
THE STUDY OF HUMAN VALUES IN SELECTIVE WORKS OF RAJA RAO AND MULKRAJ ANAND AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

P RAMULU
TGT in English

INTRODUCTION :

The proposed research work focuses on the high calling of human values in select works of Raja Rao and Mulkraj Anand and their relevance to the contemporary world.

The study assumes significance in the context of a seemingly endless global crisis engulfing all fields of vital human interest at present. In a world devoid of love, kindness, candour and tolerance it is but natural that humanity should pine for such core human values as truth, righteousness, love, peace and non-violence.

The world of today presents a bleak picture in terms of mutual trust, moral correctness as against political correctness, public accountability at all levels and a disconcerting dissonance between rhetoric and action. In short, it has become a haven for the wicked, where only the cruel, dishonest and intolerant leaders hold the sway and the patriots, statesmen and all well-meaning citizens are hopelessly marginalized.

The sweeping changes that each revolution – social, political, economic, industrial, scientific and technological – brought in had not furthered the common interests of the world community as the global leadership threw to winds the ancient wisdom embedded in human values and emerged perilously stronger with an agenda that pushes back human race to the caves.



If the misery and aftermath of real war has troubled the minds of anti-war poets such as Auden, Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen and Philosophers such as Remain Rolland and Arnold Toynbee, the Cold War era offered the beleaguered world little respite and this only helped the rise of dissenting voices on either side of the iron curtain.

The Cuban imbroglio and the wretched Vietnam War continued to haunt the memories of hapless humanity for large chunks of time. The fall of the Soviet Union in the mid-eighties resulting in the creation of a unipolar world made matters even worse as atleast one of the political dispensations that earned the people's mandate twice in America became obsessed with the idea of grabbing the natural resources of certain nascent nations. This resulted in a seemingly endless strife between the developed and the developing world.

The biggest casualty in these diabolic dissensions is the value system that dictates the course of harmonious culture across the globe. The collapse of values has thus become an inevitable and essential part of social discourse the world over. From a steadfast practitioner of Gandhism like Nelson Mandela to Mr. Obama whose ardent love for Gandhism is too very well known by now, the need for a change in the value system has become a subject of common concern. The repeated appeals of Mr. Obama to the students and parents of America to emulate their Indian and Chinese counterparts in matters of Culture, discipline and diligence emphasize this point. The Indian efforts at reviving the Nalanda University, once a seat of higher learning in Asia, area pointer to a concrete action to re-establish human values in the world in a big way.



This catch 22 situation at the global level right now calls for a return to the cherished values of humanity as enshrined in the hearts of the saints, seers, savants and sages of the land of eternal mystery that is India.

It goes without saying that this awe-inspiring nation with a unique record of affecting a bloodless revolution on a gigantic scale with her steadfast adherence to the core human values is now emerging as a rallying point for all the other nations of the world as she happens to hold the brightest prospect for ushering in the much-needed stability in different spheres, especially social, economic and cultural the strengths of which invariably lead to political stability.

It may be argued that all talk concerning the contemporary human situation could also point to the study of human values in the Indian English Literature which mirrors the flow of these core values as a natural corollary to the avowed duty of the literature of a nation to reflect its moral and cultural ethos. Raja Rao's 'The village of Kanthapura' and Mulkraj Anand's 'The Untouchable' and 'Coolie' are cases in point.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER ARE :

- To perceive the mankind of today not so much as two heterogeneous groups with angelic and demonic propensities as represented in mythologies of yore but a homogenous whole with individuals as admixtures of both truth and falsehood in themselves as visualized by Bertrand Russell and summarized with the refrain 'Much can be said on both sides' in Addison and Steele's works. This viewpoint annuls the need for the use of violence in an increasingly insane

contemporary world.

- To show that Mr. Nelson Mandela's and Mrs. Aung San SuuKyi's recent successes with the Gandhian experiment could encourage all the other warring groups in the world to shun their violent ways at once.
- To pinpoint that even in countries which are politically liberated by now, the other two kinds of freedom, namely social and economic, could still be achieved only through peaceful means.
- To disprove comprehensively and beyond doubt the much-publicised 'clash of civilizations' theory as the religions governing such civilizations never taught any kind of dissension and only underscored the need for the unity of mankind.
- To prove that the wretched, degrading, dehumanized and nauseatingly sickening culture of the metropolis flourishing in the globalization in the present form is no match for the idyllic culture of the village which alone offers a bail-out prospect for the ongoing crisis.
- To reaffirm that only people who are God-loving and not God-fearing, and a nation with a philosophy which is transcendental and not empirical can save mankind.
- To re-assert that adoption of human values alone could avert disaster in a world on the brink of collapse on all fronts and ensure the safeguarding of human, child and animal rights, the three prime concerns of contemporary society.

THE STUDY HAS BEEN DIVIDED INTO FIVE CHAPTERS :

The first chapter is 'Introduction' under which human values are discussed in detail. Human values which form the bulk of the theme are proposed to be explicated

herewith all their evocative adjurations that could ensure a panacea to the ills of a distraught world.

The Oxford Dictionary of Advanced Learner's defines values as beliefs about what is right and wrong and what is important in life. Those values which are manifest in men and women and pave the way for a happy and serene life are known as human values.

Although human values are a good many in number they could be conveniently classified under the five core values, namely truth, righteousness, love, peace and non-violence. In 1979, Prof. Goyal proposed a list of eighty three values and two years later Prof. Gokak classified and grouped them under five basic human values.

Truth is the first and the foremost of these values. It is not just an idea or an abstraction but is the very essence of life principle manifest in man.

This life principle is identified as human 'soul'. When one realizes and experiences tin's truth, one sees that the same truth pervades every other person and object. Truth is a hierarchical concept since it manifests itself at different levels as sensory truth, truth of inference and the absolute truth.

Righteousness or 'dhanna' is one that which sustains and is the cosmic law of motion or action. Dilating upon this, sage Vyasa says that 'dhanna' is not doing unto others what one does not do unto oneself.

If truth affects instant unity, righteousness promotes the exchange of noble



actions among the august members of venerable humanity.

Love which is manifest as ‘sharing and caring’ among human beings is the mightiest of forces in the world. It belongs to the psychic domain of men and women and is truly representative of human nature.

Peace is self-existent calmness. While it is seated within one’s heart, one searches for it outside oneself. It connotes an absence of desire, anger, greed and hatred. It is the awareness of the beauty, majesty and omnipresence of God. Without peace there can be no progress, prosperity or happiness in the life of an individual or a society, a country or a continent.

Non-violence does not merely mean not hurting others physically or mentally but is in practice the abstemious and frugal use of all the five elements of Nature.

Human values have been the very life-breath of India since the dawn of civilization. Thus the Indian motto ‘satyamevajayathe’ and atleast two colours in the Indian National Flag signifying two noble human values stand for Indian's commitment to pursue her high ideals in the illustrious nation’s awesome voyage to a sanguine sphere where humanity lives in brotherhood and bliss.

Chapter Two documents the different stages in the history of mankind to show how certain wars, words and weirdy deeds accounted for the erosion of human values over the years.



The 'Industrial Revolution' which spanned nearly a century from 1750 to 1850 may be reasonably assumed to be the beginning of troubles and tribulations that plagued the world thereafter. Needless to say, 'values' became an endangered species. Although it is but natural for human society to pass through the three stages of mercantile capital, industrial capital and financial capital at one point or the other, the rapidity with which the change occurred and the crudities which it brought in its trail left the world including England aghast with fear.

The cardinal thrust of the strongest of pleas of Romantics for a return to Nature is just a desperate attempt to thwart the ominous 'Progress' with far reaching consequences.

Yet more than the physical choking itself caused by the 'bete noire' that sneaked even into the 'Age of Doubt', the mental and spiritual agony resulting from the decline of faith against the onslaught of scientific thought has tormented the hearts of staunch theists whose untold misery found an expression in Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach'.

The double damage to the British rural areas and the basic faith in God continued unabatedly for three score years more when the First World War struck a death-blow to the world which is presently reeling under 'the burden of the past'. The hapless losers are all the votaries of human values across the world. Cruelly enough, the Second World War did not offer a 'coup de grace' with an end to the world but only furthered the erosion of the value system.



All the wretched wars such as the Cold War, (To believe Russell 'Fear of war is worse than war') the Vietnam War, the Bangladesh war, the ethnic war in Srilanka, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, the Arab spring and the ongoing escalation of tensions betv/ccn the two Koreas, Iran and America and Israel and Palestinian rebels only carry the idea of destruction to its logical end. But more than physical destruction the blow to the human values is a cause of grave concern today as reflected in the latest poem by Gunter Grass imploring America to treat Israel on par with Iran unless we are too eager to end up as 'foot notes' in an epic of destruction.

While surveying the degeneration of human values, one also finds that certain prejudices and rash statements by people that matter also vitiated the atmosphere causing untold misery.

For instance, the jingoism reflected in the works of Hegel only made the Germans haughty and there soon emerged a Hitler. Ironically enough, it was Hegel himself who once remarked that our actions might yield such results as we would never have even dreamt of.

This Chapter also examines certain statements which resulted in the dilution of values. They include the views of Machiavelli, Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Vajpayee, Ayn Rand, Lenin, Md. Yunus, Oprah Winfrey and the son of Warren Buffet. It also questions the syllabus of the social sciences of today which plays down the role of Temples, Churches and Mosques in the development of one's personality.

The Chapter discusses the intrusion of Internet into all spheres of human life



with its unprecedented negative effects as a perpetuation to the cultural damage caused by cinema the world over particularly since the early eighties providing a kaleidoscopic and representative view of the cities in different continents and the alarming changes in the rural and the urban scenario. It also discusses issues such as the joint family, nuclear family, atrocities on women and female foeticide.

The Third chapter deals with the human values depicted in the epoch - making novel 'Kanthapura', Raja Rao's magnum opus presents one of the most courageous yet humane heroes which the Indian English Literature is embellished with. Moorthy, the protagonist of the novel, is an embodiment of human values such as truth, love, kindness, non-violence, courage, endurance, equanimity and stoicism.

He is a leader par excellence whose selflessness lies in shunning marriage for the sake of his high ideals and his distance from prejudice in boldly aligning himself with the underdog who is not just an underdog in the universal sense but one with a social tag that could, in the view of certain caste fanatics, stigmatize even the holiest of men and women.

He leads others by example and is only too pleased to die for his motherland. Through path-breaking practice, he brings himself to love his enemies and emulates his mentor and national leader.

The villagers themselves exhibit such values as amity, solidarity and patriotism, exemplary co-operation and an unflinching faith both in their local and their national



leaders.

The villagers in the novel show strict adherence to custom and tradition. The literary and cultural strengths of the village reach a pinnacle during festivals. This makes the Indian village unique in the world, a feature that provides a much - needed remedy to a world dogged by cultural degradation and the resultant chaos.

The Chapter also shows how every village in the world needs a Moorthy now although the protagonist of the rural scene today is slated to fight an equally fierce battle for the other two kinds of independence, namely social and economic.

Raja Rao, who once wryly asked where the western mode of progress leads one to, deftly portrays the progress on the spiritual path as it is made on the Indian rural front and this augurs well not only for the all round development of the village but the individuals themselves in the realization of their soul in its supreme splendour.

The Fourth Chapter deals with Mulk Raj Anand's 'Coolie' which has greater relevance today than ever before since child abuse and child rights are matters of serious concern in the world of today.

In the novel, Munoo, the child labourers's life features insult after insult and passes through time only in change of place but never with the slightest hint of material progress, mental well-being and spiritual bliss and does not offer even a faint hope of attaining atleast one of them.

Yet Munoo shows rare courage and a fine sense of aestheticism in the wake of

torrid and abnoxious conditions. The stoicism of this lovable child offers hope to millions of child labourers working in conditions more adverse and much more perilous than those portrayed in the novel.

The poignant scenes such as his relieving himself at his employer's door, the mortification of having to eat without a plate and his traumatic experience in the wake of a mindless communal war evoke in us pity, sympathy and even empathy.

The chapter is aimed at projecting Munoo as an ideal child whose wretched life deafeningly questions the horrendous absence of human values in the world of God's creation. It urges humanity to address child issues without any further delay and with great commitment as the future of mankind depends upon the children of today.

It also tries to show how most Munoos in the world end up as criminals, desperados and terrorists. Since a disturbed childhood could be a world's nightmare at some stage or the other, the chapter calls our attention to the high calling of human values projected through the epic novel.

Chapter Five is the concluding one which deals with the findings.

It is earnestly hoped that the projected research work will offer solace and solution to the world groping in darkness, having been adversely affected by the ebbs and tides of the unprecedented, ever-deepening global crisis.

It shows how South Africa and Myamnar replicated the Gandhian experiment based on human values and offered more hope to a world yet struggling to see the end of the tunnel.



The alternatives suggested in the form of a peaceful struggle mostly in the rural areas for achieving the other two elusive kinds of freedom-the social and the economic may well prove to be not just a palladium but a rewarding and sustaining choice that ensures the restoration of human glory in all its variegated splendour.

Its plea for the eradication of child labour and the bettering of the sub human conditions of the work force may make an ideal employer-employee combine a happy reality.

It hopes to help establish an ideal world order as visualized by all the noble souls of yore and ardently practised and realized by all heroic men and women that once walked Mother Earth.