CHAPTER I

NATURE AND THE INDIAN MIND

Indo-Anglian Poetry is rooted in the Indian landscape, culture and consciousness even though early Indo-Anglian Nature Poets looked up to the English romantic poetry for structural, prosodic and stylistic clues such as metrics, line lengths, rhyme schemes, stanza formations, lexis, phrasology etc. But in its conceptual depth, symbolism, metaphoricity, imagery, insight and approach to Nature Indo-Anglian Nature Poetry belongs to the Vedic and Vedantic tradition.

While the formative role of the English romantic poetry in its prosody has been overemphasized in the study of Indo-Anglian Nature Poetry, the implicitness, significance and relevance of the Indian cultural consciousness and tradition have rather been overlooked. As a result, most of the Indo-Anglian Nature Poetry, especially, of the beginnings, has either been ignored or under-rated as imitation of the English romantic poetry. No adequate attempt has been made to discover its worth and merit in the light of the Indian worldview.
Such an approach is unreasonable and unjustifiable at least, on two grounds. First, all Indo-Anglian Nature Poetry cannot be justifiably labelled as a by-product or a mere 'imitation' of the English romantic poetry. With the advent of Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo it begins to evolve its own distinctive (Indian) identity. Secondly, since the Vedic and Vedantic spirit inheres Indian consciousness and mind, Indo-Anglian Nature Poetry consciously or unconsciously or sub-consciously imbibes the spirit of its native tradition.

Conception of Nature in the East and the West being different, the world-view of the English and the Indo-Anglian Poets, too, are unique and largely independent of each other in several ways. Nature the manifestation of the Supreme Unmanifest Absolute One (Atman) i.e. 'Sat-Chit-Ananda' or 'Sachchidananda' to the Indian mind; is either viewed as created by a personal God or remains a mere phenomenal reality to the West. Man, God and Nature being One in the Indian view; are separate from one another in the Western conceptual thought. The animate and the inanimate
are one for the Indian seers; the Western thinkers can never overlook the border-lines which divide the two. The Supreme Spirit is immanent in Nature to the Indian; the Western thinkers have to transcend the limits of the human self (soul) to see God or strike equation with an independent Cosmos. While to the Vedantans spiritual insight (the soul's eye) is indispensable for the unravelling of the mysteries of Ultimate Reality; faculty of reason holds the key to the secrets of Nature for the West. Nature, revelation of the Supreme Unmanifest Absolute One (in the dark Void), worshipped in the Indian culture; is associated with the original sin and man's fall in the Western. The Indian poets show reverence to Nature i.e. Aditi, the Mother of Gods, the Western poets, barring the ancient Greek (Pagans!) and the English romantic poets, hold it in awe as "red in tooth and claw". Nature is Aditi and Ritam for its creativity, order, dynamic movement and evolution according to the Rig Veda; it is governed by the laws of motion (discovered by Newton) of the physical phenomena in the Western
World-view. As physical phenomena its knowledge is ultimate knowledge to the Western people; it is avidya or ignorance for the Indians as, seen at the physical level only, it is Maya and the mask of matter hiding the unmanifest One behind its bodily cover. Only spiritual insight into its divine Unity is Vidya and only in that sense Nature is God knowledge. To the Indian mind Nature emanates from the One — One is in all and all in One. It is a spiritual unity. All emanates from One and is absorbed again into the One. It is a biological cycle of life and death to the Western. Even religiously, man in the Western view is created by God in His own image. God and Man, as such, remain separate entities in their view. The Unmanifest One is immanent in all things which are His own forms in the Indian view. Only names and forms differ. All in essence is One. Evolution in Nature is conscious endeavour of Nature — at different levels of the being, as the becoming of the Being—to be consciously One; natural evolution is a mere physical phenomena, comprehensive only by way of reason to the West. For them it is a wild world of conflicts and contradictions in which only the fittest can survive. To the Indian mind Nature is
Divine Unity of Aditi and Ritam (Order) or Purusha and Prakriti. It is the executive energy of the Conscious Being. Goal of all evolution in Nature is Nirvana or Moksha or freedom in conscious Oneness or reunion with the One at every level. To the Western mind physical evolution in Nature has no such teleological Goal or aim. Even in Bergson's perception evolution in Nature is devoid of any aim or direction.

Sri Aurobindo enunciates these differences in cultural consciousness and approach to reality in the Eastern and the Western traditions in the following words:

The Indian idea of the World, of Nature and of existence is not physical, but psychological and spiritual. Spirit, soul, consciousness are not only greater than inert matter but they precede and originate these lesser-things. All force is power, or means of a secret spirit; the force that sustains the world is a conscious Will, and Nature is its machinery of executive power. Matter is the body or field of a consciousness hidden within it, the material universe a form and movement of the Spirit.

Of the Western temperament, he says that

-- endeavour of Europe has become terribly outward and mechanical in its appearance.
-- 2
Whereas:

the Indian conception of life starts from a deeper centre and moves on less external lines to a very different objective. The peculiarity of the Indian eye of thought is that it looks through the form, looks even through the force and searches for the spirit in things everywhere.

And of Indian attitude towards Nature he observes:

Here is a mentality which sees the Divine in Nature and man and animal and animal and inanimate thing, God at the beginning, God in the middle, God at the end, God everywhere. — — And whole lives are given to this pursuit of the supreme Person, the universal Godhead, the One, the Absolute, the Infinite.

Nature to the Indian Mind is God's Nature whose Knowledge is God Knowledge (Vidya). Worship of Nature is God's Worship. Force and objects of Nature are divine forces called gods or divine in the Vedic Pantheon.

Since this conception of Nature — unique and all embracing and inhering the entire Indian culture and the Indo-Anglian Poet's approach to reality as well as his psychic and cultural consciousness — underlies all Indo-Anglian Poetry, its exploration (from the scriptures), as briefly as possible, is indispensable for a thorough search of the concept of Nature and its treatment in Indo-Anglian
Poetry. Since the Vedas and Upanishads are the foundations of this cultural consciousness, one has to begin this exploration of the concept of Nature with the Vedas.

VEDIC CONCEPT OF CREATION

Hymn 129 from the 10th book of the Rig Veda, which has been called the hymn of Creation by various scholars, in fact, being a cosmogonic hymn, throws sufficient light on the Vedic poet's idea of cosmic creation:

Then even nothingness was not, nor existence.
There was no air, nor the heaven beyond it.
What covered it? Where was it? In whose keeping?
Was there then Cosmic water, in depths unfathomed?
Then there was neither death nor immortality,
Nor was there then the torch of night and day,
The One breathed windlessly and self-sustaining.
There was that One then, and there was no other.
At first was only darkness wrapped in darkness.
All there was only unlimited water.
The One who came to be enclosed in nothing,
Arose at last, born of the power of heat (tapas)
In the beginning desire descended on it -
That was the primal seed, born of the mind.
The Sages who have scorched their hearts with wisdom
Know that which is Kin to which is not.
And they have stretched their cord across the word,
And know what was above and what below.
Seminal powers made fertile mighty forces.
Below was strength, and over it was impulse.
But, after all who knows, and who can say,
Whence it all came, and how creation happened?
The gods themselves were later than creation,
So who knows truly whence it has arisen?
Whence all creation had its origin;
He, whether he fashioned it or whether he did not,
He, who surveys it all from highest heaven,
He knows - or may be even he does not know.
The last line of the stanza II of this hymn enunciates that, "There was that One then" when there was "no other". The creation is "the other" which is the multiplication or the reflection or the effulgence or the manifestation of the "One". "Darkness" covered "Water" and out of the void or darkness "arose" the manifestation of the One "born of the power of heat (Tapas)". The manifested Self was then overwhelmed with desire to multiply. All that is creation is akin to that "which is not" or which is Unmanifest One. Out of the Void of darkness He shines forth in manifestation and the universe is His effulgence.

THE RIG VEDIC CONCEPT OF NATURE AS RITAM AND ADITI

The Vedic poet while showing religious-aesthetic reverence to Nature, found a pervasive order in the movement of the cosmos. Looking into the phenomenon of Nature, he discovered a moral order, termed "Ritam" in the Rig Veda, in the functions of Nature, which as law of Truth (Sat) is well enunciated in the following hymn of reverential invocation :-
O rodasi (heaven and earth), your law
shall be the truth! Enter in
for our great well being!
This salutation (is meant) to the heaven
the earth,
(0) Agni, I wait with a nourishment, I
pray, for reward.6

"Rodasi" is the term used for "Ritam" i.e. Nature
which is conceived as the creative unity of Aditi i.e. Mother
and Ritam i.e. Order and Dynamic Energy of evolutionary Move­
ment. Law stands for "Ritam". This hymn shows how the Vedic
poet was conscious of the unity of heaven and earth and the
regularity of order i.e. "Ritam" in cosmic Nature. Ritam
as Nature is the primal cause of the universe. It produces,
sustains and moves everything from basic elements (bhutas)
such as water, air, fire, space and earth to the living things
like worms, plants, animals and men and women for their step
by step evolution. On the origin of the universe, the Rig
Vedic seer poets have said that tapas were born first in the
dark Void in the beginning of the universe revealing the Sup­
reme One in His Effulgence. From Tapas were born 'Rta' and
Satya and Ratri and water7.

The Vedic seers have also used the term "Aditi", i.e.
mother of gods, for Nature. They have viewed Nature as the
mother of all creation. Both the concepts, Aditi and Ritam, apply to Nature. Aditi, the feminist term, stands for the female half (the Mother of all creation) and Ritam, the masculine term, stands for the male half. Their unity underlies the creativity principle. All creation results from the unity of these two and is sustained by both of them:

Indeed it (Rita) is identified, by some seers with the Divinity itself. And as the consort of Ritam, Aditi is in-alienable from it; where Ritam is, there is Aditi. Again, in the Vedic, as in all Eastern traditions, the wife the female principle stands for the effectuation, the Shakti of later ages, and in this sense Aditi is the Power and means of manifestation of Rita who is her Lord. Aditi is thus indispensable to bring forth into the foreground and release into operation the potencies that lie in the concentrated content of Ritam.8

VEDIC POET'S RELIGIO - AESTHETIC VIEW OF NATURE

The Vedic Aryans personified the objects of Nature as living beings and attributed to them divine powers, human and super-human characteristics, worshipped them as Nature-gods, offered oblations with devotion and reverence and prayed for all sorts of joys and blessings of life. Ananda Coomaraswami's comment on the Rig Vedic Poet's personification of Nature
powers as gods would help put the whole thing in a proper perspective:

(Yet) it must be admitted that the powers of nature are not worshipped as nature naturata (nature having been created), but rather as naturans (nature creating). 9

As such this holistic Vedic view of Nature synthesizes science, religion and aesthetics and transcends all conflicts and contradictions which are perceptible at the surface level and are either viewed as (incomprehensible) work of God in different religious faiths all over the world or are approached, by science as mere physical phenomena which is comprehensible only by way of experimental analysis as different fragments of existence at the physical level. But the Vedic view of Existence is based on pure perceptions of Nature.

The Vedic poets used the word 'Deva' (the giver) i.e. the 'Divine' for their Nature gods. Phonetically, it sounds like the Hindi deep /di:p/ or Panjabi deeva /di:va/. 'Deva' or 'Div', obviously, connotes light and benediction of the friendly objects of Nature. Many other words of light, like the Sanskrit divas /di:va/, or 'divakar' /di:va:kr/, the Hindi din /di:n/, the Latin deus and the English day, dawn, divine,
delight etc., resemble 'div' /div/ or 'deva' /deva/. Since Rig Vedic poets worshipped light, they attributed divine powers to all helpful objects of light and called them 'devas'/deva/ or gods. On the contrary, all dark and unfriendly objects were called 'demons'. Light denoted divinity and 'Vidya' while darkness epitomized doubt, disease and ignorance i.e. 'avidya' as harbinger of evil and suffering. That is why, love for Light and objects of light runs throughout the whole gamut of Indian poetry. The following Rig Vedic Hymn will show how the Vedic seers attributed divine characteristics to the shining objects of Nature:

"USHAS" : THE DAWN

Of all the lights, the highest this light has come
Thus radiance, conceived in great dazzle of colour
Rushing ahead of the imminent rise of the sun;
And Night has now given Her place to the dawn
She comes up shining, leading a shining calf,
The dark One has given over Her mansions to the dawn.
For they are undying kin and follow each other
Night and Dawn, exchanging hue for hue,

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Her colours flash out as she leads Her exultant dance
She has opened her gates for us, and opened them wide;
Revealing the World, she shows how rich we are
All of the living open their eyes to the Dawn

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Child of the Kingdom of Light, it's to us she comes
A fabulous girl arrayed in Her lustrous robes,
Lady who oversees our earthly gods,
O, Dawn, Lucid, Portent, shine on us now.10

(The Rig Veda. 1. 113), 1.

Dawn, 'the Child of the Kingdom of Light' and the Lady
who oversees our earthly gods' is the goddess of the gods.
Each line seems to be flashing the fresh light of the dawn.
Her colours flash out as she leads her exultant dance. And
yet this is not mere poetic appreciation of beauty at the
physical level. Usha, seen as the goddess of light and knowl­
dedge and Truth and beauty in this hymn, puts out darkness of
ignorance and inertia of the night.

Even god Indra is worshipped as giver of Light :-

Come to our Soma - offerings. O Soma -
drinker, drink of the Soma - wine; the
intoxication of thy rapture gives indeed
the Light.11

Soma here is a metaphor for amrita - rasa, giver of
the divine Ananda, the principle of Bliss, from which, in the
Vedic conception, the existence of man as well as of all
other objects is drawn and immortalized. Light in this hymn
is symbolic of the poet's prayer for Knowledge and enlighten­
ment or what Sri Aurobindo calls 'pure' illuminated intelli­
gence.12
Agni, the god of gods, the purifier, the divine Will in the universe, is the dynamic Life-energy. This Agni is a Light as well as a Force of Brahma or the Cosmos. Like Indra, Usha, Surya, Veruna, Mitra, and all other gods, Agni the god of Light is the most brilliant energy and force of Nature.

In a hymn to Surya Savitri the Rig Vedic poet says:

Men illumined yoke their mind and they yoke their thoughts to him who is illumination and largeness and clear perceiving, Knowing all phenomena he orders, sole, the Energies of the sacrifice.

Vast is the affirmation in all things of Savitri, the divine creator.

Another hymn to Surya Savitri illuminates the functions of the creator i.e. Light, in Nature:

And thou art powerful for every creation; and thou becomest the Increaser, O God by thy movings; and thou illuminest utterly all this world of becomings Shyavaswa has attained to the affirmation of thee, O Savitri.

Surya, the Sun is the Mother of Truth, Surya the Illuminator Savitri, the Creator who becomes the Increaser, "by thy movings". The image of the benevolent and Powerful Sun increasing and producing life and wealth and the view of the world of "becomings" suggests the Vedic poet's awareness of the benedictive nature of the Sun and ongoing evolution of Nature as the world of "becomings" under the benedictive Power and Light of the Sun. Surya enlightens, too,
the mind and thoughts of man with illumination of Truth.

In his commentary on these Rig Vedic Hymns, Sri Aurobindo, interpreting the symbolic significance of the Rig Vedic imagery drawn from Nature but treated at the celestial heights of divinity, calls Surya the Lord of Light and Truth:-

Now the forces and processes of the physical world repeat, as in a symbol the truths of the supraphysical action which produced it. And since it is by the same forces and the same processes, one in the physical worlds and the supraphysical, that our inner life and its development are governed, the Rishis adopted the phenomena of physical Nature as just symbols for those functionings of the inner life which it was their difficult task to indicate in the concrete language of a sacred poetry that must at the same time serve for the external worship of the Gods as powers of the visible universe. The solar energy is the physical form of Surya, Lord of Light and Truth, it is through Truth that we arrive at Immortality, find aim of the Vedic discipline - - - 15.

The Vedic poet shows the way of evolution of Nature from the physical to the spiritual illumination of its apex creation that is man. Throughout the Rig Veda, Usha, daughter of Heaven, performs the function of illumination, creation, growth and development and evolution. The Dawn illuminates both the internal self of man and the external world around him and thus enables him to enjoy the Beauty and Ananda within the inner self in communion with his larger-
self, the external universe - the unity of Heaven and Earth in and around him.

**VEDIC VIEW OF EARTH'S HARMONY**

Hymns to Arnyani (Lady of the Forest) brings out the spirit of harmony and portrays Nature in its bare beauty:—

> When the grasshopper replies to the distant lowing cattle
> It seems that the lady of the Forest expresses her merriment to the sound of tinkling bells.16

Another hymn from the Athurvaveda will reveal how the Vedic poet was conscious of benevolence and magnanimity and benediction of Nature:—

**TO THE EARTH THE MOTHER**

May that Earth, which holds on Her Ample
lap of the Ocean,
The rivers, the lakes, which bear the
crop yielding soil,
And is ground for all that breathes
and stirs and lives,
May she also bear the fruits of what we have done.
That Earth was born from vast waters,
at first was water,
And ancients attended Her growth with their own creation.
Her heart is set on the real, high in the heavens,
And what is undying of Hers is guarded by truth
Whatever there is at the core of your being whatever,
There is your air, whatever the power that leaps,
From your length, set us, Mother, among that wealth
Raise us up. You are my Mother. I am your child.
Mother, give me that fragrance, You Yourself
make,
The perfume that comes from green growing things, from waters.
The same that heavenly players, dancers desire,
Ancient me with it, so none may wish me hurt. 

The Earth is looked upon with reverence and her green growth, vegetarian fragrance and music and, indeed, all sensuous wealth are portrayed in full (pictorial) detail. She is the Mother of all life and not only bears but brings up, too, all her children—men and matter. The Earth itself is seen as born from 'vast Waters'. And her heart is set on the real, 'high in the heaven'. This heavenly soul is embodied in earth. The ongoing process of evolution of earth and man is bound to bring about the earth's (or Nature's) transformation into its heavenly essence. The poet says of the essential truth of Nature (of the earth), 'And what is undying of Hers is guarded by truth'. Throughout the hymn the poet invokes the Mother Earth's blessings and protective care.

In post Vedic poetry Kalidasa is the greatest poet of Nature. His Meghduta, Ritusmahara, Kumara Sambhava
and Shakuntala remain unsurpassed for their conceptual depth, subtlety of touch and tone, sensuous imagery and spiritual essence. Just one example is cited below as a brief glimpse of the beauty of treatment of Nature in Kalidasa:

When the wind from the Shipra river prolongs
the shrill sweet cry of cranes,
Fragrant at early dawn with the scent of
opening lotuses
Which like a lover with flattering requests dispels
The morning languor of women and refreshes
their limbs. 18

VEDANTIC CONCEPTION OF CREATION

Nature is the manifestation of the Unmanifest Absolute One (Atman) in the form of Brahma according to the Upanishadic Rishis. Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra are the three functional Godheads of creation manifesting the One in Nature. Purusha the unmanifest (Atman) with rajas, in the form of Brahma, Creates. Purusha with sattva, in the form of Vishnu, preserves the creation. Purusha with tamas, in the form Rudra (Shiva), destroys forms and names to be recreated in a process of evolution and devolution going on simultaneously in the Void of Darkness which is lit in the manifestation of the Absolute 'Unmanifest' (Unborn's) effulgence. Light manifesting in the Void sprouts
the Seed, Brahman, the manifesting Self or Purusha.

According to the Shatarudramhita of the Shiva Purana (Chapter One) the design of Creation is made, out of 25 components which are:-

Five grosselements (ether, wind, fire, water and earth) five subtle elements (sound, touch, sight, form and smell) five organs of action (the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose), five instruments of Knowledge (speech, smell, sight, taste and touch), besides mind, ego, intellect, nature and soul.

Creative process is interpreted both at the physical as well as at the spiritual level in the Upanishads. The world is seen as Brahma:

The highest essence, the kernel or the core of nature is the Brahma. It is according to its nature, Knowledge (Vijananam) and bliss (anandah) ... This sublime and mysterious Brahma is now the all-governing power which penetrates and shares the entire world. As soul it enters into the body and animates it, penetrates the organs and grants them ability to know and efficacy to work.

The origin of creation is explained in terms of the Spirit as well as Science in the Vishnu Purana:

The spring of all things is a primeval entity, the existing Being (Sat). This Being creates the heat or glowing fire (tejah) out of the fire springs the water (apah) and out of water springs the food (annam). The three are prime-
val elements of which the whole world is composed. In them enters the Being as an animating principle and shapes the things according to their name and form ama rupe. 21

The idea of the immanence of the Supreme Spirit in one and all in the Munda Kopanishad has been translated as:-

As a spider projects and withdraws (into itself) the web, as the plants sprout from the earth, as hair grows on the head and body of a man, so from the imperishable comes out the universe. 22

Neither the Vedic hymn of Creativity nor the Munda Kopanishad (as quoted above), attributes any cause (other than "manifestation of the Unmanifest One (Atman) for the creation of the universe." In the lines quoted above the Munda Kopanishad says that the creation emanates from the One and goes back to One.

The Attareya Upanishada also enunciates the same view of origin of creation:-

In the beginning, verily, Atman (Self) alone was this (the universe) . . . . nothing else whatsoever was active. 23

The Unmanifest Absolute One manifesting in the universe has been termed "Purusha" in the Vedanta. Purusha is immanent consciousness in the body of Matter. Consciousness in Matter that is Purusha is Brahma. Even inconscient
physical matter is not dead inertia but a vitality in dormant consciousness (as the body or the mask of the Absolute). Existence being Conscious emanation in ecstasy is Sat - Chit - Ananda.

Rishi Pippalada has explained in the Pranopanishad how Prajapati (Brahma) created Matter and Energy to create new forms out of them in the universe:

Prajapati the Lord of the creatures, decided to perform penance and having performed penance, He created a pair-Matter (Rayi) and Energy (Prana)-thinking that they would together, between them produce creatures in many forms.24

Matter (Rayi) and Energy (Prana) are the manifesting aspect or Prakriti of Prajapati or Brahma as Cosmic Purusha who creates, maintains and evolves the universe inhering it with Unmanifest's consciousness in its physical form.

The Kathopanishad explains how Nature as "the energy or force of Conscious Being produces and moves everything".25

The whole universe evolved from the Brahma, moves (vibrates) in the Prana.26

Prasana Upanishad further enunciates the creativity of Nature as "The energy of the Conscious Being".27
He created Prana, from Prana the Faith, Akash, Air, Fire, Water, Earth, Senses, Mind, Food, Strength, Thought, Mantra, Karma and the world, and in the world the different names also.28

(Pr. Up. Q. VI - 4)

Purusha with the help of "Maya (mind - intellect - equipment) creates the elements and the senses and the sense mind for new experiences and new creation.

The Vedic seers have imagined the vastness and scope of the universe beyond the universe of forms and names. The following mantra explains that only a quarter of the Supreme Self (Brahma as conceived as Purusha) has become the universe of forms and names (Jagat) :

This much is His glory only. Purusha is much more than all these. The entire universe of happenings (Viswa) and creatures (Bhootani) constitute but a quarter (Pada) of Him. The remaining three quarters (Tripada) of His glory consists of the Immutable Consciousness.29

(P. U. Soo - 3)

The other three quarters of Him remains as the immutable (Amritam) Light of Consciousness (Divi). The "universe" in the Indian tradition does not mean merely the cosmos as revealed to man in the limited state of human awareness. It includes the higher planes of existence, heaven, its denizens,
etc. It includes the gods which are conceived as the divine entities or elemental forces which express through the phenomena.

In the Vedic lore matter has no control over the mighty forces of phenomena. If the Purusha, the Cosmic Person were only limited to the universe of forms, He would be only inert, dead and insentient total Matter. But the following statement in Purusha Sooktam explains:

From the Purusha (Tasmaat) was born the Virat, the universe in seed (Brahmandam) and indentifying with Virat, the "Universe in seed" condition, the Virat Purusha was born. The new born becomes manifest (Sa-jaato) into the plurality. Then He (created) the earth and the bodies.

In the beginning this "Universe - in - seed - form" was misty, undifferentiated mass. Then the Virat Purusha, with the help of Maya (the total mind - intellect equipment) created the solid earth which is the "field of all experiences".

CONCEPT OF NATURE AS PURUSHA AND PRAKRITI

In the Post Vedic Literature and Samkhyan Philosophy Nature is described as Prakriti having Chetna or Purusha, as one of its aspects, and possessing three qualities or gunas
termed sattava, rajas, and tamas. Prakriti and Purusha have been seen in unity as two aspects of One Brahma which is Supreme Reality.

Bhiksh Samkhyasara (1 - 3. 45) interprets Nature as :-

Being Nature (Prakriti) of things implies being the immanent cause of all things through the absolute hierarchy of causes and effects. It is defined as transcendent action that is active in the form of evolution. Nature is often taken as the synonym of Energy (Shakti), of the Unborn (aja), of the first Basis (Pradhana), of the non-evolved (avakta) of disintegration (tamas) of Illusion ('Maya').

The Vishnu Purana says that Nature (Prakriti) is :-

All pervading power, the Cosmic Intellect the world planning process and action.

Interpreting the use of the term 'Prakriti' in Panini Sutra Danielous explains that :-

Prakriti is a compound word with prefix 'Pra' and suffix 'Kriti'. The prefix 'Pra' has been taken from 'Parama' which means 'transcendent' and 'Pra' means higher and 'Kriti' means action and when combined with 'Pra' it stands for creation. Hence 'Prakriti' is a higher or a transcendent goddess from which things are born.

Samkhya, the oldest system of Brahmanical philosophy with its roots in Upanishadas and in its influence second only to Vedanta, holds that the universe is uncreated. Nature according to Samkhya is Prakriti pervaded by Purusha. Without
delving into the cause or date of its beginning or end, it concerns itself with what is presently existing. It aims at the unfoldment of the implicit in the scheme of creation. It is a study of man and Nature.

According to the Samkhya philosophy once 'unfoldment of the implicit' is made explicit and comprehensible knowledge of the mysteries of Nature can be attained. The Samkhyan concept of 'Prakriti' i.e. 'Nature' is explained as:

The ultimate ground of the unfolding universe is prakriti, a formless, limitless, undifferentiated, indestructible underground, uncontrolled and eternal matter. Prakriti is variously called the root principle (Mula - prakriti), the rootless root (Amulan mulan), the chief one (pradhana), and the unevolved evolver (Avyakta).

It is an undifferentiated manifold or continuum such that its "unity ... . . . is a mere abstraction".

Brajinder Nath Seal has translated the concept of Prakriti in Samkhya philosophy as follows:

Prakriti is made of infinitesimal substantive things, called gunas, of which there are three kinds:

1. Essence (sattava) or the media of the reflection of intelligence;
2. Energy (rajas) or the efficient phenomena that work and overcome resistance; and finally,
3. Inertia (tamas) that counteracts the tendency of energy to work. 37

These three qualities of matter are eternal and indestructible. These three qualities are the cause of creation in Nature according to the Samkhya philosophy. When tamas is potential, the other two i.e. essence and energy are actual and new growth takes forms. When tamas is actual and the other two are potential, decay is the result or effect. The change in equilibrium of these three gunas in Nature results either in growth or decay.

According to Samkhya theory of evolution, the starting point in cosmic history is a condition of equilibrium consisting in a uniform diffusion of the gunas. The process of evolution is initiated by the Purusha. Purusha supplies the element of awareness to the physical world or Prakriti. The Samkhya philosophy describes Purusha as follows:

... it is the principle of sentience, a principle ... completely independent of Prakriti. 38

In order to understand and know Nature, man follows the way of reasoning from effects to causes. Similarly
Purusha can be understood through intellectual exploration of designs of Nature. The Samkhya philosophy holds that:

One can reason from the exhibition of design in the work of Prakriti to some principle which directs the design. Just as the bodily organism can be seen to contain design, so the universe in its evolution exhibits design. Purusha (perhaps) from Pri, meaning "male", but in the Rig Veda "Person" is the principle for the sake of which nature evolves. 39

This activity and urge for new formations or for further evolution has a purpose and "the purpose is the liberation of Soul of Nature". 40

Purusha is a prime mover of Prakriti for evolution according to Samkhya Karika. Dale Riepe in an interpretation of Karika, enunciates this Samkhya concept of Purusha:

Yet from the texts of Samkhya it may be seen that interaction (between Purusha and Prakriti) does occur and that Purusha is a medium for Consciousness to occur and that Purusha is medium for Consciousness to manifest itself in the matter. And from that contrast it follows, that soul is witness, solitary, bystander, spectator and passive. Therefore by reason of union with it, insensible body seems sensible . . . . . . . . . . . . . and though the qualities be active the stranger (soul) appears as agent. 41

Prakriti and Purusha interact for new Consciousness through new forms (medium) of Prakriti or remain inactive as
independent of each other. But interaction is a necessary condition in case they wanted their differentiated being. Samkhya as such propounds a dualistic View of Reality.

SRI AUROBINDO’S CONCEPT OF NATURE’S EVOLUTION AND UNITY

Sri Aurobindo and other Vedantans do not accept this concept of duality of Purusha and Prakriti. According to Vedanta Reality is unity as being the manifestation of the Supreme Absolute Unmanifest One as Brahma. In fact Samkhya philosophers began their search into the scheme of things from the visible Phenomena of Prakriti but almost overlooked the problem of relationship between Purusha and Prakriti. At a later stage they simply brought in the idea of Purusha and Consciousness and imposed Purusha on Prakriti from outside. They do not explain how Purusha enters Prakriti or how Consciousness enters matter. Purusha as an alien or a "stranger" has no source. Samkhya does not explain from where does Purusha come and where it goes on leaving Matter.

Sri Aurobindo reconciles the Vedic view of Nature as the aggregate of forces and this dualistic Samkhya view. In his view of unity of existence Consciousness is immanent at
different levels where common principle, Purusha in Prakriti, sets existence into activity for further evolution and its ultimate transformation and Divinisation. Purusha or Soul sets in motion evolution of Prakriti from its undifferentiated and indeterminate form to the differentiated and determinate form for causing better realization of Ultimate Reality. His great epic, Savitri, is a vision of unity of Nature. His Aswapathi sees Purusha and Prakriti as One or Two in One:

There he beheld in their mighty unison's poise
The figure of the deathless Two - in - One,
A single being in two bodies clasped;
A diarchy of two united souls,
Seated absorbed in deep creative joy;
Their trance of bliss sustained the mobile world.42

This image of Purusha and Prakriti as entwined "Two - in - One" alludes to the Vedantic image of Ardhanarishwara.

The material and the spiritual aspects of creation deeply permeate into each other and the world of things in Nature is lighted from within by consciousness. In other words consciousness is inherent in every object or phenomena of Nature. Existence to Sri Aurobindo manifests the three aspects of Brahma, namely, Sat - Chit - Ananda. Sat means Truth of His existence, Chit stands for His Omniscience and Ananda for the universal cause owing to which Brahma generates
out of Himself, through emanation, all things in space and time. To Sri Aurobindo matter and spirit are body and soul of all objects in existence:

'Spirit is the soul in Matter, Matter is a form and body of that which is realized as Spirit'.

Man, according to Sri Aurobindo, is not only the synthesis of all elements of the universe but also a kind of centre formed by the intervening action of various forces. The main forces are the material (prana) and the spiritual (the soul). A consciousness-force is also inherent in all Existence. In his unifying vision, Sri Aurobindo finds the identity of man in Nature and of Nature in man. He says:

To know we have to go within ourselves and see with an inner knowledge.

In the Life Divine Sri Aurobindo elaborates the Vedic concept of Nature as Prakriti brought to consciousness by Purusha:

Prakriti is Nature - Power, an executive power, it is Energy apart from consciousness for consciousness belongs to the Purusha, Prakriti without Purusha is inert, mechanical inconscient.

In chapter XVII of the Life Divine, Sri Aurobindo explains:
Out of the inconscient, Existence appears in a first evolutionary form as substance of Matter created by an inconscient Energy. Consciousness involved and non-apparent in Matter, first silent then, in imperfect formulations of a conscient life, it strives towards self finding through successive forms more and more adapted to its own completer expression.

SRI AUROBINDO'S CONCEPT OF EVOLUTION

Sri Aurobindo has taken up the Vedic theme of the Sun - helped evolution of Nature in Savitri. In fact the Vedic seer's view of Reality as a paradise of Light and Darkness informs the whole gamut of Indian Poetry and literature. Like the other Gods in the Vedic pantheon, the Sun, Surya also signifies more than he seems in his outer appearance as the solar deity radiating heat and light:

The Sun Savitri, is not the physical sun we see in the skies, but the supreme Effulgence in the highest firmament above beyond the lower triple creation. The physical sun is indeed taken as the image of the Truth - Sun, the Centre of all Knowledge and radiating Power. It is the radiance issuing from the Supreme Source in which is massed all the creative movement of the Uncreate that is ultimate root of all movement in the creation. Let that Light motivate and energise our thought movements, says the Rishi.
Like the Vedic seers Sri Aurobindo holds that the Sun itself is:

"the symbol of concentrated light of Truth". 48

The Sun for all the Indian poets right from the Vedic age has been held in high esteem as a symbol of Divine Light. The symbolic image of the Sun in the following Rig Vedic Rik is the recurring image in Indo - Anglian Nature Poetry, especially in Sri Aurobindo's poetry, more centrally in his Savitri:

I have known this great Being of Solar splendour and the hue beyond Darkness. Having known him one goes beyond death; there is no path to the goal other than this. 49

The path to salvation which is the goal of all and one is lit by the light of the "Being of Solar splendour". The Sun is the Source of Knowledge and light which can evolve as well as free man from the entanglements of Death, Darkness, Ignorance, evil, pain and suffering.

To the Indian mind both man and Nature in oneness or, to put in differently, man at the head of evolving Nature is moving gradually towards the Goal of nirvana i.e. the soul's reunion with the Supreme Absolute One (Atman). Sri Aurobindo enunciates this concept of spiritual evolution as:

The spiritual perfection which opens before man is the crown of a long, patient, mille-
nnial outflowering of the spirit in life and nature. This belief in a gradual spiritual progress and evolution here is indeed the secret of the almost universal Indian acceptance of the truth of reincarnation. It is only by millions of lives in inferior forms that the secret soul in the universe, conscious even in the inconscient, 'cetanah acetanesu', has arrived at humanity: it is only by hundreds or thousands, perhaps even millions of human lives that man can grow into his divine self-existence. Every life is a step which he can take backward or forward; his action in life, his will in life, his thought and knowledge by which he governs and directs his life, determine what he is yet to be from the earliest stages to the last transcendence 'Yatha Karma Yatha Srutam'. . . . . . . For the spirit in the world assume hundreds of forms and follows many tendencies and gives many shapes to his play or Leela. 50

The Supreme Goal of the spirit in Nature and man is to put all possibilities, desires, ego, self, interest and all action (karma) in order so that the soul may, through experience and knowledge, free itself of all entanglements of terrestrial Maya to ascend higher and higher homewards for its reunion with the Absolute Unmanifest (Atman). The ultimate goal of this process, of self-purification, self-perfection and self-realization is spiritual Good and Bliss that is Infinity and Eternity of Divinity of the Supreme Spirit or Sachchidananda. Nature and Man are the conscious beings manifesting the Supreme Absolute Unmanifest at different levels of the Being. Procession of all existence as such is the becoming
of the Being through gradual evolution of the soul towards the Supreme Spirit. Western conception of evolution of Nature from Tales of Miletus to Spinoza, Hegel, Spencer, Bergson and S. Alexander, based on Reason and rationalization of existence, is devoid of any such spiritual teleology of Nature's progression.

It is this tradition of Indian thought and love of Nature that inheres the conscious as well as subconscious mind of the Indo-Anglian Poets. It influences their attitude and conception and treatment of Nature in their poetry even when they are least conscious of it or repudiate it. How can one overlook the direct or indirect influence of this living tradition on their world-view or vision of Ultimate Reality? How can one ignore its influence on their Nature Poetry? How any fair assessment of their Nature poetry could be possible without tracing out in it any such latent influence? It has however, to be seen how the Indo-Anglian Poets have treated Nature in the background of this Indian tradition and how do they perceive the self in relation with Nature. One could sum up the focal points of subsequent discussion thus:-
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While the focus in this study is on the treatment of Nature in Indo - Anglian Poetry, an attempt will be made to capture what is unique in Indian poet's vision and experience. Exploration of Indianness of Indo - Anglian Nature Poetry in the light of the long tradition of Indian Conceptual thought, spiritual vision and poetic experience,
as briefly reviewed in this chapter, will be the main concern of this study of important Indo-Anglian Poets' important poems on Nature with special emphasis on Sri Aurobindo's Poetry.
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