

THE KALEIDOSCOPIIC VIEW OF A.K.RAMANUJAN'S POETRY

GADDAM LAXMIKANTH

Associate Professor, St.Martin's Engineering College, Dhulapally, Telangana,
India

ABSTRACT

Attipat Krishnaswamy Ramanujan (16 March 1929-13 July 1993) was one among the most famous Indian writers and famous for his perennial contributions in Poetry. He was a lyricist, professor, philologist, folklorist and playwright. His academic research was carried out in the International and south Indian languages. Ramanujan's poems are popular for their originality, nativity and Indian culture. In the current analysis paper, an attempt will be made to offer a wide insight of adept writings.

Key words: perennial - philologist- originality-adept

INTRODUCTION

Ramanujan's artistic depictions were apt since he was accustomed to the custom of Tamil and Kannada verse. He lived more than twenty-five years in America but never forgotten the essence of Indian culture. The transition reflected in physical, social, psychological, conceptual and even at the cultural representations. According to Chittaranjan Misra, In spite of Ramanujan's constant revelation to American belief and culture, he has persistently written about India. The abiding feature of his writings is being Indian.

As a poet, Ramanujan never failed to have a keen observation on physical objects, their features and portrayed well with a touching impact of his personal life in the verses collected in Relations, majorly presented in 'Small scale Reflections on a Great House', 'Love Poem for a wife-I' and 'Of Mothers, among Other Things'. 'Looking for a Cousin on a Swing,' A River and 'Obituary' from collected poems in 'The Striders.'

The most common but integral part of A.K.Ramanujan's poetry is the foundation connected with reminisced individual feelings, the concepts were universal and so they were impersonal in tone and mood.

IMAGERY VERSUS HUMAN MISERY

'A River' is a significant poem written by Ramanujan. The poet uses the tool of pastoral and physiographical imagery in the poem. The poem depicts a picture of 'Vaikai' river. It passes through the historic city, Madurai. It presents two pictures depending on two separate kinds of description during summer and rainy seasons. The poet uses similes and metaphors to describe the attitudes of the old poets. He also included the new poets' careless attitudes to human suffering. It is an assault on the unconcerned attitude of new generation poets. He concludes that both the groups of ancient and modern poets are indifferent to human sorrow and suffering. They avoided the plight of pregnant woman, who might be carrying twin babies in her womb. Their focus is on the romantic side of river ignoring the

sorrowful reality. The tone of the verse reflects sarcasm and irony. The opening stanza of the poem is as follows:

*“Every summer
a river dries a trickle
in the sand,
baring the sand-ribs,
straw and women’s hair
clogging the watergates
at the rusty bars”*

While the poets recited of the river as a creative power offering birth to new life, the paradox of the pregnant woman, who drowned with twins in, escapes them. Owning only the magnificence of the floods, they fail to realize its more complex consequence of human life. It is an admonition on the orthodoxy practices of Hinduism. In spite of cows are given the names, a pregnant woman who lost her life remains anonymous to the world.

A REFUGEE WITH NATIVE TOUCH

There is always an unconditional love for humanity and trust in all things human that causes them to be unpleasant, mocking and sarcastic in their statement. A unique personality which is separated but blended with humanity towards realities of life is an important feature in his writings. The dual motivation of being an exile author who needs to fulfill the locals of both the nations of native land and settled land are appeared in his poem. Thus the poet recollects his fond memory of multicultural influence on his career as follows:

*“English and my disciplines (linguistics, anthropology)
give me 'outer' forms - linguistic, metrical, logical
and other such ways of shaping experience,
and my first thirty
years in India,
They are continuous with each other,
and I no longer can tell what comes from where” (1976:95-96)*

OF MOTHERS

‘Of Mothers, Among Other Things’ is a portrayal of mother’s juvenile appearances that debilitated in a garden trap arranged for a mouse. Ramanujan uses ‘memory’ as the primary concept of the poem. The poem discloses the childhood experiences of the mother and how her youth was deprived of and turning her to be old. The poet uses appropriate images and vocabulary to create a live picture of his mother in different stages of her life, ‘youth’ in the first part, ‘middle age’ in the following part of the poem and the challenges faced by her as the concluding part. The opening part of the poem is provided below:

*“My cold parchment tongue licks bark
in the mouth when I see her four*

*still sensible fingers slowly flex
to pick a grain of rice from the kitchen floor”*

Indian woman as an embodiment of compassion and her self-sacrificing nature teach the contentment by giving. The poem spreads the vitality of eternal beauty in terms of human kindness. M. K. Naik expressed that “A K Ramanujan’s poetry has its origin from the past and is deeply rooted in his memory”.

LOVE POEM

Ramanujan’s ‘Love Poem for a Wife-I’ emphasizes on the evocative element of life after marriage. In India, man and woman who got married to survive together forever. Unknowing the individual past life, they are made to share each other’s life after marriage considering they are made for each other. In fact, what remains unshared forever is their childhood. They are always in search of each other’s past. The poet attempts to recall some of the actions of his wife by recollecting the past.

IN SEARCH OF A COUSIN ON A SWING

'Searching for a Cousin on a Swing' is the most suitable poem by A.K. Ramanujan; it is famous for its desolate style in a commendable approach. It is a short lyric, which consists of 23 lines: The poem starts with:

*"when she was four or five
she sat on a village swing
and her cousin, six or seven,
sat against her;
with every plunge of the swing
she felt him
in the lunging pits
of her feeling;
and afterwards
we claimed a tree, she said". (1995: 19)*

The poem reveals the feeling of a small girl of four or five when she was on a town swing along with her cousin of same age. After this experience, when the girl grew up and turned to be a young lady, living in a city. She was ready to offer herself to an unknown person. The following stanza is really captivating.

Now she looks for the swing
In cities with fifteen suburbs
And tries to be innocent
About it

Here, the word ‘innocent’ is used in a paradoxical way. In Indian villages, children spend their childhood with their cousins but unfortunately they cannot alter in marriages.

OBITUARY

Indian ceremonial practices also find an important place in Ramanujan's poetry. In the poem 'Obituary' the ritual after cremation is elaborated. After the cremation, the ashes of the father are taken by the sons to:

"throw as the priest said, facing east where three rivers met near the railway station."

The phrase "as the priest said" represents a typical Indian belief in tradition and myth.

HINDOO POEMS

Ramanujan's poetry also presents the Hindu culture and cremation practices extraordinarily. His 'Hindoo Poems' obviously provided how this poet deals with the theme of Hindu culture in his poems. His three Hindu poems are, 'The Hindoo: He reads his Gita and is Calm at all Events', 'The Hindoo: He doesn't Hurt a Fly, or a Spider either', 'The Hindoo: The only Risk', are the examples of his Hindu consciousness. The poem 'The Hindoo: He doesn't Hurt a Fly, or a Spider Either' ironically proves the kind of 'gentleness' the Hindus possess:

*"It's time I told you why I'm so gentle, do not hurt a fly, Why,
I cannot hurt a spider Either, not even a black widow."*

Ramanujan's poetry is an evidence to the charge laid down by McCutchion,

"There is little that is specifically Indian in the background and imagery; the rivers and the mountains are all generalized.....the themes and attitudes too are modern European."

Ramanujan presents a picturesque beauty of his native land. He is impartial in following so. The quality is presented by Shirish Chindhade, who notices that when Ramanujan remembers about India the following qualities can wander in his mind:

"images of dirtiness, ugliness, dilapidation, seems to outnumber the pleasant ones"

S.K. Desai says that Ramanujan is not just that of the Hindu or merely an Indian to be considered that he sees only those. His keen eye spreads wider and the range of his comprehension is enclosing a wider area. (qtd. in Pandey 146).

The artist achieves solitary effects in it by utilizing natural discourse rhythms, and slangs to which Parthasarathy writes in his article, 'How it Strikes a Contemporary: The verse of A.K.Ramanujan' (1976:156)

CONCLUSION

Ramanujan's amalgamation with Hinduism is lucidly presented in his poetry as the blend of his past memories, sensible images, and keen observation. His personal experiences became the source of inspiration. The contemporary situations of his period were the scenes and people associated with him were the characters in his literary works.

King expresses his idea about Ramanujan that he is the most famous poet in India and in western

countries. His affiliation with Western culture influenced modern poetry in Indian languages. This unimagined combination of varied expressions roots in Ramanujan's poetry.

The kaleidoscopic version of his verses inculcates positive energy in readers. The distinctive approaches of his artistic works create a modern path with past experiences and humanity for the young poets. S.S. Dulai aptly says that Ramanujan notices closely and often feels poignantly about the human corruption in India today.

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