



RESEARCH ARTICLE

“Gandhian Philosophy” in Raja Rao’s Kanthapura

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ABSTRACT

As an apologist to Gandhian ideology Rao believes that “the future of the world is in Gandhism”. The theme of the novel, “Kanthapura”, has a mythical significance in that the past blend with the present. Raja Rao was influenced by the ideology of Gandhi, which is one of the most challenging ideologies of the 20th century. According to Jawaharlal Nehru Gandhi is “like a powerful current of fresh our... like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things, but most of all the working of people’s minds Gandhi gave the great weapon of non-violence to the people of India and strengthened it subsequently by the non-cooperation and civil disobedience movement, not only sought political freedom but also aimed at economic liberty and spiritual regeneration. Gandhi wanted all the people, the opulent and the indigent, to lead a dignified life him to idealize Gandhi as a true God. In Kanthapura Mahatma Gandhi is depicted as an emblem of divine power as well as a great reality.

Key word: Gandhism, Kanthapura, Raja Rao

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INTRODUCTION

Raja Rao tried to present Gandhian ideology and movement very impartially. Kanthapura is the magnum opus of Raja Rao which proved his art which presents the impact of Gandhian movement on the rusty minded Indians Kanthapura (1930) is the first major Indian novel in English by Raja Rao. The novel deals with the civil disobedience movement of 1930’s. Mahatma Gandhi on the participation of a small village of South India in the National Struggle calls for the story’s central concern. Kanthapura follows Gandhi’s doctrine and ideology of non-violence, Satyagraha, their views on untouchability and casteism etc. It also focuses on how Moorty, under the influence of Gandhi, tries to inspire the people towards the freedom struggle. Gandhi is the way, the truth, life to Raja Rao. When Raja Rao returned from France and saw the condition of Indians under British rule, he felt shocked and upset. All human beings have the same dignity inside them but one abuses and the other is abused. The main problem is how to bring humanism in the hearts of this wide world to believe in Mahatma Gandhi and his principles as there was this highest religion of humanism inside it. He was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and his principles.

GANDHIASM

Gandhi is an incarnation of Rama and the red foreigners represent the ten headed Ravana. The voluntary of truth in prison is the divine Krishna. The novel portrays the whole drama of the Gandhian revolution, mixing politics with mythology, using ancient mythological devices in order to mix up South Indian folk-idiom with the emotional excitement of the characters in Kanthapura. These ideas are mixed up with the theme of Kanthapura and are writ large on its story. Villages before and after the coming of the British; Gandhian movement; other novels on a similar theme, blending of political and religious elements; religious elements; village life in the novel; life in the coffee estate; three groups of characters; Range Gowda; Bhatta; Moorthy; Rangamma, Ratana, Kanthapura and Fontamar; as a Sthala Purana, a narration in Puranic tradition, doctrine of non-attached duty, language of the novel are uniqueness of the novel. The freedom movement is equated with the Mahabharata Yudha. There are divine powers of Lord Krishna to regulate the war and here the invisible and redemptive presence of the Mahatma controls the actions of the

Kanthapurians. Mahatma Gandhi is thus described as the incarnation of Rama and Krishna born to liberate mother India from the draconian rule of the demon Ravana and Kansa. Thus Raja Rao harnesses the Puranic style to describe the birth of the Mahatma who was sent to this world by Brahma for destroying evil and restoring good. Prof. Srinivas Iyengar feels that "the style of narration makes the book more a Gandhi Purana than a piece of mere fiction.

Gandhi has further been compared with Lord Shiva. The Kanthapurians invoke the grace of Brahma the creator, by apprising him of the tyrannous rule of the Britishers. They beseech Brahma to send them one of his Gods so that he may incarnate on Earth and retrieve India from the demonic grip of the British rulers. Gandhi's idea of Swaraja has been compared with the three eyes of Shiva. Shiva is the three eyed, and Swaraj too is three eyed; self-purification, Hindu Muslim Unity, Khaddar. Kanthapura can also be viewed as a practical application of Lord Krishna's teachings to Arjuna in the second chapter of Gita. Evil has to be fought and righteousness or Dharna has to be established. The novel is the story not of the Mahatma himself, but of the influences of the Mahatma. Incidentally Kanchamma's battle against the demon provides an appropriate backdrop to the villager's own struggle against the British rule. The period between the world war seemed to be the most appropriate for divine Grace, and to the believer it was not too far detached to think that Gandhi was sent by God for redemption of the Indians. To Gandhi, politics and religions were inseparable because life and religion are inseparable and this was also the view of Raja Rao.

CONCLUSION

Raja Rao's novel Kanthapura presents the Gandhian ideology of non-violence and the abolition of untouchability. The great importance given to caste, the mythical presentation of Gandhi and mother India and the spiritualization, the freedom movement within the parameters of Indian cultural convention imply the tremendous impact of Gandhian ideology in Kanthapura.

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