



Theoretical Comparison of Socio-Spiritual Elements Narrated by Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo

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Abstract

This present research study deals with the theoretical Comparison of Socio-Spiritual elements narrated by Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo. In the present research, Herman Hesse examined and explored through the lens of the individual self, which Hesse regards as the repository of the divine and the only institution to which we are answerable whereas Sri Aurobindo gave the idea of a creative impulse in humans is also complementary to the concept of spiritual progress, known as epigenesis. Here it is very important to mention that Herman Hesse stated in his novel Demian, that "**One's fate is one's own**" we are its agents without responsibility, crowded inexplicable global destiny leaves us with no choice but cooperation, and yet we appear to be free. The research proposes to understand the Power of Self-determination, Self-Confidence, self-expression, and Self-Realization as the outlook of Shri Aurobindo added that what really matters is all-sufficiency to explain Mind and Soul has begun to be questioned, and a movement of emancipation from physical science's fixation has begun, though it has not progressed beyond a few clumsy and rudimentary stumbles. Theoretical Comparison of Socio- Spiritual elements narrated by Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo it appears that their writings have accomplished a great deal in tracing the development of philosophical and non-material thought and action, particularly with regard to spiritual doctrines and assumptions, and that much has also been done to spiritualize the society.

Keywords: Theoretical, Herman Hesse, Shri Aurobindo, Vedanta, Spirituality, Philosophy

Introduction

The spiritual journey always affects the social life of ordinary people as it is practised, tested and developed in one way or another by numerous spiritual leaders from Indian culture and diverse communities. Beginning in the Vedas and culminating in the writings of Sri Aurobindo, he was one of the most important and influential Indian philosophers of the 20th century. Sri Aurobindo's teaching is based on the ancient Indian sages' teaching that behind the appearances of the universe exists the reality of human consciousness and conscience, a self of all things that is one and eternal. Most of the individuals are united in that oneself and spirit but are divided by a disconnection of consciousness, an ignorance of their true inner self and reality in the mind, realization for life, and body. A certain psychological discipline can be used to lift the veil of separate consciousness and become aware of the true self, the Divinity within us all.

Hermann Hesse was born in Calw in the Black Forest, Germany on 2 July 1877. Hesse has earned international fame for his amazing novels as a popular author and poet. Since the publication of his first novel in 1904, Hesse has been one of those peculiar writers who manage to be both universal and sometimes persistently unappealing between many critiques. The 1946 Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Hermann Hesse for his inspirational writings that exemplified the conventional humanitarian ideals and sophisticated style. His famous work includes Peter Camenzind, Demian, Steppenwolf, Siddhartha, and The Glass Bead Game, every book explores an individual's search and exploration for realism, authenticity, self-knowledge, idealism and spirituality.

Here, Hesse's vision of modern society is based on reform rather than revolution, which is reflected in his writings. Hesse's work fits into a youth culture fuelled by an amorphous desire for the cognitive breakthrough, precisely because that desire has dogged him throughout his life. Many of us know this desire; it works with almost all young people, one way or another. But managing it wisely can be a challenge, and when it is about Hesse, in his life and work, it is a double-edged sword study in understanding his inner world. When it is about the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, it is believed that much has been done by his lectures and writings to follow the development of philosophical and immaterial thought and action, particularly with regard to the spiritual doctrines and postulations.

Aurobindo Ghose, popularly known as Sri-Aurobindo, was born on August 15, 1872 in Calcutta, Bengal Presidency British India, now Kolkata, in West Bengal, India. Sri Aurobindo's defined the term "Spirituality" as --

"Spirituality has no clear connection with the absolute truth; of course, the experience of the absolute is spiritual." Spiritual are

all contacts with the self, higher consciousness, and the Divine above."

According to Sri Aurobindo, the concept focuses on the current state of consciousness and the responsibility to evolve further in order to achieve the divine within. It emphasises the importance of raising one's consciousness in order to work for the spiritual transformation of the earth and the spiritual development of one's fellow beings. Sri Aurobindo's poetry was written with a specific goal in mind: to transform the very being, to elevate the current state of consciousness to psychic and spiritual consciousness. He believes in the emergence and development of the true essence of humans. The main objective of his literary works is to assist man in realising his spiritual destiny by living in absolute confidence in inner reality.

Literature review:

Hesse authored and published his first major work as a novel *Peter Camenzind* in 1904. This novel was published at a time when Germany was undergoing significant technical and economic change; his work inspired many young Germans with its concept of a more natural way of life. It tells the story of a young growing up in difficult circumstances and his spiritual journey along the way. The juxtaposition and coincidence of natural and modern ways of life in the novel convey powerful themes. *Gertrude* was a fictional memoir printed in 1910 and this work continues Hesse's lifelong exploration and search of the conflicting factors of human existence. His work *Knulp* was published in 1915 included the three stories from the life of the Tramp Knulp, a descendant of Eichendorff's *Good for Nothing*, are among the most attractive pieces of Hermann Hesse's early prose. In the sequence of his works, he used the example of numerous characteristic and mostly authentic individual fates.

In 1919 Hesse's famous novel *Demian* was published it was the best replica of the author's curiosity in psychoanalysis. According to Robert P. Newton (1991), one's destiny is inexorably one's own, as Herman Hesse described in his work "*Demian*" during World War I. Destiny appears to come from without, and we are its agents without responsibility. A crowded inscrutable worldly destiny leaves us with no choice but compliance, and yet we appear free.

In 1922, Hermann Hesse published the novel *Siddhartha*, which was considered a masterpiece by Hesse. This story offers and deals with a man named Siddhartha's spiritual journey of self-discovery. Siddhartha, the protagonist, rises above the mud of ignorance with the help of Indian spiritual principles and embraces the man's hidden treasure by opening the new book of knowledge, power, and peace. Siddhartha has profoundly affected dimensions due to the

simplicity yet lyrical nature of its language and style, which has resonated with so much over the years.

Steppenwolf by Hermann Hesse was published in 1927, and it deals with issues of isolation and romanticised depictions of distance from conventional society. As a result, Hesse's novel has become a powerful critique of bourgeois values. *Steppenwolf* is intense because of the main character's death-like life and the novel's vivid depiction of solitude. It expresses the message that if you cannot continue to explore your identity, you will fail to attain enlightenment as a human being, with a persuasively poetic representation.

One of Hesse's most famous philosophical works, *Narcissus and Goldmund*, was first published in 1930. The novel's title characters represent two distinct identities and life paths: religion and art. Hesse examines the character flaws and moral standards of both, culminating invaluable insights into human nature that are still relevant today. Hesse was known as a misanthrope who enjoyed hiking and dedicated himself to artistic self-discovery, which is evident in his investigation of *Narcissus and Goldmund*.

Hesse's novella The Journey to the East (Die Morgenlandfahrt) was published in 1932 as a prelude to his final masterpiece, The Glass Bead Game, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1946. His decisive and main work 'The Glass Bead Game', was published in 1943. The novel is focused on the power of meditation and the human spirit, and it has served as an inspiration to generations of German people seeking transformation and improved performance in the social order. The novel's context, Germany in the aftermath of World War II, had a large influence on its writing, and the prevalent German sentiment of shame towards their motherland emerges prominently as a theme.

Theodore Ziolkowski (1974) observes that Hesse has defined the power of death, i.e., the threat of death is transmogrified to the juncture of being meaningless. For example "The old Magister Muscle does not really die; he gradually dematerializes until his spiritual element is subsumed, as it were, in the abstract realm of spirit. Joyce, Robert E. (1966) explicated the Resolution of Polarities in Hesses's work *Steppenwolf*. According to Frederick A. Lubich (2009) in his work "Hermann Hesse's *Narziss und Goldmund*: Medieval Imaginaries of (Post-) Modern Realities," Hermann Hesse's novels *Narziss und Goldmund* were released in 1930 and became his most successful work during his lifetime.

The philosophical, theological, esoteric, or spiritual idea that nature, humans, and/or human civilization evolve in accordance with pre-determined potentials, branching out from the established cosmological pattern of ascension has been nicely defined by Sri Aurobindo through 37 different published writings with a focus on the socio-spiritual outlook for nature and human well-being. *Early Cultural Writings of Sri Aurobindo* was published in 2003 which is

divided into nine parts illustrating the Harmony of Virtue including the Sole Motive of Man's Existence, part 2 consists of literature and poetry followed by Education together with the Brain of India, Art, System of National Education, the Human Mind, the Powers of the Mind, the Moral Nature, Simultaneous and Successive Teaching, the Training of the Senses, Sense-Improvement by Practice, the National Value of Art, Conversations of the Dead, the Chandernagore Manuscript etc. His collection of Poems was published in 2009 by Sri Aurobindo Ashram which also has a complete collection of Poems from Manuscripts (Circa 1891 – 1898). Some other writings are Collected Plays and Stories, Translations, Bande Mataram, Karmayogin, Writings in Bengali and Sanskrit, Record of yoga, Essays Divine and Human, Essays in Philosophy and Yoga, Vedic and Philological Studies, Hymns to the Mystic Fire, Isha Upanishad, Kena and Other Upanishads, Essays on the Gita, The Renaissance in India, The Life Divine, The Renaissance in India, The Human Cycle, Letters on Yoga-I to IV, The Mother with Letters on the Mother, Savitri, Letters on Himself and the Ashram and Autobiographical Notes.

Sri Aurobindo believed that it was now possible to review larger lines for the Ignorance or this separative knowledge labouring towards identical knowledge, which constitutes our human mentality and, in a broader sense, all consciousness that has evolved below our level. Furthermore, he stated that a superficial examination of our thoughts reveals that we are entirely ignorant of a substantial chunk of our individual soul and becoming; it is to us the inconscient, just as much as the life of the plant, metal, earth, and elements. In volume 8 of 'Karmayogin' (1909–1910), Sri Aurobindo wrote,

“No national awakening that is limited to a single subject is truly vital and long-lasting.”

A country is actually alive only when the soul of people awakens and existence manifests itself in all the various forms of action through which man attempts to express the strength and pleasure of the diverse and true essence within.

“The world exists to provide ananda; the Self enters the massive and serious game of life to provide joy, and the joy that He sees is the delight of various forms of self-expression.”

Sri Aurobindo explained In volume 12 of the 'Essays Divine and Human', writings from Manuscripts (1910 – 1950) the Moksha as Pessimists have associated moksha with annihilation or dissolution, but its true meaning is freedom. Likewise, he illustrated that the Shastras use the same word for man and the one divine and universal Being Purushaas if they want to emphasize humanity's oneness with God. Nara and Narayana are the eternal couples who, despite being two, are one, eternally different and eternally the same.

Further, he discussed the Philosophies and the Siddhis. He also emphasized adopting original thinking and said that

“the human attitude toward originality of opinion is characterized by natural hesitancy and inconsistency. Admired for its rarity, brilliance, and potency, it is more commonly dreaded, ridiculed, or feared in practice for the very same qualities”.

He constantly favoured the balance of justice for modern civilization and society. Volume 25 of ‘the Human Cycle, the Ideal of Human Unity War and Self-Determination’ was published in 1997 and it has a detailed thought about the cycle of society and also the Age of Individualism and Reason. In this volume, Sri Aurobindo acknowledged that the all-sufficiency of Matter to explain Mind and Soul has begun to be questioned, and an emancipation movement from the obsession of physical science has begun, though it has not yet progressed beyond a few awkward and rudimentary stumbling. He also added that the psychology of man and his societies is already too complicated and challenging, a synthesis of many-sided and intertwined tendencies, to be satisfied by such a rigorous and authoritative analysis. This theory of a psychological cycle also fails to explain the inner meaning of its successive phases, the necessity of their succession, or the expression and end goal toward which they are driving. However, in order to comprehend natural laws, whether, of Mind or Matter, it is necessary to dissect their operation into its discoverable elements, main constituents, and dominant forces, though these may not be found anywhere in isolation.

Research design and methods:

The research design methodology is decisive in research because the procedures used in the investigation determine the reliability and validity of the findings. This research has been planned to achieve the research goals through the facilitation of consulting related texts, research journals, books, websites, and research thesis that are added to recognize and compare the Socio- Spiritual elements narrated by Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo in their writings. The paper is purely based on descriptive and qualitative study resources. To achieve the purpose, two different types of techniques have been used in this comparative research they are the primary and secondary sources of data. It is used for research papers in the form of documents, images, or artefacts. The original writings in the form of the complete work of Sri Aurobindo were published in volumes by Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust are available. Some electronic books and records are also used as primary sources.

Theoretical comparison framework

Hesse's characters have a great and strong connection with the claimant of the east. Theirs is a similar journey, a series of parallel paths that all lead to the same destination: the self. Characters in Hesse's work are mainly associated with challenges, mostly unsuccessfully or only partially successfully, through the suffering, pain and hardship of a life that, like the Buddha, Hesse perceived to be full of suffering. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy seems to be very appropriate to attaining and sustaining peaceful coexistence in the modern world. It is very necessary to uplift the human being from materiality to spirituality. If a human being wishes to live in peace and harmony, Aurobindo's philosophical ideas and teaching principles are absolutely essential.

The path of Social Development

Here, it is mandatory to mention that the writings of Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo are the best example for the discussion about the progress for the overall impact on human thought through the Psychology of Social Development is very important because it provides a complete prologue to the essential elements which are the root for the societal behavioural impact and human This psychological social development thought of Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo explores socio-emotional development and social learning.

Herman Hesse was a peacemaker and an author dedicated to humanity and humanitarianism. But he often quoted

“so far humanitarianism and politics are constantly mutually exclusive and both are necessary but it is virtually impossible to serve both at the same time. Politics is about taking sides and being a follower, supporter and partisan whereas humanitarianism opposes all this.”

Hesse was one of the few German intellectuals not to be overwhelmed by the general enthusiasm for war during the start of World War I. He continuously published two dozen critical essays on the war in German-language newspapers between 1914 and 1918. From 1915, he participated in the foundation of a reception centre for prisoners of war in Bern. He was one of the first critics of National Socialism.

The goal of the lifelong Sadhana of Sri Aurobindo was to bring the Supermind into the world of mind, spirit, life and matter. Sri Aurobindo also stated that **“Peace is the first condition, without which nothing else can be stable”**. As a spiritualist, Sri Aurobindo feels strongly concerned and involved with the concept of social and economic egalitarianism of socialism, but at the same time, he has a great fear of socialist authoritarianism. For him, organized socialism, even if it is democratic socialism, means the absence of freedom.

The Spiritual Expedition and the Influence of Vedanta

Herman Hesse's works is a self-portrait and introspection, a constant and careful debate with oneself. It is poetic and human self-knowledge that is almost unmatched in twentieth-century literature. In his words, *"Nearly every book I've written has been a spiritual autobiography."* Sri Aurobindo discussed in detail that human beings are now seeking peace and happiness, but *"true happiness and contentment lie in the discovery and maintenance of natural harmony of soul, spirit, mind, thoughts and body"*.

Sri Aurobindo has given greater emphasis on yoga. He said, *"The yoga we follow and perform is not only for us, but also for the Divine in the world, to effect and discover a spiritual transformation and to bring down physical nature and life of humanity"*.

The striking similarities between Hesse's mother-images and Sri Aurobindo's concept of Mother are captivating. God worship is indeed a very important phenomenon, but the element of God the Mother is particularly powerful. It is essential to note that both were influenced by Vedanta philosophy, which states that in the final realisation, there is only God, that there is no duality, but a nameless, formless existence that transcends all endeavours at interpretation.

Discussions

Herman Hesse did not adhere to the limits imposed on the individual by the morality of the group, regardless of the size of the group. Its characters still live outside the bounds of accepted morality. They hear a call that comes from a sphere outside of ordinary concepts of morality. These characters and Hesse himself have always fought for the last, for what was eternal and beyond the constraints of the finite. This goal can only be achieved by following codes and rules prescribed by those who are not seeking a similar goal. Therefore, Hesse has always heard the need for listening to a superior voice. Hesse's theory is compatible with the philosophy of Vedanta which places morality and spirituality in completely separate categories. It is because morality is of this rigid and unreal nature that it is in principle and functions opposite to the spiritual life. The spiritual life reveals the unique essence of everything, but reveals its infinite diversity; he works for diversity in unity and for perfection in this diversity. Morality rises to artificial norms contrary to the variety of life and to freedom of the mind.

The influences of Hesse's writings shared a conviction of the power of individual subjectivity. All are characterized by a male protagonist whose overflow is disagreement with the opaque and work expectations of the traditional society. Hesse's novels contain glimpses of true wisdom. Hesse's concern for silhouette seems to be

very valuable and precious. A great conformity for the modern self-improvement comes down to various forms of healing, but Hesse's novels remind us that the real work is dealing with the parts of ourselves that we want to ignore.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching affirms that this unique being and this consciousness are involved here in the matter. Evolution is the method by which it breaks free. Life is the first stage of this liberation of consciousness; the mind is the second; but evolution does not end with the mind, it awaits release into something greater, a consciousness that is spiritual and supramental. The next stage of evolution must be towards the development of the Supermind and the Spirit. When the Divinity is involved in things they will be completely liberated and it becomes possible for life to manifest perfection with potential. However, it is not the mental will in humans that it can be entirely done, because the spirit is only going on a certain point and after it can only move in a circle.

Sri Aurobindo put emphasis on spiritual development and believed that a spiritual revolution would certainly take place in the country when the nation will appreciate and recognise divinity. He evolved a synthesis of the East and the West, a synthesis of spirit and matter, of the eastern and the western culture and of the Science and the Vedanta. There, of course, would be a revolution in the field of spiritual education through the approach of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy. That is why, therefore, it may be said that Sri-Aurobindo appears to have made considerable progress and development of the spiritual world and potentialities of individuals for their spiritual development. So, therefore, he was a great personality with a spiritually intelligent and proficient personality not only in India but also in the world.

Conclusion

After analysing the theoretical association of Socio- Spiritual elements narrated by Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo finally it can be concluded that both the writers have a great inclination towards Indian Philosophy. Hermann Hesse has a special fondness for Indian culture. He was a Westerner, a European, and much of his personal quest for truth was framed by Western tradition. His understanding, knowledge, and extensive use of Vedanta philosophy in his writings and life did not turn him into a critic or adherent of traditional Indian philosophy and Hinduism. He was always his own man. However, in the true sense of Vedanta philosophy, he must be classified as a man who loved Indian Philosophy and can be called the Vedantist.

Similarly, Sri Aurobindo's Holistic Personality concept is primarily based on the Upanishad, Sankhya, and Yoga Philosophies he stated that *“Man is fundamentally a spiritual being, and each individual's*

true identity exists outside the personality complex in the Jivatman, whereas western theories, lacking such a spiritual foundation, regard the psychological self as the basic unit of personality. There is no distinction between soul, self, and mind in Western theories.” He stated that the action and influence of the psychic and spiritual being can be seen as performing a crucial and decisive role in the progress of an integral personality, and the concept of the psychic being is one of Sri Aurobindo’s major contributions to a dynamic and spiritual view of a self-motivated human personality.

Herman Hesse and Sri Aurobindo discussed the quest for the spiritual being in us is in essence nothing but the Divine itself and is visible in the writing like the *Divine Life* and *Siddhartha*. They converse that all forms of life are connected in a cycle without beginning or ending. Birth and death are an integral part of an enduring unity. Life and death, joy and pain, a good thing and bad thing are parts of the intact life cycle and these are necessary to understand in order to understand the meaning of life.

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