CHAPTER II

NATURE IN INDO ANGLIAN POETRY

Prosodic style, subject matter and world-view of the early Indo-Anglian Poets came under the direct influence of poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron and Keats and even Coleridge. Sometimes, this influence is too pronounced. But the Indo-Anglian Poets, especially, the early poets did not turn to English romantic poetry just for the sake of mere imitation. They, in fact, were fascinated by the romantic poet's adoration of Nature. Such devotion to Nature permeated their own native (Indian) culture. This study of treatment of Nature in important Nature poems by some important poets, right from the very beginning, will attempt to find out whether their poems voice any originality of perception of reality in the Indian i.e. Vedic and Vedantic way or, as usually believed, are a mere imitation of the English Romantic Poetry.

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN EARLY INDO-ANGLIAN POETRY

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is the first major Indo-Anglian Poet. His poetry published in two volumes entitled
'Poems' (1827) and 'The Fakeer of Jungheera' : A Metrical Tale and other Poems (1828), consists of narrative poems, ballads, lyrics and sonnets. His treatment of Nature shows that his poetry belongs to the Indian tradition and approach to Nature. Even though it is the poetry of protest against cruelty and callousness of social customs, yet it contrasts such social wrong and injustice and darkness in Indian society with Nature's order, peace, light and bliss. Such spirit of reverence towards Nature and also various other factors in his treatment of Nature link his poetry with the Vedic and Vedantic approach to Nature albeit he is seldom conscious or aware of this subterranean reality of his poetry. For instance, his masterpiece, 'The Fakeer of Jungheera' deals with social and religious superstitions and denounces the black custom called 'Sati Pratha'. Yet the poet transcends the limitations of time and space and views life in the larger cosmic perspective. When the young Nuleeni is brought to the altar the poet comments on the callousness of unevolved human nature :-

And like a demon't is its custom still
To laugh at sorrow and then coldly Kill.
That is the poet's comment on baser nature of man and society and how such an ignorant man and society behave in the world. Young Nuleeni who, on the other hand, represents a highly conscious, enlightened and sensitive mind, sings a beautiful hymn in her consciousness of the invisible bond of unity of all existence in the universe:

When all is darkness, like the sad soul's night,
And tempests lower like grief upon our hearts
Affrighted nature sees thy forehead bright,
The black storm furls his banner, and departs.2

'Night', 'Tempests and Black Storm', prevailing in the human world are contrasted with 'forehead bright' of the girl. Such contrasts in symbolic imagery assume Vedantic significance as the poet deliberately employs this antithetical technique. The Black Storm raging in the Social world of man is seen in a counterpointing contrast against order, peace and beauty prevailing in Nature:

How beautiful is moonlight on the stream
How bright on life is Hope's enchanting beam
Life moves in constant, like the rippling rill
Hope's and moon's rays quiver O'er them still,
How soft upon each flower is fair moonlight
Making its beauty more serenely bright.3

Notwithstanding imitative tone, the obvious contrivance of style and use of cumbersome and misfitting epithets such as
enchanting 'rippling' etc., Nature imagery displaying moon, 'stream', 'beam', 'rill' and 'moonlight', suggests peace, beauty and brightness in Nature and the poet does achieve an effect of contrast. Imagery of light brings out the Indian poet's traditional love for things bright in Nature right from the Vedic ages. The aim of the poem is to awake the human mind to the peace and order and light and beauty of Nature. To put it slightly differently, the poet is striving to effect transformation of human mind by awaking the reader's consciousness to peace beauty, harmony and bliss of Nature. The recurrence of the images of light, the 'bright streams' and 'shining moon' assume a symbolic significance almost in the Vedic way:

How sweet to sit upon a bank, and mark
The soft moon looking on a little bark.4

But still the poet is more Wordsworthian and Greek than Aurobindonian or Vedantic. For the poet looks on the bark and the moon from a distance sitting at the bank. He is not in the scene. He is out of the scene. He watches it. He is not in it at a deeper level of the Spirit in the Vedantic sense. As such Wordsworthian influence, especially of his 'Tintern Abbey' and 'the Prelude' comes out more prominently in his poetry. But Derozio's poetry like all Indo - Anglian
Poetry gradually comes closer home to the Vedic and the Vedantic way of looking at Nature as an Immanance. Derozio, indeed, has made a small beginning in that direction.

As articulated in the lines above, Derozio enjoys the scenic beauty of the river not only at the physical or aesthetic level of consciousness but his mind also wakes up to a new consciousness of spiritual oneness of all things. An unfathomable "Sweet" feeling descends on his mind. The poet becomes conscious of his eternal oneness with Nature. This consciousness of a unifying spiritual relationship in Nature awakes the poet to beatitude:

The sun-lit stream in dimples breaks
As when a child from slumber wakes
Sweet smiling on its mother.

Conscious relationship between all (even inanimate) objects of Nature is implicit in these lines. The sun-lit smile of the stream implies a living relationship of the sun to the stream as the juxtaposed smile of the mother-child relationship implies. Objects of Nature, like children of Aditi awake from slumber of inertia under the effect of the sun's heat and smile back in Nature in all prevasive Consciousness of mutual oneness. The poet becomes conscious of his
relationship with the objects of Nature and derives Ananda in common recognition of beauty and oneness or Sat - Chit - Ananda in Nature.

'The Sun-lit stream' and the 'moonlit' waters of dancing streams run from every where to every where in the landscape of the poem. While this kinetic element in Derozio's Nature - imagery recalls romantic imagery on the one hand, it clearly relates the poet to the Indian tradition of poetry of light and bliss, on the other.

The poet retains the originality of spirit in the native tradition of Nature Poetry :-

't is sweet upon the midnight moon to gaze
As o'er the waters shoot her trembling rays.6

Original brightness, colour and contour of objects and sights of Nature is retained and the joy of consciousness of spiritual beauty of things is conveyed home.

What is Indian in his vision of Nature is that there are no marked divisions between the animate and the inanimate and no bars of time and shape. Even though recalling Wordsworth's Lucy, Nuleeni is not just individually learning from Nature but is inseparable one within the unity of all things :-
'One lovely form is gliding there
As if 't were pure embodied air,
With face half veiled, enrobed in white,
She, like a blessed child of light
Amidst her maidens seem to rise
Like Chandra in the jewelled skies. 7

(The Fakeer of Jungheera)

Even though the (comparisons and) syntax is mostly
Wordsworthian, in tone and style, in description of Nuleni as
"Chandra" surrounded by stars, in use of epithets like "purple",
"blessed" and "jewelled" and as a whole in its diction, simi-
les and metaphors of "light" and "air" and in the use of
light imagery this is certainly an Indian poem of Indian society
and Indian landscape by an Indian poet.

In 'A Walk by Moonlight' the poet enunciates the Vedan-
tic idea of spiritual immanence which can be seen by seeing with
the soul's eye through the appearances of common things of
Nature :-

That, cold and lifeless as they seem,
The flowers, the stars, the sky
Have more than common minds may deem
To stir our sympathy. 8

Even though these lines are a reverberation of Word-
sworth's advice to Dorothy in the Tintren Abby, yet the
'flowers', 'the stars', 'the sky' to the poet's soul "have
more than common minds may deem", for they are the manifes-
tions of the Spirit in the (Indian) traditional sense of the
Vedanta. Nature, stirs the poet's soul to sympathy. "Sympa-
thy" is common consciousness which prevails in the poet's
inner self as well as the outer self in Nature. The inner
and outer aspects of Reality in mutual cohesion, notinfre-
quently in this poem, tend to come closer in mutual relation-
ship. In style and tone this is certainly Wordsworthian Poetry,
but the poet does not approach the universal spirit sheerly
from outside. His soul awakes to a new experience of delight
in mutual recognition i.e. consciousness of unity with the ob-
jects of Nature. Nature as Divine immanence exercises an evo-
lutionary influence on the (poet's) mind which experiences
Ananda in 'sympathy' i.e. Consciousness of unity of all things.
Poet's atman awakes to its Oneness with universal Atman and
partakes of the divine bliss which the awakened soul can expe-
rience in its union with the outer aspect of the Supreme Self.
To conclude, the inner aspect of Reality within the poet's self
experiences an arousing sense of bliss in unity with the outer
aspect of Reality. Joy lies in the awakening of the soul to
Divine Consciousness and Truth in all existence.
K. R. R. Nair, finds in Derozio a spiritualist poet of Nature in the Indian tradition:

A mysterious presence palpable only to his inner self, seen only with his inner eye disturbs the poet and he begins to realize the unity in the diversity of the universe. A pressing sense of his relatedness with other creations dawns on him and induces in him a spirit of indefinable joy. This is the instant when the poet is at the heart of things, a lucid moment when he trembles at the thought of crushing even a blade of grass.

H. L. V. Derozio sees Nature in the way of the Vedanta and his soul experiences Bliss in unity with the ever evolving, ever becoming phenomena of Nature which as a process of the becoming of the Being is recognised as Sat arousing a feeling of Ananda in the soul's growing consciousness of unity of one and all.

Kasi Prasad Ghose, Greece Chander Dutt and A. M. Kunte have also written poems on Nature. Though they followed the English romantic poets like Wordsworth and Shelley, yet they have portrayed the Indian landscape, the Indian birds, flowers, trees and rivers and their poetry is never devoid of a realization of spiritual essence in existence and all these poets exhibit a gnostic approach to Nature. For example, A. M. Kunte
might have appreciated Shelley's Hymn to Apollo but when he wrote his "Hymn to Surya" he projected his own vision of Nature which is closer to that of the Vedic poet of the Ushas and the Vedantic interpretation of Nature than to Shelley's scientific view of existence. The entire poem is being quoted here below for its Vedantic spirit and style in contrast with Shelley's Hymn to Apollo:

A HYMN TO SURYA

Chasing darkness, light thou sendest,1
And our mortal frame thou mendest,2
Source of joyful rainy season,3
Gladden hearts and what our reason,4
Hymns we sing, we sing thy praises,5
Yes! thy sight our spirits raises, 6-7
Dismal darkness dreams thy presence, 8
Life is light - thy glorious essence,9
Move our minds, our souls inspiring,10
Move our hearts, our feelings firing,11
Lord of skies! of light the centre,
Come we pray, our spirit enter,
Face of gods! a light surprising,
Eye of heaven - is he not rising?
Moves he not fire - the earthy power,
And the gods that waters shower?
Upper, middle lower regions
Fills he not with light and legions?
Fixed or moving, darkness shatter,
Lord, the glory show at length,12
Grant us grace and moral strength.
Dismal sin away is running,13
Suffer we from Vritra cunning,
Give us godly speech and right,14
Save us lord, from Papma's 15 might.10

Rather than an imitation of Shelley's Ode, the poem is full of Fifteen references to the Rig Veda.11 The poet
invokes the sun god like the Rig Vedic seer and alludes to the on-going struggle between the god of light and forces of darkness in Nature which are shattered by the god of light, Surya. The sun god, the eye of Heaven, moves our minds' and inspires 'our souls' to heavenly planes of truth and light and salvation from 'Papma'. The sun, as the god of light, reveals the process of evolution in Nature through a conflict against darkness and 'Papma' to Light, Truth, Beatitude and salvation.

Poets like C. N. Vesuvala have openly protested against the critics' common habit of labelling them as imitators of the English romantic poets. A few lines from 'From Malabar Hill — Bombay, will reveal the poet's love of the Indian landscape and his concerns in that respect:

Where Malabar's long hill, all clad in green,
Runs forth into the water, where between
It and the shore the shallow waters glide,
Again retreating with each turning tide;
Each aspect fraught with beauty to the eye,
And blending glories of earth, sea and sky;
Scarce thou, O Naples, with thy lovely bay
Lit by the sunlight of a summer's day,
Canst dim the glory of the Eastern scene.12

Brajindranath Seal, too, seeks his identity in one-
ness with Nature like a true Vedantist. In his 'Nature Unveiled', he says:
I was one with the woods; my body, the Earth,
I budded in the buds, and burgeoned fresh
In the green shoots; the tendrils were my veins;
My eyes blossomed on every bush; my arms
Waved in the tall spiked grass; in the white fog
The hill - side breathed with me, the twirling leaf,
Vibrated through the pores of my own skin;
I was one with the woods; my body, the Earth.
I was one with all creatures; their life, mine;
I sang on every bough; from rock to rock.

This immanence of the Divine Spirit in all things,
animate or inanimate, is not to be found in English or American
poetry. Only an Indian poet can have such a holistic view of
Reality. There is no border line here between the human self
and another object of Nature. He is earth, He is bird; He
is bough. He breathes in the hill - side. He is one in all
and all in One. He is the Absolute Unmanifest (Atman). All
things are His forms. Everything manifests Him.

This sense of oneness of all existence and the view
of unity of all things of Nature as Sachchidananda i.e. as
the manifestation of the Absolute - Unmanifest One at differ­
ent levels of the Being can be discovered only in Indian
or the Indo - Anglian Nature Poetry. The same 'seed' of
Purusha in Prakriti makes the earth sprout, the same Spirit
of the One makes the hill - side breathe and the same One
sings in the birds and the same oneness relates the poet to 
the woods and to all animate or inanimate things. There is 
no duality. There are no barriers or border lines in exis-
tence which is seen as Sat - Chit - Ananda or as One in 
Consciousness and Ananda. Similarly, Man Mohan Ghose sees 
Nature as Sachchidananda. Everything in Nature is alive and 
spiritually eternal. Everything can offer the clue to the 
immanence of the creator:—

Shapely poplar shivering white, poplar 
like a maiden 
Thinking, musing, softly here so light 
and so unladen 
That with every breath and stir per-
petually you gladden, 
Teach me your still secrecy of thoughts 
that never sadden. 14

All objects are in One and all existence is vibrating 
with a Spirit of Bliss which is at the roots of all creation 
as well as in the visible forms of things. The poet wants to 
see this Truth - Consciousness - Bliss in existence in the 
form of the poplar to experience Beatitude in Oneness and 
spiritual realization of a sense of unity of all things.

Nizamt Jung in 'Spirit of Light' calls upon the 
Spirit of Light to help man against the forces of darkness,
O, sing to them thy song of hope and gladness,
Dispel all sombre shadows from the air,
Till freed from dismal doubt and fear and sadness,
The heart of man shall deem thy world more fair!

Such invocations of the Omnipresent Spirit of Light,
in trees and all things recall the Vedic seers' attitude and
approach to Nature and reveal the fact that Indo-Anglian
Poet has his roots in the Indian land of the Vedanta and does
not blindly imitate any other school of poetry. In fact, the
Vedantic tradition is so rooted in Truth and Reality that one
can trace its influence on Wordsworth or even Eliot and not
vice versa. The Western poets and thinkers remain confined
to seeking Truth in Nature. The Indian poets, on the other
hand, in the tradition of the Veda and Vedanta, "see" the
Immanence of His Spirit in Nature.

Toru Dutt (1856 - 77)

Toru Dutt was first fascinated by the Western World -
view as is evident from her translations of French poems and
legends. But her later work, like Sri Aurobindo's, Man Mohan
Ghose's and A. K. Ramanujan's, shows that she found her roots
in the land of Vedanta and could apprehend the reality of the
world in the way of the Vedanta and Vedic tradition. Her poems, lyrics and sonnets, bring out the Vedic spirit of reverence and love of Nature. 'The Lotus', for instance, is a lyrical interpretation of Nature's creativity:

Love came to Flora asking for a flower
That would of flowers be undisputed queen,
The lily and the rose, long, long had been
Rivals for that high honour. Bards of power
Had sung their claims. The rose can never tower
Like the pale lily with her Juno mien,
But is the lily lov'lier? Thus between Flower-factions rang the strife in Psyche's bower
'Give me a flower delicious as a rose
And stately as the lily in her pride' -
"But of what colour?" - 'Rose-red', Love first chose,
Then prayed, — 'No, lily-white, — or, both provide'
And Flora gave the lotus 'rose — red' dyed,
And 'lily-white', the queenliest flower that blows.6

This sonnet can stand any comparison with any other work of English romantic poetry. Flora is attributed divinity in the tradition of the Vedic poetry. And goddess Flora is Nature the creatress of flowers, leaves and plants. 'Lotus' has fascinated the Indian mind right from the Vedic ages.

The Vedic gods have been portrayed as standing on the lotus in the Indian religion. 'The Lotus', as the subject of this poem, immediately places this sonnet in the Indian tradition of Nature Poetry. The poem has the precision and beauty of
a Vedic hymn and appears, symbolically, even to assume the spirit and shape of the lotus flower itself. The sonnet grows organically word by word and line by line like the fresh - sprouting petals of a lotus - flower.

'The Tree of Life' the last poem of Toru Dutt, projects the mystic vision of the poetess just before her untimely end. The Tree in Toru Dutt's poetry symbolises the continuity of life in Nature. Toru Dutt inherited this delicate sensibility and spiritual consciousness and simplicity of approach to Nature from her own land of the Veda and the Upanishads. The ancient Vedic Nature gods fascinated her, and her lyrics, sonnets and ballads bear the hue of the Vedantic approach. Towards the end of her short career the poetess begins to see Nature as Brahma's Maya:

I know that in this transient world
All is delusion, - nothing true;
I know its shows are mists unfurled
To please and vanish. To renew
Its bubble joys, by magic band
In Maya's net work frail and fair
Is not my aim.

These lines reverberate the Oriental view of terrestrial Nature as 'Maya' or 'mists', unfurled to please and vanish, covering the Absolute Unmanifest One (Atman) as
a mask. In the 'Legend of Dhruva', Toru Dutt expounds the doctrine of Karma. Edmund Ghose observes:

No modern Oriental has given us so strange an insight into the conscience of the Asiatic as is presented in the stories of 'Prahlad' and of 'Savitri', or so quaint a piece of religious fancy as Jogadhya Uma.18

This great poetess portrayed Nature as she saw it or saw 'into it' like a Vedic seer. She could evolve and elevate her vision of existence in an intuitive response to Nature and took her position with the great Indo-Anglian Poets like Sarojini Naidu and, indeed she belongs to the Indian tradition of Nature poetry of Vedantans like Tagore and Sri Aurobindo.

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN SAROJINI NAIDU'S POETRY

Sarojini Naidu, too, views Nature in the way of the Vedic seers. In her poetry, Vedic gods, Surya and Varuna, are the gods of light and water. The self-creative and evolving 'Seed' of the universe is Brahma as Prajapati. The creativity principle of unity of Purusha and Prakriti is sustained by Vishnu tendency i.e. the spirit of love as between Radha and Krishna. 'Scythe', as Tamas i.e. Rudra,
is the image of the force that eliminates the stale and outworn to carry on Nature's step by step evolution from lowness to loftiness, from improvement to improvement. Her tone recalls the Rig Vedic poet's tone of supplication.

Metaphorical imagery of 'Scythe' and 'Seed' is recurrent and recalls Upanishadic metaphoricity and symbolism, Nature is invoked for guidance, protection and peace:—

Thou are the Seed and the Scythe of our harvests,
Thou art our Hands our Heart and our Home.
We bring thee our lives and our labours for tribute,
Grant us thy succour, thy counsel, thy care.19

'Seed', the self-creative Brahma as Prajapati or Virat Purusha and 'Scythe' the continuously renewing Mahesh (Rudra - Tamas) signify the eternal process of change and evolution in Nature. Like the Vedic seer-poets the poetess offers sacrifice and supplicates Nature for 'succour', 'Care' and 'Counsel'.

In Harvest 'Hymn' she attributes all growth and development of life to Surya:—

Lord of lotus, lord of the harvest,
Bright and munificent lord of the morn!
Thine is the bounty that prospered our sowing,
Thine is the bounty that nurtured our corn.20
Similarly, the poetess looks on Varuna, the god of rain, and Surya the god of light (the Vedic gods), as the great benefactors who help the evolution of all life in Nature. In fact, the poetess expresses her sense of gratitude to Nature for her bounty and abundance in the way of the Vedic poets:–

Lord of the rainbow, lord of the harvest,
Great and the beneficent lord of the main!
Thine is the mercy that cherished our furrows,
Thine is the mercy that fostered our grain.21

Nature's or Aditi's (the mother's) son, Varuna, the rain god, is the benefactor, protector and creator of life. The forces of Nature which cause evolution and growth in Nature have been conceived as divine benefactors of mankind in the Vedic tradition. They are the universal functionaries who have been earnestly working on the earth whose is "the womb where our riches have birth". In her poetry 'riches' of the earth is a metaphor of new growth and evolution of life on the earth. Earth is synonymous with Nature or Vedic Aditi. In fact, Sarojini Naidu goes on painting the beauty and bounty of the Indian landscape in her poetry and she holds that earth is:–

Queen of the gourd flower, queen of the harvest,
Sweet and omnipotent mother, O Earth!
Thine is the plentiful bosom that feeds us,
Thine is the womb where our riches have birth.

Earth as such is the 'source of our manifold gladness'.

Earth is synonymous with Nature's functions in the process of fulfilment of the will of Brahma who is the,

Lord of the universe Lord of our being
Father eternal ineffable Om!
Thou art Seed and Scythe of our harvests.

The 'Seed' and 'Scythe' is the One "Om".

"Harvests" are the fruits of Karma of all creatures in their endeavour to reunite with the Supreme Spirit.

Her poetic voice sways with rhythm exhaling a spirited response to the universal movement in a process of the becoming of the Being. Onomatopoeic Words and phrases and sylvan imagery effect a sense of rhythm and harmony in consonance with the voice of Nature. Accent in her poetry is not on ideation or sermonizing but on colour, sound, light, music, peace, truth and beauty of Nature. But it is not its physicality that allures her mind. She wants to resonate the eternal 'forest notes' of Nature in her songs:­

The bridal - songs and cradle - songs have cadences of sorrow,
The laughter of the sun today, the wind of death to-morrow,
Far sweeter sound the forest notes where forest streams are falling;
O Mother mine, I cannot stay, the fairy folk are calling.
Here is a call to suffering humanity to ascend to the Divine in dynamic harmony with Nature which as the Sat-Chit-Ananda offers eternal bliss, beauty and divine rhythm to the responsive soul. Freedom from pain and suffering lies in moving ahead with Nature. Disgusted with the dull routine of life, she longs to go to refreshing Nature:

0 I am tired of painted roofs and soft and silken floors,
And long for wind-blown canopies of crimson gulmohurs!
0 I am tired of strife and song and festivals and fame,
And long to fly where Cassia-woods are breaking into flame.25

Rough and tumble of the human world's glamour "of painted roofs and soft and silken floors" and "strife and song and festivals and fame" are decried in comparison and contrast with order and Beauty, warmth and beatitude of Nature. The poem voices a longing for change and progress in human situation vis-à-vis Nature where with the dawn

"Krishna plays on his bamboo flute / An idyl of love in Spring 26"

In Sarojini Naidu's vision, man can find freedom from pain and suffering by living in dynamic harmony with Nature which to her is the manifestation of God whose functional aspects, Brahma and Shiva are the 'Seed' and 'Scythe', and where Surya and Varuna carry on the functions of evolution.
and where Krishna plays on flute an idyl of love, bliss and beauty. The metaphor of 'Krishna playing on flute the idyl of love and beauty' shows Nature as the manifestation of God where love, music and beauty reign supreme. She views things of Nature as the symbols of the Creator and asks them to tell her the secret of their beauty and mirth:—

Spring time, O Spring time, what is your secret,  
The bliss at the core of your magical mirth,  
That quickens the pulse of the morning to wonder  
And hastens the seed of all beauty to birth,  
That captures the heaven and conquers to blossom  
The roots of delight in the heart of the mirth.

Spring is the metaphor of bliss of Nature's creativity. 'The bliss at the Core' of the Spring time and its 'magical mirth' is the Bliss of the passion play of Purusha in Prakriti that "quickens the pulse of the morning to wonder / And hastens the seed of all beauty to birth". It is the passion play of Purusha as consciousness or 'Chit' in Prakriti that "captures the heaven and conquers to blossom/ The roots of delight in the heart of the mirth". And the 'secret' of Chit and Ananda in Prakriti is 'Sat' of revelation in ecstasy which is Truth of Existence as Sachchidananda.

In treating 'Spring' time as the metaphor of creativity the poetess captures the secret of creation through the
articulation of her consciousness of Bliss in Nature creativity in the Vedantic way. Vedanta holds that Brahma creates various life forms and things of Nature in self manifestation as Purusha in Prakriti or Ardhanarishwara inter-twining in a state of ecstasy. That is why, there is 'magical mirth' and beauty in all creation. This 'magical mirth' is seen hastening the seed of all beauty to birth. When this seed of beauty takes birth, beauty and mirth can be seen all over the earth and heaven. In the 'Harvest Hymn' images of 'Seed' and 'Scythe' are invested with larger symbolic connotations as two aspect of God, the Creator. 'Seed' or Brahma as Virat Purusha is seen taking visible shapes in its creative union with Prakriti, always experiencing Bliss of creation. (How in contrast with the original sin of Adam and Eve!) Nature as such is the Symbol of God manifesting as Brahma or Purusha whose 'Seed' hasten to birth in its Creative unity with the egg of Prakriti in experiential Bliss that prevails in Consciousness of creation and creativity process making it Divine Reality or Sat – Chit – Ananda or Sachchidananda or manifestation of God. If like the romantics, she has used expressionistic imagery from Nature in visualizing scenic beauty of the landscape, as has been seen in this study, that visual imagery
has been raised to symbolic heights in terms of the Vedanta metaphoricity and world-view. She portrays the Indian landscape in her poetry where Krishna plays in His flute and the Indian folks, cow-herds and gopies sing and dance, love and evolve, live or die, to be born again out of the eternal bond of Purusha and Prakriti's creative unity, and laugh or weep in dynamic harmony with the Divine's tune in a continuum of evolutionary play and dance in Nature.

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S POETRY

Nature in Rabindranath Tagore's view, as the manifestation of the Unmanifest Absolute One, is Sat-Chit-Ananda or Sachchidananda. Man as Atman i.e. pure consciousness, being and bliss can identify himself as one with God manifest as Brahma or Sachchidananda that Nature is. Like Sarojini Naidu and Sri Aurobindo, Tagore also believed that Brahma's or Conscious Being's pure delight or Ananda is inherent in Nature. Nature is energy of the Conscious Being which is One in all, and all distinctions and multiplicities are of the One who permeates all reality. Existence as such is not an illusion but manifestation of God. As Sarojini Naidu shows in her poem 'Spring Time' everything arises out of the 'Ananda' of Being. Distinctions of good and evil are
created within the overall unity of creation. These can be applied only in the world of becoming but the ultimate of reality is Pure Being. Distinctions of evil and good hold only within the limits of thought but Pure Being is Pure delight beyond all thought of good or evil, happiness or despondency. All Existence being God's manifestation, it is all good as in his own Vedantic words, "The Supreme being is all-pervading, therefore, he is the innate good in all". This Pure Being can be realized as Atman (Self).

To Tagore, as to the Rishis of the Upanishads, everything is part of the same reality which is both Being and Becoming.

In *Sadhana*, Tagore observes :-

We are enjoined to see whatever there is in the world as being enveloped by God . . . .

. . . . I bow to God over and over again who is in fire and in water, who permeates the whole world, who is in the annual crops as well as in the perennial trees.

Tagore subscribes to the Vedic Rishi's view of creation which he enunciates as :-

. . . . I have known the Supreme Person whose light shines forth from beyond the darkness.

Existence to Tagore is Effulgence of the Spirit. He expains his Vedantic concept of the Spirit :-
The being who is in his essence the light and life of all, who is world-conscious, is Brahma. To feel all, to be conscious of everything, is his spirit. We are immersed in his consciousness body and soul. It is through his consciousness that the sun attracts the earth; it is through his consciousness that the light-waves are being transmitted from planet to planet. . . . . Not only in space, but this light and life, this all feeling being is in our souls.31

Tagore's poetry is an expression of the Vedantic truth of complete oneness of all thing. Song LXXIII in his Fruit Gathering, for instance, expresses a sense of complete identification between man and Nature:

The spring with its leaves and flowers has come into my body.
The bees hum there the morning long, and the winds idly play with the shadows.
A sweet fountain springs up from the heart of my heart.
My eyes are washed with delight
Like the dew-bathed morning, and life is quivering in all my limbs like the sounding strings of the lute.
Are you wandering alone by the shore of my life, where the tide is in flood,
O lover of my endless days?
Are my dreams flitting round you like the moths with their many coloured wings?
And are those your songs that are echoing in the dark caves of my being?
Who but you can hear the hum of the crowded hours that sounds in my veins to-day the clamour of the restless life beating its wings in my body.32

The same Spirit permeates the human as well as the cosmic heart. The same Spirit i.e. Purusha throbs in all
Prakriti. All existence, as such, is Sachchidananda.

Rejecting modern man's schistic and divisionist tendencies and separatist trends which take him away from Nature the poet reiterates the Vedantic faith in the holistic view of Nature:—

Where roads are made I lose my way.
In the wide water, in the blue sky there is no line of a track.
The pathway is hidden by the birds' wings, by the starfires, by the flowers of the wayfaring seasons.
And I ask my heart if its blood carries the wisdom of the unseen way.

The "pathway" is the symbolic image of the hidden link between God and creation. The string of images that links this central image of "pathway" are the clues of "manifestation" visually linking Nature to God. Nature, as the manifestation of God is the "pathway" to God. The next image of "blood" in the human heart is attributed the same spiritual significance and "wisdom of the unseen way".

God is approached through Nature in Tagore's poetry. In crossing, he supplicates God to make him conscious of His revelation in Nature:—

Come to me like summer cloud, spreading thy showers from sky to sky.
Deepen thy purple of the hills with thy majestic shadows, quicken the languid forest into flowers, and awaken into
the hill-streams the fervour of the far-away quest,

Come to me like summer cloud, stirring my heart with the promise of hidden life, and the gladness of the green.34

As the poetic vision evolves, the seeker sees God in Nature:-

I have met thee where the night touches the edge of the day, where the light startles the darkness into dawn, and the waves carry the Kiss of the One shore to the other.

From the heart of the fathomless blue comes one golden call and across the dusk of tears I try to gaze at thy face and know not for certain if thou art seen.35

Like the Vedic seer-poets, Tagore sees God in the light of the dawn "where the night touches the edge of the day; where the light startles the darkness into dawn". Out of dark Void, hold the Rig Vedic seers, manifests the Unmanifest One in His Light as the dawn emerges out of the night.

The next image of God's revelation where "waves carry the kiss of the one shore to the other" projects Nature as the "waves" linking man and God and the idea of oneness of all things is underscored. The next image of the "fathomless blue" giving out "one golden call" serves only to strengthen the same Vedantic idea that God is revealing in the fathomless Void and all existence is His Effulgence.
Tagore reverberates the Vedantic concept of existence as Sachchidananda when he says, "From joy does spring all the creation; by joy is it maintained and towards joy does it progress, and into joy does it enter". That is how Tagore looks on Nature as an evolving principle.

As such, Tagore's poetry treats Nature as becoming of the Being. Man, and other objects of Nature are seen as various forms of the Being in the process of becoming. Ultimately, all are in One and One is in all. He says:

I am a playmate of the ever-becoming and my task is to carry within me its many flavours. What I seek is the flavour of delight that has gone into the creation of this universe. It is wonder that I am becoming.

Pure consciousness is attained in spiritual identification with all things in Nature where One is immanent. The poet is conscious of his oneness with Nature. Man, to him, is the microcosmic unit of the macrocosmic whole:

I feel that all the stars shine in me. The world breaks into my life like a flood. The flowers blossom in my body. All the youthfulness of land and water smokes like an incense in my heart, and the breath of all things plays on my thoughts as on a flute.

The theme of the ongoing process of evolution or the becoming of the Being is central to his poetry:
All things rush on, they stop not, they look not behind, no power can hold them back, they rush on.38

All life moves forward from matter to spirit i.e. from the material to the subtle for completion:

the butterflies shake their wings in the sun, the leaves tremble the fruits clamour to come to completion.39

Tagore can see the Omnipotent and the Omnipresent spirit moving all things forward:

I believe in an ideal life, I believe that, in a little flower, there is a living power hidden in beauty which is more potent than a maxin gun. I believe that in the bird's notes Nature expresses herself with a force which is greater than that revealed in the deafening roar of a cannonade. I believe that there is an ideal hovering over the earth—an ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of imagination, but the ultimate reality towards, which all things are moving.40

Tagore like Sri Aurobindo unambiguously states his belief in the continuing process of evolution in Nature. The universe is incessantly moving towards the realization of a state of perfection in the form of a Paradise which is the real destiny of the ever-evolving Nature. Tagore enunciates this process of evolution as the becoming of the Being. This perception of evolution in Nature forms the subject matter not only of Gitanjali but is the theme of
almost all of Tagore's poetry. The poet himself feels the thrust of the Spirit for onward evolution and transformation:

I must unite in love with the universal "I" who is our father, friend, lover and leader.41

Tagore's "I" or atman is One with (in) the Supreme's "I" that is Atman or the Unmanifest Absolute manifesting as Brahma in the Universal Creation. Such lines may remind of Wordsworth's Prelude or Tintern Abbey or Whitman's use of the universal "I" in a poem like the 'Song of the Open Road' ; but Tagore in line with Poets nearer home, the Vadantists and Sri Aurobindo, believes in the spiritual evolution of the mind's "I" or atman to the conscious realization of its identity with the Supreme "I" or Atman, the Unmanifest Absolute One. In song 69 of Gitanjali Tagore expresses this sense of spiritual identification with the moving stream of life:–

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures. It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and flowers.

It is the same life that is roacked in the ocean cradle of birth and death, in ebb and flow.
I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.42

"The stream of life" running through all things is Divine Consciousness. It has bliss and truth of which the poet grows conscious when he goes on evolving his mind in dynamic harmony and spiritual unity with all existence which is flooded by the same "stream" of divine Consciousness or Sachchidananda. Tagore prefers to move forward in dynamic harmony with Nature rather than toeing the beaten paths of materialistic pursuit and erroneous perception of reality. Like Sarojini Naidu the poet seeks to achieve a sense of harmony with the universal rhythms of the divine flute:-

Listen, my heart, in his flute is the music of the Smell of wild flower, of the glistening leaves and gleaning water, of shadows resonant with bees, wings

The flute steals his smile from my friend's lips and spreads it over my, life.43

Nature here becomes the smile and music of the 'flute Player' the poet's friend'. Ultimate Goal of all evolution, according to the poet is the One. Death is not the goal of life. It only signifies nothing more than a change in form and name. Incessant change being the law of Nature's evolution
towards its Ultimate Goal in the One, death can make no permanent mark on the continuity of life in the Infinite:

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. . . . 44

That, however, is not the goal of the cyclical movement of the Spirit's manifestation in Nature. The Ultimate Goal of Nature's evolutionary movement is the One. "But there, where spreads infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. /There is no day nor night, nor form nor colour, and never, never a word." 45 To sum up, Tagore, as a poet of Nature, sees all existence as becoming of the Being. Nature, he holds, is constantly moving forward for the ultimate transformation of the earth into a Paradise by way of evolution of human consciousness.

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN MODERN INDO-ANGLIAN POETRY: NATURE IN NISSIM EZEKIEL'S POETRY

Nature is not the primary theme of Nissim Ezekiel who is mainly an urban poet. But he has referred to Nature in some of his poems and apprehension of Reality is one of
the major concerns of this poet. The Indian landscape, Indian life and culture i.e. Indianness in all its aspects are the subject matter of his poetry. A visit to London awakes in the poet's mind a sense of belongingness to the Indian way of life. Later he declares:

The Indian landscape sears my eyes.  
I have become a part of it.46

The poet looks on the landscape around him and realizes a sense of oneness with the scenes and sights of the native landscape and continues to develop an all embracing outlook and a broad and penetrating vision into reality. Looking at things like an Indian seer, Ezekiel establishes a spiritual relationship with his native land, and finds his identity and roots in the Indian landscape. But he would not lose himself in the maze of superstitions, blind beliefs and stale wisdom of the dead past:

Denude me, O Lord, of all my stale wisdom,  
Keep me if possible, from everything dated,  
Let my follies be fresh as flowers. 47

Dead burden of tradition and conventionality is rejected. A flower-like creative vision and freshness of poetic voice are supplicated. The poet wants to exude freshness of flowers in his poems. In preference to error
prone human perception and theorising, he wants to approach reality in the direct way which is the way of the Vedanta too. He wishes to emulate freshness in Nature's creativity in his creative work. And prays "let my follies be fresh as flowers". Conscious of his own inadequacies, he admits:

Compared to my mind,  
Rocks are reasonable,  
Clouds are clear,  
It makes me mad but that is how it is,  
How many times have I felt free?  
How many times spontaneous?  
It's fantastic  
What a slave a man can be  
Who has no body to oppress him except himself.48

He would like to transcend the limitations of his own mind and urban vision and follow Nature for its reasonableness, spirit of freedom and spontaneity. Human mind in alienation from Nature can become oppressive like a dark and closed cell in the prison of the body. Light and freedom, unity and fulfilment, joy and wisdom can be found in spiritual identification and oneness with Nature. The inner self must express itself in identification with the outer Self in Nature. A sense of realization of unity of the one with all and all with One alone can release the human soul and bring joy to the human heart. Such a sense of identification with
the Being alone can elevate and awake the human mind to the real bliss or Ananda that prevails in all creation. Modern mind is indeed, poorer for shutting itself off from the light and movement of Nature. The poet has realized his mistake by now, and wants to apprehend the reality of things. In consciousness of man's mental limitations he prays for the spiritual strength and clear insight into the reality of things:­

What I want and pray for is only strength, to do What I have to do to see it steadily not to be deceived.

The tone here is of the Vedic poet and the spirit Vedantic in the prayer for clarity of pure perception and true Knowledge of reality. In spite of a different faith (being a born Jew), the poet is praying for spiritual light and freedom from darkness and inadequacies of the human mind like a Vedic seer. Ezekiel wants to look at reality with an unprejudiced and naked eye. He cannot accept what others say. He cannot believe in any philosophies of stereovision or unquestioned perceptions, superstitions and unrealistic insights. He prefers the right path to self realization and Ultimate Reality and observes:­
You are master neither of death nor life
Belief will not save you, nor unbelief
all you know is the sense of reality unfathomable as it yields its
secrets slowly one by one.50

Ultimate 'Reality' however is 'unfathomable' and in seeking his true identity the poet reaches the point of limitation of the human mind. Will he take the help of the light of the soul in finding "light"? The answer will have to traced out.

Non-conformity to given standards of thought and belief, however, appears to be the hallmark not only of Ezekiel's approach to reality but also of his style. He is as experimental in his stylistic measures, diction and tone as in search of the truth. Use of free verse reflects the love of freedom. But in neat cadences of the poetic voice, in its unmistakeable rhythms and felicity of expression,, volumes of perception is summed up in remarkable nuances of utterance.

Ezekiel repudiates the oft beaten path of ritualistic imitation both in style and speculation and looks on reality in the direct manner of the soul virtually like the Vedantists. The Vedanta is not a school of any rigid philosophies. The Vedanta is the way of the soul's direct manner of looking at reality. The Vedic seers are most like the
modern scientists. The only difference being that whereas
the modern scientist depends exclusively on his mental
faculties and discovers the secrets of reality in bits and
fragments the Vedic seers saw all things as One and One in
all things. Their approach to reality was direct and what
they looked for and found out was Truth. Ezekiel is there­
fore one with the Vedantists in his quest for knowledge i.e.
'Vidya' and search for Truth.

Limitations of perception of the human mind fail to
deter the poet's searching soul. Through the soul's eye he
can see reality as 'Rta' or as an all pervasive force of
movement in all things ceaselessly working out their own
evolution and transformation. This truth of his seeing
reality (unsavowedly)like the Vedantans'. evidently: comes
out in Ezekiel's psalms of spiritual insight:

a silence in the depths
a stir of growth
an upward thrust
a transformation
botanic turmoil
in the heart of earth

While these lines on the whole bring out the poet's
idea of evolution of life in Nature, each line, and even
word, compact with information, marks the several stages of
evolution in a regular succession. The Indian poets do not
dwell on the minute details of Physical phenomena, they look for the deeper meaning and total significance of Nature. Looking at Nature like spiritual scientists, they can always see the ongoing evolution and movement forward of all phenomena to its ultimate transformation through conscious realization of its Being the divine revelation. They can trace the phenomenon of evolution of the spirit's physical form towards its ultimate Goal — the One. Ezekiel here (in the lines quoted above) seeing the process of continuing evolution of earth, deliberately, does not refer to time. By inference, the poet's perceptions relate to all times — past, present and the future.

The urge to see reality continues throughout his poetry, Ezekiel is candid enough to admit man's limitations and even failures. Often the meaning of reality evades him and the poet loses the mark. He sees signs, takes his clue and says that he:—

He has seen the signs
but has not been faithful to them
Where is the fixed star of his seeking?
It multiplies like a candle
in the eyes
of a drunkard.52

Even the fixed star, the goal of his pursuit, is uncertainly multiplying due to complexities of the quest, 'like a candle
in the eyes of a drunkard*. Perhaps the poet gets drunk with dubious joy and wonder of temptations of life and can neither concentrate on the goal nor can fully fathom the depth of the unfathomable Ultimate Reality. But this very realization in itself is a great step forward into the realm of Sachchidananda. And the poet will not step out disheartened. He must seek the meaning that lies deep at the heart of things. He must aspire further and realise his own identity in identification with that One who lies unmanifest or hidden at the core of the seed of all life in Nature. He must see deep into the core of the secret of creation:

I don't want to be
the skin of the fruit
Or the flesh
Or even the seed,
which only grows into another wholesome fruit
The secret looked within the seed,
becomes my need, 53

The poetic eye must see and the spiritual "I" identify with the Supreme Creator, the Source of all creation. This yearning for self-discovery in an identical search for secrets of life in Nature steers the poetic self towards the unveiling of reality:
I've stripped off a hundred veils
and still there are more
that cover your creation.
Why are you so elusive?
Even as myself, my very own
incontrovertible, unexceptional
self, I feel I am disguised.54

This is admission of limitations of the sense - mind
striving for "light" and finding self - realization and
"light" into mystery of creation simultaneously elusive. The
last line reveals the probing efforts of the poet into the
reality of the self which is admittedly more than what
appears at the surface. The surface or the body has covered
the self which has its roots in the Unseen and Unknowable.
As the mind cannot see into the reality of the spirit,
the poet concludes the poem at a note of exhaustion, "I
am very tired / of irony and paradox". 55

The poet wants to be at the centre of things. And
the aspiration for light is not in vain in spite of the
initial set - backs. In a later poem, namely "Tribute to
the Upanishads", he makes renewed efforts to arrive at a
glimmer of the truth, "a teasing light", which assures him
of his real self :-
and so
I shrink to the nothingness
within the seed
At first it is cold,
I shiver there,
later comes a touch of truth,
a ferment in the darkness,
finally a teasing light. 56

This is neat enunciation of an inner - mystical experience of a psyche afloat on a fluxionary circumanbience resolving doubt and piercing darkness in a transcending feat of the spirit. The poet is making a steady progress in seeking the 'Light'. An ascending line of evolution of the poet's mind and personality can be traced throughout as an ascending arc marking the awakening of the inner self. Self-realization seems to alight at longer last. The poet is free of doubt and darkness of the little ego and finds himself in universal identification with One in all and all in One i.e. the multiplication of the Self. The secret "Locked in the seed" is love, rather procreative love of Purusha and Prakriti in which one can merge as part of the larger self. Creative experience in poetry is gone through again and again in search of the creative Bliss and one's "primval root" in the seed. Truth alights on the mind in such moments of creative experience of love of the (human) self for the Cosmic Self.
The poet also takes to the method of spiritual meditation to self-discovery:

I close the door and sit alone
in kinship with the world.
I am near everybody
being near myself alone.57

Having found the meaning of the self in identification with all beings i.e. the Being in totality and having expressed it in autotelic metaphors reenacting the inner experience of realization the poet further elaborates on his perceptions of Nature as a metaphor of creativity. In 'Sparrows' he says:

You may not doubt their single aim,
Which is to fly and then to mate,
Around to build with twig and leaf,
A nest sufficient for the need —
Open, warm, and planned to give
A truly bird's eye - view of things . . .
I fancy this, and then I face
The facts - the mating and the nest
Primeval root of all the rest.58

When accredited beliefs fail to unveil reality, the poet turns to Nature, the birds and trees to discover the secrets of life in this nestling universe by way of direct perception of actual creation. As he says:

We who leave the house in April, Lord,
How shall we return?59

April being peak month of spring is symbolic of creation in Nature and refers to the origin of life as the archaic
metaphor of "Primeval root" (in the preceding quotation above) visualizes the action of creativity in a house of love and unity which Nature is. And from the "Primeval root" life springs up, to return to the same source.

In contrasting this scheme of creation in Nature with the ways of city life Ezekiel comes to realize the follies and flaws of city life virtually divorced from Nature. He finds the city man dwelling in a prison of artificialities and falsities. Stagnation and pollution are the hall marks of the prison called cities. The poet denounces the illusions of the city dweller who has turned away from Nature:

The hills are always far away.  
He knows the broken roads and moves in circles tracked within his head.  
Before he wakes and has his say,  
The river which he claims he loves is dry, and all the winds lie dead.  
At dawn he never sees the skies which silently, are born again  
Nor feels the shadow of the night  
Recline their fingers on his eyes,  
He welcomes neither sun nor rain.  
His landscape has no depth or height.  

This is not only a satire but also a sad commentary on the dark and misconceived ways of city life. The poet makes use of one set of images like 'broken roads', 'dry river', 'dead wind', 'tracked circles' etc. to pin-point
follies of city life and another string of images like 'sun', 'rain', 'hills', 'dawn', 'sky' etc. to project Nature's healthy freshness. In the city there are the 'broken roads' and the city man moves in "circles tracked within his head". These "broken roads" and tracked "circles" are the 'objective correlatives' of the town man's broken sensibility, erroneous perception and specious life styles and sapping town life routines. Such lines bring out the poet's vision of a life of harmony and growth, freshness and evolution in Nature. Modern man's lack of interest in the 'sun' or the 'rain' and shallowness of his vision that has "no depth or height" are decried. The metaphorical imagery of the skies being (silen-ly) "born again" at dawn reverberates the Vedantic conception of Nature as the One's revelation in the dark Void as the dawn of His Light. The town man's alienation from Nature is brought out and lamented in Ezekiel's poetry. The so called modern town-dweller has almost lost the capacity to enter into communion with Nature :-

... The morning breeze
Released no secrets to his ears.61

In 'A Time to Change' the poet longs to recapture the beauty of fresh orchids and vast seas in his songs. The
wind becomes an inspiring agent and even the stones bring joy to the human heart and he says, "I have learnt to revel in stone". In poems like 'Transmutation' and 'the Time to Change' the poet attempts to apprehend the real meaning of life and things like a Vedic seer:

... Apprehend
The carnival of things created: water, wind
And reason's breath.62

Nature and all its things, animate and inanimate, are the 'carnival' to Nissim Ezekiel. Water, air and "reason's breath' are viewed in unity and there are no border lines and divisions between the animate and the inanimate. All are in One and One is in all. As a 'carnival' existence has an imminent spirit of joy and bliss in it and life in Nature has a divine significance as Manifestation. Joy or Bliss or 'Ananda' lies in the experience of recognition of Nature as the Carnival (in the Vedantic parlance Sat - Chit - Ananda). In seeing "the carnival the poetic self partakes of the feast of the Carnival or 'Ananda' in existence. The soul or the inner self first recognizes and then apprehends the ultimate Reality. Ezekiel will not use any Sanskrit terminology to describe Nature which helps him evolve the
inner self to recognize and participate in the Carnival but the fact remains that the poet sees the things in the light of the soul (atman) and apprehends Nature as a Carnival Sat - Chit - Ananda. This vision implies a spiritual correlation-ship between the poet's self (atman) and the universal Self (Carnival) and the light of the collective self or pure cons­ciousness leads to the Light and Knowledge in which all exist­ence is seen as a "Carnival" of things albeit "Created". Consciousness of immanence of the Supreme Light (Truth) and Bliss (in the Carnival) is achieved through an elevated vision of the Ultimate Reality as Sachchidananda (Ezekiel will never acknowledge it) like a Vedic seer and like Sri Aurobindo who has translated the Vedic lore into (English) poetry for the Knowledge of all Indo - Anglian Poets.

Nature for Nissim Ezekiel is the manifestation of the Unknowable. The poet's prayers for revelation of truth in the hymns reverberate the searching supplications of the poets of ancient India. The poet makes repeated efforts to rend the veils of ignorance from human vision. In his quest of truth he has been found undergoing a spiritual struggle in his inner self to triumph over all divisions, barriers,
negations and opposites of Paradoxical Reality. Ultimately, Ezekiel overcomes all limitations of time, thought, colour, race, or creed in his spiritual realization of the unity of all existence including the human kind. He sees the world as ever renewing itself as in 'Child' he recollects how he in the mornings woke to the wind and the sun:

With upturned face receiving kisses from
The constant newness of the world.

Use of the epithet "Constant" in the metaphor "Constant newness" is significant for the poet's view of the becoming of the Being in a continuum of evolution in Nature. Such objective metaphors project the poet's world view. In the "newness" of the world the One (God) in His creative, protective and absorbing aspects is constantly manifesting in Nature. To sum up, this study shows that Ezekiel looks on Nature unconsciously like the Vedantans as a progression in creativity, evolutionary movement and change in the Indian tradition of Nature poetry.

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN THE POETRY OF KAMALA DAS

Most of the readers and critics stop at the superficial level of interpretation of Kamala Das's poetry which
is easily labelled as titilating erotica or confessional utterances of a rejected and dissatisfied woman. Frankness of utterance is either frowned at or scandalized without taking into account the larger concerns of her poetry. Universality of her poetic voice is seldom taken into account. Adil Jassawala's comment: "She writes almost exclusively of love, sex and loneliness in the tone of insistent confession," is typical of the general view of critics like Ishwer Nath Aggarwal who supports Jassawala's interpretation in his critique entitled, "The Language and the Limits of the Self in the Poetry of Kamala Das" or C. V. Venugopal who eventually hardly justifies his view of Kamala Das as seeker after truth in his article entitled, "Kamala Das: The Seeker After Truth. Most of her readers derive just obreptious pleasure in her erotical utterances, titilating allusions or sensual treatment of sex. But sex in her poetry is treated as a means of unification of the male and the female aspects of the micro-cosmic self (human self) of the macro-cosmic Self in a spirit of love. The uniqueness of man and woman relationship is voiced in terms of the primordial relationship of Purusha and Prakriti变异ously
represented in the Unity of Shiva and Parbati or Radha and Krishna.

In fact, Kamala Das's poetry lays bare a divine discontent at the nonfulfilment of her soul's desire for its reunion with its other half through the medium of the human body. That urge is evident in Nature's primeval desire for unity of Purusha and Prakriti. Desire as such is divine and its nonfulfilment leads to discontent and dissatisfaction while its fulfilment affords divine 'Ananda.' Her poetry seeks to portray this quest of 'Ananda' of the union of the male and the female in love and love making.

Soon disillusioned and discontented with frantic expressions of the joy of the twain's inter-twining at the physical level, she turns to Nature, particularly, to the Sea in her quest of lasting love and "Ananda" through a spiritual union with the sea. In oneness with the sea in the mode of the unity of the two in One she overcomes her previous dejections, and being less restive, can look on Nature with a detached mind and equanimity of vision:

Pigeons on the ledge
Of an afternoon dream
Sit strangely silent,
The hot dust rises,
Falls on sun pealed beaks.
Only a poet who has tamed her early anxieties can look on things with such cool minded detachment and objectivity.

Her turning to Nature is marked by a recurrence of cosmic imagery of the sun, water, sea and earth in her poetry. Sea assumes a living personality. The poetess goes to the sea in spiritual quest of unity and bids to enter in a personal communion with it: -

The sea is garrulous today, come in,
Come in, What do you lose by dying and
Besides, your losses are my gains.68

In the long tradition of Indian poetry water has been treated as a symbol of force of virility in Nature. It is this 'guna' of water that fascinates Kamala Das and she goes to the sea conceiving of it to be her male partner. This emerging relationship between the poetess and the sea is analogous of the primordial relationship of Purusha and Prakriti. That is why, the poetess resolves to merge herself with the sea: -

The sea
Shall take no more, the sea shall take
No more . . . . . . The tides beat against
the walls, they
Beat in childish rage . . . .
Darling, forgive, how long can one resist.69
In the first place the sea serves as a scenic background. But at a deeper level she treats it as a living personality and it embraces the poetess's love-lorn and frustrated soul and offers shelter and solace to her thwarted self. In fact, there is a deep-rooted primeval urge that is sought to be fulfilled throughout Kamala Das's poetry. Rather than seeking the fulfilment of mere physical hunger and lust, her soul craves for the joy of cosmic Consciousness of constant 'Ananda' in an experience of perfect union with her masculine partner. When man fails to respond to her feminine self in her quest of realization of 'Ananda' through physical mating, which merely at the physical level is of a very limited value to her, her soul goes to Nature to experience 'Ananda' in the realization of consciousness of unity of Purusha and Prakriti. The sea, as an image of Purusha, welcomes her. As such all of Kamala Das's love poetry turns out to be a metaphor of a quest of experience of 'Ananda' in the realization of unisexual consciousness in the tradition of unity of Purusha and Prakriti as the two in One or unisexual 'ardhanarishwara.' That is why, she questions man's stereotyped way of love making merely at the physical level.
without its leading to any deeper Consciousness of 'Ananda':-

Can't this man with Nimble finger-tips unleash
Nothing more alive than the
Skin's lazy hungers?

It is not skin's lazy-hungers that are sought to be fulfilled. The poetess seeks to experience 'Ananda' of the union of Shiva and Parbati or Radha and Krishna as implied in the primeval relationship of Purusha and Prakriti.

Kamala Das's poems on Radha and Krishna love relationship epitomize the same idea of spiritual unity or love relationship of Purusha and Prakriti. The poetess is aware of the essence of love as the sustaining principle of all creation and as man's only guide to the realization of divine Consciousness of 'Ananda' or eternal ecstasy. It is this Divine Consciousness of 'Ananda' in the (Love) relationship of Purusha and Prakriti that the poetess is seeking and treating at different levels, at the human level as between man and woman; at the divine level as between Radha and Krishna, and at the man - Nature (relationship) level as between the Sea and herself. Divinity of love is thus underscored in poem after poem and most perceptively in the Radha - v. Krishna poems. The poetess spiritually communicates with Krishna:-
Ghanashyam,
You have like a koel built your nest in
the arbour of my heart
My life until now a sleeping jungle is at
last astir with music.
You lead me along a route I have never
known before
But at each turn when I near you
Like a spectral flame you vanish.
The flame of my prayer-lamp holds captive
my future
I gaze into the red eye of death
The hot stare of truth unveiled.?

Ghanashyam is the Supreme Self, Purusha, the Divine
Consciousness i.e. Sachchidananda nestled unseen in the poetess
's heart and stirring her body and soul in sensations of joy of
life and music for actual loving union and fulfilment. The
poetess is expressing here how awareness of the divinity of her
own inner self and the joy - the sensational music - the Ananda
that inevitably accompanies such a Consciousness of immanence
of the Divine Spirit (i.e. Sachchidananda) is dawning on her
mind. In her next simile the poetess compares Krishna to a
spectral flame guiding the questing mind through regions of
ignorance but often disappearing just when she nears enlight-
enment leaving her still seeking the light in the caves of
(worldly) darkness and ignorance which ultimately results in
the oblivion of death. In such a state of mind instead of
experiencing enlightenment of divine consciousness, the poetess feels herself bound for dark regions of death when the 'spectral flame - the guide - the Purusha (soul) opts out of the net of senses of the body. The poetess wants to transcend this dark region or the net of senses and the 'guide' does help her experience the joy of enlightenment deep within herself but Ultimate enlightenment fails to descend and the end remains the truth of death for all her seeking. But the seeking continues: -

Ghanashyam,
The cell of the eternal sun.
The blood of the eternal fire,
The hue of the summer air,
I want a peace that I can tote
Like an infant in my arms
I want a peace that will doze
In the whites of my eyes when I smile
The ones in saffron robes told me of you
And when they left
I thought only what they left unsaid
Wisdom must come in silence.72

The last line (above) expresses the aim of the poetess - the inner development and wisdom are the aim and this aim can be achieved only through introspection in meditative silence and not through any external agents. Kamala Das tries different means to the achieve peace and beatitude
through physical intellectual and spiritual action in love for all things and every person and through poetic action. But she finds in the process that spiritual evolution is possible only through self awakening in meditative and contemplative silence. Her poetry is a story of self-realization and self-evolution through empirical experimentation in love for man, Nature and God in the long tradition of Indian poetry.

Ghanashyam is described in this invocation (above) as the "Cell of the Eternal Sun" where cell is the image of the centre of the flame of divinity and the sun is the image of Light. The image of "the blood of eternal fire" symbolizes the life force in the matter and "the hue of the summer air" emphasises the warm feeling of psychic propinquity to Krishna or Purusha as the Cosmic Soul permeating the cosmos with beauty and fragrance of life. And from the Lord or from this awareness of the Cosmic Being she wants peace that she may foster and carry along. This peace she wishes to "doze" (show) in the whites of my eye when I smile", perhaps because it cannot be better communicated in any other way. Even the 'saffron robed' ones could not enunciate the meaning and essence
of this peace. She can achieve the consciousness of possible realization of this peace in one's smile only in the deep 'Cell of the Sun' within her inner self in a spiritual state of meditative self-probing in deep silence.

"The Maggots" and "A Phantom Lotus" are some of Kamala Das's other poems which show how love was a divine inspiration and not a physical hunger of lust to her. Love wells up in the heart of the poetess and she needs some one — here Radha needs Krishna — to contain it:—

The only truth that matters is  
That all this love is mine to give  
It does not matter that I seek  
For it a container, as alms  
Seek a begging bowl, a human  
Space to envelop its wealth. Heed  
My faith alone, all the rest is  
Perishable, and as such, but  
Delusions. Any stone can make  
An idol, loving this one, I  
Seek but another way to know  
Him who has no more a body  
To offer, and whose blue face is  
A Phantom-Lotus on the waters of my dreams... 73

In this quest of realization of self in spiritual consciousness of oneness with the Divine, the poetess realizes the truth of the immanence of the Unborn in all existence and loves everything in seeking the unity of the inner self with the outer aspect of the One (Atman). She loves 'one' thing (even a stone) or anything to know the Unborn immanent One.
Love for his Nature is the right way to know the Supreme One. This has been the way of the Vedic seers, of the Vedantists and of Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore. Now this is the same spiritual way of consciously evolving the self from the level of physical love and physical consciousness (of physical reality) to the knowledge of Ultimate Reality and salvation.

Lord Krishna is treated as any object of love and love is the truth and truth is love for Kamala Das as truth is beauty for John Keats. This consciousness of love welling up in the human heart seeks to enter another space or form of the human body and, even so, any other form as 'any stone can make an idol'. Divine love tiding up in the human heart for all creation originates at the primeval root as the principle of all creation. Once this is known the poetess wants to experience it as a unifying and enlightening (guide) principle of the unity of Purusha and Prakriti or Radha and Krishna or of her soul with the Divine Soul since she has seen that the realization of existence as Sachchidananda is possible only by giving love and seeking the human space or Self to contain and keep this elixer, this 'amrita', this
drink, which flows like a stream through her soul into all Prakriti and from Purusha in Prakriti into her heart awakening and inspiring it to life and its joy:—

What is the drink but
The April sun, squeezed
Like an orange in
My glass.74

The 'drink' here is love, the elixir or 'amrita' of creation. The image of this 'April sun' is aptly used to symbolize creativity of the spring and the elixir of all creativity, the 'drink', is love in the human heart welling out to be embodied in new forms or bodies at the physical level. 'Drink' naturally intoxicates the giver with 'Ananda' as also the taker of love; and the glass, taking or containing it, is the human body and soul as reciprocating consciousness. The secret of life and its joy, therefore, lies in the giving and taking of love at all levels but not merely at the physical level alone. It must get squeezed in the 'glass' that is the body the soul or collective consciousness of the taker.

In 'A Phantom - Lotus', the poetess says that in
"Loving this One, I/Seek but another way to know/Him who has no more a body/To offer, and whose blue face is /A Phantom-
lotus on the waters of my dreams . . . . 75
In love, Kamala Das seeks to know Him who is Unmanifest and Unborn, Nirguna manifesting as Sanguna or Brahma as consciousness through Prakriti and whose presence as Purusha in Prakriti can only be felt as 'Phantom - Lotus' on the waters of dreams'. Love cannot be seen (and only felt) but sustains life and brings joy. Similarly, 'He' i.e. God cannot be seen but felt and approached through love, for love of every object of Nature, which is the divine manifestation of the Unmanifest, can lead to the realization of the "Unmanifest". His face is the 'Phantom Lotus' or creation emerging from divine waters as His dream. The truth of divine unity of objects of Nature manifesting the Immanent is gradually realized through love for existence and thereby through spiritual evolution of the poetic self in her poetry:

Ultimately there comes a time
When all faces look alike
All voices sound similar
And trees and lakes and mountains,
Appear to bear a common signature
It is then that you walk past your friends
And not recognise
And hear their questions but pick
No meaning out of words
It is then that your desires cease.
And a homesickness begins
And you sit on the temple steps
A silent 'devadasi', lovelorn
And aware of her destiny . . . . . 76
The realization of the Ultimate Reality as unity of Spirit manifested in divinity of form comes to the mind that seeks to know. A sense of detachment and a homesickness for reunion with the Supreme Self descend on such a seeing soul. The Purusha in the temple of the body, originating from the 'Atman' or the Cosmic Temple of the Absolute Unmanifest, seeks to return to its Source leaving behind the physical net of the senses of the body. The soul or 'atman' or self - waiting for the reunion with the Supreme Self or 'Atman' is compared with a lovelorn devadasi sitting on the temple steps aware of her ultimate destiny.

Love of one thing leads to the knowledge of universal oneness of all things. All faces look alike and all things reveal the One. The inner self gets enlightened in consciousness and knowledge of its unity with the Cosmic Self and in this realization waits in peace and detachment for the Ultimate realization of Beatitude in real union with the Supreme Spirit-'Atman'. Kamala Das has pursued this goal of experiencing the 'Ananda' of the spirit in the fulfilment of ultimate destiny. Long back in the beginning of her search for experiencing a consciousness of 'Ananda' and realizing the real meaning of life, she took to the way of love at the human level. But,
unfortunately, man failed him. Consummation failed to take place. Realization of permanent 'Ananda' did not follow human love at the physical level. The poet then turned to the sea and His revelation in Nature and discovered Him immanent in each and every object. This awakening and enlightenment of the inner self came about through love for all things of the Creator and brought peace, beatitude, and sense of freedom from divisionist vision. And realizing the Truth of One's Immanence in a consciousness of harmony with Nature like the Vedic seers and in the way of Sri Aurobindo and his personae like Aswapathi, Ruru and Savitri, she waits for the realization of Bliss or eternal 'Ananda' like "a devdasi sitting at the temple steps" in a reunion with the Supreme Source ('Atman').

Kamala Das now feels that the initial hankering after the petty satisfactions of the physical desire may be caused by some kind of illusory ignorance before the soul's realizing the ultimate truth:

Perhaps I lost my way, perhaps I went astray. How would a blind wife trace Her lost husband, how would a deaf wife hear Husband call? 77
She acknowledges her snaring 'blindness' and 'dumbness' for which she could neither see nor hear her husband call. That the "husband" is present in Nature and "calls" her for union in love, in his voice of divine music (of Nature), is a reality which she could not cognise because the reality and presence of the Purusha or the Supreme Spirit manifested in the Supreme Self of the Cosmic Being can be apprehended only by the soul which, if caught in the net of 'Maya' (illusion) of the senses, can neither see nor hear the "husband" call. That the poetess can ultimately transcend the snare of the senses and realize her true identity through the inner light's awakening of a sense of unity with the light of the Divine in Nature is evident:

Ultimately,
I have come face to face with the sea,
In the beginning
the sea was only the wind's ceaseless whisper in a shell
But lying beside my grandmother, quite often I thought
that I could hear at night the surf breaking on the shore.
The sea was only two miles away. 78

That the child is vaguely conscious of its divine origin and can regain the complete consciousness of divinity of Nature by following the way of the soul is made evident here. The grandmother's loving voice and the sea's awakening
whispers help Kamalsa Dass recognise Ultimate Reality in the glimpses and whispers of the sea. The sea evidently is the image of Nature here and Nature as symbolic manifestation of the Unmanifest, is Sachchidananda or Existence - Divine - Consciousness. Kamala Das is Conscious of this Divine Consciousness permeating her inner self as well as all outer space and form, matter, life and existence from her early child-hood and her growth as a poet, therefore, lies in recapituation of the joy of love with the Supreme Self.

It is, therefore, wrong to say like Adil Jassawala that Kamala Das writes only of sex and love "in the tone of self-confession" or to subscribe to Devendra Kohli's view that "At the conscious level, Kamala Das's favourite theme has always been shadowy borderline between fulfilment and unfulfilment in love"?9, or to Venugopal's as he makes out that she merely poses questions to seek truth implying thereby that she projects no vision of Ultimate Reality. Kamala Das, as has been found in this study, unconsciously develops a Vedantic vision through an initial Samkhya approach to Reality. Her poetry reveals her quest for ultimate immersion with the spiritual One i.e. Ghanashyam. Her poetry reveals the gradual evolution of her vision. The inner poetic self evolves in active harmony
with evolving Nature. Her poetry frankly expresses her own way of love for purusha first at the physical level and then, gradually, at the universal level. Ultimately she experiences the joy of realization of existence as Sachchidananda and very successfully transmits that 'Ananda' through her poetic creation. Indeed she is one of those Indian poets who have seen Nature as the manifestation of the Unmanifest right from the Vedic Ages to Sri Aurobindo. In Indo-Anglian Poetry Sri Aurobindo has made a major contribution in bringing to light the Vedic lore and approach to Ultimate Reality for human emancipation through his philosophical, poetic and translation works. Modern Indo-Anglian Poets have inherited a Vedantic legacy of Divine-Truth-Consciousness as way to 'Ananda' through him.

TREATMENT OF NATURE IN A. K. RAMANUJAN'S POETRY

A. K. Ramanujan is the first major poet who shows a marked departure from the organic and colloquial style of Indian poetry in English. He will not sing out or paint or eulogise beauty of Nature. And he will never be candid, simple or straightforward in his pronouncements. He would rather prefer to use words as impages without using structural words and thematic clues, and thereby often giving rise to obscurity,
obliqueness and ineffability. One's imagination is often jolted when linkages between the familiar and the unfamiliar are found missing. Use of personal rhythm, free verse and uncommon diction often hamper spontaneity. Nevertheless, impressions of Indian life, culture, and landscape are unmistakable in his poems. Unravelling of themes and visualization of thought-provoking Nature imagery yields joy. 'The Striders', for instance, is a case in point:

And search
for certain thin-stemmed, bubble-eyed water bugs.
See them perch
on dry capillary legs
weightless
on the ripple skin
of a stream.

No, not only prophets
walk on water. This bug sits
on a landslide of lights
and drowns eye-deep
into its tiny strip
of sky. 80

One can just visualize the whole thing in this poem. His impression of an Indian 'yogin' just comes alive in visual images such as 'thin-stemmed', 'bubble-eyed', 'dry capillary legs' etc.

The poem begins with 'And' which, as a continuing word suggests the continuity (of existence). Use of the word
'search' is deliberate and hints at the search of truth by
the ancient Indian seers and 'yogins' and now kept up too
by Ramanujan himself. Not only the Vedic poets or Sri
Aurobindo or Tagore but even the present day poets are engag­
ed in this search for Ultimate Reality.

The poet's search for truth leads him to a waterscape
and the sight of water bugs suggests to him, unity of all
things in a flash of enlightenment. Indian 'yogins' and water
bugs would perch alike 'weightless on the ripple skin of a
stream'. The comparison, bringing home the idea of affinity
between the water bugs and Indian 'yogins', is further stre­
tched in the metaphorical image: "This bug sits on a land­
slide of lights". The image of landslide of lights has symbolic
significance. The Indian seers and poets 'search' for 'Light'
and the water bugs sit on the 'landslide of lights' invit­
ing (anybody) to see the 'light' of unity of all existence
as Sachchidananda. The poet like his predecessors is in
'search' of the meaning and significance of creation and
arrives at the truth which he projects in this poem. The
little poem is thus a metaphorical image of unity of all
existence. The bug drowning "eye - deep" into the "tiny
strip of the sky" signifies the immersion of the self into
the Self (Atman) of the animated self's eye - vision of the cosmos which is limited to as far as the earthly self's vision can see into its (cosmic) vastness. As all emanates from the Cosmic Self or Brahma as macro form projecting the self or 'Atman', all must immerse back into the macro cosmic Self. And therein, says the Vedanta and Sri Aurobindo, lies the goal of the self's search for knowledge for salvation (in immersing the tiny self into the Cosmic Self). This has been the aim of the Vedic rishis, this is the aim of the insects (the water bugs), this is the aim of the poet himself. The inner self is related to the Cosmic Self and Existence is unity or Sat - Chit - Ananda.

But Ramanujan, in his own independence of vision and voice, refuses to palliate human suffering and pain. In 'A River' Ramanujan sees human life caught in a vicious circle of follies misperceptions and ritualistic observance of tradition. Even poets fail to see the truth as he tells of an Indian poet:

He said:
the river has water enough
to be poetic
about only once a year.81

These poets of Madurai — that old city symbolic of the Indian tradition and culture in the poem — 'sang of
cities and temples. By implication neither did they see reality of Nature nor of human suffering. Man trying to overcome Nature, by dint of science and technology, "Clogging the water gates/at the rusty bars/under the bridges with patches/of repair all over them", and by living in over-crowded cities has lost all joy and charm of existence. Science has neither enabled man to master Nature nor has it succeeded in mitigating human suffering. The poets care to look on the river running through the city (of spiritual 'wasteland') only once a year and even then:-

   it carries away  
   in the first half-hour  
   three village houses,  
   a couple of cows  
   named Gopi and Brinda  
   and one pregnant woman  
   expecting identical twins  
   with no moles on their bodies,  
   with different-coloured diapers  
   to tell them apart.

Instead of drawing strength and vital life force from Nature by living in dynamic harmony without, the city man is heralding death and destruction for the poor who are swept away by floods caused by mismanagement consequential of erroneous perception and exploitation of Nature. Clogging of water gates does not help. The poet sings of the floppy river once a year when it plays havoc with the poor village woman and the
The woman expecting the twins is mother Nature who brings forth identical children. The cows, reminding of Krishna and recalling the Vedic view of Nature as a cow (sustaining man), are being swept away in man's excessive greed and zeal for selfish exploitation both of mother Nature and religion for his alienated city-centred life and short sighted pursuits of pleasures. The result is that the mother is being ruthlessly annihilated by her own grown up children who are striking dead the seeds of new life in it. Creativity of the mother as well as of the poets is getting scuttled and stifled under the impact of poison of artificialities and misperceived materialistic feats of the city-dweller. India has lost the glory of the days of Gopies and Krishna because it has neither preserved truthful values of its cultural tradition nor cared to live in harmony with Nature. The 'identical twins' expected by the drowned mother symbolize unity of life at its roots in Mother Nature. Only external 'diapers' can make one tell infants apart at the time of birth. But neither the modern 'poet' nor the city dweller, running blindly after selfish ends and exploiting Mother Nature and the poor cows and thus striking dead the expecting mothers in his excessive zeal for physical comfort,
can perceive the reality of unity of existence. This results in turning Brindavan, the land of Gopies and Brindavan, into a 'wasteland' where the rivers are running dry, new life is struck dead and the nests of the poor are swept away in the fury of the floods.

'A River' like Eliot's "Wasteland", in portraying decay and decadence, death and destruction, both at the physical and spiritual levels of perception, is a poem of Nature which is viewed in relation with the so called modern man in the present day India that is the ancient land of Krishna and His Gopies and cows.

Ramanujan critically comments on the misperceptions of the contemporary poets who continue to write poems in the traditional mode without taking into cognisance the changes in circumstantial situation and the present day city dwellers' attitude to and treatment of Mother Nature whose fresh growth i.e. creativity is sought to be choked and stifled at the very core of the 'seed' before it can sprout:-

The new poets still quoted the old poets, but no one spoke in verse of the pregnant woman drowned, with perhaps twins in her, kicking at blank walls even before birth.85
Ritualistic observance of myth and tradition as well as of poetic conventions, without seeing the reality in the direct manner of the soul's seeing Mother Nature, will not help. The "new poet" can neither comprehend truth of unity nor feel Sachchidananda at the beat of his own pulse nor can direct the Indian nation to fulfill its destiny on the right path of Truth. Divisions and differences between the city rich on the one hand and the poor and down trodden on the other are clogging the flow of waters of life. The infants, the unborn twins, symbolizing unity and oneness of all in One (Seed) are not allowed to see the light of the day. Darkness and not light, misperception and not direct cognition of truth, exploitation and not service of humanity are the ruberic of the world of the day.

Taking a slightly different view of the poem, if the city of Madurai is taken to symbolize India and the river Makaii the culture and consciousness of the country, the day of floods would stand for the festive days on which alone the ancient religion of Hinuds comes alive but even on such days no poet cares to review the world-view of the ancient poets in the changed situation of the present day conditions of life and reality in this country. And Ramanujan wonders at such
ritualistic observance of tradition which remains much divorced from the present day reality and says that "The new poets still quoted the old poets, but no one spoke/in verse of the pregnant woman/drowned, with perhaps twins in her/kicking at blank walls/even before birth".86

The poet thus raises a voice of protest against injustice and exploitation and against self-complacence of the Indian poets who shut their eyes on reality and blindly take sheltering cover of religion and tradition. The result is that human suffering, fear and darkness are replacing light and bliss in the day-to-day life of the individual as well as society as a whole.

In 'Conventions of Despair' Ramanujan attributes this rise in fear and suffering to man's love of material wealth and bodily comfort at the cost of spiritual enlightenment:-

It's not obsolete yet to live
in this many lived lair
of fears, this flesh.87

Man has yet not succeeded in evolving himself out of "this many lived lair" of fears of the flesh and its sensual snares and demands. Fear emananties from lust and from perception of divisions that impede human evolution from bodily
awareness to spiritual consciousness, freedom, eternity, light and bliss in all existence.

In the poem "Snakes", Ramanujan declares that fear — symbolized in the image of snakes — of death and pain can be overcome through right perception of reality. And for man the (right) way to apprehend reality and experience the joy of existence goes to Nature where in original relationship with Nature man can find freedom from fear in the spiritual consciousness of unity of existence in which state of mind fear has no room:

No, it does not happen
When I walk through the woods
But walking in museums of quartz
Or the aisles of book stacks
Looking at their geometry
Without curves
And the layers of transparency
That make them opaque
Dwelling on the yellower vein
In the yellow amber
On touching a book that has gold
On its spine,
I think of snakes.

Woods, symbolic of the unpolluted world of Nature, grant him freedom from fear while yellow books of 'avidya' of materialistic affairs with 'gold on (its) spine' remind him of snakes and bring him fear. Yellow is the colour associated with gold. As such subject of materialistic wealth makes him think of snakes of fear.
The poet finds freedom from doubt, fear and darkness, neither by going to the books with 'yellow' spines nor by visiting the city of temples and poets. He then seeks his true identity in family relationships. Here too, except feeling a sense of belongingness to his mother no relationship inspires faith, love and confidence in him for reaching an awareness of self - identification. He fails to identify with his wife because the couple did not share their childhood:

Really what keeps us apart at the end of years is unshared childhood.89

'Of the seven crazy aunts',90 uncles, father and grandfather none can open his mind to the reality of life. His tone in "Obituary" of his father is critical:

And he left us a changed mother and more than one annual ritual.91

By implication neither the family relationship nor meaningless observance of custom holds key to the secret of existence. Meaning and purpose of existence remain elusive. It is only through kinship with Nature and its objects like the tiny water insects, birds, trees, animals, rivers flowers
etc., that the poet in his search for self, can trace out its innate relative unity with the Self and can thus discover a profound insight into the reality of all creation. "In 'One More After Reading Homer' he identifies himself with an incurious cat which with its sense for the occult can simultaneously see past and present in a single moment of time.

"Eyes, Ears, Noses and a Thing about Touch" describes sensory response to elements of Nature like Trees, bird cries, lily, flowers, muskcat, crows, brown dog, dew, woods, spiders etc., are juxtaposed against things and features of human kind like man's face, children withbells, mother's voice, urine, wet mouth on dry, clammy hands, women's odours etc. Inanimate objects are not treated as separate from these things of the living phenomena in Nature. In listing a variety of pleasant and unpleasant sensations he implies that the experience of pleasure and pain is not in the thing itself but in the mind of the person who experiences the sensation.

"Poona Train Window" is another poem which describes the experience of physical sensations in response to existence and its continuum in constant movement. In "Time to Stop" as in the 'Striders' the poet points out the inadequacy of perception and cruelty of indifference of man in viewing
existence and its Nature. In "Old Indian Belief", and "As Image for Politics" Ramanujan brings out the inviolable affinities between man's world i.e. human society and the ways of other animate objects of Nature. Group life and order in the world of ants is described to counter point similarities between the world of other things of Nature and socialistic ordering of life in the human world. Water insects in the "Striders" are described metaphorically as seekers carrying on the search for truth like the Indian hermits and 'yogis'. All the above mentioned Nature poems of Ramanujan point out his preference for dealing with the very common and hitherto untreated little objects and insignificant phenomena like the activities and appearances of the water insects, ants, monkeys, fish, spiders, dogs, trees, crows, cows etc. His descriptions of water bugs as prophets and of ants and spiders working and moving in a system reveal his view of teleology of all phenomena in Nature. Water bugs and prophets are moved by the same evolutionary spirit of pursuit of the Ultimate Goal of realization of oneness with the One. Physically, they have different forms and look apart. Spiritually they are all in One. The tree in "Man and Woman in Camera and Out" is symbolic of evolution of the human self
in loving association with Nature. The distorted focusing of lense that projects "half man, half tree/the left above the right" is the symbolic image of the "ardhanarishwara" showing the unity of Purusha and Prakriti. The dark Camera projecting the image of the "ardhanarishwara" in a flash, symbolically repeats One's revelation in the dark Void as viewed by the Vedic seers in revealing moments of the souls flashing light. Since all creation is deemed the dream of the One or 'Maya' or illusion according to the Indian traditional view, the error of the camera as "One image slurs another", projects the so-viewed Reality.

In "On Memory" Ramanujan sees each self in an eternal relationship with the Supreme Self and reverberates the Vedic idea of One in all and all in One or the plurality of the Self manifesting in multiplied forms in Nature:

One face
and those words random thrown
in a tumble of your multiple
as they turn in this days dazzle
this sun-struck house of mirrors.98

The 'Sun-struck house of mirrors' is the universe, especially the human world brought into light by the light of the One whose immanence manifests in its various forms, faces
and names. Human self is the micro cosmic form of the macro-cosmic Self that Ramanujan is in search of. In a search for self-identity, Ramanujan arrives at the realization of inner-sunlike self as the micro form of the Cosmic Self.

Like Ezekiel, Ramanujan too finds the urban landscape "without the tallness of tree or the wideness of a street". The poet's preference for life in Nature is evident. Nature endows the individual self with faculties and compensations as enumerated in "Compensation" to sustain man in his search for roots in the Self's magnitude. From the physical level of the sensory stimuli the poet moves to the spiritual realization of glory and magnitude of the Self. Thus, initially feeling alienated, Ramanujan discovers the Light of the Self by way of self-realization in harmony with Nature in a progressive search of Reality.

Ramanujan lets not his spirit get uprooted from the Indian tradition and culture. Repeated attempts at interpreting reality through (the Vedantic way of) realization of the self, allusions to the Upanishads, Indian culture and way abound in the text of The Striders, Relations and Second
Sight. Always conscious of the paradoxical nature of reality and viewing things in the direct manner like a Vedantist or a modern Western scientist in his immediate environment in the West, Ramanujan looks simultaneously into the past and the immediate present and the universal. Consequently his poems reveal a progressive movement from the physical to the spiritual. For example, his 'Elements of Composition' is an attempt at apprehending the meaning and reality of the self in a dynamic lively relationship with the environment and Nature as both 'Mul' (Physical animation) and 'Amulan Mulan' (Cosmic manifestation of the Self). The self (the macro-cosmic unit) is composed of such elements as a father's seed, his mother's egg, the elements of air, fire, water, chemicals.

After this description of the physical composition of the self, the interpretation of the reality of the self in relationship with Cosmic Self in spiritual and psychological terms follows. This spiritual aspect of the self is composed of love, dreams and that flux of Nature which can be seen "only by moving constantly/the constancy of things". Reality paradoxical — both constancy and flux — can be apprehended as unity in diversity through active effort, physical, intellectual and spiritual action on the flux. All opposites get
reconciled in spiritual action. Ramanujan’s approach to apprehension is all inclusive. His poetry reveals a totality of perception in spiritual, sensuous, as well as absurd experience. Life-consciousness-forms emanate from the Spirit and elements of the Cosmic Self and dissolve back into it to reappear in new forms:

and even as I add,  
I lose, decompose  
into my elements,  
into other names and forms,  
past, and passing, tenses  
without time,  
caterpillar on a leaf, eating,  
being eaten.100

The conclusion is Upanishadic and Aurobindoian. The image of the caterpillar eating and being eaten interprets the Reality in terms of the Taittiya Upanishad (3.105) which interprets the Cosmic Self (Nature) as "I am that food which eats the eater of the food's and in terms of Sri Aurobindoian concept of recycling of the world of desire. It also implies the manifestation of the Absolute Unmanifest. One manifesting as Brahma who created water, fire, air, ether and water. From these elements was created life-consciousness in the form of seeds plants, worms, animals food, and men, and which forms of life-consciousness are constantly changing and renewing them—
selves in a state of evolutionary flux till they completely overcome their imperfections, inertia and desire to remerge with the Cosmic Self (Atman). Therein lies the goal of their salvation from ignorance, evil, pain and suffering. In the epic debate between Savitri and Death, the latter says of men, "His body I made my banquet, his life my food". But this is a false claim and the fact is:-

Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride
The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,
A grey defeat pregnant with Victory,
A whip to lash us towards our deathless state.

As Sri Aurobindo tells, death eats the limbs that long to live in desire. But the real purpose of eating and being eaten according to the Upanishads, and Sri Aurobindo and by Ramanujan, is the reunion of the human self (thriving on the universal tree like a caterpillar) with the Cosmic Self through evolution and movement over the flux towards "Our deathless state". Ramnujan's poetry reveals such progressive movement from the West to the East and from the physical to the Spiritual from Science to Vedanta. Many poems like 'Zoo Gardens Revisited', Prayers to Lord Murugan, poems for Vishnu in 'Hymns for the Drowning' and even 'Chicago Zen', in a way (enunciating

the Buddhist concept of life as an experience amidst a flux or
an ever changing flowing river defying determined concepts and particularities and systems), "Small Scale Reflections on a Great House"; "The Striders", "Looking and Finding", "Water falls in a Bank", "Connect" etc. bring out Ramanujan's world view and poetic vision of the world which to him is in a state of constant flux and change defying easy visionary order except that of the Indian i.e. Vedantic way of seeing Reality. He remains deeply rooted in Indian culture and tradition; ironies of his style tone and comment notwithstanding.

**TREATMENT OF NATURE IN JYANTA MAHAPATRA'S POETRY**

Jyanta Mahapatra's accent seems to be on intellect. Even in moments of realization of unity of things in Nature as manifestation of the Unmanifest One as Brahma (i.e. Purusha and Prakriti) creating different forms of life in an experience of ecstasy or 'Ananda', Mahapatra will not admit that he views Nature like the Vedic seers in the way of the Vedanta. His poetry relates Nature to man. His descriptions of Nature as well as his metaphoricity is a rare blend of myth and reality. The concrete becomes abstract and abstract is concretized. Nature and man are treated together in concrete metaphorical imagery. Thus night fall is described as 'Indian ink
Similarly ripening paddy crop is described as 'bronzed paddy ears'. There are instances of synaesthetic imagery as 'smells flowing like rivers'. Nature is actually seen in terms of human experience. Thus petals of flowers "Open like stiffened muscles of your belief". The trees waving in winds are described as "Those giant trees that fought the winds! like belief". Similarly hills are viewed as 'dazzling adjective, that carved the sunset! In my pain'. Even astral bodies are described in animal terms as in 'the moon running white among the clouds! like a jackal'. The Orion is compared with a spider 'Orion crawls like a spider in the sky'.

Even inanimate objects are described in human terms. For instance a rock has 'tensed muscles' and there is the 'Main street! pounding hugely like heaving heart'.

Mahapatra uses Nature as a metaphor of human condition. It is present throughout his poetry as the poet views the human situation in the context of Oriya landscape:

and yet my existence lies in the stones which carry my footsteps from one day into another down to the infinite distances.

The poet continues to seek his identity in unity
with Oriya landscape and myth :-

It is my own life
that has cornered me beneath the stones
of the temple in ruins in a blaze of sun.114

That is how the poet seeks to relate himself to the
Indian tradition of myth. But this voyage to the discovery of
the self in the Oriya landscape is not a smooth sailing.
Confessions of failures are recurrent :-

I wonder where the day goes,
Even in the bright sun
this was a world I did not know.115

Mahapatra persists in putting the tradition of spiritual
light, as the metaphor of knowledge and truth, to the rigours
of reason. And reason fails him. He cannot transcend the
walls of ignorance on the wings of reason. But he will inter-
pret the physical phenomena like rains and lights in his own
way.

Description of rains punctuates his poetic interpreta-
tion of Reality. Often he attempts to arrive at the real
significance of rains in the creative phenomena of Nature :-

Once again, it has been a day of rain
And I hear the flutter of light feet
On the warm earth, excited wings
loosening from the dark. There is
summer hiding away behind the
hills a haunting dream whose meaning
always escapes me.116
Rain, summer and the hills do bring him to the last edge of darkness when he can see the light of Reality. But he always loses the chance. Even so he continues his search for meaning of things in relation with his own self through logical identification with Nature:

Once again one must sit back and bury the face
On this earth of the forbidding myth
the phallus of the enormous stone.177

The earth is viewed as creatrix of all life. As such, the earth remains at the centre of the poet's cosmic vision. He tries to decipher the meaning of existence by interpreting the unity of the earth and the Sun as viewed in the mythological significance of the Sun Temple at Konark. When the poet envisions the world in the light of this myth of creativity in Nature, he comes to realize the value of love as the creative and sustaining principle of life. This realization leads to a new vision of hope. In the light of traditional myth of love and light as the creative forces of life, the poet can see that if man can envision such a world, he can rid himself of the all pervasive gloom and darkness. If love is recognised as the creative power in the world under the begin influence of the Sun - god, Man can see the beauty that ascends to and descends from the sky in the midst of
clouds and rains. This realization can enable man to evolve his soul to loftier heights of spiritual evolution:

For lofty as they are on their twenty four 
blue spells, my walks along the tremblings 
of the stone seams loftier still.118

In this quest for spiritual light and confidence the poet can achieve a sustaining vision of light and hope. In "The Mountain" the poet strikes an optimistic note of faith and hope in Nature from which man can learn to remake himself:

Each day, 
falling to pieces under the straddling sunlight, 
it gives clear proof that one 
might reconstruct one's life. Rigid, 

yet strangely impotent, 
perhaps it eagerly waits for the world to speak, 
for the mute clock to strike again, 
for a new kind of society to forms from these 
ruins of hate.119

The poet is looking for a clue in Nature to confirm the process of an evolutionary transformation of the whole world. As Vasant A Shahane has put it, 'the poet continues his quest for an essence divine'. As in the lines quoted above, Mahapatra is viewing human life in the context of evolutionary forces of Nature. The rain is treated as a
metaphor of expiation and spiritual purification:

The rain has come like an organised movement like a long tongue of tireless priests that will not fail to lick your palms of guilt and atonement.120

Notwithstanding an undertone of irony implicit in a dig at the greedy priest never tiring of expiating sins of people for the sake of money, the rain here is viewed as a metaphor of the process of purification of all life in Nature. At a deeper level the poet is looking for meaning of things in Nature in human terms. In his view man and matter are thriving together under the magic touch of Nature. He views man as one with the earth on which he lives:-

Sitting on the river bank throwing pebbles into the muddy current, a man becomes the place!121

This quest of identification makes the poet look deeper into reality as a Unity at the source of all creation. In Mahapatra's poems myth yields to meaning when he views Reality in the cosmic context of human situation. In 'Ikon' the image of the linga is imaginatively perceived as a symbol of cosmic creativity:-

What else the face of crowds show? Among them a father stands looking around, like a hill.122
Like Ramanujan's imaginative description of "sun struck house of the world of mirrors", "father" here is the metaphorical image of the Creator manifesting in innumerable faces and forms in Nature. His intuitive mind explores the truth of the inner self in relation with the outer aspects of universal existence. Lepers, animals, beggars, whores, birds, trees, plants, clouds, rivers, temples and human beings all are viewed in the context of cosmic time in which the past, present and the future merge together in flashing perceptions of reality. Sex, creativity, myth, man, Nature, God, temples, landscape, sick and suffering humanity, indeed, everything is taken into account in an all inclusive view of reality. In fact, Mahapatra never glosses over human misery and suffering, poverty, disease, death and dehumanization of modern man 'who bleeds in the middle of night' because in his spiritual ignorance and degeneration he has become a wolf to his fellow beings.

But the poet strives hard to take an integral view of reality. His concern is human predicament. His problem is doubt. His touchstone is reason. He subjects all rites, rituals and myths to the acid test of reason and scientific
logic. He follows his intuitions to find light but always refuses to leave reason and doubt behind. 'A Summer Poem' for instance is a case in point:-

Over the soughing of the sombre wind,
priests chant louder than ever
the mouth of India opens
crocodiles move into deeper waters.
mornings of heated middens
smoke under the sun,
the good wife
lies in my bed
through the long afternoon;
dreaming still unexhausted
by deep roar of funeral prayers.123

The "soughing of the sombre wind" and the "priests chanting louder than ever" show the "mouth of India" open. By implication, India is seen where priests chant 'mantras' and 'crocodiles' hide themselves in mysterious waters and good wives dream unexhausted by the deep roar of funeral prayers. 'Crocodiles' as associated with hypocrisy and exploitation and the mornings of heated middens and funeral prayers are the visual images bringing out the picture of India of Mahapatra's view. Mahapatra will not see any other light in the opening "mouth of India" which image recalls to one's memory the open mouth of Sri Krishna revealing the entire universe to his loving mother Yashoda.
Mahapatra feels the pain of poverty and exploitation of the poor and the miserable of India and reviews this helplessness of human existence in his poems. For instance, the description of the poor father and the helpless daughter who becomes the victim of the protagonist in the poem 'Hunger' is simply heart rending:

The sky fell on me, and a father's exhausted wile. Long and lean, her years were cold as rubber. She opened her wormy legs wide. I felt the hunger there. the other one, the fish slithering, turning inside.

Here not only the poor father and the helpless young girl but the protagonist himself are the victims of 'a father's exhausted wile'. And the father is the Creator. The sky falling on him brings out the poet's grouse with Nature and the 'father' who has entrapped man in such a predicament. Mahapatra blames Nature and God for man's hard predicament and suffering exactly like the protagonist of this poem blaming 'a father's wile' for entrapping him as a fish in a net. Nature as a cosmic force controlling the (inner) self of man is blamed for human follies, greed and exploitation in such poems of Mahapatra. 'Hunger', a neat piece
of free verse, in a detached commentary on human predicament. It questions Nature's order which seems to fail as indicated in the telling metaphor "the sky fell on me". Even the initial conscientious revulsion of the speaker is overcome by the "fish slithering / turning inside". The idea that human nature is still the slave of flesh and materialistic greed i.e. 'avidya' — the basic causes of human suffering, exploitation and injustice is underscored. Mahapatra also looks on things visible in the direct way of the Vedantans approach to reality.

'A Missing Person', for instance, brings out Mahapatra's persistent quest for meaning of existence through direct encounter with reality. In this poem he features a woman who fails to find her own (self) identity or purpose or significance of her own destitute existence:

In the darkened room
a woman
cannot find her reflection in the mirror
waiting as usual
at the edge to sleep.
In her hands she holds
the oil lamp
whose drunken yellow flames
know where her lonely body hides.125

Like the girl in 'Hunger', this woman, waiting in "the darkened room" i.e. the darkened world for her and women
like her who have to sell their bodies to live, 'cannot find her reflection in the mirror'. Whatever identity she is left with is known to the drunken flames of the oil lamp which seems drunk to the sleepy eyes of the woman who having been seen only in the yellow light of the mirror by the drunken eyes is waiting for the same drunken eyes of the sensually hungry clients. This is a poem of distorted and lost identity of man in the darkened world which, totally divorced from Nature, is devoid of any spiritual essence and significance. In such degenerated consciousness one cannot maintain one's identity in relation with the "room" i.e. the cosmic and social world and order. Seen at another level the darkened room may also refer to the dark Void in which the Unmanifest appears in his revealing Light in ecstasy in different elements, forms and names of the world. The woman here cannot recognise her own image i.e. the image of her real inner self reflected in the blurred light of the drunken oil lamp. Her relationship with the cosmic Self is blurred. She has lost herself in the darkened room (world). Only the 'lamp' knows her which (for her) is drunk and yellow flamed. She has been reduced to a mere whore in the world of reality. Neither she nor the
world sees her in any other light of the Spirit. But the poet wants to find out ultimate purpose of such an existence in this darkened and drunken world of blurred light.

In "Grass" Mahapatra accepts the existence of the light of creation in the self - creative process of Nature:

Have I to negotiate it?
Moving slowly, sometimes throwing my great grief across its shoulders, sometimes trailing it at my side,
I watch a little hymn
turning the ground beneath my feet,
a tolerant soil making its own way in the light of the sun.
It is just a mirror
marching away solemnly with me, lurching into an ancestral smell of rot, reminding me
of secrets of my own:
the cracked earth of years, the roots staggering about
an impatient sensuality, bland heads heaving
in the loneliness of unknown winds.
Now I watch something out of the mind
scythe the grass, know that the trees end,
sensing the almost childlike submissiveness;
my hands that tear their familiar tormentors apart waiting for their curse, the scabs of my dark dread. 126

The poem begins with a question. Usually, Mahapatra puts the meaning and purpose of everything to question. Here the question is whether he is supposed to negotiate the meaning and function of grass or Nature on which he often throws
his grief. When Nature helps him he can "watch a little hymn turning the ground beneath my feet". The hymn is the word of self creating Brahma as whose Self - Order - Nature creates and destroys to create afresh its world. This is what has been seen by the Vedic seers in the creative process of Nature. Creative Light of the sun is symbolic of the Light of Self - manifesting Brahma. Nature as the mirror of the Self (reflecting its various forms) becomes the mirror for the poet: "It is just a mirror/marching away solemnly with me lurching/into an ancestral smell of rot, reminding me/of secrets of my own". In these lines Mahapatra wholly identifies himself with Nature as the mirror of the Self which "reminds" him of the cyclical order and of secrets of his own existence. So far, he could not see the truth of existence in Nature because he depended solely on his sensory apparatus. Now he says he can transcend the limitations of the sense mind to recognise Reality in Nature through the eye of the soul, "Now I watch something out of the mind". At longer last, the poet is able to go beyond confining and blocking sensory mind in the light of the guiding soul. He can now realize the submissive gentleness of Nature: 'sensing the almost childlike submissiveness'.
realize the lacuna of the erroneous perceptions of his sense-
mind caught in the grip of doubt and dark dread.

In another poem, entitled "Lost", Mahapatra describes
the partial process of his spiritual enlightenment which
partly evades his vision and remains half lost for his de-
pending on reason to comprehend it. As he does not take a
holistic view of reality, full enlightenment evades him even
though he attains to it momentarily in a state of meditational
trance when he declares; "Here I have learnt to recognise
you at a distance".129

The problem with Mahapatra's way of recognising the
Light of truth is that he wants to see it exclusively at a
distance and outside himself. The Vedantists believe that it
is the intuitive light of the inner self which in dynamic
harmony with the Supreme Light of Cosmic Self can reveal
Divinity in Nature as Manifestation. When the way of reason
failed him, the poet tried the way of spiritual meditation:-

I've wanted to know what lulling silence
can bloom in my hands.130

'Lulling silence' is a metaphorical expression
denoting experience of meditation for discovering (uncovering)
reality like a Vedic seer - poet. In this process of meditation and self discovery the poet completely surrenders his physical self like Prakriti surrendering to the dictates of the Purusha, that as Consciousness within its physical appearance and as Purusha asks this self of his : -

What pain and pleasure your mind can wear through the intrigues at my fingertips. 131

The intrigues of the fingertips are man's complex activities (Karma) in pursuit of the goal of happiness. The same fingertips, as nerve - ends, are experiencing the joy of the discovery of truth in a self - searching process of meditation through ongoing movement of beads of a rosary : -

My hands move on.
Inside the lines on my moving palms,
is it time being sent back to somewhere far behind on the edge of dream?
Is it that
which quietly shuts my eyes? 132

In the meditative movement of the beads of the rosary the poet can intuitively visualize the original process of the creation, the 'Karma' of the Supreme manifesting Himself in ecstasy, "on the edge of dream". The physical eyes are shut when the soul sees the revelation of the manifesting
process of the Ultimate Reality in an experience of super-
Consciousness of truth of existence as Sachchidananda. And
the poet goes on enunciating his transcendental experience:

And outside my hands, where
your body keeps shrinking in space,
the first faith of some child goes wrong
like some defect in a mechanical toy; 133

In the inner light (of self-realization), found in
meditative practice inside the lines of his moving fingers,
the poet wants to visualize Ultimate Reality outside his
hands in the open universe. When the child emerges from the
realm of this inner light and enters the open world, the
first faith gradually goes wrong. In the same way the poet
loses the balance of unity or oneness in which spiritual
realization can be sustained only by harmonizing the inner
self with the light of the cosmic Self. But the poet, like
a growing child, fails to sustain the enlightening realization
of unity of all existence. Like a child fascinated by the
illusory flashes of the material world, he starts putting his
own spiritual realization to question:

Yet what does it lead to?
To what fateful encounter? 134

This questioning emanates from the overbearing (Maya's)
mind - equipment which makes the poet take a surface view of reality. And as soon as he resorts to analytical and questioning reason he loses grip on the meaning of reality. The ultimate Goal, "the fateful encounter" is probed but not retained or realized for good. Flashing Light is lost:—

Like a misplaced watch, this half-light.
Where was I when I lost it? 135

Like a misplaced watch, symbol of (changing) time, even the half light, impaired by the impeding reason and carried by the current of overbearing time is lost. Neither tradition (history) nor materialistic progress has helped him (and like him man) retain the divine Consciousness which he had inherited as a child (self) of the Divine 'Atman', the Unmanifest Absolute One. The poet loses his grip on the meaning of Reality which shrinks in its significance and scope with the passage of time as the poet gets more and more involved in the sensuous snare and materialistic pursuits in his narrowing vision of reality. Divine Light to Mahapatra's mind comes off and on only in flashes. Eternal Bliss (Ananda) and enlightenment remain beyond his reach. At the most, he has
found only half the light through his poetic search and
endeavour. However, in his search for the meaning and pur-
pose of Reality he is with Sri Aurobindo and the Vedantists,
and in meditating on Truth he is 'indeed' with the tradition
of Sri Aurobindo and other Indian Rishis and spiritualists
of yore.

Mahapatra, infact, approaches reality in the Vedantic
way but cannot spiritually achieve a holistic vision since
the world is too much with him. He endeavours to transcend
the limits of the human mind in the Vedantic way but can
neither prolong his experience of his realization of truth nor
ascend the ladder of spiritual truth beyond the limits of his
sense - mind - intellect equipment or the sensory apparatus
of reality. From the description of the Oriya landscape, he
moves forward to the realms of Ultimate Reality but often
stops short of sustaining its glimpses in spite of all his
inclinations of taking an integral view of man and Nature
and his endeavoured conscious movement from the physical to
the spiritual in his poetry.

It will now be seen how Sri Aurobindo treats Nature
and views Ultimate Reality in his poetry.
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   7. Vide (VI 58,1).
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