam

Dr. Sachin Gundurao Kamble¹, Aniket Ashok Patil²

¹Head and Associate Professor, Dadasaheb Jotiram Godse Arts, Commerce, Science College, Vaduj, Tal-Khatav, Dist-Satara

²Assistant Professor, Annasaheb Dange College of Engineering and Technology, Ashta Tal-Walwa, Dist-Sangli

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Correspondence Address:
Dr. Sachin Gundurao Kamble, Head
and Associate Professor, Dadasaheb
Jotiram Godse Arts,
Commerce, Science College, Vaduj,
Tal-Khatav, Dist-Satara
Email: patilaniket958@gmail.com



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Abstract

*This paper evaluates why Jean Arasanayagam is able to explore the fractured self at home through selected poems in a very few. Using feminist and psychoanalytic frameworks, the study focuses on the effects of gendered expectations, emotional repression, and cultural conflict in causes of inner dislocation. Arasanayagam poetry reminds the readers of the conventional conception of home as a symbol of tranquility by appealing to a different aspect of home, namely blurred identity, isolation and silence. In her poetic voice the writer illustrates that the home may tend to be a place of resistance but also a place of alienation, and describes the psychological turmoil that women experience, particularly with respect to marriage, motherhood and ritual. **Performance:** feminist tropes, getting married, being a mother, ritual, housewifery, Jean Arasanayagam, Sri Lankan poetry.*

Overview:

The poems of Jean Arasanayagam poignantly redefine the home in a very disturbing way. Her challenges at work.

Keywords: Feminist critique, marriage, motherhood, ritual, domesticity, Jean Arasanayagam, Sri Lankan poetry

Introduction

Jean Arasanayagam has created a dynamic and discomfiting rethinking of the home in the poetry. Her works challenge traditional literary portrayals of the home as a place of family intimacy, culture and emotional inoculum. Instead, the poem by Arasanayagam often find the home to be stressed, silent, and psychologically unorganized, especially to the women overwhelmed by their personal needs and social convention. Arasanayagam, being a Burgher woman who is married to a Tamil family in postcolonial Sri Lanka, traces her identity to the margins of society, which provides her with a unique portrayal of the intimate space to which her writing gives a particular intersectional angle. Her poems seize the struggles that women go through negotiating cultural and ethnic displacement as well as the patriarchal position.

The voice Arasanayagam presents in the sociocultural environment of the postcolonial Sri Lanka, where not only gender and religion but also ethnicity play an important role in determining lived experience is highly personal and politically, at the same time, relevant. The home environment does not support a person in recoiling force of social disturbance but weakens the social matter in the country instead. Marriage bed, the kitchen and the prayer room become all confrontational spaces where identity is reclaimed, repressed as well as negotiated in the short-term. This paper concentrates on how Arasanayagam builds the fragmented self through the parts of the women whose subjectivity has been shattered by unspoken grief, marital alienation, rituals, and cultural performance in these domestic spaces.

It looks at the way the self-disintegrates as a result of emotional repression and social norms, with reference to feminist theorists such as Luce Irigaray and psychoanalytical insights by Julia Kristeva. The routine of the household tasks and male ceremonial assignments the female speakers of Arasanayagam often practice in their life, are used in order to conceal, rather than to heal, emotional wounds. Nevertheless, such act can also symbolize endurance, memoirs, and non-verbal fixation. Arasanayagam depicts how the house, even with its apparent ordinariness and familiarity may become a performative and estranged space in poems such as

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The Wife Speaks, To My Daughter in Exile, and The Almsgiving. This paper argues that in domesticity in the poetry of Arasanayagam, gender roles, Ratesa and a personal voice are its Subjects under continual negotiation. The fractured self, on her part, is shown as a most conscious presence capable of bearing emotional truth and not just one of circumstantial sufferings. As Arasanayagam gives a language to voice what is often repressed in the privacy of the home, the poetic can be made a place of resistance. In doing so, she changes the meaning of what it is to experience the domestic, and she shows how the intimate world is also interwoven with personal backgrounds and the whole mass of social-political influences.

Housewifery and Mental Dissection.

Although, the home environment is often taken in the poems by Jean Arasanayagam as the place where personal identity is affected but not necessarily it is the restoring place. The everyday needs and routines in the caregiving process are portrayed in her poems as the factors that can ensnare the woman and strip her of uniqueness. In *The Wife Speaks*, on another occasion, such emotional wall between husband and wife is articulately picturized in mundane domestic scenes: He reads the paper and I serve the tea. New words that are never said establish a wall between us.

Its image illustrates that even a couple that is married can feel lonely because of some failures in communication and emotional distance. The wife is more of a device than a personality, and she does underline the ways the housework can turn her into a silent companion. It fits in the feminist theory as advocated by Luce Irigaray, which clarifies why women are largely segregated into internal silence and external conformity in the patriarchal systems. This dichotomy i.e., externalizing of role by women as carers and their internal desires, frustration or grief is pointed out by the poem of Arasanayagam. She questions national myths about a domestic life and reveals those psychological discordancies that may exist on the background of conditions such restrictive roles, by revealing the emotional vacuum beneath the familiar domestic vignette.

Mother and Dysfunctional Affect.

The poem of Jean Arasanayagam portrays the experience of motherhood as a painful and sensitive and quite a number of times agonizing affair especially when it has been affected by cultural change and distance. The poem *To My Daughter in Exile* tells about the sufferings of a mother, who is out of touch, both emotionally and physically with her child: "Your cradle now swings In another worldly language / And I sew saris in the silence.

In the course of time, the mother speaks with affection, but only with the elements of helplessness as the chasm of cultural roots and emotional silence increases. In these illustrations, Arasanayagam reveals that even the most intimate aspects of the family that encompass the domestic life, such as maternity role can be dislodged. Emotional tension in attempting to retain connection despite distance and change adds to the feeling of fragmentation within the inner world and how maternity has also been characterized by loss and lack of understanding.

Ritual and Repression in the Family Sphere.

The poetry of Jean Arasanayagam does not necessarily find this domestic and the religious rituals consoling or fulfilling in terms of spiritual nourishment. Instead, they have often become tools of social sanity and repression especially to women. This stress is clearly expressed in her poem *The Almsgiving*: I spread the white cloth, cover my anger with jasmine petals.

Feminist theorists including Julia Kristeva, refer to such experience as abjection where individuals are forced to lock certain aspects of themselves away so as to fit themselves into the roles prescribed to them. Being a cultural element, female speakers of Arasanayagam often go through ritual practices, yet it means that they also have to deny their individuality and emotions. The end result is a fragmented self, divided between human The end product is a fragmented self: between subtextual trauma and performativity. Ritual is a metaphor that Arasanayagam puts across in order to signify the silent burdens that women carry at the home. Rituals are supposed to keep up with tradition but in her poems, they often represent loss of uniqueness and emotional costs that compliance provides.

Ray Guke and Once More Resistance.

Arasanayagam in the poems reflects fragmentation, yet she also brings the loose clues to the tacit resisting. Even writing becomes reclaiming of voice itself. Her female speakers rebel against roles into which they are forced, recollect what is forgotten within a certain culture, and Gooder by poetry refer to their pain and struggle. The dwelling house turns into a cog of contemplation and also into a cog of confinement. Her speakers retain their inner attention, carefulness and cynicism during the performance of their allocated duties. The poetic voice becomes, consequently, a survival weapon in order to keep the individuality in systems which create to wipe off individuality.

Silent Resistance and Reclaiming Voice

The poems of Arasanayagam show fragmentation, but they also reveal hints of subtly expressed resistance. Writing itself turns into a voice reclamation. Her female speakers resist the roles that are imposed upon them, remember what is culturally forgotten, and name their suffering through poetry. The home becomes a place of reflection as well as a place of restriction. Her speakers maintain their internal awareness, observance, and criticality while fulfilling their assigned roles. The poetic voice thus becomes an instrument of survival, preserving individuality within systems designed to erase it.

Lastly, the exploration of the inner world of domestic life by Jean Arasanayagam opens up to the emotions that women in postcolonial and patriarchal society have to face. The discomibilism in marriage, motherhood and ritual is projected in her poetry, and this brings forth the myth of the harmonious home. The home in her poems is a place of no escape, but a place of emotional tumult, mute dukkha, and eventually defiance. Arasanayagam speaks out that which remains silent in the literature of well-known domestic matters, in a personal, poetic utterance. Her poetry can be remembered as being a reminder of how easily identity may shatter due to stress even in the most basic of situations, but can also be resilient and retaliate as well as speak out in artistic form.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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