

THE PARADOX AND AMBIVALENCE: DUALITY OF EXISTENCE IN THE POETRY OF A. K. RAMANUJAN

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ABSTRACT

A.K. Ramanujan unlike other expatriate poets has the ability to bring into perfect consonance the two different worlds—the inner world of his self and Indian reminiscences i.e. his past, and the outer world of his vocation and domicile i.e. his present. Ramanujan's persona is a concoction of both and he is not only well aware of the conflict between the two but also takes pleasure in this incongruence. His poems present a unique amalgamation of Indian soul and western mind. All his emotions and experiences take an Indian Origin, but the Rationale he attaches to them is essentially western. He is like a tree that has its roots carried from India and has developed in the western soil, water and air, yielding beautiful flowers in western hue but Indian fragrance. Ramanujan's Persona is a theatre decked in occidental backdrops where oriental scenes depicting familial relations in all hues are staged, and the poet himself is the audience and the critic too, watching and analyzing with a detached interest.

Although there are instances where he feels alienated and rootless with a muddled identity, for instance when he says he is a portrait 'date unknown', but confirms the contrary feeling when he says the portrait is 'often signed in a corner' by his father or maker, thus confirming his Indian roots. He is a poet who juxtaposes the duality of eastern and western sensibilities within himself and perfectly arbitrates between the two. Neither is he an Indian conformist nor a revolutionary modernist advocating westernization- he is rather an envoy who elucidates the East to the West and vice-versa with perfect composure."

KEYWORDS: Expatriate Poet, Muddled Identity, Juxtaposition, Envoy, Ambivalence