

ISSN : 2347-503X

Research Chronicler

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Vol II Issue III : March 2014

Editor-In-Chief

Prof. K. N. Shelke

www.research-chronicler.com

Research Chronicler

A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Volume II Issue III: March – 2014

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author	Title of the Paper	Page No.
1	Dr. Jeyaseelan Gnanaseelan	A Corpus Analysis of the Prepositions used in Letter Writing in English	01
2	Abolfazl Ramazani & Sima Sharbaz	Dialogic Voices in T. S. Eliot's <i>The Waste Land</i>	16
3	Dr. Shamala Ratnakar	Multicultural Identity and Immigrant Tradition in Rohinton Mistry's <i>Squatter</i>	35
4	Shachi Sood & Dr. Vandhana Sharma	The Woman in the Body: Locating the Individuality within Patriarchy in Dattani's <i>Thirty Days in September</i> and <i>Ek Alag Mausam</i>	41
5	R. Saradha	From a Marginalist Vacuum towards a Nominalist Continuum: A study of Shoban Bantwal's <i>The Dowry Bride</i>	48
6	Dr. M. Lavanya & Prof. Dr. R. Ganesan	Perceived Physical and Psychological Stress among Higher Secondary School Students: A Pilot Study	57
7	Dr. Shivaji Sargar & Prof. Shivaji Kalwale	Allusiveness in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot with special reference to <i>The Waste Land</i>	65
8	Dr. R. R. Thorat	Use of Mythical Symbols in Raja Rao's <i>Kanthapura</i>	71
9	Dr. Pooja Singh & Dr. Archana	Glam to Sham: Woman's Innate Desire for Commitment	77
10	Dr. Sudhendu Giri	Modern Entrepreneurial Spirit in an Urbanised Economy	88
11	Ali Arian	The Elements of Humanity and Sufism in Henry David Thoreau's <i>Walden</i>	105
12	Tania Mary Vivera	Mindscaping Oskar Schell: Mental Spaces and Conceptual Blending in <i>Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close</i>	111
13	Mr. Chaitanya V. Mahamuni	Digital Video Watermarking Using DWT and PCA in Encrypted Domain	118
14	Dr. Aruna	Behaviour of Consumers Regarding Electronic Goods in Pune Region	129
15	B. Moses	Syntax and Semantic Problems in Translating Indira Parthasarathy's <i>Helicoptergal Keezhe Irangi Vittana</i> into English	134

16	Dr. Yogesh Jain	Mutual Funds & Other Financial Instruments: A Study of Customer Behaviour with special reference to Udaipur	138
17	Dr. S. Karthikkumar	Feminism vs. Humanism in Anita Rau Badami's <i>The Hero's Walk</i>	152
18	Dr. Shivani Jha	Ecocriticism and Ecocritical Interpretations of Selected Recent Indian Writings in English	156
19	Abu Siddik	Vivekananda's Vision of Religion: A Brief Survey of Hinduism and Islam	163
20	S.A. Thameemul Ansari	Best Practices in ELT: A Need for Reflection in the English Classroom	169
21	S. Rajeswari	The Big Heart: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity	176
22	Prof. Arvindkumar A. Kamble	Western Women in Oscar Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest'	185
23	Prabal J. Roddannavar	The Representation of Hatred in <i>The Bluest Eye</i>	188
24	Prof. Divya Chansoria & Mr. Umakant Gajbir	Democracy, Human Rights and Its Implementation	193
25	Mr. Chandan Bharti Mishra	An Analysis of Habitat Fragmentation and Recent Bottlenecks Influence	197
26	Dr. Shilpa Mishra	The Politics of HRM in India	202
27	Megha Katoria	Representation or Misrepresentation: Image of Women in Media	210
28	Dr. Ram Kalap Tiwari	Role of Spiritual Activities to Strengthen Mental Health and Well Being of Adolescents	215
29	Chintan V. Pandya, Jignasu P. Mehta, Aditee J. Jadeja & B. A. Golakiya	Antifungal Activity of Crude Extract of <i>Butea Monosperma</i>	226
30	Dr. Jaydeep Singh Dangi	<i>Computer par Hindi Suchana Praudyogikike Vikasmein Badha Nahin Balki Vikas Hain</i>	230
31	Angela Sadeghi Tehrani	A Rebellion through Confession – A Note on the Confessional Tone of the Poems of Kamala Das and Feroz Farrokhzad	233
32	Dr. Riktesh Srivastava	Analysis of n-Tier Electronic Commerce Architecture Using Different Queuing Models	239
33	Nima Shakouri	Revisiting the Role of Gender in the Use of Language Learning Strategies: A Poststructuralist Look	247
34	Shahnawaz Ahmad Mantoo	Geo-strategic Importance of Bangladesh in Contemporary South Asia: An Analysis of Bangladesh-US Partnership	255
35	Ashish Kumar	Social Entrepreneurships in India: An Exploratory Study	261

Use of Mythical Symbols in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*

Dr. Rajendra R. Thorat

Venutai Chavan College, Karad (M.S.) India

Abstract

A paper modestly attempts to analyse Raja Rao's first novel *Kanthapura* in the light of mythical symbolism used in it. It is a successful attempt to combine folklore and myths together to narrate through bhajans, keertans, and Harikathas the movement of Freedom Struggle initiated by Gandhiji even in the remote village like *Kanthapura*. Novelist uses certain traditional symbols that belong to the female world, such as kumkum, bangles and saris. Raja Rao adheres to the Indian classical tradition by mythicising the central character Moorthy. Novelist's skill lies in mixing the myths of Lord Siva, Lord Krishna and Rama-Ravana with fact which proves to be advantageous in this imaginative work.

Key words: Raja Rao, *Kanthapura*, sthala-purana, symbolism, mythical symbolism, hari-kathas

Raja Rao, winner of the *Sahitya Academy Award* and the *Padam Bhushan* award, is the most brilliant and interesting writer of modern India. He is a specialist in handling abstract themes and tense situations in a perfect manner. His first novel *Kanthapura* (1938) has its own storage of myth and symbols which contribute to its suggestive quality and enlarge its area of signification. A paper attempts to study the novel in the light of mythical symbolism used in it. A 'symbol' is applied to a word or a set of words that signifies an object or event which itself signifies something else; that is, the words refer to something which suggests a range of reference beyond itself. For example, 'cross' for 'Christianity'; 'moon' for 'charming face'; 'darkness' for 'ignorance'.

Kanthapura is a *sthala-purana* (a legendary history of a specific place), that attempts to combine folklore and politics in its texture

and tends to be symbolic at places. The novelist's skill lies in mixing myth and fact which proves to be advantageous in this imaginative work. Meenakshi Mukherjee in *The Twice-Born Fiction* says, "This mythicising of facts serves a two-fold purpose in *Kanthapura*. Its narrator is an old illiterate woman, and mingling of myth and fact would be her natural manner of observation and reflection. Thus, it is a device of characterization. Secondly, Raja Rao adheres to the Indian classical tradition by idealizing or mythicising the central character" (141). Obviously, *Kanthapura* displays Moorthy as an idealized character who, like self-effacing Jesus Christ, undergoes all the trials and tribulations of life and takes upon himself the offences of the people. He also fasts for three days with this objective in view. He organizes the people in *Kanthapura* under the banner of the Congress and in the name of the Mahatma

and infuses a new lease of life in them. Although a visionary by nature, he turns out to be a man of passionate action in the wake of the Freedom Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. As a Gandhi-man, he succeeds to rope in Range Gowda to his cause and makes widows Rangamma and Ratna his followers, and arouses the whole of the village consisting of Brahmins, weavers, potters, and pariahs into hectic political consciousness. He sets up the Panchayat in his village in order to coordinate the activities of the people with the Congress Committee at Karwar City. He inspires them to arrange for *bhajans*, *keertans*, and *Harikathas* (divine songs and religious discourses), and distributes spinning-wheels (*charkhas*) to spin yarns of *khadi*, and spreads the message of Truth and Non-Violence among them. That's why the village women think of him as "the Small Mountain" and of the Mahatma as "the Big Mountain." And the Mountain becomes a symbol of the savior of the people as well as of the progenitor of the life-giving river called Himavathy. In this context, one should recall the truth that the Ganges "is born on the snows of high Kailas" (176). Because of the Mahatma's visible absence at Kanthapura, Moorthy becomes "our Gandhi," as the strong man of the village Range Gowda states:

He is our Gandhi. The State of Mysore has a maharaja, but that Maharaja has another Maharaja who is in London, and that one has another one in Heaven, and so everybody has his own Mahatma, and this Moorthy, who has been caught in our knees playing as a child, is now grown-up and great, and he has wisdom in him and he will be our Mahatma. ... (106)

Gandhi is always treated as a greater deity than Moorthy in the same way as Siva is greater than any local god or goddess. As for Moorthy, he represents the forces of 'good' struggling against the forces of 'evil'. The forces of evil are so powerful that they repeatedly crush the forces of good, reducing the entire village Kanthapura into ashes. At the close of the novel, the village looks totally deserted and devastated, for its inhabitants are forced by the Government to run away for their lives and take shelter in the neighboring village of Kashipura. If Moorthy, *the Satyagrahis*, and the Congressmen are the symbols of Good, Bhatta, the parish priest, Bade Khan, the policeman posted at Kanthapura and residing at the Skoffington Coffee Estate, the Police Inspector Venkamma, who "roared day and night against Rangamma" (5), and the Red-man managing the said Coffee Estate are all the unmistakable symbols of Evil.

The myth of Lord Siva reinforces the idea of *Swaraj* (Freedom) in the novel. This myth is narrated by the famous *Harikatha-man*, Jayaramachar. Jayaramachar informs us that "Parvati in penance becomes the country and Siva becomes heaven knows what" (14). Further, this talented priest mingles the myth with the freedom-fight, and observes thus:

Siva is the three-eyed, and *Swaraj* too is three-eyed: Self-purification, Hindu-Moslem unity, *Khaddar*. And then he talks of Damayanti and Sakunthala and Yasodha and everywhere there is something about our country and something about *Swaraj*. Never had we heard *Harikathas* like this. (14)

The awakened priest also speaks about the descent of Mahatma Gandhi on earth from heaven as a result of the humble supplication of Sage Valmiki to the Lord Brahma, the Creator of the Universe. Being pleased Valmiki's noble plea, the Lord pronounced as follows:

Siva himself will forthwith go and incarnate on the earth and free my beloved daughter [Mother India] from her enforced slavery. Fray seat yourself, and the messengers of Heaven shall fly to Kailas and Siva be informed of it (16). And to, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in a family in Gujarat, and years after he grew up to be "a saint," the Mahatma, a wise man and a soft man, and a saint, at whose feet "even his enemies fall." (17)

The myth of Lord Krishna is also woven into the texture of *Kanthapura*. The narrator tells us that as soon as Gandhi was born, "the four wide walls began to shine like the kingdom of the Sun, and hardly was he in the cradle than he began to lisp the language of wisdom" (16). And then, the image of Lord Krishna-of the valiant-cum-adventurous boy of Nand and Yasodha - swims before the narrator of the tale:

You remember how Krishna, when he was a babe of four, had begun to fight against demons and had killed the serpent Kali. So too our Mohandas began to fight against the enemies of the country. *Ibid*

The 'enemies of the country' referred to above are the British rulers who had "come to bind us and to whip us, to make our women die milk less and our men die ignorant" *Ibid*. The Britishers are "the serpent Kali" or, still better 'Kaliya Nag'

who lets out deadly poison to kill the very spirit of Mother India. When Moorthy was a child, he had once quietly slipped into a deep meditation under the serpent Pipal-tree on the bank of the river Himavathy in the presence of his mother, who was then washing domes there. In his meditation, he remembered the child Pralhad who had said that Hari was everywhere.

The myth of Rama-Ravana very aptly signifies a fierce battle between the forces of Good and those of Evil. The ten-mouthed ogre called Havana had let loose the reign of terror and suppression in his kingdom as well as in the adjoining country. He had become a thorn in the eyes of saints and sages. During his reign, arson, loot and rape had become the order of the day. It was beyond the power of ordinary people to overcome such a dreadful demon. So, Lord Vishnu himself appeared as Rama on earth to free people from the terrors of Havana. Similarly, under the powerful British governance, Mother India was held in shackles and her dear sons and daughters were denied freedom. Economically, Indian populace was poor and backward, though culturally they were far superior to their rulers. When Gandhi appeared on the political horizon of our country, he was looked upon as Ramachandraji. His humiliation in South Africa at the hands of the whites was compared with the humiliation of Rama at the hands of Ravana in the form of Sita's abduction from the jungle. Freedom was "like Sita sullied and dishonoured," for the sake of which the Mahatma had to wage a relentless fight against the British masters. Both Rama and Gandhi employed the same sort of weapons

to fight the enemies, and these weapons were: *Truth, Ahimsa, Self-control and Non-cooperation*. The whole nation rose as a man on the clarion call of the Mahatma, and the mighty British staggered like a goat before a lion. The slogans like '*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*', '*Vande Mataram*', and '*Inquilab zindabad*' rent the air, and there was no stopping of the nationalistic forces when once they erupted.

There is a direct reference to the Rama-Ravana myth, which is so relevant in our given political situation. The old man, who is actually the Swami's paid-man having come to Kanthapura to mislead the innocent villagers, airs out 'anti-national' thoughts and sentiments when he speaks in favor of the uninterrupted continuation of the British rule in India:

All this is very good, but if the white men shall leave us tomorrow it will not be *Ramarajya* we shall have, but the rule of the ten-headed Ravana. (126)

This argument of the old man undoubtedly advances what we characterize 'wrong reason for a right cause.' The old grandmother who narrates the tale bristles with confidence and enthusiasm when she announces as follows:

They say the Mahatma will go to the Red-man's country and he will get us *Swaraj*. He will bring us *Swaraj*, the Mahatma. And we shall all be happy. And Rama will come back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for Ravana will be slain and Sita freed, and he will come back with Sita on his right in a chariot of the air, and brother Bharata will go to meet them with the worshipped sandal of the Master on his

head. And as they enter Ayodhya there will be a rain of flowers. (258)

This passage amply clarifies that Gandhi is like Rama in his heroic struggle against the Ravana-like British, and that Jawaharlal is like Rama's younger brother, Bharata, a devoted and sincere follower, and that *Swaraj* is like Mother Sita. *Swaraj* (Freedom) can be achieved after Ravana is slain, and Ravana is an unambiguous symbol of evil, tyranny and oppression. The rejoicing Ayodhya denotes the whole of India gone into raptures over the attainment of hard-won freedom.

The 'hill' and the 'temple' have their own symbolic significance in the novel. The 'hill' should not be taken as a representative of the original face of Nature. In the novel, the Mahatma and Moorthy are compared with mountains because of "their moral strength and firmness of mind." They are the two vibrating souls having the original purity of heart and the rock-like unassailability of mind against the continual onslaught of devilish forces. The 'temple' has always been a seat of ancient culture, and it is still a source of solace and comfort for the troubled humanity. The people in Kanthapura installed a 'lingam' in the sanctum of the temple after it was first sighted by Moorthy, and they come there everyday for *bhajans* and *Harikathas* and religious-cum-political meetings. Moorthy fasts on the verandah of the temple which later becomes a centre of intense political activities.

Other symbols of Evil is Waterfall Venkamma, a fire-vomiting woman of foul tongue, excommunicates Moorthy and his mother, hastening thereby the death of that old woman-Narasamma, and with the

Government. We are told that Bhatta works as a Government agent for Rs. thousand only. But as a ritualistic priest of the village, he grows rich and goes on adding money and lands to his name. "Money meant Bhatta" (30), and he lent money at an exorbitant rate. He takes a great delight in civil suits, and visits the city of Karwar with this motive. He is a very inconsiderate husband, and cares little for his gaunt wife, who is devoted to him and who ultimately dies. After her death, Bhatta takes a girl of twelve and a half years. He goes to Kashi to wash away his sins and earn salvation. He is particularly against Moorthy because the latter mingles with the pariahs. Otherwise, he had sent Ramu for higher studies on his own money a few years ago. But by nature, he is usually greedy and selfish. During the political turmoil, he also suffers along with other villagers, and his house is gutted in the leaping flames of fire. One of the Satyagrahis called Satamma then blurts out: "Well done, well done; it is not for nothing Bhatta lent us money at 18 per cent and 20 per cent interest, and made us bleed. . ." (219). The narrator of the story clearly expresses her disapproval of Bhatta and his conduct, and comments on his departure for Kashi thus: "But, don't they say, sister, the sinner may go to the ocean but the water will only touch his knees" (p.135). C.D. Narsimhaiah in *Introduction to Kanthapura* states that the symbol of 'water' is "a time-honored symbol of purification." In *The Serpent and the Rope*, too, the Ganges is a recurrent symbol of purity. What the novelist suggests in *Kanthapura* is that the 'water' of the

ocean is not enough to "wash this man's sins away" (xvii).

Bade Khan, the policeman, is a representative of the Government, and is a symbol of power and corruption. He is "the symbol of oppression, the soulless bureaucracy made visibly repulsive." The policeman is prone to bribery, and the outspoken Range Gowda rightly grows indifferent towards him and warns him in advance: "You'd better take care not to warm your hands with other's money. For that would take you straight to the Pipal-tree. . ." (21). When Bade Khan finds no foothold at Kanthapura; he saunters away to the Skoffington Coffee Estate, where the Red-man looking after the Estate accommodates him in a small tin-roofed hut. Bade Khan calls a neglected pariah woman to clean it and cook for him and to make his bed warm. The Skeffington Coffee Estate is a symbol of "the impact of industrialization on the traditional community life at Kanthapura." The Red-man and the *maistri* supervising the coolies of the Coffee Estate also stand for oppression and corruption.

The robust and dauntless Range Gowda is "the symbol of sense and stolidity, a sort of Sardar Patel to Moorthy-the village Mahatma." (24). The spirit of Revolution is symbolized by Moorthy, Rangamma, and Ratna, and Advocate Sankar. All the *Satyagrahis* and the Congressmen are the soldiers of the Mahatma. The wearing *khadi* by the political activists denotes the boycott of foreign clothes and goods, which are a token of pure slavish mentality.

There are certain traditional symbols in *Kanthapura* that belongs to the female world, such as *kumkum*, bangles and *saris*. A woman adorned with these things is undoubtedly a fortunate married woman, whereas a clean-shaven woman putting on white *dhoti* is the symbol of a widow. As R. S. Singh states that these symbols “are woven into the narrative of the novel” (116). The presence of a widow before a marriage procession or in a social and religious function is taken to be inauspicious. That’s why Waterfall Venkamma, a widow, threatens to stand before the marriage party of Moorthy in case he marries the daughter of the Coffee-Planter Ramayya. Like the use of bangles, *kumkum*, and *saris*, the breaking of coconut and the scattering of rice-grains are also supposed to be auspicious symbols in Indian society.

A study of *Kanthapura* in the light of its use of mythical symbols reveals us that the novelist is more concerned with the questions of language and style of storytelling and plot-structure than with the question of creating an elaborate system of symbols. But since images and symbols automatically find a berth in the overall structure of the novel. Its mythical texture, its abundant application of the Hindu myths and legends, its recurrent use of certain virtues and vices to create an atmosphere of tension and conflict, and its occasional display of harmony and understanding between the human and natural worlds: all these tend to confirm that the novel employs certain appropriate symbols at appropriate places. The novel is full of symbols that are used to denote myths prevailing amongst Hindus. It also shows novelist’s intense knowledge of Indian myths or *puranas*.

References:

1. Raja Rao. 1971. *Kanthapura*. Hind Pocket Books Pvt. Ltd., Delhi.
2. Alex Preminger, F. J. Warnke and O. B. Hardison, Jr. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 1975. The Macmillan Press Ltd., London.
3. Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*. 1980. Penguin Books: Middlesex and Essex.
4. Charles Feidelson Jr. 1961. *Symbolism and American Literature*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.
5. C. D. Narsimhaiah. *Raja Rao* Arnold-Heinemann, New Delhi and London.
6. V.A.Shahane. 1985. “Fiction and Reality in Raja Rao” *Perspectives on Indian Fiction in English*, ed. M. K. Naik: Abhinav Publications, New Delhi.
7. M.K. Naik. 1979. *Aspects of Indian Writing in English*. Macmillan India Ltd., Delhi.