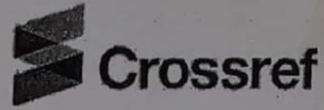


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*Shree*

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IMAGE OF REBELLIOUS WOMAN IN SHOBHA DE'S NOVEL  
"SOCIALITE EVENING"

**Abstract:**

Shobha De, one of the best selling writers in India presents a rebellious image of modern, educated upper-class family living in the urban city like Bombay. She exposes an inner urge of modern women for emancipation, pleasures of body, her identity, economic independence, equal status in the family and society. To exercise their liberation, all her heroines discard the traditional, cultural and moral values of the family and society. They run after name, fame and money. To achieve all these, they get attracted towards the glamorous world and rebel against the set norms of the married women in the family. In *Socialite Evening*, Karuna is a representation of modern upper-class women who, to exercise her freedom and self-identity hesitates even not to enter into extra-marital relationship. As she suffers due to callous and non-responsive attitude, takes bold step to stand against her exploitation, discrimination and treatment as a mere object at the hands of her husband in family.

**Key words:** Modern woman, exploitation, rebel, liberation, modeling, identity, extra-marital relation.

**Introduction:**

Shobha De is a prolific writer born in a Brahmin family in Mumbai in 1948. She completed her graduation from St. Xavier College, Bombay with a degree in Psychology. She has achieved top most position in the best selling writers in India. All her novels gained high score as well as created new records. She has dealt with the issues related to women living in the upper class society in India. To project the social culture of upper class urban

*Usha P. Yaul*

society in the metropolitan city like Bombay, she has changed the traditional image of enduring, submissive and self-sacrificing women with a bold and liberated image of women. She has presented extra-marital relationship as a stroke to the moral and traditional value in society. Through her frank style of writing, Shobha De explored the monotonous lives of bored housewives and their loveless husbands. She kept nothing to hide in her novels.

*Socialite Evening* is Shobha De's first novel published in 1988. This novel focuses on Mumbai high society and the lives of bored rich housewives who think themselves trapped in the loveless marriage. As a result, they engage themselves in ill-fated extramarital relationships. The novel presents before us a picture of marginalization of Indian women at the hands of their husbands. Also the novel portrays the selfish husbands, fashionable parties, false spirituality. There is a total decline of moral, spiritual values.

Shobha De presents the image of rebellious women who adopt various ways of protest against their oppression and marginalization. *Socialite Evenings* can be the perfect example of the misery of those women who are living under the male hegemony. They stand against the exploitation within the four walls of family. They become aware of their rights, discard the burden of traditional norms and fight for the equality in the social status. Instead of family they start thinking for only themselves.

The protagonist, Karuna's life is journey from middle-class girl to a self-sufficient woman. Karuna is born in a filthy clinic in a remote village in Satara district in Maharashtra. She does not remember much of her childhood except for the strict caution of her father. Due to domestic chores her mother could not give much time to her daughter. Karuna's definition of life changed when her parents travel to Bombay because of her father's transfer. She wants to come out of her middle-class background. Her dress and manners show how defiant she is. Karuna starts dreaming of a career in films holidays abroad. She gets married to Bunty, a rich business man. Her family accepts him because of his social status. There she meets Anjali, a well-known socialite and wife of a well-off boy. Karuna's world changes and she also starts tracing a career in films. She wants to have holidays abroad. She gets fascinated by the marriage and family for the sake of money. To satisfy her strong desires she thinks Bunty as a right choice. Because of his financial and social status she thinks him a perfect husband for her. But soon she discovers that Bunty is none other than an average typical Indian husband. Like other women, in the beginning she is also obsessed with marriage but very soon she finds her marriage is meaningless, monotonous and joyless. He is

not the right husband for her. He was not looking for any stimulation either emotionally or intellectually.

Karuna suffers due to callous and non-responsive attitude of her husband. She becomes only a mere object subjected to his will. There is a total loss of her identity. Also she finds herself in drab household activities of life. But Karuna is a self-realized person. She becomes conscious of her potential and talent. She is a woman who declines to follow the traditional etiquettes and manners. Lacking of love, joy and mutual faith for each other in their conjugal life, her marriage is failure. Karuna gets irritated due to her husband's typical traditional notions of dominated husband. He is an "unexpected, uninspiring, untutored. He was not made of introspection."(p. 65). Karuna says, "Marriage is nothing to get excited or worried about. It is just something to get used to."(p.68) These words reflect that there is no meaningful communication in her conjugal life. So, Karuna raises protest against her futile and meaningless married life. There is a complete emotional silence and only compromise and adjustment are taking place to lead their husband-wife relationship.

Being bored in married life, she wants to escape from such kind of drudgery by writing her memoirs. Because of her memoirs, she gets a great success with a measure of fame and pride in herself. Very soon, Karuna becomes a renowned active socialite. She never loses any opportunity to use her newly found identity as a prominent celebrity in getting position as an advertising copywriter and a creator of television serials. Through her rebellion, Karuna achieves liberation and emancipation.

Karuna's new social status and her glamorous world allow her to establish an affair with Krish where she finds nothing wrong. Karuna gets fascinated by the glamorous world of modeling to satisfy her thirst for money and sex. She cherishes her feeling of superiority and makes her assertion. She makes every attempt to refuse stereotype notion of husband-wife relationship. Karuna's married life is loveless and joyless, so she does not want to have a baby and seeks abortion when she gets pregnant though later she learns that she cannot conceive any more. There is no proper understanding between husband and wife. She thinks that she is married with wrong man for the wrong reasons at the wrong time, who is a typical husband unexciting, untutored. She detests callous attitude of her husband. Her husband warns her regarding her affair with Krish as he is married rake. She also rejects her husband's idea of reconciliation as she finds dishonesty, duplicity and egoistic attitude in his behaviour. By denying children and having ex-marital affair, she asserts her freedom. She

enjoys the pleasures of body but also firmly takes the control of it. And she opts for the heterosexual relationship. Being self assured of her potential and competency, she refuses the offer of Girish and does not fall prey to the threats given by Varun, a close associate of politicians, journalists and underworld.

Anjali also suffers much because of her incompatible marriage and her husband's oppressive and egoistic attitude. So she suggests Karuna that she should try affair as an antidote as she leaves her teenage daughter under her husband care and allows herself to share bed with any man. Anjali enacts a marriage of choice with Abe, an experienced rake with a wild reputation. She has a passion for sex. So she has frequent sex encounters whether with die-hard rake Abe or the innocent Karan, she is after the desire of the body. Ritu practicing flirt as an art educates Karuna about the ideas of adultery by saying –“no calls on Sundays, no calls at home, love letters should be destroyed immediately after reading...no presents”. Karuna dares her inner urge to express herself through love. She becomes so bold that even without any hesitation she expresses her sexual desire for any other man which is reflected in the following words.

“I love this friend of yours and I will feel thoroughly disillusioned after that...A Death In Venice.”(186)

It is just a formal relationship. Everything in husband-wife relationship is missing between them. It is clear that her relationship with her husband is just a formal. She discovered her ordinary status in the society as Bunty did not prove to be a good partner. She calls him not by his name but by using derogatory word “Black Label”.

Karuna wants to explore her self-identity and have freedom in all phases of life. She establishes extramarital relationship with Krish to show her revolt against her insensitive husband. She rejects the idea of second marriage as she does not want to conform to the traditional image of woman. In the process of establishing her identity, she divorces her husband and takes up the journalism as a career. She rejects the idea of second marriage proposed by her mother. Through the character of Karuna, Shobha De wants to expose the misunderstanding of women regarding their freedom and slams their wrong way of asserting their individuality. The complex patriarchal nature holds over the family and the society. It irritates troubles Karuna. It is reflected through her words:

“And as all of us in our little women's club agreed it wasn't the husbands who were the real villains.... But how could we communicate anything at all to men who

perpetually sat reading the business pages of the 'The Times of India' while concentratedly picking their noses?"

Karuna is fed up with her husband's compulsive socializing, his Safari suits and the gum he constantly chewed. She says: "we were reduced to being marginal people. Everything that mattered to us was trivialized.... roof over head and four square meals of day."

Shobha De's women expect the financial freedom, equal treatment, attentive husbands. They want to make their presence felt. No longer, they want to live under the control of their husbands. They want to live as free as their husband do. They try to assert their identity. They want to have no other's control over their life style and money. For that they stand against the men's hegemony as Karuna says:

"But mother, why does security rest with man? I feel confident now that I can look after myself. I am earning as much as any man,... I am not answerable to anyone."

Being a self-realized woman, Karuna chooses for singlehood as a way of life on her own terms and refuses the offer of Girish and Ranbir of getting remarried. Karuna, Anjali and Ritu attempt to destroy gender discrimination—the real and the only source of women's oppression. Thus, not only they reject financial security from man but also to assert their equal rights they adopt that profession which cannot be considered suitable for women. So they exercise their freedom in the matters related to sex. They challenge the accepted notions of female sexuality. They indulge in sex with men of their choice for sexual fulfillment. They never hesitate to discuss the activities inside the bedroom.

"I've stopped bothering to move under him or even to wrap my legs dutifully around his waist as I once used to."

Thus De's women never consider sexuality as their weakness. They think sex is the bedrock of all relationships. They use it as an effective thing to capture and control the man in relationship. Ritu's words show how she uses sex to control her husband:

"I love him in my own way. I'm not looking at other men... After that anything what I want is mine."

Shobha De has portrayed her women characters in such a way that reader gets a clear picture of her intention. She has not only concentrated on the presentation of a strange and startling world but also shown her concern for the problems faced by contemporary high

society women. It shows that women in upper class society have no concern about public. The concept of morality for them is outdated.

**Conclusion:**

Shobha De throws light on the emerging trend in the high class society and the problems faced by the women living in that society. Through her characters she tried to portray the women as what they really are and not what they should have been. Thus all her women-Karuna, Anjali, Ritu, Asharani, Aparna, Mikki and many others design their own code of conduct which is free from prescribed notions of traditional society and sexual constraints. When their own interest and identity is at stake, they never hesitate to revolt against their husbands, family and even the society which is imposing restrictions on them. They reign supreme in their licentious and unrestricted world. Thus, Shobha De tries to present an image of new woman who is conscious of her rights, confident and not ready to accept the status of 'other' in the family and society.

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'Is Alienation Self-imposed?' in Arun Joshi's Novel *The Foreigner*

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ABSTRACT

Arun Joshi is one of the Indo-English writers who gave new directions to Indian English novels. His fictional world is characterized by the alienation of the individual shown through a crisis of identity in an emotionally disturbed life. Alienation is a recurrent theme in different aspects. His heroes are self-centered persons and prone to self-pity and escapism. In spite their psychological weaknesses they are genuine to strive to understand the better meaning of life and the mental peace. Joshi deals with the themes of inner conflict, identity crisis, alienation and East-West encounter, existential problems.

*The Foreigner* (1968) is a story of the protagonist Sindi Oberoi, a modern young man searching for meaning to his life groping through the dark alleys of reality. In his search, he confronted with self and the question of his existence. His dilemma is based on his socio-psychological make-up of mind. He is too much obsessed with his hypocrisy and stupidity. Due to the deprivation of parental love and care, he also becomes indifferent to the reminiscence for his parents' images. He has been nourishing his own ideas of life and pretending detachment. Finally, he finds himself lonely, frustrated, dejected, rootless, restless, isolated and alienated due to his detachment and non-involvement in social and family life. He is a ruined soul wandering through the dark labyrinth of his life.

**Keywords:** alienation, existential problems, inner conflict, identity crisis, foreignness, rootless.

Introduction

Born on 7 July 1939, Benares, U.P. Arun Joshi was the youngest child of late professor Dr. A.C. Joshi, Vice Chancellor of the Punjab University and Benares Hindu University. He had his formal education at Varanasi, Lahore and Jalandhar. After completing his intermediate course, he got a scholarship from U.S.A. to pursue higher studies. He obtained a degree in engineering from the University of Kansas in 1959. He is a novelist who more strongly than most, has brought to his work that detachment from the everyday, while still

acknowledging its existence which is perhaps India's particular gift to the literature of the world.

With the publication of his very first novel *The Foreigner*, Arun Joshi emerged on the Indian English literary horizon. His obsession with human predicament and identity and existential crises distinguished him from other Indian English novelists. Arun Joshi's career began with the publication of *The Foreigner* in 1968. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The Last Labyrinth* (1981), and *The City and The River* (1990). He has to his credit the collection of stories *The Survivor* (1975), *The Only American From*

Our Village, The Homecoming. He won the prestigious SahityaAkademi Award for his fourth novel *The Last Labyrinth* in 1982. In his statement, he has said that he "essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and of himself."

Joshi's novels probe into the dark and innermost issues of the human mind, illuminate the hidden corners of the physical and mental make-up of the characters. In his fictional world Joshi tries his level best to delineate the predicament of the modern man who is confronted by the self and the question of his existence. Joshi visualizes the inner crisis of the modern man and gets convinced that the most besetting problems that man faces today are the problems of self like alienation, identity crisis, sense of void and existential dilemma. When he handles the problems of self, Joshi is careful enough not to forget our cultural heritage, and imperishable moral values. Being an original talent, Joshi explores the deeper into the moral and spiritual crisis of contemporary Indians. The novel, *The Foreigner* explores self and brings to a central focus the way in which the self tries to assess its involvement in the alienation from the family and society.

Joshi's characters are mentally disturbed and filled with despair, self hatred and self pity for they regard themselves as strangers in the physical world. Isolated from the self as well as society and family Joshi's characters are forlorn and tear themselves away from the velvety embrace of their society and live like strangers.

The present paper makes attempt to focus on the self created alienation of modern man in the mundane world. His novel presents the dilemma of modern man groping through the dark realities of life.

Joshi is concerned with the predicament of modern man and sensitively alive to the various dimensions of pressure exerted by the complex character and demands of the society in which contemporary man is destined to live. The awareness of rootlessness and strangeness and consequential quest for a meaningful self is the keynote of Joshi's novels. The sense of alienation and voids experienced by the principal character. Modern man finds himself estranged not only from

his fellow-men but also from himself, having nothing to fall back upon in moments of crisis. He suffers from sense of void and meaninglessness. In discussing the theme of alienation in Arun Joshi's novels, we are mainly concerned with alienation from society which is the most prevalent kind of alienation and secondly his alienation from his own self.

His protagonists are self centered persons prone to self-pity and adopt policy of escapism. In spite of their weaknesses they are however quite eager and anxious in their genuine search for the better understanding of life and to achieve the fulfillment through the meaningful life.

Joshi's first novel, *The Foreigner* depicts the alienation of the protagonist SindiOberoi and explores his anguished consciousness of being alienated from the conventions and rituals of his society. This anguish and alienation later on manifest themselves as the reason for the identity conflict. This novel reveals the human sufferings and agony arising due to the rapid advancement of modern world where moral values and emotions are getting replaced by the practical attitude of people. The novel is a story of SindiOberoi, a student of Mechanical Engineering. Arun Joshi exhibits the mental trauma of loneliness through the psychological conflict in the character of Sindi, in his quest for meaningful life through the relationships.

The protagonist, SindiOberoi, born of an English mother and an Indian father who died when he was only four, he was brought up by his uncle in Kenya. He was educated in East Africa, London and America. He was denied of parental love at the very childhood age. So, he did not feel any kind of love or affection towards his parents. Sindi had felt some kind of security when his uncle was alive. But after his death the security was destroyed. He grew up as a parentless child who missed the childhood affection and care of parent enables the tender child to establish a meaningful relationship with the external world. To him the memory of his parents is "the story of those strangers whose only reality was a couple of wrinkled and cracked photographs." (11) It is not surprising that he finds himself "tired of living" and "contemplating suicide" (165) at such a tender age. Denied of love, care, security and

cultural roots, Sindi grows with a cleft in his personality and becomes a rootless. His orphaned childhood generated in him a deep sense of emotional insecurity. He grows into a wayward man and finally becomes a wanderer alien to his own cultural roots and his soil.

Against this back ground of emotional rootlessness, the various incidents of his life appear more comprehensible. This vibrant intellectual moved from Nairobi where he is born to London where he studies, then, to Saho where he works as a dish-washer and barman. Then he went to Scotland where he works at a small village library and discusses the religion, God and mysticism with a catholic priest. After that he studies for six years at Boston where he meets June and Babu. Finally, he moved to Delhi to settle down but fails to establish a sense of meaningful rapport with the world. His parentage and early life made him a perfect 'foreigner' a man who does not belong to anywhere. Even in Delhi he feels an outsider. He makes evaluation of his own condition: "...I am perfect example of an Indian who pretended to be a foreigner and behaved as one."(130)

"I was considered quite misfit. My foreign background stood against me." He is a born foreigner, he an alien everywhere physically and mentally. He is a wanderer without moorings and a sense of belonging anywhere. Even when he gets Ph.D. degree, his regret is that no education and degrees can teach one how to live. Thus the protagonist, SindiOberoi is a restless and uprooted today's modern man indicating the influence of urbanization and industrialization on modern man living in twentieth century. He also calls himself "an uprooted young man in the latter half of the twentieth century who has become detached from everything except from himself." He becomes totally alienated from society. In this modern world materialistic and selfish consideration dominates man's life and higher values of life find no place in human life.

SindiOberoi's story is a reflection of human predicament in an indifferent world where people think only practically. His dialogues with Mr. Khemka reflect his restlessness and disturbed condition of his mind. He thinks himself everywhere

a foreigner. He finds no interest in social affairs and believes only in aloofness resulting in loneliness. He thinks that his life is meaningless without any trace of his own identity. He makes relationships with a number of women but with June is brought face to face with his hypocrisy, vanity, cowardice and stupidity. He defines it by developing intimacy with two young women, Anna and Kathi, as his association with them taught him to practice detachment and non-involvement in human relationships. But this intimacy does not last much. He develops an involvement with June Blythe, an attractive American girl. He fails in his determination not to get involved. But he believes that his involvement is the root cause of his emotional problems. He remains uninvolved to June's insistent love appeals and tries to drive her away into the arms of BabuRaoKhemka. In his best efforts to maintain detachment SindiOberoi leaves Boston and takes up a job in New York. So he adopts detachment attitude by which he can face the challenges of life in a much better way. His attitude to life and love is in total disregard of the values of human relations which leads to his obsession with non-involvement. He becomes devoid of emotions. The feeling of aloneness does not leave him even for a minute and he survives even after unexpected turns of events. He cannot love anybody except himself. The consequences of his practice of detachment in America, compels him to leave the country and to go to India. He hopes to live in India, the life different from New York and Boston. He believes:

"Like many of my bread I believed erroneously that I could escape from a part of myself by hopping from one land mass to another.(176)

The new development in his life was not casual. He accepts a job in Khemka's factory. He gets involved with Shella in spite of his commitment to detachment. But finally finds himself alone, perturbed and brooding over his past life and anxious of his future. In the following words he expresses the truth of his life.

"I saw myself as I had always been, an uprooted young man ... who had become detached from everything except himself."

Sindi finds no purpose in his life. He was leading a life without any purpose. Everywhere his life is the same thing for him. He consoles his divided soul as:

"Who knows where the road will lead? Only to fool can say."(182)

In loneliness and despair Sindi is a self-seeker and absurd man and an existential character. "You have a God; you had roots in the soil you lived upon. Look at me. I have no roots. I have no system of morality.... You ask me why I am not ambitious; well I have no reason to be. Even I don't have a reason to live."

Sindi becomes a young man dwelling in despair, detachment and indifference who is uprooted from his culture and social affairs. This kind of his life becomes a part and parcel of his personality. However young Sindi could not resist himself from being involved with a beautiful and benign lady June Blythe. Their affinity reached to that stage that they get involved in enjoying sex. But all the time, he is afraid of getting possessed and possessing by her. He is fully conscious about the pains and sufferings which he received and gave to others. He adopted detachment to shield his sensitive and vulnerable human self.

"The Journey had been long and tedious and still was not over."(221)

His sense of insecurity, fear of involvement and the memory of experiences with Anna and Kathi stood in the way of marriage. As a result of his disinterest in marriage, June drew herself towards BabuKhemka. But after knowing that June had had illicit relationship with Sindi, Babu commits suicides. Again, Sindi thinks himself responsible for Babu's suicide and instead of Babu he should have committed suicide. Sindi also makes his pursuit of detachment responsible for June's death during abortion and Babu's accidental death due to losing control over driving in tension. Babu, son of the industrialist makes no compromise with the reality that June had had close intimacy with his Kenyan-Indian friend SindiOberoi. These incidents create void in his life and predicament of situation persuades his life. Babu's sister Sheila once told him "You are the saddest man I have ever known."(140) Sindi himself muses over his foreignness and

confessed "I was cynical and exhausted grown old before time, weary with my own loneliness."(31) Meenakshi Mukherjee describes the hero of the novel *The Foreigner* as a 'perennial outsider.'(22) Thus throughout the plot crisis of identity becomes evident in various incidents.

Thus during his search for meaningful life and mental peace he suffers a lot. He is exposed to the harsh realities of materialistic Western civilization where he tries to discover himself but find in further bewilderment and alienation into himself. He himself calls his search for peace and meaningful as a journey of innocence to the experiences in the mad, bad and absurd materialistic world.

"I had started my life as a confused adolescent, awesomely engrossed with myself, searching for wisdom and the peace that comes with it."(22)

SindiOberoi is rootless, restless existentialist character facing one crisis after another. His relations with Anna and Kathy taught him to practice detachment and non-involvement in human emotions. The broken relationship disturbs him psychologically and remains in fear of getting involved with June Blythe, an American girl in spite of his strong determination not to get involved. He knows that involvement generate pains. So he fights with himself to escape from another affair. His self-imposed alienation is evident through his reply to June's question "where he was from." He had misconception of the term detachment for his own sake. It was just for avoiding some commitments which drives Babu and June towards death. His remorseful feelings are reflected through his words: "All along I had acted out of lust, greed and selfishness and they had applauded my wisdom when I had sought only detachment. I had driven a man to his death."(6)

He realizes his mistake of rejecting June's love which could have proved last emotional support for him. His sense of non-involvement proves fatal. Also he fails to meet June before her death during abortion. This incident upsets him. He becomes miserable blaming himself responsible for his beloved June's death and Babu's accidental death. He was experiencing the consequences of his

detachment. Through his life his words and behaviour create the same impression in all those with whom he meets. So he started his search for mental peace and to lead a meaningful life. But finally, in this modern materialistic world he remains a frustrated and cynical man alienated from not only society but also from his own soul. His self-imposed alienation and detachment create void and loneliness in his life to lead. The different manifestations of alienation create for the identity crisis. The consciousness and guilt and alienation has been illustrated through the life of the characters like Sindi, June, Babu and Mr. Khemka.

S.P. Swain rightly observes that "His responses to life are coloured by his childhood deprivation of love from his parents. Being brought up in a loveless world, he harbours in him a deep sense of insecurity and unreality." In his vain search for the essence of his existence and the relation of his self to the pulsating rhythm he begins to depend upon experiments in which his innocence begins to be rubbed. The three syndromes of alienation such as recessive, socially disinterested and socially ineffective identified by Sushil Kumar Sharma after Elizabeth B. Hurlock, were visible in his psyche.

#### Conclusion

Almost an alienated man himself, in his own words, Joshi has portrayed in all his novels the inner crisis and existentialist search of the modern man. Through the character of Sindi Oberoi, he tries to instill social, cultural, moral and spiritual values in the people of contemporary age. Thus, the protagonist Sindi Oberoi is a real example of modern man in the contemporary society. His predicament is a reflection of modern man's condition in the materialistic world. He suffers a lot due to a warring East and West cultures. He finds himself lonely, dejected, secluded and frustrated and ultimately alienated from society and from himself due to his self-imposed detachment. He is caught in his inner conflict. During his search for meaningful life and mental peace, he gets nothing but loses everything in relations. He has no longer any sense of security because of his isolation from his own family and the society. He finds no answer to his self-generated questions. He cannot give justice to himself and to those who are with him. His search for mental

peace and some valuable purpose of life ends in vain. His self-imposed alienation and detachment create void in his life to lead.

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QUEST FOR FREEDOM IN ARVIND ADIGA'S NOVEL *THE WHITE TIGER*

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ABSTRACT

*The White Tiger* is the Man Booker Prize winning debut novel by Indian author Arvind Adiga published in 2008. The present novel reflects a reality of Indian life which is kept hidden from society. After globalization there is a huge chasm between rich and poor India. A handful of rich class wants to have control over the large population of India. The writer has dexterously presented the life of servitude, religion, corruption, social caste system, poverty in India before the reader. This novel is a success story of the central character, Balram Halwai narrated by himself in his letter to Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao. Balram Halwai is an ambitious young man. Though he is born and brought up in a socially low category, he does not want to continue his father's traditional business. He wants to get escape from all social restrictions of servitude. He expects freedom from Rooster Coop to become a successful businessman. In his way to success, he removes all the hindrances. He transcends his sweet-maker caste and becomes a successful entrepreneur. He does pay off his family money and even murders his employer Mr. Ashok. He discards all controls over him by family and society. On the contrary without any remorse for his foul acts he rationalizes his desperate ambition and aspirations for power and pelf. So far as his efforts and achievement is concerned he dubbed himself as White Tiger which is seen once in a generation.

**Keywords:** globalization, poverty, caste system, freedom, corruption, bribery, rooster coop, entrepreneur.

Introduction

An Indian born and Australian educated Arvind Adiga has written three novels entitled *The White Tiger*, *Between the Assassinations*, and *Last Man in Tower*. His first novel focuses the challenges in the Indian villages with special reference social issues. The second one focuses on the stories of the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the last one focuses on the story of struggling and resist for real estate in Mumbai. He has written four short stories entitled *The Sultan's Battery*, *Smack*, *Last Christmas in Bandra* and *The Elephant*. His debut novel *The White Tiger* published by Harper Collins in 2008 won the 40<sup>th</sup> Man Booker Prize in the same year. He emerged significantly on the Indian literary horizon. It has been well received, making to the New York Times bestseller list. He has represented the struggling of deprived class for liberation from social restrictions imposed on them by upper class. The novel is about a dark picture of India's

*Usha*

struggle after globalization where nation is divided into the light and dark India. It reflects the journey of young man from a terrible poverty to a successful entrepreneur. The writer has tried to draw a line between darkness and light. Dominating theme of the novel is all that the author aims at conveying to the readers, projecting India, the poor down-trodden people of India and the Indian landscape which he calls darkness as against the rich palace of affluent people which are termed as light. The novel examines the issues of religion, caste, loyalty, corruption and poverty in India. It is the unspoken voice of the people from the darkness that is the impoverished areas of rural India. Arvind Adiga "wanted to do so without sentimentality or portraying them as mirthless humourless weaklings as they are usually." The theme of corruption and freedom from poverty and servitude are very important in the novel. The novel revolves around the central character Balram Halwai who narrates his success story through the letters to Chinese businessman, Wen Jiabao. In his letter, Balram explains how he the son of a rickshaw puller, escaped a life of servitude to become a successful businessman describing himself as an entrepreneur.

The present paper throws light on the prevailing caste-system, corruption, bribery in government offices are the evils which damage the Indian economy.

The protagonist of the novel, Balram, an intelligent young boy was born in the rural village of Laxmangarh, where he lived with his large extended family. Throughout his youth he is surrounded by poverty, disease and malnutrition. His destitute family lives at the mercy of four cruel and exploitative landlords known as the Stork, the Wild Boar, the Raven and the Buffalo referred to collectively as "The Animals".

Balram's mother died when he was young and his father is a rickshaw puller. In the beginning he was named simply as "Munna". Even his family had not bothered to name him. He did not have any proper name until his school master called him Balram. It means in deprived society young boys are not given proper names. His parents are also not concerned about his name. Balram says:

"mother's very ill.....she lies in bed and spews blood. She's got no time to name and father is a rickshaw puller... he's got no big loan from Stork who in lieu of that demanded all members of the family to work for him. (*The White Tiger* 38).

He is a smart boy but straitened condition of his family forced him to leave school in order to help pay for his cousin's dowry. So, he begins to work in a tea-shop with his brother in Dhanbad. But on the other hand he continued educating himself listening to the conversations of the customers at the tea-shop. Being a restless child, while working he used to make his receptors active. He was listening to the conversations of the customers. Through it, he learns many things about India's economy and the politics. In his positive things, he considers himself a good listener.

Balram is an ambitious child. He is not satisfied with his lot. He refers to himself as a half-baked Indian as he was prevented from schooling for formal education. But he believes that lack of schooling cannot be an obstacle in his social ambition of being an entrepreneur. He thinks that all Indian entrepreneurs are half-baked. He wants to be a rich person discarding the bindings of servitude and the family responsibility. He expects total freedom from Rooster Coop which is the fate of people like Balram. He decides to become a driver. After learning how to drive, he finds a job driving Ashok, the son of one of the landlords of Laxmangarh. Gradually, he takes over the job of main driver from a small car to a heavy-luxury Honda-city car. In his service as a main driver he presents himself as a loyal to his employer. Day by day he gets divorced from morality and family ethics. Balram stops sending money to his poor family and disrespects grandmother during his stay at village. He is a victim of half-baked moral and values.

Balram moves to New Delhi with Ashok and Pinky madam. There, throughout in his stay he gets chance to visit government officers with his Master Ashok. He observes malpractices like corruption and bribery in the government offices. He thinks that a huge chasm is made between rich and poor only by selfish association based on benefit between officers and people like Ashok. He finds that money plays a crucial role in business contracts. He comes to know that many legal and illegal practices going on there.

Balram is forced to be exploited by the elite class. He is a victim of half-baked morals and values and subject to insult. Balram witnesses incompatibility between his master Ashok and his wife Pinky. One night drunkard Pinky Madam takes the wheel from Balram and hits a child. Pinky madam leaves her husband and returns to the US. In her absence, Ashok goes out to bars and clubs hiring a prostitute one night, and

reconnecting with a former lover on another. Ashok's family mounts pressure on Balram to take the responsibility of driving and the incident. Ashok becomes increasingly involved in bribing government officials for the benefit of family coal business. Balram thinks that killing Ashok is the only way to escape India's Rooster Coop. After killing Ashok and stealing a large amount of bribe, Balram moves to Bangalore. There he adopts the same trick of giving bribe witnessed in the government offices. He gives bribe to the police to start his own taxi business. Balram justifies his own act of killing his employer Ashok. Balram's family was certainly killed by Ashok's relatives as retribution for his murder.

Balram has a considerable faith in his exceptional quality, thinking himself "White Tiger" not succumbed to conservative ethics or social expectations. He has the entrepreneurial spirit as he is not 'half-baked Indian' (*The White Tiger*, p.10) He was determined not to surrender before the difficult and worst condition. To him people of India are destined to "eat or eaten up". They accept their fate. But his father's words always inspired him, 'I was not to stay slave or eat or eaten up' Adiga's explanation of Rooster Coop is true depiction of what happens in India. Poor peasants have to suffer the evils of feudal lords. Even the things like liquor separates India that is Indian liquor of village poor boys and English liquor for rich class boys. In India we have two kinds of men: Indian liquor men and English liquor men.

"India is two countries into one, India of Light and an India of Darkness. Ocean brings light to my country. Every place on the map of India near the ocean is well off but the river brings darkness to India. (*The White Tiger*.14)

He describes the loyalty of poor towards the rich:

"Every day, on the roads of Delhi, some chauffer is driving an empty car with a black suitcase on the backseat. Inside the suitcase is a million, two million rupees; more money than the chauffer will see in his lifetime. If he took the money he could go to America, Australia, anywhere, and start a new life.... Yet he takes that suitcase where his master wants." (p.174)

Balram expresses his displeasure and protest against the way in which the lower class people compelled in servitude. He is a typical representative of lower class and he struggles to set free from exploitation and oppression at the hands of landlords and businessmen. Thus through the character of Balram, the novelist projects victimization of underprivileged class due to various social evils like caste system, unemployment, poverty, corruption, election, misuse of welfare schemes and education system. The novel explores the terrible facts of Indian society. His struggle starts at very young age when his father borrows loan from village landlord for the marriage dowry of his cousin sister, Reena. In return all the members of his family have to work for the landlord, Stork. But Balram wants to escape from the socio-economic imprisonment.

Observing his master's gradual corruption and driving him seedier districts Balram becomes disillusioned and resentful. Although Ashok is relatively kind towards Balram, he realizes that his generosity is a fraction of what he can afford. Ashok has no interest in helping Balram achieve better life or in changing status quo. The sequence of events creates in him desperate ambition and he cherishes a dream of becoming a rich by hook or crook. Things take a vicious turn when Balram realizes that the only way to be famous and get power and pelf is to murder his master. He realizes that there is no point in brooding over the wretched past of his life.

He does not want his family members to come in his dream. So he performs last rites for family members after coming to Bangalore. It means his ambitious spirit to break the rooster coop kills his emotions and social feeling for others. He also observes proximity of government doctors, entrepreneurs, tax payers, industrialists with ministers to fulfill their vested interests. Even elections are manipulated in India. After winning elections no party has any interest in the upliftment of poor. Their fate remains unchanged. They are used as vote bank by giving promises and little money.

Therefore, Balram's untruthfulness, corruption dishonesty, indifference towards family, dissolute behaviour, involvement in criminal acts like bribery and murder are the outcome of his poverty. So Balram plans to murder Ashok and escape. Day by day, his master Ashok gets involved politically and his divorce from his wife Pinky Madam also made him lonely. Balram seizes this opportunity and kills his master Ashok Sharma to become master. He escapes with the red bag loaded with money for bribing politicians for evading tax and illegal mining and begins a new life at an alien place in Bangalore as entrepreneur running a car service to



BPO's. He transforms himself into a master from a servant. When Balram takes to the path of corruption, bribery and murders his employer he forms his taxi company. Finally, things become in his favour when he changes his name to Ashok Sharma. This company is known as 'The White Tiger Drivers'. His elevation from servitude to an employer and owner of the company is not an easy going process. There are so many difficulties and hurdles of social elite class taboos. He says:

"The journey from Darkness to the Light is not smooth.....only a White Tiger can do this." (*The White Tiger*, p.250)

Being an intelligent, determined, courageous and ambitious, Balram removes all the hindrances in his way with his tricks learned from people like Ashok. The secrets of success in a modern globalized world are murder, manipulation, malpractices, opportunism, absconding police and judicial proceedings. All these contribute to the suffering of poor. Balram rationalizes his criminal actions, and considers that his freedom is worth the lives of his family and Ashok. According to him, his crime is nothing but an entrepreneur spirit. Balram becomes Ashok Sharma: a Bangalore based successful entrepreneur is confident about his disguise that he is one of those who cannot be caught in India.

It is this India of Darkness which is focused by the novelist articulating the voice of underclass silent majority. Balram is that representative voice of this underprivileged class who is struggling to set free from age-old slavery and exploitation. His anger, protest, indulgence in criminal acts, prostitution, drinking, chasing and grabbing the opportunities reflect his frustration in life and revolt against the prevailed social system ruled by handful elite and rich class. Today's politics, bureaucratic set-up, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, caste and culture conflict, superstition, social taboos, dowry practice, economic disparity, Zamindari, corruption in education, poor health services, police and judicial working sow seeds of underclass section of society. These social evil forces operate to victimize this silent majority of underclass. Thus the novel provides a true picture of gross malpractices in Indian democracy and society. A close nexus between politicians, criminals, police and media is harmful to Indian democracy and its economy. It is a social criticism focusing on poverty and misery of India and its religio-socio-political conflicts presented through humour and irony.

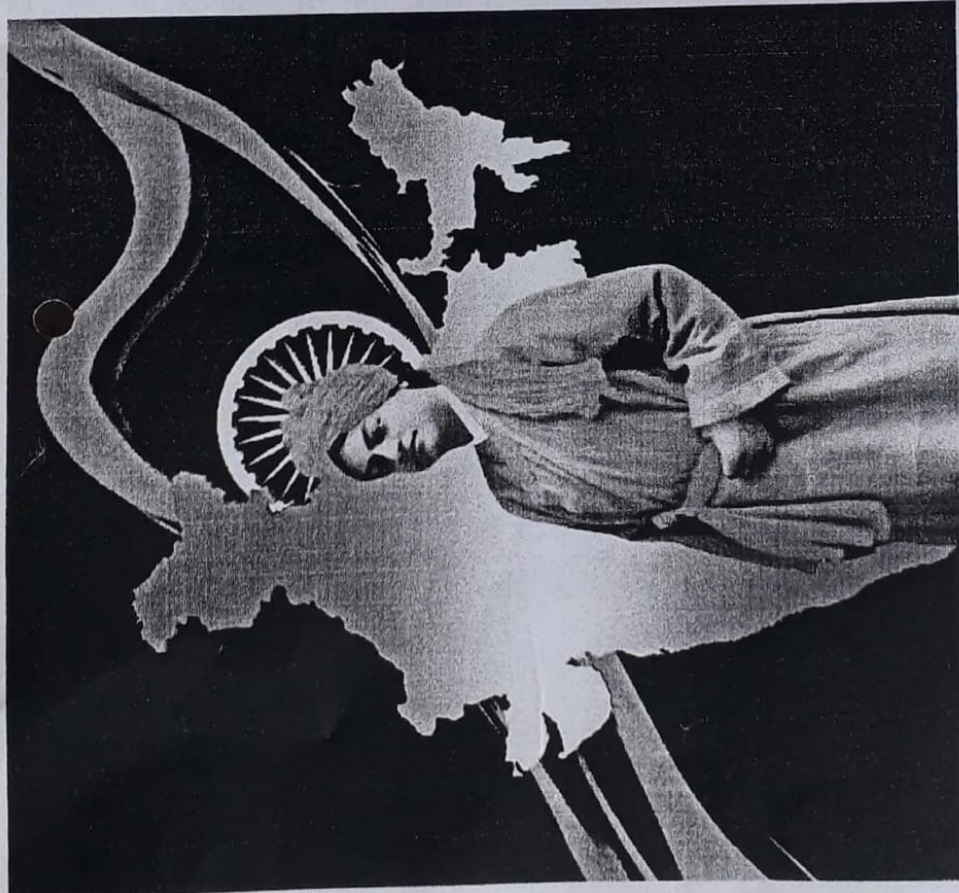
#### Conclusion

Arvind Adiga is considered as one of the most distinguished Indian English novelists who enjoy the privilege of winning the most prestigious Man Booker Prize for his debut novel *The White Tiger*. He took the challenges against the economic, social and cultural exploitation, lacking of morals and values in politics and bureaucracy, spiritual suppression of poor in India. Through this novel, he highlights the ever widening space among the rich and the poor, the rural and the urban, and the brutality of a system that allows a small minority to prosper at the expense of the silent under privileged class majority. Balram is an example of awareness in underprivileged class and will no longer tolerate any kind of social suppression. Adiga's exposure of the seamy side of democratic India can be taken as a challenge before the government. If government focuses and workson those dark areas of India to cure the sick image of India, undoubtedly a new India will emerge on the world horizon.

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## **The Making of Spiritual Personality--Swami Vivekananda**

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### **Abstract:**

The world knows the Swami as a giant intellect, a great scholar and orator, a patriotic Hindu and a powerful preacher of Vedanta. But this is a knowing only one phase of this many-sided genius. Even to those who knew him personally, the Swami, both as a lad and as a man, was too complex character to be readily understood. He was a man of original thoughts and numerous moods, each a world in itself. To introduce the life of Swami Vivekananda is to introduce the subject of spiritual life itself. All the intellectual struggles, all the doubts, all the burning faith, all the unfolding process of spiritual illumination were revealed in him. As a man and as a Vedantist he manifested the manliness that is sanctity, and the sanctity that is manliness; he manifested the patriotism that proceeds from the vision of the Dharma and the universality that comes when God is seen in everything and through the true insight of divine wisdom. He lived a life of both intense activity and Supreme Realization.

**Key words:** spirituality, religion, monk, meditation, patriotism, artist.

### **Introduction:**

It was the holy morning hour when the light of the world dawned for the first time upon the future Swami Vivekananda on Monday, January 12, 1863. In his childhood, Swami was a naughty and restless child of Vishwanatha and Bhuvaneshwari. He had a great fancy for wandering monks. Immense was Bhuvaneshwari's eagerness to educate her son well. It was in her lap that Narendranath first became aware of the glory of the gods and goddesses, the greatness of the sages of India. The first seed of spiritual life was sown during this period of his early education. In his early life he was noticed for his exceptional intelligence. His memory was prodigious. Naren was peerless from his childhood as his mind was filled with a hundred soaring visions, heart soaked in affection, intellect razor-sharp, boundless courage, inventive genius astounding, working capacity unreckoned and enthusiasm irrepressible. From his very childhood he was an adept in meditation, and had delight in worship, prayer,

was glad to see his analytical and rebellious attitude, for without intellectual questioning and struggle no one can arrive at illumination. At the same time, the overcoming by Naren of his and others difficulties and his progressive realization of Truth, prove the rare quality of Shri Ramkrishna's teaching, and reveal him as the living Incarnation of Hinduism in this modern age. It was the Master's teaching and the training that Naren, the disciple was led from doubt to certitude, from darkness to light, from anguish of mind to the peace of vision, from the seething vortex of the world to the grand expanse of universal Oneness. The effect of his Master's touch described as:

"The magic touch of the Master immediately brought a wonderful change over my mind. I was astonished to find that really there was nothing in the universe but God! I saw it quite clearly...."

Thus the guidance of his spiritual teacher raised him from the mire of unhappiness and skepticism to certainty and peace. In his making days, he was interested in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer and later on he used the Spencerian mode of reasoning in his discussion of the doctrines of the Upanishada's and the Vendanta. From such study Naren gained a power of thought, penetrating discrimination, and spirit of search for a scientific basis that stood him in a good stead when delivering his message in later years.

Naren was in full rebellion against the Hindu social system. He saw that the whole nation was in bondage to the priestly caste. The net of caste and creed became intolerable to him. Also he was in accord with the views of Western science and philosophy. Having a great respect for material science and its analytical process, he used to test the Shri Ramakrishna's various supernatural experiences and accepted only those which stood the test. He had a passion for history, the story of the conditions under which human character and human events developed. History was, to him, the record of the aspirations and realizations of nations through the centuries. Poetry, because it is the language of ideals, made a strong appeal to Naren. Wordsworth was the fixed star of his poetic firmament. He lived in the world of ideals, where history and philosophy, poetry and all sciences, are recognized as phases of Reality. He had a prophetic vision of learning, wherein thought was seen as subservient to the real purpose of life. With all his seriousness there was another side of Naren. He had a great love of fun and gave himself to it whole-heartedly. His personality was made up of a variety of moods and qualities--in recreation a boy, in song an artist, in intellectual pursuits a scholar, and in his outlook on life a philosopher. He possessed that qualification needed for the attainment of the spiritual consciousness--a passion for good. The monastic tendency was natural to him; yet he was a jubilant

and search for God.

The present article throws light on the multi-facet personality of Swami Vivekananda who is a presentation of truth.

The two traits, restlessness and kindness, were among the prevailing characteristics of his family and Naren himself. His restlessness was visible through his immense dynamism, energy and aspiration. It took various forms: high spirits, adventurousness, ardour, thirst for knowledge and travel, and dissatisfaction with monotony and stagnation. Kindness was a quality of Naren's throughout his life. The influence of his family, exerted mainly through his parents, was far-reaching in its effects. It was his mother who imbibed him with the ideals of feeling nobly, thinking highly and acting rightly. His father's influence served to widen the scope of Naren's learning by directing his attention to the cultures of other lands. In his boyhood there are many incidents that reflect his bold, generous, compassionate nature together with his presence of mind. Since his boyhood, with the help of a strong power of imagination, Naren as Vivekananda entered the region of deep meditation and was completely merged in it.

Vishwanath, who was a lover of music, had noticed Naren's love of music and his musical potentialities from early in the boy's life and had nurtured them carefully. He himself had given Naren his first training in music. Later he made arrangements for Naren's training in classical vocal and instrumental music under the reputed masters. Naren himself became infatuated with music. Music must be counted as one of the most remarkable attainments.

Narendranath was not in habit of limiting his studies to the university curriculum. He preferred those subjects for study which, with the help of his father's guidance, he believed that they conduced to the development and refinement of mind. He was devoted to literature and made great headway in the arts of composition and rhetoric. In his college days, he made great efforts to master the English language and more specifically in the arts of conversation and debating, in which he excelled.

During Naren's training with Shri Ramkrishna, Naren's life is that of saint-in-the making. There was a wonderful relationship between Guru and disciple. Naren's life was full of ideas and realizations. Their spiritual relationship was without a touch of worldliness. Shri Ramkrishna was aware of Naren's spiritual potentialities. He saw that Naren's intellect, because of the very intensity of his desire for the Truth, would for long doubt; but he saw also that Naren would conquer in the end, that he would transcend all limitations and become a spiritual giant. The Master, Shri Ramkrishna

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lover of life. He yearned sincerely for knowledge, sure, real, permanent and satisfactory.

Swami Vivekananda introduces his plans for work with some of his most telling utterances on education. "We (Indians) must have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation.... The education that you are getting now has some good points, but ... it is not a man-making education." According to him, 'education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain ... We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas.' In his view the real education is that by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own legs. He thought that religion as the innermost core of education. He expected a fine blend of secular and any other knowledge with the spiritual knowledge. To him the very essence of education is the concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. He was of the view that language is the chief means and an index of a nation's progress-- the vehicle of ideas. So education must be through colloquial language as only in native language one can think philosophy and science in one's mind and argue with others in public. Also it is most expressive. From teacher he had some expectations, like the simplicity of his teaching language and a close personal contact with his taught.

Swami Vivekananda's vision of modern India is conspicuous when he thinks that Western science coupled with Vedanta, the English language, technical education, independent of foreign control, different branches of knowledge are necessary to develop the industries so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves.

In his plans of work in India, the Swami, as a true patriot, did not forget the women of his own land. For the cause of good nation, he laid emphasis on the uplift of women and the awakening of the masses in the prior position. Religion, arts, science, housekeeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene-the simple essential points in these subjects ought to be taught. He had strong belief in women's capability of doing anything in this world. He rejected men's interference in solving women's problems. He expected women to solve their own problems. He made men alone responsible for the miserable condition of women. According to him, the nation or country which gives respect to women becomes a great country. He had thought of starting an institution for the education of girls on national lines, producing not only ideal wives and mothers but for the betterment of the womanhood of the country. He was advocating reform with regard to early marriage, advising all especially young men, to take bold stand against this custom which

was enervating Hindu society.

A notable feature of his personality was his patriotism. His patriotism was fervid. The manner in which he speaks of 'My Country' is most touching. That one phrase revealed him not only as a monk, but as a man of his people. Subhash Chandra Bose said that, to propagate his Master's religious teaching in India and abroad, he founded Ramkrishna Mission. He took an active part in inspiring every form of healthy national activity. With him religion was the inspirer of nationalism. He tried to infuse into the new generation a sense of pride in India's past, of faith in India's future and a spirit of self-confidence and self respect. Swami tried to harmonize East and West, religion and science, past and present. It is the manifestation of his great vision of modern India. In his own words, he was a 'Condensed India'.

He wanted people to look upon every man, woman and every one as God. He wanted to worship the living God. He used to say God is present in every Jiva. "Who serves Jiva, serves God indeed. Service to the alone, poor, destitute, downtrodden is the highest religion." So Swami advised the Indians to dedicate to the service of "Daridrarayan".

Through the speeches, Swami threw light on the causes of our Nation's downfall in which negligence towards the masses and monopoly of education and intelligence are the main. He was of the view that, lack of organization, exclusiveness, and neglect of womenfolk are the drawbacks of India which produce all sorts of evils and misery. He said, the country where the Shakti is held in dishonor is the weakest and the most backward. So he expected the elevation of masses without injuring their religion.

Swami had hatred for fame and name as the recognition of his eloquence and the glorification of his name, far from touching and elating him made him weep like child at the thought that for him the joy of the unknown monk was at the end. He was a voracious reader of philosophy all over the world of which the essence was reflected in his speeches based on spirituality and religion, in public, churches, and in the religious parliament. Many philosophers like Paul Deussen were astonished by his prodigious memory with analytical touch.

Swami Vivekananda expected the colourful national fabric in which unity is reflected through diversity; and a nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune. He urged India to make religion strong as it is a main current in life. He expected youth to cultivate the virtue of obedience, no sacrifice of own faith and to give their body, mind and speech to the welfare of the world. Purity of mind, perseverance, patience and energy overcome



all obstacles. Only the handful of men with perfect sincerity, holiness, gigantic intellect, and conquering will can revolute the whole world.

Ravindranath Tagore said that, "in Vivekananda everything is positive and nothing negative. Read Vivekananda if you want to know India." He was a mighty power. His culture, his eloquence and his fascinating personality have given to the world a new idea of Hindu religion.

**Conclusion:**

To conclude with sister Nivedita's words, Swami Vivekanand was the embodiment of India in flesh and blood. He was a very symbol of India's spirituality, her purity, her wisdom, her power, her vision and her destiny. Swamiji's thoughts reflect the perfect picture of India, its past, present and future. He wanted to show that the highest ideal of morality and selfishness goes hand in hand with the highest metaphysical conception.

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