CHAPTER IV

NOVEL AS MYTH: LITERARY PREFIGURATIONS
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References to mythology alone need not generate the qualities of myth in a novel. Apart from the recurrent patterns and common ritual events discussed in the preceding chapters, a certain mythicity in language is attained also through prefiguration. Certain universal patterns as well as forms peculiar to a particular culture dealing with particular locations and named characters constitute a mythic language. This element of myth diffused in the novels in the form of patterned presentation of characters and narrative tone, builds up an aura of myth transforming the novel as myth. John J. White in his book *Mythology in the Modern Novel: A Study of Prefigurative Techniques* makes a detailed discussion on the use of myth as a prefigurative device in fiction. He introduces the term thus:

Mythological motifs will be related to the more general technique of prefiguration, a literary device which embraces both this and other kinds of patterning in the presentation of character and plot.
A myth introduced by a modern novelist into his work can prefigure and hence anticipate the plot in a number of ways. (11) Just like the use of myth, making a symbolic comment on the events in the plot of a novel, the naming of characters and places along with the operation of a different sense of time act as literary prefigurations in the formulation of a mythic language.

Incidentally, Mulk Raj Anand in his article “Content and Form in Untouchable and Kanthapura” says that the works of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan “bridge the gulf between the surviving recitalist narratives in the languages of India and the residual influences of modern techniques in the West” (47). The language of the novels by Achebe and Raja Rao carries the cultural patterns of the respective traditions celebrating the traditional consciousness in the respective contexts. “The language of myth Raja Rao makes use of”, says Alessandro Monti, “is skillfully rooted by him in the polite discourse of the Indian social setting, thus equating the everyday speech of the unsophisticated Hindu people with the words addressed to the gods or spoken by the gods themselves” (8). The language in Achebe’s Things Fall Apart with the polite specific discourse is strikingly similar to the distinct variety of language found in Raja Rao’s Kanthapura with many expressions replacing standard English usage.

However, the mythic consciousness is not conveyed through the language of a single character like Moorthy in Kanthapura or that of Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart. All the characters, major and minor, through their address to gods and men participate through multiple voices in the creation of a mythic
language with their distinctive tone of politeness or deference. The use of similar sentence openings in Kanthapura provides an incantatory effect to the language. Rao created an idiom that was independent yet autochthonous. The word order corresponds to the vernacular speech pattern. Songs from the religious and folk tradition play an important role in the language of both Achebe and Raja Rao.

“The entire novel [Kanthapura] is structured symphonically” says C.D. Narasimhaiah, “music and poetry are built into Indian life and our entire tradition-literary, intellectual and folk-is suffused with poetry and song so much so it has come to be the natural rhythm of our life” (National Identity 158). In both Things Fall Apart and Kanthapura one could find the employment of songs as expressions of judgement. The following song for instance is purposefully ambiguous yet powerful in denigrating the whiteman.

Kotma of the ash buttocks
He is fit to be a slave
The whiteman has no sense
He is fit to be a slave (AT 144)

Another song relates to the mythic presence of the Mahatma who is glorified as a king who can turn poison into nectar.

Our King, he was born on a wattle-mat,
He’s not the King of the velvet bed,
He’s small and he’s round and he’s bright and he’s sacred
O, Mahatma, Mahatma, You’re our king, and we are your slaves

(K 203)
These songs are expressions or responses of a particular historical situation. This interposing of songs provide a cohesion to the narrative, and transpose the language into a timeless, mythic stream. The patterns of language in both novelists, Achebe and Rao establish a correlation between language and the mythic substratum in the respective cultural contexts. C.D. Narasimhaiah comments:

The words become images, images fusing into myths, myths manifesting as symbols, and all organising the material of the novel into a rich and complex presentation. A word, a phrase, an analogy, a dialogue form, even an unsuspected rhythm may take the reader back and forth in the attempt to perceive the hidden pattern.

(Raja Rao 131)

The sound, syntax and sense fuse into one to create the air of a prayer or incantation. For instance:

O Kenchamma! Protect us always like this through famine and disease, death and despair. O most high and bounteous! We shall offer you our first rice and our first fruit and we shall offer you saris and bodice cloth... (K 3)

Thus mythic language in Kanthapura, The Serpent and the Rope as well as Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God is an important constituent of the form of the novel as myth. Rao’s attitude to language is well summarised in the following words of Ramaswamy in The Serpent and the Rope. These words light up the atmosphere in the narrative, which contributes to the understanding of the text as well as the author’s aesthetics:

[Image]
The style of a man— the way he weaves word against word intricates the existence of sentences with the values of sound, makes a coma there and a dash here - all are signs of his inner movement the speed of his life, his breath, the nature of his thought, the ardour and age of his soul; short sentences and long sentences, parenthesis and points of interrogation are only curves in the architecture of thought but has an intimate, a private relation with your navel, your genitals, the vibrance of your eyesight. (SR 168)

One can easily see that, for Rao, language is the link between the mundane and the sacred; speech, for him, is mantra. Repetitive speech or sound has the power of mantra, which imparts a mythic quality to his language. Images such as Ganges, Himalayas, Benares or Siva, Parvati, Yagnavalkya, Krishna are repeated to act as central images of the mythic land of India in the novel The Serpent and the Rope. In Raja Rao’s novels, language is the link between the mundane and the sacred, with the various images of gods, metaphors, similes, and symbols which fulfill certain basic functions: like serving as a major device of characterisation or creation of atmosphere.

Similarly The language of the West African novelists is often influenced and modified by the language of the oral tradition as in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. The rural novels in West Africa abound in the use of proverbs and characteristic turns of phrases through a literal translation from vernacular into English. These proverbs, besides being a mnemonic device, express the philosophical moral inclinations in the collective imagination. Achebe makes use of the elements from the mythopoeic imagination such as proverbs, legends,
puns, jokes, similes, metaphors, allusions, hyperbole, conversation and public oratory. This transforms his English language into a new idiom.

In the same way, the creation of a ritual language can be cited in the context of Ezeulu’s speech at the Festival of Pumpkin Leaves in *Arrow of God*. The event described by the chief priest is related to a mythic time when lizards were “in ones and twos”. The time must be at the very beginning of creation. The mythopoeic struggle of the chief priest with the four days of the week is dramatised. The images and symbols associated with the collective imagination impart a mythopoeic power to the language. As Obeichina observes, “What Achebe has done is to build his language around traditional linguistic characteristics and to fuse them, by applying the mental and verbal habits of traditional people, into a magico-mythopoeic medium” (*Culture* 177).

Again, an atmosphere of power and mystery transporting the spectator to another world, a world beyond human knowledge, is created by the ritual language of the Masks during important ceremonies, like the *Akwu Nro*, a memorial offering by widows to their departed husbands. The appearance of a new Mask on the occasion of the *Akwu Nro* presented by Obika’s age group is described in *Arrow of God* with vivid details. The language invokes emotions of a religious nature in the reader’s mind as in the experience of the beholder of the mask in action:

The Mask arrived appropriately in the crest of excitement. The crowd scattered in real or half-real terror. It approached a few steps at a time, each one accompanied by the sound of bells and rattles on its waist and ankles. Its body was covered in bright new cloths mostly red and yellow.
The face held power and terror, each exposed tooth was the size of a big man’s thumb, the eyes were large sockets as big as a fist, two gnarled horns pointed upwards and inwards above its head nearly touching at the top. It carried a shield of skin in the left hand and a huge machete in the right. ‘Ko-ko-ko-ko-ko-ko-oh! it sang like cracked metal and its attendant replied with a deep monotone like groan:

‘Hum-hum-hum’

‘Ko-ko-ko-ko-ko-ko-oh’

‘Oh-oyoyo-oyoyo-oyoyo-oh! oh-oyoyo-oh

‘Hum-hum’ (AT 524; AG.ch.17)

The use of Igbo expressions in the above instance brings out the effective power of the word in a ritual. Rituals create a context where words and names do not merely represent objects, but are themselves the essence of things. For instance in Arrow of God the words uttered by Obika who carried the ogbuzulobodo as part of a ceremony before a villager’s second burial are potent with a magical power:

The fly that struts around on a mound of excrement wastes his time; the mound will always be greater than the fly. The thing that beats the drum for ngwesi is inside the ground. Darkness is so great it gives horns to a dog. He who builds a homestead before another can boast more broken pots. It is ofo that gives rain water power to cut dry earth. The man who walks ahead of his fellows spots spirits on the way. Bat said he knew his ugliness and chose to fly by night.
When the air is fouled by a man on top of a palmtree the fly is confused.
An ill-fated man drinks water and it catches in his teeth . . . .

(At 551; AG ch. 4)

As a matter of fact, the very existence of life in the Iboland depends on
the enactment of the numerous rites whether it be the prophecies of the oracle of
the Hills and caves in Things Fall Apart or the words of the egwugwu in
Arrow of God. Appearance of masks in the Ibo rituals is an instance of the way
man conceives the mythic ancestors. Joseph Campbell in his article “Historical
Development of Mythology” comments on the role of masks in primitive societies.
The mask is revered as an apparition of the mythical being that it
represents, yet everyone knows that a man made the masks and that
a man is wearing it. The one wearing it, furthermore is identified
with the god during the time of the ritual of which the mask is a
part. He does not merely represent the god, he is the god. The
literal fact that the apparition is composed of (a) a mask (b) its
reference to a mythical being (c) a man is dismissed from the mind,
and the presentation is allowed to work without correction upon
the sentiments of both the beholder and the actor. In other words
there has been on shift of emphasis from the normal secular sphere,
where things are understood to be distinct from each other to a
theatrical or play sphere where they are accepted for what they are
experienced as being and the logic is that of “make-believe”. (244)

Obviously, Achebe deftly handles both these dimensions of a mask referred to
by Campbell when he describes the appearance of the new mask in Arrow of God.
Edogo, the man who made this new mask is watching the mask in action. Edogo moved among the crowd to listen to people praising the hands behind the creation of the Mask. But nobody bothers to think about Edogo, as the mask when it appears is nothing other than a mythical being in the consciousness of the beholder. Neither the man who holds the mask nor the man who prepared it comes to the mind of the people while they witness its ritualistic performance.

Similarly, in Kanthapura the role of the gods, the role of the Mahatma, the mythical reverence shown by the villagers to the Mahatma who comes on earth to retrieve dharma are all contexts where the words assume a potency and meaning imbued with a feeling of Bhakti or reverence. The Kartik festival is one such instance of the unfathomable expressing itself through the responses of the villagers.

Kartik has come to Kanthapura sisters-Kartik has come with the glow of lights and the unpressed footsteps of the wandering gods; white lights from clay-trays and red lights from copper-stands, and diamond lights that glow from the bowers of entrance leaves; . . . and gods walk by lighted streets, blue gods and quiet gods and bright-eyed gods, and even as they walk in transparent flesh the dust gently sinks back to the earth and many a child in Kanthapura sits late into the night to see the crown of this god and that god, and how many a god has chariots with steeds white as foam and queens so bright that the eyes shut themselves in fear lest they be blinded . . . (K 118).

The language in the above paragraph with its stylistic and tonal features conveys the collective consciousness in all its vivid details. It echoes the localised
myth of the Kartik festival in a regional speech rhythm. The literary devices used by Raja Rao for complementing the mythic quality of the narrative include the frequent use of familiar archetypal images from religious faith, or the use of Kannada words like Ayyappa, Ayyayyo and so on or the proverbial expressions in Kannada like “If you are the sons of your father, do what this learned boy says” (K 110) or “Tell me does a boar stand before an elephant? or a jackal before a lion?” (K 189).

Again, like Achebe who employs Ibo proverbs in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God, Rao uses the Kannada idioms and expressions. Expressions like “I have seen your elders. “You cannot be a traitor to your salt givers” and the respectful addresses in the names like Bhattare, Ramannore, Moorthappa are used to denote praise, flattery or decorum. The Kannada speech with its intimate tonal nuances is adopted in an unobstrusive way. The novel Kanthapura makes use of the native Kannada ingredients in the language. K.R. Rao comments:

The anaconda like structure of the sentences, [remind] one of the polyphonic manner of the classical legends. The political upheaval that has rocked Kanthapura is fully explored in the grand detours and involutions of the style, imparting to it a vernacular resonance without radically disturbing the natural structure or manner of English. English thus localised by Raja Rao is neither a mask, nor a habit but a passion in tune with the inner and circumstantial world of the people and the genius of place described by the narrator. (122)

Furthermore, Rao’s experiments in language are similar to that of Amos Tutuola, Achebe and Gabriel Okara who have introduced the rhythm of native
Employment of mythopoetic attitude in the creation of a literary work is effected in more than one way. The role of prefigurative devices like allusion to mythic or sacred time and the characteristic practice of naming are taken up for detailed analysis. D.S. Izevbaye in his article “Naming and the Character of African Fiction” comments:

The conventional focus of fiction criticism has been plot or narrative structure, theme, characterisation, setting and style. Other elements are usually considered marginal or secondary to fiction criticism and more sociological than literary. For example we are less likely to think of time or names as literary concepts than we are of plot or characterisation... elements like time, names, myths that can be transformed to other contexts without being radically transformed by the change. (163)

Consequently, Okonkwo’s language, suffused with proverbs and stories, like Moorthy’s speech resonating with the legendary lore of Kantapura fits the purpose of placing individual thoughts in the larger mythopoetic domain of the respective cultural contexts. The protagonists in the four novels under study, Moorthy in Kantapura, Rama in The Serpent and the Rope, Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart, Ezeulu in Arrow of God rely on traditional wisdom in their assertion of their personal point of view which impart to them a representative quality. The voice of Achakka in Kantapura is the voice of mythic India elevating the narration to the vast mythic panorama in the Indian villages. In the language of both Rao and Achebe, one could trace the confident mythic urge springing from the cultural ethos of the two nations, placing the works in a domain of
creative freedom which is shared by many other Third World writers. The language, in these novels is a language of spiritual subjugation. But the language used by Achebe’s characters in the novels of the urban setting does not go beyond the immediate frame of linguistic reference. Obi in *No Longer at Ease* tells Clara, “Oh don’t waste my time. There are other things to do I haven’t got my steward yet and I haven’t bought my pots and pans” (AT 233; No. Longer ch.7). One can never conceive of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* or Ezeulu in *Arrow of God* complaining about lack of time. The following description reveals the limitation of immediate personal concerns of the character in *No Longer at Ease*: “They went in the car and made for the Jeweller’s shop in Kings way and bought a twenty pound ring. Obi’s heavy wad of sixty pounds was now very much reduced” (AT 233; No. Longer ch.7). The words ‘the car’ ‘the Jewellers shop’ ‘twenty pound ring’ ‘Kings way’ all point out to the temporal and geographical aspects of the immediate environment.

On the other hand, the conversations interspersed with proverbs harp on life in the collective sense and go beyond the limited self of the character concerned. The language spoken by characters in *No Longer at Ease*, *A man of the People*, and *Anthills of the Savannah* corresponds to the linguistic sensibility peculiar to urban social life. The language of Obi in *No Longer at Ease*, Odili in *A Man of the People*, Chris in *Anthills* generally consists of words denoting a single layer of meaning. “conferred on them from the immediate context” (Obeichina 187). Obeichina says that the different layers of meaning in the language of Ezeulu and Okonkwo give an effect of concentration to the language and this concentration, slows its movement. But the characters in the
earlier and later novels of Rao, speak in a mythic language that they do not fall into single layered significance as in the urban novels of Achebe. But the language of Kirillov in *Comrade Kirillov* corresponds to the flat style of Obi Okonkwo in *No Longer at Ease*. His language is a straight, single layered one that confirms the impression of a limited individual consciousness like that of Obi in *No Longer at Ease* or Odili in *Man of the People*. As Rosemary Colmer puts it:

Okonkwo and Ezeulu are nobler in their stand for a principle, even if it brings them into conflict with the valid and pragmatic terms of reference of their community. Obi’s principles are equally admirable, but he fails them. Odili Samalu constantly vacillates between moral sentiment and underhand action, so that the narrative form establishes what audience sympathy he has, not by his firm stand for a moral philosophy. (40)

Moreover, the cliche and commonplace slang used by Odili in *Man of the People* establish a commonplace ethos instead of the traditional Ibo ethos projected by the language of Okonkwo or Ezeulu. Rama in *The Serpent and the Rope* though placed in a metropolitan background expresses his thoughts and feelings in a language full of mythical references which impart a quality of timelessness within a context that goes beyond the immediate geographical set up. Max Bilen says, “artistic creation is an effort to recreate language in order to make possible a passage from the verbal to the formal, access to sacredness, since what is an issue is to experience universality and timelessness” (733).

Consequently, the need to find a new kind of language is necessary because it is connected to “reorienting the language to express a set of perceptions, a
vision faithful to the collective but varied experience and aspirations of a people” (Thumbo 259). The use of English language by writers like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan is a reflection of the essence of regional realities highly flavoured by their own languages. Meenakshi Mukherjee contrasts their distinctive English from that of other Indian English novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Manohar Malgaonkar whose English “neither betrays their own origin nor gives much clue to the regional identity of the characters they create” (152). Raja Rao’s perception and style, unlike that of R.K. Narayan are mainly presented through images especially in the short stories in The Cow of the Barricades and in Kanthapura. The language in The Serpent and the Rope betrays a certain pattern that reveals the various cultural paradigms in operation in the consciousness of Rama and Madeleine.

In Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God the images, symbols and patterns are intimately related to agricultural life in the respective Ibo villages. But when it comes to A Man of the People, for instance, the conversation of Chief Nanga betrays his distancing from the conventional stream of thought. His language is down to earth and matter of fact. Such a prosaic style is seen in Kanthapura only in the conversation between Badekhan and the villagers or in the talk between the mara and the labourers in the Skeffington coffee estate. All intense interpersonal relationships are revealed in a mythic, poetic style both in Kanthapura and The Serpent and the Rope. Similarly, the following pieces of conversation from Arrow of God - one from the mythic stream and the other from the immediate environment will illustrate the qualitative change in the language employed according to the context in question. Ezeulu speaks:
Umuaro is today challenging its Chi. Is there any man or woman in Umuaro who does not know Ulu, if the deity that destroys a man when his life is sweetest to him? Some people are still talking of carrying war to Okperi... Today the world is spoilt and there is no longer head or tail in anything that is done. But Ulu is not spoilt with it. If you go to war to avenge a man who passed shit on the head of his mother's father, Ulu will not follow you to be soiled in the corruption. (AT 364; AG ch.2)

Evidently, this conversation can be contrasted with the matter of fact style of Captain Winterbottom who complains:

"What I find so heart-rending" said Winterbottom, "is not so much the wrong policies of our administration as our lack of consistency. Take this question of paramount chiefs... The fellow come over here and spend a long time discovering the absurdities of the system which I had pointed out all along". (AT 431; AG ch.10.)

Thus the very structure of sentences in both Achebe and Raja Rao can be seen to have a relationship with the mythology of the respective cultural domains. Obeichina's observations regarding the speech of Ezeulu remind us of this mythic connection to language. The habit of dualisation in Ezeulu's speech is a reflection of Ibo religious views on life. The recitation of Ezeulu at the Festival of the Pumpkin Leaves illustrates this aspect:

Great Ulu who kills and saves, I implore you to cleanse my household of all defilement. If I have spoken it with my mouth or seen it with my eyes, or if I have heard it with my ears or stepped on...
it with my foot, or if it has come through my children or my friends
or kinsfolk let it follow these leaves. (AT 392; AG. ch.7)

Undoubtedly, the chief priest’s speech at the meeting of the elders which
took place under the timeless ogbu tree is another example of the two part structure
of sentences that suits the occasion of an impending conflict with the whiteman:

A man does not summon Umuaro and not set before them even a
pot of palm wine. But I was taken by surprise and as you know the
unexpected beats even the man of valour. ‘My Kinsman’ he said in
conclusion. ‘that was what I woke up this morning and found.
Ogbuefi Akuebue was there and saw it with me. I thought about it
for a long time and decided and Umuaro should join with me. In
seeing and hearing what I have seen and heard; for when a man
sees a snake all by himself he may wonder whether it is all ordinary
snake or the untouchable python. So I said to myself Tomorrow I
shall summon Umuaro and tell them. Then one mind said to me:
Do you know what may happen in the night or at dawn?
(AT 465; AG. ch.13)

Also, the following description of Ezeulu’s son, Obika with the Ike-agwu-ani
round his neck, who combines opposites as seen in the description of the spirit
in action leaving potent words behind, is yet another example of the same stylistic
device.

He was at once blind and full of sight. He did not see any of the
landmarks like trees and huts but his feet knew perfectly where
they were going, he did not leave out even one small path from the accustomed route. He knew it without the use of eyes.

(AT 551; AGch.19)

Similarly, Rama in The Serpent and the Rope speaks in a style which reminds one of the traditional Advaitic concepts of life with a three part structure leading to a final resolution. Triplicity, which comes to a final resolution, is an archetypal pattern in the metaphysics of the Advaitin. The three gunas, which constitute Prakriti, culminate in the final merging with the Absolute. Echoes of these archetypal patterns are evidently seen in the speeches of Ramaswamy in The Serpent and the Rope, and Sastri in The Chessmaster.

In time with this, the proverbs in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God express the philosophical and moral inclination emerging from the Ibo mythic imagination. They emerge from the observation of human behaviour and natural phenomenon. The abundant use of “the palm oil with which words are eaten” in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God attributes to those works a mythic flavour as the frequent allusions to the mythological characters in Kanthapura and The Serpent and the Rope testify to the expression of a mythic substratum in the Indian scheme of things. Proverbs in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God serve to place the individual character in a larger scheme of mythic consciousness.

Indeed, Prof. C.D Narasimhaiah, talking about Kanthapura and The Serpent and the Rope observes:

the words become images, images fusing into myths, myths manifesting as symbols and all organising the material of the novel into a rich and a complex presentation . . . . A word, a phrase, an
analogy, a dialogue form, even an unsuspected rhythm may take
the reader back and forth in the attempt to perceive the hidden
pattern. (Raja Rao 133)

For example, Ackakka in Kanthapura fascinates the reader with her
digressions, proverbs, parables and allusions. The following addresses by her to
the village Goddess is, in C.D. Narasimhaiah’s opinion, “remarkably close in
sound to the mantras and hymns chanted throughout India” (Raja Rao 157).

Here is an instance from the text:

O Kenchamma! Protect us always like this through famine and
disease, death and despair, through the harvest night shall we dance
before you, the fire in the middle and the horns about us, we shall
sing and sing and clap our hands and sing. (K 3)

In a similar way, in the fictional world of Achebe, “there are proverbs
for every occasion, proverbs to suit every situation and to light up every
experience. Every significant affirmation can be strengthened with a proverb,
every customary value, belief attitude or outlook can be supported with proverbs,
social problems and personal difficulties can be settled by an appeal to these
sanctioning proverbs” (Obeichina 156). Obeichina highlights the importance of
proverbs stating that they become “an artistic device for giving complexity to
the narrative, unity to form, coherence and pattern to action and direction to
moral and social insight” (157). It is also an aid to characterisation as in the case
of Okonkwo’s character, which is presented through proverbs of power motif
such as this one: when a man says, ‘yes’ his chi also says yes also”. The
proverbs help in the myth making process of transporting one from the immediate
and purely referential context to a realm of collective sensibility. The use of proverbs or conventional aphorisms in the novels of both Raja Rao and Achebe take the speaker to analogies and broader applications, which contribute to a many-layeredness of meaning.

For substantiation, the following tables provide ample illustration for the culture specific language used by Raja Rao and Achebe in the four novels under consideration.

Table 1
Kanthapura and The Serpent and the Rope:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture Specific Expressions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God - world [heaven] (K 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banana - libation [offering] (K 18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christin tongue [English] (K 71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let us not dissatisfy our manes (K 36)</td>
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<tr>
<td>let our family creepers link each other (K 38)</td>
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<tr>
<td>crush it in its seed [Nip it in the bud] (K 44)</td>
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<tr>
<td>country of hammer and sickle and electricity [Soviet Union] (K 47)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rengamma was no village kid like us (K 48)</td>
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<tr>
<td>he neither smoked nor grew city-hair (K 48)</td>
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<tr>
<td>you cannot put wooden tongues to men (K 49)</td>
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<tr>
<td>seated at their eating leaves (K 50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the youngest is always the holy bull, (K 51)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
coconut and betel-leaf good-bye (K 132)

plants herself like a banana trunk (K 57)

Kitchen-queen (K 58)

the leaf is laid [Dinner is waiting] (K 64)

ask the squirrel on the fence (K 62)

she shrivelled like banana-bark [grew lean and skinny] (K 65)

Poke your fuel-chip against them (K 72)

She’s an old sour milk [She’s cumbersome] (K 85)

Give them a shoe-shower (K 85) [kick them]

do not leave us to eat dust (K 89)

Crops will rise god-high (Crops will rise sky-high) (K 118)

the sinner will go to the ocean but the water will only touch his knees (K 94)

lean as an arecanut tree (K 173)

money does not grow on mango-trees (SR 287)

he’s the bearing of a young pipal tree, tall and sacred, and the serpent-stones around it (SR 9)

the Brahmins of Benares are like the crows asking for funeral rice-balls(SR 12)

I fell before the rice-balls of my mother (SR 7)

the blue-throated, the three eyed granter of all desires

[Little mother] She slept as though the waters of the Ganges were made of sleep and each one of us a wave (SR 27)

sufficient that the girl did not agree (SR 29)
thy water is strewn with Kusha grass and flowers (SR 33)
the Ganges with her sweet motherliness that one was unhappy to quit (SR 33)
Ganga, Mother Ganga has sat by the ghats, her bundle beside her (SR 33)

my Aryan ancestors went up the Ganges to seek the solitude of the snows and the identity of Truth (SR 35)
Truth is the Himalayas, and Ganges humanity (SR 35)

bring me a glass of white water (SR 40)
If wisdom became water, the Ganges would be that water, flowing down to the seven seas (SR 41)
let my ashes serve as tilak on thy brow (SR 43)
I am beyond imagination, form of the formless,
Form of consciousness and Bliss; Shiva I am, I am Shiva (SR 114)
the Brahmin is never contemporary - he goes backwards and forwards in time, and so has a sage to begin the genealogical tree, and a Guru to end the cycle of birth and death (SR 125)
Like ancient castor oil lamps with five petals (SR 292)
like water on a swan or a lotus leaf (SR 186)

The culture specific patterning in language is evinced in numerous other situations too. Table 2 in the next page enumerates the proverbial expressions related to animal world, god-world and day to day life in Achebe’s Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. They are the gist of the philosophical and moral concepts in the
tradition. They are derived from the mythic stream of folklore, value associations and perceptions about god and natural phenomenon. When a character utters a proverb, he allows himself to be judged by the mythic imagination. Achebe, more than any other West African writer, has effectively used the proverbs especially in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God and in a lesser degree in A Man of the People and No Longer at Ease. These proverbs include proverbs related to power, Chi, solidarity, element of the unusual, danger, the approach to change, compromise in society and so on. They sometimes serve the purpose of inciting emotional response as when the ritual run of an Ogbazulobodo, a midnight spirit is described in Arrow of God. These proverbs, with images of death and defeat provide a clue to the imminent disaster awaiting the chief priest, Ezeulu.

Table 2

**Proverbial Expressions: Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God**

The sun will shine on those who stand, before it shines on those who kneel under them (AT 20).

If a child washed his hands, he could eat with kings (AT 21)

When a man says yes his Chi says yes also (AT 35)

His eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat (AT 60)

A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches (AT 62)

A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which its mother puts into its palm (AT 63)
As mother-cow is chewing grass its young ones watch its mouth  

(AT 65)

If I fall down for you and you fall down for me, it is play (AT 67)

Umostia was like a startled animal with ears erect, sniffing the silent ominous air (AT 159)

It was no more than the power in the anus of a proud dog who sought to put out a furnace with his puny fart (AT 322)

take my name and give it to a dog (AT 323)

The man who has never submitted to anything will soon submit to the burial mat (AT 329)

If the lizard of the homestead should neglect to do the things for which its kind is known, it will be mistaken for the lizard of the farmland (AT 336)

Like one stung in the buttocks by a black ab (AT 336)
carry fire and water in the same mouth (AT 337)
a boy sent by his father to steal does not go stealthily but breaks the door with his feet? (AT 337)

land of the white man where they say the sun never shines (AT 338)

when a man of cunning dies, a man of cunning buries him (AT 339)

from cock-crow until roosting time (AT 339)

he goat's head dropping into he goat's bag (AT 344)

the fly who has no one to adverse it follows the corpse into the grave (AT 345)

If a man says yes, his Chi also says yes (AT 347)
When we see a little bird dancing on the middle of the pathway we must know that its drummer is in the nearby bush (AT 359)

The world is like a Mask dancing If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place (AT 365)

a man who brings home ant-infested faggots should not complain If he is visited by lizards (AT 379)

The very thing which kills mother rat prevents its little ones from opening their eyes (AT 381)

fussing about like a hen in search of a nest (AT 387)

If I drink water, it sticks between my teeth (AT 388)

An old woman is never old when it comes to the dance she knows (AT 389)

he must have got out of bed from the left side (AT 402)

a man may refuse to do what is asked of him but may not refuse to be asked (AT 406)

the death that will kill a man begins as an appetite (AT 410)

if a man sought for a companion who acted entirely like himself he would live in solitude (AT 414)

the only medicine against palm-wine is the power to say no (AT 419)

let us first chase away the wild cat, afterwards we blame the hen (AT 420)

we can be sure that somewhere there something happened long ago
which touched the roots of her life (AT 421)

whatever tune you play, in the compound of a great man, there is always someone to dance to it (AT 422)

a man who visits a craftsman at work finds a sullen host (AT 435)

the flute player must sometimes stop to wipe his nose (AT 442)

the fly that perches on a mound of dung may strut around as it likes, it cannot move the mound (AT 454)

when two brothers fight, a stranger reaps the harvest (AT 455)

a man who has nowhere else to put his hand for support puts it on his own knee (AT 457)

a toad does not run in the day time unless something is after it (AT 461)

a woman cannot place more than the length of her leg on her husband (AT 491)

every lizard lies on its belly, so we cannot tell which has a bellyache (AT 494)

when mother-cow is cropping giant grass her calves watch her mouth (AT 496)

he crooked the first finger of his left hand and drew it across his brow and over his eyes to clear the water that blinded him (AT 567)

like cleaning the anus before passing the excrement (AT 509)

if one fingers brought oil, it messed up the others (AT 512)

a man must dance the dance prevalent in his time (AT 514)

a man who asks questions does not lose his way (AT 529)
an adult does not sit and watch while the she-goat suffers the pain of child birth-tied to a post (AT 531)
a person who sets a child to catch a shrew should also find him water to wash the odour from his hand (AT 533)
when brothers fight to death, a stranger inherits their father’s estate (AT 545)
Darkness is so great it gives horns to a dog (AT 551)
he who builds a homestead before another can boast of more broken pots (AT 551)
the man who walks ahead of his fellows spots spirits on the way (AT 551)
Bat said he knew his ugliness and chose to fly by night (AT 551)
He who sees an old hag squatting ...should leave her alone; who knows how she breathes? (AT 551)
He who will swallow udala seeds must consider the size of his anus (AT 551)
The mighty tree falls and the little birds scatter in the bush . . . (AT 552)
A common snake which a man sees all alone may become a python in his eyes (AT 552)
The boy who persists in asking what happened to his father before he has enough strength to avenge him is asking for his father’s fate (AT 552)
When death wants to take a little dog it prevents it from smelling even excrement (AT 552)
no man however great was greater than his people; (AT 555)
The oppositional pairing in the sentence structure of the above proverbs in Table 2 can be related to the dualisation of thought in the Ibo mythic scheme. This contrastive duality of sentences can be seen in the structure of sentences in Raja Rao’s fiction also. Paul Sharrad in Raja Rao and Cultural Tradition refers to it as a 2+2 form in the sentence structure which could be ascribed to Vedanta’s division of 'artha, 'and 'kama' from 'dharma 'and 'moksha'. Rama in The Serpent and the Rope ruminates over metaphysical issues in a pattern of oppositional pairings as the following table would testify.

Table 3

Oppositional Pairing in Sentences from Raja Rao’s Novels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The impossible, for grandfather, was always possible(SR 7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The unreal is possible because the real is (SR 22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both knew by birth that life is no song but a brave suffering (SR 20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For what is holiness but the assurance man has of himself (SR 60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be a woman, was to be absorbed by a man (SR 187)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here I am, you cannot take me, you cannot forget me (SR 78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It cannot make itself and nothing else can (SR 188)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not achievement but self recognition is pure significance (SR 215).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality is when you die really (CS 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is a riddle that can be solved with a riddle (CS 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twilight is the choice time of the tiger, as dawn is of the Brahmin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Chesa 146)
Murder for me is when I do not exist (Chess 151)

India's freedom was the dream of all western imperialism

(Chess 236)

Nothing is ever lost, nothing ever gained as Newton will know

(Chess 370)

Whenever Raja Rao is preoccupied with the duality of the phenomenal, he resorts to this duality of sentence structure as against the three part structure finally reaching a fourth unit of fulfillment whenever his consciousness ruminates on metaphysical preoccupations. Both patterns of sentences, invest his language with the potencies of sacred incantations which imparts the rhythm of eternity into it. The oppositional pairing as well as the tripartite structure reaching a quaternary unit conform to the archetypal Vedantic discourse. In the words of Raja Rao “man has not only four estates, but has four avasthas, conditions, states. They are from the vedic times, waking state the dream state and deep sleep state and the final or Turiya, where even the trace of the ego may not exist” (Ultimate Word 8). The three part phrasing in the sentence structure falling into an invisible presence or resolution in Kanthapura as well as The Serpent and the Rope is listed in Table 4.
### Table 4

**Tripartite Sentences in Raja Rao**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If rains came not, you fall at her feet and say ‘Kenchamma, Goddess, you are not kind to us. (K 8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why not unearth it and wash it and consecrate it (K 15)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When he stood up with the bills at his angles and the symbols in his hands, how true and near and brilliant the God-world seemed to us (K 17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you think of having the Rama festival, the Krishna festival, the Ganesh festival (K 17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray seat yourself and the messengers of Heaven shall fly to Kailas and Siva be informed of it (K 22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is neither caste nor class nor family (K 19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But being a Gandhian and a Vedantin and an Indian (CK 26)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirillov however was learned, uninnocent and brilliant of mind (CK 10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman is the microcosm of the mind, the articulations of space, the knowing in knowledge (SR 352)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myth was to be made the revelation of a puzzle, a riddle, a mathematic of wisdom. (SR 126)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ganges was an inner truth to me, an assurance, the origin and end of my Brahmanic tradition. (SR 376)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The repetition of binary, tertiary and quartenary units in the structure of sentences can be related to the thought patterns in traditional Hindu discourse. Most of the proverbs quoted in Table 2 from Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* correspond to the traditional Ibo mythic scheme of thought. The Ibo mythic scheme incorporates the concept of the creative pair - the sky and the earth, the male and the female; the deities may be malignant or benign, celestial or materialistic. As S.K. Sarma in his article “Okonkwo and his Chi” comments:

One of the fundamental aspects of the Ibo belief is that whenever something stands, something Else stands behind it. Chi, as the individual manifestation of the supreme creator (chukwu) is responsible for the traits, gifts and talents of the individual. Man strikes a deal with his Chi in everything. If one grows too proud or too big for his shoes, he would be overthrown by his Chi. (67)

This duality of perceptions reflected in the language sees together the man and his Chi, the individual and the community which is a fundamental aspect of the Ibo scheme of things. The relationship between the Chi and supreme Chi corresponds to the concept of the individual soul and the universal soul in Indian thought. The traditional linguistic characteristics of the proverbs and the images cited in Tables 1, 2 and 3 point out to the verbal habits of the people in the two communities which form a magico-mytho-poeic medium. Ezeulu’s language at the Festival of Pumpkin Leaves in *Things Fall Apart* illustrates the fertility and force of the spoken word in the traditional Ibo context. It is largely allusive, symbolic and transformative, the qualities which are found in the speech
of the masks, or egwugwu or masked spirits. Ezeulu’s speech reenacting the first coming of Ulu and how each of the four days put obstacles in his way is described:

At that time when Lizards were still in ones and twos, the whole people assembled and chose me to carry their new deity. I said to them: Who am I to carry this fire on my bare head? A man who knows that his anus is small does not swallow an udala seed. They said to me: Fear not the man who sends a child to catch a shrew will also give him water to wash his hand. I said: ‘So be it’. And we set to work. That day was Eke. (AT 390)

In this reenactment of the first coming of Ulu, Eke was described as one whose one side was found raining and on the other side it was found dry, a manifestation of the contrasting pairs in Nature.

Mythic time is another important device of the novelist as a creator of mythicity in fiction. The narrative tradition in most of Asian and African literature is grounded on a domain outside time. Dr. K. Ayyappa Panicker commenting about Asian narrative tradition says:

The interest shown by narrators in Asia especially before they came under the influence of the West during the colonial days in locating events outside time has tremendous implications for their narrative art. This is not to imply that time is totally irrelevant in Asian fiction, but to suggest that it does not operate there as a series of specific points one after the other. (Asiatic Narrative 31)

The Indian apprehension of timelessness, is illustrated in the story of Jayaramachar which destroys the distance between history and myth, through
the story of the Mahatma, born as a reincarnation of Vishnu. This Indian conception of Time was articulated in the Atharva Veda, the Taitiriya and the Aitareya Samhitas and the Upanishads. The experience of the atemporal as an internal state of being is related well through a cyclic pattern as in the case of the story of reincarnation.

The African narrative tradition, like the Asian tradition bears a flexible attitude to chronology in the understanding of the temporal aspects of life. In both *Kanthapura* and *Things Fall Apart*, for instance, the divisions of time marked by the European classification are totally absent. Rama’s obsession with the flowing Ganges is an indication of the typical Indian understanding of the eternal. A sense of the perishable in nature is seen in the Ibo sense of art where the images of the deities are made only with perishable materials. This perishability is an aspect of Japanese as well as Indian aesthetics. The African and Indian philosophies of life, embodied in a sense of the fleeting temporalities of life shapes the language and structure of these novels.

In both Rao and Achebe, realism is subordinated to fantasy that transcends time. The structure of these novels can be related to the mode of allegory. In *Kanthapura* the war between the British and the natives is a war between *Dharma* and *Adharma*. In *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, many of the folk tales contain allegorised themes which could be termed as paradigms for the creative novel. As distinct from their European counterparts, both African and Indian narratives, before the onset of European influence, are highly flexible and fluid in their narration with many folk songs, folk tales, mythical images, parallelism with the gods and goddesses taking an active role in the construction of the text.
When folk elements like proverbs are in abundance in Achebe’s novels, mythical and historical images or philosophical discussions abound in Raja Rao’s novels.

In discussing the structure of these novels the treatment of time and eternity should also be mentioned and analysed. The African and Indian concepts of time can be seen operating in the Nigerian and Indian novels. A discussion of the time myth in the aesthetics of Achebe and Raja Rao demand a closer examination of the concepts of time in Africa and Indian imaginations which is part of the structure of any myth. Makarand Paranjpe drawing on the difference between the Third world Novel and the western novel says:

It is used to secure power and identity to create an alternative space for which to function, to redefine the rules of the game that some one else is making to survive in a meaningful manner in a system of international economic and cultural competition and exploitation.

(30)

The concept of time among Third World writers is distinguished from the European’s idea of time as passing from past to present and to future. Instead of this sense of a linear progression of time, the Africans always lived in the present as in the case of Okonkwo’s father who is reported to have inherited nothing for his son.

Dennis Duerden comments about the African concept of time thus:

[African] time is admittedly not linear because it is the time of each group in relation to each group. Each and every group has its own time and its own space and therefore there is no universal time and space, no dimensional coordinates common to every society. (17)
Charles Larson's comment on African concept of time is also relevant: “Time in the African sense has little to do with actual blocks of time as measured in the western sense, but rather with human values and human achievements” (Emergence 106).

In the Indian epics like the Mahabharata time is considered as endless in the sense that everything has to be evaluated in terms of eternity or time outside time. The following commentary by Dr. Ayyappa Panikkar about the Asiatic narrative tradition is equally relevant to the African narratives as well when we take into account the novels of Achebe or Ngugi: “Somewhere in the Asian mind seems to be lurking an unwillingness to root every happening in dates; it is more at ease with large units of time like the cosmic year than with petty divisions of time” (Panikkar 31).

This poetics of indifference to phenomenal time is inherent in the Afro-Asian tradition as it is seen built into the structure of the four novels, Kanthapura, The Serpent and the Rope, Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. This indifference to time can be seen in many other Third World novelists like Tutuola's The Palm Wine Drinkard, Rene Maran's Batuola, Achebe's Things Fall Apart, Oulogueum's Bound to Violence. Bound to Violence, according to Larson is "a pastiche of man outside time, devoid of any personal history" (Third World 45).

The double time pattern in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God is found relating in the events to the actual historical time at the end of the nineteenth century when the British presence began to be felt in Nigeria through the District Commissioners and the native courts. The other sense of time is related to the spirits, ancestors and gods—the mystic time that transcends the phenomenal.
The ancient Indian concept of time is also divided into two— the concept of time that has no beginning and no end and the phenomenal concept of time. The absence of a sense of linearity in time in Africa is not different from the Indian concept of time where time is beginningless and endless and it is equated with God who is Mahakala. The ordinary divisions of time the day and the year have their beginnings and ends which in the African traditional discourse may come under the Sasa period. Isidore Okpewho in his discussion of the cultural relevance of myth in Africa points out to a fundamental question related to time as tackled by Levi Strauss:

What is it that makes up human culture—is it the independent historical moments strung together in a linear continuous attitude to a local universe, or is it rather a single timeless model that allows us to see the past, present and the future as variables of the same cultural matrix superintended by an absolute universal intelligence?

(36)

Man's awareness of time has been articulated in ancient and modern civilizations through myths metaphysics as well as through the arts. Kapila Vatsayan in her foreword to the book Time and Eternity states that:

Caraka and Susruta, Sankara and Ramanujan discussed the concept of time, physical and metaphysical measurable and beyond a measure, as dimension, point, duration, past and future and the ever-present now. The experience of time as also timelessness in internalised states of being has determined artistic creations.

Time is a moving image of eternity and the basic reality belongs to the
timeless essence, according to Plato. For Socrates the non-temporal principle- transcending forms is the Reality, the true ‘I’. For Vyasa, “Time does not correspond to anything real, but is a product of mind and follows as a result of perceptions or of words” (Radhakrishnan 2: 277). Robert Godell, a disciple of Sri Atmananda Guru in his comparative study of the approaches of Socrates, and Sri. Atmananda Guru, quotes Socrates. “One does not hesitate to evoke the non-temporal for it is the very nature of the soul” (10). It is this metaphysical idea of the transcendence that we find in The Serpent and the Rope when Rama quotes Nityanashtakam. “I am, beyond imagination, form of the formless, form of consciousness and bliss Shiva I am, I am Shiva” (SR 114).

The concept of time that is separated from changes is a difficult one to define. “The mythological figure of a time-god is found in many races and cultures, the early Pythagorean in separating time from its content believed that time is said to come from the unlimited, that is from infinite space” (Sellier 80).

Eliade commenting on cosmic time and history rightly opines that in terms of cosmic rhythms, the historical world is illusory as it exists only in the span of an instant. For the Indian, one gets out of this notion of illusion only through the knowledge of the Absolute. In the narratives under consideration the narrator and the reader are brought to a sacred, mythical time. Reading Kanthapura and Things Fall Apart one is bound to forget historical time though both narratives describe the historical process of colonisation through the devices of myths, symbols, images and allusions.

In their attempt to recover mythical time into the structure of their narratives, the reader is initiated into the domain of a metaphysical reality.
Kanthapura is part of the conception of a cyclical infinite time, with periodic creation and destruction informed by the doctrine of the yugas in Indian thought— with the four yugas forming a cycle ending up in a 'pralaya'. This archetypal rhythm of creation-destruction-creation is infused into the narrative Kanthapura with a sense of events leading to the dissolution of Kanthapura and the emergence of Kashipura, a village exactly like Kanthapura. Both novelists assume perspectives of Great Time or mythic time. Moorthy is fulfilling Krishna's message in the Bhagavat Gita, acting, without desire for the fruits of action. From the point of view of mythic time, the revolutionary act of Okonkwo is related to historical time and therefore illusory.

Ezeulu in Arrow of God fails to maintain harmony in the village as his motives spring from a domain outside mythic time. His limited view of things in sticking on to the idea of counting the yams, omitting the period of his exile, results in total chaos. The New Yam Festival celebrates the creation, duration and destruction of the world as seen in the periodic harvesting and planting in agricultural societies. The feast of the New Yam in Things Fall Apart is therefore a manifestation of the myth of the periodic creation and destruction of the world. By pointing towards mythic time, the structure of Kanthapura and The Serpent and the Rope brings out the ontological unreality of the universe as the universe is manifested by the rhythms of historical time. The rituals in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God evinces the attempts by Achebe to do the same, by assuming a perspective of mythic time that makes any historical event in the narration illusory. Therefore, the act of Ezeulu in asserting a personal
hold over the destiny of his community is irrelevant in the larger context of myth and ritual in the Ibo tradition.

In Indian thought as well as in the African tradition, the myth of cyclical time is predominantly real, significant. The projections of the characters Okonkwo and Ezeulu into the plane of mythic time makes us aware of the unreality of the individual hero’s role in the scheme of things in man’s existence. Both Indian and Nigerian traditional societies see the temporal existence “not only as repetitions of certain archetypes and exemplary gestures but also as an eternal renewal. In symbols and rituals the world is recreated periodically” (Eliade, Man and Time 173). The central meaning of the various myths and rituals in Kanthapura and Things Fall Apart is that the world is created, maintained and recreated in a precipitate rhythm. The annual festivals in these novels correspond to this periodicity in the rhythms of life in the two communities.

Every act every thought of the characters whether it be Okonkwo or Obeirika, Unoko or Ezeulu gravitate towards the Zamani period in African thought. Unlike most of the characters in European novels who move toward the future within a linear concept of time with an indefinite past, present and infinite future, the time dimension of the present and the past with no future, dominates African thought; the future has not been experienced and it does not therefore have any relevance. The marriage ceremony of Obika in Arrow of God is a meeting point of all the dimensions of time with the participation of the departed the living and those yet to be born. The sacrifice at the crossroads performed by the medicineman and diviner, Aniegboka soon after the marriage feast is
elaborately described in *Arrow of God*. The medicine man after putting the sacrificial objects pronounced his absolution:

Any evil which you might have seen with your eyes, or spoken with your mouth, or heard with your ears or trodden with your feet, whatever your father might have brought upon you or your mother brought upon you, I cover them all here. (AT 442; AG ch. 11)

Here is a symbolic ritual described in *Arrow of God* like Ezeulu’s reenactment of the coming of Ulu at the Festival of the Pumpkin Leaves. It cleanses the defilement of all actions in the past and the present, for all who pray to Great Ulu while throwing the leaves at the chief priest. Ezeulu’s speech is the reenactment of the Great Ulu’s journey, overcoming obstacles on the way. Those who went near the chief priest heard the knocking together of his staff and another one which no one saw.

So the mysterious unseen forces from the Zamani period are in operation in every ritualistic act in Achebe’s narratives. The very essence of the chief priest is a complex of contrastive dualities. Akuebue in his friendly argument with Ezeulu regarding the propriety of the chief priest sending his own son to the church and thereby desecrating the land refers to this mythic fusion of contraries. He tells the chief priest, “I am your friend and I can talk to you as I like, but that does not mean I forget that one half of you is man and the other half spirit” (AT 456; AG ch. 12). Therefore the character of the priest was unknowable even to his best friend. He sent his own son Nwafo as a sacrifice to save the land as in the past when they were threatened by the warriors of Abame.
Time remains frozen as the chief priest refuses to eat the yams that mark the passing of the lunar months. The community is in peril as the New Yam Festival was not declared by the chief priest as a punishment for Umuaro in allowing their chief priest to be taken away by the white man. The feast was the end of the old year and the beginning of the new year. All the major and minor gods are assembled at the Shrine of Ulu. The tragedy of the community lies in the decision of Ezeulu to give importance to the two new moons when he was in the custody of the whiteman. Ezeulu errs in acting against the traditional notion of seasonal time. Ezeulu, the chief priest’s consciousness is subjected to the whiteman’s concept of counting time and the whiteman’s logic is employed against Umuaro, paradoxically, in the name of protecting the interests of the Great God Ulu. The traditional sense of time is the frame of reference in the structure of both Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. Elaine Fido says that the definite dating of events does not figure in as important in the chronology of the Ibos. There is discrepancy with regard to the age of Okonkwo in Things Fall Apart. Okonkwo is forty when the novel begins. But later it is reported that Ekwełi, his wife is forty five in present time and she loved to see his wrestling matches thirty years ago. From this clue the age of Okonkwo must be above fifty. This discrepancy is not considered serious in the Ibo chronology as the definite dating of events is not significant. The Igbo chronology relate to the market weeks, moons, harvests, seasons in contrast to the Western system. The story in Things Fall Apart begins when Okonkwo was about forty and immediately
his achievements when he was eighteen are referred to. The third paragraph
again takes the reader back to the middle-aged protagonist, with the fourth
paragraph referring to his grandfather’s time and the fifth paragraph refers to his
father Unoka’s childhood. The sixth paragraph takes us back to Okonkwo’s
present age. In the entire narration of Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God,
events are not based on a chronological linear sequence of experiences.

Obeichina observes that in West African societies, neither in the domestic
lives nor in the community assemblies nor at the weddings does one get the
impression to give importance to time. There are so many situations, tells
Obeichina, in which
time and space lose all relevance [in west African novels] as when
mystical power is magically unleashed against a predetermined
target. Mystical force is not circumscribed by time and space, it
annihilates both. This is often expressed in mythopoeic oratory.

(Obeichina 132).

On all occasions when mystical power is in operation through the priests,
mask or diviners, the narration in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God assumes
a disregard to the significance of chronological time. Charles Larson says:

It is only during Okonkwo’s seven years of exile that time plays any
significance in the development of the story. For Okonkwo, time
exists only when the conventional value system has been thrown
out of balance much as the same may be said of chief priest Ezeulu
in Achebe’s later novel Arrow of God. (Emergence 106)
In Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-wine Drinkard*, the hero's journey took ten years to reach the Dead Town and it took only a year for his return. Larson explains it by stating that the time in the narrative is related to the incidents involved in the Drinkard's journey. Malian novelist Yambo Ouologuem's *Bound to Violence*, (1968) Papuan novelist Vincent Eri's *The Crocodile* (1970) West Indian born Rene Maran's *Batouala* (1921) share this non-European sense of time which is cyclical and static. The focus in these Third World novels is on the collective and there is a lack of sense of causality in them. The events in *Things Fall Apart* or in *Kanthapura* are not caused by the choices made by the protagonist, Okonkwo or Moorthy. In Vincent Eri's novel, the main character Moiri is seven at the beginning of the story, but is referred to as old enough to be married before we are aware of the passing of time. Again when Moiri gets back to his village after several days, it is still only two days since his wife's death.

Rama in *The Serpent and the Rope* is the Brahmin who is never contemporary; as the novel goes beyond the material concerns of the characters to a realm beyond the immediate time. Raja Rajo imparts timelessness into his characters by resorting to mythic perceptions. Rama is described by Madeleine as "either a thousand years old or three" (SR 140) and he claims himself to be the product of five thousand years of civilization. Rama's mind is linked up to a consciousness deeply embedded in timelessness. "I belong to the period of the Mahabharata" tells Rama to Lakshmi (SR 351). The aesthetics of indifference to time as expressed by these Third World novelists as against the actual division of time in the western sense as seen in the European novels can be considered for further future analysis.
The mode of address, the way of greeting, the rituals the phrases all betray an implicit disregard for the linear progression of time in Achebe’s narratives, Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. The Ibo language itself, says Elaine Fido: developed to serve a traditional sense of time, contains time concepts which give a clue as to the possible basis of Achebe’s intentions in the case of Okonkwo’s age and Winterbottom’s dating. The past which is about two years ago is expressed as ‘the more recent past’ or “mgbe gara aga” (in the time past). More distant time is expressed as mgbe di anya mgbe (In the more distant time past). Thus a phrase like “twenty years or more or more than two years ago” can be seen to express more of the spirit of the Ibo system of telling time than the western one. (Fido 65)

Achebe violates this linearity of the English sentence structure by resorting to a bipartite pattern especially in the translation of the Ibo proverbs and prayers. Obeichina says:

Time and space are apprehended as approximations made more concrete by time-distance and space-distance, and socialized through customary usage and collective agreement. Time in the traditional consciousness is less significant than social institutions - ethics, religion and aesthetics. Since the traditional setting is largely an agrarian society and small in scale, time and space have less significance than in urban or industrial setting. So west African novelists show an awareness of this relative irrelevance. (135)

Incidentally, the men and women living in Kanthapura are not worried
about the lapse of time when they celebrate festivals, sing Bhajans and fast at the Kanthapureshwary temple. A radically different concept of time invades the villager's life as they work as coolies in the Skeffington coffee estate. The coolies when they relax to open a tobacco pouch or a betel bag the maistri appears to warn them: "He there, what are you waiting for? Nobody's marriage procession is passing. Do you hear?" (K 71). Here the villagers for the first time encounter the boundaries of passing time. The coolies are constantly reminded of their work to which they have to return with the Maistri's whistle. The whistling by the maistri interrupts the relaxed cyclical sense of time enjoyed by the villagers.

Interestingly enough a similar situation of a confrontation of the whiteman's punctuality colliding with that of the Ibo man is seen in Arrow of God when Obika, Ezeulu's son and his friend Ofeodu reach the site of work late. Mr. Wright, irritated at their demeanour and posture, is further agitated when Obika puts more swagger into his walk to tease Mr. Wright which brings more and more laughter into the group of working men. Mr. Wright lashes out violently with his whip. Obika charges at the whiteman. At the end of the work Mr. Wright warns the workforce about coming late. Unachukwu translates this order in a language that impresses villagers as is seen below. The conversation between Unachukwu and Mr. Wright is ample evidence of the difficulty with which even Unachukwu comprehends the idea of punctuality and his translated version for the workers suits the sensibility of the Ibo man.

No more lateness'

'Pardin ?'
‘Pardon what? Can’t you understand plain, simple English? I said there will be no more late-coming’

‘Oho, He says everybody must work hard and stop all this shit-eating (AT 403; ch.8)

The numerous festivals that Moorthy promotes can be linked to the need for regeneration through annulment of time. Regeneration rites imply the repetition of an archetypal act usually of a cosmogonic act. As Mircea Eliade puts it, “What is of chief importance to us in these archaic systems is the abolition of concrete time and hence their anti historical intent” (Eliade, Cosmos 86). Reading in this light, the ritualistic acts in Kanthapura unfold in a consecrated space and sacred time. The mythical references like Rama and Hanuman contribute to a sense of the extinction of historical time. Goddess Kenchamman and the Mahatma are the central mythical forces operating in the two places, Kanthapura and Kashipur. Achakka’s consciousness provides the past and the present, making the narrative a single mythic scheme implying a timeless principle. Though the historical phase of colonial invasion is the setting, the operation of the sacred as a guarding light in the temporalities of existence is manifested in the narrative. The description of the birth of the Mahatma is an instance of the fusing of the historical and the mythic time. The Mahatma is projected as a symbol of the eternal projected into historical time.

The survival of Kashipur after the falling apart of the matters in Kanthapura signified the existence of India beyond time and space. As Patricia Gabriel suggests in her thesis “Kanthapura and Indianness: A Structural Approach” that the redemptory suffering of the people of Kanthapura denotes
the end of kaliyuga, the end of a cyclical civilization and the beginning of a new India. The redemptive power inherent in the myth of India is proclaimed by Achakka- “You will say we have lost this, lost that, Kenchamma forgive us but there is something that has entered into our hearts, an abundance like the Himavathy in Gauri’s night” (K.255) As K.R Rao suggests, “the total effacement of Kanthapura is not to be regarded as a terminal cataclysm it is rather purgatorial process beyond which rises a renewed life” (116). The villagers are in constant contact with sacred time or eternity through rituals, satyagraha, incantations to Goddess Kenchamma and through Moorthy’s spiritual experiences. The mythic time that comes into the experiences of Moorthy during his meditation takes the novel from the historical to the mythic plane.

A timeless mythic experience emerges out of Moorthy’s meditation which is described thus:

Why was it he could meditate so deeply? Thoughts seemed to ebb away to the darkened shores and leave the illumined consciousness to rise up into the back of the brain... light seemed to me from the far horizon, converge and sweep over hills and fields and trees and rising up the promontory infuse itself through his very toes and finger tips and rise to the sun-centre of his heart. (K 92)

The satyagrahis are deeply concerned with the eternal and a new order of things is emerging in Kashipura. The images of light and water suggest the principle of pure knowledge or eternity. The language of the narrator Achakka is loaded with images, metaphors, and mythic allusions pertaining to the mythopoeic space in a mythic time frame.
Nevertheless, the cyclic pattern of birth, death and rejuvenation in Kanthapura can be compared to the recognition, rejection and escape in Things Fall Apart. Both Moorthy and Okonkwo were forced to leave their places of origin. The spatial contact of the characters in both novels is impermanent. The tragic trajectory in Kanthapura and Umuofia, the apparent failure of Moorthy and Okonkwo as revolutionary agents point out to a domain where the influence of place on the individual is insignificant. Moorthy’s experience goes beyond space when he sits up for meditation. The thought of Prahlada who had said Hari was everywhere came upon his mind. He remembers a childhood experience of feeling like floating away like child Krishna on the pipal leaf. When he opened his eyes, he felt so “light and airy that his mother looked near and small like one at the foot of a hill” (K 93). Wherever Moorthy felt a spiritual fervour, space and time get dissolved into his being.

Kanthapura through its legendary history is related to the timeless mythic past through the mythic presence of Goddess Kenchamma and the Mahatma. The impact of space on the characters Moorthy and Okonkwo who live on two different locations in the novels is minimised. The exile of Moorthy into Kashipura and Okonkwo into Mbanta point out to the temporary nature of the individual’s spatial contact. Both places, Kashipura in Kanthapura and Mbanta in Things Fall Apart provide natural protection and care to the uprooted individual. The strong sense of place in both novels correspond to the communal reality but a sense of sacred intentions take us far away from the place described. Space in Kanthapura is a context for Moorthy to reach out to the Mahatma. He serves only as an arrow in the hands of the Mahatma. The beginning of the last chapter
in Kanthapura indicates the identical nature of Kanthapura and Kashipura and the references to eating and marriage point out to the continued regenerative forces in Nature:

This Dasara will make it a year and two months since all this happened and yet things here are as in Kanthapura. Seethamma and her daughter Nanja now live in Malur, shanbhog Chikkanna’s house, and they eat with them, and grind with them and Chikkanna, who has no children, is already searching for a bridegroom for Nanja. (K. 254).

Ezeulu’s speech at the Feast of the Pumpkin Leaves wherein he conquers the four days of the traditional Ibo week is an instance of the dissolution of time and space through propitiatory sacrifices and magic power. Time is reckoned by Cock’s crow, sunrise, overhead sun or the length of shadows or by mealtime, wine tapping time, time of return from farm and so on. Space or distance is measured by certain large or exceptional trees, houses of prominent clansmen, wayside shrines, and spots with local historical association became the chief landmarks which are used to measure distance, so substituting a concrete image for an abstract one. (Obeichina 23)

Raja Rao puts to use the Advaitic concept of Time as propounded by Sankara and Sri Atmananda, his own guru. Rao is reconstructing the ancient literary tradition in India through his adoption of the ancient time concepts in his novels, overtly in discussions as in The Serpent and the Rope or The Chessmaster or covertly as in Kanthapura. The Indian concept of mythic
time is expressed through the idea of an uninterrupted continuum from the time of creation to the colonial times which is seen in the story of the Mahatma who is the incarnation of god trying to save Bharat from the Red-man.

Jayaramachar, the harikatha man tells this story:

O Brahma! you who sent us the Prince propagators of the Holy Law and sages that smote the darkness of Ignorance, you have forgotten us so large that men have come from across the seas and the Oceans to trample on our wisdom and to spit on Virtue itself. They have come to bind us and to ship us, to make our women die milkless and our men die ignorant. O Brahma! deign to send us one of your gods so that he may incarnate on Earth and bring back light and plenty to your. (K 21)

Raja Rao's *The Cat and Shakespeare* is also set in a similar mould with an aesthetic indifference to time and space. In the beginning of the novel *The Cat and Shakespeare*, as Claudio Gorlier comments,

he begins with 'Trivandrum, two years ago' and then the time goes back to '200 years ago when the Dutch landed in Kerala'. The time shift is implied in the title 'a tale of Modern India'. A tale is a story set in the past but it is here a tale of modern India. Time and space are interrelated. The story is set in timeless perennial India where time denies any historical religious, philosophical boundary. The structure of the novel questions the very notion of linear time. (4)

Though set in Travancore, the multiple layers of meaning in the narrative aim at a metaphysical awareness which is not merely the spatio-temporal reality of
Travancore in South India. Pai’s journey, like Rama’s in *The Serpent and the Rope* is destined to reach the Absolute, where there is no death, no change. All these novels, including the *The Chessmaster*, move towards the ultimate resolution of dichotomies towards the experience of the non-dual.

Furthermore, the past in both writers is not a distant one, but a reinforcement of contemporary reality as seen in the speech of Okonkwo at the Festival of Pumpkin Leaves or at the consecration of the half-sunk linga in *Kanthapura* or in the allusions to Yagnavalkya or Parvati or Satyavan in *The Serpent and the Rope*. Rama in *The Serpent and the Rope*, possessing a strong mythicising memory shows the least regard to actual historical time. Rama quips, “There never was time, there never was history, there never was any thing but Shivohom, Shivohom” (SR 198) Rama’s mind dwelling in mythic time ruminates, “the other day that is some seven or eight years ago” (SR 10). This statement underlines to the disregard shown to the passing of chronological time. Furthermore, Govindan Nair’s metaphysical syllogisms in *The Cat and Shakespeare*, Sivarama Sastri’s Advaitic discourses in *The Chessmaster* are all related to a timeless realm of experience at the ontological level. Rao’s fiction can be stated as a fictionalisation of Coomaraswamy’s statement that “the intelligible world has more to do with eternity than with time” (*Time and Eternity* 84).

These novels from India and Nigeria provide alternative temporalities in the structure of the genre disrupting the linearity of the western novel focussing not on the progress of the individual, but rather on the community. Like Patricia Grace’s novel *Potiki*, they “disrupt the linear novel, reforming the individualistic
narrative into a communal narration, of Spiral Time” (Deloughrey 60). The operation of a sacred time through rituals and ritualised mode of communication help in achieving a mythic mode of perception. For instance in Arrow of God the individual is in contact with the sacred time through the ancestral gods like Eke, Oye, Afo, Ulu and the Chi in every individual. The characteristic of a mythic language created by these novelists demand more attention regarding the appropriateness of raising new critical standards in the evaluation of the novel.

For the Afro-Asian novelist the process of naming is an effective medium for expressing the mythic consciousness in traditional societies. There is a background of mythical associations in the process of naming in African and Indian societies. A world of mythopoeic values is projected on to the consciousness as we come across a name in the traditional culture. The processes of naming-descriptive names, praise-names, metaphorical descriptions are used by Achebe in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. A praise-name goes back to the decades of one’s ancestors as well as one’s own. The act of naming has a cultural significance in the Ibo cosmology as in the Indian discourse, which is partly literary and partly socio-cultural in its importance for a literary critic.

The rich sociological or mythical layers of meaning in the names of characters in Achebe’s fictional world and also certain common Ibo names is illustrated in table 5 given below:
### Table 5

**Some Common Ibo Nouns and their Meaning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onofia</td>
<td>Children of the forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinua</td>
<td>Blessings of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chike</td>
<td>Power of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chukwueneka</td>
<td>God has dealt kindly with us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eze</td>
<td>King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngozi</td>
<td>Blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazi</td>
<td>Sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezenachi</td>
<td>The king rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chioke</td>
<td>Gift of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chijioke</td>
<td>God gives talent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namdi</td>
<td>Father's name lives on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogonna</td>
<td>Father in law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okafo</td>
<td>Born on market day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okechukwu</td>
<td>Gods gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okeke</td>
<td>Born on the market day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okonkwo</td>
<td>Born on the Nkwo market day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(first day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okpara</td>
<td>First son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oluwachi</td>
<td>Gods world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohyebuchi</td>
<td>Who is god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onyemachi</td>
<td>Who knows god's will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nwabudike</td>
<td>Son is the father's power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nnanna</td>
<td>Grand father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekwensu</td>
<td>Civil spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efulelu</td>
<td>Worthless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obi</td>
<td>Heart, soul, mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogbanje</td>
<td>Spirits waiting to be reborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chukwuka</td>
<td>Chukwu is supreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nwofia</td>
<td>Begotten in the wilderness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nneka</td>
<td>Mother is supreme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndichie</td>
<td>Council of elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anwansi</td>
<td>Magic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omu</td>
<td>Palm leaf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nzu</td>
<td>Chalk piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ego - nato</td>
<td>a quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alusi</td>
<td>Face of a mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iehi</td>
<td>Practice of sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ozo doors</td>
<td>Ornamented doors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikolo</td>
<td>Drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezidemili</td>
<td>Priest of Idemili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obeirika</td>
<td>Great heartedness, generosity of spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilo</td>
<td>A village ground</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above names are associated with the ancestors, ancestral spirits and gods that abound in the Ibo world which reveal the Ibo spirit or scheme of things.

The process of naming in these novels is also a characteristic of the oral narrative - descriptive names, praise names and so on which are carriers of an associated meaning. Mokwugo Okoye, the Nigerian writer on African life and politics comments:

The naming system among the Akans, Yorubas, Ibos, Hausas and Abyssinians follow a common pattern based normally on time, place, event (or sentiment) and religion. For example children are named after the days of the week . . . . sometimes again children are named after the gods and in this way a child’s name tells a good story about his family at the time of his birth or it compounds a well reasoned philosophy of life. (248)

The naming ceremony of Ekwefi’s children who died one after another in Achebe’s Things Fall Apart illustrates the value associations and sentiments behind each name. Name of the first child, Onwumbiko means “Death I implore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ekwe</th>
<th>a musical instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agbala</td>
<td>woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi</td>
<td>personal god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uche</td>
<td>thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nwanyieke</td>
<td>childless widow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
you”, another child’s name was Ozoemena - May it not happen again, yet another child’s name was Onwuma-Death may please himself”.

Names are important for creating a make believe world, for characterisation and in the development of meaning. The names of characters or places in a work have an unconscious value to the reader. The names of the major and minor characters help to create a meaning and climate. Even the error of naming by calling white men ‘albinos’ in Things Fall Apart “reveal an epistemological gap that itself indicates that the culture is ripe for change” (Izevbaye 167). The archetypal context of naming in Africa is found in the naming ceremonies indicated above. The names sometimes carry a symbolic significance. Even if a man acquires a meaningless name, he leaves it meaningful after his death. Furthermore, the communal names such as Sudras, Brahmins, Pariahs are used by Raja Rao in depicting the general life in an Indian village like Kanthapura.

“The two basic literary contexts” says Izevbaye, “in which characters are brought into being and named reflect two different values and attitudes to the world - value of a dream world and values of every day world” (171). The names of characters like Rama or Savitri or Govindan Nair or Santha, Sivarama Sastri or Jayalakshmy in the fictional world of Raja Rao have a set of profound mythic associations attached to them. Sometimes the names of characters have a partly epistemological and partly historical associations as in the names of characters in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God. The praise names of Okonkwo draw attention to the masculine attributes of his character and there is limited variation in the behaviour of the characters in Things Fall Apart or Arrow of God. A symbolic or mythic quality is attributed to the mythic characters whose enemies
disseminate the relevant associations to the reader. The bewildering list of names in Rao's **Kanthapura** like Beedle Timmayya, one-eyed Linga, Jack-tree Tippa, Potter's Street Kanthapura, Kuppur Suryanarayana, Four-beamed house Chandrasekharayya, Alur Purnayya, Pariah Sidha, Chennayya's daughter Madi provide a generalised experience of the village life in South India. Even the names of places have either a legendary association, a historical significance or both. Place names like Buxom Pipal Bend, Devil's Ravine Bridge, Parvati Well corner, Kenchamma Hill, Skeffington Bungalow, Bebbur Mound, the country of the hammer and sickle and electricity conjures up both these associations. The name of the protagonist is, Moorthy, which means an image and Gandhi is always mentioned as the Mahatma which removes any individualising aspect of both the leader and the follower.

Rao's naming of characters denotes the cultural positions as well as personal idiosyncrasies. Corner-house Moorthy, or Nose-Scratching Nanjamma or Temple Rangappa are characters with generalised cultural associations giving no significance to individuality and no psychological aspects attached to them. Bhatta for instance symbolises the perverted orthodoxy and casteism including Brahminical greed; Bade Khan is a symbol of colonised violence serving as a colonial instrument; Moorthy whose life is inseparable from the Mahatma's ideology is a symbol of the collective faith in the myth of the Mahatma. The naming of the English colonizer as the ‘Red-man’ and ‘leper’ denotes the depersonalising aspect of characterisation. The volunteers are addressed as ‘Satyagrahis’ a term that describes the sacred mission to reach the Truth.
The name is the Absolute Reality as every name points to the Nameless. So a thing is likely to have many names, as in the case of the Hindu gods with a thousand names. Since names are meant to particularise, more than one name works against the purpose of naming. If something has many names, it means that it has an essentially Nameless existence. The Ibo way of life pertains to a unique art of naming people with different names, with the ancestors and the past deeds appearing in the naming process. The art of naming has a cultural significance in the Ibo cosmology as well as in the Hindu traditional discourse.

Completely in accordance with this, Rao speaks about naming thus: “pure naming is pure creation... First there was the word Vac and Vac created the world” and again names are made of phonemes, graphics of breath. Hence to name precisely, we must modulate our breath. That is Yoga” (Meaning 164). Rama is not merely Ramaswamy, but Yagyavalkya, Madhwa, Sankara and innumerable other Upanishadic ancestors. Savithri is the mythic Savithri who wins Satyavan from the hold of the God of Death. Moorthy is the local Mahatma and he is the Hanuman to Rama in Ayodhya.

Similarly in Achebe, naming is primarily an aspect of characterisation. The names in Achebe carry many layers of cultural or mythical information. Biodun Jeyifo in his article on the predicament of Obeirika in Things Fall Apart analyses the name Obeirika:

Two sets of terms are linked in the name: ‘Obi’, is ‘heart soul or mind;’ and ‘rika’, ‘great, fulsome, capacious’. There is also a sense in which ‘Obi’ with a proper tonal inflection is the hut, or the homestead, in its more social, affective connotation. From these
aspects of the etymology of the name, we may project several linked
or associative meanings: great heartedness, generosity of spirit,
capacity of fellow-feelings; the mind/soul/heart of an individual, a
group, a people is infinite in its potentialities. (58)

No wonder, it is Obeirika who perceives the collapse of the culture against
the sheer 'literal' interpretation of tradition by Okonkwo which causes things to
fall apart. The significations encoded in the name [Obeirika] "inhabit the
character's experience of intersubjective sociality" (Jeyifo 58). Unlike his friend
Okonkwo, he is deeply tolerant and sensitive. He is both a critic of his culture
and also one who affirms and imbibes the cultural currents in his own tradition.

Besides, the following comment by the Nigerian scholar, Mokwugo Okoye
on the system of giving names in the different cultures is significant in the context
of a similar position for names in the fictional world of Achebe and Raja Rao:

The name of a person is so important among the Ibos as among the
Eskimos where a man took a new name in old age to gain new life;
according to Frazer, the Australations, Brahmans, Egyptians also
had secret names not to be divulged to a stranger, especially by the
owner himself; this may account for the custom among the Ibos,
Kaffirs, American Indians and Polynasians not to answer calls from
unseen persons, for these might be evil spirit to lure one to death; it
may also account for the usual practice of calling people by their
town or children's name. (Okoye 237)

Furthermore, Madeleine called her son 'Krishna' till he was seven months
old. When the boy fell ill she said, "My lover, the gods of India will be angry,
that you a Brahmin married a non-Brahmin like me, why should they let me have a child called Krishna? So sacred is that name" (SR 14). The biography of a god can be deduced from the various names attributed to him. Goddess Kenciamma in Kandhapura, Rama in The Serpent and the Rope are addressed by various names in those narratives. To know a God in the Indian society, one should be familiar with all the hundreds of names which express the multifaceted character of the particular god.

Thus, even the re-naming of Padmanabha Iyer as Comrade Kirillov in The Cat and Shakespeare is again an indication of the alternative consciousness in a young Indian revolutionary. Kirillov is a character in Dostoyovskv's The Possessed. Govindan Nair in The Cat and Shakespeare is described as a mixture of the Vicar of Wakefield and Shakespeare. The name Shakespeare is indicative of the detachment and complexity with which Govindan Nair confronts life.

The point is further clarified when we find that the African names are generally richly allusive, containing both label and its history; we find these in ordinary names and in praise-names, in titles and in nicknames. In the marriage of African material to a form that is historically European, this rich traditional source of narrative has been only partially exploited by African novelists. It has been pointed out that the beginning of the English novel was marked by a rejection of traditional plots and forms of naming. From the name 'Ezeulu' a mythic association related to the deity Ulu emerges strongly; just as 'Ezedimili' is the priest of Idemeli. A name here is both code and key to a certain mythic world.
The names of the village characters in Kanthapura too have a very strong cultural association each name revealing either caste, profession or status. A tendency to generalise is evident in the process of naming. Pariah Rachanna, Patwari Nanjundia, Range Gowda, Nose-scratching Nanjamma, Bhattare, Moorthappa, Narsamma, Potter’s Street Kanthamma, Temple Rangappa, Post Office House Suryanarayana, Pandit Venkateshina One-eyed Linga, Jack-tree tipa, Snuff Sasti, Cardamomfield Ramachandra, Subba Chetty, Gold-Bangle Somanna are all names having either one or other caste or cultural association or personal idiosyncrasies. Even the cattle are named in the village, the ‘Whity’, the ‘Blotchy’, the ‘one-horned one’ and Lakshmi and Gauri . . . (K 25). The place names too have legends attached to them like Kanthapura, the Devil’s Ravine Bridge, the Buxom Pipal bend, the Parvatiwell corner, Red-man’s Court, the Potter’s Street, The Brahmin Street, the country of the hammer and sickle and electricity, Bear’s hill, Devil’s Field, Horse-head Hill, Kenchamma grove. The terms used by Moorthy’s followers include ‘Satyagraha’, ‘Don’t touch-the Government’ campaign, Swaraj, Ahimsa, Rama-rajya, dharma, Kaliyuga, and so on which corroborate the mythic language of India.

Thus the naming of characters, gods and places in both Achebe and Raja Rao help in the creation of mythicity in the respective cultures providing clues to the relationship of man and society, his function and status. The generic names like the Brahmin or specific names like Rama, in Raja Rao’s fiction contain the biography of the character concerned and the associated set of values. Naming therefore in the literary context creates the proper atmosphere for transfusing the cultural norms into a mythic mode of perception.
Moreover, the operation of myth making in the narration of these novels is rendered possible through strategies of setting a timeless frame and through the device of naming which are connected to the mythic past. The structure and style of these novels enact the potentials of the mythic in the consciousness of the individual and the society in both countries. The language in these novels transcends the temporal concerns to project the mythic and eternal concerns. Language here is symbolic, allusive and inward looking. It is oftentimes incantatory, creating a mythic quality to the words spoken. The speech or prayer or the instructions from the godly figures in the novels have ritualistic possibilities of accommodating the indigenous experience in the English language. Eric Gould in *Mythical Intentions in Literature* rightly says: “Mythicity is a potential of a language performance, and that myths do not simply disappear because they weaken. We are left, indeed, all the more urgently with the need to define our memory of myth and, more important, to reconstitute it in our time. Mythologies may be ancient, but mythicity lives on” (125). This exactly is what happens in the novels as myth.