

PREFACE

The notions of Time and Space have always had a fascination for man since time immemorial. Various theories have been adduced from time to time by scientists, philosophers and thinkers. They exert a significant influence on literary theory and composition. But the variety is quite bewildering, often contradictory. It is against such a background that this thesis endeavours to probe into the treatment of Time and Space in Savitri, a significant inner epic by Sri Aurobindo, a versatile genius, mystic, philosopher and writer in the realm of Indo-Anglian literature.

The primary aim of this research is to investigate and analyse the two metaphysical concepts, the assumption being that Sri Aurobindo employs them in the epic to reinforce many of his thematic concerns. Science, psychoanalysis, philosophy and Theosophy offer valuable perspectives on the subject at hand. The method followed is chiefly analytical and expository. Sufficient citations from several other works of the writer are brought in, wherever relevant, as they furnish a theoretical basis for the depiction of Time and Space in Savitri. Another approach resorted to is the juxtaposition of Sri Aurobindo's concepts with the theories of representative thinkers, philosophers, scientists and writers. Such a method of comparison and contrast helps to view the integral presentation of Time and Space in Savitri in the right perspective.

The thesis comprises seven chapters. The first chapter is an Introduction to the multidimensional genius of Sri Aurobindo. It sets forth the salient features of Savitri as an epic of the soul, and relates it to the theme of Time and Space. It sketches the evolution of the poet's vision of these concepts, which attains a point of culmination in the epic. A survey of earlier probes on the epic in question is done, and an attempt is made to establish the need and relevance of an in-depth study of Time and Space in Savitri.

The second chapter tries to illustrate how Sri Aurobindo's notions of Time and Space are basically founded on the intuitive wisdom of the Vedas and the Upanishads. It studies the role of the Mind, Thought and Reason in limiting our perception of these notions. A brief survey of several theories of Time and Space is made with the intention of bringing out similarities and differences, and in order to highlight the spiritual and comprehensive nature of Sri Aurobindo's integral ideas of Time and Space.

In the next chapter, Sri Aurobindo's Time-Space concepts are studied in relation to "Ignorance" and "Consciousness". An attempt is made to exemplify from the epic how a heightened awareness of these concepts is related to the awakening of *Kundalini*, the Serpent Power.

The fourth chapter elaborates Aswapathy's Yoga of transcending Time and Space through an awakening of the *Kundalini*. Likewise, the next chapter, which

constitutes a direct sequel to it, describes Savitri's Yoga of surmounting Time, Space and Death with the help of the Serpent Force and interiorised yoga.

The sixth chapter concentrates on the aesthetic and visionary qualities of the epic, as well as the *mantric* potency of its verse to elevate human consciousness. It sets forth the numerous images and expressions of Time and Space that adorn Savitri and tries to study their functional significance in elucidating the subject at hand.

The final chapter brings together the main conclusions drawn from the research work. It brings out, on the one hand, the unique features of Sri Aurobindo's treatment of Time and Space in Savitri. On the other hand, it attempts to establish the relevance of such a treatment in effecting a change of consciousness, which is the burning need of the present times.

In order to eliminate the tedium of iteration, the following abbreviations have been used in parenthetical documentation.

1. Collected poems : CP
2. Integral Yoga : IY
3. Life Divine : LD
4. Synthesis of Yoga : SY

Shorter titles have been used in several cases, taking care to avoid ambiguity.