CHAPTER-VI

LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION

As a poet of higher consciousness, Sri Aurobindo, leans upon the Vedic traditions, Vedic allusion, symbols, images, legends and myths in order to revel his yogic experiences in the craft of his poetry. Sri Aurobindo as a poet and as a seeker after God adopts a specific mode that becomes his tool to work on the spiritual heights and the cultural norms of his motherland. He makes a declaration in his early days and perhaps his declaration becomes his principle to follow the embellishment of his language and the craft of his poetry. It is necessary to quote his declaration:

In the next great stage of human progress it not a material but a spiritual, moral and physical advance that has to be made and for this a free Asia and in her a free India must take the lead and liberty is therefore, for the world’s sake, worth striving for India must have Swaraj in order to live well and happily; she must have Swaraj in order to live for the world not as slave for the material and political benefits of a nation, but as a free people for the spiritual and moral benefits of human race’.¹
Sri Aurobindo stresses on three major aspects in his statements which was made during his struggle to achieve the freedom of this country; the achievement of Swaraj; the negation of material pursuits and the devotion to spiritual progression. These three aspects make the conformity of Indian culture and Indian spiritual heritage. His commitment was deep. So he devoted a great part of his writing in the Arya to the exposition of the pristine spiritual vision of India and the significance of her cultural and literary heritage. He also assigns the specific role to the composition of the poetic excellences. He finds the highest power of poetry not in material prospects but in spiritual pursuits. Pleasure should be one of the motifs of poetry, but it should basically be a metric poetry:

‘For in all things that speech can express there are two elements, the outwards or instrumental and the real or spiritual. In thought, for instance, there is the intellectual idea, that which the intelligence makes precise and definite to us and the soul idea, that which exceeds the intellectual and brings us into nearness or identity with the whole reality of the thing expressed. Equally in the emotion, it is not the mere emotion itself
the poet seeks, but the soul of emotion ......... So too with the poetical sense of object, the poet’s attempt to embody in his speech truth of life or truth of Nature ......... It comes from the stress of the soul-vision be hail the word; it is the spiritual excitement of a rhythmic voyage of self discovery among the magic islands of form and the name in these inner or outer words’.²

Sri Aurobindo includes three things in his theory: the range of intellect, the soul vision and the truth of life. The poetry with its deeper structure become symbolic of the transpersonalization of human emotions. Sri Aurobindo as poet and with his poetic magic follows the principles of Indian Poetics. Indian Poetics stresses on word-meaning association in order to find the universal vision or the soul-vision. Indian Aesthetics and the theory of beauty in art and literature has perhaps been one of the early pursuits of the human mind. As literature and the various arts flourish in a society, the attempt to understand the exact nature and causes of their appeal to the reader or the connoisseur also finds a place in the thinking mind. Sri Aurobindo talks of ‘the voyage of self discovery’³ through soul-vision. In the same way Indian Poetics hardly regards the permanent physical presence of beauty; but the
concept of beauty on the other hand refers to exploring the reasons for an eternal joy or the realization of \textbf{rasa} (rasanubheeti). The very small poem written at early age by Sri Aurobindo reveals the power of the words and the essence beyond words. The poet sees a beautiful face peeping through his window and feels its share being in contact with is soul-vision. He regards it as “witch of beauty” which catches him “in a net of sighs”.

Sri Aurobindo as the poet of total consciousness and as a skilled artist brings forth some symbolic paradoxes of the words. For removing the poison of the witch of beauty, he again looks at one ‘\textbf{who has ever mocked at sins}’\textsuperscript{4} gambles between loss and victory. The poet finally refers to the suggestive meaning or the truth of life or the higher motifs of poetry:

\begin{quote}
\textbf{I will pluck you forth like a fluttering bird from her nest}
\textbf{You shall lie on love’s strong knees, in his white warm breast}
\textbf{Afraid, with delighted lids that will not close}
\textbf{You shall grow white one moment, the next a rose}\textsuperscript{5}
\end{quote}

The poet in this last stanza uses that linguistic competence which reveals the higher vision of life. The “wild witch” of beauty finally merges in “Love”. The \textquotedblleft L\textquotedblright\ as capital becomes unique phenomena which in Aurobindonean philosophy symbolized the concept of
God. Again the images such as “the strong knees” of love, “white warm breast” and the “white growth” become symbolic of the Santa rasa which creates the balanced approach and the victory of lower particles of human mind.

Bharata’s account of rasa in Indian Poetics is nothing but the analysis of the emotional experience through which the spectator goes while watching a dramatic performance on the stage. Prof. Y.S. Walimbe analyses the deeper motifs of the emotional theory as propounded in his concept of Rasa:

Natyaveda was promulgated by lord Brahman himself as an object of division or recreation at the behest of all Gods and the purpose of drama is to entertain the minds of spectators and also to instruct them. Drama comprehends in itself all branches of learning all arts, all crafts, all skills, all aspects of human nature and worldly behavior, represented through gesticulation.⁶

The higher stage of emotion in Indian Poetics is realized through rasa; it is the realization of rasa ‘that gives the final meaning of word.

Thus if rasa in not an object of cognition, should it be regarded as incompressible? Abhinav Gupta accepts this position,
since the nature of rasa consists solely in its relish ability and not in its comprehensibility and so on. The emotion based poetic craft of Sri Aurobindo hardly permits the repetitive process. Though he himself acknowledges the fact that the poetry of mystic oriented ideas might be the poetry of repetition. He observes the fact that:

In mystic poetry also repetition is not objectionable; it is resorted to by many poets, sometimes with insistence. I may cite as an example the constant repetition of the word rtam, truth, sometimes eight or nine times in a short poem of nine or ten stanzas and often in the same line. This does not weaken the poem, it gives it a singular power and beauty. The repetition of the same key ideas, key images and symbols, key word or a phrase, key epithets, sometimes key lines or half lines is a constant feature.\(^7\)

He openly acknowledges the fact that kind of repetition pertaining to the free play of words, images and symbols is being followed by him in the construction of Savitri:\.

Feel her bright nature’s glorious ambience
And preen joy in her warmth and colour’s rule
A deep of compassion, a hushed sanctuary
Her inward help unbarred a gate in heaven
Love in her was wider then two universe
The whole world could take refuge in her single heart
The great unsatisfied godhead here could dwell
Vacant of the dwarf self’s imprisoned air.8

The linguistic analysis of this passage from Savitri sums up the fact that the two words “ambience” and “preen” are linked with “a deep of compassion”; and they become rather repetitive in their approach but “hushed sanctuary” is contrastive to the “foreen joy”. Again the adjective “Great” is repetitive for “great unsatisfied godhead”. Instead of writing such phrase, he acknowledges that the phrase “her greatness” would have been more appropriate than the “great unsatisfied godhead”. Once again, his famous short poem “Ocean Oneness” repeats the phrases though in the changed manner.

Silence is .......... me wideness ineffable
White birds on the ocean ........ and wandering
A soundless sea on a voiceless heaven
Azure on azure, is mutely gazing
Identified with silence and boundlessness
My sprit widens clasping the Universe
Till all that seemed becomes the Real
One in a mighty and single vastness
Someone broods there nameless and bodiless
Conscious and lonely deathless and infinite
And sole in a still eternal rapture
Gathers al things to his heart forever.⁹

The phrase “wideness ineffable” becomes usual metaphor of “white bird” in Sri Aurobindo’s poetry. Again, the “soundless” sea matches the sound of “voiceless” heaven. The phenomenology acts only when it become the “real” with “R” capital and this reality becomes “one”........ single vastness.” So many images and metaphor he uses in the same poem from the one ......... the imperishable God.

Sri Aurobindo deals with the manner of Wordsworth when he portraits the early life of Savitri. The similarity between Wordsworth’s ideas of nature and Sri Aurobindo can be analyzed through the early life of Satyavan:

Led by the wisdom of an adverse fate
To meet the ancient mother in groves
In here divine communion he had grown
A foster child of beauty and solitude
Heir to the centuries of the lonely wise

A brother of the communing with depth and dirge

A Veda-knower of the unwritten book

Perusing the mystic scripture of her forms

He had caught her hierophant significances\(^{10}\)

Wordsworthian attitude is discernible in the metaphor of “The ancient mother” who resides in groves. At the instance of Wordworth’s Lucy and Kalidasa’s Sakuntala, Satyavan is the “foster child of beauty and solitude”. He knows the Vedas not through the regular studies but through the inexpressible communion with God. The poet in the semi Wordsworthian turn moves among a diversity of things, communing with their ultimate aspects and looking over the edge of the communing process of Satyavan with nature: “depth and Marge”. The one shows the poet’s leaning of inside for realizing the “Marge” and perhaps the noun “Marge” finally becomes symbolic of the communication of divine power. Once again, the “hierophant significances” is representative of the two things: the word and its meaning. The real assessment of the word can be experienced only in solitude through its suggestive meaning. K.D. Sethna its linguistic makes the poetic bulk of Sri Aurobindo “ensemble”\(^{11}\) which denotes the process of
togetherness. Sethna takes the ensemble from book V Canto 3. Here the inside of Satyavan amidst nature is analyzed.

Sri Aurobindo in dealing with the merits of poetry and its craft uses such language which usually takes the form of images and metaphors. Here are a few lines from Savitri:

**Earth’s morns were mine:**

Lured by faint murmuring with the green robed hours
I wandered lost in woods prone to the voice Of winds and waters partner of the sun’s joy A listener to the universal speech My spirit satisfied with in me knew God like our birth right, luxuried our life Whose close belongings are the earth and sky.\(^{12}\)

In these lines the poet has used the adjective “luxuried” for the happy life of Satyavan. The language use in not an ordinary language but it is the language which is decked with the images and the metaphors of the highest order. For example, the poet has used four elements of nature, “earth”, “water”, “wind”, and “sky” but there is also the fifth one “fire” in the symbolic and the metaphoric language. When Satyavan acknowledge that “my spirit
satisfied within me” and his spirit feels the store of energy inside him and this kind of feeling represent the element of “fire” blessed with the elemental energies, he yields the fact that he listens to “the universal speech” yet again, the poet writes about the solitary wanderings of Satyavan:

As if to deeper country of the soil
Transposing the vivid imagery of earth
Through an inner seeing and sense a wakening came...
I caught for some eternal eye the sudden
King fisher flashing to a darkling pool
A slow swan silvering the azure lake
A shape of magic whiteness, sailed through dream
Pranked butterfly, the conscious flowers of air
And metered the rhythm beats of infinity\(^{13}\)

In the first three lines one sees the indiction of a new awareness which is not on the surface but in the recesses of our being-the recesses that are called “soul”. In general speculation the term soul is employed for some deep, and that the reference is not so much in the specific connotation “a deeper country”. The “soul” here is not a generalization, it is acutely contrasted to “earth”: the two terms – “of the soul” and “of the earth” – are balanced against each other.
There are only two countries implied the country of the earth and the country of the soul. The former is the Surfacial region, the latter is a deeper domain and by “earth” with its “vivid imagery” is meant the contents of our normal waking consciousness. It is packed with thousands of observations, where as the “soul” stands for a consciousness other than the life-force and mind operating in conjunction with a material body and brain.

This consciousness is ordinary like a dream region, but the poet undergoes a novel, “waking” there by which he re-interprets in a different and deeper light the earth experience of new things in the soul’s depths, things which are as if earthly object “transposed” into them but which in reality exist in their own right. It is native to those depths which constitute the originals whose copies are earthly objects. The specific quality of the experience of these originals is to be ganged from the use of the word “soul” and no other. Poetry to Sri Aurobindo is not the exclamation of the mind and its concept; not the cry of life-force and its desires; not the appeal of the body and its instincts. All of them are audible in it, but in the time with a central note beyond them which – as Longius said – strangely transport us. There remains in “transportation” a mysterious presence, which one can specify as the divine presence.
All fine poets do not offer us spiritual matter. They talk of a multitude of earthly things and some of them are even disbelievers. The Roman Lucretius scoffed at religion and said that Gods were created by human fear: he was a materialist and atheist by intellectual persuasion.¹⁴

It is true that sometimes excellent composition of poetry is hardly confined to any divine reality, but its divine power lies in its suggestive contents. Poetry is spiritual by the intuitive manner in which any theme is diversely treated by the imagination. In the second place, poetry is spiritual by the expressive results. The imaginative treatment is reflected in its word power and the movement brought to us by the use of the appropriate words. There is an inevitable phrase pattern, there is an unimpeachable rhythm design. In short a form of perfect art has been developed in the poetry of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo uses the intrinsic divineness in his poetic craft. Sri Aurobindo at the instance of the Vedic theory adopts the theory of the word. The words in association with its meanings bring forth the total essence of the language. The poet as a magician hardly knows the secret of his own creation; his
creation itself becomes a fragrance when it is being judged on the principle of poetics. Sri Aurobindo writes about the power the word:

The words which we use in our speech seem to be, if we look only at their external formation mere physical sounds which a device of the mind has made to represent certain objects and ideas and perceptions – a machinery nervous perhaps in origin, but developed for a constantly finer and more intricate use by the growing intelligence; but if we look at them in their inmost psychological and not solely at their more external aspect, we shall see that what constitutes speech and gives its life and appeal and significance is a subtle conscious force which informs and is the soul of the body of sound: it is a superconscient nature-force raising its material out of our subconscience but growingly conscious in its operations in the human mind that develops itself in one fundamental way and yet variously in language.\textsuperscript{15}

Here Sri Aurobindo echoes the same voice what Words worth has written in his poem:
A voice so thrilling ne’er was heard
In springtime from the cuckoo bird
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides-
Some times of the richer or more dynamic imaged style
Flower laugh before three in their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong
And the most ancient heavens
Through thee are fresh and strong.\textsuperscript{16}

In the above citation Wordsworth regards the sound of cuckoo bird as “so thrilling” and its mean very thrilling- the thrilling that creates the movement and vision in the mind of the poet. The cuckoo bird symbolizes the power of language a power that comes from the association of different words and creates the suggestiveness. Sri Aurobindo at the instance of Wordsworth creates so many images suggestiveness. Sri Aurobindo at the instance of Wordsworth creates so many images for showing the early life of Satyavan; and these images reflect the power of language in his poetry:

\textbf{An alchemy worked, the transmutation came;}
The missioned face had wrought the master’s spell
In the nameless light of two approaching eyes
A swift and fated turning of her days
Then trembling with the mystic shock her heart
Moved in her breast and cried out like a bird
Who hears his mate upon a neighboring bough\textsuperscript{17}

Sri Aurobindo is a skilled artist in using the linguistic competence through various images. The image of the “bird” has a visual and moving effect:

The ancient Indian word for a poet is Kavi and the linguistic interpretation, if the word is to “disclose”. Of course, the disclosing, the making shows the higher world of poet’s imagination. The poet in Latin term has been defined as “Poeta” and in Greek “Poets” both the terms from Latin and Greek bring into being the sense of a “marker”.\textsuperscript{18}

Thus, the vision is the first factor in the creation of the poet. The Indian name goes to its root if the matter in speaking of the seer who disclose instead of the discloser who has seen. Shakespeare bears out the Indian characterization though he does not neglect the Greek and Latin, by the famous passage which
describes what the poet does. In picturing the poet’s activity he speaks of “the poet’s eye”.

The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from the earth to heaven
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen
Turns them to shape and gives to any nothings

A local habitation and a name\(^{19}\)

Sri Aurobindo in this poetic craft has used freely the images and metaphors from India. The metaphors such as “dawn”, “fire”, “the sea”, and some mythological symbols and metaphors create the suggested contents in his poetry. The images such as “bird”, “the river”, colour image and some scientific and mythological images make his poetry mystical. Dawn as the metaphor of the daughter of heaven represents typically the Indian sensibility. It stands for reawakening of knowledge on man; it also brings forth the inner desire of the being to be with spiritual height. It signifies the beginning and the craving for the end.

In Vedic literature dawn is symbolic
Of new openings of divine illumination
On man’s physical consciousness it is
The illumination of the truth rising

Upon the mentality to bring the day of full consciousness

Into the darkness or half lit night of our being²⁰

There are some very pregnant examples from the text of Sri Aurobindo which shows the power of elaboration and illumination through the metaphoric symbols. The early poems where the suggestion is not so striking come to our discussion for the metaphor of dawn is the bringer of light, strength and divine forebodings:

Nearer it drew now to him and he saw

Out of the widening glory move a face

Of dawn, a body fresh from mystery

Enveloped with a prophecy of light

More rich than perfect splendors it was she

The garden virgin, mother of life²¹

As an extraordinary dawn it is the bringer of divine inclination and divine consciousness. The phrase “a prophecy light” makes it very clear that this is the dawn that shows the spiritual awakening in man. And moreover, “it was the she” decides the gender of the dawn; and this way it becomes “Usha” the mother of life and it is at the same time the golden virgin-a metaphoric
representation of colour. The green field and all living creatures take their existence to light and dawn is the goddess who heralds the arrival of light. Light is power which gives life to the earth. **Thus dawn as Usha is the mother of life. She brings to sight not only herself but the golden beauties of heaven amongst whom was Urvasie. Dawn is, for the first time, described in all its glory in “Urvasie”.**

The poetry of Sri Aurobindo is rich in imagery. Broadly speaking the whole poetry of Sri Aurobindo is concerned with images, since the poet is primarily the seer and visualizes. When any poet develops visionary approach, the images visit his/her mind and they immediately sprout in his/her creation. One finds so many images in his narrative poems such as **Urvasie** and **Savitri**. These images are of many kinds – conventional, experimental, sensuous visual, auval, kinetic, kinesthetic. They grow as directly or naturally as the plant in the soil. All his images are luminous deep and arresting. They open up whole avenues of creative vision and imagination. They come from all sides of life-nature, society, daily life, science, technology and cosmos itself. But it is the visionary, revelatory and spiritual perception that is
the primary source for most of his images, and it is these that work like flashes which communicate vision of the poet to the readers.

In the composition of his early poetry one finds the poet's imagination and sensibility which become revelative through sparkling images. The poem “Songs to Myrtilla” reveals the sparkling images of Sri Aurobindo:

**Sweet is the night, sweet and cool**

**As to parched lips a running pools**

**Sweet when the flowers have fallen asleep**

**And only moonlit rivulets creep**

**Like glow worms in the dim whispering wood**

**To commune with the quiet heart and solitude**

The above lines bring yet panoramic views of different images. The metaphor of “Sweet night” is followed first by sensuous images such “parched lips”, “running pool” and the sleep on the “flowers”. Next lines take the shift of thought movement and the night becomes silent with the imagery of “moonlit rivulets”. Again the “glow worms” and whispering wood” become symbolic of the mystic experience of the poet and that is the reason the poet shows a secret commune “with the quiet heart and solitude”. The various images analyzed in these lines reveal the linguistic competence of
the poet. Once there are same few lines beginning with the metaphor of day. These lines are yet contrastive to the metaphor of the night-night that finally turns into an abode of quietude and solitude:

But day is sweeter; morning bright
Has put the store out ere the light,
And from their dewy cushions rise
Sweet flowers half opening their eyes
O pleasant then to feel as if new born
The sweet, unripe and virgin air, the air of morn
And pleasant are her melodies,
Rustle of winds, rustle of trees24

The metaphor of day is followed with the images such as the “bright morning”, dewy cushion”, “new born flower”, “unripe and virgin air”, “Rustle of winds” and “rustle or trees”. These images are contrastive to the metaphor of night. Night brings drowsiness while the metaphor of day becomes symbolic of a new consciousness to grow newly and a fresh. Urvasie, the famous poem of Sri Aurobindo opens up with the exquisite image of the day:

Watching that birth of day, as if a line
Of some great poem out of dimness grew,
Slowly unfolding into perfect speech
The grey lucidity and pearliness
Bloomed more and more, and over earth chaste again
The freshness of the primal dawn returned,
Life coming with a virginal sharp strength
Renewed as from the streams of paradise
Nearer it drew now to him and he saw
Out of the widening glory move a face
Of dawn, a body fresh from mystery
Enveloped with a prophecy of light
More rich than perfect splendors, it was she
The golden virgin, Usha, mother of life²⁵

Spiritual experiences have been rendered vivid and concrete. The imagery of Sri Aurobindo hardly brings any strain and labors. When one is drawn by the charm of something beautiful. Sri Aurobindo has been able to make “sense a road to reach the intangible”. Images in Savitri illumine the inner meaning and reveal “homelands of beauty shut to human eyes”. Here is an image in the very opening of the canto of the epic, Savitri marches onward in her quest of finding a “soul’s mystic cave”, and she first steps “into a night of God”²⁴. As a mystic Savitri too faces the boundaries
of ignorance and wisdom, but the main thing one sees in her onward journey is her ceaseless effort. Here the intention lies in showing the poet's use of metaphoric language through the use of the appropriate images:

As awful dimness wrapped the great rock doors
Carved in the massive stone of matter trance
Two golden serpents round the lintel curled
Enveloping it with wisdom's deep and luminous eyes
As eagle covered it with wide conquering wings
Flames of self lost immobile reverie

Another picture in *Savitri* shows us an aspect of the dawn, a pale mystic hand fixing a golden door on the deep, through which one could peep into the mystery:

A wondering hand of pale enchanted light
That gloved along a fading moment's brink
Fixed with gold panel and opalescent hinge
A gate of dreams ajar on mystery's verge

Another unified kinesthetic image of travelling the road of a solitary heart:

A ping ling unified silver laugh of anklet bells
Travelling the roads of a solitary heart
It is significant to note that the image of the “Sea” springs up time and again in Sri Aurobindo’s poetry. It plays a vital role and it is particularly there when he refers to the poetic phenomenon. There is in the *Songs to Myrtilla* the images of the “blue sea” dancing like a girl. It, infact, becomes a metaphoric image:

**Her minds a sea of white sincerity**

**Passionate in flow, had not one turbid wave**

Imagery drawn from the sea is effectively used white describing Savitri’s save passage through the valley of the “wandering gleam”

**All this streamed past her and seemed to her vision’s sight**

**As if around a high and voiceless isle**

**A clamor of water from far unknown hills**

**Swallowed its narrow banks in crowding waves and foam**

**And made a hungry world of white**

As the waves strike down the swimmer, death abridges human life, as the sea roars its defiance, so does universal death. One finds another imagery of the sea voyage in the passage where he describe how many thoughts from a cosmic source came tranquilly to Savitri:

**As smoothly glides a ship nearing its part,**
Ignorant of embargo and blockade,
Confident of entrance and visual’s seal
It come to the silent city of the brain
Towards its accustomed and expectant way
But met a barring will, a blow of force,
And sank vanishing in the immensity

Sri Aurobindo in his short poem “A vision of science” reveals the scientific world through vivid images. He opines that man’s curiosity to know the world around leads him to analyze “the laws of sight divined and laws of sound”. In this he used the refined images which bind the system of cells in human body. Sri Aurobindo as a poet links the past with present; and it means he makes an application to whole consciousness. He also elaborates the scientific reason for all these things in “A vision of science”:

That comes behind us and our frallied morn
And from the heart of an approaching light
One said to man, “know thyself infinite,
Who shall do mightier miracles than these
Infinite, moving, mid infinites”
Then from our hills the ancient answer pealed,
“For thou, o splendor, art myself concealed,”
And the grey cell contains me not the star
I out measure and an older than elements are
Whether on earth or far beyond the sun,
I, stumbling, clouded, am the eternal one

One may go on citing illustration from his poems in order to prove that “Sri Aurobindo has a unique mastery of imagery. With the help of the double vision, the corollaries and sensuous image and vivid projections he builds a picture that not only delights and informs but carries many layers of meaning”.

Sri Aurobindo adopts a specific style and technique in his linguistic apprehension and in linguistic competence. He considers technique as the indispensable elements in his writings: “Certainly in all art good technique is the first step towards perfection.” Various critics have pointed out the constant problem of repetition in his poetry. Sri Aurobindo replies such charges quoting a bird passage from Savitri:

As might a soul fly like a hunted birds,
Escaping with tired wings from a world of storms
And a quiet reach like a remembered breast
In a heaven of safety and splendid soft repose
One could drink life back in streams of honey five

Recover the lost habit of happiness\textsuperscript{35}

Sri Aurobindo has six times repetition of the article “a” in this passage; and critics found this repetition of the article “a” superfluous, but Sri Aurobindo explains the reason of this repetition in his letters appended to the last part of Savitri:

As to the six fold repetition of the indefinite article ‘a’ in this passage, one should not doubt but make it a general rule to avoid any such successive repetition, but all rules have their exception and it might be phrased like this, ‘except when some effect has to be produced which the repetition would serve or for which it is necessary’. Sri Aurobindo remarks: ‘Here I feel that it does serve subtly such an effect; I have used to the repetition of this ‘a’ very frequently in the poem with a recurrence at the beginning of each successive line in order to produce an accumulative effect of multiple characteristics or a grouping of associated things or ideas or other similar massing.’\textsuperscript{36}

What Sri Aurobindo has contributed in his style and linguistic competence is the need of a proper balance between the use of language and the theory of poetry. Sri Aurobindo writes the Mantric poetry. The Mantric poetry like Ramachritamanas of
Goswami Tulsidas flows naturally in the natural language. Sri Aurobindo defines the Mantric poetry thus:

**The Mantra is possible when three highest intensities of poetic speech meet and become indissolubly one, a highest intensity of rhythmic movement, a highest intensity of verbal form and thought substance, of style and a highest intensity of the soul’s vision of truth. All great poetry comes about a by a unison of these three elements.**

Amidst the various linguistic experiments, the one that become remarkable the first is the style and technique of the poet. Style is the unison and fusion is close part of the poet’s vision because it is the style which makes Sri Aurobindo use freely the metaphors, legends, images and symbols. Style also includes language, thought, mood and attitude.

Style, Ari Aurobindo believes, is a ‘living organism’ and ‘it is born and grows like any other thing’. Poetry, says Sri Aurobindo, **‘opens to us by the word the doors of the spirit.’** When Sri Aurobindo links the power of words with the theory of words he actually suggests the theory of Dhyani- the suggestive content of his poetry:
Sanskrit is said to be one of the oldest languages of the world. It has a deep potentiality to express any great truth in the simplest and the shortest manner. There are other poets and dramatist in Sanskrit and other Indian languages, who have shown their mastery, though not in the same grand scale as Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidas in writing suggestive and symbolic poetry. Sri Aurobindo is a perfect example of a saint in the modern sense who is in the long line of the seer – poets of India. His writings, poetic and philosophical, point to his pre-eminence and his genius stands on par with that of the great seer poets of ancient India.  

Savitri sees corpse of her husband in the forest. She was left alone in the forest. Motionless she was, and measured not her less but thought of her will power. She was thinking of her Satyavan and the most important thing in her loneliness is that she thinks of only making her husband alive again. Sri Aurobindo at the instance of the ancient Indian poets, seers and monks uses the language of grand style in the chapter, towards the black void of Book IX of Savitri.

**She crossed the borders of dividing sense;**
Like pale discarded sheaths dropped dully down
Her mortal members fell back from her soul
A moment of a secret body’s sleep
Her trance knew not sun. Or earth or world;
Thought, time and death were absent from her grasp
She knew not self, forgotten was Savitri
All was the violent ocean of a will
Where lived captive to an immense caress
Possessed in a supreme identity
Her aim, joy, origin, Satyavan alone
Her sovereign poisoned in her being’s care
Her beat there like a rhythmic heart herself
But different still, one loved, enveloped, clasped
A treasure saved from the collapse of space
Around him nameless, infinite she surged.\(^{40}\)

Sri Aurobindo as a poet sees ‘beyond the sight of the surface mind and finds the revealing word, not merely the adequate and effective, but the illumined and illuminating the inspired and inevitable of poetic style’.\(^{41}\) As a seer poet and critic Sri Aurobindo penetrates the mystery of future poetic speech. With a sound optimum he points out that under the impact of
spiritual consciousness and power, poetry will undergo a deep change not only in its form and frames but also in its word and rhythmic movement. For ‘the poetic word is a vehicle of the spirit, the chosen medium of the soul’s self-expression’. Therefore, any profound change becomes symbolic and suggestive of word and its rhythm.

There are five kinds of style in Sri Aurobindo’s poetry; the adequate, the effective, the illuminative, the inspired and the inevitable. The language that was employed in the first – the adequate – is the language of the prose statement. It has more compact and vivid presentation of the poetic form. The rhythm and the metaphoric language brings in a living appeal and adds something of an emotional and sensational nearness to what would otherwise be little more than an intellectual expression. The language used in the poetic style is of higher and of much finer quality. It has the power not only to make us conceive adequately but also to see the object or idea in a certain temperature lucidity of vision.

The ‘effective’ and dynamic poetic style responds to the subjects in a more complex, more vibrant manner catching something of the movement rather than the substance of its
subjects. It tries to go beyond perfect adequacy and ‘attempts’ a more rich or a more powerful expression, not merely sound and adequate to poetic vision, but dynamic and strongly effective. A rich, subtle poetic affectivity is achieved by the beauty and condensed phrase of language. Sri Aurobindo believes that English poetry is especially opulent in effective style and gets from it much of its energy and power. Sri Aurobindo regards that without the use of the appropriate language, the effectiveness in poetry can hardly be realized. Sri Aurobindo himself defines the stage of perfection in poetry:

But then what do we mean by the perfection of poetry? There is the perfection of the language and there is the perfection of the word – music and the rhythm, beauty of speech and beauty of sound, but there is also the quality of the thing said which counts for something. If we consider only word and sound and what is themselves they evoke, we arrive at the application of the theory of art for art’s sake to poetry. From this point of view, the elevation from which the inspiration comes may after all matter, provided the one who receives it is a fit and powerful instrument; for a great poet will do more with a
lower level of the origin of inspiration than a smaller poet can do even when helped from the highest sources.\textsuperscript{44}

Here in this extract Sri Aurobindo brings into being the two main things for the language, manner and the contents of the poetry. The things said or what one say in the theory of structuralism the signified object is the care of the poetic contents. Once again, Sri Aurobindo compares the two kinds of the poet: the poet by the usual behavior and the poet of genius. The ‘thing said’ are the poetic contents and they should be inspirational in their appeal. Savitri after completing her journey through the triple forces comes back to the earth; she come back to the earth just to realize the elemental realities of life. Just see the language and style of Sri Aurobindo in his elaboration about the conjugal love of Satyavan and Savitri:

\begin{quote}
The immense remoteness of her trance had passed

Human she was once more, earth’s Savitri,

Yet felt in her illimitable change

A power dwelt in her soul too great for earth

A bliss lived in her heart too large for heaven;

Light too intense for thought and love too boundless

For earth’s emotions lit her skies of mind
\end{quote}
And spread through her deep and happy seas of soul.

Sri Aurobindo gives a complete account of Savitri: Savitri a perfect household lady who dedicates her entire life in the service of her husband; and another Savitri who challenges the bounds of time, space and dark forces. She becomes human and Sri Aurobindo uses some wonderful images in his style for making the language functionary. The image of the ‘bird’ befits the inner cry of the young husband and wife. The ‘bird’ as ‘winged poet’ becomes symbolic of the skylark of Shelley and brings forth the poetic theory of Sri Aurobindo in a very simple language. Savitri aspires to come to the earth just for the sake of humanity. SriAurobindo has presented the human form of Savitri in a beautiful language and in the lucid style in Book XII of Savitri:

Our bodies need each in the same last;

Still in our beasts repeat heavenly secret rhythm

Our human heart beats passionately close.

Still am I see who came to thee mid the murmur

Of sunlit leaves upon this forest verge;

I am the Madran, I am Savitri

All that I was before, I am to thee still ...

All sweet relations marry in our life;
I am thy kingdom even as thou art mine
The sovereign and the slave of thy desire
The prone possessor, sister of thy soul
And mother of thy wants, thou art my world
The earth I need, the heaven my thoughts desire
The world I inhabit and the God I adore
The body is my body’s counterpart
Whose every limb of my answering limb desires.\textsuperscript{45}

Sri Aurobindo’s poetic style consists in language. All other constituents of art have to be incorporated into language; and it is language that communicates and expresses them, but the language in the work of art is not the language of ordinary speech. Sri Aurobindo aptly points out the basic difference between the ordinary speech and poetical language. Ordinary speech uses language mostly for a limited practical utility of communication; for the expression of ideas and feelings necessary or useful to life. It is the conventional use of language, where words are treated ‘\textbf{much as we use any kind of common machine or simple implement;} we treat them as if, though useful for life. They were themselves without life.’\textsuperscript{46} The words which one uses in our daily life seem to be mere physical sounds. They, in fact, represent some
definitive objects and ideas and perceptions, but with the growth of
civilization, one has to exert a more vital power into them ... out of
ourselves, by the emotional force or vital energy we throw into the
sound so as to infuse into the conventional word – sign something
which is not inherent in itself.

Sri Aurobindo in his above citation reveals the power of the
words: connotative, denotative and suggestive. In India all the
schools of thought have assumed a direct relationship between
Sabda and artha, which correspond to the significant and signifies.

P.C. Chakravarti says that the theory of signs of symbolism
as worked by Ogden and I.A. Richards has maintained in a peculiar
position that goes directly against the view of Indian grammarians.
The Ogden – Richards basic triangle has the following shape:
In this triangle one finds the direct relationship between the word and the referent and that the relation is only imputed: *Sir A Gardiner uses the term ‘word’, ;meaning’ and ‘thing meant’ respectively for the ‘symbol’, ‘reference’ and ‘referent’ of the Ogden – Richards triangle*.\(^{47}\)

To Gardiner a word can be used and re-used the same word on many different occasions and ... the same word can be employed by all the different members of a linguistic community. It is infect something relatively permanent, wide spread and capable of being possessed in common by a multitude of individuals. All these considerations prove, beyond the possibility of contradiction that words transcend and are altogether less evanescent entities than the sounds which issue from the speaker’s mouth and vanish into nothingness soon after they have reached the listener’s ear.

When Sri Aurobindo talks of two things at a time in his poetic theory: the conventional meaning of the word and the contents of the things said, he reminds one about the Indian theory of words. There are three powers of the word: **abidha** (connotative), **Lakshana** (denotative) and **Vyanjana** (suggestive); and finally **abidha** and **Lakshana** associate together for bringing into being the metaphoric and suggestive meaning of the language. In the same sense, there
are two main categories of this ‘multiple meaning’ synonyms or paryag – Sabha – s, where the same word is found to have various senses. Sanskrit language is full of synonyms and homonyms and the various lexicons in Sanskrit deal with word usually arranged as paryaya – s and nanatha – s. Even Patanjali has drawn attention to his feature of language. He says that there are many words with the same sense and the same word is also found to have different senses.

As a matter of fact, Sri Aurobindo by the term ‘thing said’ refers to the suggestive contents as the soul of poetry. This contents is nothing but an ideation of rasa – Dhavni theory. The Indian poetics stresses more and on bhavaktva.

Bhavakatva is the power of universalization (sadharnikarana) which strips the Vibhavas – s, sthayibhava – s etc, of their individual and personal aspects and generalizes them in the minds of spectators endowed with the power of imagination; and bhojkatva is the power by which the sthayibhava reaches its climax and is enjoyed by the spectators (this experience is described as something which cannot be defined in words).48
Abhinav Gupta mentions three different psychological stages in the realization of rasa-dhavni theory in literature.

The first stage involves the cognition of the formal or intellectual elements of the poem, and serves as a means to the sound. The second stage consist of the idealization of a thing in poetry or drama by the power of imagination. The third stage can be marked as the climax of the inexpressible affective (emotional) condition of the reader or the spectator. The relish of rasa is manifested as a unity in the heart, heaving no trace is the constituent elements; and this is why the rasa – Dhavni is called ‘asamlakshya – karma – vyangya or the suggested sense with imperceptible stage.49 Even Sri Aurobindo in his letters written to the contents of Savitri acknowledges the theory of rasa – Dhavni as the soul component of his poetic creation:

Rasa, which, passing through the mind or sense or both, awakes a vital enjoyment of the taste, Bhoga, and this can again awaken us, awaken even the soul in us to something yet deeper and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment, to some form of the spirit’s delight of existence, Ananda. Poetry, Like all art, serves the seeking for these things, this aesthesis, this Rasa,
Bhoga, Ananda, it brings us a Rasa of word and sound but also of the idea and through the idea of the things expressed (Dhvani) by the word and sound and thought, a mental or vital or sometimes the spiritual image of their form, quality, impact upon us or even, if the poet is strong enough, of their world – essence, their cosmic reality the very soul of them, the spirit that resides in them as it resides in all things (Virat rupta).\textsuperscript{50}

Aesthesis is the very essence of poetry. Indian poetic regards rasa as the essence of poetry. Therefore aesthesis becomes the instructional and the directive part of the poetry. Sri Aurobindo has written in his theoretical aspects, reveals the yoga and Bhoga in his poetic contents. Savitri comes back to the earth; and she thus represents the spiritual and the worldly power with a message to be followed in times to come

\textbf{Like a flower hidden in heart of spring}

\textbf{The soul of Satyavan drawn down by her}

\textbf{In extricably in that mighty lapse}

\textbf{Invisible heavens in a thronging fight}

\textbf{Seared past her as she felt then all the blind}

\textbf{And near attraction of the earth compelled}
A great harmony from the stillness born

Surprised with joy and sweetness yearning hearts

An ecstasy and laughter and a cry

A power leaned down, a happiness forever its home

Over wide earth brooded the infinite bliss.\(^{51}\)

As a matter of fact, the poetic style is nothing but the use of language. Sri Aurobindo believes that in the beginning of human speech words has a real vivid life of their own. The early poetic language had a vivid living quality which it lost in its sophisticated evolution, however, greatly it might have gained in precision, clarity and utility. When poetry uses language it seeks to recover this vivid element or power. The poet looks at word in their inmost psychological and not solely in their external aspect. The poet does it in a number of ways. The poet rises in the scale of poetic achievement by degrees as he brings out not only the definitive intellectual value of the word, not only its power of emotion and sensation, its vital suggestion but through and beyond these its soul suggestion, its spirit'.

For Sri Aurobondi language is a living reality. It has its body soul. The poet has to establish contact with its soul and has to
obey her laws. This brings us to the consideration of diction which is an integral part of the style. It points to way in which words are used for the purpose of creative expression. Words are the very basis of poetry as it has been stressed repeatedly in Indian poetics. Though the words used in daily life, in prose and poetry are the same yet in poetry the order of words is an order based on choice that is guided by the philosophic vision of the poet. Sri Aurobindo as a poet is deeply conscious of the power of words. In keeping with his spiritual vision and mystical experiences he has created a new poetic language and a new poetic genre. Before using the specific Aurobindonian idioms of language in Savitri, he followed English diction in his early poetry. His earlier work is representative of form, diction, rhythm and imagery at the instance of Milton, Shelley and Yeats. His early composition reveals the romantic temper and technique:

Love a moment drop thy hands;

Night within my soul expands

Veil thy beauties milk-rose fair

In the dark and showering hair

Coral kisses ravish not
When the soul is tinged with thought

Burning looks are then forbid.

Sometimes one finds at the instance of Yeats the double adjectives and composing in the poetry of Sri Aurobindo. The double adjectives such as ‘a great priestly wind’, ‘wind winged hymn’ have justified his technique of language. He thinks that double usage and coinage of the words bring the specific literary effectiveness.

Sri Aurobindo has employed poetic devices to embellish his poetic creations. He has very cautiously used the grand style through epic similes and through specific images. Sri Aurobindo has used freely the repetition of various words, idioms and images. The image of sea occurs in various contexts of Savitri. The images such as ‘like a great sea’, sea in ebb’, ‘sea as a lonely isle’, ‘an ocean impulse’, ‘a sea of white sincerity’ and ‘an ocean of untrembling’, ‘virgin fire’ prove that Sri Aurobindo has freely repeated the same image in various contexts. ‘The mystic poet restore to Avritti, repetition as one of the most powerful means carrying home what has been thought or seen and fixing it in the mind in an atmosphere of light and beauty’.
The language, style and technique of Sri Aurobindo’s composition suit his vision. He uses blank verse in the same genuine way as Milton uses it in his *Paradise Lost*. His earlier poems *Urvasie, Love and Death* written in blank verse reveal influence of Milton on his poetry. He has combined in his poetry the delicate splendour of early Milton with the amplitude of the epical Milson. *‘The fusion of the early Milton with the late; this may be taken in general to characterize at its best the blank verse of Sri Aurobindo’s twenties’.*

His earliest poem of blank verse technique is *Urvasie* and it brings the poetic craftsmanship of the poet. He brings like Kalidas a sensuous and voluptuous sweep. Here are some lines from *Urvasie* which show the astonishing expressiveness of Sri Aurobindo’s blank verse:

... But all was silent; only

Perhaps a bird darted bright winged away,

Or a grey shake slipped through the brilliant leaves

Thus wandering, thus in every mindful place

Renewing old forgotten scenes that rose

Glean after gleam, upon his mind, as stars
Return at night; thus drawing from his heart
Where they lay covered old sweet incidents
To live before his eyes; thus calling back
Uncertain moods, brief moments of her face;
And transient postures strangely beautiful,
Pleasures and little happy mists of tears
Heart freeing, he, materializing dreams
Upon her very body almost seized.  

In Baji Prabhou, there hardly occur passion and phantasy in blank verse. It’s lines are a sustained effort of energetic ardour.

Here are some lines:

... so was the fatal gorge

Filled with the clamor of the close – locked fight

Sword rang on sword, the slogan shout, the cry

Of guns, the hiss of bullet filled the air,

And murderous strike heaped up the scanty space

Rajput and strong Maratha breathing hard

In desperate battle.

The blank verse of Savitri is in harmony with its scriptural conception. The lambic – five – foot line of blank verse is adopted. It
is the most apt and plastic for creating internal association between the Vedas and the Upanishads. In his Illion, he rather worked out the homerie movement for the specific verse creativity. Sri Aurobindo has used the flowing rhythmic pattern in Savitri.

His rhythm is neither the neoclassic sings song nor the Shellyean impulsive music nor Swinburne’s monotonous word – sound, but a powerful evocative incantatory. Sound – it is sound significance that seems to awake some ancient memory in the soul ... As elevating and soothing in its effect as the Gita, the music of Savitri reverberates in the depths of our soul.54

Thus, the overall assessment of Sri Aurobindo brings the fact into being that he is a conscious artist who also creates his own criticism; and on the pillars of his own criticism he writes his poetry. He regards the poet as a magician who works to create the spiritual sensibility for employing the appropriate images, myths and symbols in his language. One of the specific contribution of Sri Aurobindo as a poet lies in his significant statement that ‘poetry like everything else in man, evolves’. It means that he enjoys and holds a specific place among the poets of Indian English literature,
for he enunciates the mantric effects in his poetry. He is the poet who relates English poetry to the natural ascending order; he creates the poetry of power, beauty, wonder and the poetry of spontaneous substance in the specific language that is the language of Sri Aurobindo himself, and nobody else’s. Here in lies the greatness of Sri Aurobindo as a poet of unique craftsmanship.
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