

## A Study of Indianness, Mythical Techniques, and Fictionalizations in the Novels of Raja Rao

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### ABSTRACT

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This research paper represented the concept notes of the Indianness, mythical techniques, and fictionalizations related to the works of Raja Rao; an Indian English writer who enhanced the principles and parameters of the myth vs. reality. In this research paper, the researcher dignified the basic issues related to the socio-cultural activities and justified the ways of fictionalizations through the mythical approaches and techniques. The objective of this research paper is to focus on the significant parameters of the Indianness, Mythical Techniques, and Fictionalization in the novels of Raja Rao for the determination of the myth and reality related to the effective parameters of Gandhian Principles. In this research paper, it's mentioned that the researcher collected the primary as well as secondary data through different sources and resources. The researcher investigated and explored the mythical techniques of Raja Rao to assume the background of the characters used in the novels as 'Kanthapura' and 'The Serpent and the Rope.' In this research paper, the researcher also represented the mythical approaches of Raja Rao to signify the collaboration and co-operation of the characters for the observation of the Gandhian principles implemented to get the liberty, equality, and fraternity. Apart from it, the researcher visited the various institutes for the collection of the texts to analyze the fictions of Raja Rao and other Indian English writers for the implementation of the Indianness and socio-cultural practices.

**Keywords:** *Fictionalization; Indianness; Myth and Reality; Mythical Techniques.*

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### INTRODUCTION

It's discussed that Raja Rao was a highly regarded Indian English novelist to familiarize the socio-cultural practices of Indian societies through the functions of natural spirituality. It's considered that Rao's novels touched upon a wide range of themes, including intellectual, spiritual, national, political, and socio-cultural aspects for the clarification of the entire parameters of the mythical approaches Saxena, (1985). He deeply explored the complexities of Indian spirituality, politics, society, and culture within his writing and affected the conceptual and mental thinking of the readers and learners Agnihotri, (1993). Apart from that it is generalized that Rao's active involvement in political movements and his deep spiritual influences shaped his

examination of India's socio-political landscape and the country's spiritual traditions and religions.

In fact, of the Indianness and mythical techniques, Raja Rao was politically influenced by the freedom movements of Gandhi and his principles to get the freedom not only from the Britishers but also from the socio-cultural myths as caste system and untouchability Abrams & Harpham, (2009). By incorporating themes of patriotism and spirituality, Rao's writing aims to inspire readers and encourage the integration of these ideals into their daily lives. His novels are heavily influenced by the perceived loss of traditional, cultural, and metaphysical values, leading him on a profound search for meaning through his fictional work Belliappa, (1991). Although Rao initially focuses on the themes of patriotism and religion, his exploration expands to encompass broader spiritual perspectives that transcend these concepts. Through imaginative and emotional exploration of metaphysical systems, Rao's novels present spiritual dilemmas and provide meaningful solutions Narayan et al., (1987).

Despite this small corpus of literary output and his extremely complex creative genius he is acknowledged as a great writer of short stories and novels. For various reasons he stands distinctly apart from the rest of the Indian-English novelists like R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and others Ali, (1968). It is for his triumphant handling of so far unhandled themes and for the symbolic, poetic, and metaphysical nature of his short stories and novels that he shines more brightly in the galaxy of the Indian novelists in English (The Trinity; Mulk Raj Anand). R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao It is quite in the fitness of things that we should realize the importance and worth of these three great sons of mother India, who have so greatly enriched the field of Indian-English novel by their meritorious works Gupta, (1980).

Pointing out Raja Rao's greatness as a novelist Iyengar, (1984) remarks: "Roughly contemporary with Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao makes with them a remarkable triad, affiliated with them in time and sometimes in the choice of themes but not his art as a novelist or in ruses enchanting prose style."

What he considered important for India and for himself is his conviction that man can achieve the happiness if he but sticks to the search for the truth. Our study of Raja Rao's novels revealed that the justification for an apparent formlessness in his novels is that it is more natural to his Indian mind for it alone can express the complex thought processes truly Bhattacharya, (1983). Raja Rao, as an Indo-Anglian great novelist of India, is renowned far and wide. For him literature was his Sadhana. Through the use of Indian sensibility, he highlights the national movement, religion, history, myth, festivals and social reforms Biswas & Rao, (2022). This paper specifically examines how Raja Rao portrays Indian myths, nationalism and spiritual traditions in his works.

Rao's works reflected his deep understanding and influence of Indian philosophy BORN & INTERPRETATION, (1985). His outlook on life was sublime, and he held more philosophical depth in his writings than many other writers, including Tagore. He is credited with publishing several novels, including Dayal, (1991):

1. Kanthapura (1938)
2. The Cow of the Barricades (1947)
3. The Cat and Shakespeare (1965)
4. The Snake and the Rope (1960)
5. Comrade Kirillov (1976)

Rao's vision of India is a blend of external realities and inner meanings. His depiction of the social, political, and cultural life of India reflects his keen interest in the present, while his obsession with metaphysical meanings stems from his interest in reviving the past Sharma & Srivastava, (2002). His interest in the past is not just a historian's quest for roots, but also a search for the continuity of the Indian tradition in relation to the present. With the mental endowments of a philosopher and a realist, Rao applied his metaphysical knowledge and mystical insights to interpret the reality of life in his art. His works offer a profound understanding of India's cultural and philosophical heritage.

## **METHOD**

It's well-known that the present research focused on the significant principles of Raja Rao's fictions to draw attention of the readers and learners related to the myth vs. reality for the determination of socio-cultural aspects. It's noted that this work has provided the basic structure of the research to know about the parameters of it (Kumar, 2001). In terms of the research, the researcher used the process of the investigation, exploration, examination, and analysis of the primary and secondary data that has collected from the different resources Patel & Patel, (2019).

### **Data Type**

In the field of the data type or collection, the researcher utilized two methods for it as the primary and secondary data from the selected texts and respondents. The researcher categorized the data based on the responses of the respondents, readers, and learners to find out the parameters of the myth and reality through the fictions of Raja Rao. It's noted the data is the prominent aspect of the research to justify the aims and objectives of the research in a specific area. The researcher dignified the valuable issues of the data during the time of the collection from the selected texts and respondents. She compared the responses of the different readers and learners of the fictions belonged to Raja Rao for the purpose of the knowing the different arguments and criticism.

### **Primary Mode of Data Collection**

The researcher collected the primary data form the respondents through discussion, interview, and survey of the institutes. The most effective task of the primary data collection is to discuss with the readers who has interest to read the novels and short stories of Indian English writers. It's represented that the researcher reached to the different academic institutes and discussed with the teachers and research scholars about the work of Raja Rao and collected the various views and

opinions related to the myth vs. reality Harris, (2004). In fact of that, the researcher also interacted with the professors of the different colleges and universities to collect the information about the actual work of Raja Rao and his ideologies related to Gandhian principles for the judgment of the people who faced the socio-cultural issues in the societies. It's determined that the researcher also collected the data through the questionnaires distributed to the graduate, post-graduate, and research students for the generalization of the views and opinions about the fictions of Raja Rao Paul, (1984). It's clearly mentioned that the researcher faced so many challenges and problems to collect the primary data through different sources and resources.

### **Secondary Mode of Data Collection**

In terms of the secondary mode of the data collection, the researcher collected the data from the different sources as discussed below as:

#### **Data from Online Resources**

It's represented that the researcher collected the data from the online resources through different ways. It's mentioned that the researcher visited the different sites on google to read the content related to Raja Rao. The online resources platforms like Wikipedia, LinkedIn, Telegram, etc. were used to collect the secondary data for the generalization and exploration of the fictional properties related to the work of Raja Rao and other Indian English writers. The researcher downloaded the different content and also read online to understand and collect the data for the purpose of the definite functions of the Indian English literature.

#### **National, International Journals and Theses**

In terms of the data collection, it's dignified that the researcher proclaimed to collect the data from the research papers published in the national and international journals. The researcher also read the theses related to the topic for the collection of the secondary data. She has clarified the concepts of the secondary data collection from the different resources of the national and international journals and as well as the theses. The researcher read fifty (50) research papers related to the topic of the present work based on the mythical issues of Raja Rao's fiction to determine the actual parameters of the secondary data.

It's explained that the researcher collected the data from the online and offline national and international journals for the significant properties of the literary style of the writing related to the fictions of Raja Rao. The researcher also focused on the chapters of the national and international theses related to the work of Indian English writers especially Raja Rao to represent the importance of the fictional parameters of English language and literature. It defined the classical conditions of the literary works to justify the explosive figures of the present work for the representation of the socio-cultural aspects of the specific communities in India. The researcher read two (02) theses and four (04) dissertations related to the present work for the purpose of the creativity and productivity of the fictions as novels and short stories. The researcher found the key properties of the literary functions in the theses, dissertations, and research papers to get a general idea about the works of Raja Rao and other Indian

English writers for the collection of the secondary data. It's finalized that the researcher got a huge help from these texts to review the literary items for the justification of the secondary data as usual referred to the fictions of Raja Rao.

### **Books on Rituals, Myths, and Cultural Practices**

Apart from the conferences and workshops, the researcher collected the secondary data through the reading of the books on the rituals, myths, and cultural practices. It's represented that the researcher is so aware about the cultural practices to explain the socio-cultural activities based on the functions of the characters used in the works of Raja Rao. It's generally exhibited that the researcher got the knowledge from these texts to implement the principles and parameters for the enhancement of the visions and missions of the present work.

The researcher found that the rituals, myths, and cultural practice are the key features of Raja Rao's works to show the reality of the Indian societies. In fact of the congressional factors of the cultural practices and ritual activities, the researcher evoked the traditional and ancient functions of the people who believed in the mythical compositions clearly mentioned in the works of Raja Rao. It's clearly explained that the researcher got the awareness about the ritual and cultural practices to formulate the effective properties of the research in terms of the unique style or technique for the development of fictions in Indian societies Suhery et al., (2019).

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The Indian English novelists have to search and nourish their roots in their own past, discover the mythical microwaves that facilitate communication in the realm of timelessness and dovetail it with the experience of the immediate present. In a way, it is not a difficult task for Indian-English novelists as they can easily draw on their Indian myths. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes:

*Indian people are still closer to their mythology than the modern Irish or British people are to Celtic folk-lore or Greek legends.*

Philosophy permeating through Raja Rao's novels in generally held to be *vedantic* in tone and temper. Being a *Vedantin*, he seeks Truth on the lines of '*Advaitavada*' (the Philosophy of Monism) and frequently refers to the precepts from the Upanishads. To him, writing is a visible expression of his deeply -felt spiritual experiences. Duly recognizing man's deep need to seek and realize Truth, he endeavors to revive the traditional Indian quest with its entire rigor Raza, (2019).

The Upanishads form the last section of the Vedas and hence, are called '*Vedanta*'. Thus, *Vedantic* doctrine such as '*Advaita Vedanta* of *Sankara*, *Nagarjuna's* theory of Void and the Hindu and Buddhist *tantric* overtones recurrently appear in Rao' s writings. A study of the Upanishads aids in attainment of knowledge and realization. '*Upa*' means 'near' and '*shad*' means '-to sit'. The medium of this exercise is the shared bond and closeness to the guru or spiritual preceptor. The whole edifice of

the Hindu mystic culture in India rests upon the Upanishads. They are the fountainhead of deep divine esoteric knowledge which provides freedom from earthly bondage.

*Kanthapura focuses on the intensity of Indian life, its physical immediacy, its traditional swaddling and its religious murmurations. Gandhi is the god as well as a politician marching to the salt pans, Moorthy the God's manifestation as the non-violent frantic young leader, the policeman is the whole negation and evil of life. The novel is dense with the actualities of village existence and brilliant with an impassioned light of spirituality (153).*

Raja Rao, one of the prominent Indian English novelists, skillfully incorporates myths and mythological elements into his works. His novels often draw from Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain mythological traditions to explore complex themes, cultural nuances, and spiritual journeys.

In works like "Kanthapura" and "The Serpent and the Rope," Rao expertly weaves ancient myths and folklore into the narrative, infusing them with contemporary relevance. These myths serve as allegories to comment on social, political, and spiritual issues faced by the characters and the broader Indian society.

Rao also employs mythical motifs to delve into existential questions and metaphysical explorations. His novels demonstrate a deep understanding of mythology's symbolic potential and utilize it to convey profound philosophical concepts and moral dilemmas. Through the imagery and symbolism of myth, Rao explores the nature of reality, the inner self, and the quest for spiritual enlightenment.

*Kanthapura is thus remarkable in many ways: the theme is the impact of Gandhi's name and ideas on and obscure Indian village, anyway almost out of the seven lakhs of Indian villagers, the story-teller is a 'grandmother' (the most gifted of story-teller because the art of story-telling is second nature to the Indian grandmother!) who narrates for the identification of a newcomer the annuals of her village long after the actual events in which she had herself participated, and the manner of her telling too is characteristically Indian famine with a spontaneity that is coupled with swiftness, vivid with a raciness suffused with native a vigor, and exciting with a rich sense of drama. (390)*

Additionally, myths in Rao's works serve as a means of cultural preservation and identity formation. By embracing and reinterpreting ancient narratives, he highlights the enduring significance of myth in shaping Indian culture and mythology's role in capturing the essence of the nation's collective consciousness. . It helps hitting knowledge of Brahman, enfeebling the pain caused by births and rebirths. The sublime

thought, fascinating form and delightful dialogue that characterizes these Upanishads have ravished the minds and souls of even Western thinkers. Schopenhauer, who read a translation of Upanishads, declared;

*From every sentence deep, original and sublime) thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a light and holy and earnest spirit ... In the whole World there is no study, except that of the (jiginals, so beneficial and so elevating as that Of 'Oupanikhat'. It has been the solace of my life, It will be the solace of my death.*

On Brahman through our The *Advaita* Philosophy of *Sankaracharya* forms the core of Raja Rao's fictional world. The first exponent of *Advaita* was *Gaudapada*, the '*paramaguru*' of Sri *Sankara*. *Sankaracharya* expounded the *Advaita* philosophy in its final form, importing to it impeccable perfection. The quintessence of *Sankarancharya*'s philosophy has been summed up by himself in half a verse. Brahman (the Absolute) alone is real; this world is unreal; the *Jiva* or the individual soul is essentially non-different from Brahman.

Properties like simplicity of life, truth, devotion and submission to higher powers, eagerness to unfold the mysteries of life and death and curiosity to reach ultimate Truth, an: all indivisible parts of the nature of Indian psyche. Subsequently they are manifested in every sphere of existence. Finding themselves more or less free from mu~e worry, they concentrate and study problems of good and evil in all aspects. The free discuss questions of like and dislike, matter (*jada*) and spirit (*chetana*) -both within and outside themselves. Thus, it can be reasonably assumed that the origin of philosophical ideas in India began with the dawn of thought at the beginning of creation.

*The emotional upheaval that overtook Kanthapura could only find expression by breaking the formal English syntax to suit the sudden changes of mood and sharp contrasts in tone, by establishing a correspondence between perceptions and the images he could readily lay his hands on in the life around and by a fresh emphasis on old images and a completely different, in this case Kannada, intonation to English sentences. In other words it had to be a highly original style, a technical innovation indistinguishable from an essentially Indian sensibility. (133)*

Life is *yajna* or sacrifice performed by the individual soul to attain unity with the higher soul. It includes all forms of self-negation and dedication. Rao believes a land civilized only when "the hearth of *Agni* is ever actively emergence and full of loving gifts.

Furthermore, Rao's use of myths transcends national boundaries, appealing to a global readership. His skillful intermingling of Indian mythological elements with the

English language creates a unique literary space that bridges cultural divides, thereby expanding the reach and impact of his works.

Raja Rao is the most Indian of the Indians Writing in English. Even while he started writing his stories, sitting thousands of miles away from his land, he could visualize the Indian scenes and Indian thought processes objectively. He carried his India wherever he went for early in life, he had a thorough grounding in Indian religion and philosophy and observed Indian life rather minutely.

In "Kanthapura," Raja Rao skillfully incorporates various myths and mythological elements to enrich the narrative and explore the cultural and spiritual fabric of Indian society. Here are some of the myths used in the novel:

1. Story of Lord Krishna: The myth of Lord Krishna serves as a central theme in "Kanthapura." The character Moorthy is portrayed as a modern-day Krishna figure that inspires and leads the villagers in their struggle against colonial rule. Rao draws parallels between Moorthy's actions and the divine play (leela) of Lord Krishna, emphasizing the transformative power of spiritual and political leadership.
2. Legend of Rama and Sita: The mythological tale of Rama and Sita is alluded to in "Kanthapura," particularly in the character of Rangamma. She is depicted as a virtuous and devoted wife, embodying the ideals of Sita. The novel explores themes of love, devotion, and sacrifice similar to those found in the Ramayana.
3. Story of Lord Shiva: Lord Shiva's mythological presence is evoked through the character of Rangakka, who is known for her religious devotion and her adherence to ascetic practices. She symbolizes the power and spiritual strength associated with Shiva.
4. Mythical Creatures: Various mythical creatures are mentioned in the novel, such as Nagas (serpent deities) and Yakshis (celestial spirits). These beings exist in a realm between the physical and spiritual worlds, adding an element of mysticism and supernatural wonder to the narrative.
5. Local Folklore and Legends: Rao incorporates local folklore and legends that are specific to the region of Kanthapura. These stories often revolve around local deities, spirits, and rituals, providing a cultural context and enriching the portrayal of rural life in the novel.

These myths and mythological elements in "Kanthapura" serve multiple purposes: they add depth and richness to the narrative, provide cultural and religious symbolism, offer allegorical interpretations of social and political struggles, and highlight the enduring influence of mythology on Indian society.

In his novel "The Serpent and the Rope," Raja Rao incorporates various myths and mythological elements to explore themes of spirituality, existentialism, and cultural identity. Here are some of the myths used in the novel:

Myth of Samsara: The novel touches upon the concept of Samsara, the cyclical nature of birth, death, and rebirth in Hinduism. This concept is deeply intertwined with

the protagonist's grappling with existential questions and his spiritual quest for self-realization.

**Story of Lord Krishna and Radha:** The mythological relationship between Lord Krishna and Radha is referenced in the novel, exploring themes of love, devotion, longing, and the pursuit of spiritual union. The protagonist, Rama, has a deep connection with Radha and seeks to attain a similar spiritual transcendence.

**Legends of Indian Saints and Mystics:** The novel draws on the stories of various Indian saints and mystics, such as Kabir and Ramakrishna Paramahansa. These figures embody spiritual wisdom and serve as guides for the protagonist's spiritual journey.

**Mythical Creatures and Symbols:** The novel incorporates mythical creatures and symbols from Indian mythology to accentuate its themes. For example, the symbol of the serpent represents the intertwined nature of life and death, while the mythical bird Garuda signifies transcendence and liberation.

**Vedic Philosophy:** The novel explores Vedic philosophy and references ancient hymns and scriptures such as the Upanishads. These philosophical teachings serve to provide profound insights into the nature of reality, self-realization, and the pursuit of knowledge.

By utilizing these myths and mythological elements, "The Serpent and the Rope" delves into the deeper layers of Indian spirituality, delving into the complexities of existence, the search for ultimate truth, and the interplay of the mortal and the transcendental. These mythical references contribute to the thematic richness of the novel and offer readers a profound exploration of the human condition.

In "The Cat and Shakespeare" by Raja Rao, the reference to specific mythical elements is relatively limited compared to his other works. However, the novel does contain symbolic and allegorical elements that can be interpreted metaphorically. These include:

1. **Myth of the Trickster:** The cat, a central character in the novel, can be seen as embodying the characteristics of a trickster archetype, which is prevalent in mythology. The cat's playful and unpredictable nature serves as an allegory for the complexity and ambiguous nature of life itself.
2. **Myth of Reincarnation:** Although not explicitly mentioned, the concept of reincarnation is subtly alluded to through the cat's multiple lives. The cycle of birth and rebirth is symbolically represented in the cat's various encounters with different human characters throughout the novel.
3. **Symbolism of Indian Folklore:** While not strictly mythological, Raja Rao employs elements of Indian folklore and oral traditions. This includes using folktales and cultural motifs to add depth and cultural context to the story. These references highlight the folk wisdom and collective imagination ingrained in Indian culture.
4. **Allegory of Freedom and Independence:** The cat's independent and unbounded nature can be interpreted as a metaphorical representation of the desire for

freedom and autonomy. This theme resonates on a broader level, reflecting human yearnings for liberation from societal constraints and personal limitations.

5. **Mythical Elements in Dialogues:** Though not appearing as direct references, mythological themes and symbols can be found in the dialogues between characters. The conversations often touch upon existential questions, moral dilemmas, and the search for meaning – themes that have been explored throughout mythology.

While the explicit use of myths may be less prominent in "The Cat and Shakespeare," Raja Rao's storytelling incorporates symbolic elements and philosophical undertones that provoke contemplation and invite readers to interpret the narrative on deeper levels.

**Symbolism and Allegory:** Like in his novels, Raja Rao utilizes symbolism and allegory in his short stories to convey larger truths and explore philosophical concepts. These symbols and allegorical elements often stem from Indian mythology, imbuing the stories with layers of meaning.

**Mythological Characters and Motifs:** Raja Rao incorporates characters and motifs from Indian mythology into his short stories. These may include gods, goddesses, mythical creatures, and legendary figures. These mythological elements serve to enhance the narrative and provide cultural and religious depth.

**Moral Lessons and Archetypal Themes:** Raja Rao's short stories frequently present moral lessons inspired by mythology. They often explore timeless themes such as love, devotion, duty, and the conflicts between good and evil. Through these archetypal themes, Raja Rao comments on the human condition and the nature of existence.

**Cultural and Religious Traditions:** Raja Rao's short stories reflect the cultural and religious traditions of India. They may include rituals, festivals, and folk beliefs, illustrating the vitality of these traditions and the impact they have on individuals' lives.

**Mythical Elements as Narrative Devices:** Mythological elements are employed by Raja Rao as narrative devices to evoke emotions, create tension, or facilitate character development. They add a sense of wonder, mystery, and timelessness to the narratives, transporting readers to a realm where the ordinary and extraordinary blend.

## CONCLUSION

Raja Rao's short stories also employ the mythical technique, drawing on elements of Indian mythology and folklore to enrich the narrative and explore profound themes. While there are no specific short stories mentioned in this prompt, I can provide a general overview of the mythical technique in Raja Rao's short fiction.

Overall, Raja Rao's novels integrate the mythical technique to explore profound themes, imbue the narratives with cultural depth, and invite readers to reflect on the timeless wisdom and lessons embedded in Indian mythology. This technique enhances

the artistic richness of his short fiction and contributes to his distinctive literary style. It's considered that the works as fictions of Raja Rao determined the valuable parameters of the literary functions to justify the excuses of the myth. In this research paper, the researcher explained the processes of the mythical approaches and principles for the representation of the mythical techniques and fictionalization to know the actual condition of the lower background people.

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