CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS
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The thrust of this thesis on the poetry of A.K. Ramanujan both in Kannada and English and translations - is chiefly explorative. What the thesis has done up till now is to study the poetry of Ramanujan with the purpose of discovering the quality and nature of that poetry. Ramanujan's poetry which is a product of bilingual or even trilingual sensibility is obliged to make use of the techniques of other poetry. The images in his poetry drawn from life-experience develop in his poetry through a variety of narrative and lyrical techniques and attain a full significance which is never final.

A casual study of Ramanujan's poems in Kannada in the anthology entitled Kunto Bille published recently (1990) would reveal certain characteristics which are typical of Ramanujan's poetry both in Kannada and English. There are forty-four poems in this anthology. Some of them are translations from Rilke and other continental poets. Some others are inspired by the poets belonging to Zen Buddhism. Barring these the other poems are original. One of these poems entitled "Angaiyalli Aakash" (The Sky in Palm) describes a paper-weight containing an image of winter landscape of bare trees and a fine snowfall. When you shake the paper-weight the snow begins to fall and you get a strange experience of snowfall in the month of
August. The poem says that in winter you begin to get a glimpse of another world experiencing the cold season. The poem wonders at the end whether the world we actually live in may be another mini-world seen from another world bigger than our own world. There is an indication at the end of the poem that the poem might have been inspired by some other poem. This sly foot-note which may be fictitious, for all that we know, is also an organic part of the poem as we know that, in many cases, the titles of the poems also form a part of the poem. The foot-note of this particular poem suggests that all the poems that are written are products of the poetry written previous to that poem. Poems live on preceding poetry. The concluding lines of the last poem - "A poem on particulars" in his first anthology of English poems, The Striders are as follows:

I have heard it said
among planters:
You can sometimes count
every orange
on a tree
but never
all the trees
in a single
orange^2.

And while mentioning his acknowledgements at the end of the anthology of his Kannada poems, Hokkulalli Hoovilla (No Lotus
in the Navel) Ramanujan says, quoting a proverb popular among the Gypsies, that "one can count the apples in a tree; but it is impossible to count the trees contained in an apple." A poem for Ramanujan is like that apple, a product of a laborious and also a spontaneous process of growth of centuries.

The poem - "Maduve Mancha" (The Marriage Cot) describes a Chinese marriage cot, which is now kept in a museum. It sheds light on other aspects of Ramanujan's poetry. In ancient China a male child used to be betrothed to a younger female child and the parents would place an order for the making of their marriage cot the moment they were betrothed. The carpenters would choose seasoned wood and start working on it by carving intricate designs on it. The cot would be ready at the time of the marriage of the boy and the girl betrothed in their childhood. The cot is a work of art but also eminently useful for the married couple. In this way the poems included in this volume reveal not only a maturity of sensibility and a sophisticated sense of poetic craft but also the nature of Ramanujan's poetry of greater development.

Another poem - "Vandu Kshana" (One Moment) simply narrates an old incident of the early days of the poet. The incident is very familiar to the readers of Ramanujan's poetry and prose. The poet speaks about his aunt and uncle, and the uncle displaying a play of shadows on the wall by the light of
the lamp, presumably a kerosene lamp. By a clever manipula-
tion of his fingers the uncle shows a cat, a serpent, a duck, 
and various other shadow-pictures. This image of a shadow-
play covers a full chapter in his Kannada novel, Mattobhana 
Atmarcharitre (Autobiography of Someone else) where it reveals 
the mysterious relationship of a person and his craft. The 
image is repeated in the poem - "Elements of Composition" in 
his Second Sight to convey a profound sense of theatre. The 
same image in this poem becomes the complete theme and presents 
a subtle analysis of art and also reveals the relationship of 
the substance and its shadow. The poem tackles with the 
problem of reality in an inimitable way and the image gathers 
all the meanings of the images previously used by Ramanujan. 
What is new in this poem is ultimately the poetic craft which 
goes on renewing and developing an old image into a new signi-
ficance.

Dr. M.K. Naik in his review of Second Sight says that 
the later poetry of Ramanujan doesn't register any progress or 
development.

".... Second Sight shows few signs of fresh insights and the kind of quest for the untrodden paths which a mature poet's renewed utterance after a decade of silence might lead the reader naturally to expect. It only presents the poet up the family tree again. It is perhaps time Ramanujan ascended his/her still".
This statement clearly shows what is generally expected of a poet to do and the frustration of that expectation. "It only presents the poet up the family tree again". Does it mean that a previous collection of Ramanujan had raised this expectation and fulfilled it? Ramanujan did not attempt to do that even in his earlier poetry. The maturity and sophistication of Ramanujan's poetry is in its technique and this fact is conceded even by Dr. M.K. Naik. It is perhaps high time we found that the technique of poetry is the most creative aspect of poetry, and considered from this point of view the poetry of Second Sight reveals great maturity.

In an article entitled "Tradition and Freedom", R. Parthasarathy, commenting on Ramanujan's achievement and contribution to the Indian English verse, remarks:

"Both The Striders (1966) and Relations (1971) are the heirs of an anterior tradition, a tradition very much of this subcontinent, the deposits of which are in Kannada and Tamil, and which have been assimilated into English. Ramanujan's deepest roots are in the Kannada and Tamil past, and he has repossessed that past, in fact made it available in the English language. I consider this a significant achievement, one almost without parallel in the history of Indian English verse. Ramanujan has, it seems to me, successfully conveyed in English what, at its subtlest and most incantational,
is locked up in another linguistic tradition. He has, as a result, indicated the directions Indian English verse is likely to take in the future.\textsuperscript{8}

This opinion of R. Parthasarathy about Ramanujan's poetry is still valid.
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5. Ibid. p. 37.


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