

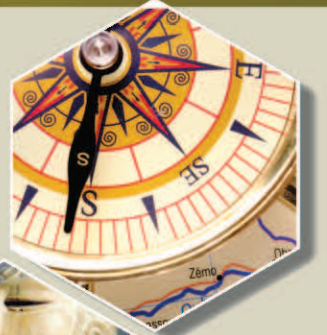
Indian Writing in English



Institute of Open and Distance Education

Faculty of Arts

Indian Writing in English



2MAENG5



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DR. C.V. RAMAN UNIVERSITY

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Aurobindo

- (1) Lay stretched immobile upon Silence' Marge.
Almost one felt, Opaque, impenetrable,
In the sombre symbol of her eye less muse
The abysm of the unbodied infinite,
A fathomless zero occupied the world.
A power of fallen boundless self awake
Between the first and the last nothingness,
Recalling the tenebrous womb from which It came,
Turned from the insoluble mystery of Birth
And the tardy process of Mortality
And Longed to reach its end invacant Nought.

Reference : These opening lines are taken from a great epic, a long but interesting poem 'Savitri' Book I, Canto I, composed by a great and famous Indian poet Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

Context: The stanza has been written in a philosophical manner. Sri Aurobindo has taken the theme of these opening lines from a great religious epic of the Hindus- 'The Mahabharata'. These mystic lines describe the state of the universe when it was not in existence. This state was very strange and mystic because there was an endless darkness everywhere. There was nothing-no creatures, no plants, no hills, mountains, rivers and not even the earth.

Explanation: The stanza is full of mysticism. The poet describes in these lines the most strange state of the universe. He says there was a time when there was no creation of any kind. There was not even the universe. The stanza shows the poet's incredible power of imagination-he successfully describes the unimaginable state of pre-universe. There was night which had no end. So there was the regime of darkness everywhere. There was no voice and no sound. It was the state of Pre-Brahmabehala when even the gods were not awake. It was a state of nothingness. There was a power of boundless self awake. There was nothingness everywhere. The poet says that this inexistence has taken birth from the womb of tenebrous and turned into a mystery of Birth and Death; This mystery of Birth and Death, could not be solved by anyone.

Critical Notes: (1) In this stanza, the poet has used very simple words but thoughts expressed are mystic. (2) The stanza shows his high imagination power. (3) The stanza shows that influence of Indian philosophy of the Vedas, especially the 'Rigveda'.

- (2) Cradled the cosmic drowse of ignorant Force
Whose moved creative slumber kindled the Suns
And carries our lives in its somnambulist whirl.
Athwart the vain enormous trance of space,
Its formless stupor without mind or life,
A shadow spinning through a soulless void,
Thrown back once more into unthinking dreams,
Earth Which abandoned in the hallow gulfs
Forgetful of her spirit and her fate.
The impassive skies were neutral, empty, still.
Then something in the inscrutable darkness stirred.

Reference: These beautiful and mystic lines have been taken from a great epic (a long poem) 'Savitri' Book I, Canto I, composed by a great poet Sri Aurobindo, who was a famous Indian modern philosopher also.

Context : In this stanza the poet describes thoughts and feelings in a philosophical manner. In these lines his imagination became wider. He describes the force of ignorance very beautifully. He says that the whole universe was in the deep slumber of ignorance. He describes the birth of Earth very beautifully with the strength of his pictorial quality.

Explanation : In these lines poet explains his feelings about universal ignorance and the state of non-existence and also the birth of earth in the form of a shadow. He says that the whole universe was in deep slumber of ignorance. At that time space had no shape, no mind and not even life. It was fully meaningless. A shadow became in-existence. It was spinning in void which was completely soulless. The void was soundless. It had no thought. The earth, come into existence and began to move in the hallow gulf due to her forgetfulness of her spirit and fate. The skies were still completely empty and without any voice or sound. The birth of earth was both a glorious and a mysterious event.

Critical Notes: (1) The poet has personified the earth by saying-"Forgetful of her spirit and her fate." (2) The thoughts described in this stanza seem to be inspired by the Indian philosophy of life. (3) We find this stanza full of mystic and spiritual elements. (4) The stanza shows very clearly the pictorial quality of Sri Aurobindo.

- (3) Almost that day the epiphany was disclosed

Of which our thoughts and hopes are signal flares
A lonely splendour from the invisible goal
Almost was flung on the opaque Inane.
Once more a tread perturbed the vacant vasts.
Infinity's centre, a face of rapturous calm
Paned the eternal lids that open heaven,
A form from far beautitudes seemed to near.
Ambassadors twixt eternity and change;
The omniscient Goddess leaned across the breadths
That wrap the fated Journeyings of the stars
And saw the spaces ready for her feet.

Reference: These beautiful and spiritual lines have been taken from a great epic 'Savitri' Book I, Canto I, composed by a famous and immortal modern Indian poet Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. He was a great philosopher also.

Context: In these lines the poet gives some indications for hope in the infinite universal darkness in the form of a message of light given by the Goddess of dawn. Aurobindo describes very beautifully both states before and after coming of the Goddess of Dawn.

Explanation: Here the poet says that the Goddess of Dawn appeared from the divinity. She gave the message of light. She is the supreme goddess of light and love. She gave the message of supernatural. The message was glorious, beautiful and delightful for the whole world and the universe forever. The poet says that she came from the heaven. As she came the deep endless darkness began to disappear. The light penetrated into the deep and boundless darkness of night. The poet describes our feelings, thoughts and hopes as the signals of the glorious divine part. A spiritual ray of glorious light descended to the earth from the beyond. It dispelled the thick and endless darkness and obscurity. The foot-steps of the Goddess of Dawn came to the earth and the sound of her foot-steps broke the passivity and silence of the void. The foot-steps also drove out the deep darkness from the world. Thus it made the earth free, from the unpenetrable darkness, silence and obscurity. The infinite in itself is shapeless and formless. It is very strange that it has neither its centre nor a circle. Then the infinite thought to manifest itself and thus it began to have its form, shape and centre. The visit of the Goddess of Dawn was grand and divine as it had colourful and pious symbols. With the coming of the divine Goddess of Dawn the darkness, deep silence of obscurity, vanished, and the whole earth and the universe was enlightened.

Critical Notes : (1) The stanza is rich in beautiful, spiritual and supernatural element. (2) The poet has used very difficult and unfamiliar words. So the stanza has demerit of ambiguity. (3) The stanza has mysticism that springs from spirituality. (4) We find the beautiful pictorial quality that has made the stanza interesting.

(4) A long lone line of hasitating hue
 Like a vague smile tempting a desert heart
 Troubled the far rim of far life's obscure sleep
 Arrived from the other side of boundlessness
 An eye of deity peered through the dumb deeps,
 A scout in a reconaissance from the sun,
 It seemed amid a heavy cosmic rest,
 The torpor of a sick and weary world,
 To seek for a spirit sole and desolate
 Too fallen to recollect forgotten bliss.

Reference : This stanza has been taken from a wonderful epic and a sweet poem 'Savitri' Book I, Canto I, composed by an immortal and a modern philosopher poet of India Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

Context: In this stanza Sri Aurobindo Ghose presents his positive thoughts by giving some symbols about a new change which would, come soon in the world. This change brought some hope and held out the promise for boundless evolution in the whole universe. He presents this change in the form of Savitri.

Explanation: In these lines the poet gives some description of a new change which would come soon in the world. The poet says that when the sick and weary world was in its dormant state an eye of deity peered through the motionless, and endless depth of darkness. A newly born stir in the void attracted the attention of the universal mother who was unaware of this state of this newly born baby in the form of 'Savitri'. The whole universe was promised of boundless evolution by this deity eye (Savitri). The coming of the first ray of light was very hope-giving and also promising. It gave a bright hope and promise of life consciousness to the world.

It also filled the world with perfect awakening of the Dawn. The infant wants began to drive away the endless darkness of her mother's heart and also to enlighten it. The presence of a neglected traveller of light was felt by awakening of the world. It was an unexpected ray of hope which spread delight everywhere. As the ray of light touched the life which was lying in an endless obscure slumber felt a resurrection.

The poet says that the arrival of Savitri in the world was not an ordinary event. It was a grand and significant event because Savitri was

not an ordinary spirit. She was a divine part of the universe. So her birth in the world is an event of a grand delight like a festival.

Critical Notes: (1) The stanza is full of hope. It shows the positive attitude of the poet. (2) The poet personifies the world very beautifully by saying- "The torpor of a sick and weary world." (3) The stanza shows his mystic and spiritual quality very clearly. (4) The poet has made the beautiful use of the figure of speech alliteration-"long lone line, dumb deeps, weary world."

(5) Amid the Night's forlorn indifference
 As if solicited in an alien world
 With timid and hazardous instinctive grace
 Orphaned and driven out to seek a home
 An errant marvel with no place to live
 Into a far-off nook of heaven there came
 A slow miraculous gesture's dim appeal
 The persistent thrill of a transfiguring touch
 Persuaded the inert black quietude
 And beauty and wonder disturbed the fields of God.

Reference: These beautiful, highly imaginative lines have been taken from a long and excellent epic or long poem 'Savitri' (Book I, Canto I) composed by a famous Indian modern poet Sri Aurobindo Ghose.

Context: In these beautiful lines the poet describes a special kind of hope that emerged from the indifferent and lonely dark night.

Explanation: The poet has made very beautiful description of a very special and strange hope that left its abode to venture to enter a new world. The state of the hope was very strange because on one hand it was hesitating and fearing to leave its home and on the other hand it was full of courage to enter the world which was strange and unfamiliar world. It was orphan and neglected, unfortunately it was driven out from its home in the heaven. The poor hope was now homeless and helpless. It did not know where to go and where and how to find a home for itself. It is the continuous thrill of this transfiguring touch of the super-conscious that persuaded the world which was unwilling and resistant, to show infinite beauty, wonder, harmony, love and joy.

The poor hope showed its boldness by struggling to survive in the world which was quite strange and unfamiliar to it. By its arrival on the earth it stirred the lonely indifference of the motionless night.

Critical Notes: (1) By the use of personification the poet has tried to make the stanza interesting and beautiful. (2) The stanza is very

rich in imagination. (3) The reader finds the stanza picturesque. (4) The poet has made very beautiful use of pathos, that moves the reader's heart.

Tagore

(6) "Thou fresh life."

Reference to its context: These lines are from the song 'Thou Hast Made me Endless' by Rabindranath Tagore.

Here the poet describes God's infinite kindness in investing the poet with immortality with utmost devotion and humility.

Explanation: In these lines the Nobel Prize winner Sh. R.N. Tagore says that he prostrates before God with devotion and humility and he says that it is God's kindness that he has made the mortal human being immortal. Man is mortal and the poet expresses this mortality of human being by comparing himself to a weak, and easily breakable vessel. But God's grace and pleasure fill this vessel again and again, after it is emptied i.e. God very kindly renews life after death. The poet is expressing his faith in the Hindu dogma of the Transmigration of soul which declares that the human body perishes at the time of death but human soul gets a new body because soul is immortal like its Creator. God's grace, Infiniteness make the poet humble and grateful to his Maker.

Comment : Here we see that the stanza is marked by its spirit of humility and devotion. We find simplicity and honesty of expression. We find no poetic jugglery or Pindaric here. The atmosphere is serene and pure as the heart and soul of a devotee.

(7) "At the immortal ineffable."

Reference to its context : This stanza has been taken from 'Gitanjali' song 'Thou Hast Made Me Endless' composed by Sh. R.N. Tagore.

Here the poet says that he is very happy at his maker's magnanimity in giving immortality to the human soul and in choosing the poet to be the instrument of disseminating his message in the devotional melodious songs of the poet.

Explanation : In this stanza we see that it is an extension and elaboration of the thought and emotion expressed in the opening verse of this song-"Thou Hast Made Me Endless, such is thy pleasure." The poet is so overwhelmed with the emotion of gratitude towards his maker that he tells with humility that the human soul is immortal like God, because it is a part of the Infinite-immortal God who renews life again and again. Continuing the same argument the poet says that when he approaches his Master after annihilating his ego, he also partakes of his

Master's immortality and the physical hindrance of human form becomes meaningless and he experiences joy which cannot be expressed in words. The poet is very grateful to god for this.

God's touch is the divine inspiration of the poet. When the poet is thus divinely inspired, his physical existence presents no problems in his communion with his Master and in the experience of bliss.

Comment: The poet sings of ecstasy on experiencing the mystic union with God. The poet like a true mystic is unhindered by his physical bondage. The divine inspiration enables him to rise above the wordly bondages and considerations. The poet annihilates his ego and approaches God in utter humility and becomes one with him. His ecstasy is beyond words.

(8) "Leave all in regret."

Reference to its context: This stanza has been taken from 'Gitanjali' song "O Fool, To Try to Carry Thyself" composed by Sh. R.N. Tagore, the Nobel Prize winner.

Here the poet calls such a man a beggar who does not rely on God. Such endeavours are foolish because these don't recognise the magnanimity of God.

Explanation: In this stanza the poet exhorts us to have absolute faith in the charity and magnanimity of God. God is omniscient and so he knows everything about our needs and problems. God is omnipotent and so he is capable of solving our problems and needs. The poet tells that if we do this in faith and sincerity, we shall never have any occasion to regret our decision of entrusting our needs and problems to God, who is capable of doing everything.

(9) "The light rushes on."

Reference to its context : This stanza has been taken from 'Gitanjali' Song 'I know not how Thou Singest' Composed by Nobel Prize winner Sh. R.N. Tagore. Here the poet speaks about God's 'Leela'.

Explanation : Here the poet invokes the image of a musician and compares God to the Musician God. The Master Muscian creates the Supreme Symphony which pervades the universe and sustains God's creations. The divine music played by the Master Musician manifests itself in various forms and ways to create, pervade and sustain the universe. The divine music manifests itself as the light, which illuminates the various objects of universe, and gives life to all animate of creatures. Still next the music manifests itself as the water which flows despite all sorts of impediments and helps in sustaining life. The light, the air and the water are the essentials of life. The poet says that the universe is the creation of God. It is like the Supreme symphony of the Master Musician. The

symphony, which manifests itself in many ways, is the 'Maya' or 'Leela' or God.

Comments : The poet invokes the image of a musician. The allusion is clearly to Krishna, the flute player. The poet has touched the religious and devotional view of his readers by selecting the image. The divine music pervades everywhere; creates and sustains everything. God's Maya is all around and is beyond the comprehension of an insignificant person like the poet.

(10) "When thou to my eyes."

Context. These lines constitute the opening of the 'Gitanjali' song "When Thou Commandest Me", composed by the great Indian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. The poet rejoices his good fortune in getting the honour of divine inspiration in the true spirit of humility and gratitude.

Explanation. The poet is besides himself with joy on being chosen for the singular honour of divine inspiration and these verses express the poet's gratitude and joy with befitting humility. The poet says that he sings only with divine inspiration and so when he gets divine inspiration to sing he feels ecstatic. His ecstasy is so great that he feels that his heart cannot accommodate his joy and gratitude and it would burst. In absolute gratitude and humility the poet looks towards his Creator and his eyes are filled with tears at so much honour that his Creator has bestowed upon him.

Comment. The poet feels pride in being chosen for divine inspiration. But the pride of the poet is his emotion of joy, honour, gratitude and humility. There is no touch of arrogance in it. He approaches his Lord in the spirit:

"त्वदीय वस्तु गोविन्दम् तुम्यमेव समर्पयामि"

The poet sings when his Master orders him (through divine inspiration) to sing. So in the true fashion of the Hindu Bhakti-poets, he chooses to sing the praises of his God. He sings of God's greatness, benevolence, love and mercy and of his incompetence, insignificance and humility. The choice of the image of bird for his soul is very appropriate.

(11) "Drunk with my lord."

Context. This stanza occurs at the conclusion of the song, "When Thou Commandest Me" of the 'Gitanjali' the offerings of Rabindranath Tagore, who won the most prestigious international award, Nobel prize for Literature on this anthology in 1913. The poet feels humble, privileged and honoured when his Creator commands him to sing. The Poet says that he can sing only under divine inspiration and so he utilizes

his divine talent in singing poems in the honour of his Master. In the present stanza, the poet describes the state of his mind and heart.

Explanation. Describing the state of his mind and heart the poet tells that the privilege of divine inspiration has fuddled his brains with joy and honour. In that state the poet forgets his true identity and like a drunk person starts behaving in an abnormal manner and calls his Master his friend, his equal. As a matter of fact the poet is so possessed of love, honour and gratitude for God that he attains to the supreme state of mystic experiences and annihilating his ego, his self, he merges his soul into the supreme soul of God. The poet's humility is his greatest asset.

Comment. The entire song, this stanza included, is marked by the serenity and sanctity of a hymn as it records the genuine feelings of happiness, honour and gratitude of the poet towards his master. The poet's humility is truly disarming. The choice of the image of a drunkard is a stroke of genius-how else could the poet explain away his blunder (which actual was the highest point of his mystic experience, the merging his insignificant soul in the supreme soul of his Lord) of treating his Lord as his equal, as his friend. The merger has also been very ingeniously described by a single word "friend". Herein lies the greatness and distinction of Rabindranath Tagore as a Mystic poet.

(12) "Life of my limbs."

Context. The present passage is the opening stanza of the "GITANJALI" song, "Life Of My Life", composed by that great poet Rabindranath Tagore. All "Gitanjali" songs are in Bangla. They have been translated into English by the poet himself. The songs are devotional in letter and spirit. The poet is indebted to his Creator for his life and in order to express his gratitude, he resolves to keep his body pure for his Master.

Explanation. The poet is in a devotional mood. He tells God, his Creator, that in reality, He is the life of the poet. The poet owes his existence to the Creator and so he is indebted and grateful. Since the poet is favoured by God he promises to God that he will continuously make efforts to keep his body, mind, heart and soul pure from all the contaminating thoughts and feelings and deeds. The poet's resolve to keep his body pure is a consequence of his consciousness of the divine touch upon him-his body and soul. This is poet's humble endeavour to acknowledge divine benevolence.

Comment. The song, "Life of my Life", is clearly devotional. In the opening stanza the poet, in all humility and gratitude, acknowledges the divine magnanimity of bestowing upon the poet the gift of life. The poet while acknowledging the divine pleasure promises to make an effort

to repay the divine debt by keeping his body, mind, heart and soul pure for his Creator. The poet's sincerity and resolve are evident.

(13) "I shall my mind."

Context. This stanza occur in the "Gitanjali" song. "Life Of My Life", composed by the Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore who won the prestigious internationally renowned award for Literature in the year 1913. The "Gitanjali" is originally in Bangla. The poet in the preceding stanza has stated that he owes his life and existence to his Creator. As a tribute to his Lord for his favour and benevolence the poet has promised to constantly endeavour to keep his body pure from the contaminating and corrupting influences of evil thoughts and sinful feelings. He is aware that all his thoughts, feelings and actions are inspired and guided by divine energy.

Explanation. In the present song, "LIFE OF MY LIFE", the poet acknowledges that he owes his life and existence to the magnanimity of his creator. The poet makes certain promises as a mark of respect and gratitude to God for favouring him with divine blessings. God is purity and the poet, therefore, expresses his resolve to constantly endeavour to keep his mind free and pure from all evil thoughts and untruths because God is Truth, Purity and Love. The poet wishes to emphasise that only God is truth so his mind should entertain the thoughts of God to make it worthy of his Creator. It is divine inspiration which has enlightened the poet.

Comment. The literal meaning of "Gitanjali" is "song-offerings". The songs of the anthology, the "Gitanjali" are truly devotional songs offered at the feet of the poet's Creator, God. The poet is conscious of his singularly good fortune of receiving divine inspiration to sing. To show his gratitude the poet utilizes his talents in singing hymns of praise to his Lord. The poet's gratefulness, his humility, his adoration are very much in evidence in this stanza also.

(14) "I ask finish afterwards."

Context. The song, "I Ask For A Moment's Indulgence" occurs in the "Gitanjali", the anthology of devotional songs by Rabindranath Tagore. The "Gitanjali" is originally in Bangla and its songs were rendered into English mostly by the poet himself for the benefit of his English literary friends. The devotional poetry so impressed the Western readers that the poet won an immediate recognition. The "Gitanjali" was awarded the most prestigious international award, the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. The present stanza is the opening one of the song.

Explanation .The song, "I Ask For A Moment's Indulgence" is, like other songs of the "Gitanjali", a devotional song. But it is a song with a difference. The difference of the distinctive feature of this song has been stated in this stanza. The poet yearns for communion with his

creator. At the very outset the poet beseeches his Lord "For a moment's indulgence". The poet wishes the favour be granted, be it for a very short duration only. The poet wishes to be in his Master's company i.e., he seeks divine inspiration. But it is significant to note that the poet is not an escapist. He does not wish to abdicate his worldly duties and commitments. He promises to his Lord that he will discharge all his worldly duties after he enjoys his Creator's favour.

(15) "It may go by."

Context. This stanza has been selected from the "Gitanjali" song "Pluck This Little Flower." It is a beautiful song of devotion in which the poet's intense desire to be chosen in the service of his creator has been expressed with sincerity. Since the poet has likened himself to a flower, which has a very short span of life, he entreats God to accept him for his worship before it withers and drops into the dust.

Explanation. The poet, Rabindranath Tagore, who has likened himself to a flower, tells his Creator that he is very well aware of his many blemishes which may render him unworthy of acceptance in the service of God as an ordinary and insignificant flower which does not have attractive colours and pleasant fragrance is not likely to be worthy if the garland which is offered in worship to God. Despite these blemishes the poet entreats God to honour him by giving him the pain of plucking the flower (i.e., choosing the poet for his worship and service) from the branch on which it grows. The poet prays his Creator not to delay lest he should wither like the flower die before being offered, the withered flowers are not offered to God. The poet is impetuous because he is not sure of his life and is apprehensive that his life may come to a close i.e., like the flower wither and be found unworthy of offering when the time of worship comes. Here the emphasis is on the uncertainty and shortness of life of a human being.

Comment. The choice of image of a flower for the poet, who is impatient to be accepted as an offering to God, the poet's Creator, is very apt. The flowers are the normal offerings in the worship of God. Similarly, the flowers have a very short span of life; they soon wither after blooming. The human beings have also a very uncertain life-span. The poet's impetuosity for the honour of being offered in worship to his creator is explained by the fact of the flowers withering soon after blooming as the withered flowers are unworthy for offering to God.

(16) "Though its is time."

Context. This is the last stanza of the song "Pluck This Little Flower" of the "Gitanjali", the anthology of devotional songs composed originally in Bangla and later rendered into English mostly by the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, himself. When first published the novelty, sincerity and intensity of the oriental devotional poetry created such a sensation

that the anthology was an instant success and won for the poet the most prestigious international award, the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1913. In this poem the poet entreats his Creator to accept him in his service despite the poet's many blemishes which render him unworthy for this. The poet's intense desire is sincere and full of humility.

Explanation. Here in this passage while the poet continues his entreaty for acceptance into the service and worship of his Creator, he shifts the emphasis from the argument of the shortness and uncertainty of his life to that of his worthiness for acceptance. The poet makes no bones about his virtusosity. He very honestly submits that he is like that flower which has no special attributes of attractive colours and pleasant fragrance to be chosen for being offered in the worship of God. The poet is aware and conscious of his many shortcomings and blemishes which render him unworthy for acceptance in the service of his creator. But his urge and yearning for communion with his Lord is so intense that he prays his Creator to accept him before it is too late as there is no certainty of his life. So the poet entreats his Lord to grant him the honour of worshipping and serving his creator despite his innumerable blemishes and shortcomings.

Comment. The poet has chosen flower as the image for himself. This is not a mere embellishment or a literary flower. It is justified on many counts. First the fresh blown flowers are employed universally as offerings to God. Like human life, the life-span of a flower is also very short. The flowers wither soon after blooming and this aspect justifies the poet's impetuosity for early-acceptance lest the flower withers or the time of worship passes. In order to convey the fact of his many shortcomings and blemishes, which may render the poet unworthy for acceptance into his creator's worship and service, the poet speaks about the flower which does not have beautiful colours and pleasant fragrance and, as such, may not make it an automatic choice for God's worship. Thus we find that the poet conveys his intense desire to be accepted in his Lord's worship successfully.

(17) "My song thy whispers."

Context. The poet Rabindranath Tagore's, the 'Gitanjali' is an anthology of devotional songs. The entire 'Gitanjali' has been translated into English mostly by the poet himself (from the original bangla). The present stanza has been selected from the song, "My Song Has Put Off Her Adornments." In this song the poet stresses the point that God can be realized through simplicity and sincerity only.

Explanation. Here the poet tells his Lord that he is aware that God can be met through simplicity and sincerity. For this reason the poet says that he has endeavored to make his song as simple as possible. He has, therefore, divested his song of all poetic flourishes of figurative

language and involved thought. The poetic embellishments damage the content because the emphasis shifts from the content to the form. In order to make his point clear the poet says that as the dress and ornaments of the bride spoil the pleasure of perfect union with the beloved/ her husband similarly the poetical embellishments spoil the purpose of the song. The poetical flourishes are like jingling ornaments which render the intimate talk in whispers inaudible and thus spoil the pleasure of the union. It is for this reason that the poet's song has no pride of dress and decoration. The poet's song has no vanity or pride. It is simple and it is humble. Beautiful dress and costly ornaments are manifestations of the wearer's vanity and pride.

Comment. To stress and drive the point home that humility and simplicity are the only conditions to achieve the purpose of meeting the Creator, God, the poet has chosen a very effective image, of the union of the bride with her beloved, her husband. The adornments of the song are poetic devices employed to embellish the poem but these shift the emphasis from the content to the form. Similarly, the ornaments and costly dress shift the emphasis from the true love between the bride and her husband to the display. What is needed between the bride and her lord is true love, sincerity and the desire to be one and not the pride and vanity of dress and ornaments. As dress and ornaments are impediments in the achievement of perfect love so vanity and pride are obstacles in meeting God. Simplicity and straightness of feeling and conduct are necessary for achieving perfect love.

(18) "My poet's with music."

Context. The 'Gitanjali' of Rabindranath Tagore is an anthology of devotional songs. Originally the songs are composed in Bangla. But for the benefit of his English friends and admirers Rabindranath himself translated most of the songs into English. The publication of the English version created a sensation in the literary circles of the English speaking world. The novelty and intensity of feeling impressed one and all with the result that the 'Gitanjali' won for the poet the most prestigious international award, the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. The present stanza has been selected from the 'Gitanjali' song "My Song Has Put Off Here Adornments." In the preceding stanza the poet has staked that he has divested his song of all poetic rhetoric and embellishments so that the song may be acceptable to the Lord, his creator, who loves simplicity and sincerity.

Explanation. The poet says that the fact of being a poet has made him vain. But when he approaches his Creator all his pride of being talented and superior to others vanishes and he is filled with remorse and shame for being proud. This ennobling realization comes to the poet when he contemplates upon his Lord. He realizes that his Creator is the greatest and most perfect poet and so this pride of the poet is

meaningless. The poet expresses his gratitude for granting this wisdom. The poet further prays his Lord to give him wisdom, strength and ability to make his life simple i.e., devoid of all feelings of vanity. The poet wishes to be simple and humble because he knows that God loves simplicity, purity and sincerity. Lord Krishna plays his divine music on a flute which is made of humble reed and which is straight-this enlightens the poet about his Lord and his wish.

Comment. The poet expresses his humility and gratitude for being enlightened about the way he should approach his Lord. The poet sheds his vanity and feels ashamed for being vain. He learns his lesson from the contemplation of God. The choice of the flute of reed to buttress his argument for the need of simplicity, humility and sincerity is really very apt and effective. The reed is straight, it is humble and simple and the flute made by it is used by Lord Krishna to play his divine music which thrills and enlightens the soul.

(19) **"Pride can and lost."**

Context. This stanza occurs in the "Gitanjali" song "Here Is Thy Footstool" composed by the great poet, Rabindranath Tagore who won the most prestigious and internationally renowned Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. In this song the poet stresses that God lives among the poorest, the downtrodden, suffering humanity and He loves simplicity. Those who ignore the unfortunate and the deprived can never hope to realize God.

Explanation-The poet tells that God lives among the poorest, the most unfortunate, deprived and suffering people. He cannot be distinguished from these among whom he moves about. The rich and hypocrites who care more for the outward pomp and show and less for the spirit, those who are proud of their wealth and possessions can never realize God because they seek Him in magnificent structures called temples, mosques and churches. So these people who believe in the distinctions of the rich and poor, high and low can never reach God because their pride, their unity is an impediment.

Comment-There are no literary flourishes here. The stanza is marked with simplicity and sincerity of statement. The only device is the repetition of "the poorest", and lowliest", "and lost" but this too has been blended with the statement to appear normal and almost inevitable."

APJ Abdul Kalam

(20) **My father could convey complex spiritual concepts in very simple, down to earth Tamil. He once told me, "In his own time, in his own place, in what he really is, and in the stage he has reached-Good or bad-every human being is a specific element**

within the whole of the manifest divine Being. So why be afraid of difficulties, sufferings and problems? When troubles come try to understand the relevance of your sufferings. Adversity always presents opportunities for introspection.

Reference: The following lines have been referred by Mr. Arun Tiwari in his book 'Wings of Fire' by Abdul Kalam.

Context: It has been referred in these lines that Arun Tiwari was talking about the father of Mr. Abdul Kalam.

Explanation: In these lines, Mr. Abdul Kalam was talking about his father's spirituality. Mr. Kalam was very much impressed with his father. Because his father could convey the complex spiritual concepts in very simple ways. He told him, "In his own time, in his own place, in what he really is, and in the stage he has reached, Good or Bad, every human being is a specific element within the whole of the manifest divine being. His father told, so why be afraid of difficulties, sufferings and lot of problems why? He also told, when troubles comes in your life, try to understand the relevance of your sufferings and solve them. Because adversity always presents opportunities for introspection.

(21) **Every child is born, with some inherited characteristics, into a specific socio-economic and emotional environment, and trained in certain ways by figures of authority. I inherited honesty and self-discipline from my father: from my mother, I inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness and so did my three brothers and sister. But it was the time I spent with Jallaluddin and Samsuddin that perhaps contributed most to the uniqueness of my childhood and made all the difference in my later life. The unschooled wisdom of Jallaluddin and Samsuddin was so intuitive and responsive to non-verbal messages, that I can unhesitatingly attribute my subsequently manifested creativity to their company in my childhood.**

Reference: The above lines have been referred by the book 'Wings of Fire' by Abdul Kalam, which is written by Mr. Arun Tiwari.

Context: In the above lines Mr. Abdul Kalam was told about his father, mother, brother and sisters.

Explanation: In these lines Abdul Kalam has told about the some extra ordinary characteristics of the every child. Extra ordinary characteristics comes from the environmental effects or circumstances. Mr. Kalam told, he was learned honesty and self discipline from his father and his mother. He told, "I inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness with my father, mother and so did my three brother and sister." He also told about the contribution of Jallaluddin and Samsuddin in the uniqueness in my childhood and all the difference in my later life. The

unschooled wisdom of Jallaluddin and Samsuddin was so intuitive and responsive to non verbal message, that I can unhesitatingly attribute my subsequently manifested creativity to their company in my childhood.

(22) **One day, he invited me to his home for a meal. His wife was horrified at the idea of a Muslim boy being invited to dine in her ritually pure kitchen. She refused to serve me in her kitchen. Sivasubramania Iyer was not perturbed, nor did he get angry with his wife, but instead, served me with his own hands and sat down beside me to eat his meal. His wife watched us from behind the kitchen door. I wondered whether she had observed any difference in the way I ate rice, drank water or cleaned the floor after the meal. When I was leaving his house, Sivasubramania Iyer invited me to join him for dinner again the next weekend. Observing my hesitation, he told me not to get upset, saying, "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted." When I visited his house the next week. Sivasubramania Iyer's wife took me inside her kitchen and served me food with her own hands.**

Reference: The above lines have been referred by the book 'Wings of Fire' by Abdul Kalam, which is written by Mr. Arun Tiwari.

Context: In these lines Mr. Abdul Kalam was told about his science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer's kindness and love.

Explanation: Sivasubramania Iyer was a science teacher of Mr. Abdul Kalam. One day he invited him (Mr. Kalam) to his home for a meal. The wife of his teacher was horrified at the idea of a muslim boy being invited to meal in her ritually pure kitchen. And she refused to serve me a meal. But Mr. Iyer was not perturbed, nor did he get angry with his wife. But instead served him with his own hands and also sat down beside me to eat his food. His wife watched all from behind the kitchen door. Mr. Kalam was ate rice, drank water or cleaned the floor after the meal. Iyer Sir invited him for dinner again the next weekend. When he observing my hesitation, he told me not to get upset. And saying, "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted;" When Mr. Abdul Kalam visited his house (Iyer's house) the next week-Iyer sir's wife took me inside her kitchen and served me food with her own hands.

(23) **Dr. Brahm Prakash helped me endure this difficult period. In practice, Dr. Brahm Prakash employed the front-line damage control principle; "Just get the fellow home alive. He'll recover." he drew the entire SLV team close and demonstrated to me that I was not alone in my sorrow at the SLV-3's failure. "All your comrades are standing by you." he said, This gave me vital emotional support, encouragement, and guidance.**

Reference: The above lines have been referred by the book 'Wings of Fire' by Abdul Kalam, which is written by Mr. Arun Tiwari.

Context: In these lines Dr. Abdul Kalam was talking about Dr. Brahm Prakash. He helped him in his experiments.

Explanation : Dr. Abdul Kalam was very much impressed with Dr. Brahm Prakash. He helped him endure the difficult period. In practice time, Dr. Prakash employed the front line damage control principle, "Just get the fellow home alive." When Dr. Kalam was sorrowed at the SLV-3's failure, then Dr. Brahm Prakash support him and told me "All your comrades are standing by you". This statement gave me vital emotional support, encouragement and proper guidance.

(24) **The future satellite launch vehicle (SLV) had also been conceived by this time. Recognising the immense socio-economic benefits of space technology. Prof. Sarabhai decided in 1969, to go full-steam ahead with the task of establishing indigenous capability in building and launching our own satellites. He personally participated in an aerial survey of the east coast for a possible site for launching satellite launch vehicles and large rockets.**

Reference: The above lines have been referred by Mr. Arun Tiwari in his book 'Wings of Fire' by Abdul Kalam.

Context: It has been referred in these lines the Arun Tiwari was talking about the future satellite launch vehicle [SLV] and Prof. Sarabhai.

Explanation : In these lines Mr. Arun Tiwari was talking about the future satellite launch vehicle [SLV]. Prof. Satabhi decided in 1969, to go full steam ahead with the task of establishing indigenous capability in building and launching our (Mr. Kalam's and Sarabhai's) own satellite. Prof. Sarabha also participated in an aerial survey of the east coast for a possible site for launching satellite launch vehicles and large rockets.

'Savitri' : An appreciation

Savitri, Sri Aurobindo's magnum opus, appeared in a single volume edition along with the poet's letters on Savitri, posthumously in 1954. Its part I, consisting of first three books, was published in a single volume in 1950; Part II, comprising Books 4 to 8, and part III including books 9 to 12, were published as a second volume in 1951. In its present form Savitri: A Legend and A symbol is in three parts, divided into twelve books consisting of 49 cantos. It runs into a total of about 24,000 lines. It took about fifty years for its completion. It was revised and reshaped several times in the light of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual realizations through the successive years.

Savitri : A legend and a symbol : It has been sub-titled as “a legend and a symbol”. It is based on the Mahabharata story of Savitri and Satyavan. This familiar story has “immeasurably gained in volume and purpose, and what is legendary integrally fuses with the symbolic and the material spirals into the realm of the spirit, while the spirit willingly suffers in terms of the material.”

Savitri: An Epic: Savitri is a spiritual epic of a very high order. There is an undercurrent of spiritual, psychological and religious states in the great epics of the world-The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, Iliad, Odyssey, Divina Commedia and Paradise Lost. But Savitri is wholly spiritual. Justifying the ‘epic of the soul’ Sri Aurobindo writes:

“The epics of the soul most inwardly seen as they will be by an intuitive poetry, are his greatest possible subjects, and it is this supreme kind that we shall expect from some profound and mighty voice of the future. His indeed may be the song of greatest flight that will reveal from the highest pinnacle and with the largest field of vision the destiny of the human spirit and the presence and ways of the Divinity in man and the universe.”

Savitri fulfils the purpose in the aforesaid lines. It is an epic of the destiny of man. It is an unfoldment of Sri Aurobindo’s mystic vision, his experiences as a Yogi, his supramental consciousness leading to the creation here on earth of a divinized humanity. Sri Aurobindo envisions that

“A mightier race shall inhabit the mortal’s world,

On Nature’s luminous tops, on the spirit’s ground,

The superman shall reign as a king of life,

Make earth almost the mate and peer of heaven.”

It is a cosmic epic. Savitri “transcends the national frame; it embraces the mystery that is the creation and the man. Not that such transcending elements are not involved in other epics but in the Savitri the vision of man’s destiny is of the cardinal focus.”

Savitri and Mysticism : As a piece of mystical poetry, it has Vedic and Upanishadic sublimity, intuition and depth. K.D. Sethna remarks : “Sri Aurobindo stands as the creator of a new Vedic and Upanishadic age of poetry.” The Divine has been poetised in it from the beginning to the end. In it Sri Aurobindo believes that one day the splendours of those high mystic peaks would stream down into man’s life. It is the dawn of Life Divine on earth that can cure all maladies of human life. This world is “a playground of the living Infinite”. It is through Love and self giving that the earth can be transformed into the kingdom of the Divine. It is an experiment in mystic poetry, spiritual poetry cast into a symbolic form. It is really a new attempt and cannot be hampered by old ideas of technique when they are assimilable.

Savitri as the future poetry or overhead poetry: Sri Aurobindo composed Savitri in moments of overhead inspiration. He wrote in 1936 : "There is a general overmind influence....sometimes coming fully through, sometimes colouring the poetry of the higher planes to its highest or the psychic, poetic intelligence or vital towards them." It is the finest example of future poetry. It is this spiritual realisation that the future poetry has to help forward by giving to its eye of sight, its shape of aesthetic beauty, its revealing tongue and it is this greatening of life that it has to make its substance. It aims at realising a spiritualised uplifting of man's thought and feeling "and sense and action, a more developed psychic mind and heart, a truer and deeper insight into his nature and the meaning of the world, a calling of diviner potentialities and more spiritual values into the intention and structure of his life that is the call upon humanity, the prospect offered to it by the slowly unfolding and now more clearly disclosed self of the universe."

Modernism in Savitri: Although Savitri symbolically deals with the story of Savitri and Satyavan, it is modern in spirit. K.D. Sethna writes : "Sri Aurobindo is no scholar shut up in the past : he mixes with his insight into vanished times a broad and multifarious knowledge of contemporary living and thinking and this would subtly impregnate any theme he might adopt."

Language, style and versification in Savitri: Sri Aurobindo's language is chiselled, polished and refined. His command over English is superb and his diction is immensely rich. Since Sri Aurobindo's aim is to lift the readers to the level of supermind, his language is "charged with suggestions that go below the thought-meaning, for example:

"It was the hour before the Gods awake.

Across the path of the divine Event

The huge foreboding mind of night, alone

In her unlit temple of eternity,

Lay stretched immobile upon Silence's marge.

Almost one felt, opaque, impenetrable,

In the sombre symbol of her eyeless muse

The abyss of the unbodied Infinite;

A fathomless zero occupied the world."

His style has a profound tone. He describes the soulscape and psychicscape in vivid picturesque and suggestive symbols and expressions which often seem obscure to the average reader.

Sri Aurobindo can be simple, easy and graceful when he does not express mystic or spiritual vision, for example:

"And yet a greater destiny may be his,

For the eternal spirit is his truth.

**He can re-create himself and all around
And fashion new the world in which he lives.
He, ignorant, is the knower beyond time,
He is the self above Nature, above Fate."**

Sri Aurobindo's diction in Savitri is charged and sustained. It is chaste and austere, not lax and prolix. Having successfully practised the various idioms which may be characterised as Elizabethan, Neo-Classical, Romantic, and Victorian, Sri Aurobindo in Savitri cultivated an idiom which is neither traditional nor modern in the accepted sense. It is typically his own. We may term it "Aurobindonian idiom". It is mantric idiom, a direct and heightened idiom embodying, the soul's vision of the Supreme Reality. Take the following passage as an illustration:

**"A blaze of his sovereign glory is the sun,
A glory is the gold, and glimmering moon.
A glory is his dream of purple sky,
A march of his greatness are the wheeling stars.
His daughter of beauty breaks out in green trees,
His moments of beauty triumph in flower;
The blue sea's chant, the rivulet's wondering voice
Are murmurs falling from the Eternal's harp."**

The repetitive use of poetic words like "Soul", "Oversoul", "World-Soul", "Mother", "Life Divine", "Cosmic Consciousness", "Supernal" etc. has a technical significance and precision.

The style of Savitri is flexible and varies according to its context and theme. It can be neo-classical or romantic, symbolic or modernistic. He employs dramatic or narrative style in order to portray a character or to present a situation, an encounter or a debate. His reflective style is of three kinds-the balanced and antithetical style employed when the matter is familiar to the reader, the paradoxical style when he writes with intensity and thought is subtly metaphysical, and the learned style when he presents the contours of a theme which is difficult or unfamiliar to the reader. He uses the analytical or expository style in dealing with rare perception and mystical levels of consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo's use of blank verse in Savitri is immaculate. It conveys the epic grandeur of his poetry. It is ecstatic and greatly melodious in many places. It has a mantric effect on readers. In the following lines, which describe Savitri's meeting with Satyavan in a secluded place of the forest, beautifully reveal the gladsome music of Savitri's heart; the blank verse glides along musically:

"In her luxurious ecstasy of joy
 She squandered the love-music of her notes,
 Wasted the passionate pattern of her blooms
 And festival riot of her scents and hues.
 A cry and leap and hurry were around,
 The stealthy footfalls of her chasing things,
 The shaggy emerald of her centaur mane,
 The gold and sapphire of her warmth and blaze.
 Magician of her rapt felicities,
 Blithe, sensuous-hearted, careless and divine,
 Life ran or hid in her delightful rooms;
 Behind all brooded Nature's grandiose calm."

Savitri is a monumental contribution to Indian English poetry. It is "perhaps the most powerful artistic work in the world for expanding man's mind towards the absolute."

Savitri As an epic

Modern age is intellectual and rational. It is not conducive to epic poetry. It is supposed that the epic requires a certain primitive atmosphere for its birth and growth, and the modern age is not suitable for it. But in Savitri Sri Aurobindo has written an epic of the New Age. It is a cosmic epic and concerns all men and women, all space and all times. He utilised his remarkable poetical capacity in writing an epic in English in which he embodied his magnificent vision of the spirit. His spirituality is not a traditional one. It is an expression of Sri Aurobindo's "speculations about the future of man and his world-speculations grounded largely on his own mystic experiences and yogic realizations-(which) led him to the conclusion that mind will one day be, is being perhaps already though slowly, superseded by supermind" and that this supramental consciousness will in good time facilitate the creation here on earth of the home of a divinized humanity." It is a spiritual epic of a very high order. Savitri "is the spiritual Odyssey of Sri Aurobindo's great inner struggle, his steep spiritual ascent and his conquest of the highest for the transformation and spiritualisation of the human race."

Sri Aurobindo held in high esteem the two great Indian epics-The Ramayana and the Mahabharata. To him the Mahabharata "is not only a story of the Bharatas, the epic of an early event which had become a national tradition, but on the vast scale the epic of the soul and religious and ethical mind and social and political ideals and culture and life of

India The Mahabharata is the creation and expression not of a single individual mind but of the mind of a nation." He says about the Ramayana that it is a work of the same essential kind as the Mahabharata, it differs only by a great simplicity of plan, a more delicate ideal temperament and a finer glow of poetic warmth and colour. The main bulk of the poem is evidently by a single hand in spite of much accretion-and has a less complex and more obvious unity of structure. There is less of the philosophic, more of the purely poetic mind, more of the artist, less of the builder At the same time, there is a like vastness of vision, and even more wide-winged flight of epic sublimity in the conception and sustained richness of minute execution in the detail."

Sri Aurobindo points out that epic can be written successfully in modern age. To quote from the Future poetry : "The epic is only the narrative presentation in its largest canvas and, at its highest elevation, greatness and amplitude of spirit and speech and movement. It is sometimes asserted that the epic is solely proper to primitive ages when the freshness of life made a story of large and simple action of supreme interest to the youthful mind of humanity; the literary epic an artificial prolongation by an intellectual age, and a genuine epic poetry no longer possible now or in the future. This is to mistake form and circumstance for the central reality. The epic, a great poetic story of man or world or the gods, need not necessarily be a vigorous presentation of external action: the divinely appointed creation of Rome, the struggle of the principles of good and evil as presented in the great Indian poems, the pageant of the centuries or the journey of the seer through the three worlds beyond us are as fit themes as primitive war or adventure for the imagination of the epic creator. The epic of the soul most inwardly seen as they will be by an intuitive poetry, are his greatest possible subject and it is this supreme kind that we shall expect from some profound and mighty voice of the future. His indeed may be the song of greatest flight that will reveal from the highest pinnacle and with the largest field of vision the destiny of the human spirit and the presence and ways and purpose of the Divinity in man and the universe."

Epic poetry may be divided into two classes:

- (i) the traditional epic which narrates a popular story of the golden heroic age. It has usually a concrete subject and a sustained splendour. It contains racial elements. Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are epics of this type. Such are generally intended for recitation. (ii) The literary epic which is intended for reading. Dante's Divine comedy, Milton's paradise Lost, Goethe's Faust and Sri Aurobindo's Savitri are literary epics. Homer's Iliad narrates in a superb but simple style a great historic fight but Divina Commedia has little story element. Even in paradise lost the pure story

element is absent. Lascelles Abercrombie remarks, "Milton from the knowledge of himself created Satan and Christ." It is clear that in an epic the story need not be a historical fact. It must have a poetic reality. Milton's story deals with the mystery of the individual will in external opposition to the Divine will. *Divina Commedia* and *The Paradise Lost* have been interpreted in terms of psychic or psychological states or actions rather than in crudely physical terms. Sri Aurobindo added a new dimension to epic poetry by writing a spiritual epic, *Savitri*. In the epics of the soul, "the action is not physical but spiritual, where the battle is fought, not on an earthly terrain, but on the high plateau of the soul."

Savitri is a spiritual epic of a very high order. It reveals the overmind influence. Sri Aurobindo himself says : "There is a general overmind influence,.... sometimes coming fully through, sometimes colouring the poetry of the higher planes to its highest or the psychic, poetic intelligence or vital towards them." As an epic *Savitri* is both a legend and a symbol. The original story of *Savitri* and *Satyavan* appears in the *Mahabharata* as well as in the *Puranas*. It is concerned with the life and penance of king *Aswapathy* who is childless, the birth of *Savitri*, *Savitri's* marriage with *Satyavan*, *Satyavan's* death and *Savitri's* victory over *Death*. Sri Aurobindo has skillfully and integrally fused the legendary "with the symbolic and the material spirals into the realms of the spirit, while the spirit willingly suffers definition in terms of the material." Even the legendary characters assume symbolic significance. *Savitri* is the supreme creative splendour of the Divine-the mother. She is the human manifestation of "the all-fulfilling, all-revealing and all- achieving Divine Grace." *Satyavan*, who embodies the Divine soul and comes into the Kingdom of death, is the vehicle of Truth. *Aswapathy*, who has conquered and mastered the truth of physical, vital and mental existences with his soul force, is the lord of universal life-energy, lord of spiritual strength and light. He is:

"A voyager upon uncharted routes

Fronting the viewless danger of the unknown

Adventuring across enormous realms

He broke into another Space and Time."

Dyumatsena, endowed with a divine and radiant intellect, descends into the world of Darkness and Ignorance where he loses his vision and becomes blind. "While the story is kept almost intact", says V.M. Reddy, "the legend itself is transformed into a living symbol of the struggle of the earth-soul in its onward march, and human destiny."

As a spiritual epic *Savitri* unfolds before us the vision of a supernal world in which the life of man-in fact the whole vision of cosmos undergoes a radical change. It opens up a new world of consciousness for mankind. It is concerned with the revelation of the

life Divine. In it man establishes a direct relationship with the Divine. In it Sri Aurobindo works upon an immense canvas of human history. He deals with the origin of the universe, of the world before the gods were awoken, of the birth of God, of man, of his supernal evolution and his ultimate destiny. It includes higher planes of consciousness which have not yet been revealed but which are pressing upon earth consciousness for revelation. Aswapathy first descends from his consciousness into regions of unconsciousness. Passing through the regions of Mind, Heavens of the ideal and illumined Mind, he reaches the Supreme from which creation proceeds. Here he realises the World-Soul. He now feels the presence of the Divine Mother who is the power of the Supreme. She supports the cosmos.

Aswapathy, released from the bondage of senses and charged with the Secret knowledge of the Divine, achieves a total spiritual transformation. He projects himself as representative man and makes a new ascent as the pioneer Traveller of the Worlds. He is the leader and the path finder of the human race. he makes a passionate appeal to the Mother to redeem the star-crossed race of man. The Divine Mother answers:

“O strong forerunner, I have heard thy cry.

One shall descend and break the iron Law,

Change Nature’s doom by the lone Spirit’s power

X X X

“A seed shall be sown in Death’s tremendous hour,

A branch of heaven transplant to human soil;

Nature shall overleaf her mortal step;

Fate shall be changed by an unchanging will.”

Savitri, the incarnation of Mother, is born. She is not like other women. She is cast to play a unique cosmic role of struggle and redemption.

“She must cross alone a perilous bridge in Time

And reach an apex of world-destiny

Where all is one or all is lost for man.”

On Satyavan’s death Savitri firmly rejects all temptations offered to her by Yama. She will have Satyavan’s soul. She assumes her cosmic form, her Visvarupa:

“A mighty transformation came on her

In a flaming moment of apocalypse

The Incarnation thrust aside its veil.

Eternity looked into the eyes of Death.”

She wins back Satyavan. She does not like paradisaical felicity for ever. She makes earth the field of her strivings, the field of her realizations :

**“In Vain thou temptest with solitary bliss
Two spirits saved out of a suffering world;
My soul and his indissolubly linked**

In the one task

**To bring God down to the world on earth we came,
To change the earthly life to life divine.”**

She along with Satyavan returns to the earth and brings there the bliss of Heaven. At last the transfiguring word of release comes to her :

**“Thus shall the earth open to divinity
And common natures feel the wide uplift,
Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
And meet the deity in common things.
Nature shall live manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
The earthy life become the life divine.”**

Savitri “is the Mahakavya as well as the Mahakavya of our age,-supreme epic and supreme word, a mantric dynamo of transforming power and light, elevating and uplifting in its effect. It is composed of the very substance of the Golden Dawn which indeed it ushers in at the most crucial period of human history. It is also the mantric articulation of the highest and sublimest concepts and achievements of humanity in the past, and humanity in our times.”

Aptness of the Title “a legend and a symbol” is the sub-title of Savitri which is perfectly appropriate, as the epic. Savitri is the symbolic treatment of the well known legendary story of Satyavan and Savitri.

Savitri : The Legend. Explaining the power of wifely chastity and love. Rishi Markendya narrated the story of Savitri to Yudhishtira. In the Vana Parva part of the Mahabharata the story Savitri covers seven cantos. The king of Madra, Aswapathy was Childless. Aswapathy resorted to tapas, Yoga and a life of celibacy, fasting every sixth day, in order to have a child. To fulfil his wish he performed a hundred thousand sacrifices. After eighteen long years of his tapas and Yoga, the goddess Divine Mother promised him a daughter. As a result of the boon of divine mother, Savitri was born to king Aswapathy. Savitri was very beautiful and brilliant. When Savitri attained the marriageable age her

parents found it difficult to get her married because all the princes were frightened away by her strong personality. Finally Aswapathy advised Savitri to round the country and select her own husband. Aswapathy told her that in her great venture the strength of her soul will be her only support. Savitri started her quest with an old minister as an escort. Savitri returned to her father's palace after two years of travelling. Savitri disclosed the name of Satyavan as her life partner, who was brave, intelligent, generous and forgiving. Satyavan was the son of king Dayumatsen, who was living in exile in a hermitage in the forest, because his enemies had sabotaged his kingdom taking advantage of his blindness. Savitri's parents at once accepted her choice but Narad who was also present there disliked it as he knew that Satyavan was destined to die after one year. But Savitri remained undaunted and persisted in her choice. Savitri clearly declared that one chooses a husband only once. As a result finally her parents agreed to her decision and she was married to Satyavan.

After marriage Savitri started her married life at the hermitage where Satyavan lived. Savitri led a simple and hard life. In spite of all the happiness the joy of the union is marred, so far as Savitri was considered due to her fore knowledge of Satyavan's approaching death. She kept preparing herself for the fate full day and for the last three days of the year she restored to complete fast, standing at one place all the time.

Savitri accompanied Satyavan to the forest on the fateful morning by giving the reason that she wanted to see the forest. But there was a grim spectre in her heart. Satyavan stopped at a well known place to cut wood. After cutting some wood, he suddenly felt a piercing pain in his head and Savitri offered her lap for him to rest his head. After a short time when Satyavan fell asleep, Savitri felt the presence of Yama before her. The God of Death Yama declared that he had come to take the life of Satyavan and after completing his task when Yama was returning to Heaven, Savitri too followed the soul of Satyavan which was separated from his physical body. Savitri tied in the moose of the God of Death, Yama.

While following Yama, Savitri tried to persuade him to give back the life of Satyavan. Yama, on the other hand advised Savitri to return and perform the funeral rites of her husband. But Savitri was of the view that she must go with her husband where-ever her husband went or was taken. Savitri claimed the privilege of friendly talk after walking seven paces with Yama. Savitri requested Yama who is also Dharama to permit Savitri and Satyavan to continue their Dharma (the grihastha Ashrama) and not separate them. The Grihastha Ashrama is the second Ashrama of the four Ashramas of human life.

Impressed and pleased by the sweet persuasive talk of Savitri, Yama offered her to demand a boon except Satyavan's life. Savitri

demanded the restoration of her father in law's eyesight. Even after Yama-fulfilled her wish. She kept on following him and pleading for the life of Satyavan. Yama again granted her a second boon, and then a third one. For the second boon Savitri demand that her father-in-law may regain his kingdom, and the third boon, she wished that her father Aswapathy, may have a hundred sons of his own. After granting these boons Yama asked her to return but Savitri answered that her place was with her husband. Due to Savitri's sweet talk Yama once again offered a fourth boon. Savitri demanded 'May a hundred sons be born to me and Satyavan,'. Yama granted it and asked her to return but Savitri kept on following him and continued her sweet persuasive talk. Pleased by her wisely and sweet talk Yama offered her a final boon. Savitri naivety told him that unless Satyavan's life was stored, the earlier boon of a hundred sons to them will be incapable of accomplishment. Yama too realised his mistake but he could not go back on his words as he is also Dharma. Finally, Yama released Satyavan's life and blessed Savitri heartily. Yama disappeared in a flame. Savitri came back to her husband's listless body.

Savitri placed Satyavan's head on her bosom. Satayavan regained his life and look at Savitri lovingly. When they were returning to the hermitage it became dark. Savitri and Satyavan found it some what difficult to trace the way back to the hermitage. Savitri came across a withered burnt tree still showing flickers of flame as the wind blew upon it. She therefore lighted some faggot; and since Satyavan was still weary, suggested that they could spend the night in the forest. Savitri suggested that they would start for the hermitage, when the woods shall be visible in the morning but Satyavan assured Savitri that he was alright. Due to this delay, Satyavan wept bitterly, thinking of his parents anxiousness and uneasiness.

Finally after reaching the hermitage, they found that as a result of Yama's first boon Dayumatsen's eyesight was restored. Now Savitri disclosed every thing Narad muni's prophecy, her vow, her accompanying Satyavan to the forest, Yama's appearance there and the five boons granted by him.

Next morning when the hermits were talking about Savitri to Dayumatsen, few people brought the news that the usurper had been jailed by his ministers, his force had dispersed, and the people wanted their beloved king Dayumatsen back in their midst. In this way Yama's second boon was fulfilled. Dayumatsen returned to his kingdom with his family in a chariot and was crowned. Satyavan was declared the heir to the throne. Other boons of Yama were also fulfilled in due course of time as Aswapathy became the father of hundred sons, and Savitri and Satyavan became the parents of hundred sons.

Aurobindo's Symbolic Treatment of It. Aurobindo has completely transformed the legend Savitri by his creative vision into a cosmic

symbol. In this epic Aurobindo has used various names symbolically. Aurobindo portrays Savitri as a being who embodies Divine Grace, the incarnation of goddess Usha, the Mother of Eternal light, the great World-Mother, descended on earth, to work out the salvation of man, and change human destiny. A.B. Purani, pointing out the symbolic treatment of the story, writes,

"The life of the childlessknowledge."

In the epic Aswapathy Symbolises the soul of man aspiring for self knowledge.

"He acquires by his tapasyabe fulfilled."

*"The whole period of Aswapathy's significance."
Aswapathy represents the aspiring human soul in search for the truth of himself of the world and of God. Aswapathy, the name of Savitri's father means the lord of life, the symbol of life- energy or vital power. "Aswapathys penance symbolises the trials great master."*

In answer to Aswapathy's intense aspiration for the divine's help in creating divine perfection here, Savitri was born, as his daughter. Savitri symbolises the light of truth and wisdom, that struggle with the darkness of Ignorance symbolised by Yama, and overcomes it. Savitri's struggle with Yama for the life of Satyavan becomes symbolic of the struggle of the aspiring human soul to break the chain of determinism-the eternal chain of Karma which binds the present to the past-and thus establish life divine on earth. Satyavan symbolises one who possesses truth or at least one who aspires for it. In fact the union of Savitri and Satyavan is thus the union of truth and Light-the light of knowledge, the light of wisdom, the light of the spirit-and together, they do overcome the darkness and Ignorance of the material, and establish the kingdom of God on earth, where truth prevails and the reign of darkness has no power. The symbolic treatment of Aurobindo is further seen when he depicts the life of Savitri and Satyavan after the conquest of Yama, the God of Death. In the legend, they return to the earth and Satyavan after regaining his kingdom, rules it for many years, living happily ever after. But Aurobindo depicts their rise from the kingdom of Death to the rejoin of eternal day where the Sun of Truth never sets, where Ignorance is unknown and Death has no place. After staying in this region of Truth for some time, Savitri and Satyavan look upon the earth and return to it in order to accomplish their Devine work the creation of a new humanity. Thus, this simple stroy has been transformed by the alchemy of the great rishi's genius into a living symbol, and implanted a cosmic significance.

K. Srinivasa. Iyengar has pointed out, "Savitri is symbolic and earth nature."

The conception of Savitri Sri Aurobindo took from the Mahabharata legend of Savitri and Satyavan, but he has considerably enriched and glorified it. Savitri in the legend is the very model of a chaste and royal wife, a Pativarta who can face even death for the sake of her husband. Savitri as presented in the present epic is both human and divine. She is one of those great martyrs who are born from time to time on this blighted planet of ours to suffer and die for the good of mankind. She is an incarnation of the divine, the only female Avatar in the whole range of history and mythology.

Her Personality : Radiant and Majestic. Savitri was born to king Aswapathy as a result of a boon granted to him by the goddess Savitri, the World-Mother. She was brought up in beautiful nature-surroundings, and so she imbibed some of the dignity and majesty of nature herself. She grew up into a maiden, radiant, beautiful, dignified, calm and self-possessed. The poet vexes eloquent in praise of her radiant personality.

A body like a parable of dawn

That seemed a niche for veiled divinity

Or golden temple door to things beyond.

Immortal rhythms swayed in her time-born steps:

Her look, her smile, awoke celestial sense

Even in earth-stuff, and their intense delight,

Poured a supernal beauty on men's lives.

The Divine Element Savitri's is a radiant female personality, but she is also divine. She is the incarnation of the World-Mother, and this divinity in her is also fully stressed by the poet:

Her spirit opened to the Spirit in all,

Her nature felt all Nature as its own.

Apart living, within all lives she bore :

Aloof, she carried in herself the world :

Her dread was one with the great cosmic dread,

Her strength was founded on the cosmic mights :

The universal Mother's love was hers.

Against the evil at life's afflicted roots,

Her own calamity its private sign.

Her love : Its vastness She lived a secluded life in her native nature-surroundings and it was here that love came to her with the

suddenness, "that divine events have", and found in her a vastness like his own :

**Here with the suddenness divine events have,
Repeating the marvel of the first descent,
Changing to rapture the dull earthly round,
Love came to her hiding the shadow, Death.
Well might he find in her his perfect shrine,**

Love came to her suddenly, found in her a vastness like his own, but it came to her, "hiding the shadow, Death". Savitri was sad, because she had a foreknowledge that Satyavan would die exactly after a year. But she told her woe to none, she suffered silently, alone, and gathered all her spiritual resources to save the life of Satyavan from the clutches of Death, and than to alter human destiny and nature's law. Her fight with Death was not to be a fight for her own sake, but rather she regarded her private fate as a sign and symbol of the fate of humanity. It was to be a fight with Death for the sake of humanity; she was determined to change human destiny and make him immortal. She is thus seen to be in line with those great martyrs, Budha, Christ, Gandhi who, laid their lives for the sake of man. It is universal love which inspires and moves her, and she seeks to change Nature's law.

Her Heroic struggle with death. Savitri's personality has been heightened and magnified to epic dimensions. She is shown to be a super-human being who stands firm and determined like an admantine figure, to face death and break the cosmic law of Karma:

**Empowered to force the door denied and closed
Smote from Death's visage its dumb absolute
And burst the bounds of consciousness and time**

She did not take anybody's help in the gigantic task that lay ahead. She stood for the world, "the world unknowing". She is one of those larger than life personalities who have the capacity to stand alone and remain undaunted in the face of the greatest of dangers. She was determined to wrestle with death, the great enemy of mankind, all alone and "hew the ways of Immortality":

A Super-human Saviour. She was not merely human, a frail being tossed about on the ocean of desire, and thrown down into the gulf of circumstance, but also divine, and so,

**Her spirit refused to hug the common soil,
Or, finding all life's golden meanings robbea,
Compound with earth, struck from the starry list,
Or quench with black despair the God-given light.**

**Accustomed to the eternal and the true,
Her being conscious of its divine founts
Asked not from mortal frailty pain's relief,
Patched not with failure bargain or compromise.**

She did not compromise with the laws of Ignorance, darkness and Death, she did not accept the Karmic law which binds the present to the past, and with, "Her single will opposed the cosmic rule," and, "To stay the wheels of Doom her greatness rose." She could reverse the march of destiny and change the law of determinism, because "A prayer, a master act, a king idea," sometimes becomes, "a magic leverage" to change the movement of the ponderous machinery of Nature, and to link man's strength to a transcendent Force. "This truth is exemplified in the life of martyrs of the world who have suffered and died for man. Savitri, too, suffered, all alone, but persisted in her purpose, and so ultimately succeeded.

Conclusion

Aurobindo's Savitri is the symbol of all that is great, heroic, and noble in man. She symbolises the powers and energies of the spirit through which even the impossible can be achieved. She symbolises the power of love which raises the human to the level of the Divine, and before which even Death has to withdraw helplessly. She symbolises the wonders that the human spirit can do, once it has gathered all its forces and has determined on a particular course of action.

Introduction: Savitri was an ideal Indian woman. For her, her husband was the most important and precious person. No Indian woman likes to be away from her husband. And no true Indian woman can live happily if her husband dies.

Narad Muni had told Savitri that Satyavan would die after a year. She loved him so much that despite the fatal forecast by Narad Muni she married Satyavan.

Savitri's Most Serious Worry: Worry or anxiety is the most painful thing in the world. Worry is like slow death. It is death in instalments. And Savitri was surrounded by worry. She knew that death was rushing towards her dear husband Satyavan. It was the only worry of Savitri-

*"And yet there was a sceptre grim,
A sketeton is Savitri's heart,
Looming is shadow, somewhat dim,
But which would never thence depart".*

Narad Muni's words of forecast always rang in Savitri's ears. She was feeling fear, depression and helpless. In such circumstances man takes shelter of God. And Savitri did the same thing. She prayed and prayed to Good for Satyavan's welfare. She felt a sword was hanging over her head.

Our sorrow lessens when we tell over sorrow to someone or to our dear and near. We can unburden ourselves to some extent by sharing our sorrow with someone. But Savitri could not share her sorrow and worry with anyone. Whom could she share her sorrow with? Her father-in-law was blind and old and her mother-in-law was old and weak. She did not want to make them more unhappy by telling them the worst news. And it was impossible for Savitri to tell the bad forecast to Satyavan. So her sorrow was not lessened.

The Fatal Day: Time went on moving and at last the fatal day came when the death of Satyavan was scheduled to come. At the time of sorrow when all hope leaves us we remember God and pray earnestly. Savitri went on praying gods for husband, Satyavan's long life. She knew it very well that nobody could change destiny. What is ordained in our life, it does happen but still people pray gods for favourable changes in their destiny.

Savitri did all sorts of religious activities like worshipping, praying to goods and feeding the birds with grains. She also fed the Brahmins and requested them to bless her with long life of her husband Satyavan. Still she passed through most painful sense as what would happen. Will she be able to move the heart of gods and save Satyavan's life or cruel death will make her widow as it was written in her destiny? The day was filled with sorrow, pain, fear and suspense for Savitri

"No help from man. Well, be it so!

No sympathy, -matters not!

God can avert the heavy blow!

He answers worship. Thus she thought.

And so her prayers by day and night,

Like incense rose unto the throne;

Nor did she now neglect nor rite

The Veds enjoy or helpful own.

Upon the fourteenth of the moon.

*As nearer came the time of dread
 In Joystee that in May or June,
 She vowed her nows and Brahmins fed.
 And now she counted e'en the hours,
 As to eternity they past;
 O'er head the dark cloud darker lowers,
 The year is rounding full at last."*

The above lines give a pathetic picture of Savitri's condition of helplessness. As the time was passing, she began to count even hours which passed into eternity.

Satyavan goes to Woods : Satyavan feels like going to woods. He wants to go to woods as the weather became pleasant. Cool air was blowing slowly and twilight was very beautiful-

*"The twilight is most beautiful!
 Mother, to gather fruit I go,
 And fuel, -for the air is cool-
 Expect me in an hour or so."*

So he asks for his mother's permission to go to woods. He tells her that he will gather fruits and also bring fuel. He says that he will return home after an hour or so.

Savitri's accompanies Satyavan : Savitri was a very dutiful woman. She thinks that it is her duty to be with her husband Satyavan in this grave situation-

*"What is my duty? It is clear,
 My husband I must follow; so
 While he collects his forest gear
 Let me permission get to go."*

*His sire she seeks, -the blind old king,
 And asks him permission straight."*

Her father-in-law and mother-in-law give her permission to accompany Satyavan to the woods but they asked her to return with Satyavan before the fall of night

*"Go, then, my child, -we give thee leave,
 But with thy husband quick return,
 Before the flickering shades of eve
 Deepen to night, and planets bum,
 And forest-paths become obscure,*

*Lit only by their doubtful rays.
 The gods, who guard all women pure,
 Bless thee and keep thee in thy ways,
 And safely bring thee and thy lord."
 On this she left, and swiftly ran
 Where with his saw in lieu of sword,
 And basket plodded Satyavan."*

After getting permission from Satyavan's parents she ran fast to the woods to be with her husband Satyavan.

Conclusion : Savitri's day passed in anxiety, fear, tension, suspense and prayers. The only consolation for Savitri was that she was with her husband when he would need her most. The time of death is the most difficult and critical time in every person's life. So it was great consolation for her.

Introduction: When Satyavan's age expired, Yama, God of Death ordered his messengers of Death Yamdutas to take away Satyavan's soul or Jiva from his body. They dared not come near Satyavan because his wife Savitri, was sitting by his side. Savitri was not an ordinary woman. She was a very religious woman who had been performing religious rites and rituals properly. She had been worshipping different gods including Yama, the god of death. She had been devoted to her husband, Satyavan so Yamdutas failed to come near Satyavan and Savitri. So Yama, the god of death, himself came to take away Satyavan's soul. Yama, the god of death, took Satyavan's soul out of his body and tied it into a noose and set out for the Yamalok, his abode.

Savitri started to follow Yama. Yama asked her to return home but she continued to follow him. She began to pray and talk to Yama. Yama told her that he was extremely happy with Savitri because she was a pious and religious woman and she had been worshipping gods and performing all the religious rites and rituals perfectly and properly. She had been devoted and faithful to Satyavan, her husband. He asked Savitri to ask for a boon except Satyavan's life as a reward, which she deserved.

First Boon:

*"So sweet thy words ring on my ear
 Gentle Savitri, that I fain*

Would give some sign to make it clear

Thou hast not prayed to me in vain.

Satyavan's life I may not grant

Nor take before its term thy life,

But I am not all adamant,

I feel for thee, thou faithful wife!

Ask thou ought else, and let it be

Some good thing for thyself or thine,

And I shall give it, child, to thee,

If any power on earth be mine."

Savitri expressed her obligation to Yama, the god of death, she asked him for the eyesight of her father-in-law i.e.. Satyavan's father because he was blind. Yama, the god of death granted the boon desired by Savitri by saying 'be if so'.. He also asked her to go home perform rites for Satyavan's death.

The Second Boon: But Savitri continued to follow him. Yama, wanted to get rid of Savitri as it was against the rule of Yamalok for a living person to enter it. So he told her that he can neither give Satyavan his life back nor can take her life before expiry of her life. But he could grant her one boon more. Now Savitri wished that his father-in-law might get his kingdom back. Yama, the god of death granted this boon too and asked again to go back home and perform her duties as she seemed to be tired after walking so long. He told her that she was not strong.

"Receive thy boon and homewards start

For ah poor child, thou art not strong."

Yama, the god of death asked Savitri to go back home as the night was about to full.

The Company of Good: Good company is very useful and necessary. The company of good persons is called 'Satsang'. Company influences men. He becomes what his company is. If we live in a bad company we become bad. If we live in good company we become good. Savitri was very happy to have the company of Yama, the god of death because he was very wise and kind too.

Savitri tells Yama, that she is not tired because she had very good company of Yama and her husband Satyavan; She was not tired also

"Each heart-wish from the goodness worn,

If I am still allowed a choice,

I fain thy voice would ever hear,

*Reluctant am I still to part,
The way seems short when thou art near
And Satyavan, my heart's dear heart."*

She tells Yama, that she is unwilling to leave such a good company as that of wise, gentle and generous Yama and of her dear husband Satyavan. Savitri also tells Yama that due to the pleasant company of him and of her dear husband Satyavan she felt that the way is short and she was not at all tired. One never feels tired in the company of good persons at least if one himself is good-

*"Of all the pleasures given on earth
The company of the good is best,
For weariness has never birth
In such a commerce sweet and blest."*

The Third Boon : Good persons pray for the good of others and rarely for themselves. It is an important quality of good persons so Savitri prayed and wished, "May her father-in-law get back his eyesight that he had lost. Then for the second time she wished, "May her father-in-law get back his lost kingdom. Thus she did not pray for herself. This shows her unselfishness. Lord Yama, the god of death was highly moved and impressed by Savitri's this quality. So he asked her to ask a thing for herself too-

*"O thou endowed with every grace
and, every virtue,-thou whose soul
Appears upon thy lovely face,
May the great gods who all control
Send thee their peace. I too would give
One favour more before I go;
Ask something for thyself, and live
Happy, and dear to all below,
Till summoned to the bliss above.
Savitri ask, and ask unblamed."*

At this hour of misfortune Savitri needed mental peace most. And Yama, the god of death invokes all the gods to bless her with peace

*"May the great gods who all control
Send thee their peace."*

He tells Savitri that he wants to give her one boon more before he leaves-

"One favour more before I go

Ask something for thyself....."

Savitri was highly intelligent. She knew very well how to deal with human beings as well as gods. She tells Yama, that he knows well the wishes of all men and he knows internal desire of Savitri also. But as Lord Yama, the god of death asks to ask something for herself too, she asks for Satyavan, her dear husbands life back. She requests Lord Yama to bless her with children-

"She took the clue, felt Death was Love,

For no exceptions now he named,

And boldly said,- "Thou knowest, Lord,

The inmost hearts and thoughts of all !

There is no need to utter word,

Upon thy mercy sole, I call

If speech be needful to obtain

Thy grace, -Oh hear a wife forlorn,

Let my Satyavan live again

And children unto us be born."

Satyavan's Life Comes Back: At last Savitri succeeded in winning the heart of Yama, the god of death. She moved his heart by her very good, sweet and wise talks. She was successful in getting the third boon i.e. giving back life of Satyavan, her dear husband also boon forgetting children.

Yama, the god of death untied the noose and made Satyavan's soul free. In this way he gave back life of Satyavan-

"As thus he spoke, he loosed the knot

The soul of Satyavan that bound,

And promised further that their lot

In pleasant places should be found

Thenceforth and that they both should live

For centuries, to which the name

Of fair Savitri, men would give

And then he vanished in a flame."

Lord Yama not only gave back life of Satya van but blessed both Satyavan and Savitri long life of centuries. After blessings to Savitri and Satyavan, Yama, the god of death vanished into a flame.

Soon Satyavan revived. He suddenly woke up as if from deep sleep. His breath came back to him first slowly and then his breathing became normal. She took head of Satyavan into her hands.

*"She lifted it with eager hands
 And as before, when he expired
 She placed the head upon the hands
 That bound her breast which hope new fired
 And which alternate rose and fell;
 Then placed his soul upon his heart
 Where like a bee it found its cell,
 And to, he woke with a sudden start !
 His breath came low at first, then deep."*

Conclusion: Savitri made the impossible, possible. It is said that no one returns to the earth after he or she dies. Savitri by the virtue of her earnest prayers, religious rites, ceremonies, and worships brought back Satyavan, her husband's life after he had died. Lord Yama, the god of death was very much pleased with Savitri good behaviour and religious activities. He was so pleased that he gave her three boons, One of the boons was revival of Satyavan's life. So Satyavan revived and thereafter lived happily with his devoted wife Savitri.

Introduction: The fatal forecast made by Narad Muni ever haunted Savitri's mind and night She never forgot the approaching fatal day. For Savitri her husband, Satyavan was the most precious person. And her misfortune was that Death of Satyavan was galloping towards him. "She knew that the hour of death is the most difficult and critical time for every person. In our difficult time, we need the moral support of our near and dear or who loves us. So Savitri wanted to be with her husband, Satyavan as the hour of his death was, approaching fast. Who could give him greater moral support? She loved Satyavan most. Poor Satyavan did not know anything about Narad Muni's fatal forecast about his one-year life.

Dreadful Thought of Death: Savitri could not help thinking about death that was approaching Satyavan, her dear husband

And all the while one dreadful thought
 haunted Savitri's anxious mind,
 Which would have fain its stress forgot;
 It came as chainless as the wind,
 Oft and again: thus on the spot
 Marked with his heart-blood often comes back.

The murdered man, to see the clot!
 Death's final blow,-the fatal wrack
 Of every hope whence will it fail ?
 For all, by Narad's words it must;
 Persistent rising to appall

This thought its horrid presence thrust.

Satyavan's Symptoms of Death: Sri Aurobindo Ghose gives It realistic description of Satyavan's death. Satyavan begins to feel uncomfortable and the axe falls down from his hands. He feels sharp pain in his head. He feels cobra's pangs. He fails to see clearly as the vision dims. Tries being to go round his eyes. He fails to walk straight. Instead he staggers like a child. He tells Savitri that headache was unbearable and wants to lie down-

Sudden the noise is husband,-a pause!

Satyavan lets the weapon drop-

Too well Savitri knows the cause;

He feels not well the work must stop.

A pain in his head,- a pain

As if he felt the cobra's pangs

He tries to look around,-in vain,

A mist before his vision hangs;

The trees whirl dizzily around

In a fantastic fashion wild;

His throat and chest seem iron-bound,

He staggers, like a sleepy child

"My head, my head !-Savitri dear,

This pain is frightful. Let me lie.

When Savitri saw Satyavan's poor condition. She at once understood that the fatal moment of death had come. The first symptom of approaching death was dropping of the axe from Satyavan's hands. His hands were too weak to hold the axe. A severe headache was the second symptom. His vision began to become dim. His vision was blurring. He began to feel giddy. Trees were moving round before his eyes. He felt that some one was putting a band round his throat and chest. These were other symptoms of approaching death; He could not stand on his feet. He was struggling like a child. He asked Savitri to let him lie. Satyavan also felt suffocation in his throat and chest. His condition was growing from bad to worse. Darkness began to grow before his eyes-

"Ah me, this pain,-its getting dark.

I see no more-can this be death?

What means this, gods ?-Savitri mark,

My hands wax cold, and fails my breath.

For the first time Satyavan thinks of death-can this be death? More symptoms of death come-Satyavan's hands become wax cold and he feels difficulty in, breathing. His headache, was growing intenser and intenser. Now he understands that he may be dying. Thus in his last hour he calls gods and asks them the meaning of his bad condition.

Satyavan's' Death Scene: Sri. Aurobindo Ghose has shown his skill in drawing Satyavan's death scene. The reader find it so realistic that he feels that Satyavan is dying before his eyes. The death scene is rich in pictorial quality.

Satyavan beings to believe that he is going to die-"It may be but a swoon." Darkness grows before his eyes. His headache is becoming worse and he feels piercing of arrows through his heart. And at last he becomes sure that he is dying-Farewell my love! for I must go. This, this is death."

Satyavan now feels that he is facing death. He gives one start and then lies quiet on Savitri's lap. He becomes unconscious and insensible to sight and sound. And finally he breathes his last-

"It may be but a swoon." "Ah ! no-

Arrows are piercing through my heart

Farewell my love! For I must go.

This, this is death." He gave one start

And then lay quiet on her lap,

Insensible to sight and sound,

Breathing his last.....

When Satyavan becomes certain that he is dying he bids farewell to his beloved wife, Savitri and tells her that he is dying-

Farewell my love! For I must go.

Finally Satyavan gives one start and lies quietly on Savitri's lap and breathes his last.

Tagore's The Gitanjali or "song-offering" is a collection of hundred and odd lyrics in which man is constantly in converse with the eternal, in "tune with the Infinite". It is a great and complex work of art, and as such a number of themes and ideas stand out of it, but its

central theme is devotional. it constantly expresses the yearning of the individual soul for reunion with the Infinite. It is this constant and intense yearning which makes The Gitanjali, "a mighty piece of prayer, pleading and exaltation." it is a work in which poetry aspires to a condition of prayer. The lyrics have a mantric quality, as if they were hymns chanted by a true devotee to his Maker, the Supreme. They aspire to a condition of prayer, for they express the poet's own yearning for re-union with the divine.

The theme of the Gitanjali is devotional. It is in the tradition of Vaishnava devotional poetry of India, but it finds a new and original treatment. That is why Gitanjali created such a sensation in the West. When it was first published in English Abbe Bremond declared that pure poetry aspires to a condition of prayer. "Such poetry is half a prayer from below and half a whisper from above, the prayer evoking the response, or the whisper provoking the prayer, and always prayer and whisper chiming into song." Gitanjali is full of such poetry, as in the opening song-

**Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This
frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever
with fresh life.**

The human body is the temple of the soul, the human soul is the temple of God. The human soul has no significance unless it is inhabited or "filled" by the Spirit. Birth and death are but the filling and the emptying of the soul by the Supreme Soul, and the individual-insignificant as he may seem to be-in this way partakes of God's endless life, His immortality. Hence sings Tagore,

**This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and
dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.**

"The lifeless flute comes to life when the Lord of Brindavan plays upon it-forever piping songs forever new. The human soul is, not only God's temple, it is also Krishna's flute. Life's vicissitudes are but new melodies played by the Lord." The poet, therefore, concludes-

**At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses
its limit in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.**

**Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small
hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still
there is room to fill.**

"The phenomenal world in which the individual plays his obscure part is really the Lila or the drama of the Supreme, and to know this is to participate in the total joy of the cosmic play and give utterance to the joy in ineffable song. Even so is the seemingly little united with the

vast, and frail man is filled with the joy, power and glory of the Infinite” (Srinivasa Iyengar).

Not only is this realization the source of song, but the song can also guide the devotee, along the labyrinthine ways of the world to the very threshold of Reality.

**Ever in my life have I sought thee with my songs. It were
they who led me from door to door, and with them have I
felt about me, searching and touching my world.**

**They guided me all the day long to the mysteries of the
country of pleasure and pain, and, at last, to what palace
gate have they brought me in the evening at the end of my journey?**

“The last corner turned, the last vigil over, the devotee is seized with marvellous contentment; and so he makes a final offering of his riches to the Supreme.”

**In one salutation to thee, my God, let all my senses spread
out and touch this world at thy feet.**

**Like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back
to their mountain nests let all my life take its voyage to its
eternal home in one salutation to thee.**

“The one hundred odd songs in ‘Gitanjali’ form a mighty piece of prayer and pleading and exultation.”

The central theme is devotional in the great tradition of devotional poetry centering round the loves of Radha and Krishna. Again and again the human soul is spoken of as the Radha or the beloved waiting for the arrival of the lover or the bridegroom, Krishna, her lord and master, or responding to his flute, and going out to meet him. Krishna is the great unknown and the call of his flute symbolises the message which the Infinite is constantly sending to the Finite. Thus the Vaishanva-myth is invested with a transcendental significance. The drama of love between Krishna and Radha is God’s Lila in Vrindavan. Radha, who surrenders everything, including a wife’s duty and good name, symbolises the human soul and the terrestrial universe yearning with reckless passion for union with God. When the divine shepherd plays on his flute, Radha becomes restless and considers no sacrifice too great for the bliss of a meeting with her lover. Rabindranath transforms this story of sensuous passion and mystical longing, enlarging its significance and appeal. For him the divine shepherd is neither a human lover nor a particular deity, but the great Unknown who is loftier than any individual person, and the call of the flute symbolizes the message which the Infinite is constantly sending to the finite world. It is the

elusive but irresistible call, not subtleties of passion, that becomes the dominant theme with Tagore.

Tagore's originality is further seen in the various ways in which God is made a living, breathing reality. In other devotional poets God is either an abstraction, or it is incarnated in some idol. In the Gitanjali He is an ever present and all pervasive influence. He is to be seen in the myriad forms of Nature, in the heavens or on the earth. Sometimes He comes with the sweet perfume of the lotus, at other times He plays on his harp as the poet sleeps, and he hears his melody in sleep. It is his call which the poet hears in the myriad voices of Nature. Sometimes He is a stranger coming to the poet's house, at other times he is the lover, and the poet's soul in the bride going out to meet him in loneliness and darkness. The all-pervasive presence of God is suggested through a host of images taken from the common, familiar things of life. Many of his images create the impression of the vastness and majesty of God, as the image of a glad bird spreading its wings on its flight across the sea. When he has to give an idea of the brilliance of God's sword, he refers to the outspread wings of the divine bird of Vishnu-a figure familiar in Hindu mythology-perfectly poised in the red light of the sunset. In some places the majesty of God is suggested with the help of the simplest things of nature. Although there is the great music of the universe, God is attracted by the poet's plaintive, little strain and stops at his small cottage-with only a flower for a prize. The freedom, the mystery and the vastness that will come with the poet's union with God are delicately suggested by means of an image within an image : "Who knows when the chains will be off and the boat, like the last glimmer of sunset, vanish into the night."

Meaning of Mysticism: Mysticism is a word derived from "mystes". 'Mystes' is derived from Greek word "Muein" which means to keep silence. So mysticism is the belief that knowledge of God and of real truth is independent of the mind and senses. This knowledge can be obtained through contemplation or spiritual insight.

Mysticism and Rabindranath Tagore: The best minds of India have held mysticism to be the source and ultimate proof of the teachings of philosophy and religion. The fathers of Hindu religion were mystics who embodied in inspired words what they saw in mystic vision. Rabindranath Tagore belongs to this pine of mystic poets who have an inner vision, and seek to convey the truths thus visioned in the language of ordinary experience.

Usually a mystic believes that the ordinary world of sense perception is not real and behind this visible world there is a more real world which can be apprehended spiritually and not through the senses.

Function of mysticism: Emancipation of soul from the trammels and entanglements of life so that the soul may rise to the level of Beauty and Truth and may become one with Beauty and Truth. Mysticism lead us to the essence of things and the essence is eternal.

All functions of mysticism are based on the belief that direct knowledge of God, of spiritual truth and of ultimate Reality, is attainable through immediate intuition, insight or illumination.

The love of the mystic can only find its consummation is worship. The song No. 59 illustrates : "yes, I know, this is nothing, but thy love, O beloved of my heart-this golden light that dances upon the leaves, these idle clouds sailing across the sky, this passing breeze leaving its coolness upon my forehead."

The divine love is so enervating and exalting and comforting that makes everything beautiful. "The morning light has flooded my eyes-this is thy message to my heart. Thy face is bent from above, thy eyes look down on my eyes, and my heart has touched thy feet."

The second stanza of the song, unmistakably, records the human soul with the divine soul. Every man aims at finding what is in him, which is the truth, which is his soul, the key with which he opens the gate of the spiritual life. The nearer we reach our real selves, the more harmonious our life becomes but the end is sure and it will definitely come. Song No. 12 is an example : "The time that my journey takes is long and the way of it long."

"I came out on chariot of the first gleam of light and pursued my voyage through the wilderness of worlds leaving my track on many a star and planet-

It is most distant course that comes nearest to thy self:

The traveller has to knock at every alien door to come to his own, and one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end :

"My eyes strayed far and wide before!

Shut them, and said, "Heartiest thou!"

The intensity of quest and rapture of realisation are beautifully depicted in the last stanza : "The question and the cry 'Oh, where?' melt into tears of a thousand 'streams and deluge the world with the flood of the assurance, I am!

Thus this 'Gitanjali' song illustrates the mysticism of R.N. Tagore.

Mysticism in 'Gitanjali'

We see that Tagore's mysticism consists in looking at the world with a pure soul and his vision of life is an attempt at the purification of the soul and the realisation of the inherent unity is all. According to S.B. Mukherjee, "It is a mysticism of limpid clarity, a vision made concrete, even sensuous, Nature's mystery, mystery of primordial unison of the soul with her the joy and wonder of it all are woven into the texture of the poems and vivified with an imagination that can externalise an intuitive vision with symbol and images startlingly new."

Really mysticism is a striking feature in Tagore's 'Gitanjali', in which he had the vision of unity in all things, of the one inseparable phenomena of the universe, R.N. Tagore was a seer, and a mystic, besides being a poet. He lived a life of inward excitement and passion. His emotional excitement was due to his mystic or spiritual experience. Here we see him quite different from the Western mystics, who lived in wildness, in a world which was devoid of aim and meaning and god. So his poetry has a spiritual significance and it cannot be ignored by the modern world.

The following excerpt from his "My Reminiscences" is interesting and instructive also; "I had so long viewed the world with external vision only when all of a sudden from some innermost depth of my being, a ray of light found its way out, it spread over and illuminated for me the whole universe.... This experience seemed to tell me of the steam of melody issuing from the very heart of the universe, and spreading over space and time, re-echoing thence as waves of joy which flow right back to the source.... And as we become aware, our love goes forth, and ourselves are moved from their mooring and would fain float down the stream of joy to its infinite goal. This is the meaning of the longing which stirs within us at the sight of beauty The stream which comes from the infinite and flows towards the finite That is the Truth.

This shows in his poetry the genesis of mysticism

'Gitanjali' embodies Bliss. The vedantic texts say that the essence of Brahma is being, Intelligence and Infinite; so Brahma is Existence, Awareness and Bliss because that which is infinite is bliss. R.N. Tagore's 'Gitanjali' embodies this aspect of the Infinite. In it the poet seems to say that the entire creation is a joyous expression of his play and to realise him we should rise above self love, materialism, and worldly attachments so that we may establish our communion with Nature.

Mysticism to R.N. Tagore was an essential attitude of the mind based on the instinctive belief that unity lies under all diversity,

Rabindranath Tagore-the Mystic Poet

Tagore's faith in god is abiding, as he aspires for a communion with God. He believes in the immortality of soul and he believes Death to be the gateway to the eternal life. Like the mystic poets Tagore's belief in the mystery of Creation is highly imaginative and he looks for the presence of God now in man and now in the cosmos. He is baffled at the mystery of creation and he is a seeker after God. In song no. 57. God takes many symbolic forms in 'Gitanjali' for instance, light i.e. enlightenment "Light, my light, the world- filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart sweetening light. Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life, the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love, the sky opens, the wind runs wild daughter passes over the earth."

Use of Concrete Sensuous Images. Tagore's poetry is a vehicle for the expression of his mystical philosophy, but his mysticism finds a concrete sensuous expression. In this sensuousness he differs from other mystics who also use symbols and images to increase the expressive range of their poetry and to convey highly abstract metaphysical truths. There is nothing original in his mysticism as such, for it is there in the Bible and other religious teachers of India; his originality lies in the combination of mysticism and sensuousness reflected in the image of the Jivan-Devata and in other images.

The Jivan Devata Image. The concept of the Jivan-Devata is present in his poetry from beginning to the end. This Jivan-Devata, the lord of the poet's life, is identical with the Supreme Person, the Lord of the universe. The Supreme expresses himself in various way, through the individual. It manifests himself in the yearning of the individual to become one with the larger world lying beyond. This Jivan-Devata is the Lord of the poet's life leading him, despite all obstacles, towards the fulfilment of his innermost yearning. He is a part of the poet's self, an apotheosis of his inner spirit. He is the Lord of the poet's soul, but also its lover.

The Jivan-Devata is not only the lord of the poet's life, he is also the Lord of the universe. He expresses himself not only through the poet, but also through the myriad forms of nature. Working within the individual, it yearns for union with the external, so also working through the universe it aspires for union with the individual. It has the same yearning for the individual as a bridegroom has for the bride, or the boatman has for the passenger.

Thus the concept of Jivan-Devata is a dual one:

- (1) *It is the lord of the poet's life, the source of his yearning for union with the myriad forms of the external world.*

- (2) *It is also the Supreme expressing itself in the myriad forms of Nature, and yearning for union with the individual and the finite.*

Nature-objects as Symbols of Human Emotions. Tagore's poetry does not lack in sublimity and depth of thought. It has also richness of diction and imagery, and yet-this is his uniqueness-it has the open air atmosphere of a folk-song. Like the folk-song, there are constant references in it to common things of Nature and to common people-flowers, the fruits, rivers and ferries, clouds and rains, the sky and the stars, the boatmen and the beggars, travellers on the road and shepherds with their flutes. These common objects of nature provide Tagore with his imagery, they are also used symbolically and thus the physical universe is invested with a human significance. Common objects of nature symbolise human passions, longings and ideals.

For example,

(a) Objects of Nature symbolise the creative joy of the Eternal, and their beauty is the expression of his delight in the act of creation. Flowers are beautiful, and their beauty has no utility. They symbolise his freedom from bondage to the useful and the practical, joy and beauty results from such freedom.

(b) Nature objects are eternal; they have continued since time immemorial and in their eternity, they symbolise the eternity and the Infinitude of God Himself.

The flower:

(a) *The flower in all its beauty symbolizes the fulfillment of the human longing for the unknown, and the far off. The bud finds its fulfilment in the flower and the flower in the fruit.*

(b) *The flower also symbolizes the victory of joy over pain, and the victory of life and beauty over ugliness. The flower grows beautifully in an environment of thorns.*

(c) *It also symbolizes love and the power of love : that is why the bridegroom is welcomed with a garland of flowers, and flowers are offered to God.*

(d) *It also symbolises the rhythm of life and death. It lasts only for a day, but is immediately replaced by its successor. Life renews itself through death.*

(e) *The phenomenal life is not maya, mere illusion, for the objects of sense are constantly kept alive by death. This fact is also symbolised by the flower.*

(f) *The odour of the flower bursting out of its bondage symbolises freedom.*

Light and darkness. The dawn of the morning symbolises the triumph of light over darkness and of freedom over bondage.

Light is the symbol of freedom, but night is not to be cast aside as mere fetters. Darkness is constantly moving towards life, thus it symbolises the renewal of life through death. (Darkness-light- darkness symbolises the rhythm of birth-death-rebirth.)

Night is mysteriously beautiful. Its darkness symbolises the mystery of the unknown. God is the king of the dark Chamber. One who understands him or achieves with him, comes into light.

Darkness of night is also terrible. It also symbolises destruction. It is behind the veil of night that the Destroyer hides himself, and the storm is God's own signal, the signal of his wrath.

The Stars, the Sky and the clouds. The stars symbolise freedom, love and joy. They are like flowers blossoming in the sky. The sky itself symbolises immensity and eternity.

In their mingling of light and darkness the stars symbolise the rhythm of life, the very mystery of life. They shine (which is life), then are hidden behind the cloud (which is death). The stars are constantly moving towards each other, and this movement is an expression of their love. It symbolises the urge of the individual to become one with the Infinite.

The horizon symbolises the 'oneness' of all things. The vastness of the blue sky symbolises the Infinitude of God. The floating clouds and the moving wind symbolise the Joy of freedom in which lies the significance of life.

The Birds and the River. The flight of birds in the sky symbolises the freedom which man longs for but fails to attain. Man like them longs for a nest in the sky, which is God. The ceaseless flow of life, the intense longing of the human soul for a home of rest in the far away is a recurrent theme of Tagore's poetry. It is symbolised by the ever ceasing flow of water in the river, and the ocean symbolises the great unknown, the heaven of rest for which man longs.

The Boatman and the Traveller. The ferryman symbolises God or Death and the sailing of the boat the journey of life, and the other bank of the river is the great unknown, the eternal which is achieved only through death. The open road also symbolises, the wistful longing for the unknown. Where does the road lead to and what lies on the other bank? This questioning symbolises the eternal mystery of life. At other time, God is the lover or the bridegroom coming from afar or waiting outside for the bride or the beloved. He plays on the Flute. He is the Eternal Krishna and Radha cannot resist his call.

The Sea. The sea in tempest symbolises the eternal questioning. Its waves rise upto the sky to ask this question, and fathom the mysteries of the unknown. The sea rising upto the sky also symbolises the desire for union with the unknown.

The God, the Jivan-Devata, is the eternal stranger. The call of the sea and the wind is the call of this eternal stranger.

Images come from Tagore's pen as do sparks out of a chimney fire. His images are colourful, highly sensuous and sometimes even voluptuous. They are drawn from the most common and ordinary objects and phenomena of nature, and yet they enable Tagore to communicate highly abstract truths to his readers. It is in this way that in his poetry the difficult is made easy, the abstract is made concrete, the unfamiliar is made familiar, and the spiritual is made sensuous. These commonplace images create a deceptive impression of simplicity; in this way Tagore achieves a rare union of simplicity and sublimity. His is a art which conceals art.

Tagore's diction and versification have come in for a good deal of criticism. There are those who are all admiration for his command over English language and technicalities of English prosody. But there are also those who severely take him to task for the various short-comings in his technique of communication. There are critics who go to the extent of saying that in the Gitanjali, "there are no poems, but only beautiful prose pieces", and that his language abounds in inexcusable faults of grammar. A dispassionate study, both of his diction and versification, is, therefore, necessary.

There is no doubt that Tagore is guilty of some faults of grammar and syntax. In this connection, it should be remembered that the English Gitanjali is a transcreation from its Bengali original, and in translation however imaginative, some of the beauty, colour and charm of the original is lost. Moreover, in the English translation Tagore was obliged to use only such words as were likely to be familiar to the English speaking world, and carefully eschew such expressions, however apt and suggestive, as were likely to create difficulties in the way of his foreign readers. Hence there were constant omissions, alterations and selections. It speaks volumes for his extra-ordinary, genius that, working under such limitations, he could 'transcreate' a work of art which took all Europe by storm.

Edward Thompson gives a balanced estimate of Tagore's use of the English language. He writes, "Examination of Rabindranath's English soon shows that it is by no means perfect grammatically. It contains sentences which no educated Englishman would have written, sentences marked by little, subtle errors. There are others who could

bear testimony that his English is absolutely his own, but I will speak out of what I know, having seen some hundreds of his translated poems before publication. He writes English of extreme beauty and flexibility, but with mistakes that can be brought under two or three heads. First, he is not quite at home with the articles. Secondly, he does not use prepositions as an Englishman would. Thirdly, he sometimes has an unnecessary word where clauses meet, which makes the rhythm sag, like cloth with a stone in it. Add to this an occasional misuse of idiom, as 'I took my shelter, where' English says, 'I took shelter', and you have the whole of his slips. These things are but the tacks and nails of language. The beauty and music are all his own. It is one of the most surprising things in the world's literature that such a mastery over an alien tongue ever came to any man. Conrad conquered our language more completely; but he began to attack it in his teens, whereas Rabindranath was over fifty "before I began my courtship of your tongue."

Tagore's diction underwent gradual process of evolution, very much like the evolution of Yeat's diction. In early poetry, his style is over-decorated, florid and pedantic. Gradually the poet showed greater depth and restraint, he learned to load every rift of his subject with oar, and gradually acquired almost Shakespearean felicity of expression, that classical simplicity and austerity which makes for loveliness and imposing majesty. "The flashing felicity of diction", of a line as the following, is a rare achievement, indeed :

In the crests of the corn the skirts of earth tremble

In the later phases of his career, his diction became colloquial close to the everyday language of man. The Gitanjali is a rare example of the union of simplicity with sublimity. The language is simple. There is rarely, a hard unfamiliar word. There are no poeticisms; the language approximates as closely as possible to the language of every day use. The vocabulary is simple, easy and familiar and the grammatical constructions are also easy. There are no complications, no inversions, no long, involved sentences. Shortest words, mostly mono-syllabus, have been used, and the words are selected both with reference to their sense and their sound. The use of monosyllables results in a concentration of vowel sounds and this contributes to the music and melody of his poetry. The use of Alliteration, Onomatopoea, liquid consonants, etc., also contributes to the music and melody of his poetry. The poet is also a master in the use of malapoeia, or the witchery of musical suggestion. In the Gitanjali he has used "a fluent, measured, well modulated prose".

Sometimes, a single word is so used as to make it profoundly significant and suggestive. In a well-known lyric of The Gitanjali, the poet contrasts the smallness of his desires with the greatness of God's gifts. "Day by day thou art making me worthy of the simple, great gifts that thou gavest me unasked-this sky and the light, this body and the

life, and the mind--saving me from the perils of overmuch desire." The contrast between "simple" and "great" and the word "unasked" show the mysteriously beautiful ways of God and enable us to read a new significance into the things we take for granted.

As noted above Tagore's diction is characterised by extreme simplicity, but this simplicity is deceptive. This simple language is the vehicle for highly abstract and mystical truths. In order to convey his apprehension of divine reality, the poet uses concrete and picturesque images. Similes and metaphors drawn from the commonplace and ordinary objects and phenomena of nature are used abundantly and profusely. No other poet displays such a wealth of natural illustration. The use of such graphic and vivid images is an important characteristic of Tagore's diction and contributes much to the open air charm of his poetry. It also contributes to the Indianness of his poetry. It is because of the use of such concrete imagery that God does not remain an abstraction in Tagore's poetry, but becomes a living, breathing reality. Sometimes He is the bridegroom, at other times the bride, or the traveller, or the sailor, or the guest who comes to visit the poet unexpectedly. The human soul yearning for the eternal is likened to a 'flock of homesick cranes' and life and Death are said to be 'the two breasts' of the divine mother. Images like this one are startling in their originality and freshness. Indeed, images come out of his pen as sparks do from a Chimney-fire. Some of the most commonplace images acquire a symbolic significance by constant repetition. Flower, 'river', 'the star', 'the sky', 'the wind', 'spring', 'autumn', 'rain' etc., are all important symbols.

However there can be no denying the fact that such repetition also results in much staleness and monotony. Indeed, Tagore's diction has been much criticised on this ground. For example, writes Edward Thompson, one of his most sympathetic critics. "There is a recurrence of a certain vocabulary, of flowers, south wind, spring, autumn, tears, laughter, separation, tunes, bees and the rest, which sometimes is positively maddening. This sort of thing is most apparent when he is least inspired, but it is by no means absent from his best work. 'In Rabindranath,' said a Bengali to me, 'flowers are always opening, and the south wind is always blowing'. Even in much of the noblest work of his later years, his incorrigible playfulness, the way in which, often when most serious, he will fondle and toss with fancies, spoils some splendid things. In his lectures and addresses, he can never resist the temptation of a glittering simile. Often he dazzles the beholder with beauty when he wishes most to convince. When he should run a straight course, he turns aside. Never was such an Atalanta. From all this comes sometimes a sense of monotony, which hides from the reader the richness and versatility of his work."

Just as Tagore displays full command over the English language so also he is the master of English prosody. No doubt, the lyrics of the Gitanjali are prose-poems, but it is poetic prose of the best and the noblest kind, one which is hardly equalled in its beauty and loveliness by the poetic prose of Walt Whitman in his *Leaves of Grass*. As a matter of fact Tagore was tireless experimenter in verse forms. He experimented with a number of metrical forms but his English lyrics are all prose poems.

Speaking of prose poems Tagore himself writes : "There is a weight and restraint in the language of poetry. That is what is called metre. Prose is not squeamish. It goes about everywhere with its head erect." He compares the movement of a prose-poem to the 'the steps of a young woman, controlled by the natural desire for balance'. He mentions his own experience : I can say this much that I have written a number of prose poems, the subject matter of which could not be expressed in any other way than in that form. There is an easy everyday manner about them perhaps they don't have the usual trappings of poetry : they nevertheless have their beauty. For this reason I consider them as rightfully belonging to the family of poetry. It may be asked : what is a prose poem? I will say I don't know what it is, nor how it is formed. I know this much that it has beauty which cannot be demonstrated by argument."

As he himself said there is no rhyme or metre in the lyrics of *The Gitanjali*. It is *verse libre* or *verse* which has been freed from the bondage of metre. "The essence of free verse consists in the heightened moment of poetic expression forging out a music of its own—not the music associated with verse forms based on the rhythm of metrical feet, but cadence which was bound to no counted syllables or even lines that rose and fell with the emotions and the flow of words. Free verse in other words is an attempt at aesthetic organization (*Verghese*). The rhythm and verse-movement are determined by the requirements of thought and emotion, and not by the laws of metre. It is chantable prose, as Ezra Pound called it, the rhythm of which is a "subtle under-flow". This subtle under-flow of Tagore's poetic-prose is, according to Edward Thompson, an impeccable metrical achievement".

The lyrics of the *Gitanjali* and his other English works have a haunting music of their own. They have an incantatory or mantric quality all their own. They have the lilt of a folk song. A great deal of the charm of the *Gitanjali* lies in its music and melody. It is rhythmic prose, but Tagore has succeeded in capturing the very sweetness and lilt of a folk song. The poems seem to sing themselves as if by some natural magic of their own. They have an exquisite rhythm which charms even the most casual reader. It is certainly poetry, though written in prose. "By shedding the bondage of metre. Tagore has attained a freedom of

movement beyond the scope of verse. The diction and imagery is poetic, it is prose with poetic idiom, and there is a division in word-groups similar to that in poetry, only instead of groups of two or three syllables, there are groups of four or five syllables. Thus he has acquired greater freedom and flexibility, and has still retained the rhythm of poetry, its music and melody." The poems are works of art of a high order of perfection, an art the greatness of which lies in the fact that it conceals art. "It has the rhythm of the Authorised Version of the Bible in its most passionate passages, a rhythm which changes according to the needs of thought and emotion."

However, even the best of us have their faults, and Tagore is no exception. As Paul Verghese points out, "The chief defect of Tagore's poetry, however, is a certain rhythmic and tonal monotony; the tonal variety especially is almost negligible. In other words, the reader fails to be surprised and thrilled by any newness with each succeeding work." But this fault does not lessen his real greatness as a metrist or the value of his contribution.

Poem I : Thou Hast Made Me Endless

Rabindranath Tagore's 'gitanjali; the anthology of his lyrics of devotion, is really a remarkable work and the song: "Thou Hast Made Me Endless", is the First Song of this remarkable anthology. Humility and devotion are the two main characteristics of all the poems of the 'Gitanjali' and so the present poem is no exception.:-

At the very outset of the song the poet speaks of God's kindness in making him, the human soul, immortal-"endless". In the very next breath he alludes to the Hindu-belief in the Transmigration of Soul:"This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life." In the second stanza the poet compares the human body with "This little flute of a reed." The frail human body, "this frail vessel" of the previous stanza, is "a reed" i.e weak and mortal. It is the kindness of God which makes it immortal ("endless") by breathing through this little flute of a reed" "Melodies eternally new.". The poet wishes to say that he composes under divine inspiration.

In the next stanza, the poet again speaks about God's kindness. The "little heart" of the poet i.e man who is finite and mortal, has a limited capacity of holding joy but the kindness of God ("the immortal touch of thy hand") removes that barrier and makes it capable of holding limitless joy which is so great and intense that it cannot be described in words. It, in essence, means that under divine inspiration the poet sings with divine joy thus losing his physical identity and limitation in divine magnanimity, which is impossible to describe.

In the end, the poet speaks of gifts that God has scattered all around us. But because man is finite and mortal his capacity to enjoy and benefit from these divine gifts is also limited. But God is infinite, Eternal and magnanimous so he has all along been showering this gifts on the successive generations of humanity and will always continue to do the same.

Comments

Poet Rabindranath Tagore approaches God in a spirit of absolute humility. He prostrates himself before the maker and pours out his heart at his sacred feet. With deep reverence he expresses his gratitude for making the poet immortal. Here the poet speaks about not his individual soul but he speaks about the immortality of soul as is commonly believed by the sages and saints down the ages. The poet says that the human being-his body-is weak and mortal but it is God which has made it the vehicle of his kindness and grace and for this reason God very kindly renews and rejuvenates human beings. The poet here hints at the Hindu belief in the transmigration of soul.

Poem II : When Thou Comandest Me

The present song gives expression to the poet's sincere and intense feelings of ecstasy, pride, admiration, gratitude and humility. The poet emerges as a mystic longing and endeavouring to meet his Lord and merge his identity into Him. God is pure joy and absolute harmony which transforms all that is dull, drab and dissonant in the poet into peace, melody, sweetness and order. Such is his Creator's Magnanimity and Benevolence that he overlooks the poet's inadvertence and inconsistency of thought and conduct. The song is marked by absolute devotion, innocence and surrender before the Lord of Creation.

In utter humility and gratitude the poet confesses that he sings because of God's inspiration. This singular honour of divine inspiration makes the poet full of gratitude and he feels that his heart is incapable of harbouring such immense joy and may burst. Such feelings bring tears of joy to his eyes. The divine inspiration purifies all that is dross and debasing. The poet transcends the mundane vices and experiences elevation, ennobling and ecstasy. His soul filled with joy strives to pay its respects at the sacred feet of its Master. The entire song and the poet's effort is the worship of his Lord who is pure Love and Indulgence.

Poem III : I Know Not How Thou Singest

The creation of the universe by God has been likened to the playing of a divine symphony. Different manifestations of the divine music are responsible for everything that is present in the universe. The light, air and water are the manifestations of the same divine symphony. These manifestations are responsible for the creation and sustenance of

all activities. Divine music pervades all creation and underneath all diversities of creations there is one divine symphony which turns all discordance and incongruity into order and harmony. God's "Leela" or "Maya" is much beyond human comprehension.

The poet who wishes to understand the mystery finds his efforts frustrated and he is baffled and bewildered but is, at the same time, filled with admiration and awe for his Master.

Poem IV : Life of My Life

The poem "Life of my Life" is a beautiful song from the poet's anthology of songs entitled 'Gitanjali'. This poem is also the poet's tribute to his creator. The poet acknowledges his debt to God. The poet owes his existence to his creator and he is grateful. In order to acknowledge his Benevolence and Magnanimity adequately, the poet expresses his resolve to constantly endeavour to keep his body, heart, mind and soul pure-untainted by the contaminating and polluting influences of evil thoughts, and sinful acts-so that the poet's heart becomes the temple of God. The poet also promises to keep the divine love fresh, blooming and fragrant in his heart and also to disseminate God's kindness and magnanimity for the profit and ennoblement of humanity.

Poem V : I Ask for a Moment's Indulgence

Like other songs of "Gitanjali" studied so far for the present poem, "I ask for a moment's indulgence", is also a devotional song. but this-song is with a subtle difference. Here the poet expresses his intense longing for communion with his Creator but not at the expense of his worldly commitments and duties. Here the poet blends the divine with the mundane. While the poet is alive and conscious of his debt to his Creator, he is equally alive to his duties to the society in which he lives. He seeks his Creator's proximity, his favour, his blessings to give him the ability to perform his mundane commitments. The divine favour, the indulgence, that the poet prays for, is like a rejuvenation so that he may perform his duties. Here the poet is-

"Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam-

True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home !"

-William Wordsworth

So the poet's devotion to God is not to turn his attention away from this world of misery but it is for the world itself. The poet is not an "escapist". The poet promises to perform his worldly duties after seeking and getting divine favour and inspiration.

The poet needs his Creator and his proximity. He is listless without his Creator's favour. All his efforts, even his existence, become torturous and endless misery in the absence of divine inspiration. The

beauty of Nature catches the poet's' attention and evokes admiration but it also whets his appetite for his Creator's presence and he longs for the communion. We are reminded of Shelley, who was encouraged for his beloved's company by looking on Nature:

"The fountains mingle with the river

And the rivers with the ocean,

The winds of heaven mix for ever

With a sweet emotion;

Nothing in the world is single,

All things by a law divine

In one spirit meet and mingle-

Why not I with thine?"

-Percy Bysshe Shelley

The fountains, rivers, winds etc., inspired Shelley and here in the Tagore's poem the beauty of Nature makes him keen for communion. The beauty of Nature has made impact on various poets but with different responses. Robert Frost was bewitched with the snow-covered forest but found no time to enjoy that beautiful scene

"The woods are lovely dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep

And miles to go before I sleep.

-Robert Frost

Similarly the great Urdu poet-'Faiz' found the compulsions of life greater than the memory of his beloved-

"दुनिया ने तेरी याद से बेगाना कर दिया,

तुझसे भी दिल फरेब है गम रोज़गार के"

Rabindranath Tagore has something in common with Frost and Faiz but he is different, vastly different, because while the two abandon one for the other (for whatever reason) Tagore blends devotion and duty admirably and herein lies the greatness of this po

Central Idea Of The Song

The poet yearns for divine communion but not at the expense of his worldly commitments and duties. The communion with his Creator will rejuvenate him to perform his mundane duties with renewed vigor and added enthusiasm. The advent of summer reveals the beauty of Nature and whets the poet's desire for his Creator's company in the absence of which all his existence and efforts are vain and tortuous.

Poem VI : Pluck This Little Flower

Like the poems of this anthology, the "Gitanjali", the song "Pluck This Little Flower" is also a devotional song in which the poet offers the ordinary flower his unworthy self in the service and worship of his Creator, God. The poet likens himself to an ordinary flower which has many blemishes-dull colours and no fragrance-which render it unworthy of being placed in worship. The life of a flower is short and so is the life of the poet, a human being. Like the flower, the poet is also unworthy of being chosen for the service and worship of God. But the poet is burning with an intense desire to be offered in the service and worship of his creator. He entreats his Lord to accept him despite all his blemishes and shortcomings. The poet is not confident that his Master will choose him and accept the poet's wish so he is anxious and apprehensive that it may be too late (as human life like that of the flower is short).

The choice of flower as image is very appropriate. The poet's love for God is as pure and fresh as a freshly blown flower. Like an ordinary flower which has neither attractive odours pleasant fragrance the poet, too, does not have any special attributes to recommend him to the service and worship of his creator. The intensity of poet's love and his humility are the only two things which recommend the poet in the service and worship of God and also puts this song into the category of the best devotional songs.

The Central Idea of the Song

The poet entreats his creator to accept him to be offered as a flower in the service of God. The poet tells his master that he is like the flower with many shortcomings and blemishes. His life is short and like the flower which has neither attractive colours no pleasant fragrance, the poet also has many drawbacks which render him unworthy to be chosen automatically to be offered in worship at the feet of his creator, God. Even then the poet prays that his wish be granted before it is too late.

Poem VII : My Song Has Put Off Her Adornments

The 'Gitanjali' song, "My Song Has Put Off Her Adornments" is yet another devotional song overflowing with spiritual wisdom. The poet stresses the point that the only condition of meeting the Creator is the intense desire and nothing else. The Creator is absolute Love and so love is the only approach to him. The bride's only desire should be the union with her beloved, her husband. The adornments and embellishments of dress and ornaments are the manifestations of pride, vanity and overt manifestations of pride, vanity and ostentation hence positive impediments in the perfect union of the two. The poet his

illustrated this point by stating "My song his put off her adornments". The feeling expressed in this verse is in the same spirit as:

"...God doth not need

Either man's work, or His gifts:...

... .. His state

Is Kingly; "-On Blindness"

-John Milton.

Who can impress him who possesses all and who is the source of all? What God really needs is simplicity, honesty and truthfulness. It is for this reason that the poet has divested his song of all adornments. The greatest beauty and truth lie in simplicity. An Urdu poet has expressed this fact very beautifully:

"सब ही अन्दाजे हुस्न प्यारे हैं,
हम मगर सादगी के मारे हैं,
लाला-ओ-गुल को तुझसे क्या निस्वत ?
नामुकम्मिल से इस्तियारे हैं"

The above couplets mean that forms of beauty are good but the poet is specially and specifically loves simplicity. The beauty of simplicity cannot be compared as the flowers are incomplete metaphors. So simplicity is the essential condition for the perfect union of the Creator and the created. Shakespeare also does not tolerate impediments in the "marriage of true minds":

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments."-Shakespeare

In this song the poet has stated this in no uncertain words:

"Ornaments would mar our union; they would come

between thee and me; their jingling would drown thy whispers."

These trappings of dress and ornaments are pride and vanity and these are impediments in the perfect union. Annihilation of "self" is the one and only condition for the communion with God. It is for this reason that the poet has discarded the poetic flourishes to make his song appealing and acceptable to God. The figurative employment of the "flute of reed" is really very effective. The reed-flute is used by Krishna to play His divine music because reed is humble and straight. The poet speaks of "vanity" and "shame" to tell his Creator that he now realizes the futility of feeling proud on being an accomplished poet, who knows all the tricks of the trade (of using figurative language). He confesses that he has realized that the best beauty and elegance lie in simplicity of language and honesty of expression.

Poem VIII : The Child who is Decked With Prince's Robes

In the preceding song the poet asserted that the dress and ornaments were positive impediments in the perfect union of the bride with her dear husband thereby implying that the demonstration of physical prosperity engenders a complex which hinders the union between the creator and the created. God loves simplicity and sincerity and can be achieved through simplicity, sincerity, honesty and truthfulness. Since this echoes similar sentiments the mention of the preceding song become inevitable.

Whereas in the preceding song the poet speaks about the union between the Creator and the created in the present song, he is speaking about more mundane but equally vital topic.

In this song also the poet wishes to stress that the demonstration of wealth leads to the segregation of the child from his playmates thus depriving him not only from the enjoyment of life in a carefree manner which is health and happiness-giving but also keeps him from learning the vital lessons essential for life and its enjoyment. The encumbrances of costly dress and ornaments distract the child's attention thus depriving him from a fuller enjoyment of life. These also hinder the free movement and use of his limbs. Another and a more important disadvantage is the feeling of superiority in the child which segregates him from the company of the playmates of simpler origin and lower social status.

Here the poet wishes to say that worldly wealth is not only an obstacle in the realisation of God but also an impediment in mundane matters as well. The poet stresses the need of mixing with people of humble background for a comprehensive understanding of life. He has chosen the image of a child dressed in costly clothes and ornaments to drive his point of integration with humble and common folk in an atmosphere of cordiality and mutual respect. If such feelings of equality, cooperation, mutual respect and cordiality are engendered from early childhood a man can achieve anything in life and this is the surest way of achieving the union with God-through the love of humanity. This thought has been very beautifully illustrated by a couplet of Iqbal' who incidentally, was a contemporary of Rabindranath Tagore:

"खुदा के आशिक्र तो हैं हज़ारों, बनों में फिरते हैं, मारे-मारे
मैं उसका बन्दा बनूँगा जिसको खुदा के बन्दों से प्यार होगा।"

Wordsworth speaks:

"The child is father of the Man:

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety."

-My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold

-Wordsworth

Here the poet tells that all those qualities which are found in a child blossom into a man and that's the reason why he calls the "child" to be the FATHER of the "Man". So if noble feelings and thoughts are given in childhood they will bloom and blossom when the child attains manhood. So the childhood stage is very vital. In 'Education of Nature' also the Nature selects a child.

**This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make**

A lady of my own."

'The Education of Nature'

-Wordsworth

It is for this reason that Rabindranath Tagore has chosen a child to press his point home. The dress and ornaments here also are symbols of vanity and show and hence impediments in the moral and spiritual development of a child's personality besides depriving him of many other vital things.

Central Idea Of The Song

For a successful life it is necessary that a person should be allowed to lead a life in the company of his fellow beings from his early childhood. Such a life, in the proximity of Nature and in open air not only gives health and vitality but teaches vital lessons of living with equality, cooperation and cordiality. The encumbrances and ostentatious not only hamper physical development and movements but also alienate the person from his own people and make him vain thus rendering him incapable of the full enjoyment of life and achieving his goals in life.

Poem IX : O Fool, To Try to Carry Thyself

The 'Gitanjali' songs are devotional. The poet in the present song "O Fool, To Try To Carry Thyself" exhorts all to have perfect faith in the magnanimity and charity of God Almighty because he takes care of all the creation. The faith in God is the greatest wisdom and freedom from covetousness is the greatest virtue. Contentment is the greatest possession. The poet exhorts. "Leave all thy burdens on His hands who can bear all, and never look behind in regret." The holy book 'Gita' also exhorts us:

"कर्मण्ये वाधिकारस्ते ..."

i. e., is perform all your duty and leave the outcome to God. Similarly, the poet exhorts us to be free from covetousness as 'Nazeer' Akbarabadi in his "Banjaaraa Naama" does:

“टुक हिसों हवा को छोड़ मियाँ”

The Bible also speaks against wealth when it says that a camel may pass through the eye of a needle but not a rich man will go to heaven. Here the wealthy is the one who has ill-gotten wealth because worldly wealth leads people on the path of evil and sin.

The poet lays emphasis on absolute faith in God and pure conduct as we have in the poem "Character of a Happy man" by Sir Henry Watton:

**"How happy is he born and taught
Whose armour is his honest thought
And simple truth his utmost skill !
"Who God doth late and early pray
More of his grace than gifts to lend:"**

Central Idea Of The Song

"O Fool, To Try To Carry Thyself" is a devotional song exhorting us to have faith and trust in him who is Kind, Magnanimous, Omniscient And Omnipotent. The soul should be free from the contamination of covetousness. God has granted all that is needed so we should not worry about the outcome of their pious and sincere efforts; we should learn contentment.

Poem X : Here Is Thy Footstool

The song "Here Is Thy Footstool" is, without the least doubt, devotional. Mundane achievements-worldly possessions like wealth and scholarship-lead to covetousness and make people vain. The vanity leads to their segregation from the common humanity. Vain people are vain because they labour under the misconception of being superior. Any heart or mind tainted with pride cannot be the abode of God. God does not reside in magnificent structures called temples, mosques or churches. God resides in the heart of simple and humble people most of whom are poor, deprived and unfortunate. Such people have absolute faith in God. In preceding songs also the poet has spoken that dress and ornaments impediments in the realization of God.

The same idea is found in the Bible where it is said that the rich cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Here the rich are those who are vain on account of their wealth, who are unscrupulous in the pursuit of wealth, who consider themselves superior to other human beings. God loves simplicity, humility and sincerity and these qualities are found mostly among the poor, the deprived and the unfortunate. It is for this reason that Iqbal; the great Urdu poet and the contemporary of Rabindranath Tagore says:

“खुदा के आशिक्र तो हैं हज़ारों, बनों में फिरते हैं, मारे-मारे
 मैं उसका बन्दा बनूँगा जिसको खुदा के बन्दों से प्यार होगा।”

Here, like Rabindranath Tagore, 'Iqbal' also approaches God through his loved ones that is through those who love humanity irrespective of any discrimination.

At another place the same poet sings protesting against acquisition, exploitation, monopolistic acts and heralds the rise of democracy in very forceful verses:

“उठो, मेरी दुनिया के गरीबों को जगा दो, कारवे उमारा ऽ के दरो-दीवार हिला दो
 गर्माओ गुलामों का लहू सोजे यक्रीं से, कुज्जिश्के फ़रोमाया को शाहीं से लड़ा दो,
 सुलतानिये जमहूर का आता है ज़माना, जो नक्रशे कुहन तुमको नजर आवे मिटा दो।”

In the same poem we find two very significant couplets which echo the same thoughts as the song of Rabindranath Tagore does:

“क्यों खालिक्रों मखलूक में हाइल हों ये पर्दे, पीराने कलीसा को नलीसा से उठा दो।”

Which means: Why these curtains should be obstacles between the Creator and his Creation, So expel these priests of the church from the churches.

“मैं नाखुशों बेज़ार हूँ मरमर की सिलों में, मेरे लिए मिट्टी का हरम और बना दो”

Which means: It is God speaking-I am angry and ill-at-ease in these magnificent structure of marble slabs. So construct for me an humble mud-abode.

Through this song the poet wishes to convey that loving the poor, the deprived, the unfortunate is the surest way of realizing God. People desirous of serving and worshipping God should serve the deprived and suffering humanity. The poet has made a very clever and effective use of the device of repetition. All the four stanzas conclude with "the poorest", "lowliest", & "lost". It is almost a refrain and makes a lasting and powerful impression on the psyche of reader.

Central Idea of the Song

God loves the poor, the deprived, the unfortunate and he lives with them. God loves simplicity and humility. Through the love and service of the suffering, the deprived, the unfortunate and the poor God can be realized.

Rabindra Nath Tagore, a man of versatile genius and achievements, was the first Indian poet and writer who gained for Modern India a permanent place on the world literary map.

He mainly wrote in Bengali and translated his own creations into English, often changing, transforming the originals. His English renderings may be called trans-creations. Tagore was a poet par

excellence and all his writings-Play, Short Stories, Novels, Essays, Letters and Speeches, he gave in India and abroad, are permeated with a rich fund of creative imagination.

Birth, Childhood and Education of Tagore : Rabindra Nath Tagore was born at Joransanko, Calcutta on 6th May, 1861. His grand father, Prince Dwarka Nath Tagore, was an intimate friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a great thinker and social reformer. Poets father Name was Debendra Nath Tagore and Mother Sarla Devi, was the Mistress of the big household. She was so awfully busy in domestic chores that she could pay hardly any attention to her children.

In his childhood Tagore received little attention from the ladies of the house. He spent most of his time in servants' quarters. Often he would remain confined to a room and would gaze on and on out of the window like Amal in the post office. At night a servant perhaps Isvara, used to Narrate stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata to children. So Tagore becomes familiar with ancient epics.

He was sent to school but the conventional pattern of education failed to attract and mould his free spirit. Private lessons were regularly imparted to him at home. He was absorbed more and more in mental reflection and even of at early age he cultivated an idea of the grace and harmony that reign in the universe. As he grew up, it moulded his entire outlook and found powerful expression in his mature works the Gitanjali Sadhna, Our Universe etc.

Tagore was a Romantic Poet: During the first decade of the twentieth century Rabindra Nath Tagore suffered severe tragic blows in the death of his beloved wife, daughter, son, father, and a budding poet, Sameer Roy whom he treated like his own son. He spiritualized his sorrow and Gitanjali. Lyrics were the results.

Rabindra Nath Tagore a true romantic poet, a lyricist and one of the greatest poets of India and the world. His genius is essentially lyrical as is evident from the illustrations from Gitanjali.

Married Life of Tagore : Tagore was married to Mrinalini Devi a girl of eleven on December 9. 1883, In 1884 he became the secretary of Adi Brahma Samaj and condemned the Hindu caste system and after orthodox customs. At the age of 29 he was the father of 3 children. Tagore's numerous works, written both in prose, and verse, were published in journal Sadhana. During this period Tagore cultivated closest communion with nature and acquired complete knowledge of the joys and sufferings of human life.

Important Time of Tagore's Life: The year 1901 was-very important in Tagore' s life. His school, Shantiniketan (The Peace Retreat), was founded at Bolpur. He founded it with the intention of forming it as the nucleus of a cultural organization based on the model

of gurukulas. He thought that it would gradually become a centre of international culture. He felt that the world was full of sound scholars but not of sound men. It was with the purpose of bringing out sound men that his school was started. According to him the sound man should come before the sound scholar. The open air school, Shantiniketan, developed into a famous University, Vishva-Bharati, in 1920. It embodies Tagore's ideal of "the union of all sections of humanity in sympathy and understanding, in truth and love." Vishva-Bharati is an international university where the whole world has become a single nest.

Rabindra Nath was an exponent of the Swadeshi Movement. The Swadeshi Movement began as a protest against this grievous act of injustice, and in due course of time it developed into a national movement for freedom. He took an active part in it. He lectured, organized processions and toured extensively. Rabindra Nath asked people to reform-villages, to eradicate social evils and to arouse mass-consciousness. Politicians did not share his views. So he withdrew from politics and returned to Shantiniketan where he remained in quiet meditation for a year, only to emerge as an international figure.

Period of Gitanjali : In the post Gitanjali period his literary activity went on unimpeded. In 1922, he published his famous play Raktakarabi, translated into English as Red Oleanders. He wrote two articles Samasya and Samadhan on Hindu-Muslim unity. During his South American tour he enriched Bengali literature by writing two books-(A) Jatri and (B) Purabi.

Both are collection of poems. Rarisesh is a collection of beautiful lyrics, yogayog, a novel, is a work of art sufficiently complete in itself. The child is his only work which was originally written in English and was later on rendered into Bengali. Punascha (Postscript) is a sequel to Parishesh, which the poet had thought to be the last collection of his poems. Dui Bon (two sisters) is a psychological short story and Char Adhyaya, a Novelette, is the love story of an ill-fated couple. Prantik is a collection of mystical poems which strike an austere note and reveal 'the nearness of death'.

Gitanjali is an important work of art. These are the main features of Gitanjali :

- (a) *God and human.*
- (b) *God and nature.*
- (c) *Nature and the soul.*
- (d) *The soul and humanity.*

Gitanjali is a prayer of God. It consists of poems which are offering of the finite to infinite. The theme of Gitanjali is the realization of God through self-purification, love constant prayer and devotion

surrender to God through service to humanity. In the Gitanjali there is a wide variety of love-love for women, his fellow beings, love for humanity, love for God, for nature, for his country, for beauty and truth. Tagore has a comprehensive view of life. He is as much a poet of love of God and religion and his poetry is true manifestation of Sat yam, Shivam and Sunderam, the trinity of Truth, Welfare and Beauty.

Gitanjali is a collection of devotional songs in praise of God. These songs are firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Indian Vaishnava poetry and they reveal a highly personal quest for the Divine. They are characterized by a great variety of moods. The whole Gitanjali is created bearing the theme of God.

Rabindra Nath Tagore began his literary career by writing on Bengali Banphul in his first verse Narrative. He had written about 7000 lines of verse before he was eighteen.

Tagore's place in literature is assured. His English Translations, especially Gitanjali for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize, made him famous all over the world. The following three main features of his poetry inspire and will continue to inspire suffering humanity:

- (a) *The positive attitude of sympathy for all, even the lowly and the lost.*
- (b) *The futility of mere Negation or renunciation and the need for a holy or a whole development of life.*
- (c) *The ultimateness of spiritual values to be obtained by inward honesty and cultivation of inner life.*

Rabindra Nath Tagore has rightly been acknowledged as a great poet not only of India or of orient but of the entire world. He is without doubt a world poet. He is relevant to the people of the entire world.

Rabindra Nath Tagore has a dream and a vision of the whole world. His wisdom is not material success in life, nor for salvation but it is for contentment and eternal peace. He is the poet of the fleeting moment for the dream still remembered at dawn, of memories of past existences and of perceptions we can hardly define Tagore is, the great master of nuance, who makes us feel the world.

Style of Tagore's : Tagore's lyrics are distinguished by the beauty and richness of imagery. Gitanjali, The Gardener, The Crescent Moon etc. abound in poetic, similes, romantic metaphors and suggestive and picturesque symbols. His imagery concretises his emotions and increases the poetic beauty of his lyrics which are already emotionally powerful and touching. Tagore's imagery is mainly drawn from nature and Indian mythology. W.E. Yeats says about Tagore's use of imagery in Gitanjali, "Flowers and rivers the blowing of couch shells, the heavy rain of the

Indian July or the parching heat are images of the moods of that heart in union or separation." Rabindra Nath Tagore is one of the greatest poet of the world. He spoke to us of "mind and soul, leading the human spirit towards God."

Tagore's Poetry : Tagore's poetic genius developed as he grew up. The gradual development of his poetic genius corresponds with the various stages in the evolution of his personality. His early poetry was imitative and sentimental. He had no sense of form. He composed his early poems, *Banupal* and *Bhagna Hridaya* in adolescence when the poet was restless and perturbed on account of his own inner tension. His mind had nothing but, hot vapour and vapour filled bubbles frothed and eddied round a vortex of lazy fancy, aimless and unmeaning." His early poetry has little poetic merit but it shows promise for future development and greatness. It is romantic in character and expresses the young poet's joys and sorrows. Some of his poems, written in Bengali, were published in *Jnanankur*, a periodical.

The second stage in Tagore's development came when he was at the crossing of adolescence and youth, when he was rising above the vague, self obsessed. Miseries of adolescence and discovering his own ground. The second stage begins with the appearance of the evening song. It bears an unmistakable stamp of this phase of experimentation. It makes the beginning of a New art and New standard in the sphere of poetry.

The third stage in the development of Tagore's poetic genius marks a pause, the momentary exhaustion of the poet's versatile poetic impression which had reached its climax in *Chitra*.

The fourth stage in Tagore's poetic career began with a spiritual experience. Describing this experience he says that one morning he was gazing upon the rising sun when all of a sudden "a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes, and is found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side. The radiance pierced in a moment through the folds of sadness and despondency which had accumulated over my heart and flooded it with universal light."

Tagore's poems of the last phase *Punasca* (1932), *Bicitrita* (1933), *Bithika* (1934), *Ses Saptak* (1935) and *Ses Lakha* (1941) are intensely spiritual.

Tagore chose highly suggestive, melodious and expressive words from a rich treasure. Sunita Kumar Chatterji rightly called him 'Vak-Pati', the master of words. His poetry has a rare felicity of diction which arises from the use of apt and melodious words which convey his meditative and reflective feelings. We cannot substitute even a single word because by doing so we will destroy the sense, spirit and intrinsic beauty of the

poem. Imagination enables him to harmonise ideas among themselves and to communicate them in a beautiful, musical and rhythmic style. He composes lines of haunting beauty by his harmonious blending of words, music and imagination. He shows an unique knack of turning his theme and verses to the inevitable spiritual purpose. His poetic style is noticeable for musical quality, flawless ease, spontaneity, suggestiveness and picturesqueness.

Gitanjali is mainly devotional poetry in the great Indian tradition but the treatment is new and original.

These following are the main characteristics of the Gitanjali-

- (a) *Simplicity, sublimity and intensity commingle in Tagore's poetry or Gitanjali.*
- (b) *Tagore's thought is always sublime but his diction is simple and clear.*
- (c) *Music and melody run together in his Gitanjali.*
- (d) *Gitanjali express Tagore's innate love for humanity.*
- (e) *The diction is simple, clear, highly expressive and apt.*
- (f) *Gitanjali is a collection of devotional songs in praise of God.*
- (g) *Music is an essential ingredient of Gitanjali.*
- (h) *Gitanjali's words are easy, simple and high suggestive.*
- (i) *The main theme of Gitanjali is devotional and mystical.*
- (j) *In Gitanjali the poet sings songs to the Eternal.*
- (k) *In Gitanjali, Tagore castigates blind worship and idolatry in the Name of caste and creed and upholds the cause of the humble and the lowly who are denied the sacred rights of man.*

The English Gitanjali was first published in 1912-13 and it won for Tagore the prestigious Nobel prize for Literature. Tagore's fame crossed the boundaries of Bengal and, became a world figure. It has been translated into most of the important language, of the world and its popularity has been continuous and world wide.

Tagore, who had won great recognition as a poet in Bengali before the appearance of the English Gitanjali, composed it in a mood of renunciation, which was induced by the deaths of his near and dear ones in quick succession. He suffered a number of bereavements-death of his wife in 1902, of his daughter Renuka in 1903, of his favourite disciple Satish Roy in 1904, of his father in 1905, and of his youngest son in 1907.

The Conception of God in Gitanjali : The conception of God takes many forms in Gitanjali. Naturally the poet also appears in

corresponding situations. These different forms God takes, represent the main traits of Mysticism in Gitanjali.

- (a) *The poet conceives God as the father of the creation and so also of his motherland. He says, "Into that heaven of freedom, my father let my country awake,"*
- (b) *Tagore finds glories and mysteries of God in Children. The poet sings in Gitanjali, when I bring to you coloured toys, my child, I understand why there is such a play of colours on clouds, on waters and why flowers are painted.*
- (c) *He conceives God as Beloved. He sings; "Yes, I know, this is nothing but thy love, O, beloved of my heart."*
- (d) *The poet proceeds most honestly and humbly to confess that God's blessings has made him a poet and so he is the Master poet. He sings, "My poet's vanity dies in shame before thy sight, O Master poet."*
- (e) *In order to honour God, the poet imagines him to be the king and himself to be extremely poor.*
- (f) *The poet feels that God is a true friend of human being as he is omnipresent with him. He sings, "Drunk with joy of singing, I forget myself and call thee my friend who art my lord."*
- (g) *The poet takes God to be the perfect singer and his creation in his song. He sings in Gitanjali, "I know not how thou singest, my master, I ever listen in silent amazement."*

Tagore's conception of God is practical and emotional both but it has no illusions. He by all means realizes God in humanity.

Tagore was the most versatile poet of his time. His vast poetic output is characterized by variety of themes and originality both in thought and expression. No other Indo-English poet either before or after him showed so much freshness and fecundity of imagination in glorifying the common objects of Nature world and human life and in this respect he stand in front rank in Indo-English romantic, poetry. Gitanjali, the greatest contribution of Tagore to Indian poetry is mainly a collection of lyrics of devotion in the great Indian tradition and its motto is "I am here to sing the songs." Closely related with the main theme, other notes too, i.e. love of nature, love of humanity and world and the theme of the glorification of childhood.

The themes in Tagore's poetry are varied and he treats them in an original manner. In his two thousand old songs, he wrote on God, devotion, nature, love, Motherland and beauty etc. His originally mainly consists in creating a synthesis between Modern European thought and traditional Indian philosophy.

About the Gitanjali : Gitanjali is an immortal work of art. In it many themes are woven together like flowers in a beautiful wreath. Its hundred odd lyrics, in the words of S.B. Mukherji open 'four worlds' before its- (1) God and the human soul, (2) God and Nature, (3) Nature and the soul, (4) the soul and humanity. These four worlds coalesce and we cannot strictly separate them. Gitanjali is a prayer to God. It consists of poems which are "offering of the finite to the infinite." Its central theme is the soul's voyage to eternity. Broadly speaking, the theme of Gitanjali is the realization of God through self purification, love, constant prayer and devotion, dedication and surrender to God through service to humanity. We can classify its theme in the following order:

(1) **God:** Gitanjali is a collection of devotional songs in praise of God. These songs are firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Indian Vaishnava poetry and they reveal a highly personal quest for the Divine. They are characterized by a great variety of moods and approaches.

(2) **Death:** Towards the end of Gitanjali the poet's thoughts turn to Death and the theme of death finds a varied and artistic treatment. Tagore is not afraid of death. He welcomes it joyfully because it is the gateway through which union with God is Possible. When death arrives, the poet can say: "When I go from here let this be my parting word that what I have seen is unsurpassable."

According to Tagore, "Death looks to be terrible but it leads the human soul to its tryst with the Eternal".

Death is not the end of life. It is the renewal of life.

(3) **Nature:** In many songs in Gitanjali the poet explores the relationship of God and Nature. In it the poet ranges over the immensities of time and space, the eternal and the temporal, and probes into the mysteries of life, of man and nature, and the poet's vision is 'free, vast and serene'. One of the central themes in Gitanjali is the immanence of God in love and joy in Nature's beauties to woo the human soul.

(4) **Humanity:** Along with the relationship of the individual soul and God, the relationship of the individual soul with other men, is also explored. God is with "the poor and the lowly and the lost." S.B. Mukherji writes: The vision sweeps down upon the sordid present and dwells upon the insults to humanity in the name of caste and creed, to the humble and the lowly who are denied the sacred rights of men." Tagore castigates all religious orthodox.

Gitanjali is mainly devotional poetry in the great Indian Tradition but the treatment is New and original. In the words of Dr. K.R.S. Iyengar - "The imaginary, the conceits, the basic experience, the longing, the trial, the promise, the realizational have the quaintly Indian flavour and taste. Its familiarity was its recommendation to India, its apparent novelty was its recommendation abroad." A peculiarity of Tagore's lyrics in English Gitanjali is that they are prose poems.

Tagore's poetry is distinguished by the use of Numerous beautiful images, romantic, metaphors and suggestive symbols which are worth nothing for their mystical depth, romantic beauty, exotic freshness and sheer poetic and beauty. It gives concrete expression to the poet's emotions and contributes to poetic charm- of his poetry that is already touching and emotionally powerful.

Tagore's imagery is functional, illustrative, decorative, evocative and emotive. It imparts clarity, picturesqueness and concreteness to his thought and experience. We find three types of images in Tagore's poetry.

- (a) *Reciprocal Images.*
- (b) *Figurative Images.*
- (c) *Direct Images.*

When the poet reveals himself thorough images in which the tenors and vehicles reciprocate.

The poet expresses his vision, emotions and experiences through methaphor, simile personification and mythological or legendry images.

The poet's visions, dreams and fancies are expressed by means of picturesque and concrete fancies.

Tagore's imagery is largely romantic, sensuous and picturesque. The - majority of images are visual, auditory and olfactory.

Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Kalam (born October 15, 1931) is an Indian Scientist and engineer. He became President of India in 2002. He is well known as Dr. A P. J. Abdul Kalam or Abdul Kalam. Dr. A P. J. Abdul Kalam....Profile of India's first citizen born on 15th October 1931 at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, specialized in Aeronautical Engineering from Madras Institute of Technology. Dr. Kalam made significant contribution as Project Director to develop India's first Indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV-III) which successfully injected the Rohini Satellite in the near earth orbit in July 1980 and made India an exclusive member of Space Club. He was responsible for the evolution of ISRO's Launch Vehicle Programme, particularly the PSLV configuration. After working for two decades in ISRO and mastering launch vehicle technologies, Dr. Kalam

took up the responsibility of developing Indigenous Guided Missiles at Defence Research and Development Organisation as the Chief Executive of Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP). He was responsible for the development and operationalisation of AGNI and PRITHVI Missiles and for building indigenous capability in critical technologies through networking of multiple institutions. He was the scientific Adviser to Defence Minister and Secretary, Department of Defence Research and Development from July 1992 to December 1999. During this period he led to weaponisation of strategic missile systems and the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in collaboration with Department of Atomic Energy, which made India a nuclear weapon state. He also gave trust to self-reliance in defence system by progressing multiple development tasks and mission projects such as Light Combat Aircraft.

As Chairman of Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (FIFAC) and as an eminent scientist, he led the country with the help of 500 experts to arrive at Technology Vision 2020 giving a road map for transforming India from the present developing status to a developed nation. Dr. Kalam has served as the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, in the rank of Cabinet Minister, from November 1997 to November 2001 and was responsible for evolving policies, strategies and missions for many development applications. Dr. Kalam was also the Tableman, Ex-office, of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet (SKC-C) and piloted India Millennium Mission 2020.

Dr. Kalam took up academic pursuit as Professor, Technology & Societal Transformation at Anna University, Chennai from November 2001 and was involved in teaching and research tasks. Above all he took up a mission to ignite the young minds for national development by meeting high school students across the country.

In his literary pursuit four of Dr. Kalam's books-"Wings of Fire", "India 2010-A Vision for the New Millenniare", "Your Journey" and "Ignited Minds-Unleashing the power within India" have become household names in India and among the Indian nationals abroad. These books have been translated in many languages.

Dr. Kalam is one of the most distinguished scientists of India with the unique honour of receiving honorary doctorates from 30 universities and institutions. He has been awarded the coveted civilian awards-Padma Bhushan (1981) and Padma Vibhushan (1990) and the highest civilian award Bharat Ratna (1997). He is a recipient of several other awards and Fellow of many professional institutions.

Dr. Kalam became the 11th President of India on 25th July, 2002. His focus is on transforming India into a developed nation by 2010.

He is also a very famous scientist. He is known as "Missile Man of India".

Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam was born 15 October, 1931 in Rameshwaram Madras Presidency, British India (now Tamil Nadu, India) usually referred to as Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, was the 11 th President of India, serving from 2002 to 2007; he was elected during the tenure of the National Democratic Alliance (India) Coalition government, under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpai. During his term as President, he was popularly known as the people's president.

Before his term as India's president, he worked as an aeronautical engineer with DRDO and ISRO. He is popularly known as the Missile Man of India for his work on development of ballistic missile and space rocket technology. In India he is highly respected as a scientist and as an engineer.

Kalam played a pivotal organisational, technical and political role in India's Pokhran-II Nuclear test in 1998, the first since the original nuclear test by India in 1974. He is Chancellor of Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (Thiruvanthapuram) a professor at ANNA University, (Chennai) and adjunct/visiting faculty at many other academic and research institutions across India.

Political Views of Abdul Kalam : In his book India 2020 APJ Abdul Kalam strongly advocates an actions plan to develop India into a knowledge superpower and into a developed nation by the year 2020. He regards his work on India's Nuclear weapons program as a way to assert India's place as a future superpower.

It has been reported that there is considerable demand in South Korea for translated versions of books authored by him.

Kalam continues to take an active interest in other developments in the field of science and technology. He has proposed a research programme for developing bio-implants. He is a supporter of open source software over proprietary solutions and believes that the use of open source software on a large scale will bring the benefits of informations technology to more people.

After graduating in Physics from St. Joseph's College in Tiruchirapalli, Abdul Kalam graduated with a diploma in the mid-1950s from Madras Institute of Technology specializing in Aeronautical Engineering. As the Project Director, he was heavily involved in the development of India's first Indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III). As Chief Executive of Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), he also played a major part in

developing many missiles of India including Agni and Prithvi. Although the entire project has been criticised for being overrun and mismanaged. He was the Chief Scientific Adviser to Prime Minister and Secretary, Department of Defence Research and Development from July 1992 to December 1999. Pokhran-II nuclear tests were conducted during this period, and have been associated with Kalam although he was not directly involved with the nuclear programme at the time.

Honours of the Abdul Kalam: On April 29, 2009, he became the first Asian to be bestowed the Hoover Medal, America's top engineering prize, for his outstanding contribution to public service. The citation said that he is being recognised for making state-of-the-art healthcare available to the common man at affordable prices, bringing quality medical care to rural areas by establishing a link between doctors and technocrats, using spin-offs of defence technology to create state-of-the-art medical equipment and launching tele-medicine projects connecting remote rural-based hospitals to the super-specialty hospital. A pre-eminent scientist, a gifted engineer, and a true visionary, he is also a humble humanitarian in every sense of the word, it added.

On 13 September 2009, he was a recipient of the International von Karman Wings Award.

The Government of India has honoured him with the nation's highest civilian honours: the Padma Bhushan in 1981; Padma Vibhushan in 1990; and the Bharat Ratna in 1997 for his work with ISRO and DRDO and his role as a scientific advisor to the Indian government.

Kalam is the third President of India to have been honoured with a Bharat Ratna before being elected to the highest office, the other two being Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Zakir Hussain. He is also the first scientist and first bachelor to occupy Rashtrapati Bhavan.

After his tenure as the president he is now a visiting guest professor at JSS university, Mysore. He has agreed to deliver a minimum of four lectures every year.

The moment you think of missile, and if you are an Indian, chances are that almost always the figure of Abdul Kalam conjures up in the mind. Such is the impact of Dr. Kalam on the development of missile technology in India.

Perhaps the same impact led me into buying his autobiography on my trip to India recently; Actually it was long on my list of 'to read' books. I'm glad now that I've it. Kalam's autobiography is as inspiring as his life to the millions of Indians around the globe.

Aptly titled "Wings of Fire," it's written by one of Kalam's own pupils, Arun Tiwari. Arun worked under Kalam for over a decade in the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad. How difficult the task must have been for Arun is expressed in his own words, "His (Dr. Kalam) conversation was not always easy to follow, but was always fresh and stimulating. There were complexities, subtleties, and intriguing metaphors and subplots in his narrative, but gradually the unfolding of his brilliant mind took the form of a continuous discourse." But it was all worth it in the end, "For myself (Arun), writing this book has been like a pilgrimage." What more can one say for such a person.

Avul (great-grandfather), Pakir (grandfather) Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam was born in 1931 in the island town of Rameshwaran in Tamil Nadu to a little educated boatowner. His father Jainulabdeen was a spiritual man always willing to help others. As Kalam himself said he tried throughout his life to emulate his father in his world of science and technology. Surely he must have been someone special.

"When my father came out of the mosque after the prayers, people of different religions would be sitting outside, waiting for him. Many of them offered bowls of water to my father who would dip his fingertips in them and say a prayer. This water was then carried home for invalids. I also remember people visiting our home to offer thanks after being cured. My father always smiled and asked them to thank Allah, the benevolent and merciful."

Kalam's mother Ashiamma was an ideal helpmate to his father. She used to feed quite a few outsiders every day.

Two other persons influenced Kalam's boyhood, his sister's husband Ahmed Jallaluddin and cousin Samsuddin. Kalam's talks with Jallaluddin mostly revolved around spiritual matters. Although Jallaluddin had limited schooling because of family reasons, he always encouraged Kalam to excel in his studies.

This is what Kalam says of him:

"Incidentally, at the time I speak of, he was the only person on the entire island who could write English. He wrote letters for almost anybody in need...Jallaluddin always spoke to me about educated people, of scientific discoveries, of contemporary literature, and of the achievements of medical science. It was he who made me aware of a "brave, new world" beyond our narrow confines."

Samsuddin was the sole distributor for newspapers in Rameswaran. Kalam worked for a while as his helper during the outbreak of Second World War in 1939.

Kalam's beautifully sums up the influences in his early childhood:

"I inherited honesty and self-discipline from my father; from my mother, I inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness and so did my three brothers and sister. But it was the time I spent with Jallaluddin and Samsuddin that perhaps contributed most to the uniqueness of my childhood and made all the difference in my later life. The unschooled wisdom of Jallaluddin and Samsuddin was so intuitive and, responsive to non-verbal messages, that can unhesitatingly attribute my subsequently manifested creativity to their company in my childhood."

The real step in the direction where Kalam stands today was taken when he applied for admission into the Madras Institute of Technology. He got selected but the fee of 1,000 rupees was too much for his father. His sister, Zohara, had to mortgage her gold bangles and chain to see him through.

From MIT, Kalam went to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) as a trainee. He worked on engine overhauling as part of a team. Out of HAL, as a graduate aeronautical engineer, Kalam applied for both the Air Force and the Directorate of Technical Development and Production DTD&P(Air) of the Ministry of Defence. He got interview calls from both the places.

He could only finish ninth in the batch of 25 examined to select eight officers for commissioning in the Air Force. Needless to say he was terribly disappointed. On the positive side he got selected as a Senior Scientific Assistant at the DTD&P(Air). His monthly salary was Rs. 250 per month in 1958.

It was his work on an indigenous hovercraft named Nandi that got him noticed. He was taken by the Indian Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) as a Rocket Engineer. Sometime in 1962 he was asked to proceed to New York, US, for a six-month training programme on sounding rocket launching techniques, at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) work centres.

He worked at Langley Research Centre (LRC) and Goddard Flight Centre (CSFC). Towards the end of his trip he went to Wallops Flight Facility at Wallops Island in East Coast, Virginia. This place was the base for NASA's sounding rocket programme. Something there made him feel very proud and reading it made me too.

"Here, I saw a painting prominently displayed in the reception lobby. It depicted a battle scene with a few rockets flying in the background. A painting with this theme should be the most commonplace thing at a Flight Facility, but the painting caught my eye because the soldiers on the side launching the rockets were not white, but dark-skinned, with the racial features of people found in South Asia. One day, my curiosity got the better of me, drawing me

towards the painting. It turned out to be Tipu Sultan's army fighting the British. The painting depicted a fact forgotten in Tipu's own country but commemorated here on the other side of the planet. I was happy to see an Indian glorified by NASA as a hero of warfare rocketry."

Nevertheless Tipu did manage to inspire a few talented Indians:

"The development of Indian rockets in the twentieth century can be seen as a revival of the eighteenth-century dream of Tipu Sultan. When Tipu Sultan was killed, the British captured more than 700 rockets and subsystems of 900 rockets in the battle of Turukhanahally in 1799...These rockets had been taken to England by William Congreve and were subjected by the British to what we can 'reverse engineering' today."

Thanks mainly to efforts of people like Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and Jawaharlal Nehru, rocketry was reborn in India. Prof. Sarabhai was the one who inspired Kalam to stretch himself beyond boundaries. For Kalam, he was the Mahatma Gandhi of Indian science, "generating leadership qualities in his team and inspiring them through both ideas and example." When Prof. Sarabhai passed away on 31st Dec., 1971 it was a great personal blow to Kalam and a huge loss to Indian science.

Prof. Satish Dhawan took over as the head of ISRO. This is how Kalam saw him:

"He could hold the listener enthralled because of the logical, intellectual acumen he could bring to bear on his analysis of any subject...I found him full of optimism and compassion. Although he often judged himself harshly, with no allowances or excuses, he was generous to a fault when it came to others."

On other person who influenced Kalam, both personally and professionally was "Dr. Brahm Prakash.

"If Prof. Sarabhai was the creator of VSSC, Dr. Brahm Prakash was the executor. He had nurtured the institution when it most needed nourishment. Dr. Brahm Prakash played a very important role in shaping my leadership skills. In fact my association with him was a turning point in my life. His humility mellowed me and helped me discard my aggressive approach...He was an intellectual giant with a frail constitution; he had a childlike innocence and I always considered him a saint among scientists."

On 18th July, 1980, after previous failures and issues, SLV-3 lifted off from SHAR. It was India's first Satellite Launch Vehicle, and Kalam uttered the most important words of his life, "Mission Director calling all stations. Stand by for an important announcement. All stages performed to mission requirements. The fourth stage apogee motor has

given the required velocity to put Rohini Satellite into orbit". Minutes later he was lifted onto the shoulders of his jubilant colleagues as India became the fifth country to achieve satellite launch capability.

The very next year Kalam received the Padma Bhushan and an year later he was appointed the Director of DRDL. It was here that the 'missile man' we know was born, and so did his babies Prithvi, Trishul, Akash, Nag and Agni. The once abandoned Devil missile project was revisited to the delight of those once a part of it. The then PM, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, too, took notice of this new development. She visited DRDL on 19th July, 1984 the same year she was assassinated.

All the, now famous, missiles were test fired during Kalam's stay at DRDL. A Padma Vibhushan in 1990 followed along with all the accolades.

But for an Indian, a Bharat Ratna is the peak of excellence and the greatest appreciation that he can get for his efforts. And so when the nation honoured one of its beloved scientists in 1997, Kalam's name was forever enshrined in the annals of Indian science.

Kalam's autobiography is a must read for all Indians. It inspires, educates, and encourages us to do things which we 'could' but never tried. As I always say, "The essence of life lies in facing difficulties and overcoming them with courage." Dr Kalam stands testimony to it !

I would like to sign off with Kalam's own words:

"I will not be presumptuous enough to say that my life can be a role model for anybody; but some poor child living in an obscure place, in an underprivileged social setting may find a little solace in the way my destiny has been shaped. It could perhaps help such children liberate themselves from the bondage of their illusory backwardness and hopelessness. Irrespective of where they are right now, they should be aware that God is with them and when He is with them, who can be against them ?...Let the latent fire in the heart of every Indian acquire wings, and the glory of this great country light up the sky."

Wings of Fire

It is truly a story of a people's president: Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam describes his life from his humble beginnings, through his term as President. As he describes his childhood in Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, his schooling, obtaining his degree in Engineering to becoming one of India's most forward thinking scientist and finally the President of India, there is one underlying statement his undying respect for family and

relationships. He attributes his success to the strong backing given to him by his family, friends and relatives.

As he entered his professional life, he describes his meetings with famous scientists of India. Though little has been said about them, he believes India is what she is because of them and if India can become a super power it is because of them. His book is so full of incidents and anecdotes so well written, it is indeed an inspiration to readers of all ages. Dr. Kalam has always seen a promising future for India and the people he has hope in are the children and the young in India.

That said, the only word possible to describe the book is "inspirational". What other word could possibly describe a dirt-poor Muslim growing up to become president of a country filled with 800 million Hindus? Supported by both major political parties, the man is considered the quintessential Indian.

Abdul Kalam wasn't a member of any of the disparate groups who combined forces to push back the British occupiers... occupiers that had deliberately slaughtered millions of Indians over hundreds of years. If he had an opinion of the brutal partition that tore India in half, he didn't mention it in the book. No one asked him for an explanation of India's humiliating defeat at the hands of China in 1962. It's almost as if he missed all of the major mind-blowing events of his time. So why exactly is he so important?

When Abdul Kalam was growing up, he was just a young man eager to learn as much as possible about science. Successive mentors convinced him that there was a great goal to be achieved in making India self-sufficient in multiple areas. Eventually he came to greatness by overseeing the development of satellite launch vehicles, a feat duplicated by only a handful of other countries. Those SLVs served as the basis for a variety of state-of-the-art military missiles. (caveat: I'm not an expert on whether they're actually state of the art, but India is certainly holding her own...)

From an American viewpoint, where everyone is screaming bloody murder about weapons proliferation, Abdul Kalam's recollections of France's withdrawal of support and false accusations of German help serve as a disturbing reminder that embargoing a country simply cannot work if the country's populace is determined to control their own destiny. It's disturbing that there is little discussion on the ethics of an impoverished nation developing nuclear weapons and deploying delivery systems... but that's almost completely lost in the discussion of self-reliance and a determination to never again submit to foreign rule.

"You gotta believe!" may be an ok motto coming from Parappa the Rappa, but it sounds corny coming from just about anyone else...

but not from Abdul Kalam. The man is boundless optimism, and it's infectious. Any gathering of Indian adults in America will inevitably produce the whining that their kids are too Americanized and they don't respect India and blahblahblah. My opinion on this is that kids who grow up outside of India don't appreciate India's potential. This book is the solution. I challenge any skeptic of India's greatness to try to read this book without having your views fundamentally altered.

This book is being released at a time when India's technological endeavours, to assert its sovereignty and strengthen its security, are questioned by many in the world. Historically, people have always fought among themselves on one issue or another. Prehistorically, battles were fought over food and shelter, With the passage of time, wars were waged over religious and ideological beliefs; and now the dominant struggle of sophisticated warfare is for economic and technological supremacy. Consequently, economic and technological supremacy is equated with political power and world control.

A few nations who have grown very strong technologically, over the past few centuries, have wrested control, for their own purposes. These major powers have become the self-proclaimed leaders of the new world order. What does a country of one billion people, like India, do in such a situation? We have no other option but to be technologically strong. But, can India be a leader in the field of technology? My answer is an emphatic 'Yes'. And let me validate my answer by narrating some incidents from my life.

When I first began the reminiscences that have gone into this book, I was uncertain about which of my memories were worth narrating or were of any relevance at all. My childhood is precious to me, but would it be of interest to anyone else? Was it worth the reader's while, I wondered, to know about the tribulations and triumphs of a small-town boy? Of the straitened circumstances of my schooldays, the odd jobs I did to pay my school fees, and how my decision to become a vegetarian was partly due to my financial constraints as a college student-why should these be of any interest to the general public? In the end, I was convinced that these were relevant, if not for anything else but because they tell something of the story of modern.

India, as individual destiny and the social matrix in which it is embedded cannot be seen in isolation. Having been persuaded of this, it did seem germane to include the accounts of my frustrated attempt

to become an Air Force pilot and of how I became, instead of the Collector my father dreamed I would be, a rocket engineer.

Finally, I decided to describe the individuals who had a profound influence on my life. This book is also by way of a submission of thanks, therefore, to my parents and immediate family, and to the teachers and preceptors I was fortunate to have had, both as a student and in my professional life. It is also a tribute to the unflagging enthusiasm and efforts of my young colleagues who helped to realise our collective dreams. The famous words of Isaac Newton about standing on the shoulders of giants are valid for every scientist and I certainly owe a great debt of knowledge and inspiration to the distinguished lineage of Indian scientists, that included Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan and Brahm Prakash, They played major roles in my life and in the story of Indian science.

I completed sixty years of age on 15 October 1991. I had decided to devote my retirement to fulfilling what I saw as my duties in the sphere of social service. Instead, two things happened simultaneously. First, I agreed to continue in government service for another three years and, next, a young colleague, Arun Tiwari, requested me to share my reminiscences with him, so that he could record them. He was someone who had been working in my laboratory since 1982, but I had never really known him well until the February of 1987 when I visited him at the Intensive Coronary Care Unit of the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences in Hyderabad. He was a mere 32 years old, but was fighting valiantly for his life. I asked him if there was anything he wanted me to do for him. "Give me your blessings, sir," he said, "so that I may have a longer life and can complete at least one of your projects."

The young man's dedication moved me and I prayed for his recovery all night. The Lord answered my prayers and Tiwari was able to get back to work in a month. He did an excellent job in helping to realise the Akash missile airframe from scratch within the short space of three years. He then took up the task of chronicling my story. Over the last year, he patiently transcribed the bits and pieces of my story and converted them into a fluent narrative. He also went through my personal library meticulously and selected from among the pieces of poetry those that I had marked while reading, and included them in the text.

This story is an account, I hope, not just of my personal triumphs and tribulations but of the successes and setbacks of the science establishment in modern India, struggling to establish itself in the technological forefront. It is the story of national aspiration and of co-operative endeavour. And, as I see it, the saga of India's search for scientific self-sufficiency and technological competence is a parable for our times.

Each individual creature on this beautiful planet is created by God to fulfil a particular role. Whatever I have achieved in life is through His help, and an expression of His will. He showered His grace on me through some outstanding teachers and colleagues, and when I pay my tributes to these fine persons, I am merely praising His glory. All these rockets and missiles are His work through a small person called Kalam, in order to tell the several-million mass of India, to never feel small or helpless. We are all born with a divine fire in us. Our efforts should be to give wings to this fire and fill the world with the glow of its goodness.

Epilogue- This book is interwoven with my deep involvement with India's first Satellite Launch Vehicle SLV-3 and Agni Programmes, an involvement which eventually led to my participation in the recent important national event related to the nuclear tests in May, 1998. I have had the great opportunity and honour of working with three scientific establishments-Space, Defence Research and Atomic Energy. I found, while working in these establishments that the best of human beings and the best of innovative minds were available in plenty. One feature common to all three establishments; is that the scientists and technologists were never afraid of failures during their missions. Failures contain within themselves the seeds of further learning which can lead to better technology, and eventually, to a high level of success. These people were also great dreamers and their dreams finally culminated in spectacular achievements. I feel that if we consider the combined technological strength of all these scientific institutions, it would certainly be comparable to the best found anywhere in the world. Above all, I have had the opportunity of working with great visionaries of the nation, namely Prof. Vikram Siirabnai, Prof, Satish Dhawan and Dr Brahm Prakash, who have all greatly enriched my life.

A nation needs both economic prosperity and strong security for growth and development. Our Self Reliance Mission in Defence System 1995-2005 will provide the Armed Forces with a state-of-the-art competitive weapons system. The Technology Vision -2020 plan will put into place certain schemes and plans for the economic growth and prosperity of the nation. These two plans have evolved out of the nation's dreams. I earnestly hope and pray that the development resulting from these two plans Self-Reliance Mission and Technology Vision - 2020-will eventually make our country strong and prosperous, a "developed" nation.

Asif Currimbhoy (b. 1928) occupies a unique place in post Independence dramatic literature by dint of his fecundity and versatility, firm grasp of the varied facets of life, command over language and the introduction of documentary and cinetic technique in Indian English drama. He has been hailed as a "dramatist of the public event." Asif

Currimbhoy's "fecundity in alliance with his feeling for variety and talent for versatility makes him the most prolific and the most successful of our dramatists. Farce, comedy, melodrama, tragedy, history, fantasy: Currimbhoy handles them all with commendable ease." C.V. Venugopal also says:

If Indian drama in English has had a significant breakthrough of late, only a handful of playwrights can take the credit of it. Among these few, Asif Currimbhoy most definitely figures prominently. For sheer fecundity of a dramatist he has no equal. . . . Nevertheless, viewed as a whole, what he has achieved is singularly impressive. Also, some of his plays, even considered individually, do show signs of a mature artist who knows what he is after.

Although Currimbhoy's plays are of uneven nature and some of them are marred by technical lapses, yet the variety of his themes is amazing. The single largest group of his plays deals with historical and political themes: *The Captives* (1963), *Goa* (1964), *Abbe Faria* (1968), *An Experiment With Truth* (1969), *Inquilab* (1970), *The Refugee* (1971), *Sonar Bangla* (1972), "Om Mane Padnie Hum!" (1972) and *The Dissident MLA* (1974) are his famous historical and political plays. *Goa*, a two-act play, deals with the Indian take over of Goa. It is a well constructed play. The plot centres around Krishna and Rose, the daughter of Maria, a Portuguese widow. Maria disapproves their love affair. Maria develops a liaison with Alphonso who is killed by Krishna on Dec. 18, 1961, the day of Goa's liberation. It brings to light racial prejudice and hatred. Alphonso says: "Rose is Goa, Goa is Rose". Rose is a complicated symbol in his play. She is fourteen years old. Being the child of Portuguese mother and an native father, she is coffee brown in colour. Rose's age of 14 years symbolize that Goa had lived 14 years of slavery even after India had won her independence. Alphonso's death on 18th Dec. 1961 stands for the liberation of Goa. Currimbhoy employs deftly cinematographic technique to create vivid dramatic effect. K R. S. Iyengar remarks:

The insinuating rhythm is paralleled by the studied stylization in the play - the patio walks, the exercises in equalisation the enormities of brutalisation and the haunting echoes of tragic ending.

An Experiment with Truth is a play in three acts on various episodes of Mahatma Gandhi's life. The playwright has failed to achieve unity of effect and purpose, tight plot construction and "a firm centrality of vision". The play begins with the first attempt on the Mahatma's life and ends with his assassination. In spite of lack of dramatic unity of effect it highlights some significant episodes in Mahatma Gandhi's life - his relations with his wife and the untouchable girl Manu, salt march, Kasturba's death and the Mahatma's martyrdom. Currimbhoy uses episodic technique in it. It is good and striking only in parts. Comparing

it with John Drinkwater's Abraham Lincoln Naik considers it to be a failure:

"But though Drinkwater restricts himself to the presentation of only the last five years of his hero's life, he is able - to present a unified picture of Lincoln's character, showing his simplicity, dignity, humanitarianism, idealism, since he has obviously seen his subject 'steadily' and seen him 'whole'. This can hardly be said about Currimbhoy's treatment of Gandhiji."

Characters of Sardar Patel, Mahadev, Kasturba etc. are sketchily portrayed and are not convincing. Nevertheless, the playwright has successfully described Mahatma Gandhi's firm faith in truth and non-violence. The scene of Kasturba's death has been dramatized effectively.

Inquilab deals with the Naxalite movement. It portrays "the conflict between the existing order and the new order anticipated between conservation and forces of revolution." Prof. Datta, Shomik, the Jain landlord, etc. stand for the old order; whereas young people Amar, Suprea and others stand for change and revolution. The play is full of scenes of violence and terrorism and ends with the death of the professor and the landlord. Characters are types and not individuals.

In his famous one-act-play *The Refugee* Currimbhoy shows a human concern to the exodus of over ten million Bangladesh refugees into India in 1971. He dramatises graphically the liberation of Bangla Desh from the tyranny of Pakistan. *The Refugee* is noticeable for the playwright's concentration on one problem, well knit plot and vivid characterization. In the wake of Pakistan's massacre of intellectuals in the universities of former East Pakistan, intellectuals fly to India. Yassin, who runs from Comilla University, takes shelter in the house of Sen Gupta who has had to leave his home at the time of partition. Yassin finally decided to liberate his fellow countrymen from the tyranny of Pakistan and joins the Mukti Bahini. The plot is well structured and has a beginning, a middle and an end. Characters are well portrayed. Yassin is devoted to "his search for conscience in the confusing world of political standards. He is both type and individual. He is an emaciated young man of about twenty. His is a complex character. He has a scholar's detachment and withdrawal from world's sordid realities and a humanist's concern for suffering humanity. Sen Gupta is a dominant character. He is diligent, self-confident and ambitious. He behaves like a politician. He is a Hindu who is unhappy over the exodus of Hindus from Bangla Dash. In *The Refugee* Asif Currimbhoy "explores the predicament of humanity caught in the political restlessness, moral mooring and psychological alienation." From the viewpoint of technique it is an excellent play. P.B. Reddy says:

"His sense of commitment has overpowered his language which creates a sense of immediate action-the implied physical movements of restless violence, the questions and exclamations, the arresting changes of tone-the one that takes our interest. And Asif's sentence often performs two or three functions at once. It sheds light on the character speaking, on the character spoken about; it furthers the plot; it almost functions ironically in conveying to the audience a meaning different from that conveyed to the characters."

Sonar Bangla depicts various phases of the liberation of Bangla Desh. The atrocities of Pakistani forces ruthless massacres, exodus or refugees, the rise of Mukti Bahini, final war, the unity of all religious groups and Pakistani tyranny under the undisputed leadership of Sheikh Mujeeb and the liberation of Bangla Desh have been vividly and realistically described. It is a well documented play in cinematographic technique.

"Om Mane Padme Hum!"(Hail to the jewel in-the lotus) deals with the Chinese invasion over Tibet and Dalai Lama's flight to India. The title is both significant and symbolic. It is used here "probably as a symbol of the origin, development and death of Lamaism in Tibet". The film style has been overdone and hence the play does not seem actable. The opposites-Lamaism and Communism, Beauty and Beast, the Past and the Future, Violence and Sufferance - have been juxtaposed nicely.

The Dissident M.L.A. is based on the dissolution of the Gujarat Assembly in 1976, Manubhai, a fictitious dissident- MLA., is the main brain behind rumpus in the university. The problem of dissidence in politics, the pernicious influence of politics on academic life and political corruption are dealt with realistically.

The Captives is a play on China war and Abbe Faria is about an 18th century Goan priest. Angkor is related with the vicissitudes in the history of Indo-China.

In most of Currimbhoy's political and historical plays the documentary element has been overdone and there is little attempt to discuss and analyse political thought process. The thrill of existing political events attracts the playwright's attention.

The Doldrummers-, The Miracle Seed and Thorns on a Canvas deal with social problems. Loose plot, sketchy characters and overdone documentary element mar the dramatic element. However, Doldrummers based on Bombay vagabonds is a realistic play which presents the depression (doldrums), attitudes and reactions of Tony, Rita and Joe who have alienated themselves from the main current of life and have drifted into a state of sheer hopelessness and depression. Liza also occasionally joins them. They live in a shack on the fashionable Juhu Beach in the suburbs of Metropolitan Bombay. They are "too close

to reality to live the life of imagination" and their "idealism has turned to cynicism. The doldrums commit shamelessly acts of obscenity publicly. In this play Currimbhoy has most sensitively captured the life of the shack dwellers, in all its poverty and squabbles, its love and small joys, he has equally successfully portrayed their basic humanity." It is a stageable play.

The Miracle Seed, a one-act-play, presents a vivid picture of the severe drought in Maharashtra in 1972-73. The title symbolises the dawn of green revolution, caused by a few seeds of a new scientific breed. It exhibits a conflict between old ideas which are represented by Dada and Ram and new scientific ideas which are embodied in Laxman. Currimbhoy emphasises the need of scientific innovation in agriculture. The playwright exposes the evils of patronage in art.

The Clock, a one act play, is a fine psychological play remarkable for well-knit plot and convincing characterisation. Henry, a salesman, is the only character who reveals his frustrations and rebellion against the existing order. He also reveals the influence of seven characters who only enhance his disappointment and frustration. Other characters are revealed by voices and shadows. Henry's character is psychologically convincing. The Dumb Dancer too is totally psychological in content. A Kathakali dancer plays the role of Bhima with so much devotion and absorption that he begins to think himself Bhima. The lady psychiatrist who treats him also becomes mad. This Alien Native Land deals with psychological insight with the theme of alienation and isolation the Jews in Bombay experience.

Om, a play in three acts, is a religious play in which he tries to trace the development of Hinduism from Vedic days. It deals superficially with a significant theme.

East - West relations, which have been a predominant theme in Indian English fiction, also fascinate Currimbhoy. The Tourist Mecca deals with the theme of East-West encounter. Janet Toffin, the daughter of an American widow Lady Toffin, visits the Tourist Mecca, the Taj Mahal and falls in love with Keshav Singh, a tourist agent. Their love affair is cut short by the intervention of Lady Toffin. The plot is clumsy. Darjeeling Tea is a powerful play which unfolds the story of Anand's famous novel Two Leaves and a Bud. The background of lovely Darjeeling Hills is picturesque. It gives a real and intimate picture of the planters life, their nostalgia about the past, the callousness of planters are described vividly. In it Currimbhoy combines successfully the techniques of both the theatre and the cinema. Currimbhoy has portrayed well both major and minor characters - Big Mac the planter, Bunt, Jennie, Didi, Thapa, Hugh, Sally, Marwari and the young man.

Asif Currimbhoy is undisputedly a great playwright who has "abundant stage sense" which is often spoiled by the playwright's obsession with realism. Currimbhoy's effective use of language contributes to the theatrical values of his plays, for example Yassin says "All pain comes from attachment, all wrongs come from self interest. That is why we should each lead our own lives".

Asif Currimbhoy is decidedly a distinguished playwright. He began writing plays in the mid-fifties, but he could not find a producer for ten years in India. A recipient of John D. Rockefeller III Foundation grant, he spent a year in United States where *The Dumb Dancer* and *The Hungry Ones* were produced at the Cafe La Mama. *The Dumb Dancer* was also shown at the British Drama League Festival. *Monsoon* and *Goa* were staged respectively by Dallas Theatre Centre and University Group. In India too Currimbhoy's plays were staged and created a great stir. In 1969 and 1970 his plays were staged in Bombay and Delhi. *Thorns On A Canvas* was staged by the Fine Arts Theatre Group in Bombay and *The Doldrummers* was produced by the Little Theatre Group in Delhi. The national centre for performing Arts was inaugurated in 1970 with a production of *Goa*. The stage sense has contributed much to Currimbhoy's popularity as a playwright. M.D. Melwani remarks:

"Asif Currimbhoy's plays provide an excellent alternative to plays by foreign authors, which form the staple entertainment of English-speaking audiences."

Currimbhoy's contribution to the field of drama is "both impressive and distinctive, and touched with the hallmark of significant achievement".

Badal Sarkar (Badal Sirkar) born 1925, is an influential Indian dramatist and theatre director, most known for his anti establishment plays during the Naxalite movement in the 1970s. He has written more than fifty plays of which *Ebong Indrajit*, *Basi Khabar* and *Saari Raat* are well known literary pieces, a pioneering figure in street theatre as well as in experimental and contemporary Bengali theatre with his egalitarian "Third Theatre", he remains one of the most translated Indian Playwrights.

He has been awarded the Padma Shri in 1972, Sangeet Natak Acadami Award in 1968 and the Sangeet Natak Academi Fellowship Ratna Sadsya, the highest honour in the performing arts by Govt. of India, in 1997.

Early life and Education: Badal Sarkar was born in Calcutta, India. He studied civil engineering at the Bengal Engineering College Shibpur, then affiliated with the University of Calcutta. In 1992, he

finished his Master of Arts degree in Comparative Literature from Jadavpur University, Calcutta.

Career of the Badal Sarkar : While working as a town planner in India, England and Nigeria, he entered theatre as an actor, moved to direction, but soon started writing plays, starting with comedies. He stayed for two years in London, here he was influenced by people like Joan Littlewood, Anthony Serchio, Schechner and Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski, this was make his body of future work distinct from other Bengali playwrights like Sombhu Mitra and Utpal Dutt. Amongst these influence of Richard Schechner, founder of the Performance Group, an experimental theatre troupe, became more pronounced with establishment of his "Third Theatre", nearly two decades later.

Eventually still employed in Nigeria he wrote his landmark play *Ebong Indrajit* in 1963, which was first published and performed in 1965 and catapulted him into instant fame, as it captured "the loneliness of post-Independence urban youth with dismaying accuracy". He followed them with plays like *Baaki Itihaash (Remaining History)* (1965), *Pralap (Delirium)* (1966), *Tringsha Shatabdi (Thirtieth Century)* (1966), *Pagla Ghoda (Mad Horse)* (1967), *Shesh Naai (There's No End)* (1969), all performed by Sombhu Mitra's Bohurupee group.

In 1967, he formed 'Shatabdi' theatre group, which in five years of its existence performed several of his plays and had deep impact on contemporary theatre, especially after 1969 when it started performing plays both indoors and outside amidst people, and evolved the *angan manch* (Courtyard stage) and inspired by the direct communication techniques of Jatra rural theatre form, to eventually become his 'Third Theatre', a protest against prevalent commercial theatre establishment. Often performed in 'found' spaces rather than rented theatre halls, without elaborate lighting, costumes or make-up, where audience was no longer a passive rather became participatory, it added a new realism to contemporary dramaturgy, retaining thematic sophistication of social committed theatre all the while, and thus started a new wave of experimental theatre in Indian theatre. In 1976, his group 'Satabdi', started performing at Surendranath Park (then Curzon Park) Kolkata on weekends, these open air and-free performances lead to his troupe travelling to near by villages on other weekends, where it employed minimal props and improvised dialogues to involve audience further into the performance.

Though he continued to hold his job till 1975, as a playwright he rose to prominence in the 1970's and was one of the leading figures in the revival of street theatre in Bengal. He revolutionized Bengali theatre with his wrath-ridden, anti establishment plays during the Naxalite movement.

His plays reflected the atrocities that prevailed in the society, the decayed hierarchical system and were socially enlightening. He is a proponent of the "Third theatre" movement that stood ideologically against the state. Third theatre involved street plays, with actors being attired no differently than the audience. Also the formal bindings of the proscenium theatre was given up. Sarkar's "Bhoma" is an example of a third theatre play, set as always, in an urban background. Starting with Sagina Mahato, which marked his advent into arena stage, his subsequent plays, Michhil (Juloos), Bhoma, Basi Khabar, Spartacus based on Howard Fast's historical novel by the same name, were performed in parks, street comers and remote villages with the audience sitting all around.

Following are the major plays of Badal Sarkar :

- *Ebang Indrajit (And Indrajit) (1963)*
- *Basi Khabar*
- *Baaki Itihaash (Remaining History) (1965)*
- *Pralap (Delirium) (1966)*
- *Tringsha Shatabdi (Thirtieth Century) (1966)*
- *Pagla Ghoda (Mad Horse) (1967)*
- *Shesh Naai (There's No End) (1969)*
- *Spartacus*
- *Prastava*
- *Juloos (Procession)*
- *Bhoma*
- *Solution X*
- *Baropishima*
- *Saari Raat*
- *Badi Buaji*
- *Kavi Kahini*
- *Manushe Manushe*
- *Hottomalar Oparey*
- *Bolloupurer Rupkatha*
- *Sukhpathya Bharoter itihash [Indian History Made Easy]*

Plays in Translation:

- *Evam Indrajit : Three-act Play tr. by Girish Karnad.*
- *Three plays: Procession, Bhoma, Stale news. tr. by Samik Bandyopadhyay.*

- *Beyond the Land of Hattamala & Scandal in Fairyland*. tr. by Suchanda Sarkar.
- *Two Plays: Indian History Made Easy, Life of Bagala*, tr. by Subhendu Sarkar.

Major Works of Badal Sarkar :

- *The Third Theatre*
- *The changing language of theatre [Azad Memorial Lectures]*

Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* that went on to become an expression of the Indian modern situation has perhaps lost its sheen in a globalized age with youngsters who are fortified in many ways than their ancestors were. And yet, the play is as much about the existentialists' question as it is about the urban youth of the sixties then. While the stories of Kamal, Amal, Vimal and (evam) Indrajit may superficially hold no meaning for today's 'Generation Next', their dilemmas especially Indrajit's will forever remain. Badal Sircar did not merely write about the coming of age of four friends; he actually wrote about the vagaries of existence itself and it is this quality that makes the play a true classic eternal in scope and magnitude.

A reworking of the play therefore was an exciting proposition that Chennai-based groups 'The Madras Players' and 'Evam Entertainment' took upon them seriously enough. The results—a surreal set, wide screen projector, laptop and keyboards—serve as the visual stimuli in the play. This paraphernalia is integrated well into the play to give it a contemporary ethos. Kamal, Amal, Vimal, evam Indrajit are after all protagonists of the twenty-first century. They eat pizza, drink coke and are glued to the screens of their desktops. They however have to contend with issues like marriage, housing, maximizing profit, etc. just as the Kamal, Amal and Vimal of the sixties and seventies did. Indrajit then asked questions about the banality of existence and he still does. For him, there is no option but to walk the road. Condemned like Sisyphus, his very existence had no reprieve then and can think of none now or forever. The writer who guides the audience through the story of the four friends can himself never hope to alleviate his frustration unless of course he reaches a state of sublime awareness and detachment.

In a way then the circular design on the surface of the set is symbolic of the whirlpool churning in the writer/Indrajit's mind. The screen serves its purpose well enough as we get sucked into a virtual reality whose texts and subtexts are no different from the ones of the pre-computerized age in India. The similarities as such outnumber the differences between the 'then' and the 'now' which explains why most

members of the audience could react favourably to this contemporary production of the play.

But unfortunately most of the actors lack the maturity that seasoned and well-heeled actors possess. Although the plays style of presentation is appealing, it fails to balance it with the nuances of expression and emotion, which in turns is quite a loss to a play that fluctuates between the real and the imaginary, the practical and the philosophical. In this contemporary production, the relationship between the writer and the Indrajit is sorely missing.

The writer ends up as a distant, pontificating observer, at times too self-engrossed in this actor's projection of the character. At such times, Konstantin Stainstwasky's Crisp warning of 'Love the art in yourself, not yourself in the art' rings true. It was quite evident too that the actors were not comfortable with the set. Movement was at times awkward and clumsy. Could the set have been made simpler to facilitate easy and fluid movement?

It must be mentioned that 'The Madras Players', one of Chennai's oldest theatre -groups was actually the first group in the country to perform the English language production of EVAM INDRAJIT in the seventies. 'Evam Entertainment' (the group derives its name from the play) is the youngest group in the city. The play is, therefore, significant for both the groups. One would imagine that Indrajit's question as raised by 'The Madras Players' does not find an answer; it is not meant to. His journey is what counts. The young group 'Evam Entertainment' would do better to concentrate on the finer nuances of this play. They have the style be could do with some attitude!

Evam Indrajit is the story of a writer who painfully strives to write play in vain. Not having witnessed life at the primary basic realities, he is goaded to write about those sitting only in the audience, but whom he finds undramatic. The writer gets really angry and tears up his manuscripts, when he finds inspiration in the form of a woman named Manasi. Manasi is the Indian Counterpart of Jung's Anima, an entity serving as a pointer to the collective consciousness. The very title Evam Indrajit or 'And Indrajit' exemplifies that Indrajit's identity is not 'Just Indrajit' but and Indrajit and is described in terms of society and not in terms of his own existence. He prefers to be called Amal, Kamal, or Vimal and conform to the dictates of society. His identity is also questioned when he is addressed by his teacher by a mere roll number.

The writer needs to write at the cost of neglecting important biological functions, stressing for a purpose in life. The writer endeavours to explain Indrajit's life, love and his revolutionary tendencies against society. But the dictums of society begin to crush him

gradually. Amal, Kamal and Vimal function as cogs in the wheel and we laugh at their humdrum existence. Indrajit resists himself from the monotonous existence; towards the end he realizes that there is no escape. He reaches a stage where even the fulfilment of his love would not have provided the answer. A visit to London is futile and he considers suicide, he finds himself incapable of the same. He concludes, "the past and present are two ends of a single rope." The realism of Evam Indrajit is a psychological realism as in waiting for Godot. There is no concrete characterization as Amal, Kamal and Vimal are different aspects of the writer himself.

The Picture of the Mind. It would be almost foolhardy to draw a picture of another person's mind on the basis of his books. But it is usually, and almost always, done in the field of literary criticism. Shakespeare wrote no autobiography, but his works give ample evidence of what he was. It is not bad taste to peep into the mind and soul of Kalidasa through the windows offered by his dramas and epics-his sensibilities and soul speak out.

But when a picture of a living mind is drawn, many difficulties may arise. Hemingway deferred publication of Philip Young's book on him for a long time pleading that living authors should be allowed to 'work in peace'. It was due to a disturbing psychoanalytical theory that Young propounded about Hemingway that the objection was made. But evidence of her works shows that Anita Desai possesses one of the healthiest and psychologically most balanced minds in the realm of Indo-Anglian fiction and the sanity, of her tastes and attitudes, is almost exemplary, a point worth emulation for her fellow-religionists in the field of writing. And it will be our serious endeavour here to recreate a picture of this exigent and piercing mind, howsoever unsatisfactory in likeness to the original this image may prove to be.

Sharpness and Insight. She has the sharpness and penetration of vision of extraordinary degree. She cuts things clean and enters into the inside of things with perfect ease. The ratiocinative powers of her intellect are as keen as any philosopher's, only they are kept in constant curb and have to serve the conscious or subterranean plan the authoress has in view. She seems to possess to a high degree the intuitive power of seeing into the nature of things. She is likely to become one with a sparrow like Keats and peck about the gravel. Thus she can unearth the gradual onslaught of insanity in Maya's psyche and she slowed and retarded thought movements of Baba as well as the silence of a tree or a rock with equal facility and ease. Her vision intuits the future shape an incident, a character, an action is going to take and is thus strong in hindsight as well as foresight and insight and thus becomes a good manipulator of plot as well as character. The insightful working of her

vision is best evidenced in the intuitive origin and organization of symbols and metaphors in work after work with amazing constancy. Her insightful intuitions into life spectacle help elucidation of a plan and system inherent in the scheme of things in life. The harmony of sharpness and insight endow her with a sense of divination so necessary for a subjective writer for unerring revelations at every stage.

More than ordinary organic sensibility. All fine arts including literature, emerge from the notes arising from communion between the artist's heart strings and life spectacle. Response of sensitive hearts and minds acquires different art forms-pictures, music, sculpture, poetry, fiction etc. An observation of Anita Desai's works proves beyond all shade of doubt that she is in possession of a poetic talent of the most sensitive type. Nature has endowed her with an overdose of sensitivity. Shapes, colours, sounds, odours, hues and tints- all strike at the sensitive chords and inspire exuberant effusions. Her Mayas, Monishas, Sitas, Bims are all keenest poetesses, although they are not termed as such by Anita Desai. The novelist has imparted a bit of her soul to all of them and partly lives, and will live, in them.

The subtlety of her cognitive-perceptual-powers, yoked with a hypersensitive emotive faculty works wonders in her works. Had she been in possession of the gift of instinctive versification, she could be one of the best poets herself. But even as things are, most of her works prove to be poems in prose.

Not only responses, but also expectations of such hypersensitive souls must be more than ordinary and therefore, the world being malignant to such beings, their disappointments, too, must be many. And this shows how she was unable to build rough rude barbarians and men of the world into inhabitants of her works. This sensitivity, the accompanying emotive responsiveness and expectant nature is likely to exaggerate matters and stretch things beyond proportions prescribed by commonsense and is likely to result into a sort of pessimistic gloom in life vision.

The waverings of the volitional-willing faculty-powers of Maya, Nirode Ray and Monisha are wish-fulfilling projection of a side of the psyche which gets steadiness by the time Sita makes a daring move of coming back to normal demands of life, relinquishing rebellious attitudes. Such extremely sensitive souls are averse to standards of conformity, and if they would be conformists, they would build their own island of conformity mostly within the regions of the psyche as Bim does in the last days of the life shown.

Imaginative Faculty. She is gifted with an acutely keen imaginative faculty with prolific power of creation of incidents, situations and characters and plot-yarn. This is the first manifestation of her

creative imagination. What she lacks in outer physical experience, she compensates by imagination—a fact admitted by her in interviews.

While being a subjective and psychological writer she is often forced to peep in the inner recesses of the psyche rather than in the outer spectacle of the world, the creative spirit of imagination is her unfailing reserve and security. Thus the conception of Maya and her situation, although rooted in some experience felt or fancied, must be primarily imaginative—a mystification, increased to high proportions, and such may also be the case of Sita and Bimla Das.

The abundance of imaginative colouring is observable in the artist like the poetic power of Macbeth. Her keen insight augments her sensibility to make high-strung fancy flights into the realm of wallowing abstractions and inane fantasies which often serve what she lacks in solid realities and in this sense she is almost a Shelleyan. Free play of the imaginative power leads to the employment of fantasy, reverie, dreams, phantoms, visions, illusions and hallucinations in her books, which acquire a kind of form of rebellion of noble and higher souls stung by the malevolent unseeing heartlessness of the universe, to construct worlds and visions in which they find solace as did Shakespeare in *The Tempest* or Kalidasa in *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*. That stage is yet to come in the career of Mrs. Desai but most likely it will come, and she should create some of the finest idealistic and visionary writings.

Weltschmerz. Universal sympathy for the sorrowful and the suffering is the hall mark of Anita Desai's personality. The spectacle of suffering among human beings, animals, moths and insects and the lower animated world magnetically draws her mind and heart. The sight of human sorrow lacerates her heart as deeply as that of the insects snapping under the pull of the beak of a sparrow or any small bird.

Sanskrit poetics holds that sympathy for human sorrow is the only sentiment worth expression in literature. The kindness and loving care seen by the student in the short story 'Studies in the Park' in the Muslim elderly gentleman's caressing of the young sick lady in his lap not mere kindness; it is a wisdom, a dawn of truth on the human mind. The same incident is reproduced by Sita also. This is Anita Desai's wisdom and enlightenment. She seems to move about in the world with the weight of this suffering. In work after work this state of her being is reflected; this is an excellence and also a limit of her genius.

She is more preoccupied with the sombre than with the frivolous side of life. An undercurrent of irony, satire, sarcasm which often surfaces in the pages of her novels speaks of their minimal presence in the artist's genius. And this is why she fails to make brilliant raids into the fields of comedies of manners like Jane Austen. Her personality inclines more on the side of Emile Bronte, the authoress of *Wuthering*

Heights than on that Maria Edgeworth. In her moral and psychological preoccupations her talent comes close to that of George Eliot.

Weltschmerz, which seems to be the life-breath of her inner being, tilts the propensities of her consciousness in favour of a deterministic pessimism and gloom in most of her early books such as *Cry*, *the Peacock*, and even *Voices in the City* is befogged with shadows of depression all through. The sense of Weltschmerz colours her imagination in darker hues than would otherwise be usual. Even *Fire on the Mountain*, built upon an exaggerated note of Weltschmerz ends not only pessimistically but even tragically. The works after these tell a different story.

Secular Tradition. Western literary tradition begun by Shakespeare follows secular attitudes. Miltons, Brownings and T.S. Eliots are great rarities. Even Wordsworth only implicitly talks of the "mighty being", "awake" and working through nature. Mrs. Desai has inherited the Western custom of secularism. The basic import of her writings is not religious at all. The occasional existentialist concerns of many of her characters seem to be hers also. Although theoretically existentialism is divided into theistic and atheistic forms, yet basically it philosophies on a universe that is Godless-leading man to a nihilistic blind alley. Her later works are free from the extremities of such obsessions.

Humanistic Agnosticism. Weltschmerz on the plane of community of mankind acquires humanistic form-man is considered a dignified centre of the universe and his sufferings and miseries are looked at as indignities and violation of the divinity of man. Secular attitudes supplement the humanistic note in every literary figure. The case of Anita Desai is not an exception. She might not supply metaphysical theories and generalizations, but her attitudes are deeply humanistic.

Scientific inventions and theories are turning society more and more materialistic. Reason or rationalism examines religion and spirituality on logical grounds and therefore reduces religion to the level of superstition. God-realization falls outside the purview of material sciences. And hence God stands banished. And therefore the mind of man-at least the Western mind-seems wedded to agnosticism. Mrs. Desai does not appear to have liberated herself of agnosticism; at least her works give no evidence of this type.

Thus belief in horoscope and astrology terminates in mere superstition at the end of *Cry*, *the Peacock* and the dancing image of Shiva has wrought only destruction. Goddess Kali in *Voices in the City* is only an agent of devouring people. The magic cures of Sita's father are not considered genuine in an unqualified manner. The sacred ashes, given by the priest-magic man figure in *The Village by the Sea*, are

implicitly disapproved of as is the priest in the Mulk Raj Anand's *The Road*. The religious pursuits of the ladies of the novel *In Custody* are looked at primarily as superfluities. *In Custody*, thus, has reverberations of agnostic secular tradition almost on the verge of crack-up. Coming works may attempt a new beginning-let us watch and see.

The Meeting Point. There is a grain of truth in Rudyard Kipling's opinion that the East was East and the West is West and that the twain shall never meet. A westerner cannot become a thorough orientalist nor can an orientalist become fully westernized. At the most partial give-and-take may occur. At least the minds of most of the Indo-Anglian novelists have become the meeting points of the East and West.

Cultural roots go deep into the consciousness and are difficult to break or get exchanged-exchanges do add a certain rootlessness and inauthenticity. Most of the Indo-Anglian writers trying to make the best of both the traditions suffer from a certain amount of rootlessness. Anita Desai inherits both the traditions and her novel *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* presents an externalised symbol of this cultural crises. The earlier position of Adit embracing the West and its culture was ludicrous. His return to India presents him in true colours. Dev's position of latter-day romance with British culture makes him ridiculous, although a doctrinaire, internationalist.

Anita Desai's is a composite mind-inheriting and assimilating both the traditions. But doubtlessly the Western impact is more predominant than the Eastern. Over all analysis of her works, confirmed by her own admission goes to prove this. Mention of the philosophies of *The Bhagwadgita* in different novels seems to be a doctrinaire imposition on the structures of the novels rather than a natural emergence from psyches of characters. Mention of "Panchatantra" and Vibrations of Sanskrit recitations are no doubt laudatory. But a devoted adorer of the fictional traditions of Panchatantra may like to practise some of them.

Heredity and Environment. Through her mother she inherits German and thus European traditions and temper characterised by a cosmopolitanism and liberty-consciousness, very much above the confines of parochialism of any sort. She imparts these traits to most of her protagonists and their right-consciousness, instead of duty-consciousness, and sometimes, a malignant touch of man woman antagonism, perceptible in some protagonists can be explained on that plane. The inheritance from father's side may be explained on the level of broad nationalistic and philosophical pre-occupation and human service and altruistic motives seen in work after work. The eternal note of non-conformity, forming part of the psyche of many characters is evidence of this.

Her sense of non-attachment to any form of religion might be hereditary or environmental or partly both. The sense of not belonging of many characters can be explained that way. Although this seems a negative trait from the viewpoint of growth of a spiritual man, yet it fertilises her literary talent and enables her to cater to the modern rationalistically agnostic sensibility.

She has inherited a multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural tradition, enjoying familiarity with Christian, Muslim and Hindu cultures and German, Bengali and English languages. English is more naturally the language of communication in modernised families, being the *lingua franca* of the world and of India particularly where Macaulay's system of education, and British colonialism have infiltrated the minds of the rank and file of educated Indians with the help of the Bible and Golden Treasury. It is due to this breadth of her cultural inheritance that she delineates De Silvas, Panwallahs and Sayyid Alis with as great an ease and secure confidence as Haris and Lilas.

Any writer with traditional orthodoxy of cultural and religious anchorings of a Hindu society would be incapacitated to show Raja's romance with Muslim culture. It appears nature has some larger purpose to fulfill through the writings of Mrs. Desai. She will not go in the annals of literature as a prophet of Indian culture or metaphysics, but she would always be related to the cosmic tradition of *Weltschmerz* and humanism as good for India as for the West.

The Feminist Outlook. Although Anita Desai does not write with a conscious social purpose yet her works have unconsciously contributed to the feminist cause, an expression of inner preoccupations and of the modern ideal of building a male-dominance free society. The cases of Maya and Monisha atleast support this view. Sita's consciousness is an expression of the onslaught of violence on the feminine sweetness and light all over the globe. The credit of the family uplift in *The Village By the Sea* is given as much to Lila the elder sister as to Hari the teenager brother. And in *Clear Light of Day*, it is Bimla Das who is raised to the status of heroine. And it is not without reason that Imtiaz Begum gives a petition to Deven-the society symbol-for the serious consideration of her claims as poetess and for being honoured along with Nur; her attempts among Nur admirers having partly succeeded, she works for formal recognition of her talent.

Austerity of Standards. Anita Desai's standards are very austere and ascetic. Both as artist, as thinker, as moralist, as woman her ascetic standards are very high. They might be instinctive and self-imposed or the flowering of a family discipline and decorum. But in any case they are very high.

As artist she works for almost absolute perfection. She often has three versions of her texts and shapes her final copy on them. She is in possession of an unerring sense of judgement in the literary aesthetics. From her own admission, we know that she is in the habit of writing since childhood. And it is no wonder that she should produce a masterpiece at the age of twenty six.

Anita Desai's aims in literary writing are neither didactic nor ethical; they are purely aesthetic. Many a critic will like to place her in the tradition of art for art's sake rather than in the tradition of art for life's sake. But the general impact of her writings is ethical.

In the modern Indo-Anglian fiction, more so in the American and European fiction, the writers indulge in sexual obsessions in one way or the other, so that their writings appear shallow and cheap. Anita Desai is absolutely free from the kind of obsession. Love-relationships shown in her books are related with the spheres of emotion, passion and spiritual camaradery. Her devices of description are based on implication and suggestion. And so much is to be filled in by the reader's imagination.

It will be plain to every reader that Mrs. Desai's sensibilities are very keen and she seems to have the imaginative and passionate flavours of a romanticist-her sense of form and judgement is that of a thorough going classicist. The harmony of both the faculties leads to the making of her literary talent. But the flavours of a hard disciplinarian emanate from her pages and even a casual reader will note that she is a dedicated of absolute standards and aims.

The reading of Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* transports one into the realm of old romances, ballads and idylls dealing with the passion of love; Keats's poem, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, 'Isabella' and Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover' come to mind. The passionate intensity of feeling, the romantic aroma of love, the aspiration for amour as something extraordinary, the atmosphere of flowers, gardens, the moon, the night, the stars, salutary to these are recollected. The experiences and sensations are profoundly poetic; even the prose medium helps bring the experiences home to the reader. The Universal Forces through a malignant Destiny foil the lovers' efforts to consummate their ecstasies of love.

Verbal expressions and their connotations have immediate and total appeal and it is always difficult to dissect and analyse them. Yet an appraisal of the literary devices is being attempted. The novelist uses the devices of imagination and its various shades, such as fantasy, reverie, dream, and still more complex states of consciousness as nightmares,

illusions, delusions, hallucinations. The traditional devices of impressionism, expressionism, imagism and symbolism are also used. The galvanizing force of the artist's personality, detached and distant, yet working through every word, synchronises everything to the artistic problem of the presentation of the tragic and the abnormal passion. Deeply insightful penetration into the lovers' 'insides' is made. From Freud and Freudian theories to the basically human problem of adjustment with the world the artist moves skilfully. Reality of sun, light, open air is constantly contrasted with shades of imagination. Words, phrases, rhythm where with feelings expressed.

Cry, The peacock is the tale of Maya's love for Gautama, her husband. Deeply devoted and affection in nature, oversensitised in mental states and feelings, Maya requires a love partner with wide sympathies, highly sensitive, imaginative and responsive temperament, which Gautama lacks. This is the beginning and the end of the tragedy of love in the novel-the temperamental and emotional self between the lovers.

Maya, the tender clinging creeper, cannot absorb herself in totality in the personality of Gautama, a mighty tree no doubt but lacking the elixir of consolation and sweetness of temperament which she may sap on. Gautama, a realistic, practical man of commonsense, believing in work, guided by logic and reasoning aims at a philosophical detachment in life visualised by the lines of the Bhagwadgita reverberating through Maya's consciousness in her weak moments consoling her freakishly not entering into the texture of her nature and personality, into her blood veins:

"He is fit to attain immortality who is serene and not affected by these sensations, but is the same in pleasure and pain;

When he completely withdraws his senses from sense objects as the tortoise withdraws its limbs, then wisdom becomes well established."

Could Maya attain this philosophical height, becoming a saintly woman like Joan of Arc she would have guided nations' destinies but, as things are, she fails to transcend her own failings and destiny.

The inadequacy of love-responsiveness of the two is the central point of the novel. Rejoicing at recitations of poetry and Urdu verses is going on in the lawn of their house. Maya is pining and fretting in side to share the party, at least to touch and feel her husband and be near him. When she enters the party, uninvited, she is termed as an 'oberwearing woman' she recoils and runs back. She tells her husband.

'All I wanted was to be outside with you...Near you...But you made me go away...'

He sighed, fumbled, and lit himself a cigarette.."

Gautama preaches to her detachment and warns from Gita that attachment leads to destruction. But Maya wants love to satisfy love, she wants expression of emotions and affections to drench her love thirsty heart, her mind, the pores of her body and womanhood. But she receives only chidings to which she responds : "How it suits you to quote those lines of a dry stick. You know nothing of me-and how I can love. You have never loved and you don't love me..." These are words of total self-surrender, similar to those of Porphyria to her lover who consummated her demand by strangulating her. Her shock is that Gautama is reducing love to mere attachment. Maya compares Gautama of the novel to Gautama the Buddha : "He looked very much the mediator beneath the 'bo' tree too fastidious to admit love, with its accompanying horror of copulation ... spiritual demands of possession and rights won and established.

Maya is a reversal of the traditional Indian women, Gautama's beloved Yoshodhara who was elf-effacing, tolerant and forgiving. Maya is more right-conscious, less duty conscious, with a love sick and love-impooverished heart, very feminine and human. Maya's words of prayer, submission, anger and disillusionment to Gautama follow : "I live my life for you... You are untouched...You shall never help me. It is all true one of us will win, the other must lose." The demand for love, affection, sympathy being unfulfilled leads to antagonism and positive hostility. Gautama losing his temperamental sweetness uses hard-hearted words 'madness' happiness-also the conclusion of the Saint Poet Surdas. It is confirmed by the peacock symbol also.

Gautama oversimplifies the personality of Maya as spoiled by the caresses of her father, living in a fairy tale atmosphere of unreality and being out off from the life of the 'ordinary man': "Life is a fairy tale to you still. What have you learnt of the realities?"

Gautama's temper is matter-of-fact, standing for truth and balance; Maya's is romantic-related with the ideal, so the inadequacy of their partnership in love and resultant tragedy. Maya is egotistical and self-indulgent, pursuing fancies and fanciful feelings. She is a "toy princess" living in a world of elusive happiness. Gautama accuses her :

"....And here you are capable of seeing nothing but delusions, imaging them to be real."

Through the contrasted pictures of these two lovers, their words, thoughts and deeds Anita Desai establishes that perfect love on this planet is difficult to achieve. Desire for loving and being loved in return in physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions to the point of perfection is beyond attainment; hence life of those gifted with higher love-sensibilities is bound to be partly tragic.

Gautama calls Maya a lady with third class poetess's brain. But she has a poetess's heart and also imagination. If Gautama too possessed a passionate poetic, imaginative heart, the novel would end in some other way. Gautama's death was not a chance accident. His body is frantically pushed by Maya. She is in no delirious state. Granted that she had an instinctive revulsion to the ugly shadow created by Gautama's body coming in between her and the moon. Also pushing of Gautama is not a deliberate cold blooded act of murder. Her extreme sensitivity of nature makes her revulsions and hatreds exaggerated. Thus sight of ugly pregnancy revolts her and leaves her sick and depressed for days. Her revulsion is caused by the ugly shadow of the body blocking her intense appreciation of the rising moon. But her disaffection with Gautama is partly responsible for her love of artistic beauty more than her lover. Cruelty in passion of love of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and '*Porphyrion's Lover*' is suggested : one may conclude that deep and blind passion operates on global basis.

The psychological study of Maya's childhood and puberty, her delight in sumptuous favours of sense experiences will be of profound thematic interest and so will be the picture of the growth of her amour for Gautama in the early four years. Equally important is the Freudian theme of father obsession and the modern theme of man-woman antagonism. Poetic and lyrical reverberations of meanings of verses and words, luxurious enjoyment of the connotations of Urdu verses, music, sculpture, all art, and the dance pose of the image of Shiva constitute other thematic interest of the novel. Of great thematic significance is the study of Maya's more than ordinary organic sensitivity, her cultured taste, creating revulsion to the vulgar and ugly. She has a benevolent heart at an impulse of which she feeds the bear more more bananas than the man, sight of eaged monkeys lacerates her heart. These impart thematic exuberance to the novel.

Early in her life Maya's mother dies, leaving her to her father's affections. Arjun, Maya's brother, is defiant to his father, leaving the widower father to pour all his affections on her. She develops as a privileged pampered child, not prepared for facing bafflements. To her in childhood life has been all along a toy. Father and child fondle and indulge in each other living on the wealthy 'sumptuous fare of the fantasies of the Arabian Nights'. The father indulges in Maya's playing with oranges as shuttle cocks, an extravagant game.

Her father always assured her that things will be well. She is thus trained to receive affectionate consolation from everybody and is shocked when not getting it from her husband. She entertains memories of her father's house at Lucknow where professors, philosophers, barristers gathered and talked "in gentle cultured tones, of books and

gardens, art, art..." So she is regarded by Gautama as her father's "pet, spoilt and cosseted".

Maya is self centred, egocentric, exaggeratedly fanciful and unpractical. She is idle, self indulgent, dreamy, living like an elfin in a grotto. She is trained to regard every thing as meant for her. Hence the abnormality of her adjustment with her husband and society and her love of seclusion.

Her sensitivity to feeling, emotions and love is more than normal. She could go well in life even with such sensibility if she were not born in a Brahmin family and the resulting horoscope obsession was absent. The real tragedy is caused by the prediction of death of one of the couple after four years of marriage. But attributing the tragedy only to the prediction will go against the laws of human nature and propriety of art. We feel partly that the tragedy is caused by the self centred egotistical nature of Maya ; -this is more credible and human and so true. The end thus is the consummation of a process issuing from Maya's complex personality. Maya's birth in a Brahmin family rooted in tradition and custom, faith in foretelling by palmistry, horoscope, facial features, belief in traditional religion verging on superstition-all these add a depth to the thematic pattern and Maya's personality.

Of profound thematic significance will be the study of disintegration of her personality, disaffection with her friends, and the process of psychotic obsession leading to abnormality. Her long life with Gautama was bright and pleasant in the early years. She enthusiastically adored Gautama and the Bhagwadgita was frequently pursued. Earlier she treated his tender affectionate touch as a cathartic. Gautama's words and acts led her to ecstasy. "Shooting-star, rocket, comet, great fountain of light-Darkness, chaos-gone." Recitation of a verse in Urdu creates this ecstasy.

Maya's relations with Gautama grow worse as end of four years comes close. Her earlier thought is that it is she who would die forcing her to leave a "longing lingering look behind". She is so much obsessed with her inside that her adoration of Gautama grows into indifference and apathy and later to antagonism and Gautama's death.

Psycho analytical techniques are used to represent Maya's disintegration of personality. Gautama sees only the upper surface of her life; he is cold to her 'inside' feelings and affections; there is mutual drying up of affections on both sides, increasing bitterness, consummating in Gautama's death, Maya's abnormality. Anita Desai's artistic skill lies in making insanity understandable while the insanity of Prophyria's lover was only to be imagined.

Maya's egocentric absorption is self found encouragement in her father's caresses and fondling. Every thing must follow her will and dreams; bafflements cannot be tolerated. Part I of the novel finds her

bereaved on the death of her pet dog and mistaking it for Gautama's coldness of the soul at the outset of Part II and indulges in a pugilistic act of pillow beating. This is caused by the inadequacy of Gautama to satisfy her emotionally by company and sharing of feelings. Pillow beating has been a customary 'child-hood experience' to her. This pugilistic vengeance paves the way to the end of the novel.

Emotional alienation is the central problem of the novel and Maya. She lacks companion life-contact, relationship, communion. Thus the novelist introduces the modern existentialists jargon into the texture of the book. Money, success, fame are the chief concerns of Gautama and his family, Passion, revenge, murder or something exciting is desired by Maya. Too much attachment this is the diagnosis of Maya's unrest. But she is not too much attached to life, love, Gautama but to the obsession of the doom. If she were absorbed in life spectacle of pregnancy would not revolt her. She realises madness creeping upon her "Yes, I am going insane...I shall soon be mad." Work, company, society is the cure all of which she shuns.

The turning point in her obsession comes with the flash of the idea that not she but Gautama might die. This brings reversal of affections confirming her to her selfishness. Boldly temperature results from her agonies. She has self knowledge : 'I am torn between two worlds-the receding one of grace, the approaching one of madness. My body breaks in the battle.'

The inner, violent, accumulated hatred of Maya for Gautama, born of selfish love of life and life's joys, in total disregard of her husband's claim to life erupts when Gautama calls her mad : " 'Madness' I screamed, leaping up at him, to strike him, stab him. I choked.. and began to cry hysterically." Her love misunderstood and unresponded, she falls into a fit of fierce and revengeful anger. Instead of a lover, Gautama becomes an adversary. Her psychiatric hatred is caused by inadequate mating and insufficient spiritual companionship. Part III finds her in permanent delirium at her husband's death and what she did. She says she is better qualified for life because in love with living than Gautama-what an insane ground for imparting death.

Absorption of a soul in another soul as an end in itself is not culturally visualised. Love of souls among themselves should lead to the love of God. Hence Gautama's cold and cryptic dismissal of the claims of passionate love as sheer attachment. Maya stands for secular love of man and woman as a goal in itself. Her life view, thought of love, indulgence in pleasures are termed. "Occidental" by Gautama. So Maya dreams of dying while most happy in the loving caresses of Gautama. She thinks life will end here and now, she is not interested in anything higher and transcendent.

In such egocentric love and desire to feel and enjoy all its shades, strife, jealousy, rivalry, anger, irritation and sorrow are bound to exist; cultural, emotional, psychological differences prevent absolute perfection of love on earth. Modern Indian life and philosophy is passing through a cultural crisis and western influence is increasing. Hence the love rhapsodies of Anita Desai are not unaffected by the man-woman antagonism of the West and the agony of love : "Do you not hear the peacocks call in the wilds? Are they not blood-chilling, their shrieks, of pain? "Pia, pia" they cry. "Lover, lover Mio, mio-I die, I die." The barful strife of modern love is symbolised by the love life of the peacocks : "Have you seen peacocks make love, child? Before they mate they fight. They will rip each other's breasts to strips and fall bleeding, with their beaks open and panting. When they have exhausted themselves in battle, they will mate. Peacocks are wise". Maya's love agony finds expression in that of peacocks.

Maya, the heroine, shares poetic sensibilities with the authoress herself. Most sense objects inspire high-strung responses in Maya, so that thematically the novel provides exuberant indulgence in sumptuous sensuous delight. Rich flavours of joyful feelings arising from the sight of a beautiful flower, its fragrance, the sight of the moon, stars and night are aroused and presented making the novel a narrative of deep poetic import justifying its world wide popularity. So by the sight of white petunias she was "drawn away from pain into a world that knew no pain... I bent over them, inhaling that mist of sad, maidently scents feeling mood merge into mood, sensation into sensation, till there was nothing left but that mist". Mysery of nature and universe was difficult to solve but Maya thinks going to the "heart of that mystery" is partly to solve it. Such poetic flavours of pagan sensuous exude page after page.

Stylistically, there is continuous shift from impression to expressionism in the various descriptions. Part of the plot, theme and action is presented as passing through the external vision of the artist such as the scene of the party, music, the cabaret dance are presented in terms of impressionistic technique. But most of the novel is an expression of the inner experiences of Maya rendered in expressionistic terms. Her ecstasy arising from the sweetness of Urdu verses is rendered as follows : "Ah, this was it, the ultimate, absolute joy. Here lay perfection...I was filled, filled to the point of destruction. God, God, I gasped-enough, enough, no more...". This is what she feels and the way she feels it.

Maya's joy at the sight of Gautama is also expressionistically rendered : "I looked down at him...how much more food for delight in this male companion, surely. And I melted with tenderness." Maya is not prepared for death because her dreams of enjoying life are yet unfulfilled". Maya's love of life, besides being an important theme, is

partly responsible for the tragedy. Her giggles of laughter at the end are partly due to her idea that, her husband being dead, she is free to enjoy life, so her gloomy broodings of death are over. But she is partly blind to the idea of a lunatic asylum waiting for her.

Beauty and love of nature is an important theme of the novel. The frenzied tempestuous upheavals of Maya's emotional states find a true symbol in the storm, which is a cathartic to Maya. The sensitive epicure of sensations as she is, she is delighted by the storm : "Storm, Motion, Speed, Living. I beat upon the window as the dancer." It is the storm which is her perfect mate : "Now I stood in the midst of it, I exulted, and raised my arms to return its impassioned embrace." Like Byron and Shelley, Maya enjoys the wild aspect of nature in the storm : "Here was a turmoil, a wild Chiaroseuro of oven-hot colours that churned over and over in heat swelled bubble around me ... it was mine, mine, this life was mine." She giggles in rejoicing, her giggle is partly childish, petulant and insane.

Beauty, sin and evil is an important theme on which Maya meditates. Beautiful flowers of night queen attract snakes associated with beauty and evil. Maya's beauty is associated with evil to come. The superhuman beauty of the rising moon at the close of Part II is presented exactly before the fatal action : "At the parapet edge, I paused, made him pause, and his words were lost to me as I saw the moon's vast, pure surface..casting a light that was holy in its purity, a soft suffusing glow of its chastity, casting its reflection upon the night with a vast tender love". This is the epitome of Nature's sacred beauty. But evil follows instantly and in her crazy frantic disgust of the ugly shadow of Gautama she pushes him out, down the parapet, to the earth where he dies.

The novel is saturated with a variety of themes-theme of inter caste and inter class marriage, faith in astrology and palmistry, thoughts of fatality and predeterminism, theories of Karmas, life circles, attachment and detachment. These themes are adequately expressed by appropriate stylistic modes.

Part I and III, forming beginning and end of the plot are written in epic style i.e. third person universal observer technique giving the novelist omniscience. The middle of the plot, Part II, runs for about two hundred pages which is in first person autobiographical narrative form putting the narrative burden on Maya, the centre of the novel.

It is clear by now that Anita Desai is the novelist of the 'inside'-of introversion. Plot in Part II is presented as passing through Maya's consciousness-the stream of consciousness technique helps also character-delineation and is suited to the autobiographical narrative with Maya as the narrator. Thus the stylistic and the thematic modes cohere. Maya reads a letter sent by her brother Arjun from America and reflects

on it at the same time.”...‘Dear sister, dear small stupid silly sweet sister’, it said“I heard you ar married. Impossible to believe’. Strange Arjun, strange brother. That astingency that had always given an edge to his low voice, it clung to the written words.” Here streams of thoughts of Arjun caught in the letter are set beside the stream-of-thought of Maya. Arjun’s past and appeal of his personality are set side by side through the stream-of- consciousness technique.

Set beside it is the technique of internal monologue. The thoughts flowing through Maya’s psyche are usually silent but many times vocal. She seems to be talking to herself. As her husband is not a perfect sharer of her agonies she talks to herself and her monologue is often heard by Gautama in his sleepy state but he pays no attention to them. Her monologues continue for pages leaving on the reader the impact of impassioned soliloquies. The reader listens with wrapt attention and there is no flagging in his interest by monotone as descriptions of certain physical activities are interspersed in between.

Anita Desai, like some great masters of fiction, manages to raise the action and the plot above timeliness and transitory ephemerality and yet at the same time gives the impression of timeliness also. She achieves this by memory flash backs and the device of stream-of-consciousness probings into the past, present and the future. Through her memory flashes and stream-of- consciousness probings she manages to live in all times, and through absorption in her, the reader enjoys a corresponding feeling. In Part II Gautama and Maya are conversing about a Kathakali Troupe coming to Delhi. The conversation stops and memory flash backs begin : “When with my father, even breakfast in the garden becomes a party, as good as a revel of elves and fairies.... (As a child, I enjoyed princess-likethe glories and bravado of Indian mythology..)” There is memory flashback within memory flash back and then suddenly attention goes to Maya’s tossing of oranges beside her father. And then suddenly the focus of consciousness comes to immediate present : “No one, else, I sobbed into my pillow..loves me as my father does.” Stream of-consciousness probings take two forms, aspiration to be with her father and the horror of the hideous doom awaiting her the second is the doctrinaire existential nada. Her lines put within brackets give crosslights and sidelong glances into events and characters reminding one of the manner of Thackeray. Anita Desai stops for a second time to comment, through Maya’s mouth, within brackets that she was a toy princess in a toy-world. After ninety pages of continuous narrative, Maya the character narrator intervenes to present within brackets that all she said and narrated might to true or merely imagined.

To express Maya the poetess’s thoughts the authoress uses imaginative techniques. Like Macbeth’s, her extra-sensitive imagination created hallucinatory states of mind in her. Constant interplay of light

of reality and shade of delusion and imagination is presented. Only few descriptions pertain to sunlight except for the scenes of shopping by Maya together with Gautama's mother and Leela. Scenes with her father at Lucknow are related with bright light. Usually glinting dazzling sunlight is avoided. Usually evenings, nights, twilights closed rooms are described that suit the shadows of delusions and unreality. Maya muses : "Night, night, deep, dark night. This, I knew, was what I lived for ...". She lives in a world of imagined beauty.

Wishfulfilment is an important part of the workings of the human consciousness especially for children and young ones. Fantasy, through reveries, brings about imagined fulfilments and does some good. In the novel *Fire on the Mountain* fantasy is an active agent for the mental balance of Nanda Kaul-Maya, the heroine of the novel sops on the honey of fantasy. When disappointed in life situations Maya evokes the fantasy of her father and gets relief. The artistic purpose of these fantasies, is to create a world of protection, escape and dreamy visions to satisfy Maya. Stylistically Anita Desai manages to achieve a consistent movement from disgusting present to fanciful past. Reality and fantasy, present and past, harshness and harmony, truth and imagination replace one another mechanically at the demand of the plot.

At times fantasy is rewarding at others not, and like Keats, Maya bids adieu to fancy : "I twisted uneasily...I repeated Gautama's couplet to myself. But it did not help." There is a wavelike ebb and flow of words, phrases, ideas and feelings. Fantasy and reality push the style, the language, the plot ahead. But usually fancy plays a dominant role in the texture of the novel. In her fancy she talks to her father and evokes his memory. She seems to be more in love with the concept of love and life than reality.

Closely related with these unrealities is her absorption in nightmarish dreams of her mother. Her nights pass in ugly nightmares of bears dancing and "Then suddenly, behind the bears, an entire row of traniers rise up and begin to dance too, with greater vigour." Illusions and delusions form part of her thought processillusion. She thinks if she heard an actual peacock cry her heart would break and she would never sleep in peace. Like Macbeth's her delusion of murdering sleep is very convincingly presented inspiring admiration for the novelist's stylistic skill.

Transformation of imaginings into hallucinations is a complex process and in the novel there are many air-drawn daggers. Maya's imagining of death, doom, destiny, destruction acquire a concrete shape and terrible horrors are solidified into images of the albino, thoughts of the horoscope and visions of destiny in the forms of scorpions, snakes and lizards etc. In these lines Anita Desai gives a shape to the airy nothing or doom. Thus descriptions of terror are interspersed with

descriptions of realistic and fantastic nature. First it comes as an intuitive apprehension of "some disaster." Later it acquires a palpable form : "It was ...Fate. He had been-large or small? I cannot remember, but his eyes I do : they were pale opaques and gave him an appearance of morbidity." Gradually it becomes the shadow of the astrologer who had predicted the doom : "I could think only of the albino, the magician.... It seemed real, I could recall each detail, and yet-God, Gautama, father, surely it is nothing but an hallucination. Surely not, I sobbed..." These are illusory experiences of an overheated brain tormented by obsessive worry psychosis. She wants to cast off the vision and fails and thus Anita Desai is able to bring about the picture of normal mind becoming abnormal.

Like the cauldron scene of Macbeth numberless fearful images are heaped together, first it is rats eating every thing and suckling seven young ones then a god leaping and whirling by torch light, then it is snakes near the Queen of the Night then it is a desert, lizards, iguanas and the albino. Gradually the hallucination is no more visual, it becomes auditory-drum beats coming closer and cloer : "And softly, softly the drums crept across the desert.... Nothing but the sound, irrepressible, relentless sound of drums, drums beating".

In the novel Anita Desai exploits the literary tradition of fatalism, imagism and symbolism. Maya's father was a fatalist and enjoyed resignation. Maya cannot learn his resignation. Leila is another fatalist believing in predeterministic notions. Maya is not resigned but rebellious. Side by side, the philosophy of 'Karma Yoga' is presented in the novel. Gautama's father is a freedom fighter and recognised activist passing more time in prisons than in open. Arjun was another freedom fighter established in America as a worker. Gautama's mother is a lady dedicated to human service. But unfortunately Maya is dedicated only to her inside obsessions instead of a life of action.

Anita Desai is skilled in the use of images both literal and figurative. Thus in Part I the sun is presented as "a purulent boil." The image symbolises her own over ripe agony at the death of the dog Toto. Symbol of peacock is central to the novel. The peacocks with the hundred eyes on their tails are supposed to have seen the truth of life and death : "Living they are aware of death. Dying, they are in love with life." One is only reminded of Shelley's skylark : "Waking or asleep Thou of death must deem. "The peahens lead an inverted passionate life. The peacock symbol not only explains Maya's passion but determines the pattern of the plot. Images of rain, storm, night have similar meaningful connotations in the book.

Anita Desai conveys the thematic complexity through a language really lyrical and copious in vocabulary. Fluctuations of thoughts and feelings and exploration in the dark inner-most caverns of the human

psyche i.e. the conscious the sub-conscious and the unconscious was possible only through a language really resourceful and rich in connotative power. Her language is simple, easy, lucid and at times elevated. The reader is satisfied with the expression of rich hues of feelings and idyllic experiences in lyrical, rhapsodical yet spontaneous language. Uncommon words and obscure expressions are used to convey some purely Indian concepts. Plants, flowers and modes of expression.

Her prose style is marked by elasticity, dynamism and profundity. At times it is emotive, at others realistic and matter of fact and objective. But mostly it is subjective utilising empathy, personification and humanising. Anita Desai has hewn out a style, pruned and chiselled, at times poetic giving to airy nothing 'a local habitation' and a name. It could capture the elusive intonations of art and subtle feelings as well. Here is a rendering of feelings of Maya caused by poetical recitations in a party in Gautama's lawn : "The soft blue twilight in the garden vibrated with rich words like, 'zulph' and 'mehtab'-words filled with the short, deep sighs of Weltschmerz and rounded with a passion for balance, design, precision. They seemed to issue out of the mouths of the large, white flowers that had begun to breathe now in the even dimness, out of the beds of earth, freshly dug and moistly odorous." Artistic flavours of emotional connotations of words and language are being conveyed. The artist makes the daring effect of conveying effects and connotations of one language through another-i.e. of Urdu through English. She attributes human sentiments to objects of nature; it is not the 'blue twilight' that is vibrating with words, but the heart strings of Maya. The word Weltschmerz, meaning universal sympathy with misery, is taken from a foreign language i.e. German. Impact of words is so fresh, pleasant and appealing that words are supposed to issue from flowers rather than from human mouths. Here is description of feeling in terms of the language of the inside and the prose is suited to finest expressionistic needs.

Conclusion

As Srinivasa Iyengar points out, by writing this novel, namely *Cry, the Peacock*, Anita Desai added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers of English fiction. While in the work of Praver Jhabvala, the social background is rather more important than the characters, and in Kamala Markandaya's novels the emphasis is as much on the principal characters as on the social, political, economic, and cultural backgrounds, in Anita Desai's first novel, and also in her subsequent novels, the inner lives of the characters are as important as their outer lives and their environment, if not more important. *Cry, the Peacock* is the story of the married life of a woman by the name of Maya. The action of the novel occurs in Delhi; and there are a number of references to places in this city, such as Birla Mandir, the Ridge, the

Red Fort, and the Jama Masjid. The novel begins with the death of Maya's pet dog, and the effect of this death upon Maya's mind. Maya's husband, Gautama, is a busy and prosperous lawyer, too absorbed in his own affairs to meet the varied demands of his young wife. An astrologer had told Maya that, in the fourth year of her married life, either she or her husband would die. When the novel begins, Maya has already entered the fourth year of her married life; and she is now haunted by the astrologer's prophecy. Eventually she herself pushes her husband from the parapet of the roof of their house, bringing about his death. Subsequently she herself commits suicide, at the same time dragging her mother-in-law down with her from the roof to the ground below, and killing her also. Thus the astrologer's prophecy becomes the cause of the tragedy of Maya's life. Related to the theme of the novel is the myth about the peacock's cry. It is said that the peacocks fight with each other before they mate. Living, these peacocks are aware of death; and dying, they are in love with life.

Dr. R.K. Dhawan rightly points out that *Cry, the Peacock* broke new ground in Indian-English fiction and is considered a trend-setter. He goes on to tell us that this novel deals chiefly with the strange obsessions of the hyper-sensitive heroine Maya who kills her husband Gautama by pushing him off the parapet and then commits suicide.

According to Professor Darshan Singh Maini, *Cry, the Peacock* is the most poetic and evocative Indo-Anglian novel, next to Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope*; and, according to Dr. S. Indira, it is the poetic imagery that lends richness and beauty to the narrative in this novel, though the story line is thin, being an account of a neurotic consciousness. Anita Desai has given ample evidence in this novel of her talent for psychological analysis; and she effectively employs the devices of the interior monologue and the stream of consciousness which she has obviously borrowed from Virginia Woolf.

The novel *Cry, the Peacock* has been written by Anita Desai. She is a well-known writer of India. The novel is a story of a sensitive woman Maya. The story revolves round the theme of marital disharmony. The theme of marital disharmony is the emerging theme in India writing in English. The emerging trends in the big cities have given birth to such kind of theme.

In *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya is the most sensitive woman suffering from neurotic fears and marital disharmony. Her neurosis growth, development and crisis are painted in all the three parts of the novel. Maya has developed a father-fixation and after her marriage finds Gautam a poor substitute. Gautam is not a loving husband. He proves a medium to reach her father in her unconscious mind. Naturally, there

is little in common and they simply maintain matrimonial bonds. To Maya freedom is not possible unless she removes her impression of Gautam in her inner consciousness. Maya strikes at Gautam's reflection in the mirror and tries to kill him. This shows a gradual transformation of her character into a criminal. But the novelist dramatises the character and the situation simply to give a clear shape to the inner self of Maya and thus she proves a medium for refracting experience. She connects her present with the past and tries to go into a sheltered life. Efforts by Gautam to heal up her internal wounds fail. Her continuous longing for something fails to establish complete communication with reality in life. Maya continues to suffer from the feeling of suffocation and disassociation of her internal self even after the sugar-coated pills of relief given to her by Gautam.

Maya is obsessed with prophecy of disaster. In the very beginning she longs for the company of her husband soon after the death of Toto. Maya wants to revert back to her childhood memories to escape her present. In this crisis she usually resorts to crying and bursting into a lot of pillow beating. In her such efforts her consciousness seizes sensations of colour, smell or sound. The message of loneliness and the spell of darkness separates both Maya and Gautam. Even the sky does not seem to give her an inescapable fact of life, she seeks meaning in a dark universe. The Urdu couplet quoted by Gautam does not heal up her wounds. This does not redeem her loneliness. It simply underlines the irony of her position still longing for something. Her experience of love appears to be short-lived-and her hopes vanish.

The Cry, of the Peacock and at the same time the cry of Maya frustrates her within. The world appears to her 'like a toy specially made for her, painted in her favourite colours, set moving to her favourite tunes'. Similar to the monsoon Peacock dancing madly and crying for its lover and finally killing itself in a frenzy of love, Maya's heart cracks up with the presumption of same hopelessness. She admits that when she heard one cry in the stillness of night, its hoarse, heart-torn voice, pierced her white flesh and plunged into its knife to hilt in her palpitating heart.

Still Maya controls herself and watches her others elf which dominates at the end. The dance within her becomes more and more feverish. She is no longer sane. She is torn by doubts and dread and the atmosphere around her indicates sub-human existence.

Her hopelessness is individual but it spreads and becomes universal. Her neurosis is somewhat collective and poses a definite danger to the identity of woman as a whole. The mental agonies and the tensions in her mind shows miseries of her existence and narrows down the poetic beauty of her life. She continues to lead an explosive life and comments on her unsuccessful married life. Whenever she

discloses her mind to Gautam he does not appreciate her, he does not understand her, on the contrary he rejects the things out-right. He calls her neurotic, a spoiled baby and her life a fairy tale.

Maya remains a lonely creature. Her loneliness, her aching heart and gradual deterioration of psyche make her an existentialist character.

Harish Raizada is of the view that the reason for Maya's neurosis is, however, not her father-fixation though it aids to hasten her tragedy, but persistent obsession of the prediction by the albino astrologer of death either for her or her husband within four years of their marriage.

B. Ramchandra Rao writes: "In case of *Cry, the Peacock*, the problem is further complicated by the emotional instability of the heroine of the book. In the early part of novel Maya is emotionally disturbed but very much in control of herself."

Maya is very much possessed by the vision of albino astrologer. Therefore, she turns hysteric over the creeping fear of death. She has no rest any more-only death and waiting.

Maya herself admits: "Torture, guilt, dread, imprisonment, these were the four walls of my private hell one that no one could survive in long. Death was certain."

Thus, it can be said that the theme of the novel is more psychological than social. The instability of Maya's mind is the theme. The vision of the artist lies in expanding this theme.

Anita Desai is a novelist of interior reality. Although she is not an established psychological novelist, her tone and tenor of the novel suggest that she has many things that bring closer to a psychological novelist. Anita Desai is a sensitive writer. She is a sensitive woman too. Therefore, it is quite obvious that she is quite minute in understanding the woman's mind. *Cry, the Peacock* is a psychological novel. It is a psychological novel because the central character Maya has been presented from psychological point of view.

The part I of the novel describes what leads Maya, the protagonist, to her neurosis. She is shown a childless young wife married to an advocate of great repute. She is mourning over the death of her dear dog, Toto. This death motif is skillfully built up in the story. Though obsessed by death from the opening, of the novel, she is responsive to the poetic beauty of life. The result of her tension creates miseries in her existence. Part II gives us causes of her neurosis and it traces her compulsive fear also. Maya's intense desire to love and to be loved constructs the plot and sub-plot. Part II consists of seven chapters in first person narration. In all these chapters Maya is a woman-hysterical, demanding, and obsessed with the fear of an impending catastrophe.

She is always speaking something. Her speech builds up her character. It also presents her conflicts from her own point of view. Her narrating the story creates an atmosphere and the atmosphere reflects her state of mind.

The most remarkable things about Cry, the Peacock is building up the tension and presentation of the hideous transformation of a sensitive, poetic young lady into an insane individual. Desai comments on her inner world 'the dance within grew more and more urgent'. Even her language makes a psychic drama. Through a natural stream of consciousness process we move from the bright stars to the Pascalian dark spaces between them. Then there is fear of darkness which is yet to be located. Again we come to the idea of death and it connects the death of Toto. Then comes the cry of pain-a desperate cry. When the fear becomes obsessive, Maya is less and less able to control herself. She is at this stage finally to break down. Her abnormality is expressive of her hysterical condition.

Maya sometimes screams: "My father might have come. Look, look for him? Gautam..." Gautam also admits "there was fear in his face as he stared down at me, holding me fiercely. "God what has happened to Maya ?" There is strangeness in her behaviour: "I heard a thin voice, shrill, as kites do when they battle and barely recognised it as my own." Sometimes she warns, "Do not take me seriously what I write now, for I cannot quite recall whether these conversationsever actually took place, or merely occurred to me when I sat there, alone, insane with dread, I was ill, ill." The dance within her becomes more and more feverish. The albino, the Kathakali dancer, the peacock, the bronze Shiva and the other images come to her mind one by one until she is finally insane. The dark dancer represents death and Maya knows there is no time left. She or her life partner is fated to die. Regular contacts outside the world intensify her fear psychosis and her sense of loneliness. Leila married to a man slowly dying of tuberculosis, the Vulgar Lal, the funny Sikh-all add to her miseries. Each encounter tells a new intimation of mortality. The same pattern of events continues to repeat itself. A trivial occurrence or incident makes her more subjective and neurotic. The small boy in the party with Lal makes her feel all of them are waiting to perish soon.

On all occasions when she tries to have rapport she fails and she is bound to withdraw herself. Sometimes this world appears to her familiar and compromising and sometimes it is menacing and fearful. She translates outside world into her personal experiences. The Cabaret, the dancing bear, the caged monkeys all serve as reminder to her death.

The peacock's dance is associated with the rainy season. It is seen that when dark clouds come over the sky, the Peacocks start spreading their colourful feathers ready to dance and mate. However this dance

of the Peacock mergers with the colour of the Albino astrologer and the dance becomes somewhat the dance of the death "the hundred eyes upon their tails have seen the truth of life and death, and know them to be one Living they are aware of death. Dying they are in love with life." 'Lover, Lover', you will hear them cry in the forests, when the rain-clouds come, 'Lover, I die'.

The Peacock's dance acquires a personal significance for Maya's life and it shows to her future course of life as she views her marriage with Gautam as a deadly struggle. The poetry of life, its passion, its love and its hatred-life and death are identified with the peacock and its dance.

Maya is ever imaginative. The imagination creates the desired and apprehends the threatening. The gulf between the two separates them. There are a number of episodes to prove this gulf. Rebuffed by Guatam and mauled by the society, she is torn between her love of life and fear of death. Anita Desai dramatizes her gradual disintegration of Maya's personality in a powerful way. She has nightmares and fears. She is going to be insane: "Yes I am going insane. I am moving further and further from all wisdom, all calm, and I shall soon be mad, if I am not there already." For Maya the desert is full of hidden dangers and presenting those dangers the novelist dramatises the psychic drama of Maya sometimes her disintegrating sanity and sometimes her cracking up under the pressure of fears. Though Desai has her sympathies with Maya, she maintains a distance so that the reader may see Maya's personality in its complexity and beauty.

Anita Desai is a well-established writer. She is one of the important novelists of India. Her importance lies in Indian writing in English because she has tried to present her character from psychological point of view. Anita Desai is a link between old set of India writers in English and the new set of Indian writers in English.

Anita Desai generally portrays female protagonists-young and old, rich and poor, single, married or widowed. Maya in the Cry, the Peacock is a fully developed female character. She is an unusual woman, introvert and child like. She completely lacks the virtues of grace and self-possession, but she exemplifies thought, emotion and sensation of a female character which attracts our attention for study of her illusions.

Maya is a pampered recluse. She lives with her husband alone. Her husband even requires little interaction with her. The major action takes place in the protagonist's mind. One of them will die in the fourth year of their marriage. This prophecy by the astrologer comes back to torment her during that ominous fourth year. For as many months she

has fears of her own death. As time passes, she comes to reflect intensely the life's meaning and further she develops extreme awareness of sights, sounds and smells around her. She desperately tries to imprint life's experiences on her memory. She thinks her days are numbered. Now she wants to live for more years. She wants to enjoy the fullest and demands more and more. To fulfil the demand of Fate, she finds out the only way, that her husband has to die and she has to live. Maya is not conscious of this alternative firstly, by and by she notices differences between Gautam's and her own attitudes. Here it is decided that Gautam will be sacrificed. The full moon and the roof-top (Time and Place) indicate his death.

There are four significant events which force Maya for her illusions. These events intensifies her inner-self the death of her pet dog. Toto, Lal's visit to her home, a visit from her in-laws, a shopping trip and a letter from Arjuna, her brother. These are ordinary events for others. For example, the death of a pet dog would be simply mourned but she says that a relationship with a dog, "is no less a relationship than that of a woman and her child." Only the letter of a long-lost brother might change a normal man. Maya's strong reaction to all these ordinary events shows her high perception of the things around her. Except for these things her life is normal. Maya is free to sit in her bed-room and live a life of loneliness. Her lack of manual labour and social activities leads her to take up an inward journey and finally she becomes as existentialist character. She herself admits when Nila and her mother visits her-"these two had not the time for thinking and imagining", shopping and knitting, painting and cooking and caring for orphans. Maya, without outwardly concerns and social contacts, lives a self centred life. Her loneliness and inward things develop her personality into a woman of illusions. The readers know the reasons for her behaviour, but her husband sees only the outward manifestations of her thoughts and he is not in a position to piece together the complete picture of her disturbance taking place day by day.

The characters in this novel are limited-Maya, Gautam, Arjuna, Lals and a few relatives, all of them are well-to-do and educated. The Lals and the carbarret goers are the people for which Maya has distaste. The reasons for her insanity lie in her own nature. The other people around her do not see her saner side.

Maya's behaviour is child-like. She was free to play with pets and small flowers. Years later she is almost free. On two occasions she sums something serious. At times Maya behaves like an adult. Once she says "it was discouraging to reflect on how much in our marriage was based upon a nobility forced upon us from outside, and therefore neither true nor lasting." She says this only to herself when she is forced to say something, she has nothing important to say something. We also know

that it is easy to speak the truth to oneself, but it is more risky to expose it to others. Therefore, it appears much safer to keep her thoughts to herself, but there is limit to this. One cannot contain it for ever. It also happens in case of Maya when Gautam dies she erupts like a volcano : "I saw the moon's vast, pure surface, touched only faintly with petals of shadow, as though brushed by a luna moth's wings, so that it appeared a great multi-foliolate rose waxen white, virginal chaste and absolute white, casting a light that was holy in its purity, a soft suffusing glow of its chastity."

At the end Maya appears waiting for an asylum. Her childlike behaviour has overcome her adulthood. Through her own description of the situation leading to her husband's death, we have her breakdown. In this way, the novelist has given an opportunity to the readers to enter into the inner recess of a particular woman during her short critical period.

Anita Desai is quite successful in delineating a character like Maya. Maya represents a modern woman. She is a true representative of a woman character who lives in the big cities of India.

Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* is a poetic novel. It has a visionary aesthetic which gives it a spiritual shape. Its poetry is a matter of vision, tone, temperament and atmosphere. It never sabotages the story element, rather it helps the imagination to grow into a thought. It extends the events and actions, and supplements it like a positive force. Thus, it is skillfully structured with incidents, characters and details that the poetic elements become an abiding force in this novel.

Part one and Part three of the novel consisting of 3 pages and 7 pages respectively serves as prologue and epilogue. These parts are told in third person narration which appears as novelist's statements. It is lyrical. The subjective mode of expression give Maya's psychic condition.

In the opening Part, we see Maya, a childless young lady married to a famous lawyer, nearly twice of her age. She is seen grieving over the death of her dog, Toto. The death motif is built into the very structure of the story and it is extended as an ode to whole of the novel. Maya surfaces this motif in her fears and musings. Simultaneously she is responsive to the beauty and poetry of life as the tension in her makes her life miserable and aching. The husband-wife alienation is not the theme fully developed like other psychological novels, rather this theme is dramatised through simile, metaphor and symbol. The two spouses are of different sort, Gautam an efficient; pragmatic, unsentimental person whereas Maya is a creature of graceful illusion, song, dance and

flower. Therefore, their alienation has no sociological or philosophical connotations.

Maya is a prisoner of the past. She is always under the shade of her past memories-her memories engulfing her one after another like wave upon wave. The painful past is always throbbing in her inner consciousness. It has taken the shape of a permanent fixation. The prophetic note with her-for one of the spouses will die four years after marriage aches her, the Toto after death has widened the pitch and she is left with dissolution and extinction.

The interior landscape of Maya's agonised soul is depicted beautifully. The imagery of insanity-moon, drum, desert, rodent and lizard show her hysterical condition. The imagery of bird, tree, wind, flower and fruit show her childhood memories. Here the sensibility is released as the result of the tension between the two sets of images.

In her nightmare and sufferings Maya moves farther and farther from reality. She descends into the darker and darker side of her life. Loneliness and unreality become her permanent companion. During the phase she is at times reminded of the dread prophecy and peacock's cries of death. The imagery of pit, corridor and well indicates her alienation and darkness, though she desires for its end. The symbol of Peacock is poetically structured throughout the novel which assumes meaning and it is never exhausted. Whenever the sultry mood of Maya deepens, she appears panting for a cloud burst and relief. The dust storm fury shows her emotional imbalances.

Thus *Cry, the Peacock* is a novel of sensibility. It is concerned with the terrors of existence and it achieves a multidimensional effect through a series of events in the life of its protagonist, Maya. The poetic sensibilities of the author are well reflected. Although Anita Desai has never been a poet, the passionate thinking, the depth of feelings that she presents in her novel make her poet. She is a sensitive woman presenting a life of a sensitive woman.

Structure is one of the important constituents in fiction. It is as important as the backbone to a human body. Structure gives unity to a work of fiction. E. M. Forster observes: "We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence." A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. On the structure of the novel Anita Desai says: "I prefer the word 'pattern' to plot as it sounds more natural and even better...one should have a pattern and then fit the characters, the setting, and scenes into it-each piece in keeping with the others and so forming a balanced whole." *Cry, the Peacock* is a psychological novel of a hypersensitive, childhood, young

woman, Maya. she is obsessed with a childhood prophecy of disaster. She tries to kill her husband in a fit of frenzy. She goes mad and finally kills herself. This novel is divided into three parts dealing with origin, development and the end of her neurosis. Part I and III are very brief and part II forms the core of the novel. The opening and the concluding parts describe Maya's excited conditions and are rendered in third person narration. In part I she is overwhelmed with sorrow on the death of her dear dog Toto and as such she is unable to express her inner feelings. In part-III she is lost in herself and there she is not able to tell her story. Through stream of consciousness in part II she Discloses the origin and development of her miseries in first person narrative. The past and the present are so mixed up that it shows the temperamental incompatibility of the couple. The couple's alienation is at the root of the tragedy which is indicative in the opening section. The death motif is built into the very structure of the novel.

This image of the albino astrologer creates a sense of fear and void in her. The Cry of the peacocks deepens her anxiety and she goes on with her agonized soul chapter after chapter. Her neurosis goes on mounting like waves till she has no hold on her. In this fit of insanity she argues with her brother Arjuna that her own death was not necessary and it might be Gautama's as "the man had no contact with the world or with me." At once she decides to get rid of him and gets him agreed to have a stroll with her on the roof. There she engages him and hurls him over the parapet down to death. Her insanity takes her own life when she jumps off the balcony of her ancestral house in Lucknow three days after the death of Gautam. The action takes place at two places-Delhi and Lucknow. There are references of other localities, but the inner space preoccupies the novelist's attention. The novel is sound from the structural point of view right from the beginning to the end. Cry, the Peacock thus, is something of a technical triumph. Desai's ability to use the English language in an uniquely individual fashion is amply demonstrated by this novel. Her careful artistry is illustrated by her intelligent mixing of the first person narrative with third person rendering of the story for the purpose of contrast.

In her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), Anita Desai portrays the psychic tumult of a young and sensitive married girl Maya who is haunted by a childhood prophecy of a fatal disaster. She is the daughter of a rich advocate in Lucknow. Being alone in the family, her mother being dead and brother having gone to America to carve his own independent destiny, she gets the most of her father's affection and attention and in her moments of affliction exclaims to herself: "No one, no one else, loves me as my father does". The excessive love Maya gets

from her father makes her have a top-sided view of life. She feels the world to be a toy made especially for her, painted in her favourite colours and set moving according to her tunes.

Having lived a carefree life under the indulgent attentions of her loving father, Maya desires to have similar attentions from her husband Gauta, a father surrogate. When Gauta, a busy, prosperous lawyer, too much engrossed in his own vocational affairs, fails to meet her demands, she feels neglected and miserable. Seeing her morbidity, her husband warns her of her turning 'neurotic' and blames her father for spoiling her.

The reason for Maya's neurosis is, however, not her father fixation though it aids to hasten her tragedy, but Persistent obsession of the prediction by the albino astrologer of death either for her or her husband within four years of their marriage. The terrifying words of the prediction, like the drumbeats of the mad demon of Kathakali ballets, ring in her ears and unnerve her. She knows that she is haunted by 'a black and evil shadow'-her fate, and the time has come : "And four years it was now, we had been married four years...I know the time had come. It was now to be either Gauta or I".

The loving attention of her father makes Maya oblivious of the deadly shadow; but as her husband Gauta fails to satisfy her intense longing for love and life, she is left to the solitude and silence of the house which prey upon her. She muses over her husband's lack of love for her and once, in a fit of intense despair and agony, tells him straight to his face: "Oh, you know nothing understand nothing. Nor will you ever understand. You know nothing of me-and of how I can love. How I want to love. How it is important to me. But you, you've never loved. And you don't love me..."Temperamentally there is no compatibility between Maya and Gauta. Maya has a romantic love for the beautiful, the colourful and the sensuous; Gauta is not romantic and has "no use for flowers". Maya is "a creature of instincts", "a wayward and high-strung child". As symbolized by her name she stands for the world of sensations. Gautama's name, on the other hand, symbolizes asceticism, detachment from life. He is realistic and rational. He has philosophical detachment towards life as preached in the Bhagwad Gita. Such irreconcilably different temperaments are bound to have marital disharmony.

Had Gautama shown an understanding towards and been attentive to Maya, he would have saved her from the haunting fears of "shadows and drums, drums and shadows". The gap of communication between them leaves her lonely to brood over the morbid thoughts of the albino astrologer's prophecy. Her attempts to divert herself by visits to her friend Leila and Pom, or Mrs. Lal's party or the restaurant and the cabaret, prove powerless to dispel the creeping terror. The visit of Gauta's mother and sister Nila brings a brief respite to her and she

enjoys her busy life in their company. But once they are gone, she finds the 'house empty' and herself alone with her 'horrors and nightmares'.

Maya is so much possessed by the vision of albino astrologer that she recalls his talk about the myth surrounding the peacock's cry. Listening to the cries of peacocks in the rainy season, she realizes: "I should never sleep in peace. For, God, now I was caught in the net of the inescapable, and where lay the possibility of mercy, of release? This net was no hallucination, no". Being intensely in love with life she turns hysteric over the creeping fear of death: "Am I gone insane? Father! Brother! Husband! Who is my saviour? I am in need of one. I am dying, and I am in love with living. I am in love, and I am dying. God, let me sleep, forget, rest. But no, I'll never sleep again. There is no rest any more only death and waiting."

Maya suffers from headaches and experiences rages of rebellion and terror. As she moves towards insanity, she sees the visions of rats, snakes, lizards and iguanas creeping over her, slipping their club-like tongues in and out. Her dark house appears to her like her tomb, and she contemplates in it over the horror of all that is to come. Then suddenly, during her interval of sanity, an idea hopefully dawns in her mind that since the albino had predicted death to either of them, it may be Gauta and not she whose life is threatened. She thus transfers her death-wish to Gauta and thinks that as he is 'detached' and indifferent to life, it will not matter for him if he misses life. In her perversity she is even haunted by the word 'Murder'. Gauta remains so much lost in his work that Maya finds him even oblivious of the dust storm that has raged earlier in the afternoon. When she asks him to accompany her to the roof of the house to enjoy cool air, he accompanies her, lost in his own thoughts. Passing out of the room, Maya catches sight of bronze Shiva dancing and prays to the 'Lord of the Dance' to protect them. Climbing the stairs she finds her cat suddenly speeding past them in a state of great alarm. They walk together towards the terraced end.

Anita Desai does not need any introduction in the world of novel writing in India. She is one of the most popular English novelists in modern times. She has good command over the language and handles it in the most effect manner. On her style Anita Desai herself comments, "I think the purpose of my writing is to discover for myself and then describe and convey the truth.....the Dutch old masters who could paint a loaf of bread so incomparably, were not painting the meaning of that loaf, its significance to man, its quality, even its flavour.....My writing is an effort to discover, underline and convey the significance of things." To transmit the significance of things some Indian writers use irony, metaphysic, humanism and heroic postures, but Desai inquires into widely the psychic dimensions of her characters. With this existential

dimension her overall vision is gloomy, dejected and disgusting. Maya's predicament is the prophecy of the astrologer. Though she is fond of song, dance and flower, she loses control over herself and finally she turns crazy. R. S. Sharma is one of opinion that "most of her (Anita Desai) problems as a fiction writer begin with her insistence on too much style on too small a canvas." Almost in all her novels Anita Desai uses words for their own sake. She displays her proficiency in using words for music and magic. Meenakshi Mukarjee has rightly commented, "Her language is marked by three characteristics: sensuous richness; a high-strung sensitiveness and a love for the sound of words." Darshan Singh Maini also expresses almost the similar view on Desai's style. "Words appear to have sensuous appeal for her, and she exults in the reach and power of her rhetoric." Thus she has a likeness for the sound of words. She employs familiar Indian words for items of food, dress rituals, festivals, trees etc. She attempts to call up typical Indian environment by using Indian imagery on finding links in experiences, events and objects of life. Simultaneously, she applies parenthesis as a stylistic device and other linguistic technique.

The rhetoric in *Cry, the Peacock* consists of lyricism and its repetition of words. Desai poetically describes the extremely hot and oppressive odour of Toto: "Once sweet, once loved, then suddenly rotten and repulsive." The light in the varandah has been compared with "an inward glow as of marble at sunset". To Maya "star like flowers that had been pink and red in day light" appear at night white and full of strong fragrance. There is nothing abstract and everything is full of concrete images. Sometimes Maya turns aside from her "thoughts of anguish with rose, every now and then, like words and awake from dreams and rise out of their trees amidst great commotion, circle a while, then settle again on their branches".

The passage given below is a nice example of Anita's ability to use suitable words as per the demand of the situation. The passage describes Maya's neurotic mind.

"Wild horse, white horse, galloping up paths of stone, flying away into the distance, the wild hills. The heights, the dizzying heights of my mountains, towering, tapering, edged with cliff edges, founded on rock. Fall, gloriously fall to the bed of racing rivers, foaming seas. Horrid arms, legs, blood flowing, tenacles thrashing, eyes glazing. Storm, storm at sea, at land! Fury, whip, lash. Fury furiously Dangers."

The words employed here are forceful and violent. The formation of the sentences is abrupt, odd and broken. There are exclamatory and interrogatory phrases. The method of indirect description has been employed. The mental make up of Gautam and Maya had also been expressed in the similar manner.

"Not at all, like my family or myself, Maya. We are egoists, one and all. We work for fame, name, money, all other evils put together. Yet we do have our work, our vocations each of us, and so far, I must say, it appears to have brought us a certain amount of security. Not the complete ideal peace. Gita tells us about not by any means.

Anita uses the technique of interior monologue to make her presentation of events more interesting in her novels. In such cases sentences are logically joined. They are incoherent and disjointed. Here is an example, "Are you certain of your beliefs, their rightness? I am not, After all, what if we are wrong, We Hindus? What if there is a Christian hell? Oh, I do have to think of it. I bubbled, crazed by fear. I should not like to die and find myself in purgatory, should you, Gautam?" Desai manages the device of repetition to attain the rhythmic beauty of a lyric: "Of course you are still so young, so very young." For rendering immediacy and dramatic effect, Desai also adopts third person narration. The past events are presented in a way as if they have taken place in present..... "he closes his eyes because he cannot bear to see the flat, flat lawn, the white, white house, the many-many people".....a jagged line of azure blue amidst coils of silver mist.....quiet winter." Anita Desai creates an interesting Indian atmosphere in her, novels by employing pure Indian words to present some events in their pure Indian way in her novels.

"Pia pia, they say lover, lover, Mio Mio, I die, I die", Desai does not render Hindi words into English and yet she is able to express the true meanings. We have her use of originals from Indian languages such as paimana, tamanna atta, sindoor, kumkum, sanyasi, raga, gulmoher, maidan etc. Her use of imagery is also Indian. There are images of animals dead bodies, violence and abyss and they are presented in Indian atmosphere. The under noted passage delineating the drum beating may be presented as a nice example of it.

"And softly the drums crept across the desert, stole through the dust, softly, softly they began to beat. Closer and closer came the sound, louder and louder. 'Ah', I find, looking up to see if I could find..... nothing but the sound irrepressible, relentless sound of drums, drums beating."

Thus the moral cry, the peacock continues a number of good image and metaphorical expressions. Anita Desai nowhere in the novel exhibits a sense of humour and irony. Her prose style loses its good qualities and it appears unchanging uninteresting and dull.

The novels of Anita Desai are known for strong female characters. They are young and old, rich and poor, single, married or

widow. The character of Maya in 'Cry, The Peacock' is elaborately portrayed. She is introvert and child like. She wants to keep herself aloof from the crowd of the people. She is devoid of the qualities of grace and self control, but she represents thought, action and feeling of a female character which draw our attention for the study of her.

Maya is the wife of Gautam. She wants to live alone. She finds herself unable to adjust in the people. She feels isolated even in the midst of society. Her married life is not pleasant. Even her husband wants to have a little interaction with her. The major action takes place in Maya is mind. An astrologer told her before her marriage that one of them would die in the fourth year of her marriage. This prophecy keeps on tormenting her and she is always obsessed with the fear of death. Death plays a crucial role in Maya's life. On the other side there develops in her heart, an intense desire to live. She develops extreme awareness of sights, sounds and smells around her. She desperately attempts to become oblivious to death and wants to live a long life. She wants to enjoy all beauties of life. She demands more and more. She thinks if death of either of the two is inevitable, her husband should die and she should live. Maya is not aware of this alternative firstly. Slowly she observes differences between Gautam's and her own attitude. Once Gautam is found lacking in perception when a dust storm overtakes the house they live in only underlined an unawareness, a half deadness to the living world, which helped and strengthened her by justifying her unspoken decision. It is resolved that Gautam will be sacrificed. The full moon and the roof top (Time and Place) are symbols of his death.

There are four events in the play that lay a huge effect on Maya's mind and create many wrong conception in Maya's mind. These events turn Maya's behaviour and make her a typical woman. These events are (i) the death of her pet dog, Toto. (ii) Lal's visit to her home, (iii) A visit from her in-laws, (iv) A shopping trip and a letter from her brother, Arjuna. These are insignificant events. For instance, the death of a pet dog in any case should not be mourned extra-ordinarily but she says that a relationship with a dog, "is no less a relationship than that of woman and her child." Maya was deeply attached with her dog and its sudden death gives Maya an emotional shock. Only the letter of a long lost brother might bring a change in the life as a normal man. Maya's strong reaction to all these common events shows her high perception of things around her. Except for these things her life is normal and well set. Maya lives a free and lonely life. She is free from all family restrictions and bondages. In her house, she lives a queen-like life. She does not take part in social activities. That is why she keeps her mind centered around her own life. She takes up an inward journey and ultimately she becomes an existentialist character. She herself admits when Nila and her mother visits her that these two had not the time for thinking and imagining,

shopping and knitting, painting and cooking and caring for orphans. Maya has fully cut off from the society. She has nothing to think about others. She, therefore, always thinks about herself. Her isolation and her own introspection, develops her personality into a woman of illusions. The readers know why she behaves strangely but her husband has only the outward manifestation of her ideas and fails to perceive together the complete picture of her disturbed and unsettle psyche.

There are a few characters in the novel. They are Maya, her husband Gautam, her brother Arjuna, Lals and a few relatives. They come from the upper section of the society and are well educated and well-mannered as well. Maya maintains a distance from the Lals and the Caberet goers. The reasons for her insanity lie in her own nature. The other people around her do not regard her as sane. Her own name has obvious significance. She is a type of Maya (illusion). The dog Toto is like the dog who was with Dorothy on her visit to the land of Oz. It offers its company for a lovely and exciting adventure. The same is the case with Maya and Toto.

In the entire novel, Maya's crazy and child-like behaviour is the centre of interest. She attracts everyone's attention towards herself with the help of her cragy behaviour. It is because in her childhood she had been carefree. She was free to play with pets and small flowers. She enjoyed this freedom for some more years. On two occasion she draws serious conclusion. Sometimes she behaves like a normal adult. Once she says, "it was discouraging to reflect on how much in our marriage was based upon a nobility forced upon us from outside, and therefore neither true nor testing." She says this only to herself when she is obliged to utter something. She has nothing to unfold to herself. It is known to all that it is easy to speak the truth to oneself, but it is not safe to open it to others. She, therefore, thinks it safe to keep her thoughts to herself but there is limit to this. It is very difficult for everyone to keep, one's secrets and ideas hidden in their heart. Same happens in Maya's case. When Gautam passes away, she erupts like a volcano: "I saw the moons vast, pure surface, touched only faintly with petals of shadow, as though brushed by a luna moth's wings so that it appeared a great multifoliage rose waxen white, virginal chaste and absolute white casting a light that was holy in its purity, a soft suffusing glow of its chastity."

At the end of the novel, Maya appears to be insane and crazy waiting for lunatic asylum her childlike behaviour has swallowed her adulthood. Through her own duplication of the situation leading to her husband's death, we have an idea of her broken personality. She has been presented as a victim of isolation and disillusioned mind. Thus the novelist brings to view the inner recess of a typical woman.

Arun Joshi is a novelist who, more strongly than most, has brought to his work that detachment from the everyday, while still acknowledging its existence, which is perhaps India's particular gift to the literature of the world. The rising up into the transcendental is a trait that has increasingly marked out his novels from his first, *The Foreigner* where the young hero, after experiencing life and love in America, is back in Delhi, at last persuaded by a humble office worker that sometimes detachment lies in actually getting involved-on up to *The City and the River*, which takes place wholly in an imaginary land.

Becoming a novelist in the pre-Rushdie era - that is to say, at a time when Indian fiction in English had not consolidated a reputation in the West and its chances of success at home were poor - was a hazardous matter for an Indian writer. Moreover, an indrawn individual, who did little to promote his books and who refrained from entering literary circles, found even more obstacles on his way. Starting from this situation, and considering the fact that Arun Joshi was essentially an industrialist who cultivated his love for literature only in his spare time, it is easy to understand why Joshi cynically rejoiced that not even his neighbours knew he wrote books. In spite of his neighbours ignorance, however, Joshi little by little became a novelist of outstanding repute in the restricted circle of Indian scholars and critics, acclaimed for his absorbing novels in which French existentialism co-existed and fused with meditations based on the Bhagvad Gita. A bridge between two worlds and cultures - not necessarily the East and the West - his Career followed an ascending line that eventually led him to being awarded the Sahitya Academy Award, India's most prestigious literary prize.

To venture as a writer into such territory it is necessary to be equipped with the means to make the everyday credible and sharply present. This Joshi was from the start well able to do, as his early short stories, subsequently collected in *The Survivor*, clearly show. "The Gherao" tells simply and effectively of how a young college teacher arrives at maturity when his aged Principal is subjected to that peculiar Indian form of protest action, the gherao, the preventing of a target figure from moving anywhere or receiving any succor.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas is the story of a young, rich, American-educated Indian who ends up in the wilderness of central India living as a semi-naked "tribal" seeking a meaning to things above and beyond all that everyday civilization can provide. A key to Joshi's whole intent can be found in the words he puts into the mouth of his narrator; as he grows old he realizes that the most futile cry of man is his impossible wish to be understood.

The Apprentice, Joshi's third novel, takes his search for understanding man's predicament one step further toward the transcendental. Its central figure is a man essentially docile and

uncourageous whose life more or less parallels the coming into being of postcolonial India. Eventually gaining a post in the civil service, he ends, as many real-life civil servants did, by taking a huge bribe. But in the final pages he comes to see that at least corrupt man can strive to do just a little good- he cleans shoes at a temple-and that while there are in the world young people still untainted, there is a spark of hope.

In *The Last Labyrinth*, the hero, if that always is hot too strong a term for the men Joshi puts at the center, is a man crying always "I want! I want!" and not knowing what it is he desires, in some ways a parallel figure to Saul Bellow's Henderson, the rain king. His search takes him, however, to infinitely old Benares, a city seen as altogether intangible, at once holy and repellent, and to an end lost in a miasma of non-understanding. But the way there is gripping. Joshi writes with a persuasive ease and illuminates the outward scene with telling phrase after telling phrase.

Then there is *The City and the River*; where the city is not the Delhi or the Bombay Joshi has elsewhere described so concretely but a wholly intangible place, removed from time, where nonetheless a man can be seen wearing jeans. Joshi, in his search for a way to describe the meaning of things, has now come to a world akin to those of science fiction or perhaps to the mystical poetry of Blake writing of "Golgonooza the spiritual Fourfold London eternal." But all the while there are digs or sly hints at the current ills of Indian society and, by implication, of all societies everywhere. And in the final pages, where the wild river sweeps over the whole complex city, there is, again, sounded that faint note of hope. The question is not of success or failure, an old yogi tells his disciple; the question is of trying.

Thus, Joshi's novels probe into the inner recesses of the character's mind. To suit the Stream of Consciousness technique, Arun Joshi uses the language of the interior, the language of the heart and mind which is a subtle mixture of emotion and intellect, of poetry and prose. Joshi echoes Indian consciousness through the Stream of consciousness technique and not the consciousness of a Camus or of Kafka protagonist. After all what he gives is a typical Indian Stream of Consciousness revealed through the inner turmoil of the Indian characters in a typically Indian situation.

The passage from the Eighties to the Nineties in India, however, marks a significant shift in the tastes and orientation of the reading public as far as fiction written in English was concerned. The arrival and enormous success, of Rushdie's novels had caused ferment in what had been a static situation and it is likely that *The City and the River*

embodied a turn in Joshi's literary output partly in an effort to exploit the new vogue. Of all the author's novels, in fact, *The City and the River* is the one which can best be described as "fictional experiment", despite the fact that this label was used for other works of his, *The Apprentice* in particular.

In *The City and the River*, the fifth and the last novel, Joshi exhibits his narrative skill in the use of the Stream of Consciousness technique especially in delineation of the individual's estranged plight, his psychical encounter with reality.

The master of Rallies, a child of boatman, for example, is "an unhappy man" and the real cause of his unhappiness is rootlessness. He appears as "tired", "afraid of humiliation" and at "no peace". He says, "I have no family, no wish to get rich. I do not wish to become famous; I have no friends to lose. Am I afraid of going to prison? In fact I (am, but why?). There is no one to mourn me, nor do I have commitments that would suffer".

The professor, a star watcher and a teacher of Master Bhoma, apart from his scholarship is weary and tired "I am tired of being careful... I am weary". His quest leads him to imprisonment at Gold Mines. He expresses in disgust: "Forgive me; I have spent my life in sleep. My life has been a joke, even as the lives of brick-people are a joke... I have squandered it on baubles". In extreme sorrow, he expresses "I am lost".

Crushed by solitudes and weight of human misery, even Bhumiputra, a teacher of Mathematics and disciple of professor "felt very alone". He was forced to roam in wilderness, after having the feeling of "wandering through a desert land". He excites the demoralized boatmen by reminding them that they are children of the sacred river and they should not sell their soul to a man however powerful he may be. But soon, "A sense of overwhelming futility filled him at such times, so much so that he saw no point in living". Sometime, he feels "so old and lonely and useless".

The City and the River is a political fable. Using a mixture of fantasy, prophecy, and a startlingly real vision of everyday politics, this is a novel that is truly a parable of the times, *The City and the River* is a political fable. Using a mixture of fantasy, *The City* is all cities. *The River* is the mother of cities. The Grand Master rules the City by the river and is determined to become its unchallenged King. Things move smoothly in this earthly Eden till a strange prophecy is made by the palace astrologer. The learned man predicts the crowning of a new King in place of the Grand Master.

The book is not a philosophical tract mouthing the utterances of its characters. Its appeal lies in its skilful handling of the course plotted

by intrigue and corruption in high places. The readability is enhanced by incisive character detail. As events unfold, each of the main actors becomes a portrait in a gallery.

Here, like Virginia Woolf, Joshi eschews the conventional devices of character definition in series of internal monologues, to give the readers an easy access to the character's neurotic mind.

The novel records the gloomy story that the Great Yogeshwara recounts to a disciple, the Nameless One, in order to explain who he is. Joshi makes use of the same device of one-sided dialogue that he employed in *The Apprentice*, where Ratan emptied his conscience to the National Cadet. Differently from the former novel, however, the teller's detachment from the story, due in part to the fact that he is now a witness of the events rather than the protagonist, runs the risk of mirroring the author's attitude as a consequence, the narrative fails to grip the reader's attention and its critical reception it was given was lukewarm. Following the vogue *Midnight's Children*, *The City and the River* tries to exhume the legends of ancient Indian epics - chiefly the Upanishads, in which an old sage teaches a lesson in life to a talented disciple - and incorporate them within a postmodern structure and significance. As is already evident in the title, the book emphasises two separate and hostile worlds, another interpretation of the typical dichotomy in Joshi's vision: the Bombay and the Benares of *The Last Labyrinth*, the Delhi and the Maikala Hills of *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*.

"A sharp observation, an unflinching candour, an intelligent wit combined with easy flowing prose, lend the story a unique charm that only a well written period novel can evince..." - **The Book Review**

Arun Joshi is one of the most noted and popular literary figures of the 20th century. He does not need any type of introduction in the literary field. He gained enormous popularity with 'The Last Labyrinth' and 'The City and The River'. *The City and The River* was Arun Joshi's last novel and it came after a span of ten years of 'The Last Labyrinth'.

Of all the novels of Arun Joshi, *The City and The River* is the one which can best be described as 'fictional experiment', despite the fact that this label was used for other works of his 'The Apprentice in Particular'.

The City and The River is a novel that gives a gloomy and sad account of great Yogeshwara's life. The Great Yogeshwara recounts to a disciple who is nameless in the novel in order to describe who he

: Yogeshwara unfolds the mystery of his identity before him. In this novel Joshi again adopts the technique of one-sided dialogue which he has employed in 'The Apprentice' and successfully creates an environment of mystery. By using the one-sided dialogue device, Joshi turns the novel into a tale or fable. But here differently from the former novel, however, the teller's detachment from the story, due in part to the fact that he is now a witness of the events rather than the protagonist, runs the risk of mirroring the author's attitude; as a consequence the narrative fails to have a grip on the reader's attention and the critical reception it was given was dull and quite lukewarm. In 'The City and The River', Joshi has followed the trend of 'The Midnight Children', The City and The River attempts to exhume the legends of ancient Indian epics-chiefly the Upanishads, in which an old sage teaches a lesson in life to a talented disciple. In the same manner, Yogeshwara tells many things about his life to a nameless disciple and attempts to teach him the lesson of life. As is already evident in the title, the book emphasises to separate and hostile world, another interpretation of the typical dichotomy in Joshi's vision: The Bombay and Banaras of The Last Labyrinth, The Delhi and the Maikala Hills of 'The Strange Case of Billy Biswas'.

The story told in the novel is woven on a disturbing and horrible dream. The dream has been interpreted as a harbinger of problems by the Astrologer, the Great Master of the city resolves to strengthen his command and authority. Surrounding himself with a group of ambitious, sycophant ministers, he attempted to win the sympathies and confidence of the boatman. This situation nicely represent the other pole in the city. There are so many people who still follow the tradition and custom and they have established a solid alliance and relationship with the river. Nevertheless they are not taken in by the Great Master's cajoling, who consequently feels the need to employ stronger measures to make the boatmen submit: mass imprisonment, torture, other severe punishment and even told death.

The City and The River is basically a political fable. Using a mixture of fantasy, prophecy and a startlingly real vision of everyday politics, this is a novel that is purely a parable of the times.

The title 'The City and The River' is very interesting and amazing work of Arun Joshi. The title of the play is very interesting, apt and suggestive. The City and The River gives hint of the theme of the novel. The city is all cities. The River is the mother of all cities. The City and the River was the last literary product of Arun Joshi and it got immense success because of its unique story, plot, interesting title and good dialogues.