

Conclusion

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Chapter VII

Conclusion

Savitri is an epic of tomorrow, in which a legend of the past has been transformed into a symbol of the future. Hence the epic is characterised throughout by double time and multispaces. Considered as an epic in the conventional sense, Savitri adheres to the three Dramatic Unities. The action comprises the titular heroine's successful confrontation with Death in a stupendous effort to retrieve her husband's soul from his iron grip. There is little digression. The story starts *in medias res*, in keeping with epic traditions. Aswapathy's yoga, Savitri's birth and her marriage to Satyavan, and the ominous prophecy of Satyavan's death within a year of their marriage, are all given as a flashback. The epic action opens on the day Satyavan must die. The place of action is the forest where Satyavan has gone to cut wood, and Savitri has accompanied him. The actual encounter with Death takes place then and there. Thus, the epic sticks to the Unities of Time and Place. Shahi adopts a similar line of thought: Part I (Books I-IV), recounting Aswapathy's yoga in all its essence, is Time Past. Part II (Books V-IX), which describes Savitri's *sadhana*, denotes Time Present, racing towards the crisis. Part III (Books X-XII), which sets forth the dialectic between Savitri and Yama, the God of Death, for the soul of Satyavan, may be described as Time Future (25). He adds:

Though the tale of Savitri belongs to remote days, when Sri Aurobindo decided to retell it, he had to reinterpret it in the light of his experience. So the action of Part III is shown as happening directly before our eyes. (26)

In reinterpreting the legend of something that took place in the history of man, Sri Aurobindo has transmuted it into a symbol of what is going on, and of what is going to be. Far from being a conventional composition Savitri is an epic of the soul. The supreme crisis of the bereaved Savitri's encounter with death provides the backdrop of the inner epic. In symbolic terms, the poem's action takes place in an inner chamber or soul-space or soul-scene. Hence, Aswapathy's travels are to be construed as forages into multispaces within the soul, beyond the mind. Obviously, Time assumes a psychological, subjective or occult meaning. "The drama unrolls itself through a psychological rather than a time sequence. Its "endless moment" is also for ever - again, a symbol rather than a legend" (Ghose, "Savitri - A Subjective Poem" 261). In the inner epic, things are perpetually happening, all the events being psychic, occurring in subtle soul-spaces and subtle time orders. These subtle Time-Space continua are designated by Sri Aurobindo as the Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind and Supermind.

Time and Space are employed in the "legend" part of the epic in the ordinary sense. Time is linear, it is a relentless flux. Space is physical, actions are physical

occurrences. In a word, it is the conventional world of Newtonian Time and Space. But, the "symbol" part of the epic depicts a journey from Time to Timelessness, from Space to Spacelessness. Touching on the aspect of double time in Sri Aurobindo's work, Purani asserts that Savitri throughout portrays the vision of the true reconciliation of the opposition between Timeless Eternity of the Absolute and Time-Eternity, which is constantly flowing. He elaborates :

The conception of a Time-Eternity as a dynamic Reality depending organically upon Timeless Eternity is one enunciated clearly for the first time by Sri Aurobindo in the world of thought. [. . .] Far from Eternity being in opposition to Time-movement the grand vision of *Savitri* constantly brings Eternity in moments of Time.

(Sri Aurobindo's Savitri 41-42)

The effect of the blending of such a double time and space in Savitri is that a "cosmic-transcendental dimension is thus already set in the story narrated as a simple human tale belonging to early times" (Deshpande, "The Legend of Savitri" 525).

Sri Aurobindo's notions of Time and Space have influenced the narrative technique employed in the epic. The narrative part of the legend is mixed up with his commentary on Integral Yoga like a shuffled pack of cards. While the former follows a double time sequence, the latter is invariably in the present tense. The jumping from one to the other is abrupt, and takes place unawares throughout the

epic. To a casual or an uninitiated reader, such a narrative mode is likely to cause confusion. However, by isolating the two parts like sorting out the cards, and stringing them together in order, we arrive at two sets: the story in a chronological sequence following the normal order of Time and Space, and the commentary on Integral Yoga, which serves as a background for it. The reason why Sri Aurobindo employs such a narrative technique is that he is illustrating his own yogic experiments using the story as a pretext. The method used by him is commonly seen in modern fiction, where the preoccupation is with the psyche and in which what happens internally is more significant than what happens externally. Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines, Milan Kundera's The Joke and R.K. Narayan's The Guide adopt similar jumbled narrative techniques, ignoring Time and Space, as Sri Aurobindo does in his epic. This narrative mode makes Savitri a poetic epitome of the other masterpieces of Sri Aurobindo, particularly The Life Divine, The Synthesis of Yoga and Letters on Yoga. Further, it reinforces the argument that in estimating the treatment of Time and Space in Savitri, one invariably arrives at an appraisal of the poet's life and yogic evolution as well as his other writings, considered as a corpus.

The double aspect of the epic is reflected in the characters too. Considered from the perspective of the story, all the characters appear to be well drawn, more or less in keeping with Vyasa's delineation of them. But, viewed from the standpoint

of an inner epic, the same flesh-and-blood characters become symbol-powers representing various planes of consciousness. Iyengar's observations reinforce this finding:

The characters, then, are at once symbol-powers and real human beings. They didn't figure in the mythic past alone, but are also constituents of the current climate of striving, pressing towards the future. ("A Survey of Savitri" 286)

There is a hierarchy among the characters in their relation to Time and Space. At the lowest rung stand Savitri's mother, the Queen, and Satyavan's father, Dyumatsena, the fallen king, who are caged in the mind, and who perceive the phenomenal world as through a fog dimly, totally unaware of the subtle worlds that lie beyond. The Queen, in her ignorance, resembles Yasoda, the foster mother of Lord Krishna, *Kalapurusha* 'the lord of Time'. She is limited by ordinary notions of fleeting time and physical spaces. "A future knowledge is an added pain," as far as she is concerned, for she cannot bear the "dire ordeal that foreknowledge brings" (Savitri 6.1. pp. 425-26). The Queen and Dyumatsena symbolise an ordinary mortal's awareness of Time and Space. Satyavan represents the aspiration for evolution in the human form. He is "eternity hid in moving Time" (Savitri 11.1. p.702). He is "a pilgrim soul, a seeking heart and a mind that understands the purpose and the goal of life" (Sitaramayya and Swarna Gouri 12). Satyavan's words exude confidence

and reassurance in the life divine: "My Matter shall evade the Inconscient's trance. / My body like my spirit shall be free. / It shall escape from Death and Ignorance" (Savitri 5.3. p. 406).

Aswapathy is depicted as a daring hero-traveller of the Infinite, a symbol of humanity ever trying to exceed itself so as to embody higher and higher levels of consciousness. Purani throws a flood of light on his character:

Aswapathy's character as a seeker of the Divine and as an adept of the great spiritual and mystic realisation of the past gives us a wonderful picture of man's growth from mental consciousness through various intermediate stages to the Supreme Divine Mother - Consciousness. (Sri Aurobindo's Savitri 151)

Aswapathy symbolises the level of perception of all times and spaces, being blessed by Divine Grace.

Narad is the omniscient sage of the Puranas "whom the Mother once saw standing between the Overmind and the Supermind" (Sitaramayya and Swarna Gouri 25). Obviously, he is capable of the supramental vision of Time and Space. The heroine Savitri is portrayed in the epic as possessing a double consciousness. Though she appears to be an ordinary mortal in her outer surface self, she is potentially an incarnation of the Divine Mother who stands at the head of Time.

Thus, Savitri is the epitome of Time and Eternity, Space and Infinite. If Aswapathy is the Paraclete, Savitri is the Rose of God.

Being an inner epic, Savitri is characterised by an intense and abundant subjectivity. All the characters including the demons and the gods are potentially present in each one of us as varying levels of consciousness. "Both events and *dramatis personae* are within us. We are its locale and our lives its grand theatre" (Sisirkumar Ghose, "Savitri - A Subjective Poem" 260).

Time and Space as presented in Savitri is in line with the Vedas and the Upanishads. Accordingly, Time and Space are inscrutable indeterminates, which issue from the Unmanifest when it manifests itself as the phenomenal world of names and forms as a divine *lila*. Though it would be an exaggeration to claim any novelty of concept, it has to be conceded that Sri Aurobindo has treated these two metaphysical concepts in a unique manner. The influence of Vyasa is evident too. Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo has given a new turn to the idea of time in Savitri. An all-embracing atmosphere of eternity rather than a restricted view of temporality pervades Vyasa's works like the Mahabharata, the Bhagavatam and particularly, the Devi Bhagavatam, which is an epitome of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and which contains the Savitri episode too. The Divine Mother is extolled as the Creatrix. Everything is attributed to her Divine Will. Death is accepted with a calm resignation because of the assurance of a heavenly existence or the liberation

that will follow thousands or lakhs of divine years of penance (Devi Bhagavatam III. 20.24, 35, 46; V. 27. 12, 27; IX . 8. 101,108 etc). In accordance with his philosophy Sri Aurobindo deviates from Vyasa in rejecting death as the end of the world of Time and Space. "Whereas in Vyasa time is ultimately Death the Ender, in Sri Aurobindo even in Time there shall come the end of Death" (Sarkar 456).

Savitri is a poetic rendering of the steps of Integral Yoga to transcend Time and Space. "Each step of Yoga is noted here, including the secret of all other Yogas" ("The Mother on Savitri" 45). The triple yogas of Aswapathy, Savitri and Satyavan furnish us with a demonstration of Sri Aurobindo's theory of Ascent and Descent in the evolution of the soul and the divinisation of the earth. All the three yogas are indispensable like terms in an infinite series. Aswapathy attempts to bring closer the Future, symbolised by Savitri, to redeem the present, represented by Satyavan, with the grace of the Divine Mother, who steers the ship of Time and Space. Despite superficial differences, the yogas of Aswapathy and Savitri are only different approaches to Integral Yoga. "Quintessentially, it is the same consciousness, although it may seem to divide itself into two: the two complementary halves of the one cosmic or supramental consciousness" (Iyengar, Sri Aurobindo 660). If Aswapathy is the forerunner, Savitri is the *avatar* on the endless, evolutionary march to the Timeless, Spaceless origin. Mother adds: "In the eternity of becoming each Avatar is only the announcer, the forerunner of a

more perfect future realisation" (Darshan Messages 38). Satyavan has taken upon himself the mortality-bound birth in order to engage himself in the Yoga of the Earth or the *Prithvi Yoga*, as a natural sequel to Savitri's *Shakti yoga*. Deshpande elaborates: "Because the supermind has entered into time, time itself shall unfold the dynamism of its growing ages" ("Apropos of Savitri" xli).

Sri Aurobindo is probably the first poet to have actually traced the path through Time and Space to the Ultimate source. Employing Aswapathy, Savitri and Satyavan as potent symbols, he has elaborately charted out in the epic the separate, although related, yogic *sadhana* and the amazing occult experiments of his and of the Mother's, so that Savitri becomes a double spiritual autobiography, a genuine recordation of their combined quest for the Eternal and the Infinite. "As is the identity of Savitri and the Mother, so too is the oneness of Aswapati of the timeless past and ageless Sri Aurobindo" (Deshpande, "Apropos of Savitri" xxix). Deshpande further adds that Sri Aurobindo is "*kalatit*, beyond the circumscribing boundaries of time, yet growing in time to take time along with him" (xxix). Consequently, the poet's meticulous descriptions of the various occult or subtle worlds, the World - Stair with its different beings and different grades of Time and Space are not a faded copy of what some one else has felt, thought or seen, as many "pious" utterances are, but truly, freshly-minted and authentic expressions emanating from a living human soul. A.K. Sinha substantiates this point:

It seems that he had direct intuitive vision of the ultimate reality, and he records his spiritual experience in vivid detail. His interpretation of the Indian spiritual tradition is not, therefore, like those of other classical scholars, but it is the result of the direct intuitive comprehension of the various aspects of reality.

(51)

Mother, the supreme authority on Savitri, certifies the authenticity of Sri Aurobindo's tireless endeavour to transcend Time and Space: "He is the first to have traced the path in the Unknown, so that we may be able to walk with certitude towards the Supermind" ("The Mother on Savitri" 47).

In this respect Sri Aurobindo towers majestically above the handful of writers who have poetised and dramatised the problem of transcending Time (but who have omitted Space) in their works. Eliot, for instance, is preoccupied with the attainment of the point of intersection of Time and Eternity through suffering and atonement; clearly, it is a typically Christian approach. Rameshwar Gupta airs the view that despite "the experience of the still moment of interaction between Time and Eternity," Eliot would nevertheless, "like a true Catholic, doubt if man could transcend the Original sin before the Doom's Day" ("Savitri in World Literature" 120). Priestley, who is more explicit, grapples with the idea of ascending the spiral of Time with the help of esoteric knowledge (which he does not elaborate),

attaining a level of perceiving all times in a single survey etc., which are merely borrowed from Ouspensky and Dunne; he has no personal conviction. Also, he vaguely perceives a better world beyond the shadow of what he calls a Time-wall, but provides no clue as to how to reach there. The Romantic poets Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley do have some inkling of the Supreme principle behind the world of manifestation, but it is invariably influenced by their religious or philosophical beliefs. Yeats is deeply mystical and familiar with occultism, but his poetic expressions fail to convince us of any authentic or permanent experience. Whitman often writes about his experience of transcending Time and Space, of cosmic consciousness, of shedding body-consciousness, and of arriving at the frontiers of eternity. His magnum opus, Leaves of Grass, brings out, among other things, the transcendentalist in the poet. Evidently, none of these writers ever saw the light that Sri Aurobindo had seen, or reached the summit of consciousness that the epic poet had attained. Beside the fidelity of the epic recordings of different grades of Time and multipyschic spaces, they sound and seem vague verbal accounts, at best.

Sri Aurobindo is perhaps the first writer to relate Time-Space concepts with the concept of Consciousness, especially, the rousing of *Kundalini*, the coiled power within the subtle human body. He has successfully welded the principles of Tantra, Theosophy and psychoanalysis in his treatment of Time and Space in Savitri.

This is a rare accomplishment indeed, and it bears testimony to the fact that the poet had experimented, researched and probed the depths of the higher realms of consciousness. Over the millennia, the *rishis* of India had developed the science and art of transcending the normal consciousness, and of attaining a poise that might be described as superconscious. While the poet of Savitri cannot claim to have discovered the concept, he deserves credit on two scores: his discovery of the Supermind and its realisation in himself, in the first place, and secondly, his exhaustive presentation in the epic about how Time and Space can be transcended through a heightening of consciousness, accompanied by the awakening of the *Kundalini*. This is amply demonstrated by the yogas of Aswapathy and Savitri. Charusheel Singh, modern poet and critic, is the exponent of the Mandala literary theory, whose structural principle is the symbolism of the *Kundalini Yoga*. He deals with concepts like Consciousness, Time and Space, but unlike Sri Aurobindo, he focuses on the correlation between forms of art and readerly competence in terms of *chakras* and levels of consciousness attained. In Singh's own words:

Literary artifacts, like human beings are informed by *mandalas* or circles one into the other. As we move from outward to inward, to the centre within, there are transformations of energy which give us a vision of the Infinite and endow us with super-mundane consciousness (*Sat-Chit-Anand*). (Preface vi)

Singh's theory validates Sri Aurobindo's principle of relating different grades of Time and Space to the various levels of consciousness attained by the characters in Savitri.

Sri Aurobindo's notions of Time and Space obviously have a solid spiritual basis, for the poet asserts, time and again in Savitri, that they are enigmatic but inevitable emanations of the One when it expands into the Many in the cosmic drama. This spiritual dimension distinguishes the epic poet from several other writers who have handled these metaphysical concepts. The main defect of each Western theory of evolution *vis-a-vis* Sri Aurobindo's conviction, in Maitra's view, is "the absence of any true spiritual principle underlying it" (34). This is the case with Alexander, Bergson, Bradley, McTaggart and others. Of all such thinkers it is Whitehead who comes closest to Sri Aurobindo. Both believe in recurrence. In the system of Whitehead God, though present, is imperfect and evolving. "As for their fundamental differences, Whitehead's theory of evolution is naturalistic, whereas Sri Aurobindo's is spiritualistic" (Madhusudan Reddy, "Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy" 19). Sri Aurobindo and Hegel agree that evolution is a process of home return of the Absolute spirit, but, as Maitra states trenchantly, "even the Hegelian view of evolution, in spite of its vaunted spirituality, is not sufficiently spiritual" (34). Besides spiritualising Time and Space in the epic, Sri Aurobindo accords the highest status to the Divine Mother as *Kundalini*, who stands at the

head of Time and Space, and whose grace alone can help the aspiring soul to attain the Timeless, Spaceless abode of *Brahman*.

Sri Aurobindo's treatment of Time and Space in Savitri vitiates Existentialism, the most unspiritual Western theory of evolution. In its rigorously philosophical form, as developed by Heidegger and Sartre, Existentialism is founded on Nietzsche's solemn proclamation that God is dead. This is tantamount to a rejection of the non-temporal, the non-spatial as well as the higher and the more subtle dimensions of the universe depicted in the epic, particularly in the Yoga of Aswapathy. Chaudhuri pinpoints the chief shortcoming of the theory: "Existentialism overemphasises the temporality of man and ignores his non-temporal dimension" ("Mysticism and Existentialism" 32). Through the delineation of Savitri's mother, the Queen, (Savitri 6.3), the seer-poet exemplifies that such a myopic view of Time and Space stems from *avidya* 'ignorance'. The yogas of Aswapathy and Savitri are truly the demonstration of how to break out of temporal-spatial bounds into non-temporal, non-spatial realms of consciousness. Likewise, Sri Aurobindo refutes the theory of the Unreality of Time upheld by Sankara. More than any other work perhaps, Savitri sets out to illustrate how Time and Space as well as Eternity and Infinity are all real at the respective levels of apprehension, being integral dimensions of the One Supreme Reality.

Time and Space as presented in Savitri furnish a re-interpretation of some of the key Biblical ideas. Thus the "Original sin" is ignorance, which leads the individual soul to develop a sense of separativity, and venture into the world of Time and Space. The Queen is depicted as an epitome of temporal and spatial ignorance. Death is not so much the cessation of the clayey body; it spells the ending of the feeling of separativity or de-centralisation. The Mother describes the phenomena of death and the defying of death in Integral Yoga very clearly:

Death is the de-centralization of the consciousness contained in the cells of the body. The cells constituting the body are held in a certain form by a centralization of the consciousness within them. As long as the power of centralization prevails, the body cannot die. (qtd. in Gyanchandra 20)

Savitri's encounter with Death is a true demonstration of how Integral Yoga can help to surmount temporal and spatial ignorance. The Resurrection of Satyavan symbolises the emancipation of aspiring humanity from the clutches of ignorance, culminating in its attainment of its original status in the Timeless, Spaceless *Brahman*. Savitri is Divine Grace incarnate without which the Resurrection of Satyavan is not possible. Thus interpreted, the redemption of Time and Space are psychologically and spiritually much more meaningful. Savitri becomes the Messiah born to save and redeem mankind, but in Sri Aurobindo's vision she

transcends the Christ figure, being an emanation of the Divine Mother, who is the origin of all times and spaces. It is certainly to Sri Aurobindo's credit that in his treatment of Time and Space in Savitri's yoga he has transmuted Biblical ideas into universally acceptable beliefs.

In dealing with drab metaphysical concepts in the epic, Sri Aurobindo does not lose sight of the beauty of words, style and imagery. More than Blake, Yeats or any other mystic poet, Sri Aurobindo is essentially a visionary or a symbolic poet of the most subjective kind. No other poet, probably, has such a plenitude of images and verbal expressions of Time and Space as Sri Aurobindo proffers in Savitri. Flick elaborates on their effect upon the mind of the sensitive reader:

It is the sounds, images, and ideas employed by the poet that enable us to enter into the poem's consciousness, as into a holy temple, and carry us beyond the outer edifice to a supreme spiritual truth and experience. (382-83)

Besides being characterised by picturesqueness and appropriateness, all the temporal and spatial images in the epic are living entities as far as the poet is concerned. In range and diversity he surpasses even Kalidasa and Shakespeare. Likewise, "Valmiki's description is physically concrete whereas Sri Aurobindo's is a concretisation of abstract experiences of the subtle psycho-spiritual world [. . .]"

(Sarkar 453). With his poetic genius and intuitive power, he has poured into the several wonderful verbal portraits of Time and Space in Savitri the nectar of Vedic wisdom, thereby creating new scientific and psychological grooves of modern consciousness. If some of these images turn out to be marvellous or fantastic, especially when they pertain to different orders and grades of Time and Space, it is because Sri Aurobindo could perceive them through his third eye. Dilip Kumar Roy vehemently advocates this opinion: "He knows this because he has peeped into something behind the veil and is not only delighted but overawed by what he has glimpsed" ("The Message of Savitri" 393).

The most distinguishing quality of the epic poet's vision is its integration of the different worlds from the grossest to the subtlest characterised by their respective levels of consciousness, and the corresponding grades of Time and Space. "Thus the three symbolic expressions - the World Stair, the Descent into Night, and the World-Soul stand identified to give a unitary approach to the movements of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga" (Ganguli 438). Neither the symbols nor the verse appear to be "manufactured" laboriously. Parallels, if they do exist, may indeed be exceptional. One does get the impression that the poet of Savitri must have travelled intuitively through the various soul spaces before he arrived at the supramental Time-Space vision, which is picturesquely portrayed in the yogas of Aswapathy and Savitri. Highlighting the visionary quality of Sri Aurobindo

Shraddhavan observes: "We recognise a writer as a poet purely to the extent that, by means of word-music, image and suggestion, he can bring us into touch with some vividness and colour and truth our normal unpoetic perceptions miss" (375). Dwelling upon the *avritti* 'repetition' of words, lines and images in the epic Pandit observes: "*Āvritti* is a technique of our ancient seers to create grooves in the consciousness through sound waves by which the idea, the truth that is clothed in the sound, gets embedded in the being of the reciter" (Introducing Savitri 8-9). Going by such norms we may conclude that the author of Savitri fulfils the Indian archetype of *kavi* 'omniscient poet' by draping his images of Time and Space in the most potent and colourful language.

The relevance of Sri Aurobindo's treatment of Time and Space in Savitri cannot be overstated. In the first place the epic makes an exploratory probe into the problem of existential anguish. Sri Aurobindo categorically attributes the pain, suffering, alienation and estrangement of the phenomenal world to temporal and spatial ignorance. The only time and space known to that world are psychological duration and material existence. Terrestrial life is perpetually threatened by the nagging fear that Time and Space will be annihilated by Death. Against this bleak prospect of a hopeless future matched by a desperate present, Savitri portrays Sri Aurobindo's bold probings and explorations in supraspatio-temporal realms which come as a welcome and much needed panacea for the "devastating degeneration and

deformation which befog the present man, the man in the whirlpool, the man in the flux" (Aniruddha Smart 5).

It may be argued that the means of transcending Time and Space as chalked out in Savitri are idealistic and utopian; for, pain and suffering, disease and death, poverty and wretchedness are not illusory; they are real experiences, and try as one might, one cannot but be bowed down by despair when the tragedy of life is overwhelming. Such is the predicament in the worlds of Beckett, Faulkner, Kafka Camus, Sartre and other practitioners of Absurd literature. Another allegation could be that the poet's attitude is facile and escapist, for, indeed, Time and Space are experienced by most people as they are by Savitri's mother. All such charges are quite legitimate, *but only at the mental level*. Transcending Time and Space, as elaborated in Savitri, signifies a total deliverance from pain, sorrow and death. But the remedy lies far beyond the world of names and forms, in higher realms of consciousness. It calls for a heightening of one's sense of awareness, step by step, through a turning inward or a meditative process.

The Mother affirms that Savitri is "a meditation, it is a quest of the Infinite the Eternal" ("The Mother on Savitri" 45). Meditation is a timeless, spaceless experience which enables man to gradually outgrow the barriers of body consciousness and ego, to extend his degree of perception and to cultivate the ability to be in the present moment, without taking flight into the unknown future

or seeking shelter in the known past. Meditation helps us to make our consciousness vast and to disidentify ourselves with Time and the mind. The Mother explains that if we begin to think of the eternity of time and the immensity of space, that is, "see the whole as one unity, and from far above," gradually "the sense of limitation disappears," and we enter "the perception of a kind of indefinite duration beginningless and endless, of something which has always been and always will be" ("How to Change One's Consciousness" 7). In addition, if we can realise that our little person, our ego, is only "a fragment of a second in eternity," even "the deepest sorrows" are swept away ("How to Make One's Consciousness Vast" 14).

Savitri demonstrates throughout how to expand one's consciousness infinitely and go beyond the mind by means of Integral Yoga. By learning to de-clutter the mind of wasteful thoughts and egoistic desires, we create more space. "Awareness of these peaceful spaces between thoughts brings us right into the present and gives us the feeling that we have 'room for manoeuvre', time to spare" ("Time Waits for No One" 14). This is what Aswapathy and Savitri attempt with success. In the utter silence beyond the mind, love (symbolised by Savitri) enters. As the habit strengthens one begins to feel a oneness with all creations. Time and Space, with all their dualities and limitations, cease to matter. One becomes a point of light and might, like the epic heroine, radiating peace and bliss, embracing all creation in an infinite circle eternally. The several temporal and spatial images as well as

the *mantric* quality of the verse in Savitri enable the sensitive reader to move through Time and Space to supramundane levels of perception.

The significance of meditation in surmounting the restraints of temporal existence is endorsed by thinkers and philosophers world-wide. "Thinking about the timeless Being is the fundamental activity of the being in time [. . .]" (Yadav 347). In fact, the very purpose of time is to lead us to a mystical perception of the timeless. At the peak of meditation, the "timeless illuminates the temporal" (Ninian Smart 323). Dwelling upon the purpose of time Mahadevan observes: "Meditation on time is recommended in the Upanishads as a means for getting beyond time to the timeless reality which is Brahman" (327). He adds that the "fruit of time-meditation is not to cling to time as if it were ultimately real, but to transcend it" (328). The veteran Theosophist H.P. Blavatsky has left a Diagram of Meditation on Time and Space as an aid to spiritual transformation. Accordingly, meditation on the conception "I am all Space and Time" leads to the acquisition of desirable qualities, the deprivation of negativities, and a feeling of "UNITY by Expansion in Space and infinite in Time" (Roger Price 300-09). A comparative study reveals a basic similarity between the principles of the Diagram and Integral Yoga.

The process of transcending Time and Space as outlined in the epic is akin to therapeutics and holistic healing, a remedy for the malady of the modern man, namely, his radical self-estrangement and alienation from the totality of awareness,

and all the ills associated with it. In order to extricate himself from the self-made time warp man has to learn to experience the "Eternal Now" which Sri Aurobindo illustrates through the double yogas in Savitri. It is to live in the present instead of wallowing in the past or worrying about the future. Eckhart Tolle's views in The Power of Now bears much resemblance to Savitri in this regard. To cite a single instance:

Time and the manifested are as inextricably linked as are the timeless Now and the Unmanifested. When you dissolve psychological time through intense present-moment awareness, you become conscious of the Unmanifested, both directly and indirectly. (qtd. in Tattvāloka 74)

Likewise, Integral Yoga bears great resemblance to the several *Kundalini*-based techniques of meditation and holistic healing such as *Rajyoga*, *Kriyayoga*, *Reiki*, *Pranic healing* and so on. Despite certain differences in finer details, all these methods aim at raising the consciousness of the practitioner above the level of the mind. Initiation into any of these techniques is of immense help in understanding Sri Aurobindo and his treatment of Time and Space in Savitri.

It is quite likely that Savitri will prove to be a major force in effecting a radical change of consciousness in the near future from the finite to the Infinite.

The Mother had indicated that the twenty first century "would be the century of consciousness, where the technology of consciousness would be developed to its full potential" (qtd. in Ranade 11). In the Mother's words:

We are at a moment of transition in the history of the earth. It is merely a moment in eternal time, but this moment is long compared to human life. Matter is changing in order to prepare itself for the new manifestation, but the human body is not plastic enough and offers resistance [. . .]. ("Cure of Illness" 3)

Also, Maurice Bucke wrote decades ago that cosmic consciousness is before the race and will gradually come to it in the future where Time and Space will be swallowed up and gone without trace like all unreality (qtd. in Sivananda 32). It is increasingly being felt that a dynamic adventure of the human spirit towards a change of consciousness is the burning need of the hour. Paula Horan, Reiki practitioner, rightly remarks: "A quantum leap in the consciousness of mankind is now needed to defeat this old feeling of separation" (150). The yogas of Aswapathy and Savitri envisage the possibility of such an experiment in human consciousness.

The resurrected Satyavan, in Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution, will be the Superman, that is, the next evolute after man. The epic poet describes the Superman as one "who can rise above this matter - regarding broken mental human unit and

possess himself universalised and deified in a divine force [. . .]" (Darshan Messages 39). In him the faculty of the mind will be replaced by the Supermind or the mind of light which is "the inner and outer extension of the Infinite who is beyond Space, the unfettered Time of the Eternal who is timeless, the supernal harmony of all absolutes of the Absolute" (Synthesis of Yoga 466). In the epic the poet writes about "a world of everlasting Light, / In the realms of the immortal Supermind" where "the perfection born from eternity / Calls to it the perfection born in Time [. . .]" (10.4. p. 661). Obviously: "The supermind has the vision of the three times, *trikaladrsti*; it sees them as an indivisible movement and sees too each containing the others" (SY 762). Sri Aurobindo is convinced that the "Spirit's greatness is our timeless source / And it shall be our crown in endless Time" (2.2. p. 110). Eventually, the Eternal Supermind will touch earthly Time. This idea is dramatised and symbolically depicted in the latter part of the epic comprising the redemption of Satyavan by the Grace that is Savitri:

The superman shall wake in mortal man

And manifest the hidden demigod

Or grow into the God-Light and God-Force

Revealing the secret deity in the cave.

Then shall the earth be touched by the Supreme [. . .].

(11.1. p. 705)

At the acme of supramentalisation, Matter and Spirit, Time and Eternity, Space and Infinity, the One and the Many will all be perceived in one vision:

The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze

And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.

Then man and superman shall be at one

And all the earth become a single life. (11.1. p. 709)

In Savitri, Sri Aurobindo thus makes a magnificent prognostication in an absolutely confident voice, which rings with the authenticity of a Revelation or an epiphany: Time and Space will be transcended when humanhood evolves into Superhumanhood. His prophecy sounds all the more plausible considering the findings of modern science. Vrekhem is of the opinion that modern science is "one of the many barely touched upon subjects concerning Sri Aurobindo and the Mother awaiting to be studied in depth" (265). He substantiates his view:

For instance, when writing the *Arya*, i.e. years before the formulation of the theory of quantum mechanics, Sri Aurobindo predicted that the deeper science would penetrate into Matter the more Matter would seem to evaporate till none would be left. In *Savitri*, an explanation of the origin and evolution of the cosmos in addition to so much more, we find numerous revealing examples of this kind of knowledge. (266)

In modern Particle Physics the tendency is increasingly more towards integrating time and space, rather than thinking of each as separate entities. Quantum Physics and Wave Mechanics assert that Space is not really void, but is full of vibrations of electromagnetic waves. A post-Einsteinian theory called the Superstring theory takes us back to the beginning of time, back to an era when all the forces of the world were perfectly symmetrical and united as one primal superforce. The theory may provide answers to questions about phenomena that are at the centre of our existence, but beyond all human experience (Kaku 192). Modern Science is seriously speculating the possibility of the existence of multidimensional universes (189). Probably, the "one primal superforce" corresponds to the Timeless, Spaceless *Brahman*; the multidimensional universes may be comparable to the subtle worlds or the inner countries through which Aswapathy travels. At the present level of our knowledge, it is all pure conjecture. "However, more recent scientific thought supports the perception of Theosophists that, at a profound level, science and spiritual wisdom meet" (Ramakrishna Rao 291). As physicists search for a Unified Field theory, psychologists and psychoanalysts are looking for Synchronicity, or a unifying principle behind individual consciousness and the totality of space and time. Savitri is a standing monument to prove that Sri Aurobindo could grasp intuitively the real nature of Time and Space without resorting to any mind-boggling calculations and

speculations. Vrekhem supplements: "To a high degree atomic physics has become occultism, as predicted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, though without the scientists realising it" (268).

In estimating Sri Aurobindo's handling of Time and Space in Savitri it becomes evident that the poet has an absolutely sure command and an intuitive knowledge of the two concepts. He does not propound any specific theory of Time and Space; nor does he try to define them. He interweaves the two terms with several related concepts like love, pain, death and Consciousness. In the epic he has restated "the ancient Truths as suited to the present times and the need of the future" (Navajata, "The Importance of Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Work" 8). Truly, his apprehension of these elusive categories is broad and ocean-like, for it can compare with any and every theory of Space-Time, ancient or modern, in Science, Psychology, Philosophy or Literature, in the East or in the West. Sri Aurobindo would certainly have been familiar with such theories, but his presentation of Time and Space in Savitri is founded purely on intuition, and is hence original.

Most other Time philosophers and writers have highlighted only certain aspects of Time, invariably sidelining or overlooking the concept of Space. Sri Aurobindo towers above them all by probing into every aspect of not only Time but also Space metaphysically, and presenting them artistically. The bizarre speculations of post-Einsteinian scientists become experienced actualities in the epic poet's

vision. Also, Sri Aurobindo is possibly the only writer to have handled Space elaborately in a literary composition.

However, the most outstanding or striking quality of the treatment of Time and Space in Savitri is the integrality or the total comprehensiveness of Sri Aurobindo's poetic vision. Kleinman's erudite words endorse this finding:

One of the most appealing characteristics of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is that one can choose, almost at random, a central concept [like Time or Space] and then use it to throw light upon the development of that concept throughout the course of world philosophy. This is due to the unsurpassed comprehensiveness of Sri Aurobindo's vision of Reality. (71)

In summing up, Savitri, indeed, is an epic of hope, optimism, and affirmative spirituality. When man eventually transcends Time and Space, and attains the Supermind, he possesses the vision of the past, the present, and the future in one sweep. Then he realises, like Aswapathy and Savitri, that nothing is lost, everything is ever present, so that death loses its sting. Thus, amidst the present day existential angst there shines a ray of hope in the Master's pithy statement: "Our being must move eternally through Time" (Savitri 2.6. p. 197). And:

Only when Eternity takes Time by the hand,
 Only when infinity weds the finite's thought,
 Can man be free from himself and live with God.

(Savitri 7.4. p. 516)

Sri Aurobindo is challenging, or gently coaxing, every willing or prepared reader of the epic to try the experiment at supramentalisation, which he and the Mother successfully performed during their lifetime. The Mother adopts the same line of thought in one of her Darshan Messages:

Without care for time, without fear for space, surging out purified
 from the flames of the ordeal, we shall fly without stop towards
 the realisation of our goal, the supramental victory. (36)

Earth is now in a trance of waiting - waiting for man to go beyond Time and Space, evolve into a supramental being, and divinise the entire planet. Savitri shows the way.