CHAPTER-II

HIS POETIC THEORY
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The detailed theoretic analysis of Sri Aurobindo's poetry can only be made where it is to be analysed on the principles of Indian Poetics. The abiding value of Poetry in Indian Poetics is attested by the persistence with which generation of critics- Indian as well as Western- have studied, discussed and defended it. By the poetry the average man means writings in verse. But in Indian Poetics Alankara, Rasa, Dhvani and Vakrokti work on the word Kavya (Poetry). It is used in a wider sense in order to bring into force the validity of human emotions. There are different kinds of poetry, creating the differences of temperament and culture, of tradition and purpose. But according to Indian Poetics:

The essence of poetry, then, is the enjoyment (rasa) of the cultivated reader rich in poetic sensibility, an enjoyment which is valued for its own sake and which on analysis involves the appreciation of distinct qualities (gunas) in style (riti)-qualities inheriting in form (sabda) as well as content (artha), and which more often than not reveal turns of speech or imagery (alankaras) deliberately made remote from the common ways of daily talk or of science.1
Again, Sri Aurobindo follows Indian Aesthetic while theorizing the norms of his poetry. To Sri Aurobindo, Aesthetic is concerned "mainly with beauty but more generally with rasa, the response of the mind, the vital feeling and the sense of certain taste in things which often may be but is not necessarily a spiritual feelings."  When Sri Aurobindo talks of rasa, and does not always show its affinity with religious motifs, he certainly refers to the theory of Emotion. The various bhavas (emotions) if they are transpersonalized for the sake of objective delineations of human behaviour, they reveal the highest truth of literature. Sri Aurobindo for his poetic theory quotes the two famous lines of John Keats:

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty- that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

[Ode to a Grecian Urn]

These two lines denote the fact that "beauty" and "truth" are abstract metaphysical terms. The poet gives the metaphysics of the terms an earthly shape by revealing the universal validity of the abstract terms. According to Sri Aurobindo, the Overmind aesthetic forms the basis of all poetic creation. The term aesthetic in his poetry is meant for a reaction of the consciousness, mental and vital and bodily. This reaction creates the sense of the taste or flavour which is defined in Indian Poetics as rasa.

Sri Aurobindo follows the instance of Indian Poetics
where one is reminded continuously the poetic theory - a theory that suggests the physical and spiritual levels of meanings. The right meaning of the poetry according to Sri Aurobindo and according to the great Vedic tradition can be appreciated by the connoisseur (sahrdaya):

Poetry depends for its existence not only on the experience of the poet and the diction adopted by the poet but on the appreciative genius of the connoisseur who is endowed with such a fine aesthetic sensibility as to allow the recreation of the experience to take rest in his mental plane. ³

Sri Aurobindo in his conception and theory of poetry suggests two things in general: the physical and the spiritual levels of human emotions. The suggestive pattern in his poetry helps him recreate his experience, which is nothing but relishable, in the minds of the readers and it is due to the operation of the suggestion that the most deformed is transformed into the most beautiful, the most unpleasant into the most attractive.

There comes a kind of conversion of various stages of emotions. This process of conversion is regarded as the process of poetic idealization in the language of the Western Aesthetics which also acknowledges the power of poetry "to generate supreme and instantaneous bliss." ⁴ The two approaches: the approach of relishing physical objects (rasa) and the approach of
the supreme bliss (Anandam theory) become suggestive of the theoretic norms of Sri Aurobindo's poetry. Sri Aurobindo in his theory of poetry regards "yoga" and "bhoga" as the necessary parts of the poetic evolution. Rasa, which, passing through the mind or sense or both, awakes a vital enjoyment of the taste. Bhoga can awaken even the soul in us to something yet deeper and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment. The concept of bhoga is contrary to the Western concept of materialistic pursuits; it is the spiritual process in Indian Poetics which leads to realization of the mind's deeper points and the spiritual height of human thinking. Sri Aurobindo himself analyses the importance of Rasa, Bhoga and Ananda for his poetic principles:

Poetry, like all art, serves the seeking for these things, this Aesthesis, this Rasa, this Bhoga, this Ananda; it brings us a Rasa of word and sound but also of idea and, through the idea, of the things expressed by the word and sound and thought, a mental or vital or sometimes the spiritual images of their from, quality, impact upon us or even..... of their world essence, their cosmic reality, the very soul of them, the spirit that resides in them as it resides in all things.⁵

The various properties of the word (connotative, denotative and suggestive) yield the final/the highest aesthetic
experience; and if this experience is expressed through the medium of words, it becomes *mantric poetry* at the instance of *The Bhagvad Gita*. Thus, Sri Aurobindo is to transform even the physical life into the life divine. He sets some definite instances in literature and some new dimensions to the theory of poetry. As a seer and Rishi, Sri Aurobindo has enriched the human mind with his unique aesthetic vision. His Yogic life did not interfere in his artistic life though it might have inspired him to create the high norms/objectivisation in his literary creations. Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge, Arnold, T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards, Sri Aurobindo hardly deals with the definition of poetry. Nevertheless, he places the art of poetry to a great position and calls the poetic creation as the *mantras* which are to be followed for making life divine. In his magnum opus, *Savitri*, which will be analysed for the application to his poetic theory in this and other core chapters, uses the truly spiritualized terms repeatedly such as "soul", "divataman", "the phychic being", "the spark of soul" etc. A poet of soul is the creator of spiritual joy, "Ananda"; the poetry is not merely a sensuous exercise, but it is mysterious which the highest bliss that enlightens human mind and soul. To Sri Aurobindo, the poetry as synthesis lives in the harmonious relationships of vision of truth, passion for beauty and the quest for joy. It becomes the soul that sustains the breath of human life. To quote his own words:

A poetry which is all thought and no life or a
thought which does not constantly keep in touch with and refresh itself from the fountains of life..... elegant or cultured philosophizing or moralizing in skilled verse, even if it has vision and intellectual beauty, suffers always by lack of fire and body, wants perfection of grasp and does not take full hold on the inner being to seize and uplift as well as sweeten and illumine, as poetry should do and all great poetic writing does. The function of the poet even when he is most absorbed in thinking, is still to bring out not merely the truth and interest, but the beauty and the power of truth, its life and emotion, and not only do that, not only to make the thought a beautiful and living thing but to make it one thing with life.⁶

The citation under analysis brings three major works for a poet in his creation: the beauty and the power of thought, the expression of truthfulness and their relevance to the life of man on the earth. The abstract form of the poetic creation is suggested to its concrete form. Poetry, to Sri Aurobindo, should not deal with the revelation of sensuous, intellectual, and imaginative aspects of life only, but it must work out the inner and the spiritual life of man through the use of appropriate words; it should become the rhythmic voice of life. The poet as a seer and as a rishi is gifted
with the ideation of sensing the inner most spirtual life. This kind of poetry "will be the voice and rhythmic utterance of our greater, our total, our infinite existense, and will give us the strong and infinite sense, the spiritual and vital joy, the exalting power of a greater breath of life."?

The application to his theoric principles can be made with the following lines of his magnum opus, Savitri. Savitri as an ordinary girl serves the highest purpose for three things: the physical aspects of human life, the sadhana of a yogi and the combination of these two experiences for realizing the higher norms of human life:

As when the mantra sinks in Yoga's ear,
Its message enters stirring the blind brain
And keeps the dim ignorant cells its sound
The hearer understands a from of words
And, musing on the index thought it holds,
He strives to read it with the labouring mind
But finds bright hints, not the embodied truth:
Then, falling silent in himself to know
He meets the deeper listening of his soul:
The Word repeats itself in rhythmic strains
Thought, vision, feeling, sense the body's self
Are seized unutterably and he endures
An ecstasy and an immortal change
He feels a Wilderness and becomes a Power
All knowledges rushes him like a sea
Transmuted by the white spiritual ray
He walks in naked heavens of joy and calm,
Sees the God-face and hears transcendent speech.  

In the textual citation of Savitri, Sri Aurobindo stresses *repeatedly* on the terms "ignorant cells", "the deeper listening of his soul" and the capital form of "Word" which become symbolic of the mysterious powers of the words. The "ecstasy" creates the sense of "Samadhi" which denotes the transcendental form of the poetry and the higher role of the poet. What it creates can be explained in the words of C.D. Narasimhaiah:

But the poem bears witness to the fact that the poet becomes a witness (*sakshi*) to the *bhavakatva vyapara* (creative process) of the *Maker* and we are invited to participate in the new and ever new imaginative acts *nava navomesha saloni pratibha*-the sparks that emanate from the smithy of *Viswakarma* (the creator) seem to be onomatopoetic illustrations of the term *nava navomesha*.  

In his Yogic experiences, Sri Aurobindo makes Yoga a collective entity. This is perhaps the reason that Sri Aurobindo has the
validity of the universal movement for the progress of human being. He has the least desire for his personal salvation, he, instead regards the well being of the entire humanity. He rather creates in his poetic creation a new order and harmony and unity and fixes in the supramental consciousness in the earth consciousness in order to lead a man to divine consciousness. A few poems of Sri Aurobindo such as "The Self Infinite","Surrender", "The Divine Worker", "The Golden Light" and "Transformation" describe the thematic contents of the Overmind.

Sri Aurobindo holds that the poet not only gets the inspiration from the Power Overhead but also receives dictats for his composition :

There would be no difficulty if the inspiration came through without obstruction or interference in a pure transcript- that is what happens in a poet's highest or freest moments when writes not at all out of his own external human mind but by inspiration, as the mouthpiece of the Gods.10

Sri Aurobindo worked very hard in the composition of his masterpiece Savitri and this poem becomes an ideal about the poetic theory of Sri Aurobindo. The following lines bring into being Sri Aurobindo's poetic credo and the divine inspiration at par :
On inspiration with her lightening feet,
A sudden messenger from the all-seeing tops,
Traversed the soundless corridors of his mind
Bringing her rhythmic sense of hidden things
A music spoke transcending mortal speech
As if from a golden phial of the All-bliss
A joy of light, a joy of sudden sight,
A rapture of the thrilled undying word
Poured into his heart as into an empty cup
A repetition of God's first delight
Creating in a young and virgin Time
In a brief moment caught, a little space,
All knowledge packed into great wordless thought.\textsuperscript{11}

Even before the composition of \textit{Savitri}, Sri Aurobindo experiences the higher motifs of life; he practices the Yogic activities. Roman Rolland described him as "the last of the Rishis". "The poet is always a symbol, the highest point of contemporary consciousness. A representative man or deputy of the aspiring world."\textsuperscript{12} Sri Aurobindo's essential poetry is a natural fruit of his interior life or inward grace. A gift appropriate to the giver, it is in the effect the recovery of our buried self.

To these high-raised dominions of the Self

Too far from our surface nature's postal routes
Too lofty for our moral lives to breathe
Deep in us are responsive elements.\textsuperscript{13}

Sri Aurobindo's first book of poetry Songs to Myrtilla (1895) describes his creative talent. A few poems such as "A Rose of Women" and "To the Cuckoo" exhibit fine and fluent English. It can be seen even in the opening lines of the cuckoo poem:

Sounds of the wakening world, the year's increase,
Passage of wind and all her dewy powers
With breath and laughter of new-bathed flowers
And that deep light of heaven above the trees
Awake mid leaves that muse in peace
Sweet noise of birds, but most in heavenly showers
The cuckoo's voice pervades the hours.\textsuperscript{14}

Sri Aurobindo also adopted the tradition of Sanskrit Poetics more specifically in his long and narrative poems. In Sankrit theory of poetry, the obscure is thus treated with contempt and as a natural corollary to it. Lucidity or perspicuity is commended, being admitted as an excellence which makes a specimen of literary art really appealing. In theory the emotive content attains prominence. The organismic theory of poetry as enunciated by Anandavardhana is accepted practically without any challenge by later theoreticians. The concept of beauty of Sri Aurobindo comes near to the theoretician of Sanskrit Poetics.
Appaya, infact, acquiesces with the learned Dhvanikara in conceiving of the best type of poetic art as one characterised by the inexplicably charming implicit; and Jagannatha advancing a step further connects the concept of Beauty with the concept of Rasa, implying thereby his agreement with the proposition that poetry always leads to disinterested and super mundane bliss and consequently poetry itself is beauty.\textsuperscript{15}

The Urvasie theme has been an old favourite of Indian poets. In the Aurobindoan version it is passion more than penance that is a felt quality, the passion for love and the passion for beauty. The king, Pururavus, who prays to the silent Himalayas: "Give her back to me, O mountain, give her back." Urvasie belongs to the poet's early writings. It is a long narrative poem in four cantos, and details the well known legend of king Pururavus and the heavenly nymph, Urvasie. It's motif is love. The meeting of lovers provides one of the most glowing passages in the poem, Urvasie;

She a leaf
Before a gust among the nearing trees
Cowered. But, all a sea of mighty joy
Rushing and swallowing up the golden sand,
With a great cry and glad Pururavus
Seized her and caught her to his bosom thrilled,
Clinging and shuddering. All her wonderful hair
Loosened and the wind seized and bore it streaming,
Over the shoulder of Pururavus
And on his cheeks a softness. She o'er borne
Panting with inarticulate murmurs lay,
Like a slim tree half seen though driving hail,
Her naked arms clasping his neck, her cheek
And golden throat averted, and wide trouble
In her large eyes bewildered with their bliss
With her sweet limbs all his, feeling her breasts
Tumultous up against his beating heart,
He kissed the glorious mouth of heaven's desire
So clung they two as shipwrecked in a surge
Then strong Pururavus, with golden eyes,
Mastering hers, cried tremulous: O beloved
O miser of thy rich and happy voice,
One word, one word, to tell me that thou lovest.
And Urvasie, all broken on his bosom,
Her godhead in his passion lost, moaned out,
From her imprisoned breasts,
    My Lord! My love.16

The poet has made effective use of a number of Homeric similes in it. Canto-I narrates the heroic rescue of Urvasie by Pururavus from the hands of Cayshie, the demon, who was
running off with her. This generates the deep suspense in love between the king and Urvasie. A fine reference to Urvasie's dear companions - Menaca, Misra, Cayshie, Mullica, Rumbha, Nelabha, Shela, Nolinie, Lolita, Lavonya and Tilottama (P. 40)- has been made. Canto II seems to be uninspired for the most part. It describes the scene in Paradise, the dance of the divine girls, Urvasie's dear folly, Bharuth's great anger at it, and her subsequent exile to earth, towards the close, it becomes animated and surcharged with passion. Canto III depicts the deep love between "the glorious pair", the birth of a child from the golden Urvasie, the return of Pururavus along with Urvasie and the child to his kingdom, the popular welcome they received; the return of Urvasie to Paradise; and his leave-taking of his subjects after having relinquished the throne in favour of his worthy son, Ayus. This canto is interesting enough. Canto IV gives the account of the wandering of Love-Lorn Pururavus in forests, meadows, and dales. He is sore over the departure of Urvasie and his own lonliness. He says:

She is not here; though every mystic glade
And Sunbright pasture breathe alone of her
And quiver as with her presence, I find not
Her very limbs, her very face; yet dreamed
That here infallably I should restrain
Her fugitive feet or hold her by the robe. (P. 73)
There are brilliant flashes of nature-poetry in it. The king is charged, by the patron-goddess of Aryasthan, of neglecting his duties and "a nation's destinies" for the sake of his own passion. But the Mighty Mother, to whom the king had been sent by the patron-goddess, tells him that though he has failed in his kingly charge, God will neither blame nor punish him (P. 80). Pururavus makes a pessage to the upper regions and attains an immortal's status to be forever united with Urvasie:

And they were left alone in that clear world
Then all his soul towards her leaning, took
Pururavus into his clasp and felt,
Seriously glad, the golden bosom on his
Of Urvasie, his love, so pressing back
The longed-for sacred face, lingering he kissed.
Then Love in his sweet heavens was satisfied. (P. 82)

Urvasie anticipates Savitri in many ways. Both deal with symbolic interpretations of Hindu legends. The Mighty Mother in Urvasie suggests the World Mother in Savitri. Both follow the epic patterns and employ blank verse for serious purposes.

The poet was deeply impressed by the Urvasie legend. He, thus, rendered into English Kalidasa's play, Vikramorvasie (The Hero and the Nymph). He also wrote a short poem of 62 lines entitled "Urvasie" (More Poems, P.P. 51-53). It has been suggested that Sri Aurobindo considered this theme for his epic of human
aspiration (as Savitri is) before finally adopting the Savitri legend.

In 'Love and Death' indomitable Love is presented as gaining victory over Death. That is what we found in Urvasie, and that is what we find here. In Love and Death, Ruru invades Patala (Hades) to reclaim his beloved, Priyumvada, who dies untimely of snake-bite. He willingly barters away half his own life to live the other half with his beloved restored to life. The legend reminds one of the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, with the difference that Orpheus could not bring his beloved back to earth. The youthful love of Ruru and Priyumvada before her death is presented as follows:

To him the earth was a bed for this sole flower,

To her all the world was filled with his embrace. (P. 85)

Ruru, after her death, challenges Death with determination in a heroic fashion:

Somewhere, I know not where,

Some how, I know not how, I shall confront.

Thy gloom, tremendous spirit, and seize with hands

And prove what thou art and what man. (P. 92)

The lines describing the re-union of Ruru and Priyumvada are really memorable:
Sighing
With a slight sob she woke and -
- earthy large
Her eyes looked upward into his -
-she stretched
Her arms up, yearning, and their souls -
-embraced
Then twixt brief sobbing laughers and -
-blissful tears
Clinging with all her limbs to him, -
-O love,
The green, green world; the warm sun-
-light!" and ceased,
Finding no words; (P. 115)

Love emerges triumphant ultimately. The poem makes elaborate use of similes and metaphors. Its sustained poetic grandeur pleases us. In it we have a youthful vitality combined with an intense love of life. Some of the notable events of the poem are: the profound love of Ruru and Priyumvada, the pathetic cry of the dying girl, the self- exaltation of Kamadev, and the sickening picture of Hell.

Speaking of Urvasie and Love and Death, Dr. Iyengar has observed that both the narratives "are quarried from the ranges of deathless Romance, for Pururavus and Ruru are great lovers,
and Urvasie and Priyumvada are truly worthy of their love."  

Dr. Iyenger is quite correct in this observation, but he seems to go wide the mark when he remarks that "the lovers have somehow failed, and have, after all, preferred the lesser realization of personal felicity to the greater realization of world redemption and transformation." The truth is that both the poems have successfully attempted the victory of Love over Death and the lovers have not failed.

Even in his early poetry, Sri Aurobindo follows the Vedic height of literary creations and works out successfully the principles of Indian Poetics. The skill of the great poet lies in his successful employment of the poetic function of suggestion. It is competent to bring into expression a reliable symbol of experience which is understood by the refined reader when the provocations of its imagery reverberate in his mind. And in the whole process of this transference of the symbol of the poet's experience, the diction and image play very important role, because it is out of the language and the objects of the language that the poet makes a reliable symbol of his experience. The end of poetry, according to Indian Aesthetics is represented by attainment of blissful experience which is transferred to the reader by the poet through the medium of language characterized by the magical phrase and the charming poetic figure
This is the stand of both the Western and Indian Aesthetics on the nature of poetry and the status of the poetical elements in relation to the centre of gravity represented by the blissful experience.¹⁹

His next book of early poems brings into being the concept and theory of poetry. The mood and manners in the composition of these early poems reflect his yielding to the philosophic matter. An unequal volume, there are, however, exceptions to the philosophizing mood. For example in a poem like "Who", he sings with perfect gaiety and buoyancy of a philosophic poet:

In the strength of a man, in the beauty of a woman
In the laugh of a boy, in the blush of a girl,
The hand that set Jupiter spinning through Heaven,
Spends all its cunning to fashion a curl
These are His works and His veils and His shadows
But Where is He then? by what name is He known?
Is He Brahma or Vishnu? a man or a woman?
Bodied or bodoless? twain or alone?
All Music is the sound of His laughter,
All beauty the smile of His passionate bliss;
Our lives are His heart-beats, our raptures the bridal
Of Radha and Krishna, Our love is their bliss.²⁰
As in the case in Indian Aesthetics that the function of poetry lies in using such myths and symbols as to create the secret zone of truth. Sri Aurobindo raises an important question for the form of God- a Vedantin Concept. The question "is He a Brahma or Vishnu?", and again "bodied or bodiless", creates the dialectics of the form and the nature of God in Indian mythology.

Again, one feels an increase of the individual accent in "In the Moon light". Characteristically the poet thinks of the process of infinite instead of thinking of the romantic musings. From his life at Baroda, Sri Aurobindo engrossed deeply in Yogic experiences. In his letter published in the volumes of the Centenary edition, he elaborates his experiences:

There was an entire silence of thought and feeling and all the ordinary movements of consciousness except the perception and recognition of things around without any accompanying concept or other reaction. The sense of ego disappeared and the movements of the ordinary life as well as speech and action were carried on by some habitual activity of Prakriti alone..... This condition remained unimpaired for several months and even when the sense of unreality disappeared and there was a return to participation in the world- consciousness, the inner peace and freedom which resulted from
this realization remained permanently behind all
surface movements and the essence of the
realization itself was not lost.\textsuperscript{21}

He even chooses the historical personalities for his
poetic creation for two major purposes: the epical narratives; and
for the intellectual debate and solution for the nationalistic zeal
among the masses of the country. In Baji Prabhou, he does not
deal with the natural sights of the Himalaya or the moon light or the
tortured mind of modern Hamlets but the searching Deccan
Plateaus and the background of the battle:

A noon of Deccan with its tyrant glare
Oppressed the earth, the hills stood deep in haze,
And sheltering a thirst the fields glared up
Longing for water in courses long parched
Imprisoned by a bronze and brilliant sky
Sought an escape for the wide trance of heat.\textsuperscript{22}

In Sri Aurobindo, Baji has found "a ministrel worthy of his
imperishable sacrifice".\textsuperscript{23} The poem is written in vigorous blank
verse and the diction is charged with passion and power. He
chooses an epical episode from Maratha history, Baji Prabhou's
defence of George against the superior and overwhelming Moghul
army. There can be little doubt that the choice of theme, including
tribute to Bhabani, "goddess formidable who watches over India
till the end"\textsuperscript{24}, was the expressive of the poet's own intense
nationalism. The marital mood is also reflected in the free translation of "Vidula" from the Mahabharata. Here one finds the upbraiding of the queen mother for her faltering son, Sanjoy: "Warrior; wake! I have laboured to provoke the will, the strength of thy heart within."25

The poetic theory of Sri Aurobindo includes the norms of beauty and truthfulness being set simultaneously in his poetic creation.

Sri Aurobindo believes that love and beauty are the sources of Joy, Ananda as light and knowledge are of consciousness. God can be found only in the highest joy, and this is the reason why the spiritual joy makes life beautiful, wonderful and resplendent to man. No wonder poetry, which is inspired and governed by spirituality, can exert a healthy impact on the life of the reader. Spiritual Joy or Ananda is the highest form of human vision. Ananda - fathomless, indivisible joy-has love and beauty as its two most important ingredients. The highest delight, the spiritual joy, which makes life lovable and beautiful, is attainable only through the realization of, and close contact with, God. Poetry, in Sri Aurobindo's opinion, should aim at embodying this spiritual delight, for only then it will exercise a wholesome influence over the life of man. The poet discovers within himself, or in the world around him, a profoundly spiritual vision which clothes everything is celestial Joy- Ananda. The reason of this is not far to seek. The
Vedic religion, according to which spirit is the foremost and ultimate reality, explains it convincingly, Brahma is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, and is the ultimate reality. Life emanates from Brahma, or the spirit, and ultimately merges into it. Thus, man is only an ingredient of Brahma, God, or the spirit. Inevitably, the spirit in him drives him towards Him. This accounts for Sri Aurobindo's preoccupation with the poetry of Spirit, about which he states:

This can only come if the mind of the race takes actually the step over which it is now hesitating and passes from the satisfaction of the liberated intellect which has been its preoccupation for the last two centuries to the pursuit of the realization of the larger self, from the scrutiny of the things that explain to the experience of the things that reveal, the truths of the spirit.26

A very basic feature of Sri Aurobindo's poetics is the fusion of the spirit and the material world. To him, the transcendent and the aesthetic are absolutely inseparable from each other. The Matter and the Spirit are wedded to each other; the body and the soul are one, having no independent entities of their own. No doubt, art in all its forms is fundamentally concerned with the perception of beauty; Thus, great poetry, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the Energy of Transcendent; it is "the rhythmic voice of life ...... one of
the inner and not one of the surface voices."27 Infact, it presents inner beauty, an assessment of inner life. Obviously, the poet is not different from the spiritualist, though the two seem to be two entirely different beings. The spirit and the material world become one unified whole in great poetry, despite the fact that to an artist the world is real, while to the spiritualist the spirit is real and the world is illusion. Apparently, to Sri Aurobindo, the transcendent and the aesthetic are inalienable. No wonder he asserts that art is spiritual, having its basis in sensuous reality. What he professes, he has realized in his own life as is evident from his record of one of his unique epiphanies, moments of spiritual revelations:

Since I set foot on the Indian soil on the Appollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not discovered from this world but had an inner and infinite bearing on it, such as a feeling of the infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies. At the same time I found myself entering supra-physical world and planes with influences and an effect from them upon the material plane.28

Apparently, Sri Aurobindo holds that to gain strength in poetic art, as in any other sphere of work, power or Shakti is needed. Just as in Hindu philosophy, Shakti is inalienable from
Shiva, likewise force is inseparable from being. The artist, who needs power continually, can acquire it through profound Sadhana, dedication. Thus, he believes in the Indian concepts as stressed by some of the modern Indian English authors like Tagore and Raja Rao. Sri Aurobindo not only talked of Sadhana, but also practised it in his life. His intense yoga, Sadhana infused him with immense power enabling him to attain supra-mental consciousness in his life on the earth. Through Sadhana, he grasped his true self, and combined the various parts of his self to see the Divine in others. According to him, in yoga, work is as invaluable as Bhakti or meditation, for work done with utmost sincerity and spirit of renunciation transports man's consciousness close to the Divine. Thus, his concept of Purna yoga is the unification of knowledge, work, devotion and meditation, stemming from man's deep urge for the Divine.

To the common man who is not able to grasp poetry, it is "nothing more than aesthetic pleasure of the imagination, the intellect and the ear, a sort of elevated pastime." It is true that everyone expects pleasure from poetry, but the delight that poetry affords us cannot be comprehended through intelligence, imagination or senses because they are only its instruments; the poetic delight is the creation of the soul and hence it can be understood only through the soul. Apropos of this Sri Aurobindo states:
Therefore poetry has not really done its work, at least its highest work, until it has raised the pleasure of the instrument end transmuted it into the deeper delight of the soul. A Divine Ananda, a delight interpretative, creative, revealing, formative- one might almost say, and inverse reflection of the joy which the universal soul has felt in its great release of energy when it rang out into the rhythmic forms of the universe- the spiritual truth, the large interpretative idea, the life, the power, the emotion of things packed into its original creative vision- such spiritual joy is that which the soul of the poet feels and which, when he can conquer the human difficulties of his task, he succeeds in pouring also into all those who are prepared to receive it. And this delight is not merely a godlike pastime; it is a great formative and eliminative power.\textsuperscript{30}

Obviously, Sri Aurobindo is of the view that despite faulty poetic technique, a gifted soul is capable of creating great poetry which may captivate human mind for centuries. Technique, according to him, is not as invaluable for poetry as for any other art. The reasons are two: first, the instrument of poetry- the rhythmic word- is more full of immaterial and subtle elements than of any other art-form; secondly, the instrument of poetry, being the most
suggestive, supple and complex of all the instruments of art-forms, has immense possibilities in various directions. The rhythmic word, with its sense and sound, has a soul value, a spiritual power which is absolutely inalienable from it and which is something beyond the mere mechanical construction. This is the reason why the poet, of all artists, is least concerned with the technique of his art. In fact, at the height of creation, he forgets all but the technical side of the poetic creations, and his sound-movement and style emanate naturally from his soul. Hence, he considers poetry as the highest human speech-from. Inevitably, Sri Aurobindo infers:

So poetry arrives at the indication of infinite meanings beyond the finite intellectual meanings the world carries. It expresses not only the life-soul of man as did the primitive word, not only the ideas of his intelligence for which speech now usually serves, but the experience, the vision, the ideas, as we may say, of the higher and wider soul in him. Making them real to our life-soul as well as present to our intellect, it opens to us by the word the doors of the spirit.\(^3\)

The another phase in the poetic theory of Sri Aurobindo includes the principles of the meditative and mystic poetry. Mystic poetry ordinarily does not deal with the analytic and the descriptive mode of expression. There is a difference between
the spiritual and the mystic poetry. If, however, the spirit speaks out of choice or necessity- an alien language in a strange manner e.g., that of a profane consciousness, or of the consciousness of another domain, idealistic or philosophical or even occult, puts on or initiates "spirit's language and manner, we have what we propose to call mystic poetry." The period of Sri Aurobindo's creative genius includes *Six Poems, Transformation and Other Poems*. The first poem of the collection is: "The Bird of Fire". The poem consists of the two symbols: the "bird" which is suggestive of human soul; and the word "fire" symbolizes the divine love on its higher plan and the passion signifies the lower zone of human emotions. The symbolic application in the poetry of Sri Aurobindo is the original base and hence it appears very difficult to interpret in the common language:

Gold-white wings a throb in the vastness, the bird
Of flame went glimmering over a sunfire curve to the haze of the west,
Skimming, a messanger soul, the sapphire - summer waste
Of a soundless, wayless burning sea. The next poem is "The Life Heavens" which describes the blissful life of yogi. The poet suggests that man can experiment this blissful life on the earth with earthly objects.
All things are a harmony faultless, pure;
Grief is not nor stain-wound of desire
The heart- beats are a cadence bright and sure
Of joy's quick steps, too invincible to tire.\textsuperscript{34}

The line of the poem- "I, Earth, have a deeper power than Heaven"- becomes the best points of Aurobindian theory of poetry. He justifies the claims, and says that "it holds in itself that possibility implied in the presence of the suppressed Divine here-which does not exist in the perfection of the vital (or even the mental) Heavens."\textsuperscript{35}

At the later stage, which includes his \textit{Magnum opus}, Savitri, the poetic theory of Sri Aurobindo becomes evolutionary. By the process of evolution, he means that a man can attain the status of superman if he constantly pursues the Yogic experiences in his/her life. The evolutionary of Charles Darwin influenced Sri Aurobindo. At the instances of Jainism and Buddhism, Sri Aurobindo perfects the philosophy of \textit{Dhyanas, Samadhi} and \textit{Yogic} trances. As opposed to the older assumption Sri Aurobindo in his poetic theory accepted the reality of the world, revealed by science. He also accepted the social challenge and the task of charging the socio - political structure of the world :

Freud, Jung and Sri Aurobindo think that social improvement can come about by improving the
individual. This stand is consistent with the age old tradition of the Indian sages who started with the dictum of self-conquest. But society is the life-blood of each individual. In a socialist pattern of society, the individuality is preserved and is yet transcended. Socialism gives meaning to each individual by using and harnessing it in the service of the whole state and the state itself is shaped through an ever increasing evaluation of its moves by a society of intellectuals.  

The poet, who thinks of bringing the evolutionary in man's spiritual and worldly attainments, can really be regarded the right theoretician of the poetry; for the ultimate object of poetry, if all literary creation is to ameliorate the condition of man from lower impulses of the physical world to the higher imaginative power.

The theory of evolution in Sri Aurobindo's poetry lies in revealing the growth of human culture from the primitive barbarian to the civilized and cultured man of society. This evolution can hardly be called a biological evolution. To Sri Aurobindo, man is essentially a socio-cultural animal. What is distinctively human can grossly be defined as the process of culture. Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other activities of man received from society he inherits from. The habit of acquiring the social
elements makes the cognized mode which can be renamed as the process of culture. The biological inheritance should not be supposed as the process of handing down from man to man. Culture thus becomes a living force and that can be acquired through long and complex interaction between heredity and environment:

Culture, however, is something else. It is wholly acquired by human beings from other human beings and not only by children from their parents as in biological heredity. Heredity does determine that a person can learn to speak languages, but it does determine which language he will learn or what he will say. Biological heredity does not transmit characters which a human individual has acquired during his/her life time, but culture transmits only such characters.37

Sri Aurobindo in his theory of poetry does not evade from materialism; but out of the materialistic approach, the highest point of spiritualism can be accomplished. Both the material dialectics of Marx and the spiritual evolution of Sri Aurobindo lead to the brightness of future. To Marx, it is the society, without the powers of the state, in which there hardly exists any kind of exploitation of man by man. To Sri Aurobindo, it is the emergence of Supermind or a race of Gnostic that is inevitable. Both Sri
Aurobindo and Marx desire that an individual should co-operate in the historical dialectics of society. Sri Aurobindo desires to bring the perfection in the society through enunciating the process of the spiritual evolution. It is this knowledge which will save both the writer and the reader. But above all, it is through this means that we are able to see the real. Sri Aurobindo in his letter on Savitri explains how he has merged the material approach of life with the spiritual height in order to form the whole of life:

As a matter of fact in the passage itself earth in its wheeling does come into the dawn and pass from darkness into the light. You must take the idea as a whole in all its transitions and not press one detail with too literal and insistence. In the poem I present constantly one partial view of life or another temporarily as if it were the whole in order to give full value to the experience of those who are bound by that view, as for instance, the materialist conception and experience of life, but if any one charges me with philosophical inconsistency, then it only means that he does not understand the techique of the Overmind interpretation of life.38

The philosophic principle of Overmind holds that it is only the inner change, as one finds in the journey image of Savitri herself, that can bring about the change in outer conditions in so
far as the outer conditions are the product of human actions. The
spiritualist, therefore, emphasizes the need and the primacy of
radically changing the human psyche. The following lines from
Savitri bring into being the broader vision between the matter and
the spirit showing the poetic theory of Sri Aurobindo:

In the impalpable field of secret self
This little outer being's vast support
Parted from vision by earth's solid fence
He came into a magic crystal air
And found a life that lived not by the flesh
A light that made visible immaterial things
A fine degree in wonder's hierarchy
The kingdom of subtle matter's fancy craft
Outlined against a sky of vivid hues
Leaping out of a splendour-trance and haze
The wizard revelation of its front
A world of lovelier forms lies near to ours,
Where undisguised by earth's deforming sight,
All shapes are beautiful and all things true
In that lucent ambience mystically clear
The eyes were doors to a celestial sense,
Hearing was music and the touch a charm,
And the heart drew a deeper breath of power,
There dwell earth-nature's shining origins
The perfect plans on which she moulds her works.
All Sri Aurobindo's works lead up to *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. He had been at work upon the poem for years, made several revisions. Sri Aurobindo did not complete it fully unless he was fully satisfied with the merit of the work according to his standard. Yet he was fully aware that the appeal of the poem did not come to its level. The theme of the poem is the legend by which a faithful wife attains the highest spiritual status. The absence of outward action, the prolonged interior dialogues, the massive flashbacks become the theoretic points which bring the cultural norms into operation. Its inner motifs become the motifs of poetic theory. Sri Aurobindo himself tells the beginning of Savitri about its theoretic norms:

A message from the unknown Immortal Light
Ablaze upon creation's quivering edge,
Dawn built her aura of magnificent hues
And buried its seed of grandeur in the hours
An instant's visitor the godhead shone
On life's thin border awhile the Vision stood
And bent over earth's pondering forehead curve.
Interpreting a recondite beauty and bliss
In colour's hieroglyphs of mystic sense
It wrote the lies of significant myth
Telling of a greatness of spiritual dawns,
A brilliant code penned with the sky for page
Almost that day the epiphany was disclosed
Of which our thoughts and hopes are signal flares.⁴⁰

This epic is not an allegory, a philosophy or a
doctrine, but it is a book, which is based on the real experience of
a Rishi. In the words of K.D. Sethna, "to create a poetic mould
equally massive and multiform as The Life Divine ...... such a task
is incumbent on one who stands as the maker of a new spiritual
epoch scattered and short pieces of poetry can not build that
sustained weltanschaung required for epic or drama can - Savitri
is from every angle the right co-relate,"⁴¹ to Sri Aurobindo's toal
effort and status as a poet, its crown jewel. Little attempt has been
made so far to relate it - "the poetry of tomorrow", as the Mother
once said- with world literature or to stress its significance for the
future of consciousness and man.

Sri Aurobindo wanted poetry to be mantric and
mystical. As the theorist of poetry, Sri Aurobindo is neither to
teach truth nor to pursue knowledge, nor to serve any ethical
purpose, but to have a life of its own and to embody beauty and to
give delight. His sole intention in writing Savitri is to theorize the
norms of a poet for future poetry. The future poetry may take any
or all forms- the lyric, the drama, the epic, but each form has to
run along a new line and fix its own new aim. There are some
distinctive notes between the early poetry and the poetry of Savitri
period. In early poetry, the aesthetic theory was influenced either
by the Victorians or Decadents. *Savitri* is based on the new aesthetic theory of indigenous myth, symbol and images. It brings into being the removal of all kinds of evils from the earth by the divine powers of an individual. Here is one example in the text of *Savitri*.

I am the Mystery beyond reach of mind
I am the goal of the travail of the suns:
My fire and sweetness are the cause of life.
But too immense my danger and my joy
Awake not the immeasurable descent,
Speak not my secret name to hostile Time;
Man is too weak to bear the Infinite's weight
Truth born too soon might break the imperfect earth.\

Again, the poet engrossed deeply in the high objectives of the mystical reflection; this kind of engrossment generates the principles of Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary process. The main thing that can move a man to Godhead is his will power. In the evolutionary process of Sri Aurobindo the specific importance of power exists. For example:

Turned from the fruitless motion of the years,
Deserting the fierce labour of the worlds,
Aloof from beings, lost in the Alone
How shall thy mighty spirit brook repose
While Death is still unconquered on the earth
And time a field of suffering and pain?
Thy soul was born to share the laden force;
Obey thy nature and fulfil thy fate:
Accept the difficulty and god like toil
For the slow-paced omniscient purpose lie.\(^43\)

The appeal of certain passages is a fact of immediate experience. The action, the plunge into the inner realm and the long debate with Death and Nothingness reflect the aspect of cosmic drama through the operation of the myth of Savitri. The drama unrolls the deeper psychological reality of the innermost regions of human mind. The symbolic content and enrichment are Sri Aurobindo's own creative genius and this too represents the subtle cultural signifiers and signs that deserve to be decoded in order to work out the poetic theory of the poet in relation to our social order. Here is the poetry such as Rishis wrote or might write. Primafacie, the motifs behind the surfacial reading of the poem lie in the quest of higher existence of soul beyond the area of darkness. Strictly according to the norms of his poetic principle/theoretic norms, Sri Aurobindo paints even the super creater with human weaknesses. Following lines in the text bring the fact into being that even the super creater, Savitri too undergoes the temptations of "the never-dying fire":

And the miracle of the never-dying fire,
It spoke to some first inexpressible ecstasy
Hidden in the creative beat of life;
Out of the nether unseen deeps it tore
Its lure and magic of distorted bliss,
Into earth-light poured its maze of tangled charm
And heady draught of Nature's primitive joy
And fire and mystery of forbidden delight
Drunk from the world-libido's bottomless well,
And the honey sweet poison-wine of lust and death
But dreamed a vintage of glory of life's gods,
And felt as celestial rapture's golden sting
The cycles of the infinity of desire.\textsuperscript{44}

The theoretic norms of poetry bring the fact into light that Sri Aurobindo becomes successful in showing a subtle yet inner battle between the light (truthfulness) in the form of Satyavan and the dark forces (Yama) and the final victory comes to the righteousness/truthfulness in his theory of evolution. An allied theme of the poem, on which the entire action hangs, is resurrection, the resurrection of Truth (\textit{Satyavan}), the soul of the world, Telos. Not defiance of the Law, not personal desire, but Grace alone can do the miracle, some descent of the supreme. This exactly is what Savitri, the Eternal Feminine, the World Mother, cast in a new role, represents. Fate can be changed by an unchanging will, the World Mother had assured the aspiring A swapathy.

The foregoing analysis of views, opinions, the critical principles and the textual analysis of Sri Aurobindo yield some
fructiferous inferences that the poet has to bring into his creation some serious and deeper motifs of life. Even the great mystic poets of the world such as Blake, Wordsworth, Yeats, Whitman, Emerson, Kabir, Tulsi, Jai Shankar Prasad, Mahadevi Verma and others work on the path that shows the high serious purposiveness of poetic creation. Sri Aurobindo's theory of poetry deals with the broad outlook that encompasses and includes the philosophic norms of Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita.
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4. Ibid. p. 4.


7. Ibid. p. 234.


27. Ibid. p. 225.


30. Ibid. p. 10.


34. Ibid. p. 14.


40. Ibid. p. 04.


42. *Savitri.* p. 335.

43. Ibid. p. 336.

44. Ibid. p. 492.