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A critical study on religious views in the work of A.K. Ramanujan

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Abstract

A.K. Ramanujan, in contrast to other poets who expatriate, possesses the ability to bring into perfect consonance two distinct worlds: the inner world of his self and Indian reminiscences, which is his past, and the outside world of his career and domicile, which is his present. The character of Ramanujan is a mixture of both, and he is not only well aware of the tension that exists between the two, but he also takes joy in the fact that they are incongruent with one another. The Indian soul and the western mind come together in a way that is uniquely beautiful in his poems. Despite the fact that all of his feelings and experiences have an Indian origin, the rationale that he connects to them is primarily western in nature. He is comparable to a tree that has its roots brought from India and has grown in the soil, water, and air of the western world, producing lovely blooms with a variety of colours and fragrances that are distinct from those of India. Ramanujan's Persona is a theatre that is decked up in western backdrops, and it is a theatre where oriental scenarios representing familial ties in all colours are staged. The poet himself is the audience and the critic as well, watching and analyzing with a detached interest. Despite the fact that there are times when he feels alienated and rootless with a jumbled identity, such as when he says that he is a portrait with a "date unknown," he affirms the opposite emotion when he adds that the image is "often signed in a corner" by his father or maker, so establishing that he is of Indian descent. As a poet, he is able to juxtaposition the dualities of eastern and western senses that exist within himself and flawlessly mediate between the two. Neither is he an Indian conformist nor a revolutionary modernist demanding westernization- he is rather an emissary who elucidates the East to the West and vice-versa with flawless composure."

Keywords:- Religious views in the work, a critical study.

Introduction

A.K. Ramanujan was born in 1929 and died in 1993. His parents

were Tamil Brahmins and lived in Mysore, which is a Kannada-speaking city. He also tried his hand at teaching English in Kerala for a period of time. In the course of his time spent in Kerala, he became married to a Syrian Christian, who was the one who introduced him to the Malayalam language. Ramanujan, who was fluent in many languages, not only translated a great number of Kannada and Tamil classics into English, but he also relocated to the United States of America upon accepting a position as a professor of South-Asian studies at the University of Chicago. He created a complex characteristic of Western material-oriented nature and Indian human-related temperament, which led to his becoming a renowned Indo-American poet in English. He also developed a complicated trait. Bemused by the scenario, Ramanujan himself remarked....in a mock satirical tone, “....I cannot unlearn conventions of despair....they have their pride.....I must seek and will find that particular hell only in my Hindu mind”. A crosscultural configuration of his poetry emerged as a result of the contradiction between the newly acquired reason and the sentiments that he had received from the traditions of his family. Satchidanandan (1994) made the observation that "his exile in Chicago only strengthened his sense of the 'Indian past.'"

Objectives

1. To study of present work.
2. To study A.k. Ramanujan's inner and outer self.

Present work

The enticing poetry of Ramanujan naturally invites a variety of analytical approaches to be utilized in order to arrive at the ultimate picture. An fundamental feature of 'kinship with nature' is mentioned in Rumanian's poems (Rajagopalachary and Ravinder), such as "The Striders, Snakes, Breaded Fish, A river, Chess under the tree, ecology, etc.," according to the expert opinion, which is in agreement with the consensus. The enticing poetry of Ramanujan naturally invites a variety of analytical approaches to be utilized in order to arrive at the ultimate picture. An fundamental feature of 'kinship with nature' is mentioned in Rumanian's poems (Rajagopalachary and Ravinder), such as "The Striders, Snakes, Breaded Fish, A river, Chess under the tree, ecology, etc.," according to the expert opinion, which is in agreement with the consensus. Dom Moraes analyzed that 'A.K.Ramanujan represents a sensibility of awareness of the world as his poetry isexploring man's kinship with nature besides social, familial and personal relationships....echoing man's evolutionary relationship with vegetables,

animals and minerals.....". The critic Kurup claims that "the poet asserts oneness of all life on earth...the poet hopes to have another birth in the form of a tree...with the weight of honey-hives in his branching and the hessian weave of weaver birds in my hair..." Kurup makes this statement.

In addition to this, Ramanujan demonstrates his profound compassion for the women, who are among the most marginalized members of Indian society (Surjeet, D.'s). In his poem titled "The Opposable Thumb," he discusses the way in which women are subjected to domestic violence at the hands of their spouses. According to R.K.Guptha, Rumanian's "Love poems to his wife – 1 and 2" and his numerous references to the defenseless nature of women as victims of exploitation by men give the impression that he is a feminist. Despite the fact that he comes from a conventional and conservative upbringing, he continually displays the agony that he feels for the helplessness of the other gender, which is a direct response to masculine chauvinism. In the poem "GURU," Ramanujan makes fun of the unholy nature of a false GURU who preached, "do not forgive the woman of her malice,...you may forgive a weasel of his tooth... or a tiger of his claw...but do not give the woman her freedom..." Ramanujan's poem is a satire on the unholy nature of a false GURU.

In spite of the fact that it is simpler to associate Ramanujan with feministic anecdotes, it is not as difficult to see his ecocritical observations. The rejection of the notion that man is the sole owner of nature is the essence of ecocriticism. It is unacceptable for him to dominate nature and to engage in aggressive behaviour that is "self-centered." The life that does not include humans is of equal significance, and it is essential for the environment to strike a balance between the natural world and the culture of humans. For the purpose of this discussion, ecocriticism refers to the reflections of such a necessity in fiction. (Legler, G.T.) Ecofeminism is defined as the practice of elevating the concept of "nature" to the same level as the feminine gender and evaluating the egocentric attitude of man.

The study of ecofeminism as a philosophical category is based on the observations that the dominance of nature by man and the dominance of woman by 'male' are comparable and syntactically identical. Over 150 poems from A.K. Ramanujan's body of work are studied in this article, and the writers make an effort to demonstrate that eco feministic evidences may be found in his body of work. While 'feminism' is a universally understood movement with categories like black feminism, white feminism, Marxian feminism, radical feminism and sexual feminism,

‘ecofeminism’, the daughter of ecocriticism, came into existence in the last two decades of the 20th century, originating from the Western American Universities.

A.K. Ramanujan’s inner and outer self

Ramanujan lives in a state of tranquilly on the intersection of two worlds: the inner and intimate world of his core identity, which is rooted in his Indian reminiscences and memories, more commonly referred to as his past, and the outer world of his domicile, which primarily accounts for his attitude and perspective, more commonly referred to as his present. In the course of his search for his roots, he eventually discovers them in the Indian family with whom he spent his formative years. His basic self, his soul that is completely Indian, is emotionally and academically disciplined by its value system. This is because his fundamental self is a closely woven patchwork of relations. The deepest part of his Indian identity serves as the primary source of inspiration for his poetry. However, there are instances when he disregards the pompous and oppressive traditions that are prevalent in his native culture. It should come as no surprise that his logic and discretion are shaped by the influence of his exterior self, which is his existence in the United States. In Ramanujan's poetry, there is a synergy of internal and outward essence that is both perceptive and unseen. When he is trying to find himself, he employs poetry as a technique. Every one of his poems is a journey into one's own mind. Over the course of his work, he is attempting to discover the significance of his existence by utilizing a wide range of topics and approaches. Ramanujan's poetry is characterised by its multifaceted world, which is a result of the simultaneous occurrence of his two distinct experiences: the first was Indian, and the second was American.

It is the poet's inner world of Indian memories that provides the poet with the raw material for his poems, and it is his mature, rational, and daring viewpoint of his outside world that enables him to approach them from an altogether new angle, which other Indian English poets most likely would not have the courage to bring to light. His poem "looking for a cousin on a swing," for example, presents an entirely different aspect of the sweet innocent intimacy of the cousins. This is in contrast to the familial possibility of cousins being intimate with one another, which is considered to be incest. However, when the cousins grow up into adolescents and are reminded of the experience, they develop a yearning for romantic experience. This yearning is a touch of "innocence" that no longer remains innocent and gives a feeling of sensuality and a desire for romance.

A rich system that enables Ramanujan to see the significance of life from a more holistic standpoint has been bestowed upon him as a result of the impact of a religious family, which Ramanujan spent his formative youth years in. His belief in the Hindu theory of the Unity Consciousness has been something he has managed to keep intact. "Christmas" is a poem that he wrote that demonstrates his understanding of the interconnectedness of all life:

During that brief time, I was no longer
aware of the difference between a leaf and a
parrot, a branch and a root, or, for that
matter, that tree from either you or me. S.
30-31 (S)

Through the use of the image of a tree inside the same poem, the poem further emphasizes the differences that exist between the conventional practices of the eastern and western cultures. The contrast of the two images—the naked leafless tree standing outside his window in the United States of America and the lively tree seen out of his window in India, which is more than just a "stiff geometrical shape"—is what brings to his mind the concept of two distinct cultures. In his poem "A Hindu to his Body," the poet expresses his desire to "rise in the sap of trees" and "feel the weight / of honey - hives in my branching / and the hessian weave of weaver - birds in my hair." This is an illustration of the oneness of life, and the poet uses the example of the sap to emphasize his point.

His world of memories

In essence, Ramanujan is a poet who writes about memories. A.N.Dwivedi makes a very astute observation when he says, "The poet is always haunted by the family relations, and there are many good poems that owe their origin to the recollected personal emotions." In these poems, he discusses his recollections of his family members and the ambiguous independence that comes with living far from them. His dedication to the native south Indian experience, which he maintains even after spending a significant amount of time in the United States, is frequently reaffirmed by him: Letting go of fairytales is letting go of what will not let go:

mother, grandmother the fat cook in
widow's white
who fed me rice and ogres

(Collected Poems – P 260)

Ramanujan is of the opinion that it is impossible to separate oneself from

one's memories on any level. Recollections of the past and history play a significant role in the process of determining an individual's identity. For the purpose of discovering the significance of his own identity, the poet explores this universe of recollections from the past. Reading Ramanujan's poetry is an exquisite joy because of the unique method in which he combines his memories with the life that is happening right now.

Ramanujan is completely absorbed with his earlier recollections, as well as the history, mythology, and folklore of India. His interactions with the concept of searching for one's own identity are mostly based on recollections of his upbringing, which took place within the context of South Indian culture.

His detached perspective

When Ramanujan examines and investigates things in their current state, without adding any personal comments or conclusions to them, he possesses a demeanor that is genuinely remarkable. The poetry of Ramanujan presents an altogether unique perspective for the Indian English poets who have emigrated to other countries, which is that their poetry must incorporate the required liveliness, augmentation, and continuity aspects. He has the ability to combine the two cultures in a way that is pleasing to the eye. Together in his detached glance and side by side being completely detached – advocating only the aspects that are worth taking and criticizing others that are burdensome in both worlds – he is able to keep two worlds that are completely different in their cultures and dogmas in synergy. He is able to do this because he possesses an exceptional outlook, which enables him to maintain this synergy. His ego is a theatre that is decked out in western backdrops, and it is there that oriental scenes representing familial connections in all shades are staged. The poet himself is the audience and the critic, watching and analyzing with a dispassionate interest. Because he is a poet, he is able to juxtaposition the dualities of eastern and western senses that exist within himself and perfectly arbitrate between the two. It is not accurate to say that he is an Indian conformist or a revolutionary modernist who advocates for westernization; rather, he is an emissary who elucidates the East to the West and vice versa with complete serenity.

When it comes to criticizing certain superstitious aspects of his religion, Ramanujan does not hold back without hesitation. For him, the Hindu philosophy of non-violence can appear to be a form of timidity at times. This is because the poet has lived in a world that is known for its rationalism, dynamism, rapid scientific and technological advancement, and brutality. Within the realm of actual practice, there is the possibility

that the norm will deteriorate into insensitivity and apathy. The poem "THE HINDOO: he doesn't hurt a fly or a spider either" does an excellent job of capturing this sentiment. In light of the fact that a Hindu is incapable of inflicting harm on even a fly or a spider, his great-grandfather remained to be a helpless victim of his wife's infidelity and a silent spectator to it. The spirit of Great Grandfather, that still man, untimely witness, timeless eye, perpetual outsider, watching as only husbands will a suspense of nets vibrate under wife and enemy (Collected Poems – p. 63)

In the piece titled "Obituary," he expresses his sorrow over the passing of his father and offers sarcastic observations on the traditions and practices that are associated with the cremation of the deceased: he burned properly at the cremation

 several spinal discs, rough, some burned to
 coal, for sons to pick gingerly and throw as
 the priest said, facing east where three rivers
 met near the railway station; -
 (Collected Poems - P111)

His internal interrogation for identity

Despite the fact that there are instances in which he experiences feelings of alienation and rootlessness, as well as a muddled identity, such as in his poem "self portrait," in which he states that he is a portrait with a date that is unknown, he confirms the opposite feeling when he states that the portrait is "often signed in a corner" by his father or maker, thereby confirming his Indian roots. "I resemble everyone

but myself.....

.....

the portrait of a stranger, date unknown, often
 signed in a corner by my father. "

It should come as no surprise that a painter would unquestionably include the date they created their portrait. However, Ramanujan notes that the date is not present! His sense of self-identity is being eroded. In his mind, he sees a stranger dwelling within himself. In spite of this, the poet discovers the signature of his father, which serves as evidence of his Indian heritage. It was his father who carried out the painting of the portrait.

In his poetry, the Indian ethos can be found in abundance, and it is treated in a variety of different situations.

will one day be short of breath,
 lose its thrust, turn cold, dehydrate and
 leave a jawbone with half a grin near a pond
 (Collected Poems P 209)

Conclusion

There is a distinct inclination towards the modern scientific view point of nature's ecology and its being connected to feministic overtures in Ramanujan's poetry, despite the fact that Ramanujan's poetry has a background that spans multiple cultures. There is a strong tendency towards the modern scientific view point of nature's ecology and its being connected to feministic overtures in Ramanujan's poetry, despite the fact that Ramanujan's poetry is influenced by a variety of other cultures. This is what E. N. Lall has to say about Ramanujan's poems: "Ramanujan's poems take their origin in a mind that is simultaneously Indian and Western -- the Indian mode of experiencing an emotion and the western mode of defining it." It cannot be determined that Ramanujan entirely believed in western ways of expression, despite the fact that he adopted western means of expression and was open to the changes and attitudes that were becoming prevalent. In addition, he did not call for modernization and westernization like a number of other expatriates may have done. Not only does his poetry connect with an intrinsic Indian sensibility, but it also possesses a logical understanding that could be attributed to his extended residence in the Western world. He is a poet of "mixed sensibility," who has been enriched by his experience of a fight within him, between two traditions and between two elements of his identity. He uses his poetry to search for his true self, and he is a poet of "mixed sensibility."

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