



INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA

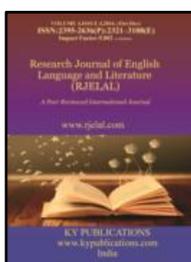
2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

## CONFLICTS OF IMMIGRANTS IN Raja Rao's Novel *The Serpent and the Rope*

A.SATHYA

M.Phil. English, Prist University  
Thanjavur.

Research Supervisor: G.Ambika



### ABSTRACT

Raja Rao is a pioneer of India writing in English. Raja Rao was born of an old Indian Brahmin family in the village of Hassana in Mysore in 1908. Raja Rao has written only a handful of novels. *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) deals with problem of immigration. Migration has taken place due to historical, political and economic reasons including higher education, better prospects and marriage. However, the migrated Indian community has showed greater sense of adjustments, adaptability, mobility and accessibility. *The Serpent and the Rope* is out and out autobiographical. Raja Rao projects his own plights and predicaments through Rama. Rama is doing research in Albigensian heresy in the University of Caen in France. Rama is totally changed in his native behaviour. He become unstable because of the reason is immigration. Immigration is a long and complex process and relocation to another country is not easy. A different culture and a different life – style will increase the issue that an immigrant is experiencing in the new country. Without any doubt, loneliness is one the most important problems that will affect a newcomer's life. He does not understand for his situation as an immigrant in the new country.

Keywords: Immigrants, Accessibility, Adaptability, Deprivation

Raja Rao is a pioneer of Indian writing in English. Raja Rao was born of an old South Indian Brahmin family in the village of Hassana in Mysore in 1908. He studied French Literature at Montpellier. He lived in France till 1965. Raja Rao has written only a handful of novels. *Kanthapura* (1938) is his first novel. *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) deals with a problem of immigration. He passed away in 2006 at Austin, Texas, at the age of 97.

*The Serpent and the Rope* is out and out autobiographical. Raja Rao projects his own plights and predicaments through Rama Ramaswamy alias Rama is the narrator –cum protagonist of the novel *The Serpent and the Rope*. Rama comes from an orthodox Brahmin family of Karnataka. His mother

dies when he is seven years old. His father remarries twice. His second wife dies, leaving behind three daughters, Kapila, Saroja and Sukumari. His third wife Vishalakshi gives birth to a son. When the child is eleven month's old Rama's father dies.

Rama is doing research in Albigensian heresy in the university of Caen in French. He is only twenty one year old. He meets France women by name Madeleine at the University of Caen. He falls in love with the French girl Madeleine who is much older than him. Rama married Madeleine. She is a lecturer in history in a local college soon misunderstanding crops up between the two and they divorce each other. Their only child called Krishna alias Pierre dies of bronchopneumonia. Like

Rama, Raja Rao also went to French for doing research. This is, broadly speaking, similar to Raja Rao's life also.

Rama's father dies. Rama rushes back to India and takes his second step-mother Vishalakshi and her infant child Sridhara to Benaras to perform funeral rites to his father. The priests object to Rama's participation. Saying that his marriage with France women unfits him to arrange his father's funeral rites. On being bribed by Rama, they withdraw their opposition. Vishalakshi is projected as a devout widow in this chapter, visiting temples and chanting hymns.

Savithri is daughter of Raja Raghbir Singh of Surajpur, studying English at Cambridge, is introduced. She is compulsorily engaged to Pratap Singh, a posthumous son belonging to the family of the Jagirdars of Mukthapuri in Aurangabad District. The engagement Ceremony is grandly conducted. Pratap introduces Savithri to Rama. Rama is shocked by her habit of smoking. Savithri like Rama's research aptitude but he is disgusted with her modernity.

Rama is highly volatile and unstable. Rama illicit passion reaches the highest water-mark when he meets Savithri she has been betrothed to Pratap Singh. Then after Rama contact with her. Rama behaviour as husband may easily appear as an illusion of Sartre's perceptive analysis of bad faith.

As for his flaunted intention of telling the truth ("I'd never want to deceive! This is true, I swear it!"), all this, of course, is the object of an inner negation, but also it is not recognized by the liar as his intention.

Rama's journey to France has an inauspicious beginning. At Rome he misses his connection to nice. Rama gives her the Sari gifted by Saroja. Savithri calls on Rama. Pratap has written to Rama that Savithri has fallen love with a Muslim by name Hussian Hamdani and Pratap says that separate Savithri from Hussian. Rama dresses like a bridegroom when he goes out to meet Savithri she explicitly expresses her nation by washing her feet with Ganges water and touching with her head. Rama reciprocates by smearing kum-kum at the parting of her hair and fixing toes rings on her toes.

These rings were presented by the little mother to decorate Madeleine's toes. Savithri said.

"I have known my lord for a thousand lives, from Janam to Janamhavel know my Krishna" Savithri at this time inclined to marry him. But eventually she marries Pratap Singh and settles down with him.

Rama relationship with Madeleine is extremely shallow. He is attracted only be her physical charms. When he is in India, he receives a letter from Uncles Charles regarding Madeleine's caesarean operation and her child's death shortly afterwards, but he does not grieve over this tragedy at all. Madeleine knew that her husband have connection with Savithri. So she coolly rejects him.

He continually claims that is Hindu religion tradition it is the "Impersonal", the self that underlies the love between husband and wife.

"So no man can love women for her personal self" yet Rama confesses, "Did I love the self in Madeleine? I know I did not".

Madeleine coolly rejects him, because saying that he is lusting after her eighteen aggregates only, that is, her body. She has become an uncompromising Buddhist. She is no longer interested in playing a wife by role. She divorces Rama and sends him away.

In relation to Madeleine however Rama is unable to locate himself as a free subject dominant over her. "This time I had really won her" and Madeleine was won. "So I felt free". But this dominance is essentially an intellectual victory. Rama completes his thesis. But he is longer interested in academic pursuits.

I found myself saying the Gayathri Mantra as we landed at Santa Cruz, I had said it day after day, almost for twenty years. I must have said it a million, million times, Om, O face of truth with a disk of gold, remove the mist of race that I may see you face to face.

The story ends at the feet of the guru he wants to go to Travancore in search of a guru who will enlighten him on how to live meaningfully and purposefully.

. During the ancient times a large number of Indians migrated to other parts of Asia to spread Buddhism and to trade. During the British period, a major lot of Indians migrated due to misery, deprivation and sorrow to the U.K. Africa and U.S.A. Migration was also in wave in the nineteenth century in order to flourish to the developed economies like the U.K., U.S.A. Australia etc. It was a major wave as it gave rise to immigration either to study or settle and it goes on till present date following the footsteps of the succeed lot. The situation today is that the Indian diasporas are a well-known success story in the in the U.K., U.S.A. and Europe. Coming across two cultures, the first impression for a migrant is that of homelessness.

The sense of homelessness every immigrant suffers is genuine and intense; but in recent times it has been seen that this concept has been minimized and made less intense through their social networking. Earlier immigrants suffer intense homelessness due to lack of communication means. They had letters either to write or to receive to connect with family in homeland. The letters receive at a long interval. Land line telephones were a luxury in India in the 1980s. Therefore an immigrant cannot avail the facility unless it is there in homeland.

Rama is totally changed in his native behaviour. He became unstable because of the reason is immigration. In beginning he change himself to enjoy the worldly pleasure. After the result Rama is highly volatile and unstable. Immigration is long and complex process and relocation to another country is not easy. A different culture and a different life-style will increase the issues that an immigrant is experiencing in the new country. The end of the story he wants to become a rishi and search for enlightenment.

#### References

- Rao Raja. *The Serpent and the Rope*, University of California: John murray publisher 1960.
- Dubey Meenu. *Myths, Legends and Reality in the Novels of Mulk Raj Anand R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao A Critical Study*, New Delhi: Sarup Book Publication, 2010.

Prasad Amarnath, Kanupriya. *Indian Writing inEnglish Tradition and Modernity*, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons Publicaiton, 2006.

Dey, Esha *The novels of Raja Rao* New Delhi, Prestige books publishers-1992

Mathur. S. S. *Raja Rao The Serpent and the Rope*, Agar: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, publishers.