

## **A CRITICAL STUDY OF MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN THE POETRY OF A.K. RAMANUJAN**

Dr.Mosam Sinha  
Associate Professor & Head  
Department of English  
TMIMT, TMU, Moradabad

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### **Abstract**

A.K Ramanujan uses myths, legends and rituals to varied use in his poetry. By doing so, he enriches the texture of his poetry. Myths, in particular, help him contrast the ideal and the actual, and project the complexities of life. By the use of irony and mocking tone, however, he underlines the sterility of myth in the contemporary world of senses. Unlike traditional poets, he does not believe in the life-affirming value of myths and legends, though he shows his awareness of their symbolic value and meaning. His knowledge of Indian myths and folklore is amazing. And he makes use of myths and folklore as themes in his poetry. And it is in this aspect that his poetry conforms to the norm of post-colonial literature.

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### **Introduction**

It is an acknowledged fact that in India creative writing in English had begun even before Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* (1835). Nearly one hundred and seventy years have passed since Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and Kashiprasad Ghose wrote what are considered to be the first Indian English Poems.<sup>1</sup> What was born as an evolutionary freak has survived as a strong mutant. Indian English poetry was once described as "Matthew Arnold in a sari,"<sup>2</sup> and later as "Shakuntala in skirts,"<sup>3</sup> with a third critic noting "the stamp 'Mode in India' on the fabric."<sup>4</sup> Now, the muse of Indian English Poetry can be described as being equally at ease in jeans (with the

inevitable bindi) as in salwar kameez or Kanchipuram silks. In other words, Indian English poetry is born in and responds to the multi-faceted, multi-cultural Indian society in an increasingly shrinking world.

The most obvious fact about Indian English poetry (as about all Indian English writing) is that it is written in a language other than the mother tongue of the writers or at least that of a majority of them. This has led the doyen among Indian English critics, Srinivasa Iyenger, to say that Indian English poets “have effected a true marriage of Indian processes of poetic experience with English formulae of verse expression.”<sup>5</sup>

## **Discussion**

Among the Indian poets writing in English, A.K. Ramanujan stands out as a unique figure for his substantial contribution to the growth and development of Indian English poetry. As an expatriate, with a sense of commitment, he finds his roots in the native ethos and tradition. He has carved a niche for himself by combining diverse stands and themes. Besides, the immense influence, Ramanujan’s father had on him, he is also greatly influenced by Dylan Thomas, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. Further, in a number of poems, Ramanujan successfully fuses the forms and tropes derived from poets like William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and W.B. Yeats with the tradition of ancient Tamil and medieval Kannada poetry. Kannada poet Adiga influenced his poetic sensibility.

A.K. Ramanujan’s poetry is a union of the various sights, sounds and other aspects of nature, as he had perceived them and the historical, philosophical and mystical attitude with which he has responded to them. It is this synthesis of his perception of the external world with the world of his inner imaginative response, which lends an extraordinary meaning to his poems.

Ramanujan’s inherent genius enabled him to amalgamate the critical and rational outlook of the West with the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of the East. Though he had stayed for a long time in the United States, his poems strongly exhibit his warm associations with the East. In spite of his

Western footing, A.K. Ramanujan has never ceased to be an Indian, which is both his asset and liability as a poet.

We can understand Ramanujan's poems in terms of a constant problem that comes up in the discussion of colonial and post-colonial literatures, the relation of the present to 'roots'. Ramanujan does not ignore this problem; as an Indian living in the United States and as someone of Hindu stock married to a Syrian Christian he is certainly conscious of it. His poetry blends the technique and conventions of European, Indian, American and British literatures, with those of Kannada, Tamil and Sanskrit. His poetry develops out of Ramanujan's own emotions and experience but is well polished by many revisions and is intellectual in its range of ideas and use of philosophical concepts.

Ramanujan's poetry, thus, becomes the reflection of the poetic self's predicament, wherein the need for relating oneself to history and tradition stands face to face with the contemporary milieu, whose main modes-the continuity of tradition, myth, literature and family-are largely sterile. While resolving this tension arising out of the conflict between the need for a mythic tradition and an outer intellectual and social predicament, his poetry could have ended up with noting greater than the nostalgia about a presumably glorious past. But with a great deal of skill, he could fuse the essential Indian sensibility with the temper of modernity and rescued his poetry from becoming merely nostalgic. He looks at 'modernization' in India as a movement from the context sensitive to the context free.

In Ramanujan's poetry, one finds no detachment, as in Ezekiel's from neither the Indian scene, nor the anxieties of the expatriates founds in Parthasarathy's. What one finds in it are the combination of the sensibility peculiar to the Indian spirit and the sharply ironic and skeptical view of the actualities and surfaces of life. His felt alienation from the immediate environment thus becomes a source of continuity with an older ideal.

A significant achievement of Ramanujan is that he has repossessed and made available in English language his deepest roots in the Kannada and Tamil past. This is how his poetry with home as its central force succeeds in maintaining a vitally Indian sensibility. Here the image of home becomes

a unifying force among individual and tradition, emotion and intellect, and past and present. And again the same image-home-provides the poetic self of Ramanujan with a sense of cleansing and a sense of affirmation in facing the actualities of living.

As a talented critic, A.K. Ramanujan evolved the definition of poetry and expressed his views on the significance of language as a medium of poetic expression. His interest in linguistics, Tamil Classics and folklore forms the bedrock of his conception of poetry and linguistics. His linguistic approach was derived from his knowledge of native Tamil, English and Sanskrit. His conception of poetry and poetic craftsmanship had been influenced by the tradition of folklore and myths and images from epics-*Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*. He had definite views on the use of language in poetry.

As a post-colonial critic, Ramanujan envisages that translation of the great texts of Sanskrit and Tamil and other literatures will take place along with the development of new literatures. He says, “so internally, too, Indians have to discover one another’s languages and cultures” (*UCP: 60*). As an exponent of synthetic linguistics, he wants that languages should attain innovation and enrichment by close contact with one another.

According to Ramanujan, poetry is made of words, which are “like objects; they have a sound; a look” and reveal the very personality of the poet. Words have an elastic quality, which is found in the individual twists and turns that a poet gives to them in order to express his emotions, ideas, feelings and fancies in his own peculiar way. So the words assume newness and innocence, and translate into imagistic patterns the inner thought movements of the poet. So image is an important element in Ramanujan’s poetic credo.

Ramanujan’s poetic credo reflects his Indianness. As a poet and theorist of poetry, his approach is both extrinsic and intrinsic. He defines Indianness and compares it to Western ethos. He defines what is oriental about India and thus, corrects the Western notions about it. He was an illustrious indologist, who taught Americans and Westerners what Indology really means.

Ramanujan believes in the continuity of cultural traditions, which passes into modernity. To Ramanujan, Indian culture is an alive culture. He never compromises his Indianness. It moves comfortably even in U.S.A. His interest in Indianness is unsurpassable, but he was equally interested in American culture and environment. Indeed, to him, Indianness and Americanness are “the two lobes of his brain” (CE: 36). He assimilates the cultures of his native land (India) and that of the land of his migration (U.S.A) and successfully brings alive the indigenous transition and culture in his works. He has made a multicultural commitment and transcended the limitation of an expatriate poet. Further, central to Ramanujan’s vision is continuity, past and present, tradition and modernity acting on each other endlessly. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak says that cultural reversal and displacement results in “the binary opposition, the Western intellectual’s longing for all that is not West, .....the so called non-west’s turn toward the West.”<sup>6</sup> Ramanujan is unique in his ability to contain within himself the binaries, explaining the East to the West and the West to the East with perfect equanimity.

A close perusal of his poetry evinces that Ramanujan got his outer forms linguistic, metrical, stylistic and other technical devices from English and anthropology and linguistics, He got the substance of his poetry from his experience of India, his Kannada and Tamil surroundings and his interest in folklore. These two sources are fused together in his poetry.

Ramanujan’s themes are inevitably influenced by the pressing predicament he faces. His poetry in the process becomes the arena where the need for relating oneself to history through tradition confronts the reality and immediacy of the contemporary milieu. The face-to-face encounter often results in a combination of the sensibility peculiar to the Indian spirit and the sharply ironic and skeptical perception of the harsh realities of life.

Despite the overt Western influence, particularly in the use of ironic mode, the typical Indian experience forms the core of his poetry. William Walsh observes that he is “unlike Ezekiel, deeply possessed of, or by, the Indian ethos and psyche in its pure Hindu form.” His poetry is pre-occupied with five basic postulates which constitute what we may call Indianness: (i) search for the self, (ii) family concerns, (iii) unified vision of life, (iv) myths and legends, and (v) peculiar Indian milieu.

Alienation is seen in critical circles as another recurring feeling in the welter of Ramanujan's themes, and a number of nuances to it have been explored in his poetry-the fundamental alienation of the brahmin from a secular modern society, the linguistic alienation of a Tamil-born in Kannadiga society and that of a Kannadiga in a literary milieu saturated with non-kannadiga elements; the alienation of a person formally trained in non-literary culture in the formative phase of his educational career but later pushed into the literary realm, the total alienation including physical arising from being an expatriate and then lastly the universal alienation imposed by the Western dualism.<sup>7</sup>

Indianness also lies in the philosophic view of oneness of life. Indianness perceives a close affinity between human lives in nature. To perceive and establish a link between human beings and nature is also one of Ramanujan's chief concerns. The theme first appears in an early sonnet called *Towards Simplicity*, which represents the body as a natural mechanism.

The typical Indianness finds its effective portrayal in Ramanujan's poetry, in *Poona Train Window*, which offers a series of visual images of the familiar life in the Indian countryside. *A River* presents beautiful descriptions of the river in the monsoon when it creates havoc all around, and in the summer when it is almost dry. Actually, *A River* points out the implicit reality, the reality of the river and dimensions of relations between the present and the past.

In spite of his constant exposure to American beliefs and culture, A.K. Ramanujan has consistently written about India, not as an obsession, but as a source of inspiration. While recreating the human situations and details of Indian life, the image of family appears as a key image.

Family is at the centre of Ramanujan's poetry. It is "one of the central metaphors," in the words of R. Parthasarathy, "with which he thinks."<sup>8</sup> It is self-evident from the titles of most of his poems included in *Relations*. In order to affirm his unavoidable family connections, the poet chooses a particular poem from a classical Tamil anthology to serve as the epilogue to his second anthology *Relations*:

one may run,  
escape.  
But living  
among relations  
binds the feet.

In several of his poems, family and familial relations find effective poetic treatment. He reacts differently to different aspects of domesticity. Family, in fact, is a springboard to project his varied viewpoints, philosophical and psychological. It is used to perceive continuity, a major poetic preoccupation in his poetry. By putting it into wider perspectives through ironic and imagistic modes of perception, the poet accords it universality.

Family and social concerns have been at the center of our culture. In several of his poems, Ramanujan deals with the joint and nuclear families, and familial relationships, love and marriage. *Small-Scale Reflections on a Great House*, on one level, offers a realistic view of the joint family in India, and the typical trait of Indian culture of assimilation of all odds and ends. In some poems, Ramanujan has recollected memories of his father, mother, grandmother, and other relations. In all these poems, the poet distances himself from the object of his reflections, and deflates any grandeur attached to rituals, traditions, and even death. In *Obituary*, for example, the poet underlines the fact that the death of a commoner like his father is a non-event. In an ironic tone, he says that the father left the family with nothing but” debts and daughter” and “a changed mother.” His father lived and died with no notable achievement. Such a man is not remembered by anyone. If the ironic mode is used to deflate father’s death in *Obituary*, the imagistic mode is used to indirectly evoke the poet’s sense of grief for the helpless mother in *Of Mothers, among other Things*.

In *History*, the poet takes up a past family event to show that history is composed of small events, and is not constant. The present with its new facts reviews the past and reshapes it. The poet’s childhood memory of the day his great aunt died undergoes a change when he learns from his mother what actually happened on that day. In *Love Poem for a Wife, I*, the poet tries to find out the cause of disharmony in his marital relationship. In *Opposable Thumb* and *Lines to a Granny*,

the focus is on the grandmother. The grandmother is remembered as a strong person and as an excellent story-teller. In *Looking for a Cousin on a Swing*, the poet has a memory of a girl-cousin with whom he shared a ride on the swing. The girl-cousin, having gone to live in the city, is nostalgic about it, and longs for the swing in the city and the innocent paradisaic joys it stands for. But she is bound to fail in her futile search.

Family, then, becomes a metaphor for past, tradition and history in Ramanujan's poetry. It acquires universality in some odd ways and forms. On the one hand, it shows the poet's roots in his cultural and familial past; on the other hand, it shows the poet's belief in the inextricable links between past and present. Ramanujan has competently rendered several of his poems memorable and fascinating by faithfully depicting his family and relations. A reader can reconstruct the history of his family and its widespread network of relatives through these poems. They also offer us a glimpse of our living Indian tradition and culture. The poet Parthasarathy rightly thinks that they are "a microcosm of the Hindu family which has ... ensured the continuity of a rich traditional culture."<sup>9</sup> The joint Hindu family system comes alive in them. It is to the credit of the poet that he largely concentrates on his family and kith and kin for his artistic creations and utterances, thus keeping well within his experience and knowledge.

As a poet of love, Ramanujan has written a very few poems which can be categorised as love poems. His treatment of love is, on the whole, cerebral and like any other love poet, he does not start with any genuine personal experience. But even then we should not ignore his love poetry, because it has its own validity, however limited that may be.

In *Two Styles in Love*, included in *The Striders*, Ramanujan has two imaginary lovers responding to each other's manner of love. In the last anthology, we have six love poems: *Love 1* to *Love 6*. In *Love 1: what she said*, we have the viewpoint of a lady in love. The picture she paints of her lover is, however totally negative; but paradoxically, the lady admits her attraction for his heart. In *Love 2: what he said, groping*, the speaker points out the precarious situation of a lover whose love is one-sided. *Love 3: what he said, remembering*, portrays the maternal love as the speaker goes down the memory lane. *Love 4: what he said, to his daughter*, underlines the fact that age is no bar in love. *Love 5* is a Shakespearian sonnet. It portrays a lover who is aggressive during the love act



at night but who strangely, loses his confidence and self-control during the daylight. *Love 6: Winter*, is a monologue of an old person who looks behind, and still yearns for youthful pleasures.

In all these poems, we find Ramanujan portraying different viewpoints and situations in love quite realistically. But in all these, the mock-ironic tone undercuts the edge of burning passion of love.

There are also three poems in which Ramanujan analyses his marital love. In *Love Poem for a Wife, 1*, the poet tries to explain in a mocking tone the reason of the lack of mutuality between him and his wife. *Love Poem for a Wife, 2*, explores the hiatus underlying the husband-wife relationship. The poet finds the cause of disharmony in the difference between their cultural backgrounds. *Love Poem for a Wife and her Trees*, is again an exploration of the theme of alienation in marital relationship, and there is again an awareness of accepting the situation as it is. All the three poems addressed to the wife, thus, end on a note of compromise. They are love poems in the tradition of Eliot's *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

Ramanujan's experience of love is wide and tense, and his sensibility is sharp and modern. Evidently, he has traversed a vast expanse of love experience and given us a fresh and first hand account thereof. He starts with a statement of true nature of love, moves through its different aspects – longing, frustration and despair, infatuation, promiscuity and sensuality – and arrives at the secure and sure heaven of wifely love. These different aspects of love are scattered over his poetical collections.

In his love poetry, then, Ramanujan strikes a metaphysical note of realism. He invents situations, adorns masks and avoids flat tone. His strategy to have feelings in tight control by ironies deprives his love poetry of intensity and in some cases, even genuineness. In fact, the absence of genuine personal feelings, and the avoidance of their direct expression make his love poetry sterile.

Apart from his themes and the motifs in his poetry, Ramanujan ranks very high among the Indian-English poets for his use of English language to express himself. He has shown a rare originality in the use of words and an extraordinary talent for phrase making. His poems abound in felicities of word and phrase.

Ramanujan has derived his poetic technique from the ancient Kannada and Tamil verse has synthesised oriental and accidental models into new forms. Ramanujan's technical accomplishment is incontestable and his thematic strategy is precisely the right one for a poet in his position. He has completely exploited the opportunities his material offers him.

In his poetic use of language, Ramanujan has been able to 'extend the resources of the English language' and to add a peculiar pungency to it by indianising it. Occasionally, it tends to be colloquial and topographical. At places it becomes epigrammatic. The terseness of Ramanujan's diction, the consummate skill with which he introduces rhyme and assonance into his verse, the sharply etched, crystallized images, and the disciplined handling of language, make Ramanujan one of the most significant poets in India today. Ramanujan employs a number of devices to achieve his effects. For instance, he creates tableau-like effects in many of his poems. In *Still Life*, the speaker sees the half-eaten sandwich, bread, lettuce, and salami, all carrying the shape of a bite by the woman who had left a little while ago after lunching with him. In the poem entitled *A River*, we get a picture of the river drying up to a trickle in the sand, and the watergates getting clogged by straw and women's hair, and the picture of the bridges which have patches of repair all over them, and which have their wet stones and their dry stones. Similarly there are tableau-like effects in the poems entitled *Some Indian Uses of History on a Rainy Day* and *Poona Train Window*. The artistic effect of this cameo-like pictures is similar to the impression made by *nature morte* paintings. They reveal not only an eye for detail, but also an ability to recapture it with photographic fidelity.

In Ramanujan's poems, there is often an intelligent play on word; and this device is skillfully related to the meaning, which Ramanujan wishes to convey. This device is not something superficially imposed but is made an integral part of the poem. Ramanujan also employs the device of repetition of words with telling effect in several poems.

From the point of view of syntax in Ramanujan's poems, each word is used carefully, precisely and economically. The poem itself culminates into stability, and the fixed point goes against the self, its anxieties, other persons, India and the past. The poet is careful in using verbs with precision and economy, the structures of which vary subtly to suit the multiplicity of themes. The

syntactic structure of his poems demonstrates wonderful variety and his stanza scheme an intricacy.

Ramanujan writes mostly in free verse but he does make use of rhymes including internal rhyme, and of assonance for creating certain effects. Also there is a subtle mingling of sound and sense in most of the poems. M.K. Naik expresses the view that, in poetic technique, Ramanujan of all his contemporaries appears to have the surest touch because he never lapses into romantic cliché. Ramanujan's unfailing sense of rhythm gives a fitting answer to those who hold that complete inwardness with language is possible only to a poet writing in his mother tongue. Though Ramanujan writes in open forms, his verse is extremely tightly constructed. He can also surprise us with a startlingly apt adjective as in "the *naked* parting of her hair" or blend image and word-music perfectly as when he describes snakes as "writing a sibilant alphabet of panic/On my floor." Thus, Ramanujan's technical accomplishment is indisputable.

Images play a decisive role in Ramanujan's poetry. It is through them that he communicates his ideas. An image in his poem is used graphically to elaborate a particular thought. The skilled use of metaphors is another proof of Ramanujan's superb craftsmanship. As a poet, he realized he could find a release for his agonizing mental conflicts only by giving them expression in imagistic verse. An understanding of the imagery employed by him is thus highly essential to the understanding of Ramanujan as a poet. The images are the links, which give a total picture of the poet's personality.

One of the limitations of the imagistic mode in which Ramanujan writes his poetry, is the restricted scope of imagination. The poet has to move with the image and work out only those nuances of thoughts and feelings, which can subserve it. It is because of this reason that he has been justly or unjustly accused of thinness of thought-content. If one reads poems like *Snakes* or *Of Mothers, among other things*, one is left wondering, after being struck by the cleverness of images in these poems, what the poet wants to say after all. This kind of feeling prevails after reading a number of other imagistic poems. Indeed, Ramanujan's use of imagery, in spite of its limitations, is effective. His imagery, mostly visual, has its source in the familiar worlds of nature and human beings. Though it is shaped by the Western modes of thought, it is typically Indian.

Irony is perhaps the most conspicuous quality of Ramanujan's poetry. While poets generally use irony for comic effects, Ramanujan uses it to emphasize the melancholy, the gloom, and the pessimism of his poems. Almost every poem by Ramanujan is characterized by irony to a greater or lesser extent.

The poems *A River*, *Obituary*, *Still Life*, *Self-Portrait*, *Image for Politics*, *THE HINDOO: he reads GITA and is calm at all events*, *Relations* and *The Last of the Princes* are some of the other poems of Ramanujan where irony becomes a characteristic feature. Whereas in *Still Life*, even things considered most sacred receive an ironic treatment, irony is dominated by good humour in *Self-Portrait*. In his *Image for Politics* he draws the picture of the victor-victim where finally the victor is eaten up. In short, irony has been a very strong device in the hands of Ramanujan and it is almost all pervasive especially in those poems about familial relations.

Ramanujan is a talented poetic craftsman, who has assiduously polished and refined his poetic style. He has achieved rare felicity of expression and classical simplicity and austerity. He uses apt and meaningful, simple and everyday words with utmost economy and epigrammatic terseness. His images are suggestive, real, precise and sculptural.

Myths, legends and rituals form the substratum of any culture. Despite his physical alienation from the land of his roots, Ramanujan is well versed in the knowledge and use of myths, legends and rituals. His poetry is deep-rooted in Indian myths, legends and rituals, of course, not in any celebratory tone and manner. In some poems, Ramanujan makes use of myths, legends, tales from epic-mostly Indian-not only to endorse and affirm his instinctive access to the rich cultural heritage of his native land and, but also to ascertain their contemporary relevance.

In spite of material progress, scientific inventions, myths remain central to a culture. By revoking myths in his poetry, Ramanujan tries to perpetuate the link between past and present. In myths, the poet discovers the continuity of his own self, in the present. In case of Ramanujan, the myths often act as background to sharpen the edges of his irony.

Among Ramanujan's mythology poems-*Mythologies I, Mythologies II and Mythologies III*, in the first two poems, Ramanujan juxtaposes the reality of the myth with the fact of his real self. In both these poems, he tries to capture myth/a thing of the past-to show the continuity of his own self from the past to the present. He also incorporates into these poems a prayer motif like a true Hindu at the end of his life. Not only the sense of death, and not the fear of the death, is evident, but also a willingness to be united with the divine is very much implicit in the prayer motif.

Apart from myths, Ramanujan also makes a good use of rituals and legends in his poetry. In *Snakes*, for instance, he refers to the Hindu rituals of offering milk to snakes on the Nag-Panchami day in the month of Shravan. Its observance reveals the large heartedness and compassion of the religious Hindus towards animals, even harmful animals like snakes. It also affirms sexual passion and fertility. *Obituary*, written on his father, is another example in which Ramanujan presents some rituals of Hindu religion. According to a Hindu ritual, a dead body is burned and its ashes are thrown in the Ganga. So when the father dies, he is burned. The ashes left after the cremation, were thrown ritually at a place where three rivers meet.

Ramanujan is also interested in folktales. He thinks that folktales catch the fancy of children. A.K. Ramanujan while outlining the difference between folktales and poems opines that poems are from a more adult world. However, he still feels that no adult is cut off from the folktales. Every person, almost in every stage of life follows folktales. The reason for being attracted to folktales world is also cited by him. A.K. Ramanujan believes that folktales create a worldview, which every person seems to subscribe in his fancy. The big official worldview, the world of epics, of the mythologies influences the gentry. The common person fails to understand the ideology of the epics dressed and conveyed in the terminology of literature. Folktales present "a counter system to the ideology of the epics" (*UCP: 71*) and allow the space even to the common reader to be a part of the worldview.

Ramanujan was interested in all forms of folklore, but as miniaturist and a student of literature, he was specially drawn to the tale. His essays on an Indian Cinderella (Ramanujan 1982a) and on Indian versions of the Oedipus story (Ramanujan 1983) demonstrate his grasp of the immense corpus of Indian folktales, in their diverse languages. *A Flowering Tree* offers Ramanujan's

insights developed over three decades of scholarly inquiry and represents a unique contribution to the study of the folktale in India. Ramanujan believes that tales affect those who tell them as much as those who hear them. He further believes that tale telling is a form of self-expression. In fact, in retelling Kannada tales, Ramanujan leaves us a self-portrait.

## **Conclusion**

In the end, we may add that each of A.K. Ramanujan's four volumes- *The Striders* (1966), *Relations* (1971), *Second Sight* (1986), and last the *Black Hen* have a critical theme and each takes its central theme from the title poem. The sound application of theme in Ramanujan's poetry invariably results in a forceful, meaningful utterance. His poems reveal with telling details 'the specific physiognomy of an object or a situation.' The poet does not hang on certain chosen literary devices at the cost of his meaning or communication, the sole end of all good poetry. There is dynamism in his poetic art, and one has but to agree with Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar that Ramanujan has now established himself as "one of the most talented of the "new poets."<sup>10</sup>

The more gold is burnt, the more it becomes brighter, the more sandalwood is rubbed, the more fragrance does it yield. Similarly A.K. Ramanujan, passing through a good deal of experiences, becomes brighter and more fragrant in successive poetic collections. Truly speaking, a house cannot be built on shifting sand dunes, and Ramanujan has built his artistic house on a solid foundation of concrete and mortar. It is this that prompted the distinguished Indian-English poet, Nissim Ezekiel, to remark in one of his articles, "Ramanujan has enriched the Indian-English tradition of poetry and that too in a perceptible way."<sup>11</sup>

## **References**

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