



TEXTURE OF THE TEXT *ARMY ANTS* BY A. K. RAMANUJAN : A STYLOSTATISTICAL STUDY

Dr. Leelawati Arvind Patil

Assistant Professor of English

Shikshanmaharshi Dr. Bapuji Salunkhe College, Miraj.

ABSTRACT:

A. K. Ramanujan is a leading poet of Indian English Literature, globally known for his excellent and special depiction of Indian sensibilities. His poetic cosmos ranges from self to universe, family to society, vegetable to mineral and human to animal world. He has unique ways of expressing various issues which leave a permanent impression upon the mind of the readers. The verbal texture of his text is so perfect; some of his poems are just in image craft. The present paper aims to examine the verbal texture his poem "Army Ants" with reference to measuring the statistics.

Glossary: Ramanujan, text, texture, language, Statistics, Army Ants.

INTRODUCTION:

Attipat Krishnswamy Ramanujan occupies a prominent place as a poet in the cosmos of Indo-Anglian poetry. William Walsh rightly evaluated him as "*the most gifted poet*". He was one of the multi-faceted and multi-talented personality in the Indian English literature. He is a poet, an essayist, a folklorist, a philologist and a translator. His academic research ranges across five languages: English, Kannada, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. He published his work on both classical and modern variants of these literature. His brilliant mind and gentle demeanor drew attention from many; he got a teaching position at Chicago where he lectured on Dravidian Linguistics and Literature. He devoted rest of his life in the exploration of new field and pastures, in both creative writing and erudite learning of Indian literature and culture. He did enjoy teaching of linguistics, morphology, syntax and so on but his love for literature led him to classical Tamil anthologies.

He writes about his own interest:

"because I had always been interested in folklore and in the anthropology of language – structuralism, semiotics, connections between linguistics and of communication in general- over the years I have become more and more involved in South Asian Languages."

Ramanujan does not draw any distinction between his study of linguistics and writing of poems because he gets his necessary impetus in his search for a right idiom.

He sees these two facets in their interconnectedness:

"English and my discipline(Linguistics and Anthropology) give me my outer forms-linguistic, metrical, logical and other such ways of shaping experience and my first thirty years in India, my frequent visits and field trips, my personal and professional preoccupations with Kannada, Tamil, the classics and folklore give me my substance, my 'inner' forms, images and symbols. They are continuous with each other and I no longer can tell what comes from where".

Ramanujan's poetry reflexes cultural and emotional dilemma, he nostalgically recalls India of his past with its hoary traditions, rituals caught in the tensile web of his imagination. His poetry there is a perfect artistry and conceptual aplomb.

RAMANUJAN'S POETIC CRAFT:

In A. K. Ramanujan's poetry, there is a unique blend of individual and tradition, past and present, intellect and emotion of his poetic self. His themes are inevitably influenced by the pressing predicament he faces. He strives for a suitable poetic idiom to project it effectively without compromising its integrity or diluting its impact. He has a unique ways of expressing the issues. Each and every word of his poems seems to be potential enough to reach to the heart of the reader. Ramanujan manifests extensive experimentation, divergence from the conventional modes of expression and exercise of liberty in form and content and use of language. He has faith in a vital language to compose poetry. His poetry deals in concrete terms with concrete experience. He strives for originality and newness. His poetic technique evinces the influence of the East and the West.

Bruce King Observes in this connection:

"The sophistication with which Ramanujan recreates and treats South Indian culture is also reflected in his technique, which like his translations, often seem a modern recreation of the spirit and methods of Tamil and Kannada verse. The word play, funs, inner rhymes, rhetorical devices, ironies, distant neutrality of tone, under-statement, compression and elliptical progression of poems have similarities to his translations".(King Bruce 1976)

Ramanujan's poetry is mystical, metaphysical, spiritual and cosmic, irony is his great weapon, he evolved a distinct idiom to express his voice. His craftsmanship of language and imagery is both the spring board and the Kernel. He is an imagist, his poetry is full of paradox, rich in imagery and metaphors that is used to articulate his concept and nature. Parody is employed to link the text and the context with a culture that is regressive and sterile. Ramanujan's words and expressions are perfect that convey the desired message to the reader. He has a notable skill of repetition similarly; alliteration and assonance add the aural effect to his poems. His areas of vocabulary are varied as his themes, his images and expressions relating to are from science, mythology, religion, geometry, anthropology. He borrows ample words from history, religion, nature, animal world and so on.

The adjectives Ramanujan uses assist in delineating picturesque descriptions. He is fond of using unusual expressions and phrases. He prefers the form of free verse for most of his poems, his lines are of unequal length and have no end rhymes. He is a technical artist, he depersonalizes his personal experiences. He has a firm grip over his emotions and feelings which are expressed in a quite controlled manner through his chiseled poetic craft. Ramanujan is a modernist; his poetry reflects an adept usage of all the devices used in modern poetry.

TEXTURE OF ARMY ANTS:

The humanization of the bestial and the bestialization of the human is one of the oft-used parodic tropes in Ramanujan's poetry. Animals hold lessons for human beings. In Army Ants Ramanujan finds similarities between ant's

community and human world. He admires their diligence and industriousness. The tiny insects tend to separate the world in a simple way into two classes: colony members and the everybody else. They have all awful instincts of human beings and yet possessing a deadly precision and efficiency, which leaves no waste behind. Ants are nomadic, they have their society, their own social behaviour, like humans ants solve their problems in groups, The way ants build their cantonment, and lay out their barracks outdoes the human endeavor. In ants colony, the queen is the primary individual responsible for reproduction in the colony.

The army ants develop their lineage independently on separate continents. They march together through the camp like a flowing river of red; while they move silently their presence is announced, the other insects get scared, they make noise as they flee the invading army. Ramanujan's Army Ants is his impersonal and metaphorical comment on human behavior; the problems of destruction and untouchability human society. Ramanujan points out the destructive aspects of socialism.

In the preface to the poem he quotes from C Judson Herrick: *The army ants not only make their houses but they are their house, For of their own living bodies they form the whole complicated dwelling* .(CP p 60)

The ants inherit the aristocratic tastes for they have

**... *separate apartments*
for the queen,
colonies
*for the various castes. (CP p.69)***

There are wild ants also; they model their society for their benefits. They use the bodies of dead ants as bricks for their houses and make them:

**... *for a brick, altar*
*and martyr in one, (CP. p 69)***

In the ants society, the males die young or live older than death in nurseries of eggs. They use their knees for hinges; heads for the plinths of their rain –soaked Corinth. Hands and feet are used for the pavement. The Great Wall of China has been built of slaves and enemies who died favorites of the kings;

and in the ants colony young ants are used as the brick and mortar of the house. They die without leaving any legend behind. The concluding lines shows pathetic situation of the worker ants:

And the work

as they say, is the workman at last.(CP.p70)

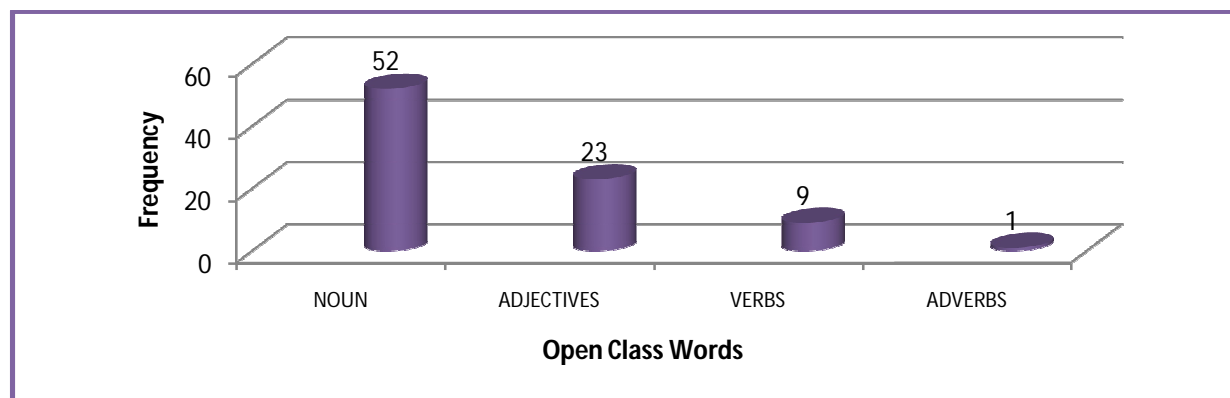
The worker ants symbolize the common workers in the human society. The image of 'building a house' seems a constructive things in society, it is a continual process, however, it is constructive as well as destructive at the same time because some of them destroy themselves to construct the new society.

A STYLOSTATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ARMY ANTS:

Frequency of open class words in "Army Ants"

Open Class Words	Frequency
Nouns	52
Adjectives	23
Verbs	9
Adverbs	1

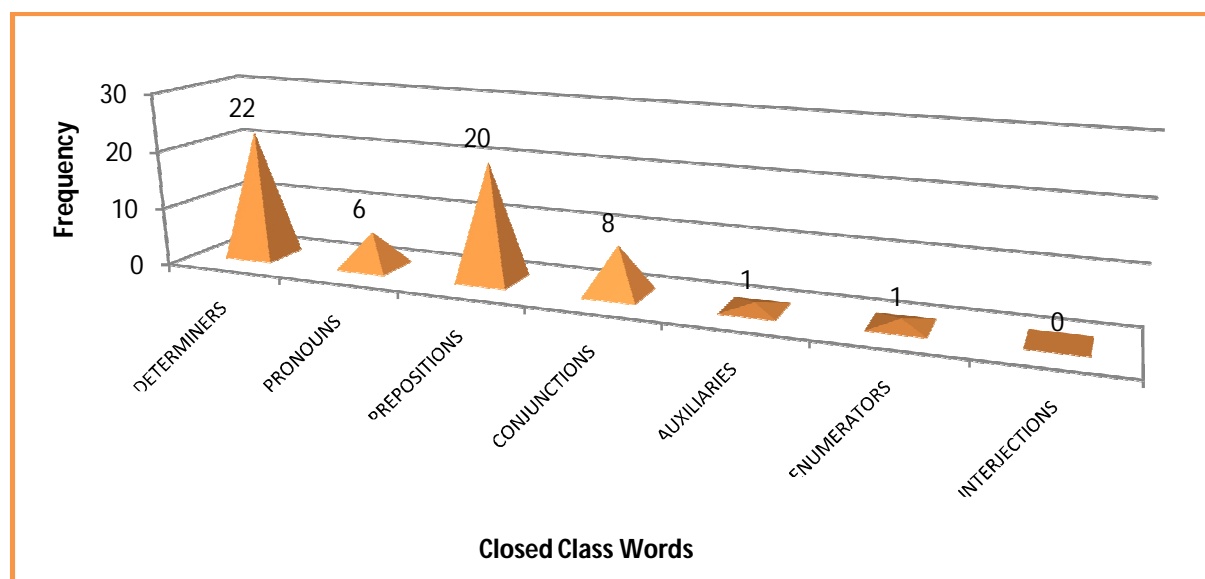
Frequency Distribution of Open Class Words in "Army Ants"



Frequency of closed class words in "Army Ants"

Closed Class Words	Frequency
DETERMINERS	22
PRONOUNS	6
PREPOSITIONS	20
CONJUNCTIONS	8
AUXILIARIES	1
ENUMERATORS	1
INTERJECTIONS	0

Frequency of closed class words in "Army Ants"



INTERPRETATION:

Ramanujan exclusively uses substantive expressions to articulate his message; he travels in the realm of his poetic cosmos as a profound genius. He employs short, simple enigmatic and cryptic words to express his urgency and sharpness of thought. The close reading of the poem *Army Ants* his choice of words strengthened his concept; there are in all 85 content words and 58 structure words, triggered with lofty meaning in the poem. He is quite poignant in his use of words while sharing his observations; he follows a fine confinement of content words and structure words.

Ramanujan has used maximum number of nouns(52) referring to physical phenomenon, objects, places, persons, states and activities, which signifies that the poet is object oriented.

There are 22 adjectives found in the poem, that emphasis Ramanujan's skill in using imagery, denoting physical qualities of color, shape, psychological qualities of emotions and evaluative qualities.

Verbs contribute significantly to the understanding of the meaning of the poem which express action, state, activities, processes. Ramanujan used 9 full verbs to articulate his message. Also there is 1 adverb to visualize the state of action.

The data suggests that there is high frequency of determiners that is 22 in number whereas there are 20 prepositions followed by it. There are 8 conjunctions and 6 pronouns. There is 1 auxiliary, 1 enumerator and no interjection in the poem.

CONCLUSION:

The stylo-statistical analysis of the frequency of open class words and closed class words in the poem *Army Ants* manifests that Ramanujan has used the uniform variety of content words and structure words to create rhythm, as rhythmic pattern ensures effectiveness of the desired content.

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