

**ANALYZING THE METAPHORICAL ACT OF ‘JOURNEYING’ IN
JEAN ARASANAYAGAM’S ANTHOLOGY:
SEARCHING FOR AN AMBALAMA**

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The metaphorical act of journeying from one place to another in Jean Arasanayagam’s collection of poetry, *Searching for an Ambalama*, represents her attempt to realize and accept her multiple identities. This feature of constant mobility denoted by the act of ‘journeying’ gives rise to the feminist thought that identity is a flux and never ending process. Arasanayagam’s issue of identity lies not in the fact that she does not belong to a particular social group, but in the fact that she belongs to several social groups. This aspect becomes evident in her anthology in which she reiterates her attempts to identify with places she visits. Interestingly, Arasanayagam’s concern with multiple identities becomes her unique poetic identity in this particular collection of poetry. Being a Burgher of Dutch origin and later married to a Tamil, Jean Arasanayagam was exposed to a rich cultural heritage through which she enriched her own poetic identity. The paper discusses identity in relation to theories including place-identity theory, and feminist theory developed respectively by environmental and social psychologists and feminist critics. Articles done on Arasanayagam’s poetry, reviews, interviews, comments from her contemporaries, studies done on Sri Lankan English literature, research done on feminist theory and identity theory are used as main secondary sources to conduct the research. This study analyses how Jean Arasanayagam’s ‘journey’ into different ‘places’ functions as a metaphor to indicate the process of identity formation and her realization and acceptance of multiple identities.

Key Words: metaphor, journey, place, identity, mobility

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