

PREFACE

The present undertaking is an act of prayer onto the feet of the Lord. It cannot be otherwise when one is dealing with a philosopher cum writer of Raja Rao's eminence. He is a philosopher first and then a novelist as his novels emphasise more on *advaita* 'non-dualism' philosophy than on the intricacies of the novel form. By virtue of the wide range of his thought content and his command of the fictional form and language, he is doubtlessly one of the major novelists of the English language. Raja Rao's imagination is deep rooted in Indian mythology and he has a strong myth making consciousness.

The impact of the myth in his novel is persistent and lends philosophical depth to his novels. He is said to have mythologised the contemporary realities such that the thin line between the myth and reality appears blurred. All the protagonists of his novels are in search of the ultimate reality through this mythical world and in this process they break various myths of their lives. The odyssey of reaching the reality is through the negation of all the myths which in philosophical terms is called as *neti-neti* 'not this not this'. The principle of *neti-neti* 'not this not this' says that by ruling out the myths of life one reaches the threshold of realization. When one is deeply involved in worldly affairs then the absolute reality appears mythical and on the other hand when the reality dawns upon then the world appears a myth. Therefore the study of myth and reality becomes very much relevant.

The relevance of this topic is not only for the novels of Raja Rao but also for a lay man who is entangled in the cobweb of *maya* 'illusion'. Every human being is seeking lasting happiness, peace and tension free life. The bliss can be achieved if we lead our

lives with detachment, attempting to realize our true self. The present study is divided into six chapters dealing with myths and realities in the life of the protagonists of Raja Rao's novels.

The first chapter introduces the concepts of myth and reality as described in various fields of knowledge. The second chapter is based on Raja Rao's first novel *Kanthapura*. This chapter "Gandhian Myth in Kanthapura" deals with the myth of Gandhian principles which the protagonist, Moorthy, breaks on his journey towards self realization. The third chapter "*The Serpent and the Rope : An Epic*" deals with the institution of marriage from which the protagonist, Ramaswamy gets disillusioned and in the end seeks a Guru for self realization. In the fourth chapter two novels *The Cat and Shakespeare* and *Comrade Kirillov* have been taken up for study. The first novel, *The Cat and Shakespeare* deals with the philosophical school of *visistadvaita* 'qualified non-dualism' theory and the myths related to the theory and the second novel *Comrade Kirillov* emphasizes the importance of Vedantism breaking the myth of Marxism.

In chapter five again myths of two novels, *The Chessmaster and His Moves* and *On the Ganga Ghat* have been analysed. The first novel of this chapter, *The Chessmaster and His Moves* breaks the myth related to God being the controller of the universe. The second novel, *On the Ganga Ghat* of this chapter deals with the myth and reality of life and death. The last chapter sums up the myths of all the chapters and analyses the ultimate truth of *Brahman* and the various paths needed to reach that.

The list of works consulted is appended at the end of the thesis which elucidates the references drawn from various books, websites and encyclopedias. The thesis follows

the seventh edition of *MLA Handbook of Research Papers* in all respects. The mode of transliteration is the same as used by *Epigraphia Indica* and the English renderings of the Sanskrit texts in this work are based on standard translations. The books which are very common have not been given any marking or special emphasis as per the *MLA* norms.

RUCHI TIWARI

Raipur (C.G.)

Research Scholar