



RAJA RAO AS A MASTER IN REPRESENTING THE MODERN INDIAN ETHOS IN HIS WRITING: AS AN ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

Raja Rao, in his novels and Stories, he is said to have given graphic description of Indian life. He moves the readers with his excellent descriptions of the sufferings of the Indian untouchables and Hindu widows and draws vivid pictures of the exploitation of the peasants and labourers by the landlords, the plantation owners and many lenders. Rao is no doubt, a great novelist of Indo-Anglian literature, who brings before the readers a profound picture of India with the help of symbols like Kashi, cow, the Ganga, Rakhi, coconut, kum-kum, toe rings etc. He is an adept in bringing out the real emotions and feelings while writing in a foreign language. His imagery is out and out Indian. His similes and metaphors are all taken from the lives of the people who are described, and his images and symbols are drawn from common Indian objects and experiences. According to him, rice should be fine as filigree and mangoes should be yellow as gold.

Key Words: - prejudices and superstitious, incarnation of Indian sensibility, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The sky is as blue as a marriage shawl. Some women are beautiful as newly opened guavas while others are tender as April mangoes. Young boys are as bright as banana trunks and it

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will be apt to say that his images give an Indian flavour to his writings. Rao's main gift as a novelist is his capacity to create living characters. While commenting on Rao's art of creating living characters, S.S.Mathur rightly observes: "His characters are real creatures of flesh and blood with their own virtues and vices, their love of gold and their love of the motherland. Their prejudices and superstitious, their beliefs and ideals" (Mathur 35). Truly speaking, his characters, even minor one, are Indian in spirit and temperament pulsating with life and lingering in our memory for long. S.S.Mathur further adds:

"He has widened the scope of the novel to include not only the experience of living people but also the myths and legends of India and other nations and the speculations of philosophers of the past and the present, of the east and the west" (P 39).

As the master piece of Raja Rao, Kanthapura entirely reflects Indian thought and atmosphere as its very theme revolves around India. Though written in English language, the expression is entirely Indianized and the rhythms of speech are more often those of South Indian languages like Kannada. It is nothing but a reflection of the deepest urges and problems of India and a remarkable example of the incarnation of Indian sensibility in English creative writing.

"It depicts India of Pe-Independence days the real India of that time which still continues to exist in great many respects. The vivid details of the village life are so evocatively described that the Indian way of life comes fully alive" (Srivastava 16).

Rao's conception of narration is thoroughly Indian. He approaches his story as a sthalapurana, or the epic of a place. The narrator is not the learned and omniscient author, nor the hero, Moorthy but an aged village woman so that the story inevitably takes on some characteristics of a folk tale.

In the words of Narsingh Srivastava, "In Kanthapura, Raja Rao has compiled Satyapurana Sthalpurana, a mythological history of pre-independence Indian life" (p. 40).

In the very first chapter, there is a detailed story about the legend of Kanchamma who once saved Kanthapura from being destroyed by a demon. Evidence of this phenomenon states that Kanchamma hill is still red and Goddess Kanchamma is the chief deity of Kanthapura village and its neighbourhood. The Harikatha-Purusha of the city discovered another story that gives a mythological origin to Gandhi as an incarnation of Shiva. The whole background of the



story is mythological and religious, as both sides quote lines from the song in which Krishna says that whenever evil things come to an end he is born as a human being, to punish evil deeds and to defend 'Dharma'.

Jayarama Char says that Gandhi is the divine protector of religion and the supporter of the truth, Swami's supporters claim that the British came to India not only for the life of Indians but also for the protection of religion. Kanthapura is entirely Indian as it is an example of a strange Indian art form (i.e.) Sthal-Purana. Some fanatical followers of Gandhi like Rangamma in the novel cannot imagine anything beyond Gandhianism. Gandhi appears in one or two scenes in Kanthapura. C. Sanyal writes:

"One of the major Indian novels in English in which he presents more prominently is Raja Rao's Kanthapura. The most powerful force behind the independent movement is the recurring pressure in the novel Mahatma. He has been treated in various ways as an idea, a myth, a symbol, a tangible reality, and a benevolent human being" (P.128).

In Kanthapura, residents live differently depending on the caste or class to which they belong. Even the kind and the sympathetic narrator says that readers do not expect that as a Brahmin she would never have actually entered the village fairy's square, so she described her as appearing to her from a corner of the temple. Following the ideals of Gandhi by working for the upliftment of the fairies, and expelling them for it, they intensify their work. In the neighbouring town of Karwar, the anti-untouchability movement has opened its temple to Pariya despite protests Swami. Due to this disregard of Swami's will, he has been expelled. To testify to the fact that Indian customs are followed by the villagers, superstitions and traditions generally entertain the villagers. Narsingh Srivastava is right.

"Superstitions and old traditions affect the minds of the people of Kanthapura just like any other village in India" (p. 17).

The socio-economic divisions of the village in different parts like Pariya Quarter, Weaver Quarter, and Brahmin Quarter called 'Char Vis Ghare' also give a true picture of a traditional Indian village. In this way, the novelist here succeeds in creating familiar images of rural life through their names, houses, concrete details of the living conditions of the inhabitants. In short, Kanthapura is Indian in treatment and description. Gandhi's followers are like Hanuman and they are just as ready to follow his instructions as ever. Sanyal aptly comments



“In the novel, the idol is portrayed as a personality far above the level of the common man. He is an ideal man who devotes his life to the selfless service of humanity. For the locals, he is revered as the local Mahatma” (169).

The concept of India is also reflected in Kanthapuram. In ancient times, women had a place of honour in Indian society, but later their place became secondary and insecure. The greatest curse of Indian femininity is the plight of widows and child widows as portrayed by many Indian writers. Widow remarriage is considered taboo in India, although many social reformers, from Ram Mohan Roy onwards, have argued. Kanthapura has many windows - Rangamma, Narasimha, Kalamma, Venkamma and others. There is no doubt that Raja Rao presents female characters as a symbol of Indian femininity.

In fact, India is reflected in the Indianized English in which it is written. This is true of the dictionary in Kanthapura where Indian words like 'kumkum', 'linga', 'Katha', 'bhajan' etc. are frequently used. The expressions here are really creative. Rajarao does not consider English as a foreign language. His English seems to have come from the landscape and soil of India and he seems to have matured in the fields, markets, and homes of the country. It is consistent with Indian habits, gestures, and ways of thinking. His style is excellent for its uniqueness in Kanthapura

"India is wonderful to me. It was a drink to conquer a kingdom or to reach the immortal juice of roses, jasmine, or golden myrobalan brought from any world by a hero or a dark mermaid. He gave me the desire for sweetness and death "(SR 15)

Raja Rao paints a picture of pre-independence India. It is a realistic picture of Indian society and its orphaned culture, philosophy, and civilization. This is a picture of India in which religion and philosophy predominate. Here Raja Rao brings to the fore the plight of the people of India. Most of the people in India are poor because India is generally called a poor country and there is a lot of poverty and misery in the country. There are many beggars. At one point, Ramaswamy says that his communism is made up of the tears of Mother India. Therefore, Raja Rao presents not only the pink side of India but also its dark side. Referring to Raja Rao, Dr. K. N. Joshi, and b. Shyamla Rao observed:

'His close acquaintance with the history, philosophy, and literature of India as well as Europe and his extensive reading is a new literary experience in Indo-Anglican fiction' (PP166-167).



Thus, in fact, the serpent and the rope are essentially the best and most complete expressions of Indian sensibility. The Cat and Shakespeare, like his earlier novels, reflects India. Most of the novelists have portrayed Indian customs, attitudes, and the Indian way of life. In fact, the Indian atmosphere is vivid and beautiful. This is the story of corruption in the ration department of two friends, Govindan Nair and Ramakrishna Pai. The social scene in The Cat and Shakespeare changes from rural India to urban India. A realistic view of Indian social and political life in the city of Kerala paints a true picture of life lived throughout India during World War II. Mr. Panikar has rightly commented on the review of his novel:

"Raja Rao has thoroughly studied the allure of Kerala life, which is steeped in superstition, tradition, casteism, and corruption and yet full of colorful freshness, consciousness and Vedanta" (Panikar 124).

The way of life of the people of Trivandrum is well presented. Reading "The Cat and Shakespeare", one can clearly understand the depth of observation of Rajarao's Indian life. A significant addition to the novel's realism is the depiction of the physical side of life, which symbolizes the ration shop. Food is the greatest need of life and it was one of the biggest fears during World War II, hence the race for it and the corruption in the ration office. Ration offices were the epicentre of corruption, and we are told: "The kingdom of Denmark is like a ration office" (CS 83). Such corruption occurs in almost all ration shops in India.

The simple story of life in Trivandrum in the middle of the twentieth century is a true story of the whole of India at that time. On a purely physical level, possession of a three-story house is a status symbol in northern India as well as in the south. He says:

The natural aspects of Trivandrum are evident through the landscape features along with the repetition of history. Description of Trivandrum by Ramakrishna Pai's wife It is like the house, the coconut trees, the huts and the sound of the sea "(The Cat and Shakespeare 6)

Similarly, the myth of a deity hunter who accidentally throws blown leaves on an image of a deity and pays homage to Shiva is popular all over India. Moreover, the feminine principle of the universal mother as the creator and saviour and destroyer of this universe is a traditional material truth that is considered all over India. India is one of the many aspects shown to us in this short novel by Raja Rao as well as in his other novels, which aims to revive material truths and spiritual values.

In this context, Raja Rao has become the authentic voice of India, painting the present and enlivening the past to reveal the realities of India both internally and externally. If one wants



to know about India and its customs, one should read Raja Rao's novels to get a clear picture of India. Narsingh Srivastava is right: Of all the Indo-Anglian novelists, Raja Rao is the greatest exponent of Indian thought and culture, his main aim as a novelist is to reveal the essence of Indian life and character. Far from making nostalgic compliments or emotional outbursts, his praise of India makes self-understanding for himself and an explanation of his values for others, especially Westerners "(p. 15). Thus, Raja Rao is the voice of Indian sensibility to steal his fiction

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