CHAPTER VIII
TECHNIQUE - II
Raja Rao is the most outstanding Indo-English novelist who harnesses the expression of Indian thought and speech patterns in a language that is acquired, yet close to his mother tongue, that is Kannada. Being a genius, Raja Rao evolves for the Indian novel in English a pattern which differs from one novel to the other. In fact he incarnates his narrative to suit the Indian sensibility in an alien language. The word 'incarnate' does not mean of producing a work merely of tranformation or translation, moreover, as Raja Rao holds English is not the language, "of our emotional make-up". For writing a novel or any other art form for that matter, in English, a suitable form of expression in a foreign language for the communication of what we feel in our own way is to be innovated.

After the discussion on form, style and the narrative devices the language too occupies a very prominent place in the making of these novels. Hence we have to see why an Indian writer should choose English as his medium of expression. The French language is closer to the Indian language as it is spoken fast with emotion and intensity like many of the Indian languages. Raja Rao is steeped in the Sanskrit tradition and the work of the Vachanakaras of the twelfth century Kannada literature.

Yet, neither the employment of French nor Sanskrit or Kannada will serve the purpose that Raja Rao has in his mind. Raja Rao admits that in writing Kanthapura he did face the problem of fusing, "the tempo of Indian thought and sensibility with the English expression." He possesses as much mastery in French as in English which is fully evidenced by his French version of Comrade Kirillov. Yet, despite his subtle appreciation and masterly grasp of French he chose English as his vehicle of expression. Raja Rao being an experimenter tries to choose the right word in the right language. In an interview R. Parthasarthy quotes Raja Rao:

Finding a right word is like a spiritual discovery. All forms of literature are only capable of indirect statements. English, unlike French, is not academized. The English language is expandable to an extraordinary degree, breaking conventions without any fear of its becoming unEnglish. ³

The need to choose English in place of a native language as the medium by a creative writer is largely due to his consciousness to communicate to an

2. Ibid.
audience other than his own country. Raja Rao in his Foreword to Kanthapura says:

We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.

The English language is chosen because intercommunication through the medium of art is the universality of its use, its character as a lingua-franca both within the country and abroad. Moreover, "English is not really an alien language to us" and being a language of intellectual make-up it is easily adaptable to our creative needs. Raja Rao's endeavour is to experiment with a Western language to our Eastern sensibility and create a mode of expression to give a real and natural flavour of Indianness to the Western audience and the meaning and Indian life to the people of our country.

Raja Rao makes use of the language of the rustics in his narrative. He is able to bend and mould the English language in accordance with the sensibility of the uneducated villagers in the novel Kanthapura. At times

5. Ibid., p. V
words, phrases or idioms are noticed directly translated into English but sometimes he bends and twists the medium so that the natural touches remain. Raja Rao adopts a new style of using the Proper noun after the completion of the sentence. For example:

"And he can sing too, can Jayaramachar."

"And there were other stories, he told us, Jayaramachar."

"He's fallen, Moorthy. He's dead Moorthy"

Furthermore, a string of names are strung in a rhythmic pattern one following the other in perfect coherence. To give a perfect resonance, Raja Rao chooses the proper names of characters which give a perfect beat on pronouncing. Even a casual glancing by the reader through the names and nick names of the Kanthapurians is a thing of great interest. Names such as:

Rachanna and Chandranna and Madanna; Sampanna and Vaidyanna; Somanna and Seethanna; Moorthappa and Rangappa and Seenappa and Borappa.

6. Ibid., p. 14
7. Ibid., p. 17
8. Ibid., p. 199
The women folk too have musical names ending with a tag 'amma', to show reverence. Kanthapura village comprises of Satamma and Rangamma and Puttamma; Narsamma and Timmamma and Chandramma; Nanjamma, Kenchamma and Papamma.

Added to their proper names the villagers wear tell-tale nick names for it would be absurd for an illiterate, insignificant and unsophisticated villager to be known by his initials like a white-collared man. The names so qualified contribute greatly to the individualisation of the village characters and places and also to the evocation of proper rural sensibility. To name a few villagers with nick - name tags:

Nose - scratching Nanjamma; Waterfall Venkamma; Gold bangle Somanna; Coffee - Planter Ramayya; Corner-house Moorthy; Front-House Akkamma; Temple Rangappa

It is not to be forgotten that the narration is from the old granny's point of view, that too, she adopts a typical Kannada tradition of tagging nick- names to proper names, in order to give an identity. A similar device is employed by Sudhin Ghose in his *Cradle of the Clouds* and Mulk Raj Anand in his *The Road*.

Raja Rao is of the belief that language has
an inner life of its own and makes use of rhythm, imagery and repetition to bring out this effect. An example is cited below:

... and the coolies answer one and all, 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!', and then someone lights a dhoti and throws it at the soldiers, and there is a long, confused cry like that of children, and we see lathis rising and falling, darting and dipping like fishes, and the coolies shout out, 'Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!'

... And they seem so near the Skeffington coolies that they have just to jump and they will be at the top of the Mound and the Skeffington coolies have just to jump down and they will be with the crowd, and between them stand the city coolies, white and bearded and motionless.

This passage depicting the confusion among the villagers when charged with lathis contains rhythm, imagery, repetition of words as well as simile. Such passages are numerous in Kanthapura and give an effect of a fast film bubbling with actions and actions. This is a very rare achievement of Raja Rao not noticed in the works of his contemporaries.

Besides the scene of the atrocities of the British on the village folks, the novel vibrates with religious hymns and in the process, the novelist succeeds in creating a native atmosphere not only through themes but

through language also. Goddess Kenchamma is the protector, the life and breath of the village. In praise of the Goddess, Laxmi Holmstrom precisely puts it:

Kenchamma, the village deity, represents the stability of the village community.

Villagers clap their hands and sing:

Kenchamma, Kenchamma, Goddess benign and bounteous, Mother of earth, blood of life, Harvest-queen, rain-crowned, Kenchamma, Kenchamma.

Definitely it cannot be denied that in coming close to the language of the rustics Raja Rao departs from the traditional form of expression of the English language. Raja Rao consciously uses literal translations of typical Kannada phrases, idioms and expressions and words too. V. D. Katamble is of the opinion that:

through the use of the 'rustic idiom' a flavour of rurality is captured. There are similes, comparison and vituperative terms which smell of the...
charged with Kannada phrases and idioms. The novel, Kanthapura has the evocation of the South Indian village and acts as an eye opener to the readers in the northern parts of India. Examples of some Kannada phrase are:

"he will not have a rag - wide left" 13

"You will not even lick the remnant leaves in the dust - bin" 14

"Only a pariah looks at the teeth of dead cows". 15

Kannada idioms too find their place in this novel as they display peasant sensibility. Idioms such as:

"Let her take care not to warm your hands with others money." 16

"Why do you seek to make our

13. Kanthapura, op. cit., p. 110
14. Ibid., p. 114
15. Ibid., p. 232
16. Ibid., p. 21
stomachs burn?" 17

are used freely and give the idea of the colloquial language used by them and Raja Rao excels in translating their expressions into the English language. Kannada expressions, for example:

"The policeman are not your uncle's sons" 18

"hold your head and weep." 19

"before we closed our eyes". 20

Besides the use of idioms and Kannada expressions similes and metaphors too are included in the villagers' thinking pattern:

"the youngest is always the holy bull" 21

"And yet he was as honest as an elephant" 22

"We felt as though a corpse had smiled upon a burning pyre" 23

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17. Ibid., pp. 2-3
18. Ibid., p. 225
19. Ibid., p. 218
20. Ibid., p. 113
21. Ibid., p. 47
22. Ibid., pp. 12-13
23. Ibid., p. 223
are some of the metaphors used. The similes are:

"our hearts are squeezed like a wet cloth" 24

"an idea came into his head like a cart-light in the dark" 25

"you go back into the thicket like a barking puppy." 26

"Narsamma was growing thin as a bamboo and shrivelled like banana bark" 27

"Our stomachs began to beat like drums" 28

Abusive words and expressions play a vital role in the colloquial language of the rustics. Raja Rao very aptly scatters such a language whenever a scene of quarrel or small tiff arises amongst the villagers. One of the characters in the novel, Venkamma, does humiliate Narsamma (Moorthy's mother) as Moorthy is a Brahmin who mingle freely with the pariahs. In caste-wise classification the Brahmins are regarded as of the highest order and privileged to read the Holy scriptures and perform the temple rituals. Their principal vocation is of

24. Ibid., p. 244
25. Ibid., p. 111
26. Ibid., p. 70
27. Ibid., p. 61
28. Ibid., p. 220
a priest, holy and clean and not mixing freely with Pariahs, who perform lowly duties. Angry Venkamma shouts at Narsamma and says, that:

It's for nothing you put forth into the world eleven children, if you do not even know what your very beloved son is always doing. I will tell you what he is doing: he is mixing with the pariahs... If he does not stop mixing with the pariahs, this very hand—do you hear?—this very hand will give him two slaps on his cheeks and one on the buttocks and send him screaming to his friends, the pariahs.

There are other abusives like

"a life drag and a nail witch and a scorpion."\textsuperscript{30}

"those sons of concubines"\textsuperscript{31}

"you son of my concubine"\textsuperscript{32}

"you rat of a woman"\textsuperscript{33}

are freely used as they are normally used in the speech of the rustics. A sentence of abuse such as:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{29. Ibid.}, p. 53
  \item \textbf{30. Ibid.}, p. 198
  \item \textbf{31. Ibid.}, p. 19
  \item \textbf{32. Ibid.}, p. 119
  \item \textbf{33. Ibid.}, p. 157
\end{itemize}
...concubine Chinna still remains in Kanthapura to lift her leg to her new customers.  
sounds absolutely vulgar but is, undoubtedly, effective in the evocation of proper rustic atmosphere. Raja Rao does not reject this style too. It is creditable that though it is the grandmother who narrates the tale, the author includes this shade of language in the expression of the Kanthapurians. Another example of this nature is:

'Oh! The Bel-field! May your house be destroyed — may your wife die childless — I'll sleep with your mother!'

As K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar puts it:

This is simply the natural speech of rural folk transmuted into English.

A unique feature we notice in Raja Rao's narrative technique is that he encompasses not only human beings but also animals who participate in the struggle for freedom. The author pairs the animals and their sounds so effectively that the reader can almost hear them.

34. Ibid., p. 259
35. Ibid., p. 233
An example:

trees rumbling, lions roaring, jackals wailing, parrots piping, panthers screeching, monkeys jabbering, jeering, chatter-chattering,

The language of the villagers includes animals and birds from time to time to express their action and reaction.

that shaven widow hadn’t even the luck of having a bandicoot to call her own. 38

he was as honest as an elephant. 39

a rasping hiss as though a thousand porcupines had suddenly bristled up.

does a boar stand before a lion or a jackal before an elephant? 41

and numerous proverbs find a natural place in the peasant’s speech.

A glossary of words and diction finds their place in Raja Rao’s novel. Sounds made in agony and pain

37. Kanthapura, op. cit., p. 214
38. Ibid., p. 5
39. Ibid., p. 12
40. Ibid., p. 240
41. Ibid., p.
by the villagers after a lathi charge are also recorded thus:

shrieking and slaying, weeping, wounding, groaning, crawling, swooning, vomiting, bellowing, moaning, raving, gasping ...

The sounds give the intensity of pain the villagers undergo after a lathi-charge on them.

Another important aspect of Raja Rao's prose style is the use of Sanskrit and Kannada words. Some typically Indian words which do not have an equivalent in English are used in their original meaning. Indian words are scattered in all his novels, in Kanthapura words like:


A mention of the humbleness of the villagers cannot go amiss. To address someone higher in rank and with respect the term 'The Learned One' or 'the Learned Maharaja', is a tradition amongst the rural folks. The impact of regional speech is evident in the names of endearment such as 'Moorthappa' and 'Siddayya' or

42. Ibid., p. 251
'Sundaryya' for example. The local environment and the diction adds novelty, specially to a non Kannada reader. Even typical expressions such as 'Ayyo- Ayyo' find their place in Raja Rao's novel to give a natural flavour to the speech of the villagers.

Raja Rao, seems to undergo a prolonged period of hardship in order to attain a typical Indian village colour in scenic beauty as well as language. For most of the time he turns and twists the English language to suit the language of the rustics. In Kanthapura Raja Rao keeps his form and style typically Indian and never deviates from it. This is why the novel does not lose its Indian fervour, moreover, it introduces the language and life - pattern of a far-off South Indian village. The novel recalls to one's memory Hardy's Wessex novels where the local colour is predominant.

The rural imagery reveals the author's natural mode of perception

says V. D. Katamble, furthermore, he adds that:

Raja Rao's perception of reality is conveyed mainly through the images.

A perceptive critic like William Walsh very  

43. V. D. Katamble, op. cit., p. 76
correctly finds Kanthapura "dense with the actualities of village existence".\textsuperscript{44} and admires it for it presents an authentic account of village life in South India. C. D. Narasimhaiah in his eulogy states that:

one outstanding contribution of Mr. Raja Rao to Indian writing in English is to have struck new paths for a sensibility which is identifiably Indian.\textsuperscript{45}

The language of The Serpent and the Rope marks a decisive change in Raja Rao's use of the English language. The lengthy paragraph long sentences, repetition and simple dialogues of Kanthapura give way to intellectual pondering, scholarly discussions on various issues and sophisticated use of the English tongue. No abusives and nick names are seen in this novel. There is a drastic change in the use of idioms, phrases and words, though Indian diction is made use of to give the novel an authenticity of being Indian. The language in this novel is used as a medium to express the metaphysical quest. An example:

\begin{quote}


\end{quote}
She saw how happy I was. But it was with a happiness that knows life is a continuous jump from awareness to awareness, like a straight line is from point to point. In between is the knowledge of the perpetuity of life. Sorrow is the background of all moments, for moment means the transitory and the transitory is always sorrowful.46

Raja Rao being a scholar in the Holy Scriptures discusses about illusion and reality of the Hindu concept. Rama's thesis deals with the metaphysical symbolism of Paradise, in his tenth chapter. He explains thus:

... there is not only satya and asatya, Truth and untruth, but also mitya, illusion - like the horns on the head of a rabbit, or the son of a barren woman, Paradise, I argued, was the inversion of Truth. To see frankly is not necessarily to see fairly- you can look at a thing upside down. After all, the deer went to drink water at the mirage. The impossible becomes the beautiful.47

Musings of high standard are noticed throughout the novel. A noteworthy advancement in the language of Raja Rao is the


47. Ibid., p. 377
employment of aphoristic statements which are found in abundance. They play an important role in building up the narrative texture of the novel. In fact, they form the very breath of the dialogues and form an unavoidable and inseparable part of the narrative. Such statements as:

Holiness is happiness.
Happiness is holiness.

Affection is just a spot in the geography of the mind.

So Knowledge has knowledge of the I through Knowledge, which means Knowledge is the I.

whether the world was real or unreal, the sea seemed proof of something unnameable.

and many others which provoke us to stop and ponder besides the illuminating ideas that form an integral part of the theme of the novel. The aphorisms besides heightening the dialogues and philosophy reveal the character of Ramaswamy too.

Another advancement in the language is that he draws images that migrate from concrete to abstract and sometimes show a tendency to move towards mysticism.

48. Ibid., p. 22
49. Ibid., p. 18
50. Ibid., p. 112
51. Ibid., p. 336
Thus transcending from realism to surrealism the images are striking. A few examples are given below:

Benares is eternal. There the dead do not die nor the living live. 52

The Ganges alone seemed to carry a meaning, and I could not understand what she said. She seems like Little Mother, so grave and full of inward sounds. 53

and many more images of such nature are seen in his work. The second reference shows the shift of thought from realism to surrealism and such flashbacks and ruminations play an important role and show an improvement over the language texture from that of his earlier work.

Similes and metaphors play a useful role in a novel which conveys its philosophical preachings to its reader. Raja Rao employs this technique in all his novels. Just as the reader is invited to share something deeper than experience in his aphoristic statements, by employment of similes and metaphors he is invited to think and meditate on the hero's idea by making comparisons. This method helps the reader to know the thinking pattern of Rama in relation to the ultimate reality of being and not

52. Ibid., p. 22
53. Ibid., p. 26
being.

Examples of similes and metaphors:

- life was like a bullock-cart wheel. 54
- Love is even so young, so elevating- like the flying buttresses of Notre-Dame... 55
- sweat like a bull in summer. 56
- the winter weeps like some war widow at the cemetery. 57

Metaphors of metaphysical value are:

- Pain is the residue of action. 58
- Joy is the identity of love. 59
- Woman is the sacrifice. 60

The protagonist of this novel is a South Indian Vedantin Brahmin, Raja Rao thus engages the address with reverence as already seen in his previous novel, Kanthapura. Names

54. Ibid., p. 197
55. Ibid., p. 229
56. Ibid., p. 309
57. Ibid., p. 367
58. Ibid., p. 364
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p. 361
like:

Ramakrishnayya, Ranganna, Somasundarayya, Manjappa, Ashappa and Gandadharyya.

are used and the Indianness is maintained by such name-tags. Indian words are used in their original form as there is no alternative or translation in English. Words like:

Brahmachari, mohurtham, sheesham trunk, prakriti, lila, raga, prasadam, lakhpati, Khadiwala, pan, choli, upavasa, dharma, tilak, pandal, Nandi, Upanayanam, Tulasi, Satvic, Kumkum, ghat, dhoti, bhāṅg, banyā, arathi.

to name a few. If the above words are distorted they will lose their meaning and significance. Just as in Kanthapura where the Indian dishes and food is mentioned, the novel The Serpent and the Rope too, consists of South Indian recipes like:

rasam, chutney with coconut and coriander leaf, dosé, coffee

This novel deals with the advaita theory and it is the protagonist's extraordinary kind of mood and vision which exemplifies the subject. It is the subject which coerces the narrative technique to change its form, style as well as the language and the newness of the
subject makes the novel easily distinguishable from the others. M. S. Patil says that, "It is one long stretch of rumination" with no chapter headings to impede the thinking pattern. The whole novel is "sought to be presented in a fluid, coterminous state, the state which it exists in the mind of the protagonist." Furthermore the hero, Ramaswamy, in his brooding meditative tone seems natural in quality and he is portrayed "as a consumptive, hypersensitive individual, an intellectual with a poetic disposition."

To release the readers charged mind Sanskrit slokas and verses play a very important role. The philosophic revelations weigh heavily on the readers mind, hence, Raja Rao introduces this technique. It is not only Sanskrit but French and Latin verses also are made the best use of. From time and again, Rama, speaks of the Holy mother Ganga and in Her praise recites the following verse in Sanskrit:


62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.
Sakala kalusha bhanghe svarga
sopana sange
Taralata range Devi Gange
prasida

(Dissolver of blemishes
Companion of the Waters
Dancing and sparkling Ganges !
Worship.)

As the reader goes through the novel he will
notice that Raja Rao adapts several generalisations which
as a part of the novel appear important and bold, and on
including gives a peculiar evocative charm. One such
example is cited below:

Just as reading poetry at the
break of day is like
remembering the feel of one’s
dream but not the acts of one’s
dream, to know Savithri was to
wake into the truth of life
to be remembered – unto God.

The above passage if read separately with the
sequence of the idea unknown, it gives a more poetic charm
rather than philosophic rantings. The novelist with his
profound knowledge sprinkles his ideas through the
development of the novel. The novel being an exercise
dedicated to spiritual explorations, the metaphysical
muscings of Ramaswamy continue thus:

The
64. Serpent and the Rope, op. cit., p. 383
65. Ibid., p. 169
Death is our friend in that sense - life after life it faces us with the meaning of the ultimate.  

In contrast to the philosophical novel The Serpent and the Rope stands The Cat and Shakespeare a 'metaphysical comedy' and it is through this light-hearted contention we probe deeper in meaning to know the complexities of life. A word, a phrase, a dialogue demands a careful perusal by the reader for it underscores the multiple layers of meaning the fable possesses. The apparent simplicity of narrative structure believes in its inner complexity. Raja Rao fuses fancy and imagination with a remarkable ease. In The Cat and Shakespeare there are expressions which turn from the abstract to the mystical, for example:

How can two not seek the not-two? Find this secret and you need no gold to seek happiness.  

The unknown alone resolves the unknown. So brother work and be merry.  

There are sentences in the novel which lack

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66. Ibid., pp. 302 - 303  
68. Ibid., p. 37
decorum due to inadequacy of the verbal medium. An example of such a sentence is cited below:

They came from Malabar Malabar, is Truth. Antartica is only a name for Malabar.

On each grain of rice is writ the name of the who'll eat it. The ration card is the truth.70

Another important innovation Raja Rao makes in the use of the language is that he weaves the entire passage around a single word in order to show its importance and value. There is a word 'Truth' in The Cat and Shakespeare around which the novelist makes various statements and its recurrent repetition shows the significance of the word. Let's see the example:

Your Lordship, I speak only the truth. If the word of man does not conform to truth, should truth suffer for that reason? If only you know how I pray every night and say: "Mother, keep me at the lotus feet of Truth!" The judge gives judgement. The Government advocate can accuse. Police Inspector Rama Iyer can muster evidence. But the accused alone knows the truth.71

69. Ibid., p. 55
70. Ibid., p. 43
71. Ibid., p. 103
Speaking on the use of the Indian idioms and words, Meenakshi Mukerjee rightly observes that the writer is to make sure that he does not go against the English language. In this respect Raja Rao is most conscious of the pitfalls involved, hence he makes a very judicious use of the Indian words and idioms. The author follows the language of the Sanskrit Poetics in which the difference between prose and verse disappears altogether. If the reader is unaware of the Sanskrit 'Kavya' he will be as puzzled as Ramakrishna Pai, the central character of The Cat and Shakespeare. Raja Rao uses this method of Sanskrit poetics in his The Serpent and the Rope too, that is why at times the narrative gives a poetical touch. In trying to explore a novel pattern he transmutes the conceptual thinking into concrete sensation.

Moving to Comrade Kirillov we find this novel to be an advance on the previous novel. Raja Rao depends on the ironic structures for it is the character and nature of Kirillov that demands it. Kirillov too, as the other characters of the previous novels uses Indian words and names of Gods and Goddesses which cannot be altered. For example he mentions:

Krishna, Rama, Goddess Lakshmi

The Indian words are again introduced to give the novel an
Indian touch. Words such as:

Pati-Patni, maidan, ashram, rajas, gora, marwari, satyagraha, hamare, janata ke, choli-piece, kum kum, mandap, Tulasi

are freely used with utmost ease by the author. Literal reproductions of the Indian words are fewer, examples:

your colour was chocolate, when it was not terribly coffee.

birds in the Wakefield gardens were mournful with autumnal anxieties.

Cock and sparrow show.

The above Indian phrases too are put to the best use by Raja Rao. He never makes a departure from the Indianness in any novel so far, he keeps in touch either by citing Indian words or phrases or even idioms for that matter. The repetition of Benares, Shiva, Parvati, Ganges and Himalayas are indeed exotic to a Westerner but for an Indian it conjures up images which are full of meaning and significance. The thoughts and words are interlaced with

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73. Ibid., p. 45
74. Ibid., p. 41
the Sanskrit citations in its original form. The words sound forceful as they represent India with which the narrator is quite familiar Irene herself makes a note of the Sanskrit word principle like:

Para, Pashyanta, Madhyama and Vaikhari

No word can be distorted as the meaning will change so also its significance. Raja Rao used the common or cryptic Indian terms so skilfully that the reader scarcely notices a few missing meanings.

An example to show a repetition of a word and the mantric quality is given below:

where no man will be master of another, and where a man like you will sit on some lone hilltop and write beautiful books, instead of wandering in search of metaphysical will-o'-the-wisps, and a cup of coffee, or listening to nonsense from men like me. I myself am a man fit for liquidation. I am an old moralist. I hate possession and yet I respect every one else's possession. I hate violence, and yet I will kill in a civil war.

The narrative in this novel is simple and the

75. Ibid., p. 97
76. Ibid., p. 39
narrator's vocabulary of English is highly polished and suits the hero who plays the role of a scholar possessing a philosophic bent of mind.

Sanskritic leanings are noticed more in his The Serpent and the Rope, The Cat and Shakespeare and Comrade Kirillov. A philosophic note is struck in all the three novels and hence the Sanskrit language plays a very important role. In order to describe the theory of advaita — where the illusory rope lies and is mistaken for a serpent, Sanskrit language plays a vital role. A unique technique Raja Rao introduces, is that of mantras and slokas. The dialogues with intermittent Sanskrit verses free the reader of the monotony as well as complex philosophical conversations. The verses come as a relief from the hectic language in the episodes placed one after the other. The chanting of mantras or the very recitation gives a droning effect and sound which is rhythmic and pulse like. The Buddhist mantra goes thus:

Om - Dhin - Om Gih- Om Jrih

Aum - Aum - Aum -- Tam - Tam -
Tam--
Hri - Hri - Hri -- Ha - Ha -
Ha.

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78. Ibid., p. 100
and many more of the like are frequently recited by Madeleine. A mantra recited in whatsoever the situation may be, makes you dip and rise in your inner Ganges. With its chanting it is said that:

Kashi Kshetram Shariram
Tribhuvana jananim vayapim gyana
Ganga

(My body, the holy site, is Benares, spreading within me as knowledge, the Ganges, Mother of the three worlds.) 79

Besides the above mantra Rama chants the 'Uttara Rama Charita' to Madeleine on a February afternoon. It is not that she only hears the mantra but tries to delve deep and shows her keeness to know its significance too. Her curiosity and inquisitive nature highlights the recitation of these Sanskrit mantras. A well known verse of Sri Sankara is recited in two of Raja Rao's novels The Serpent and the Rope and Comrade Kirillov by Rama and Kirillov the principal characters respectively. The famous verse runs thus:

Mano-budhi Ahankara chittani naham...
chidananda rupah Shivoaham-shivoham

(I am not the mind, I am

79. Ibid., p. 216
intelligence nor egoism,

I am joy of intelligence - I am Shiva, I am Shiva...

Madeleine announces her separation with Rama as she wishes to completely devote herself to Buddhism. She rejects the body and accepts no relation with this illusory world. Rama on the other hand follows Sri Sankara’s philosophy. The theory to realise the Ultimate Truth did not demand to completely reject human relations and the world. Rama’s challenge to reach the Ultimate is by living in contrasts and find the wisdom in reconciling with remote and unconnected things. He believes that:

Wisdom consists not in separation and isolation but in assimilation and integration of the heterogeneous elements...

The understanding of the philosophy of Buddhism as well as Hinduism stand in direct contrast as shown by the two

The Serpent and the Rope, op. cit., p. 91
principal characters.

Hence Rama towards the end is seen ruminating in bed:

Kashwan Koham kutha ayatha ka me janani ko me tatah ? (Who are you and whose; whence have you come?)

The above Sanskrit sentence states the confused mind of Rama who is groping for the luminous world and enters a state of self-realisation. Besides the use of mantras, slokas and sentences in Sanskrit, Sanskrit words too appear, for example:

"ekam advayam" (non-dual) 82
"Upavasa" 83
"pranayama" 84
"abhisheka" 85

The above words are used to give the ancient touch of Indianness to suit the subject chosen by Raja Rao. Speaking of the language Rama is of the opinion that; "The Sanskrit language has a gambhiryatha a nobility that seems rooted in

82. The Serpent and the Rope, op. cit., p. 383
83. Ibid., p. 382
84. Ibid., p. 25
85. Ibid., p. 81
primary sound, and chanting of the verses of the great philosophers seems to create an aura of emptiness around one and one felt the breath of oneself, saw the sight as it were of oneself, such is the intensity of chanting a mantra. This is the reason why Rama from time and again is seen reciting these verses and slokas for it is in their recitation he finds solace. Moreover, the major theme of East-West encounter too plays an important role in this novel. Hence Raja Rao shows the confluence of Indian tradition and language to that of Western culture. In order to create a typically Indian atmosphere he uses Indian words in spite of living in France for over two decades. The language of French too influences him immensely but the Indian ethos overpowers him.

Comrade Kirillov is a scholar like Rama who is steeped in Sanskrit learning. He loves Sankara and his Nirvana Astaka and enthusiastically recites the Sanskrit verses with great ease though he is a devoted Marxist. This dynamic character is a Sanskritist and this knowledge helps him to judge impartially the superiority of Islam on Hinduism. His wife, Irene, too finds the language interesting and prepares a congenial atmosphere for Kamal, her son, to learn the great Indian Classics and the

86. Ibid., p. 70
87. Ibid.
Sanskrit language primarily. Kirillov is heard humming "pasunam patim papanasam paresam". Indian philosophy and philosophical meditations are spread all over and constitute the warp and woof of the novel. The questing hero firmly holds on to the Sanskrit language in order to show his rootedness in India. In Comrade Kirillov the novelist himself appears as the narrator, R. In his effort to tear open the veil of illusion of Kirillov's mind, R. tells him the kernel of Vedanta in the following words:

Vedanta alone has the courage of the ultimate—its lovingly uncovers the limits to your own ignorant authority and asks for more inquiry into your biological, psychological, and psychic self, delimiting you bit by bit into acute dissolution, when, intensified in your desperate anonymity, you surrender yourself to that which is ever your "I". And in that is-ness there is none that you are brother to. Love has no brother, only lovingness has.

Sanskrit mantras and the learning of Vedas are what Raja Rao uses in the original or translated forms in all his novels. Ancient Indian philosophy with touches of Sanskrit

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88. *Comrade Kirillov, op. cit.*, p. 86
89. *Ibid.*, p. 73
language significantly illumine the true inner meaning of the concerned philosophy. Though in The Cat and Shakespeare there are no direct Sanskrit mantras and slokas their translations are given, so that, at least the indirect form conveys the meanings it is supposed to.

An important aspect of Raja Rao's prose style is the use of regional language. He makes use of Kannada names, places, words, idioms and phrases in his novel Kanthapura more than his other novels. He purposely adopts this method for it depicts the story of the Freedom Struggle of the village people of the State of Karnataka. Raja Rao succeeds in fulfilling his vision of giving 'Kanthapura' a realistic South Indian atmosphere. Names like Moorthy, Seenappa and Somanna, places like Kanthapura, Kashipura, Mangalore, Puttur, hills like Bebbur Hill, Kanthur Hill, Mena Crag, river like the Himavathy river, deities like Goddess Kenchamma, Talassanamma are all used throughout the novel to give it the South Indian touch. Words such as:

Prabhat pheri, Shamoo, hobli, Kanchi Sari, mlecha, Kartik, Hari-Om.

are used to express the native sensibility.

By writing innumerable names of various things it is to be noticed that Raja Rao has given a name to all that he introduces. It may be a hill or river, road or lane, trees, animals or birds all are specifically named
in order to get it easily registered in the mind of the reader. Raja Rao adheres to the native sensibility and language, hence takes care not to mingle any urbane expression into the novel as it will only tarnish the simple, innocent language of the Kanthapurians. Moreover, it is not to be forgotten that it is Rangamma who relates the entire story.

One more regional language he utilises in his expression is Malayalam which is introduced in The Cat and Shakespeare. In the novel the names and places, Raja Rao uses, is not quite the same as they appear to the Malayalam speaking characters. His main aim is not to create or expose complex issues of life but to impart enlightened awareness of life through the characters. The reader arrives at an understanding of life from a distance. The names introduced in this novel are:

Ramakrishna Pai, Govindan Nair, Kartikura Eletcham Mudabi, Kurtarakam, Narayan Pandita Vaidyan, Kolliathur, Kurnikutta, Vazhavanhad.

They do appear, not as natural in the Malayalam structure; this distortion is purposely done in order to achieve the proper artistic distance from the original, that is, everyday life and its reality.

Discussing myths, symbolism, legends, images as well as the archetypal pattern Raja Rao deviates from
the traditional nineteenth century western form of novel. Raja Rao is the most prominent of all the writers who produce a form or formlessness in fiction writing in the Indian Literature. Modern writers gradually take up the study of myths and symbols as the appropriate language and form for expressing man's deepest thoughts and ideas. Myths create everlasting effect on man's mind, hence their popularity shows a gradual increase in their usage in the novels. Moreover "Owing to their universal nature and timelessness and power to convey that which cannot be otherwise expressed... modern writers find it useful to convey their ideas more explicitly through this device.

According to Joseph Campbell,

myth is a system of metaphysics; it is a 'revelation of transcendental mysteries' it is 'symbolic of the spiritual norm for Man the Microcosm.'


Campbell further adds that myth is the picture language of metaphysics. But this study limits itself to studying how myth is used as a technique in the novel, and discusses metaphysics only where the mythical form refers to it. In the novel The Serpent and the Rope Raja Rao employs numerous and repeated references to myths and legends. He makes use of Indian as well as Western legends. These legends are not meant for digressions but form an integral part of the technique by the author. With the help of legends Raja Rao tries to present a clear picture of the prevailing condition of that very moment. The discursive passages on myths and metaphysics are interpretations and not deviations as Raja Rao himself admits. The narrative produces the impression that we move not in space but in time and from time to timelessness. The actions look as though suspended for the time being and what is described is no more related to an external event than to a belief, a truth or an experience. Raja Rao, thus, from time to time introduces sentences that bring us back to some thought provoking analysis or discussion of a philosophical idea of an abstract introspection which is enlivened by aphoristic statements. Since he deals with the metaphysical problems in order to reach the Ultimate Reality, he finds myths and symbols as the best vehicle to convey his ideas. His encyclopaedic knowledge and varied interests help him to draw the required material from the Indian mythology as
well as from the Western one.

In Kanthapura Raja Rao reveals that villagers visualise all the important aspects of their lives through religious point of views by mythicising them. The old grandmother who relates the tale is familiar with local legends and myths from the Puranas, and in a gossipy way relates the happening of the 1930's. Every village in India has its own sthala-purana or local myths. Raja Rao in his Foreword states:

There is no village in India, however mean, that has not a rich sthala-purana, or legendary history, of its own. Some God or godlike hero has passed by the village—Rama might have rested under this pipal-tree, Sita might have dried her clothes, after her bath, on this yellow stone, or the Mahatma himself, on one of his many pilgrimages through the country, might have slept in this hut, the low one, by the village gate. In this way the past mingles with the present, and the gods mingle with men to make the repertory of your grand-mother always bright.

Kanthapura is a sthala-purana where the stories of Gods and god-like heroes are related in order to mingle the past with the present, and the gods with men.

92. Kanthapura, Foreword, p. V
Moorthy, who stands for the Mahatma in his own village stirs the villagers into action in the Freedom Movement. Mahatma Gandhi stands for Rama who kills Ravana and Krishna who destroyed serpent Kali. Gandhi is born to free Mother Bharatha from Ravana and Kansa i.e. the British. The youths say that 'Jawaharlal is like a Bharatha [Rama's brother] to the Mahatma', and it is "like Bharatha we [villagers] worship the sandals of the Brother saint". [Mahatma] until he returns with Swaraj after killing the Red Ravana, the British. The villagers will celebrate their happiness just like on the return of Rama who "will come back from exile, and Sita will be with him, for Ravana will be slain and Sita freed ... as they enter Ayodhya there will be a rain of flowers".

All the activities of the villagers are aptly related with the mythological figures. This is only because the rural people are very religious and more god-fearing in the absence of education than the urban folks. Elsewhere Shiva is compared to Gandhian teachings. Just as, Shiva is said to be three-eyed, so is Swaraj which teaches self-purification, Hindu-Muslim Unity and the use of Khadder. This is the religious method adopted by Jayaramachar in

93. Ibid., p. 258
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
order to teach or enlighten the villagers regarding politics. Tales from mythology become so much part of their life that the villagers use it frequently in their conversation.

The illiterate villagers participate in various festivals throughout the year in order to refresh their numb spirits. It is in the Hindu month of Kartik, otherwise known as the festival of lights that lights are lit in all the streets of the village. It is a belief that:

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gods walk by lighted streets,
blue gods and quiet gods and
bright - eyed gods ...
Kartik is a month of the
gods... Kartik is a month of lights ...
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The village deity, Goddess Kenchamma resides in the red hill from where the river Himavathy emerges. Every offering is made to the Goddess first and they believe that due to her benign presence they enjoy good harvest, perform marriage and have good rain. Gold trinkets are offered to the Goddess to ward off diseases and famine and first rice and fruit and bodice cloth is offered for every birth and death. They believe that their faith in the Goddess would shield them from any calamity which may fall on them. Raja Rao with the help of myths conveys the whole ethos of the

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96. Ibid., p. 116
Indian villagers. The nativeness and simplicity of villagers is shown by their firm belief in myths through which they accept the teachings of Gandhi.

Speaking of myths in *The Serpent and the Rope*, Madeleine though a French lady, associates herself with Indian myths in the later stages of her life when she faces misery and frustration. After the death of her second son instead of grieving she writes to Rama who is in India: "I shall now be a good Vassita." 97

It relates the myth of Lord Buddha and Vassita in which the latter is asked to face death of her son as a natural happening, for there is no house who has seen no deaths. Her understanding the meaning of death and its inevitability is brought to the surface by her innate desire to be a good Vassita and face the tragedy with more compassion and understanding. Thus, Madeleine, slowly drifts into Buddhism and follows its physical practice of yogas and the ritual of japas religiously.

Raja Rao uses several myths in *The Serpent and the Rope* in order to convey contemporary man's predicament in the universe and also to express the hidden recesses within the human heart. The myths of Shiva and Parvathi and Nandi are expressed in all its fineness.

97. *The Serpent and the Rope, op. cit.*, p. 289
Somewhere over against the sky should Kailas stand, and Shiva and Parvathi besport themselves therein, for the joy of mankind. Nandi, the vehicle and disciple of Shiva, that bull without blemish, would wander round the world, hearing the sorrows of this vast countryside, hearing of painful birth and death, of litigation, quarrel and paupery. 98

Though Nandi knows the sorrows of the people it is Parvathi who pleads to Shiva to give them happiness. So no one knows when a sack of gold will be at one's threshold. Another example of a myth is the story of Radha and Krishna and Durvasa the sage. Radha to honour the Sage cooks food herself and takes it across the Jamuna, the river making way when she utters;

"Krishna, the Lord, the brahmachari, wishes that the way he made for me to pass through". 99

On reaching the other side the Sage eats all the food Radha brings and his mighty hunger is satiated. On return she wants the Jamuna in floods to make way for her return, Durvasa has the power to make the river make way. Radha cries:

98. Ibid., p. 35
99. Ibid., p. 381
"River, Durvasa who is ever in upavasa says opens and let me pass." 100

Radha is annoyed as neither Krishna is a brahmachari nor Durvasa an upavasi, nature obeys lies, Truth remains unknown. Krishna explains to Radha that it is not the body nor the mind which is Krishna but the principle. He tells her that the world is an illusion and none can possess the Absolute and "The "I" is the Absolute." 101 Radha understands the Truth and falls at Krishna's feet.

Raja Rao chooses myths as the appropriate method to convey an idea but he makes no mistake in choosing legends of Indian origin as well as of other civilization to give a concrete shape to the illusory ideas and give them a definite shape and understanding. Indian grandmothers are gifted with good memory to reproduce legends handed over from generations. Here we see grandmother Lakshamma telling a sweet story of Satyakama, son of King Dharmaraja of Dharampuri, who is banished from the kingdom and sent to the forest. This unfortunate prince meets a princess coming out of budumekayé (brinjal). She is a beautiful Princess of Avanti, Ramadevi, the eldest of the

100. Ibid.
101. Ibid., p. 382
seven sisters. Satyakama weds Ramadevi and takes her to a
new kingdom of happiness and joy. The legend is related to
the meeting of Rama whose search leads to the princess
Savithri.

Satyavan and Savithri is another legend of
the Hindu myth of Mahabharata. This is again related to
Rama and Savithri. Just as Savithri awakens the spiritual
heritage in Rama, so is Savithri who brings back her
husband, Satyavan from the clutches of Yama, the God of
death, by her courage and sharp intellect. Satyavan, as
the name itself implies is the symbol of, "The self, the
Truth" 102 and Savithri a symbol of life through which the
self knows itself to be, "eternal - he is deathless" 103.

Raja Rao in order to highlight Rama's
relationship with Savithri makes use of the legend of
Jagannath Bhatta and Shah Jehan's daughter. It is Bhatta
who marries the Moghul princess and takes her to Benares.
The entire populace of Benares rises against Bhatta for
bringing a muslim into the temple of Kalabhairava. The
poet, Bhatta then takes his bride through the dirty lanes
to reach the ghats of the Ganges, and says :

"Mother Gangâ, great Mother
Gangâ, I bring thee my bride,

102. Ibid., p. 360
103. Ibid., p. 361
my princess..." 104

Mother Gangā rises and washes the feet of the bride and it is here that Bhatta composed the famous verses of the Gangalahari. Rama in praise of Savithri says that if he was born in the seventeenth century he could have written verses like Jagannath Bhatta.

It was Saturday and Little Mother believes that it is important to relate the story of Rama. In the legend, it is Ishwara Bhatta who emphasises to his son Brahma Bhatta the importance of retelling the story of Rama. The story when retold on Saturday brings happiness and auspicious things in the house. Such is the belief of Little Mother too. By retelling the story, happiness shall ever remain in their house. This is a practice even today amongst the educated Hindu Indians.

Being a brahmin, Raja Rao is well-versed in the Indian myths and legends but it is his vast knowledge of other cultures that inspires him to draw sources from other civilizations too. A mention of the classical myth of Demeter, Poseidon and Ulysses is made through Madeleine when she awaits the birth of her first child in a nursing home. A Chinese fable of Wang - Chu and Chang - Yi is related by Rama to Savithri. Rama takes the help of such

104. Ibid., p. 178
legends in order to make the illusory concrete and truth which is, "a puzzle, a riddle, a mathematic of wisdom 105 for Savithri to understand.

The spiritual marriage of Savithri with Rama is another mythic parallel in the Western legend of Tristan and Iseult. Tristan who sets out to bring Iseult as a bride to King Mark of Tintagel, himself falls in love with her. Their love continues even after the marriage of Iseult to King Mark, and eventually leads to death. Similar is the condition of Savithri who is persuaded by Rama to marry Pratap. But Rama falls in love with Savithri and their love continues even after her marriage with Pratap. But death is not the end result as we see in Tristan and Iseult instead the meetings of Rama and Savithri bring forth fresh hopes and inspirations to the quester Ramaswamy. He admits that love neither demands, says or knows anything but it lives only for itself.

As noticed, it is mostly with Savithri that Rama indulges in the philosophic rantings. It is in the context of Savithri that Raja Rao excels in the use of myths and legends. At some places Raja Rao blends one civilization with another. The love story of Iseult and Tristan is analogous to Satyavan and Savithri or even Radha and Krishna. Rama and Savithri indulge in deeper aspects of

105. Ibid., p. 126
life and abstract elements, such as:

"Pain — what is it?" she asked

"Pain, I answered, "is the residue of action."

"And joy?"

"Joy is the identity of love." 106

Rama further explains that:

"No, Satyavan cannot die. Man must unto himself be himself and his bride... "Man must die, Savithri, nevertheless." [Rama]

"There never was a woman. There never can be a woman. when Tristan died, Iseult came. Iseult always comes too late." [Savithri]

If Iseult had died?" 106 [Rama]

"Iseult was death itself. When death dies." [Savithri]

"Tristan is born. And there never, never is an Iseult." [Rama]

"What happens to Iseult, then?" [Savithri]

"She is Tristan." [Rama]

"Tristan, do not die!" [Savithri]

"Satyavan will not die, Savithri." 107 [Rama]

Moreover

106. Ibid., p. 364

107. Ibid., p. 360
"Because Krishna is not Krishna yet. And when he is Krishna there is not Radha as Radha, but Radha is himself. That is the paradox, Savithri, the mortal paradox of man." 108

The narrator of The Serpent and the Rope is more intelligent and sophisticated than Moorthy in Kanthapura. Hence the mythology here is more esoteric and emblematical. Raja Rao uses myths and legends to integrate the past and the present into the essential oneness of history. He seems not to show any difference between the Ganges and the Rhône,

The river Rhône flows like the Ganges, she flows, does Mother Rhône into the seven seas. 109

Again he sees King George the Fifth and Bharata of Ramayana on the same plane, both believe in the impersonality of monarchy for "The King can do no wrong". Just like Bharata who establishes a duality in himself, that is, he apologises for being a King. Soon after his apology he becomes only an agent to the King, "worshipping the sandal of his loved brother placed on

108. Ibid., p. 363
109. Ibid., p. 389
110. Ibid., p. 204
the throne. 111

Raja Rao illustrates the mythical happenings related to historical one. In an example of Karna and Uttara of Mahabharata, he says:

There's always a Karna and Uttara in every battle whether their names be changed to Innocent III or Hughes de Noyers, Bishop of Auxerre. 112

Raja Rao thus draws many elements from epic and philosophical discourse and blends them in a plastic flowing structure.

In The Cat and Shakespeare myths are used either for establishing the identity of characters with the help of mythical analogies or used for substantiating the metaphysical musings of Ramakrishna Pai and Govindan Nair. Pai and Nair draw references from Indian myths, the Puranas and Raja Rao in the dialogues of his characters relates the myths.

We do not find the myths and legends of various civilizations and culture in this novel as we see in The Serpent and the Rope. An Indian myth of the wicked hunter and bilva tree describes a story how the hunter accidentally drops the bilva leaves on Shiva and Shiva

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., p. 101
grants the hunter his vision. The myth states that it is not the manner but the object of worship that is important. It implies that Pai in order to keep his wife Saroja happy gives everything and she in return should be like Shiva whether she receives a good house and riches or not.

In another instance Govindan Nair who comes to Pai with Astavakra Samhita, the text on Vedanta, is described as Bhima, a character in the Mahabharata, to whom Hanuman, of Ramayana, renders him help find to the flower of Paradise. Another myth is of Shantha who during her pregnancy looks as beautiful as Panchali, of the Mahabharata. Shantha knows how to give and she gives everything to Pai. Her complete surrender to Pai in her love-play is like Jinn's giving away all the royal treasure in the story of 'Sindbad the Sailor'. Besides the myth that explain the philosophy of surrender, they are also used for digressions too. For example references are made to the crowned cat treated as the Bastet in Egypt, the Ration office is referred to as the Holy Cow, Kamadhenu, Vishnu seen resting on his seven headed serpent and also the vehicle of the Gods like the rat vehicle of Lord Ganesha, the bull of Lord Shiva and the Peacock of Lord Subramanya. Legends have not been used and most of the expressions and meanings are expressed through myths.

In Comrade Kirillov too mythical study is harnessed for digression just as in The Cat and Shakespeare
but references are drawn from several cultures just like The Serpent and the Rope. In Comrade Kirillov, Gandhiji, "the great Master of the human race, now born, and already being prepared for his historic mission..." becomes the Messiah and, "The seven wise men of the West would bring their magican offerings to the child of holy Benares. And five would be his favourite disciples, like with the great Galilean and Kirillov would be one of them". Before Christianity came women was only a helper, a mother to look after children and a slave. But in the wake of Christianity:

The troubadour identified the beloved with the Virgin, that woman rose to human standards, and mother and chattel gave way to the beloved.

The Albigensian heresy is traced to be of Buddhist origin:

They spoke even of the spiritual values of the lettuce. They were vegetarians, and all but in name they were some European incarnation of the Hindu.

113. Comrade Kirillov, op. cit., p. 10
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid., p. 78
116. Ibid., p. 79
Numerous mythical allusions are seen in Irene's diary. The historical legend of Bhaskara, the great Indian mathematician of the twelfth century writes his famous work Lilavathi, "... as a puzzle book for his widowed daughter. It was meant to amuse and console her." 117 and compared to Eloise in twelfth century Europe, who was the unfortunate widow sent to the nunnery by her Uncle. Irene thinks of Rama as not of her dream of the true Indian but, "Some Tristan" 118 or "an Aloysha, but a Dimitri added a Karamazov, all right" 119

A reference is made to Sita by Irene who believes that Indian psychology is more advanced than the Westerners. She admires Sita because she is a loyal and a submissive wife and though she has a baby in her belly, she is happy if her, "Lord's will be done" 120 To Sita Rama is God. In contrast Irene thinks of Helen of Troy who has several paramours, unlike Sita who trusts and loves only Rama.

Kirillov's ultimate hope lies in uncovering his limits of ignorant authority while R. is seen to possess a mythic sensation or feeling. While standing to

117. Ibid., p. 96
118. Ibid., p. 109
119. Ibid., p. 118
120. Ibid., p. 117
knock at Kirillov's door his mythic sensation is seen at work, he thinks:

But, what a beautiful thing it would be if, yellow robe in hand, I stood at the bottom on the staircase, a Kanthaka under porch. 121

Kanthaka is the horse of Gautama which he rode on leaving his home to become the Buddha the 'Enlightened One'. Besides a mythical study, Kanthaka is also a symbol on which Kirillov rides to become Enlightened. Raja Rao intends to undertake the task of bringing back the Indian Brahmin, Kirillov, to India to be enlightened, thus putting an end to his quest for the Ultimate Truth.

Another Indian myth to which Raja Rao makes a reference is Parvati's endless waiting at Kanyakumari for Lord Shiva to come and wed her and escort her to his abode. Parvati's waiting is the timeless significance to Mother India who is ever waiting and willing to welcome her estranged sons. "At the tip of India stands Parvati. She is India." 122

Raja Rao paints beautifully the picture of Kamal's endless waiting, as he grows up into an adult, he

121. Ibid., p. 90
122. Ibid., p. 126
is initiated to the love of his country as he delves deep into India which is rich in knowledge and glory. R. makes Kamal conscious of the myth of Shiva and Parvati in order to gain his love for India. The myth of Parvati's conversion into a stone is associated with Kirillov's tragedy who remains in Peking and never returns to India.

Symbol in its original meaning in Greek implies throwing or putting together. Jung considers symbols as a means of uniting the conscious with the unconscious. As Harish Raizada states that, symbol is a "visible sign of something invisible or as that which embodies and is capable of evoking indefinite suggestiveness." 123 This in fact becomes a useful tool for modern writers to communicate and interpret their profound vision of reality and give concreteness to the indefinable impulses of the human spirit. Raja Rao in his The Serpent and the Rope derives symbols from the Indian as well as the French sources. Just as myths are used to highlight a particular situation, symbols are used in the apprehension of the Ultimate Reality. The main symbolism is the title of the novel itself where the 'Serpent' symbolises 'illusion' and the 'Rope' the 'Reality', the 'Ultimate Truth.' It is Advaita theory of Sri Sankara that teaches to differentiate the illusion from reality. Raja Rao in his own words

123. Harish Raizada op. cit., p. 195
explains this theory thus:

The world is either unreal or real - the serpent or the rope. There is no in-between-the-two... The poet who saw the rope as serpent became the serpent, and so a saint. Now, the saint is shown that his sainthood was identification, not realization. The actual, the real has no name. The rope is no rope to itself.

The theory teaches as not to confuse the relative with the Absolute and in order to differentiate this the guidance of a Guru is essential. The symbols find their place in river Ganga, for example:

O Holy Ganga, Mother Ganga thou art purity itself, coming down from Shiva's hair.

The feelings of Rama are expressed in a symbolic fashion after he leaves Savithri at Cambridge and returns to London:

I could see in myself a vastness, as it were a change of psychic dimension, an awareness of a more ancient me. There was no joy in this knowledge, no, no exaltation. There was just a rediscovery, as though having lost a brother

124. The Serpent and the Rope, op. cit., p. 335
125. Ibid., p. 12
in famine or on pilgrimage I had wandered hundreds of miles, had asked policeman and mistress of household for him, had asked barbers, tradesmen and Sadhus for him; as though walking back through time I had asked men with a more antique form of tuft on their heads, with voices more grave, with lips more lecherous;... and as though at each epoch, with each person, I had left a knowledge of myself, a remembered affirmation of myself; and in this affirmation had been the awareness of the Presence that I am, that I am my brother. 126

Rama affirms in this passage that an awareness of his orthodox self's presence was felt by him very strongly.

Rama who is unwell and convalescing in Bangalore, reflects how,

Kapilavastu is the true home of mankind; each one of us has a Kanthaka at his door. 127

In his treatment of symbols, Raja Rao gives numerous symbols of timeless India. Undoubtedly the protagonist, Rama, states that, "Benares was indeed nowhere but inside oneself" 128 Rama earlier describes

126. Ibid., p. 195
127. Ibid., p. 287
128. Ibid., p. 50
Benares as a 'surrealistic city', rather like Baudelaire's Paris. Rama quotes from a poem by Baudelaire called 'Reve Parisien' i.e. Parisian Dream. Scarfe's translation of the quotation is given below:

Impassive, silent Ganges river in the sky poured down the treasures of their urns into diamond abysses.

The Ganges just means river but here it means the imagery Gangā in the sky. Raja Rao, in fact, does not confine the symbolic treatment to one river alone, he also claims that, "Thames is the principle of water made real". Besides the holy city of Benares, "Paris somehow is not a city it is an area in one-self, a Concorde in one's being."

Coming to the third novel, the very title of the novel, The Cat and Shakespeare suggests the Cat as a symbol of Shakti and a Mother of all beings and their protector. If a total surrender is made to the Almighty Mother, she in return gives joy and makes life harmonious and thus man survives. Survival is not limited to merely

129. Ibid., p. 52
130. The Serpent and the Rope, op. cit., p. 204
131. Ibid., p. 51
physical survival but it has broader implications too. It means to survive with a life full of meaning, richness and beauty, if not surrender oneself totally to God who takes care of those who surrender. Shakespeare is the symbol of temporal existence in life comprising of joys and sorrows, triumphs and defeats. Raja Rao makes a relevant remark when he states that Shakespeare knew every mystery of the ration shop, equivalent of the stage on which men and women are actors. The Shakespearean world is seen in its "bewildering diversity". 132 Raja Rao probably chooses to give his novel the title of The Cat and Shakespeare because of the resemblance of the world in its 'bewildering diversity' to the world of Shakespeare. The ration shop symbolises these temporary phases. The multitude that come and go from this shop is the world in itself where people live and die. The kitten symbolises the common man, who like the kitten shows his willingness to surrender to the Almighty.

Raja Rao describes the houses in a significant manner and draws various symbols from them. The house of Pai with all his wisdom symbolises the abode of the Guru. The vastness of the sea stands for knowledge which has no limit and the Guru possesses it. An unusual reference is made to the different types of houses. The

132. Narasimhaiah, Raja Rao, op. cit., p. 133
three-storied house refers to the three gunas, Tamas, rajas and satwa. The people who stand in long queues irrespective of caste and status await their turn to get a little quantity of ration. The long queues are symbolic of the people who stand and suffer in order to fulfil their bare necessities of life. The ration office upstairs allegorically means a place of corrupt practices the ration clerks stand as a symbol of corrupt means practised by people irrespective of caste and creed.

The other characters who accumulate wealth by unfair means do penance by visiting places of pilgrimage. A grain merchant is seen going to Jagannath Puri to offer a silver spire to the Lord for fear of the sins he committed in accumulating money by corrupt means. Similarly Ramakrishna Pai decides to offer the Lord a golden spire, ten men 'high' when Shantha's baby is born. The symbolic meaning of such a gesture is quite explicit.

Besides the corrupt and dishonest men in the ration office there are the honest men who fear that the big boss will not accept the account because the ration office is just above the ration shop and every malpractice is known and nothing remains hidden. This symbolises God who governs all and knows everything that happens in this world. Together with the corrupt men, Raja Rao picturises the metaphysical concept, of the governance of the universe by God, is concretised in images of book-keeping, the
above remark is said to be an equivalent of 'Macbeth' where a drunken porter says, "You can't equivocate to Heaven".

A very simple way in which Raja Rao presents time and eternity is in the example of Pai who when the clock chimes thinks he lives 'in a bit of eternity'.

Besides this novel being a metaphysical comedy it deals with the allegoric and parabolic mode of treatment which remains blurred at the first instance but becomes lucid after several readings. Through fancy the author gives the allegorical mode of framework, but it is softened by the toughness of imagination as seen in the creation of real characters in real life situations. Fantasy is deliberately employed to suggest other levels of consciousness but in so doing facts lose their inherent meanings, as much is to be discerned by the perceiver's subjectivity.

A symbol which repeats itself in The Serpent and the Rope and now in Comrade Kirillov is that of Siddartha being carried on his horse Kanthaka to a place of self-realisation. Towards the end the tip of India is Kanyakumari a symbol of the unmarried Goddess Parvati who awaits eternally for her Lord Shiva to come and take her to his abode of the Himalayas. A few other symbols that appear are the "roundness of the barrel" on which Kirillov is seen seated show his inflexility of mind which keeps ever-changing and has no stability. He sits on a barrel as,
"its roundness made rotation easier". The peculiar parabolic shape in the neck tie of Kirillov assumes the shape of his indrawn nature and it symbolises, "his thought and had given a certain twist of psyche". At times the necktie received its pattings as it, "hissed and curled in ritual approval".

Thus the Indian myths, fables, symbols and tradition find a suitable place in the novels of Raja Rao. He employs these myths and symbols in his technique in order to give a more concrete touch to the idea he wishes to relate to his readers. Irony plays a vital role in the technique. This contrivance is employed to pretend to be ignorant with the intention of exposing, perplexing and irritating. It gives a double-meaning, the hidden as well as the obvious. Superficial reading will fail to discover the implicit irony. Once the element of irony is exposed, the hypocrisy of Kirillov too is exposed and the purpose of the novelist is fulfilled. Raja Rao writes exposing Kirillov in several ways and showing what a dynamic character he is, simply his immediate past and his present is described as a world of intellectual conflict and emotional tension.

133. Comrade Kirillov, op. cit., p. 7
134. Ibid., p. 30
135. Ibid., p. 45
Another noteworthy feature Raja Rao introduces is the adaptation of the archetype pattern. The word 'archetype' is used in the sense of a pattern or model used in creating an original form or experience which repeats itself now and then. The past and the present are linked with experiences what men felt ages ago, it may be a culture or a community or a group and Raja Rao's novel *The Serpent and the Rope* is, "the finest and fullest possible expression of a profound sensibility." 136 though it evokes the spirit of a place or a time transcends both and captures:

a continuity, a palimpsest, a layer after layer of which points to the authencity of its timelessness and persuasiveness. 137

The assimilation of all outer sense experiences to the inner psychic events are not only the primitive needs but it is the main source for the human beings to attain solace and stability. In order to express fully the meaning of the inner and the outer, the primitive and the modern, the old and the new the archetypal pattern is adopted by the author. To keep the vital old cultures alive Raja Rao adopts this culture with his own creative

136. Narasimhaiah *Raja Rao*, op. cit., p. 75
137. Ibid., p. 81
ability to keep the Indian tradition alive which give his writings a sense of identity and rootedness.

The hero of The Serpent and the Rope is a true Brahmin who captures the mystical experience of those Upanishadic sages who have arrived at eternal truths on the banks of the Holy Ganga. Ganga or Mother Gangā,

With her sweet motherliness that one was unhappy to quit, who said it, for she it was, from age to age, who had borne the sorrows of our sorrowful land. Like one of our own mothers, Gangā, Mother Gangā, has sat by the ghats, her bundle beside her. 138

This is one of the examples to state how the inner mind of Rama acts upon the outer forces and it is in the Gangā he finds a sense of solace and holiness.

Raja Rao's novel is full of heightened awareness of life. An example of this effect is prominent when Rama after his sojourn in Europe returns to India on hearing the illness and the subsequent death of his father, reacts quickly to the Indian heritage. Reciting a hymn he slips into one of those curious moods that:

fill us in the vastness of India; we feel large and infinite, compassion touching

138. The Serpent and the Rope, op. cit., p. 33
our sorrow as eyelashes touch the skin. Someone behind and beyond all living things gave us the touch, the tear, the elevation that make our natural living so tender.  

From time and again Raja Rao through his protagonist shows the archetypal experience which enables man to rescue himself from the hazards of life. Raja Rao mentions the Ganga as the 'Gyana Ganga', the knowledge that cuts across time and space and flows eternally giving man a sense of happiness and liveliness to man.

Besides the archetypal experiences of Rama which Raja Rao makes him experience, the rebirth archetype too, is introduced. Where an impression influences the human mind and leaves everlasting image on the mind, The truth or the eternal truth is that the cycle of life and death go on eternally just as the river Ganga flows. Benares the holy city speaks of deathlessness of man for:

In Benares one knows death is as illusory as the mist in the morning. The Ganges is always there.

Innumerable instances of the thrills and joys of the hero are given where he too responds to the environment with the

139. Ibid., p. 36
140. Ibid., p. 11
same awe and inspiration. Sexual pleasures with Madeleine, Rama experiences a 'still wonder':

The wonder that makes the sun shine or the moon speak. 141

His inner feelings find expression in the outer - nature. Thus his feelings with the inner and the outer gives him a sense of continuity.

You know the world will be, for it is; you know the banana ripens on the stem and the coconut falls on the fertile earth - that rivers flow, the parijata blossoms, white and pink between leaves. And as the wind blows, wave after wave of it, and mountains move, the wind stops and you settle into yourself; and you hear it again.. 142

In all the novels of Raja Rao it is noticed that Raja Rao never detaches himself from his native land and the rich heritage of India, its culture and tradition have been beautifully written in them. In Kanthapura there is no doubt about the sensibility we find is strictly Indian. The form, style, language along with words and diction are solely Indian. Though Raja Rao translates the original Kannada words, idioms and phrases into the English

141. Ibid., pp. 158-159
142. Ibid., p. 159
language care is taken not to lose the significance of that word or sentence. He, in this novel organizes both life experience and expression himself. The task to express the Indian rural sensibility indeed is not an easy one but Raja Rao accomplishes it successfully through subtle nuances of language.

Raja Rao, is the first Indian writer in English to realize that the 'Indianness' in his writings should not be of a totally Indian content but of an Indian form also. As he himself remarks:

The Indian novel can only be epic in form and metaphysical in nature. It can only have story within story to show all stories are only parables. 143

This is true of his novel *The Serpent and the Rope*. He shows a curious blend of ancient Indian tradition and modern Western attitudes. He is an experimenter of blending the age old literary expression in the techniques of the modern fiction of the West. In appraisal of Raja Rao Ratna Sheila Mani K. states:

He has brought to Indian fiction in English many elements in which it has previously been largely

deficient; an epic breath of vision, a metaphysical vigour and depth of thought, a symbolic richness, a lyrical fervour and an essential 'Indianness' of style. 144

Here is a passage to indicate the genuine Indianness of Raja Rao's use of English for creating a truly Indian scene and the Indian moods:

In the morning when dose came with filter-coffee, Little Mother really smiled. How much we are dependent on familiar things for our feelings of sorrow or joy. In this new-found ambience, Little Mother almost discovered her old spirits. 145

At times Raja Rao cites the original Sanskrit sloka, because if translated it will lose its dignity and precision, moreover, a parallel expression in English will only tarnish the beauty of the language and the meaning be distorted. A description of an Indian wedding scene shows the rituals and celebrations with Sanskritic rhythm and image:


145. The Serpent and the Rope, op. cit., p. 27
What blues and greens of saris, what diamonds, rubies and sapphires were seen to glint. And by the tulasi Saroja was drying her spread hair on the fire-basket while the women were busy anointing her with henna and turmeric. Mango leaves and silver pots were to be seen all over the verandah and how happy the women looked...

The novel is said to convey a special vision of life with the aid of evocative philosophical suggestions and poetic insights. M. S. Patil renders the novel as intimately Indian:

The poetic, dream-like intimation of life offered from a position above the conscious mind, the mythical scaffolding, and finally, the surrender of a literal humanistic emphasis on human reason and personality, are the truly revealing qualities of its Indianess.

Raja Rao in his Comrade Kirillov presents a character or the protagonist who is torn between two

146. Ibid., p. 268
strong pull of his divided consciousness. On the one hand
the hero's conscious intellectual conviction and commitment
and his emotional leanings on the other. The Indian ethos
or Indianness of the novel is noticed here which
contributes to its brilliance. Being mainly Western in
theme, the novel remains spiritually and basically Indian.

Irene's diary introduces us to an Indian
tradition. It is a practice in South India to give a choli
piece and Kum-Kum to the daughter-in-law by the mother-in-law. Now the mother-in-law being dead:

It is the eldest brother's wife
who sends me [Irene] the ritual
choli-piece Kum-Kum, and an
ancient gold coin from their
old treasury. 148

Though Irene is a Czech she is accepted as
the daughter-in-law by the family of Kirillov.

In conclusion it may be pointed out that Raja
Rao is a realist in the real sense of the word. Reality of
life and the events in the novels may not be identical but
the correspondences between the two stand on a more
realistic plane than on the fabulous. The employment of
innumerable myths and puranic parables are taken for
substantiating certain philosophical truths which are
connected with the events and actions. A unique feature

148. Comrade Kirillov, op. cit., p. 114
noticeable in his narrative technique is Raja Rao's uniqueness in talking about his character as well as through them; the dialogues the character speak either to us or the others or among themselves, we remain spectators and passive listeners throughout. It is the ideas that delve deep into the mind of the reader rather than events. Raja Rao can be aptly called as the novelist of ideas.

Ramesh K. Srivastava's opinion about the works of Raja Rao is that:

Raja Rao has been oblivious of the form and structure of the novel and that he has not been a conscientious artist who carefully works out his plots, weaves his political, social and philosophical views into them, chalks out his own strategy for a suitable narrative technique, whittles every sentence-nay-every word till each one fits in its respective slot.

This impression is formed as Raja Rao took forty years to write four novels and this is the evidence to prove that on an average it took ten years for him to complete a work. At the same time K. K. Sharma is of the view that inspite of all the irrelevances:

Raja Rao is a significant modern novelist, who has evinced a refreshingly fresh approach to the novel and has created new variety of it, viz. a truly Indian novel with its roots deeply embedded in native tradition.

Unquestionably, Raja Rao is a genius and justifies his position as one of the greatest novelists of the world today.