

CII 03 Representing Sri Lanka: Cinnamon Gardens as a diasporic novel

De Zoysa I

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Diasporic writing has become a “fashionable excursion” to many Sri Lankans who have permanently migrated to Western European countries. Many circumstances which have precipitated their migration function as buttresses or as compelling reasons for them to look back at “home”, their imaginary homeland, and write with nostalgia about the very geo-political space they have left. The reasons discussed in such literature cut across politics, culture and socio-economic factors which at times are presented in a manner whereby it makes a strong case for (the personal decisions involved in) migrating from Sri Lanka. Migrant writers have now established themselves as separate cannon in the world of post-colonial literature. Their work has become internationally published thus turning them into celebrities both “at home” and abroad. With this cannon gaining currency, a separate cannon pertaining to criticism has also arisen within the post-colonial contexts and in this instance, within Sri Lanka, a whole new field of literary research has risen in order to critique the expat/diasporic work. These critics have especially focused on the holistic notion of “representation” the expat writer projects in his/her work and have at times critiqued or complemented their exercise. This form of criticism or political analysis is growing as a form of research as the past twenty years have witnessed a rapid growth in diasporic literature. It is in this light that I hope to analyze the novel *Cinnamon Gardens* written by Shyam Selvadurai to critically analyze the representation of Sri Lanka found within it on a post-structuralist-post colonial theoretical stand. Hence, I will in a way use these two critic-theoretical foundations in an overlapping manner, in order to analyze the discourses pertaining to representation found in the novel.

Keywords: diasporic writing, International publication, Cinnamon Garden