

**Diasporic Plight in Robert Kanigel's Novel *The Man Who Knew Infinity***



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A  
Dissertation submitted to Department of English  
For the partial fulfilment of the degree of

**Masters of Arts**

**IN**

**ENGLISH**

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## **Certificate**

I hereby certify that the dissertation entitled Diasporic Plight in the novel The Man Who Knew Infinity by Shagufta Andleeb Khan for the award of M.A. degree is a record of research work done by the candidate under my supervision during the period of her study (2015-2017) and that the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree, diploma, associate ship, fellowship or other similar title and this dissertation represents independent work on the part of the candidate.

**Place: Jalandhar**

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**Date:**

**Supervisor**

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled Diasporic Plight in *The Man Who Knew Infinity* by Robert Kanigel is a record of first hand research work done by me during the period of my study in the year 2015-2017 and that this dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree, diploma, associate ship, fellowship, or other similar title.

Place: Jalandhar

Signature of the Candidate

Date:

## **Acknowledgment**

My sincere gratitude is to my supervisor Mr. Sandeep Kumar Sharma under whose expert guidance, I completed this dissertation. It would have been very difficult to complete the project without his valuable support and guidance. He had been very helpful to me in giving valuable suggestion in my research project.

I would also like to thank Dr. Ajoy Batta, Head of the Department of English for his support and valuable advice.

I owe my greatest debt to my parents who encourage me to work hard. I also put on my record my thanks to my family and friends for their love, affection, support and encouragement.

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## Introduction

The present dissertation entitled “Diasporic Plight in Robert Kanigel’s Novel *The Man Who Knew Infinity* explores the problems of the diasporas who leave their homeland to suffer multiple displacements and loss of identity. The Post-colonial Fiction of Anita Desai, Kiran Desai and Khaled Hosseini are famous in the world of fiction since they seriously concerned about the themes of marginalization of women and their fractured identities. Robert Kanigel has also made serious efforts to explain the predicaments, causes, and symptoms of the protagonists trapped in the alien culture and have depicted the theme of their fractured identity. At the outset of the study, it is significant to point out the ideas that motivated the researcher to take up the topic of the present dissertation. The intensive review of literature of past and present was done and found a veritable research gap. Robert B Henkle in *Reading the Novel: An Introduction to the Techniques of Interpreting-Fiction*. (1977) discusses the stylistic techniques of Kanigel. Fredric Jameson wrote *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern* (2009) and discussed the relationship between the colonial powers and the colonized. Kanigel wrote about the life and achievements of Ramanujan who was a great wizard in mathematics born in Tamil Nadu. The novel was so popular that its plot was dubbed into a film directed by Matt Brown.

Robert Kanigel was born on May 28, 1946; he was an American biographer and science writer. He was commonly known as the author of seven books. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School in New York City. He also received a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Rensselaer Institute. He moved to Baltimore where he worked as an engineer for three years before he started writing books. In the 1980’s he wrote magazine articles, essays, and reviews during his starting days. After working for twelve years as a professor at MIT he returned in 2011 to

Baltimore. From late 1971 to 1974 lived in San-Francisco. Somehow he needed to write a book about cities and city life and the name of the book was “City Sunrise waking up from the suburban dream”. Unfortunately, it was never published. In 1975, he returned to Baltimore, where he lived and worked as a freelancer until 1999. During this period he met Elise Hancock, editor of Johns Hopkins magazines for whom he wrote dozens of articles over the next fifteen years. He wrote about Medical students life, war games, male contraceptives, memory, astronauts, slide rules, playing the French horn, and many other subjects. He also wrote for Jewish publications and his work began appearing in National publications and he received a number of awards. He learned more about writing as he proceeded with his career. His book, “Ideas into Words”, was published in 2003 by Johns Hopkins University Press.

His first book “Apprentice to Genius, the making of a scientific dynasty” was published in 1986. This was followed by ‘The Man who knew Infinity: A life of Genius Ramanujan’ in 1991, The one best way: Fredrick Winslow Saylor and the Enigma of Efficiency in 1990. Higher season: How one French Riviera Town has seduced Travellers’ for two thousand years in 2002. Faux Real: Genuine Leather and 200 years of inspired fakes in 2007. In 1999 Kanigel became a professor of science writing at the Massachusetts institute of technology, where he started his graduate program in science writing, which he directed for seven years. Kanigel’s latest book, on “An Irish Island” published in 2016, was the biography of the Scholars, linguistics, and writers.

In this novel ‘The Man Who Knew Infinity’ he talks about the life of the main protagonist of the story. The writer tells us the mystery of Ramanujan’s life. He belonged to a poor family who lived in Madras. His parents were unable to support him after his schooling, due to some financial problems. This was one of the great ironies of his life. Actually, his contribution to the

World of Mathematics was inspiring and brilliant. Kanigel was more focusing on the protagonist, and provide great information which Ramanujan suffered and raised in the Novel. He also describes how the Education system in India and the orthodox nature of his family and his premature marriage to a very young girl. He took readers through how, after writing to many mathematicians and several failed attempts to make him heard, luck finally aided Ramanujan when G.H. Hardy, an English mathematician, realized his gift. He was much obsessed and real for his work

Diaspora applies its wider aspect which is evolved from the Assyrian two way mass deportation policies which have won over the population and denied the claim on territories. The term Diaspora in ancient Greek meant something that is scattered and used no explain or refer to citizens who live in a city that is dominant in nature and move to other conquered lands with a motive of colonizing and assimilating territories into empires. At the very first the diaspora in 1876 was taken from dispersing which means to disperse which means to scatter about. Diaspora is an academic field, which studies how established relating itself to the new meaning and the use of diaspora. This term Diaspora has transformed into English during the mid-1950's and refers to other countries being diaspora. The study of Diaspora has become more established to the contemporary study of the world.

Robin Cohen in Global Diasporas defines:

Diaspora as a community of people who stay all together in the same country and acknowledge that the country where they lived prior has some right to their emotions and loyalty living together in one country who acknowledged that the old country always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions(Cohen 1).



Diaspora talks about the human beings who are connected deeply to their homelands. We find out that their sense of yearnings for their homeland, being attached to their tradition, language and religion give rise to the literature which is known as Diasporic literature and deals with the attachment of people from their homeland. The focus that Diasporic literature puts focuses on the people who migrate from the countries they originated in and all the experiences that they face during migration, which can also be experienced by them when they reach to new places of the migration. They may face hostility and racism and also feel rootlessness and wander in the search of identity which may result from displacement and lead to cultural diversity.

Diaspora also witnesses the transformation of the immigrants in their cultural, tradition, language and several other factors in late 20th century and early 21st century people witnessed a large scale of population movements which occurred basically for these reasons. A).Government action. B) To avoid conflict or war. C) Political effect. D) For economic prosperity. E) The consequence of certain decisions such as “Colonialism”. Migration, exile, eviction all these are among major reasons which are responsible for dislocation, re-fashioning the identity of an individual depends on the type of dislocation he has faced. It clearly indicates that the post-migration life of a person gets affected by the reason behind his dislocation. For example, a person who has faced forced dislocation struggles a lot for his settlement where in other cases the picture is different.

Cultural diaspora is the diffusion of communities around the world, through various historical reasons cause cultural diaspora. Immigrants represent different traditional and cultural values than the native mass and retain bonding with their own country and culture of origin. Their own cultural identities can easily be seen if we closely observe their daily lifestyle.

Armenians Greek, Irish, Italian and mainly the Jewish spreads all these cultural traits throughout those dispersed areas in which their successors live. The modern-day also we can find Diasporic culture constituting valuable networks around the world and connecting people through intellectual and cultural values. This is a major factor for the promotion of cultural variety or diversity. There are various problems faced by immigrants after their dislocation. For example, Linguistic, cultural, generation gap, economic, ethnic problem, and nostalgia. Major of the population choose to migrate from native Nation to Europe or America in order to get a better life with high economic prosperity. They, after their migration, face several problems among which the linguistic problem is common. Most of them are from lower –middle class with little or no education, who struggle to understand and use the English language once they leave their own country. Second major problem is the cultural differences which they face throughout their stay. The new generation who are born and brought up in the new Nation adopts the native culture very soon and differs from their parents in cultural and traditional values. Those parents who try hard retain their culture from their own country of origin fail to preach their children the same. A conflict between parents (who believes in their own culture) and the new generation kids (who are born and brought up in a different culture) becomes a headache for the immigrants. Even they face problems related to race. They have to quite their own religion or believe sometimes in order to make a stay in the new country. They travel to earn a good life and in order to get a good life they want good money, but all dreams, never come true as many of them face financial crisis.

Among all these problems which hurt them more is the constant feeling of nostalgia or homesickness. Their childhood dreams or native land stories remind them, their colourful past which probably never come true. The migrant runs from pillar to post crossing the

boundaries of time, memory and carrying history always with them with the vision and dreams of returning homeland as and when likes and finds fit to return. The longing for the homeland is countered by the desire to belong to the new home so the migrant remains a creature of the edge. In this study the Diasporic theories of Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Salman Rushdie have been applied to investigate the causes and the symptoms of the migration; their marginalization and the fracture of the identity of the protagonists of *The Man Who Knew Infinity*. The purpose of this study is to highlight the sufferings of the migrants and their traumatic experiences realistically depicted by Robert Kanigel.

### **Scope**

This dissertation shall focus on the research problem of, “Diasporic Plight” in Robert Kanigel’s novel *The Man Who Knew Infinity* mainly discuss about the people who shift from one place to another place or one country to other, and how people suffer their whole life and also discuss how it affects the life of Indian people. Much work had done in this novel but the topic “Diasporic Plight” has still not been discovered.

### **Objectives**

The main purpose of this research to explore the various causes of sufferings of diaspora found in Robert Kanigel’s novel *the man who knew infinity*.

This research proposal will focus on:

1. To explore the cultural dislocation of the diaspora

2. To explore their quest for a home of the diaspora.
3. To explore the loss of identity of the diaspora.
4. To apply the theories of the diaspora of Edward said, Homi Bhabha, Salman Rushdie, and Gayatri spivak.

## **Literature Review**

Sujata Rana, (Ph.D. in English Literature) in her research work on “Diaspora Crisis of Dual Identity” writes: Living in a foreign land is not easy, as it seems to be. Once you start living in the alien land means you are alienating yourself from your roots and alienating from the world of birth. Loss of ancestral roots, identity crisis and alienation is common among Diasporas. Language dress traditions, they have to adopt the traits of a land, which is completely new to them. The Diaspora experiences of an individual can be read with his connection with his home land. He always wishes to come back to his own place and never feel comfortable in the alien land. He suffers from hybridity and identity crisis which makes his life more difficult along with all these problems he too faces cultural issues and religious issues which compile to his sufferings.

Morrison talks about the Cultural Dislocation in “The Dark side of Globalisation: The criminalisation of refugees (2003)” that Cultural dislocation is when people live their lives on someone else's terms other than their own. Due to globalization, migration becomes a common trend in nowadays to have an economically better life. Settling in new lands means adopting new cultural and social values. Once we adopt new cultural and social life, which is different from roots of migrants, create a kind of chaos. The chaos of cultural values, that results in cultural

dislocation and cultural clash. Clash and cultural dislocation occur when people do not know what and how to put on someone else's clothes to appease others. Dislocation occurs when people do not know to whom they are connected. So it is no wonder that when these refugees come to a new country they feel as if they need to go together as a community so they will be able to hold on to their cultural identity.

## **Research Methodology**

This research aims to discover a better understanding of a topic through qualitative research, and the methodology used shall include library search, online journals, other internet articles and cultural approach.

Library searches shall focus on books that are related to the research questions, the main point of online journal shall be to look for any article that has already been written on the book. Using these research methods, the researcher intends to collect all possible sources like book, article, journal, and all kind of written material supporting the study.

## CHAPTER-1

### Diasporas and existentialist issues in Robert Kanigel's Novel *The Man Who Knew Infinity*

Diasporas are the alien elements living in different soil than their motherland. They are uprooted from their motherland at one land on the other they are culturally displaced, which make them vulnerable to existentialist problems. Ramanujan is an Anglo-Indian diaspora staying in England. He is uprooted from Madras, his motherland but he is never able to accept the territorial and cultural changes which are inflection upon him. He suffers from the existential problem like alienation, displacement, anxiety, dread etc.

Alienation is an element of the diaspora. As per Collins Dictionary, alienation is the feeling of being disconnected to the society while living in a mass and the person he feels himself alien from the external world. It is defined in the morphology of the word, or transformation of the word. The alienation is the act through which something/someone becomes alien to something or can say that it becomes something to somebody else. It usually means digression from normality which basically means insanity. Many psychologists and sociologists usually believed that the individual isolation towards the socio-culture world is alienation. They have given the term reification which is same as the alienation. Reification is the act of transforming human properties, relations, and actions into properties and many actions of things that are independent of the man who governs their life. Many philosophers have given the

different terms which define alienation. For other philosophers “Alienation” means ‘self – alienate’ which means “self-estrangement” it is the process by which a “self” ‘God’ or ‘man’ through itself become alien or strange to itself or to its own nature. Alienation is an important place in modern life as well as in literature. According to Homi Bhabha, alienation is that part of literature having multiple voices and interpretation or we can say that in words of Bakhtin, actually, it has polyphony or freedom of voices. It has dominant themes in modern and post-modern theory and literature. It has examined from multiple angles by initializing different theoretical points such as Nietzschean, Freudian, Lucanian and many others. The earlier man has found entangled or involved himself in existential dilemmas. The existential question which man has found is like where I am? Who am I? Why am I? What is the purpose of my being? Etc.

Srinivasa Ramanujan is one of the scholars of mathematics. He goes to England for his education and for his job. He is not from a good background, belongs to a poor family but he is an intellectual and hard worker. He leaves his home and goes to the alien country where he does not know anyone except G.H.Hardy. Mahatma Gandhi was in England in 1887 and he wrote about alienation. He stated:

He would think about his homeland and its culture for his life time. He remembers about his past life and feels nostalgia. He recollects his old memories with his mother and believes that all the name and fame whatever he has today is of no use to him. This society is not his own hence everything related to this alien society is meaningless to him (241).

When he lived in England he missed his home and family even everything of his country. He reminds the happy memories of his past. He was the only son and he never thought that he will leave his home and will suffer the problems of alienation. He never shared any problem with

their alien friends and thought that all are strange for him. It was an unknown place where Ramanujan felt pain for leaving the home country. His feeling of nostalgia being trapped the moment to him far away from Madras life. Generally, immigrants linguistically bind themselves with their original homeland. This novel “The Man Who Knew Infinity” also orchestrates this. The language of madras is supposed to make Ramanujan linked with Indian soil. The American English seems less significant to him than the madras language in which he is accustomed to madras life. Ramanujan was not the type of chameleon, which changes their culture and language. He tried to reshape him to fit a foreign culture, but he fails to indulge him in that culture. In his initial days, he never talked to anyone and always hesitates to talk with foreigners. He never forgets his foreigners. His skin was darker than the Americans and they always stared him.

Ramanujan is out of his country to feel so homeless there. He believes that he does not belong to the place and it gives sense detachment. His identity which resolves which being an Indian has drifted away from him. He lives in total loss and tries to create affinity with his belonging but however hardly tries if feels to create a connection to surroundings at home. He was ideological alienated but here nothing is horizontal or vertical except the dead embalmed with the intellect and power. According to Alex Marsh

In popular discourse, homelessness is classified as under class or as the archetypical socially excluded group...Homelessness is to understand as varied process involved and the differentiated product which these processes have on particular social groups (2)



Loss of identity is the most important element in Diasporic theory. It mostly talks about issues of post-colonial time and it is considered to be the most significant because of its crisis exist in the post-colonial community. Identity loss is not a clear and fixed concept. Mercer argues “identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (43). Identity is a strong premise in many literary texts because a writer must always construct several identities in order to achieve interesting characters. It is more of a state of mind in which someone recognizes their character traits that lead to finding out who they are and what they do and not that of someone else.

This starts taking the toll on his identity if he starts he is divided into two parts. To separate piece of identity start wrestling and he feels divided along the two. As David. R. Heise states,

The idea of “self” is a concept which is dependent on the individual phenomena where the person solely is responsible for building it. It is a unified idea which differs from person to person (IX).

In the case of Ramanujan, he also feels that the constituent of his identity, not drifting apart and new components are getting added up. This increases his anxiety and makes him an existentialist alien.

Identity crisis means the search for one’s own identity which refers to the idea of “self” find himself and fails to understand the importance of self. Identity crises give power to the self-confidence and self-image so a strong image building is required, so that more difficult

challenges can be faced. When we lose our identity and sense of self, we are likely to seek our sense of self-worth from others.

Dislocation means dislodging from the native land. Self-exile and compulsion are two different reasons behind displacement. It results from the things, one ends in alienation and other in a new life full of prosperity. Homi Bhabha explains the theme of displacement and connects it to broader issues of cultural and national identity. He notes there is a repetitious and recursive nature of the processual appears as displacement where repetition at different sites is accompanied with difference. It deals with sufferings the frustration and degradation of living hand to mouth and depending on the generosity of strangers. According to Francoise Kral,

The reflection on identity takes place at a time when identity constitutes to occupy centre stage not only in literary and cultural studies but also in the humanities in general. Considering the violent the dispersal of people, we are inevitably confronted with next histories, cultural mingling, and composite languages and displacement (1)

Homelessness is not related to the concept of having a home. It is something which is related to the psychological concept of home. When someone is alienated in a foreign land he feels homeless and fails to connect his present life with his past. Ramanujan displaces not of his own choice but he had a need of a job. Initially, when Ramanujan lost his scholarship he wanted to go out of the home because he was in stress and he wrote a letter to a professor and beg him to give an opportunity, but when was staying there he reminds those things and felt unhappy.

Dread clearly means the feelings of fear we feel horrified inside when we experience something which is uneasy to us or our mind feels endanger and tries to escape from

the present scenario. In literature, the person who lives life in the alone state always experiences mental traumas and dreadfulness is such a situation which is very common.

Stephen Priest states:

Realising the full burden of our responsibility to humanity provokes in us the deepest sense of dread. This discomfort is why we plunge ourselves into that faith. Facing our freedom requires facing our responsibility. Hardly we bear to face our responsibility so we deny our freedom. (193)

The Ramanujan also face dread because he needs to act on his choice. He has chosen to study in England however, his concept of fairy world has dislodged and destroyed by the mundane reality of England. But the choice had been made and he had to face the consequences. This thing to take certain bad faith that he does not belong to the place. Everyone treated as a stranger and he experiences homelessness and the society around him provoked him to adapt the new culture and tradition but he had failed to adapt. His mind was deeply uprooted somewhere in his own place. Ramanujan lived life outside his country finds it difficult to merge into the new norms and tradition and separated him from them and lived a life closed in four walls. Such situation gave rise to his mental illness such as dreadfulness and dreadfulness sometimes gave rise to anger and terror. His mind became rebellion and he tried to do those things which were unexpected from him.

Anxiety can better be called a mental disorder which comes due to several different reasons. When we feel uncertain about things happening around us we feel stressed and worried and sometimes fails to take an uncertain decision. Such conditions of mental illness can be defined as anxiety.

As Jacob Golomb states

The fall to the inauthentic Being is not sociability, through social intercourse serves as a seductive medium for somebodies fall. The reason for the fall is found in one's ontologically existentialist and immanent state of mind: Anxiety (71).

Ramanujan also suffers from anxiety. He believes that root cause of its origin is outside in socio cultural context, but he is wrong. It is not only socio-cultural context but also an individual element which causes anxiety. Ramanujan's life was surrounded by many tensions. During the time when he was in England, unfortunately, a war occurred there, he thought that he will never be back to home and he will never see his family again. Hardy always frustrated him because he wanted to take proof of his work. Ramanujan was very confidential for his work but on the other side, he had a fear in his mind because he never took any guidance from someone. His normal life gets affected by his daily life behaviour. He tried to avoid sharing the things with anyone else, that further adds to his problem. This all becomes very serious when the person tries to avoid the common life, friends and lives an alien life without any close association with anyone, same was the problem with Ramanujan he lived a very difficult life. Due to that he fell ill and came back to India.

Ramanujan heard all his life, the slow voice of thwap.....thwap.....thwap of wet clothes. He always talks about the Cauvery River. He was born almost within the sight of the river; he heard it as in childhood. Growing up, he fetched water from the river, bathed in it and played on the sandy banks of the Cauvery after the school. The Cauvery was very famous, a recurring constant of Ramanujan's life. At some places he talks about its length, palm trees and their trunks heavy with fruits and on the other leafy trees created a canopy of green over it, their

gnarled, knotted roots snaking along the Cauvery bank. During monsoon, the rise of its water might ten, fifteen, twenty feet and sometimes allowed drowning cows to graze too long to beside it, and in the dry season, the heavy flow of water became a memory, the river bank, the extensive sandy beaches and the Cauvery itself but a weak tickle tracing the deepest channels of the riverbed. The Cauvery painted the picture of the countryside unforgettable green and that single fact, made Ramanujan's world what it was

Kumbakonam- the hometown of Ramanujan's surrounded with Cauvery and one of the tributaries, situated in the heart land of the South India, 160 miles of South Madras in district Tanjore like Ganga. Cauvery was one of the India's holy and sacred river and India's ancient Puranas told of a mortal known as Kavera muni who adopted one of the Brahma's daughters. In loyal devotion to him, she turned herself into a river whose water would purify all the sin. Dakshin Gange, (the Cauvery) also called the Ganges of the South.

Ramanujan talks about the Sarangapani Sannidhi Street. In September 1887, a nineteen-year-old Kumbakonam girl named Komalatammal, her mother travelled to Erode to her parental home, to prepare for the birth of their child she carried. Erode; a place where aristocratic people lived more than fifteen thousand was located at the convergence of the Cauvery and one of its tributaries about 250 miles Southwest of Madras. The word 'Erode' means "wet skull" recalling a Hindu myth or legend in which an anger Siva tears off one of Brahma's five heads – The Cauvery is wide, its stream bed mess up with great slabs overhanging rock.

He had to learn from his mother to sing a religious/ pious song and also learned to join pujas and to eat the fine food. He was a pure vegetarian and rejected the wrong ones. In short, he learned all those things what he must do, and what thing he must never do, to become a good

Brahmin. Brahmin had been learned teachers, men, and interpreters of Hindu life, for hundreds of years. They shaved their heads and looked prematurely bald and coloured paste upon their foreheads. They were the Guru, astrologers and the priests of the temple, they were the Pandits. All the four castes Brahmins at the top of the heap, Kshatriyas or warriors, Vaisyas or merchants and traders and Sudras or menials. The fifth group was the untouchables appropriately outside the caste system. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas had a legal right to wear a sacred thread. The Sudras could not enjoy those equal rights but could enter the temples and the holy places. The untouchables could not do anything even they do not touch the holy things nor could they drink water from the village well. They could even their shadows across the path of Brahmin in to undergo a purification ritual. All Hindus believed in the rebirth of a soul in another body and karma, heard the same tellings of Indian epic, values, and faith. Vaishnavite Brahmins, they did not marry Shaivite Brahmins each group had its own temples and religious teaching centres.

Ramanujan also wore a mark on his forehead the name which differentiates him a Brahmin, a wide red “U” intersected by a white vertical slash fully distinct from the three white horizontal stripes worn by Shaivites. Caste barriers rose highest at a meal. A Brahmin ate only other Brahmins, and in the hotels and restaurants employing only Brahmins chefs. Mostly it was a Brahmin male’s wife who prepared and served his meals, but the males never ate with her. Ramanujan ate with his hands. He seated on the floor, and ate in a round metal tray or mostly banana leaves, like the paper plate. The staple food of north was wheat and of the south was rice and bread played a role in its diet. So Ramanujan ate precisely as every western child learns not to eat with his fingers.

South Indian cuisine was very delicious, healthy and nutritious, if not always nice. It was never mild, the dishes were very tangy and sharp flavoured. Rice and yogurt, far away from their nutritive value, coconuts, and bananas were the most favourite fruits along with mango and guava. Ramanujan never ate meat and he always denied these things because he was a pure and strict vegetarian and he belonged to Hindu religion and as good Brahmin meat was strictly 'prohibited' an invisible reason an orthodox Jew or Muslims did not tell not to eat pork;

You just didn't do it. Some of Ramanujan's friends avoided ingredients for example beetroot. He followed such dos and don'ts of Brahmin life and he naturally learned to talk and walk. As the child, he learned all the responsibilities of one good Brahmin and he was also learned that if the lower caste people touch him he would be polluted but he did not care these things so that he gave honour and respect to lower caste people. Every morning Hindu male underwent to Cauvery river to take bath, Ramanujan never brought a cup to his lips when he drinking water. The people of the madras were very superstitious but growing up, many things were changing.

Brahmins were still priests, Gurus, and sanyasis but the old tradition and the old system were little changed and was taking a new form. His native language was Tamil, European scholars praises Tamil for its clear 'cut logic' spoken from only north Madras with broad kidney-shaped region west to Nilgiri Hills and south to Cape Comorin at the top of the subcontinent. Tamil does not represent out of the way of linguistic out post. Tamil had its own rich literature and totally distinct from the Hindi of the north. In early 1900, as now English was the most uprising language of India. It was the language of the rulers, and they spoke English and dozens of other languages. The British government gave extra money to those people who spoke English. It was the ticket of the professions.

Ramanujan was the student of kangayan primary school so that he studied English from his childhood and when he was just ten Ramanujan completed his primary education. His subjects were English, Tamil, arithmetic and Geography and he got the first position in his district. Ramanujan entered town high's first form at the age of ten. His classmates came to him for help with mathematics problems. Ramanujan was an inborn genius from his birth. Ramanujan's family always suffered from poverty. When he was only eleven two of the Brahmin boys were studying at the nearby Government college. He was interested in mathematics and they fed him whatever they knew. He had exhausted their knowledge within the month and was annoying them for math texts from the college library. He learned from his seniors how to solve the cubic equations. He had to understand trigonometric functions. He had rattled off the numerical values of pie and, "transcendental" numbers.

He was a genius when he appears in exams he uses to finish his papers in half the time. At his School, Ganapathi stubbier, the senior math teacher would give many responsibilities to him. Although his school years he wrote volumes of English poetry and got numerous scholarship prizes. He got award for mathematics in 1904; his headmaster Krishna swami Iyer introduced him to the audience as a student who not only qualify his exam but he got very good grades also. His school life remained in rough balanced.

The Temple always sparked with lights and fires, the chanting of mantras, incense smell etc. from the outside, the entrance tower, this great temple built by Nayak kings sometime before A.D. 350 its sculped figures, 90 feet at its base and 146 rising into the sky. It was so high no one could discern the images of the top, and the facial expressions upon which their sculptors had luxuries attention.



There were figures naked and clothed, sitting and standing figures with human and animal shapes, fantastic and realistic. He always spent his time with his family he came to the temple and he had grown up virtually in shadow. Four miles from Kumbakonam, a town of Thirunageswaram began where the uppilianpan koil temple found. He came every year at the time of full moon, in the month of Sravana. South India was the world apart and if north was Europe during the insight; the South was religiously still rooted in the Middle Ages. His family deity was the Goddess Namagiri. Her shrine was about a hundred miles from Kumbakonam. His mother and father childless for many years after they married and had prayed there for a child (Namagiri). His maternal grandfather was a devotee of Namagiri. He learned that from her, she had to teach to him because it has imprinted in the example of her life.

The book of Carr; in this chapter, he tells us that he left Town High school, somewhere in 1903, then college students started staying with Ramanujan's family because he assured teaching them he too showed them the book which was highly influential. The book was the collection of five thousand equations, written one after the other theorem, formulas, geometric diagrams and other mathematical facts, tied topic together etc. Algebra, trigonometry, calculus different equations- great chunks of mathematics as it was known in the late nineteenth century, ranged not over a whole shelf of textbooks. "The book is not in any sense a great one," someone would later say of it, "but Ramanujan has made it famous" (39).

The synopsis was a product of George Shoobridge Carr. Actually, he was a mathematician, middle rank who tutored privately for years in London. Mathematics students in England during late nineteenth century were preoccupied to the point of obsession with notorious difficult examination known as Tripos. Carr himself had a strange academic history, born in 1837 Teignmouth; he attended school in Jersey, a channel island off the French coast,

and then university college school in London. He received Bachelor of Arts degree in 1880 and after four years he got his M.A degree. He was not a highly intelligent student. He knew that he was not the star or brightest light in the firmament of English mathematics. In the preface of the synopsis he might have done a better job with it, but Carr as a mathematician was mediocre, but he had the love to teach it those who were abler than he himself was. On May 23, 1880, from his desk in Hadley outside London, he put the finishing touches on the first volume and a second volume appeared in 1886 of the synopsis which linked his name to Ramanujan's forever.

The Carr's book was a manoeuvre, in which he gave formulas one after the other in artless manners. For example,  $a$  and  $b$  that figures in an equation. They are the symbols and they never change. Some equations are true only when their variables takes on certain values then is to "solve" the equation, to determine these values  $x=3$ , say; or  $z=8.2$  that make it valid but this one, an "identity" is always true; whatever you make  $a$  and  $b$ , the statement still holds.

So try it! Let  $a=11$ , say  $b=6$  what happens?

Well  $a+b$  is just  $11+6$ , which is 17

And  $a-b$  is  $11-6$  or 5,

The Cambridge of India

In 1904, after discovering Carr, He graduated from high school and entered Kumbakonam Government College with a scholarship. He was an F.A student from the middle of the town, the college was about twenty –minutes away. The college was small, and the faculty consisting a dozen lecturers, and the best local students had begun to leave it for larger schools in Madras.

According to his English Mathematician teacher E.H. Neville “his mind was free, or, shall we say, was the slave of his genius.”

When professor talked with chanted voice to study about Roman history, Ramanujan would sit manipulating mathematical formulas. He was quiet unmindful of what was going on around him. He worked problems I algebra, trigonometry, calculus. He also played with the building blocks of the number system, prime numbers etc. One of the mathematics professors P.V. Seshu Iyer left him to do as he wanted in class, and he also encouraging him to solve problems appearing in mathematics journal of The London mathematical Gazette. One day he showed his work to him in the area of mathematics known as infinite series; “In Genius, an Original” and one of his professor Seshu Iyer judged his work. He complained one of his friends that Seshu Iyer may not have been concerned with his work and he is “indifferent” to him.

Ramanujan ignored the physiology, the English, the Greek and Roman history and at last, he failed in English composition too. “To the college authorities” E.H. Neville one of his professors observed that, “He was just a student who was rejecting or neglecting flagrantly all”. His scholarship was also taken away. His mother got angry and she went to see the principal. His mother argued about her son’s scholarship why he got rejected. The professor was polite and firm but rules were rules. He told his mother that her son had failed the English composition paper and that’s why he lost his scholarship. Ramanujan was taken under pressure because the fee was thirty-two rupees per term, as much as his father made in a month and a half. It was really difficult for him to manage the money as he was totally dependent upon the scholarship money for his studies.

Still, he managed for few months showing up for class enough to earn a certificate in July 1905 attesting to his attendance. He had lost his scholarship and everybody knew it. His parents were under a high financial burden and Ramanujan knew all the problems too. He felt pressure and thought that to do well in his other subjects; he did not want to lay mathematics aside for their sake. He was very depressed and torn. He undergoes the situation until he could endure it no longer. In August 1905 Ramanujan, ran away from home when he was at the age of 17.

Ramanujan watched the South Indian countryside slip by twenty-five miles an hour. From the distance, the man who was working in the fields beside the tracks were little more than brown sticks, the women who wore red sarees set off against the starting green of the rice fields. Ramanujan was looking the beauty of nature.

At that time, transportation in India, by bullock cart or the one-horse vehicle known as Jutka had been painfully slow roads were terrible. The coming of the railroad had changed Indian life; the growing engineering achievement of the British Raj, emerged in the mid-nineteenth century to knit the far-flung country together.

In the south first line had been laid in 1853 and in the year 1879, they began pushing south from madras. Ramanujan does not inform anyone and went to Calcutta. His parents were in stress when he disappeared and gave no message to anyone. They advertised it in the local newspaper. His father took a house in madras and Trichinopoly, looking for him. But fortunately, his parents had back him safely. It was the first great disappearances in his life, but it was not the first time when he took sudden and headless action.

Ramanujan from the very beginning of his life experienced many psychological traumas which changed him later in his life. For example, when He took the primary exam at Town Hall

in Kumbakonam, he had scored 42 out of 45 on the arithmetic problem, while his friend got 43. He was hurt and angry and he refused to speak to him. Sarangapani tries to calm down to him and he pointed out that in the other subjects Ramanujan had scored highest.

After many years, the memory of his school failure would make him seek assurance that a scholarship he had been offered would not leave him, with another examination to pass. The government college Fiasco humiliated him, apparently to the point of physics formula. He was supremely self-assured about mathematical gifts. He had not cared at all to follow the mathematics; he had chosen his own path.

Pachaiyappa's Mudaliar was born on 1784 in a rural family, was a dubash a master of two languages, who served as a vital link in commerce with the British. By the time he was twenty-one he had amassed a fortune. At his death, he left great heaps of it to charity. The college bearing his name, founded in 1889, and opens only to Hindus.

In India, the value of certificate is very high. One can get a job with ease by displaying such the certificate and if it is a dignified University such as University of Madras than the value of certificate doubles.

In 1904, hardly five thousand boys and just forty-nine girls were registered in the presidency's colleges and professional schools. Among all, only a thousand students earn an F.A. degree.

Ramanujan was 18 years old when he wanted to be one of them. After a year of his failure in Kumbakonam, he was giving college another try in Madras. Ramanujan's new math teacher was very much impressed when he showed his notebook and he introduced him to the principal-who, on the spot, awarded him a partial scholarship.

He always solved all the problems of math and sometimes he'd get together with the college's senior math professor, P.Singaravelu mudaliar. Together both of them would tackle the problems appearing in mathematical formulas. He tried for admission in several different colleges for his higher studies but got rejected. He was gifted and everyone knew it. But the system would not budge him.

One day the wind had blown off Ramanujan's cap as boarded the electric train for school and his school teacher insisted him and asked him to step back to the market and buy the new cap because it was necessary that boys wear their traditional tufts covered. He apologized that the already leaked few annas. His father never gave him more money. There were so many families' worse off than Ramanujan's. His mother sang in the temple, sometimes old women in their neighbourhood would always invite him for a lunch. Another family of Ramanujan's friend S.M. Subramanian would also take him in feeding Dosai, the South Indian cooking.

He always helped other students in the class to solve their problems. One of his friends from High school, N. Govindaraja Iyengar, asked him to help him. Calculus for his B.A exam. He finished all his works with in two weeks. Calculus as a set of powerful and difficult mathematical tools and that row most students learn it.

He had lost his scholarship and failed in school, but he always loved to teach people. He had nothing yet he had everything. He never diverted him from his notebooks –notebooks, crammed with the theorem that each and every day bulged wider. It was in working through Carr's synopsis, as he failed. After Ramanujan's death, his brother arranged a handwritten account of facts, data, and dates of his life and presented there in original form.

His first published notebook which was published later on was believed to be written by Ramanujan during his stay in Pachaiyappa's college in 1907. His first published work "Notebook" was later expanded and reversed into a second and was much better than this mere notes.

She asked for the girl's horoscope. The horoscope is the first step of every arranged marriage in India. In July 14, 1909, Ramanujan was married to a nine-year-old girl Janaki. After Ramanujan's mother visited one of her friends in another village. She saw a bright eye girl, Janaki – daughter of a distant relative. Janaki was the fourth daughter of Sri Komalatammal of Rangaswamy Iyengar. Her mother was the friend of Ramanujan's mother.

After the marriage, Komalatammal took Janaki along with her son to Kumbakonam. After some time he went back with her parents. He came back in 1912 when Ramanujan got a clinical job in madras port trust. His parents and wife lived some months with him and in 1914 he went to England.

He was all alone in England for many years and fell ill. After the world war, he returned to India, in April 1919, with honor and reputation. Janaki joined him and cared him in Madras until his death. He died on April 26, 1920. Ramanujan's mother was a very courageous and a brave woman and that time the household was run by his mother Komalatammal and grandmother Ramagammal. After his death she stated:

I considered it my good fortune to give him rice, lemon juice, buttermilk etc., at regular intervals and to give fomentation to his legs and chest when he reported pain. The two vessels used then for preparing hot water are alone still with me; these remind me often in those days.

After the death of her husband, firstly sometimes she lived with her brother and there she learnt tailoring she lived with her sister for a year and then she decided to live separately. She had begun to teach tailoring. She earned more money from her profession and she could also save a little amount. Her friend died and she left her small baby boy. She took up the responsibility of bringing up a boy and became a foster mother to him. She educated him and he became the officer of State bank of India. She conducted the marriage of her son and her daughter in the land also an employee of state bank of India. Janakiammal was orthodox and pious in nature. She was receiving a pension from the University of Madras since 1920, the year of her husband's death.

After he lost his scholarship, he had a chance to be a mathematician. He needed a job, a chance for future a new life. He looked for a job in Madras and he got but there he had no home and he lived with his friends. In 1914 he went to England and when he reached there Neville was waiting for him. He immediately started his work with Hardy and Little wood. One day Ramanujan moved out of the house. Hardy and Little wood began to look his notebooks. Hardy had already received 120 theorems in two letters. In that notebook they saw, many more results and theorems. He left an impression on them. Little Ram spent five years in Cambridge and collaborating with Hardy and Little word published many works there. Ramanujan and Hardy had very high personalities and their collaboration was the biggest clash of the cutters, beliefs and working style.

He was awarded "Bachelor of science" degree in 1916. In 1917 he was the one who was elected to the London mathematical society. When Ramanujan fell ill in London he turned to him and said: "If I die, please handover the notebooks to professor Singaravelu mud alien or to the



British professor, Edward B. Ross, of the Madras Christian college “. His notebooks were no longer for him. He wrote the letter to Hardy to beg to introduce himself in January 1918.

Ramanujan wrote a letter in which he first introduced himself as a clerk in the department of the Port Trust Office and added information about his salary which was 20 Euro per year. He further stated that he was only 23 and he had no University knowledge to boast of but he managed to attend a school course he dedicated his time to mathematics. He added that he had never followed the traditional system of study where after school one has to attend higher education in college and later in some renowned University but he had acquired much knowledge in the field of mathematics

G.H. Hardy was the most famous professor at Trinity College, Cambridge University. Some inconsequential clerk had approached him; someone asserted him to have no University training but declares to have made startling new discoveries in mathematics. In the second paragraph, he was insisting that he could give negative values of the gamma function.

## Chapter-2

### Language and Cultural Conflicts in Robert Kanigel's *The Man Who Knew*

#### *Infinity*

Brahmin and issues: The Brahmins were supposed to be the most venerated and respectful among all the Hindus. They washed away their sins by giving lands, houses and gold etc. all Hindus believed in karma and the metempsychosis, and they heard the same tellings of great Indian epics shared certain sensibilities, values, and beliefs. There were many controversies/ issues in the Brahmin families. A Brahmin ate food only with other Brahmins and could be served by other Brahmins. When they went away from their homes they suffered a lot for their food and survival. It was difficult for them to get vegetarian food outside their homeland and dealt with the utter pain of hunger. Brahmin's wives used to prepare food for their husbands and served their meals but they had no right to eat with them. They were expected to eat only after the husbands finished eating. Ramanujan belonged to a poor family and he always kept himself neat and clean "as a child learned to accept responsibility for its own bodily cleanliness, it was also taught the importance of avoiding the invisible pollution conferred by the touch of members of the lowest castes" (23). He was very religious from his childhood. Every morning he took bath. G. Morris Carstairs tell one of the incidents of Ramanujan that once his mother or grandmother called him for bath, he did come and said,

The mother or grandmother would call him in and make him bath and change his clothes if this should happen until his repugnance for a low caste person's touch became as involuntary as his disgust for the smell and touch of feces.(23)

When he was in England, he felt unhappy because he never got his desired food. In England most of the people they love to eat beef but Ramanujan did never eat meat so that he faced many problems in the host land. In his initial days, he did not eat food because he wanted to eat pure vegetarian food but he did not get it from anywhere else. As a Brahmin, he had to bear many things. He once said that no one can follow their culture/ norms and tradition etc. outside of their own home. These are the issues which he faced there and it was very difficult for him to make adjustments in the host land/foreign country.

Ramanujan was a madrasa boy and he was not too much familiar with other languages. He loved his own language. He was an intellectual and genius only in mathematics. He always failed in other subjects, so that he had no knowledge about other subjects like English, Geography, and Psychology etc. he was considered to be an intelligent student of his town. He gave many theorems and formulas of trigonometry. When he was in abroad he had many other problems but the major problem among them was the linguistic problem. He lived with his friend G.H Hardy who always supported him like a close comrade.

Homi.K.Bhabha in his book “The Location of Culture” states

Discourse creates an instrumentalist notion of power/knowledge. The problem is summed up by the ready acceptance of the view that, representations or formations, or as Roland Barthes has said of all the operation of language, they are deformations (72).

As Ramanujan is staying in England, he was supposed to use the language of natives. The power/knowledge as stated by Bhabha also measured by language. If a person unable to use signs and signifiers of the accepted norms of the society, he would lose the respect and will be

received as alien. In the case of Ramanujan, he is a genius in mathematics but language fails and his knowledge does not receive recognition and he fails to get the stamp of respect from his colleagues it further alienates him from the environment and culture where his identity is in question. His tryst with language, however, would be inconsequential if he lives his country where his language is accepted.

Ramanujan was a Brahmin and he used to eat only vegetarian food. He never saw beef. He liked food when his mother cooks for him which he missed in England.

Dwaine Plaza states,

The question about integration as either a one sided or two sided courses gave rise to a lively discussion in the group: To what extent does integration include learning and accepting the values and habits of the content and when does it term into assimilation (150).

In the case of Ramanujan, he is unable to accept the non-vegetarian habits of Britishers and does question the hegemony of the dominant culture and it hampers his process of integration and assimilation in the alien country. This distanced him further from his colleagues and friends and cast him into the world of prejudice and exploitation. He finds himself in a vulnerable position and triples his problems. His cultural welding never gets complete because he never cherishes the habits of his counterparts.

Ramanujan belongs to Madras and his culture is totally different from the British culture. Milton J. Esman states,

An unwelcoming opportunity structure may be encountered either by blockages of access to education, economic and political participation or by demonstration of contempt or disrespect for the culture of an immigrant community and for its members (101).

As Ramanujan belongs to a community which is considered to be inferior to the white race, it calls for stigmas and discrimination upon him. Ramanujan is a genius and defies the perception of white race that the Indians are inferior to them. Another thing is he also defies the nationality and perception of westerners. Westerners believe in the scientific approach and consider that Indian mystic ideologies are number jumbo. Due to this, it was perceived that he deserves failure and continually put under scrutiny and suspicion. He is marginalized by not only physiology but also by ideological and mystic notions. He has a little inclination to afford with their culture and his willingness further push him into the zone of aloofness, and deepen his cultural disintegration.

The dominance that he faces is his ideological and political in nature. He belongs to a rival ideology, which submits a point of departure and suggests that a liminal ideology which is Asian and subverted can be a mainstream. He wants to lose his mystical intellect to solve the problem of the mundane world. This is sub-textual in nature and sounds like a threat to rational and scientific westerners. Ranajit Guha states,

The differences consisted in the fact that metropolitan state was hegemonic in nature with exclamation to dominance based on a power relation in which the moment of persuasion outweighed by coercion, whereas the colonial was non hegemonic with persuasion outweighed by coercion in its structure of dominance.(xii)

Ramanujan belongs to an ideology and a nation which is outweighed by the powerful political alliance. It wasn't suitable for a western line to accept. A distinct paradigm which portrays the dominated thought as the superior one. It was a universal tendency under colonial rules which south to endow Ramanujan as a diversion a wrong turn.

## Conclusion

Under the umbrella term of diaspora, we come to understand the plights which are associated with homelessness, anxiety, dread, migration, alienation, nostalgia, race issue, cultural clashes. Etc. “The Man Who Knew Infinity” uncovers the pain and suffering of the main protagonist Ramanujan who struggle for his existence in the host land. Other Asian population travel to different European countries in order to get a better life. The monetary problem is the main reason behind their dislocation/displacement. But unlike them, Ramanujan visited England for his study and future experiments in the field of mathematics. It was actually his vast ideas and knowledge in math which enables him to ensure a place in Trinity College, U.K.

As we know that there are two sides to every coin and the picture changes when we change the side. Ramanujan’s theories in mathematics accepted and appreciated by his friends and mathematics wits but he himself was suffering from Diasporic plight. He was freely homeless in the alien land. He was sufferings a lot to accept the new culture. The norms and traditions of the British society were very difficult to understand for him.

He even could not accept their food and dresses. He was broken inside and a constant feeling of nostalgia was there in his mind. All his feelings gave rise to his anxiety and dread which further got added to his pain. His never ending pain with his struggle to existence made him mentally and psychologically ill.

Diasporic people lives in extreme condition, bears alienation takes the central place of their life. They are away from their culture and secure atmosphere which makes them more venerable to existentialist problem. In case of Ramanujan, an Indian diaspora he faces two sorts of problems. the first one is due to cultural differences and the second is due to ideological

differences. The problem which he faces due to cultural issues is same for all Diasporas. These issues are alienation problem of choice anxiety, homelessness, and meaninglessness. There problems can be sorted out ones it came out of an alienated scenario. He faces the issues of food, dressing sense and cultural norms which are more outward in nature: problems of choice , anxiety and dread are inward in nature, whereas outward issues are easy to resolve /just territorial changes can change his situation.

Internal problem are inevitable in nature. It is stupid on the part of human that he think that he can escape these problems. Ramanujan understands that and he cure all his problems from invert by scorching his own soul. The problem of ideological difference is more problematic for Ramanujan and this is the problem of essence, it does not matter wherever Ramanujan goes in Europe\_ A rational and scientific society he face of ideological differences. The approach of the European thinker is rational in nature. This rationality has its own flaw but it is widely accepted which gives us the currency of truth. Ramanujan challenges this concept so he has to face the wrath of rationalist. The problems of Diasporas are mostly culture in nature, but specifically in the case of Ramanujan there are existentialistic and ideological in nature. He needs to go to the level of ideology and essence of his living to find his issues.



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