

SELF PORTRAIT

-AK RAMANUJAN

- In this poem the identity crisis of the speaker is clearly visible. The poem is autobiographical in tone. AK Ramanujan was born and brought up in orthodox Brahmin family and he spent his later life in the liberal Western society. This contrast has created a conflict, the conflict between the inner-self and the outer-self form the core of his poetry. His inner-self is constituted by Indian milieu and his outer-self is constituted by Western milieu.
- Ramanujan is a modern poet. Identity crisis is a common problem of every modern man. In this modern world it is easy to resemble everyone but searching one's self is a really difficult task. In this poem we can see that the speaker of the poem is facing the identity crisis, so he sees his own mirror image as a stranger. He has the impact of both Indian and Western societies, he seems to be stuck in between Indian and Western sensibilities. Most probably this is reason for he is getting difficult to find his own identity.
- Ramanujan uses poetry as tool to search his real self. Born in a traditional South Indian Hindu family and settled in America through marrying a Christian woman are the facts of his life and these elements provided a scope for the development of the poetic self. He has analysed the human situation, through the combined vision of the east and west. The Indian perspective and experience towards the human problems, finds a prominent place in the poetry of Ramanujan. In this poem we see the speaker's confused situation about real self. The speaker says that the identity he has at present is given by his his father. Here we can see the picture of the traditional patriarchal society of India. Ramanujan is also under the influence patriarchy as instead of having his own identity he has an inherited identity of his father. One's identity is highly influenced by the father figure in our patriarch society.
- The central idea of the poem is the need for creating our own identity instead of copying others. Each of us has a unique personality, we must try to create an individuality. While searching our own self we should not forget our roots, where we started from. There must be balance between the past where we started and the present where we are. One's past helps in creating present which should be kept in mind to get an own identity. In this case Ramanujan is not able to make a bridge between his past and present so he is facing the identity crisis.