

The “Coming”¹ Epic of Freedom: Reading Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri* as a Mythopoesis in Opposition to Sovereign Control

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Abstract

There is a general trend among Western critics, and scholars influenced by the West, to stereotype Third World Literatures, particularly those from India, either as the voice of national consolidation or as providing the emancipated West with the required dose of mysticism and spiritualism. Sri Aurobindo’s works have fallen within either of these two categories. As a result, much of the aesthetic autonomy of his writings have been ignored. This article focuses on the unique quality of Sri Aurobindo’s works, with particular reference to his epic poem *Savitri*, and shows how he recreates indigenous and classical Indian legends, myths and symbols to subvert sovereign control initiated by the West. *Savitri* emerges as the representative epic for a new nation that has much more to offer to the future generations apart from the intangible ideas of mysticism and spiritualism. By reinforcing the concept of *Shakti* and the Mother as the primal Universal Consciousness the mythopoesis in *Savitri* stands in opposition to the anthropocentric and the anthropogenic machines of sovereignty, both ancient and modern. It establishes the fact that in the human resides the divine and that divinity is a kind of life that can be lived on this earth.

Keywords: Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Epic, Mythopoesis, Sovereignty, “Coming Community”, Giorgio Agamben, Third World Literature.

In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, Elleke Boehmer explains how, in the West, Third World literatures are seen as the voice of national consolidation, as inevitable outcome of nationalist movements in the erstwhile colonies and as the representations of the subsequent achievement of political independence. Explaining the way in which authors, writing from the erstwhile colonies, fall into the pitfalls of a hyper-nationalism the argument takes into account both 19th and 20th century authors, like Bankimchandra and Ngugi wa Thiongo, and states that almost all dissenting intellectuals had to face "a stern imperative challenge" (186) which led to the production of "nationalist", "combative", "cause-led, and, often unashamedly polemical" (188) literatures. Boehmer critiques these writings as a search for "self-definition" engaging with one's own national identity. Authors writing back against the imperial culture show either an affinity towards the national or the "not quite" and the "in-between" international wanderings "from rootedness to peregrination" (232). Those authors who do not articulate the nationalist longing or the in-betweenness of exile or diaspora are evaluated as those who impart, to the West, the much-needed spirituality.

Boehmer observes: "Tagore, who was strenuously promoted in Europe at this time, was also taken up in the 1920s by Wittgenstein, who sought *religious insight* (italics mine) into his work. India represented to thinkers and writers the possibility of new spiritual awakening." (127) Not Rabindranath Tagore alone but a range of authors and thinkers, Sri Aurobindo being among them, have been assessed from this view-point. Boehmer highlights how the promotion of Eastern authors as mystics and spiritualists was, and is still, the manipulation of “neo-colonialism”:

Finally, confusion is sometimes created by the overlap between the terms postcolonial and neo-colonial, both of which refer to the post-independence period. A term from economic theory, neo-colonialism signifies the continued economic control by the West of the once-colonized world, under the guise of political independence. Though they may differ in ascribing causes, many theorists broadly agree that the decline of one sort of colonialism in the 1950s led to the rise of another, less overt, some might say more insidious, form — what has been called a super or new imperialism. [...] Despite anti-imperial movements, despite apparently subversive energies of postcolonial writing, in a world supervised by the new imperial powers of multinational companies, colonialism is not a thing of the past. (9-10)

Within the rubric of neo-colonialism, as was evident in the case of colonialism, critics, either belonging to the West or inspired by the West, search for an exotic Other in the works of Third World writers. Western mainstream discourses revel in highlighting the mysticism and spiritualism of intellectuals like Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo though these writer-philosophers had concrete and tangible ideas to offer to their country and to the world. Least remains said and discussed about their concepts of literature, poetry, critical understanding, politics and education. The need, therefore, arises to appraise the original autonomy of their work as opposed to the discourses based on the assumption that "exposure to the West, through a Western language, literary tradition, or audience, is a precondition for critique" (Adak 20).

It is to point out the necessity of an alternative critical discourse, one that would not merely dig into Third World literatures for outbursts of mysticism and spiritualism, that this article grounds itself on Sri Aurobindo's works with particular reference to *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*. The title of my paper speaks about the focus of my argument. I use the word "coming" from Giorgio Agamben's *The Coming Community* in order to justify the need to

think about the future of poetry (even literature) in a manner that remains unique to an erstwhile colony, its indigenous tradition and to a nation rising from its own debris of poverty and ignorance. Sri Aurobindo's writings show us that a new dawn is immanent for a country that was dragged into colonization but had a rich past that was forgotten by the bleak present.

Given our contemporary ideological and political urgencies, here I argue that Sri Aurobindo has much more and much different to offer to the readers than the oft-discussed dose of mysticism and spiritualism. This article, within its frame of reference, focuses on the necessity of exposing the self-contradiction embedded in dominant/mainstream postcolonial theories that critique literatures either as "machineries" of nationhood or as "machineries" building up, to use Anderson's phrase, an "imagined community" (24)². It articulates the need to counter such discourses because they read literatures as ideal examples of the "aesthetics of resistance" (Gugelburger 515)³ and, hence, try to establish the "modernist conception of exile" (into the West) as "a privileged state of consciousness" (Adak 20)⁴. To assess Third World literatures on the basis of the exotic flavour that they seem to offer to the West is to remain confined within those Euro-centric/neo-colonial/mainstream discourses that tend to regiment and stereotype non-Western cultures as the 'Other', as the weaker sign in the Us/They binary. The thrust of this article, then, revolves around the basic question: is there nothing else that authors like Sri Aurobindo and countries like India, and the East by extension, have to offer to the West apart from the required quantity of mysticism and spirituality? To find an answer to such enquiry a brief introduction of Sri Aurobindo and his works, with particular reference to *Savitri*, is necessary.

Born in 1872, in Calcutta, Aurobindo Ghosh was sent to England at the age of seven. As a student of St. Paul's School in London, he won a scholarship for admission to King's College, Cambridge. Deeply immersed in Western thought and tradition he returned to India in 1893. Widely read in western classical literatures the early Aurobindo was a radical

thinker. But while in the service of the Maharaja of Baroda his vision started changing drastically. He became immensely interested in Indian culture, literature and religious thought: a fact which led many western critics, like Katherine Raine, to consider him primarily as a Hindu philosopher and an interpreter of the Indian Sanskritic philosophical tradition. Most scholars and critics see him as a politician turned mystic and spiritualist. Others, though few, consider him as a Third World intellectual writing back against that imperial West. There is a general neglect and deliberate cultural amnesia towards the essence of Sri Aurobindo's thoughts: that philosophy is essentially political and, as is illustrated in the Gita, has its place in "psychological experience" (*Letter 737*). Beyond and outside the general inference that there is only mysticism and spiritualism in Sri Aurobindo's works one finds a constant and consistent effort, on the part of the author, to overturn sovereignty through native myths, legends and philosophical methods of subversion. A close reading of the apparently spiritual epic poem *Savitri* will validate my point.

In "The Poetry of Sri Aurobindo: The Mantra of The Real", A. K. Ramabushnam states that Sri Aurobindo defined poetry as 'The Mantra of the Real' (1). In *Savitri* he tries to create a "real" epic to represent a new nation with its classical and indigenous myths and legends. Of a remarkable uniqueness is how he makes the mythical character 'Savitri', a woman, embody the fundamental aspects of his nationalist project. In the character of Savitri he invokes the idea of the Divine Feminine and the Mother as the Universal Consciousness. The mythopoesis presented in *Savitri* is explained in *The Life Divine* with the help of India's integral philosophical tradition and cultural inclusiveness.

Written in blank verse *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, which is about 24,000 lines, is based on the legend of 'Savitri and Satyavan' taken from the *Pativrata Mahatmya Parva* in chapters 291-297 of the "Aranyaka Parva" of *Mahabharata*. Literally it shows how love is able to conquer everything including death. But on a metaphoric level it reveals how divine

life can be attained while living on earth, that there is God within the human. The story is of King Aswapathy who, in dire need of an heir, performs rituals and 'yagnas' to please the Divine Goddess. After eighteen years the Goddess Savitri bless him with a daughter who, in fact, is an incarnation of the Goddess herself. The daughter, too, is named Savitri. She is immensely beautiful, intelligent and radiant with divine grace. When she grows up into a woman she falls in love with Satyavan, the honest son of the blind and exiled king Dyumatsena. Upon informing her father about her love, she comes to know that Narada had warned the king about Satyavan's short life: that Satyavan is to die within a year. But Narada had also advised King Aswapathy to let Savitri marry Satyavan for, this marriage itself would bring a turn in the wheel of destiny. On the fated day of Satyavan's death she not only fasts and prays but also follows him into the woods. After felling a few trees Satyavan, numbed with pain, falls on the ground and dies. Savitri sits there crying after taking her husband's head on her lap. A little later Yama, the God of Death, arrives to take away Satyavan's soul. When Savitri asks Yama why he himself had come without sending his messengers, Yama replied that Satyavan was endowed with such virtue that his soul could be carried away only by the God of Death. Yama takes Satyavan's soul and proceeds towards the south. Savitri follows him courageously. Yama tries to stop her repeatedly but she impresses him with wise and appealing answers to his questions and the latter cannot help but grant boon after boon to her. At last, as Savitri follows the Dark God into his dark cave he realizes her unfathomed love, devotion for her husband and her innate wisdom to impress even the God of Death and, finally, grants her the almost impossible boon of returning Satyavan's soul into his body. Beaming with joy Savitri returns to the forest where her husband's body was still lying and persuades the soul into consciousness. Overjoyed they return home. Eventually, with the progress of time Yama's boons to Savitri are all fulfilled.

While acclimatizing this legend as a symbol of spiritual growth and divine perfection, Sri Aurobindo makes certain alterations in the original story. For example King Aswapathy's sacrificial asceticism is changed into meditation or "tapasya". Savitri is not only the incarnation of a goddess but the complete realization of divine grace that Aswapathy desired to bring down on earth. Savitri and Satyavan's marriage is the connection established between the human and the divine consciousness. The epic promises the appearance of a new dawn to millions who are ignorant and are suffering.

Primarily described as Miltonic, *Savitri* not only expresses, in poetic form, Sri Aurobindo's conception of epic and of poetry but entails a writing back against the master with the master's language in order to reinforce the indigenous legacies and myths of our country. Written in order to validate poetically some of the central issues of his other seminal work in prose, *The Life Divine*⁵, this poem transcends the literal plane with the protagonist emerging as emblematic of the Universal Mother: the *shakti* of *Brahman*⁶. Central to *Savitri* is the idea of freedom. That the mythical Savitri is capable of overcoming all kinds of fear, even the fear of death, underscores her potential as the Mother: the protector and provider to millions of colonized people who are suffering under fear. The poem focuses upon the quest of the soul to realize the state of being through the intuitive process of self-discovery and the consciousness of the infinite. Though Sri Aurobindo emphasizes the freedom and unity of consciousness he never loses his firm grip over reality. In fact, his imagination envisions earth as humankind's ideal home where one's soul, by losing its egotistical selfhood in complete self-surrender and by merging common humanity with universal consciousness, experiences joy and fulfillment. Attaining individual freedom gives way to the liberation of humanity.

The divinity that is innate in humans, according to Sri Aurobindo, is fundamental to the realization of freedom, equality and fraternity, and, hence, is a redemptive feature for the

future community. This alone can commence, to quote Giorgio Agamben, the “coming politics” of the “coming community” (CC 1). Of Sri Aurobindo’s concept of evolution of the human consciousness, R.C. Zaehner states: “More concretely he sees evolution both in political terms and in terms of ever greater awareness — a progression from apparently inanimate matter to life, from life to consciousness and mind to what he calls Overmind [...]” (35)⁷. This vision affirms the reconciliation of social reality with what is ideal. That Savitri is able to challenge time through her challenge to death and that she, as the “eternal bride”, can salvage from the death-state “the soul of the world called Satyavan” give poetic manifestation to the integrative process of human life that becomes divine even while living on earth. Here Sri Aurobindo emphatically rejects the Hobbesian thesis of the origin of evil as well as of the conception of original sin. For him religion is not a personal matter, nor can an experience of the Absolute be considered as a private experience. His is the vision of humanity-divinity in its fully liberated and integrated form. For this reason, in one of his letters he wrote:

[...] Man cannot build greatly whether in art or life, unless he can conceive an idea and form of perfection and, conceiving, believe in his power to achieve it out of however rebellious and unductile a stuff of nature. Deprive him of his faith in his power of perfection and you slay or maim his greatest creative or self-creative faculty.
(Letter 619)

This vision of absolute freedom provides a positive counterpoise to the dictates of sovereign power.

Through such a vision one is able to perceive the distinction between a political revolutionary and the *karma yogi*. The *karma yogi* creates or tries to create a paradise-like condition on this earth itself. Being an agent of the *Brahman*, he is engaged in the redemptive act of regenerating this virile universe. Sri Aurobindo believed that the individual is the universal and, so, true *dharma* is “*manav dharma*”: a process that binds a human being to his

fellowmen. He defined it as “*lokasangraha*” — “the holding together of the race in its cyclic evolution” (*Letter 59*)⁸. As a process existing beyond and outside of identity politics it evolves a space which is able to resist sovereignty's enforcement of homogeneity (a feature inherent in the Euro-centric concept of the nation-state) upon the 'Other'. Sri Aurobindo's vision was that of a world which is capable of acknowledging heterogeneity and respecting pluralism. To endorse “*manav dharma*” is to accept, in Giorgio Agamben's words, that “the coming being is the whatever being” (*CC 1*), a being who is not only at liberty from the quandary of either the universal or the particular, but whose very belonging to a class, set, category becomes immaterial as does the inconsistency that is rooted in the very sense of belonging⁹. This aspect of Sri Aurobindo's works, particularly that in *Savitri*, is neither appreciated nor critiqued by West engendered discourses and so this great Indian philosopher remains outside the ambit of canon.

Sri Aurobindo's relevance, today, ought to be seen in this political action, in his refusal to endorse any sort of identity politics in literature, one that takes him closer to human praxis. His writings call out for the need for a critical apparatus that would not only challenge conventional theoretical standpoints but would also suitably critique Sri Aurobindo's opposition of sovereignty which, in Giorgio Agamben's words, is “bare” life (*HS 1*). In his formative works, Giorgio Agamben argues: “politics today seems to be passing through a lasting eclipse” (*HS 4*) because of the emphasis on “bare life” (*HS 8*): a state of exclusion from “form-of-life” — the “happy life” (*MWE 143*) — which is “an absolutely profane 'sufficient life' that has reached the perfection of its own power and its own communicability,” and is, in consequence, “a life over which sovereignty has no hold” (143). “Happy life” initiates the progress of humanity by liberating it from the politics of exclusion. Within such space, alone, is it possible to do away with the binaries that are created by power structures in order to aid the establishment of sovereignty. This opens up the possibility of

loosening "what has been artificially and violently linked" (Agamben, *SE* 87) and returning not to some "lost original state" but to political action and human praxis (88). Sri Aurobindo's concept of "life divine" may be understood as, what Agamben calls, the "happy life". In *Savitri* the author presented an appropriate mythopoesis of this "happy life".

Sri Aurobindo's recreation of the myth of Savitri shows how he underscores the vital contradiction which the western philosophical tradition grapples with. Savitri, as a mythical heroine, resides in a pagan, ancient world that is not only prior, external, and antithetical to European Christian culture but is also remote from and antithetical to its classical antiquity. Hence, it reveals the multidimensionality, pluralism and the open-endedness of a culture that remains exterior to Euro-centric paradigms. Sri Aurobindo believed that the disquieting forces of the modern malaise had its origin in the western empirical, capitalistic, hegemonic tradition supporting a definitive version of reality and a homogenized culture. The "mythopoesis", to use the word from Marc Manganaro's *Culture 1922: The Emergence of a Concept*, in *Savitri* is used to clarify this vision.

While T.S. Eliot, in *The Waste Land*, delineates the wholeness of a fragmented world where "bits of culture [...] are thrown together in an air of artlessness" revealing "metonymized fragments, ruined towers predicated upon a theory of collapse" (Manganaro 55), Sri Aurobindo deconstructed this western modernist anthropological exercise of constructing a homogenous culture out of disjointed and variegated human societies. Relying on the hypothesis that modernity is a mess, his *Savitri* attempts to liberate humanity and human cultures from the western notion of a monolithic homogeneity and tries to reconfigure them as dynamic, heterogeneous processes. While the tropes of the "wasteland" delineate an isomorphism of people to land by capturing the sorry state of affairs in the modern world, Aurobindo's persona, Savitri, proves that such a state can only be transcended through the liberation of the soul from its attachment to concrete materialistic existence. When his

contemporary western philosophers and intellectuals were striving to formulate newer ways of suppressing, to use Heidegger's term, *aletheia*¹⁰, and hence to promote the power-structures of sovereignty, Sri Aurobindo was determined to disseminate an awareness of and an opposition to the overriding structures of sovereignty and to initiate the process of uncovering the truth. It is interesting to see the extraordinariness with which Sri Aurobindo tried to restore to *aletheia* its lost grandeur through a renewed poetic mythology in *Savitri*.

Sri Aurobindo's persona, Savitri, symbolizes, in Agamben's words, "the potential being" (RA 134). She articulates a singularity that divulges modern (western) life as a "fracture between the living being and the speaking being, the human and the inhuman [...]" (Agamben, RA 134). She forcefully ascertains humanity's future outside that anthropogenic and anthropological machine called sovereignty. Agamben observes that the machine known as sovereignty has two variants: (1) that of the moderns, which functions "by isolating the non human within the human", and (2) that of the ancients, where "the non-human is produced by the humanization of the animal" (O, 26-37). There is always an attempt on the part of sovereignty to distinguish between different forms of life. Jenny Edkins, elaborating on Agamben's analysis, states:

At one time, women were considered not to be full members of "the human race" [...]. At another time, different races were considered primitive or savage, without full capacities as "human". [...] Each of these exclusions were, in their context, considered obvious, unproblematic, and even unchangeable. In the contemporary world, the exclusion of non-human animals from the realm of politics is deemed obvious in much the same way. The exclusion of other forms of being is not noticed as such.

However, as Agamben has so clearly demonstrated, exclusions of this type form communities based on sovereign violence. A Whatever politics, if it is to be politics

without the conditions of belonging, cannot operate as a politics of humanity or human being, however broadly drawn. It has to be a politics of being as such. It is by no means just a question of including that which is currently excluded — women through a discourse of women's rights, or animals, for example, through an insistence of animal rights. [...] It is rather a question of refusal to draw the line between forms of life as such. It is to take literally Agamben's call for a *form-of-life*, "that being its own form, remains inseparable from it" (HS, 188). (82-83)

Given this argument, one is able to perceive in Savitri's struggle an attempt to move beyond both types of sovereign machines: the ancient and the modern. It is a struggle that tries to establish an inseparability of beings and to include all kinds of life within its fold. It not only challenges the Christian Humanistic Great Chain of Being but tries to replace its dictatorial and exclusionary vertical structure with an all-inclusive horizontal one. Sri Aurobindo deliberately undermines the philosophy of Christian Humanism to impart centrality to Man in the whole universe. Instead, he reinstates the human as a creature existing parallel, and not superior, to all other animate and inanimate beings. Thus, Savitri, a female, becomes his heroine, the representative voice of the decolonized country having a bright future if it remembered its legacy. A bird-like Aswapathy becomes the *karma yogi* and the beast-like Yama has a humane sympathy. Giorgio Agamben's view, that "there is in effect something that humans are and have to be, but this something is not an essence or properly a thing. It is the simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality" (CC 43), justifies Savitri's realization of the truth: that the future of humanity lies not in the doctrines of the Western empirical tradition but in its antithetical alternative.

In *Savitri*, as in his other works, Sri Aurobindo tried to expose the self-contradiction embedded in sovereign politics. In his writings he not only broke down the power structures of such dominance but highlighted that literature, through its political and aesthetic

autonomy, can become a mode of sociological inquiry standing in antagonism to sovereign politics. Literature, he argued, is capable of making sovereign politics ineffectual. The mythopoesis in *Savitri*, by way of its spatio-temporal dislocation, creates a symbol of the Mother Goddess protecting and showing way at a time of transition, at a time when the West was hopelessly trying to reconstruct its dismantled culture from its imperial past. Through its vision of freedom from sovereign control Savitri, a woman and a divine power amalgamated, becomes representative of the Third World emerging as an active force. Sri Aurobindo, once a political activist, created out his imagination a mythopoetical vision of his country — independent and liberated — with its core values related to the concept of *Shakti*, the Universal Mother, who is indomitable and fierce in action and contemplation. He believed that this mythopoesis alone would be able to tear apart the historicity of the grand narrative of sovereign politics.

Therefore, a reading of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* shows us the necessity of creating such discourses that would reinstate the importance of writers, like Sri Aurobindo, by holding out the possibilities of: (1) weakening the monopoly of hegemonic discourses and theories that undermine the historical, cultural and ideological contexts of literatures existing outside the politics of identity and the canons of sovereignty, (2) breaking the silence of those writers who neither write back nor wake up to the traumatic experiences of being utilized/exploited by the stereotypes and homogenizing factors of dominant/mainstream discourses, and (3) redeeming humanity from a life that oscillates between a world constructed by Darwinian metaphors, on the one hand, and Nietzschean Godlessness¹¹, on the other.

Abbreviations used:

CC: *The Coming Community*, Giorgio Agamben.

HS: Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, Giorgio Agamben.

MWE: Means Without End: Notes on Politics, Giorgio Agamben.

O: The Open: Man and Animal, Giorgio Agamben.

RA: Remnants of Auschwitz, Giorgio Agamben.

SE: State of Exception, Giorgio Agamben.

Notes:

¹ The word is used in the sense that Giorgio Agamben uses in *The Coming Community*.

² The imagined community, a concept coined by Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), states that a nation is a community socially constructed, that is, it is imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. Benedict Anderson defined a nation as "an imagined political community [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". An imagined community is different from an actual community because it is not (and cannot be) based on quotidian face-to-face interaction between its members. Instead, members hold in their minds a mental image of their affinity. As Anderson puts it, a nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion". These communities are imagined as both limited and sovereign. They are limited in that nations have "finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations". They are sovereign insofar as no dynastic monarchy can claim authority over them, an idea arising in the early modern period:

[...] the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were

inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the [direct relationship] between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state. (6-7)

Finally, a nation is an imagined community because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings." Imagined communities can be seen as a form of social constructionism on a par with Edward Said's concept of imagined geographies. Anderson is not hostile to the idea of nationalism nor does he think that nationalism is obsolescent in a globalizing world. He values the utopian element in nationalism.

³ Georg M. Gugelburger, in his essay "Decolonizing the Canon: Considerations of Third World Literatures" (1991) employs an argument similar to Madhava Prasad. He says that there is another trend in global literary studies, formulated to countermand nationalizing Third World Literature: it romanticizes this literature as "fighting against the traditional oppression: gender, race class." (515) As Shu mei Shih asserts: we need to counter this "fatigue with orientalism analytic" (28) too.

⁴ I refer to Hula Adak's essay in *PMLA*, she tries to challenge the "universalisms in global literary studies, particularly the way Third World Literatures are nationalized". (20)

⁵ This seems to be a fairly standard approach to the study of *Savitri*. I refer to Prema Nandakumar's *A Study of 'Savitri'*. However, critics like I.A. Richards advocate the independent character of the poem, divested of all other agenda, appendices and aids, including the biography of the poet.

⁶ I refer to K.D. Verma's "Myth and Symbol of in Aurobindo's *Savitri*: A Revaluation" in the *Journal of South Asian Literature* 12.3 and 4 (1977): 17-72.

⁷ In *Evolution in religion: A Study of Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), Zaehner remarks that Aurobindo, during his stay in England, “had come to accept Darwinism and Bergson’s idea of creative evolution”. (10) But Sethna, in *The Spirituality of the Future: A search apropos R.C. Zaehnar’s Study of Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin* (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson UP, 1981), contradicts Zaehnar’s observation that Aurobindo was influenced by Bergson’s theory.

⁸ For a discussion of Aurobindo’s theory of evolution I refer to R.S. Srivastava’s “The Integralist Theory of Evolution” in *The Integral philosophy of Sri Aurobindo*, ed. Chaudhuri and Spielberg, 133-42.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben states that the "coming politics" is a politics of "whatever being", not just "a simple affirmation of the social in opposition to the state" (CC 86). In "Whatever Politics", Jenny Edkins explains that, according to Agamben, if the coming (future) politics has to be something other than sovereign politics, then, "it cannot be a form of identity or social movements politics" (75) because “social movements share a call for recognition of particular claims or demands (the environmental movement, the anti-Apartheid movement), or are formed explicitly on the basis of a claim to shared identity (feminist, gay, black).” (75) What sovereign power "cannot tolerate" is "that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging", or "that singularities form a community without affirming an identity"(CC 86).

¹⁰ I use Heidegger’s term “*aletheia*”, meaning that the process of dissemination of knowledge is the process of opening up the truth from concealment, because as Heidegger states: this word, corrupted by historical and social processes — speculations, assumptions, boundaries — has lost its power to unconceal the truth and has been enmeshed within the tyranny of tradition that conceals the power of the truth. Terry Eagleton, in *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (U of Minnesota P, 1983), observes that

Heidegger's philosophy "bases itself upon questions of historical interpretation rather than on transcendental consciousness". For a better understanding of Heidegger's philosophy, refer to *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Trans. Menheim (New York: Anchor, 1961) 86.

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