

METAPHYSICAL CONNOTATIONS IN HESSE'S NOVELS: AN EXERTION IN DERIVING EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT

In the present time, philosophical descriptive researches have started gaining some ground. The study bridging literature and education through philosophical analysis of metaphysical ideas taken from the works of Hermann Hesse, a German writer equates education with life. Anyone moving towards individuation may study the developmental process of the Hesse's characters and may realize the real meaning of life and education. This paper makes one understand the importance of 'education for the self and by the self'. The research objective was to study metaphysical and ontological ideas as reflected in his selected literary works and to derive dimensions of education from the analytical study. It was found that a free flowing individual accepting life as it comes and plunging into experiences has more scope for learning and education, as professed by Hesse should free the learner from past memories and future expectations.

Keywords: Philosophical Description, Work of Herman Hesse and Education.

INTRODUCTION:

Research in education fall within recognized disciplines—economics, sociology and so on. But these disciplines have their problems. J. Wilson (1972, p.6) asserts that in the case of education a new approach and range of technique is required for which 'philosophy or conceptual investigation is crucially important'. Research in the area of philosophy of education is not just research in 'what is the case' but research in 'what ought to be the case'. Being radically different from scientific educational research and historical educational research, philosophical research provides foundation for the development of theory suggests problems and helps in

solving the problems. This kind of research points out the way for the enhancement of quality and future of educational practices.

Nisbet (1980, p.10) asserts that educational research is a mode of thinking rather than a shortcut to answers. He means that research in education has always a practical aim of guiding the subsequent educational practices. Therefore, Nisbet declares, "... educational researches are the unacknowledged legislators of the next generation" (p.10).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the study are divided under two categories. *What to do* in this study has been presented in research objectives and *how to carry out* the study is presented in task objectives

Research Objectives

This study has been carried out keeping in view the following objectives:

- (1) To study metaphysical and ontological ideas as reflected in his selected literary works.
- (2) To derive dimensions of education from the analytical study

Task Objectives

- (1) To undertake a critical reading of selected books written by Hesse to derive idea units representing metaphysics and ontology from them.
- (2) To develop a plan for the classification of the Hesse's ideas.
- (3) To select representative idea units and to categorise them into different idea groups.
- (4) To derive key words from the idea units and tabulate them.
- (5) To prepare an analytical format for interpreting his ideas.
- (6) To determine the constructs for interpreting his ideas.
- (7) To derive conclusions and implications relevant to educational processes and practices.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

- (1) The study has its foundation in philosophy and psychology, it is not a literary study.
- (2) For the present study, the English translations to Hesse's five works are the source of the data. They are :
 - Siddhartha (Sid)
 - Demian (Dem)
 - Steppenwolf (Step)
 - Narcissus and Goldmund (NG)
 - Glass Bead Game (GBG)
- (3) Hesse's metaphysical views are studied for an important support and reference to understand his educational thinking.
- (4) This study is not a case study. Hesse's 'thinking' and 'philosophy of life' are given more importance than his personal life.
- (5) Classification and analysis of data is done following content analysis method. No statistical analysis is given.

HESSE'S METAPHYSICS AND ITS EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS

Employing the scheme of Idea Analysis, Hesse's metaphysics and its educational dimension have been presented here.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy that establishes principles of reality transcending those of science. It is also concerned with explaining the ultimate nature of 'being and world'. Kant has argued that certain questions concerning metaphysics are inherent to human nature and have always intrigued mankind. Some examples are

- What is the nature of reality?
- Why does the world exist and what is its source of creation?
- Does the world exist outside the mind?

While presenting “experiments in living” in his novels, Hesse attempts to answer the questions addressed by metaphysics. The following table presents Hesse’s views on metaphysics through the keywords derived from them.

Table 1 : Hesse’s Metaphysics

No.	Idea Units	Key Words
1	The world itself, being in and around us is never one sided.(Sid,143)	world, not one-sided
2	The things we see are the things that are in us. There is no reality except for reality we have within us. (Dem,96)	reality, within us
3	What a lesser man sees in a greater is just so much as he is capable of seeing (GBG, 122)	greatness, capacity of seeing
4	The world is not imperfect or slowly evolving along a path to perfection. It is perfect at every moment. (Sid, 144)	world, perfect, at every moment
5	My life should be a transcending, progression from stage to stage... always awake, always fully alert to the present. (GBG, 61)	transcending life, progression
6	Every life is a venture.... This is never done without sacrifices and mistakes. (Dem .178)	life, venture
7	There can be no noble, no higher life without the knowledge of devils and demons and without a constant struggle against them. (GBG, 82)	knowledge of devils and demons, constant struggle

The study of the idea-units and key-words suggests that the core of Hesse’s metaphysics is the reality which is within us. Following Buddhism, he advocates the perfectness of the world at every moment. For him life is fully lived only when one transcends one’s self from the memories of the past and expectations of the future.

Idea Unit one and two make it clear that reality is not out there. It lies in each individual. The physical existence of anything depends on the inner capacity of an individual. As inner capacities vary from person to person, there is no single reality possible. The more capable one is, the greater vision of reality he has. It is the task of an individual to expand his capacity of seeing to understand the macrocosmic world. The Idea Unit three presents the reason why understanding of the world differs from person to person.

Idea Unit four and five voice Buddhist principle of perfectness. Hesse suggests that one, who views the world imperfect, or slowly evolving towards perfect, fails to note its perfection in the present. In doing so, memories from the past and imagination of the future do not let one be in the present. Idea Unit six talks about the task of an individual. It is to transcend one's state of being while remaining in the present. If a person lets his life flow, without reflecting on it, no progression takes place. One who is fully awake, fully alert to the present is entitled to real living.

Hesse shows his agreement to idea of the existential school of thought when he considers life as a venture. When one lives in present, without anticipating the future consequences, one is likely to make mistakes. These mistakes are labelled as mistakes by the society which has its set patterns of behaviour. Actually for the one who ventures on the life's path, everything is 'being in the situation' and therefore it is learning. Without risks, sacrifices, challenges, mistakes, a creative and novel way of living is not possible.

Hesse discards the idea of keeping one's self away from the evil forces when he emphasises one's plunging into the so called dark world. When one fight against the evil forces and transcends them, real education takes place. In Hesse's metaphysical thinking, though the world assumes perfectness, man needs an internal valour to wage a constant war against the demonic forces. Human life, Thus, becomes a tough journey from the mundane to momentous.

Educational Dimensions

Educational dimensions revealed through Hesse's metaphysics are centred on the reality : learner and teacher as persons. The following ideas are derived in this context :

- (i) The person who has transcended memories and expectation is a worthy leader.
- (ii) Education demands a learner who is capable of understanding the world.
- (iii) An effective learner maintains a participative stance with the free flowing life.
- (iv) A learner is to be viewed in context of his present, not in terms of future.
- (v) Evils are the part of the world. Education needs to accommodate evil as the inevitable part of reality.

HESSE'S ONTOLOGY AND ITS EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS

Employing the scheme of idea analysis, Hesse's ontology and its educational dimension have been presented here.

Ontology

Ontology is a study of the nature of being as reality. It attempts to study 'existence' and forms the basic subject matter of metaphysics. It describes or posits basic categories and relationship of being or existence to define entities and types of entities within its framework.

Ontology has one basic question "what exists?" "What is" "What am I?", "What is described this to me" are some exemplifying questions. Hesse's Ontology, centred round the individuation of a man, explores the issues of nature of man, and the task of man. The following table studies idea units and their key-words.

Table 2 : Hesse's Ontology

No.	Idea Units	Key Words
1	Each man is not only himself; he is also the unique, very special and in every case important point where the world's manifestations interest, only once in this particular way and never again. (Dem, 85)	man, uniqueness
2	The more a man attunes his life and thought to the spiritual and transpersonal, the more he learns to venerate, observe, worship, serve and sacrifice, the more useful he is. (GBG, 38)	tuning life and thought spiritual transpersonal

3	One man is exactly like another, but not in life. (NG, p.40)	man, like another, not in life
4	Never is a man wholly a saint or a sinner. This only seems so because we suffer the illusion that time is something real. (Sid, 143)	saint, sinner, illusion
5	Many people are like a falling leaf that drifts and turns in the air, flutters and falls to the ground. (Sid, 72)	falling leaf drifts, turns, flutters, falls
6	A few others are like stars which travel one defined path: No wind reaches them; they have within themselves their guide and path. (Sid, p.72)	stars, defined, path, guide within
7	Everyone can perform magic, everyone can reach his goal, if he can think, wait and fast. (Sid, 60)	to think, to wait, to fast
8	I call a man awake who knows in his conscious reason his innermost unreasonable force, drives and weaknesses and knows how to deal with them. (NG,126)	conscious reason, knowledge of unreasonable force, drives, weaknesses, dealing with them
9	One must find the source within one's own self, one must possess it. Everything else (was) seeking; a detour, error. (Sid,72)	Source within seeking detour

The study of idea units and key words sketches the ontological reality viewed by Hesse in just three sentences. It is: 'Each man is perfect. Perfection is within him. One has to just find out the source from within.'

Idea Unit one negates the traditional view of the world that all men are alike. Hesse calls each person 'a unique one' not only because his essence is different from others. While living in the world, he acts not only driven by inner forces but he exists at each moment with numerous

intersections of world's manifestations. As the manifestations are constantly evolving, the self of a person varies from the previous moment. Hesse explicitly points out that the state of one's being in a moment is never repeated.

In Idea Unit two Hesse sees the task of a man to develop spirituality and transpersonal relations not only in living but also in thinking. The more one feels one with others, the more he grows affectively, learns life and creates his meaning.

Sticking to his view of uniqueness of each man, Hesse projects how one differs from the other in life. A person who is out of life exists in his memories of past and images of future. While doing so, he negates the present and remains absent in the situation. But when one enters the life, enters the situation he becomes different. His whole being opens up and the self gets expressed fully. Responding to the present situation with whole being he starts 'living.' All other acts are tantamount to lifelessness.

In Idea Unit four Hesse seems following Buddhist view that each one is Buddha at each moment. In one situation, one may act as a saint. The very next moment he may be seen behaving as a sinner. Thus, the fabricated labels like '*saint*' and '*sinner*', '*good or bad*' are generated by the society and cannot be applied to any self on a permanent basis. How one behaves at one moment is just the manifestation of that self at that time only. Hesse advocates to make one free from the illusion that time is real. In the absence of time the polarity of 'saint and sinner' vanishes.

Idea Unit five and six present two categories of persons: They are (a) worldly and unreal man living in action-reaction chain that is just driven by the outer force. (b) real or independent men who possess an inner momentum and compass. The first category of people doesn't have self will. While the second category of people knows themselves. They are not submissive to the outer forces. They have within them their guide and path. They let the situation flow into them, see themselves in new forms and decide what to do the next. They know that the treasure is within and they just need to find out. The journey to this treasure – within demands unlearning of what was loaded by the others and for the others.

In Idea Unit seven Hesse shows a way to find out what one is. *To think* suggests one to reflect while being in the situation. This quality would enable him not to submit to action-reaction chain. *To wait* suggests one to let the situation flow in one and then observe what is going on in

the self instead of reaching to it. The quality of waiting helps one not to jump to what is liked and not to escape from what is not liked. *To fast* suggests one not be succumbing to the physical forces. These three qualities minimises the effect of the outer-forces on man. A man possessing these qualities can perform magic in a sense that whatever he does is not causal, but something a creative.

Idea Unit eight expresses how one can find what he is and how to overcome the limitations. An awakened being is said to have reflective nature, who while getting involved in a situation identifies his innermost unreasonable force, drives and weakness. He is also supposed to know how to deal with them. Only a reflective being passes through stages wherein he discards what limits him in the progression of life.

Idea Unit nine is derived from the assumption that each one is perfect. If one knows this, then he has just to find that source within. If one seeks it outside, his journey of life becomes a detour and an error. While finding the source within one has to shatter off what comes in the way of his complete debecoming.

It may be concluded, that Hesse rejects the outer forces as ‘causes’ in the journey of one’s individuation. He seems to integrate ‘what one is’ and ‘what one can be’ with the concept of perfectness in each moment. This magical compound of ‘*is*’ and ‘*can be*’ induces the life of ‘*here and now*.’ This is the worthy life of an awakened being.

Educational Dimensions

Educational dimensions derived from Hesse’s ontology focuses the learner’s quality required for the process of individuation. The following ideas are derived in this context.

- An effective learner is one who is aware of his constantly evolving self. He not only views him as what he is, but also knows what he can be.
- Education necessitates an attitude of searching a guide within oneself.
- Affective development of a learner requires a learner’s readiness of accepting others.
- Education demands a person who responds to the present situation with his whole being.
- Every learner is perfect at each moment.
- Education brings about a person who possesses inner momentum and compass.
- To think, to wait and to fast are the three qualities of an efficient learner.

- Awareness of one's limitations is tantamount to learning.

FINDINGS:

Hesse's thinking alludes to the interior of an individual journey than the exterior of it. His views provide a deep revelation about all the aspect of human life. This study has endeavoured to approach his thinking from an educational as well philosophical point of view. Based on the discussions in the preceding points certain important findings are presented here.

- Education proceeds through unlearning
- Debecoming is the terminus of education
- Renouncing each state of self is necessary until total unlearning happens.
- Imposition of ideals obstructs real education.
- Any system built on particular ideology and norms obstruct autonomous development of a person.
- Education of a person starts when he feels inner discontent leading to rejection of set norms.
- Genuine education generates a capacity of creating a personal value scale.
- Education creates space for the learner to exercise his freedom of choice.
- Evil is the inevitable part of reality, therefore, in all learning encounter evil is present.
- Genuine education provides experiences of both: good and bad. It leaves to the learner to decide what is good and what is bad.
- Education prepares a person to live in the present.
- Genuine education exerts pushes to the learner to create his own wisdom.
- One can teach only one's own self, therefore Education means self-education.
- Education necessitates an attitude of searching a guide within oneself.
- Individuation is tantamount to self education.
- Reflection over feelings refines one's sense experience. It helps one become depassioned.
- Genuine education brings balance between cognitive and affective aspects in a person.
- Irrational involvement in a situation brings about something unprecedented in a person that is genuine education.

- Intimate relationship with men / women of substance triggers experiential learning. It wipes out the psychological imbalances and allows a person to relate with people.
- Education happens to a man of learning, not to man of knowledge.
- Static mind resists learning.
- Each man is perfect. Perfection is within him. One has to just find out the source from within.
- Man is perfect when he lives in a moment. But when he starts demanding, expecting, reflecting about that moment, a sense of imperfection takes over, which subsequently induces learning and unlearning.
- An authentic life demands one to choose, decide and create values through encounters with real experiences.

PROFILE OF THE TEACHER DERIVED FROM METAPHYSICS AND ONTOLOGY

- He accepts the learner as a person.
- He never dominates or dictates and takes no pleasure in commanding.
- He selects and provides experiences to the learner for a gradual shift from rationality to emotions.
- He doesn't teach, he induces self-education.
- He behaves friendly with the learner.
- He exerts pushes to the learners for self exploration.
- He enters into mutual dialogues with the learner.
- He enables the learner to visualize his vocation.
- He remains a source of life-long learning.
- He poses before the learner contradictory views about the topic to be learnt.
- He encourages the learner to keep on reflecting to modify his thinking.
- He facilitates the learner to find his own way.
- He frees the learner for independent learning.
- He fosters courage for making original choices.
- He doesn't give dogmatic or fixed answers to learner's questions.
- He helps only when he is asked.
- He creates a scope to keep the cycle of learner's unlearning – learning go on.

- He encourages the learners to doubt and to refute traditions.
- The teacher convinces the learner that whatever he learns at present is temporary.
- He demonstrates from his own life.
- He says yes to novel experiences.
- He is always ready for self-correction.
- He reflects on his vocation from time to time.
- He is unmoved by public criticism / outer views.

CONCLUSION

Hesse's epistemology is focused on the process of learning than on knowledge. A free flowing individual accepting life as it comes and plunging into experiences has more scope for learning. Hesse rejects man of knowledge and static mind. Education, therefore, aims at producing man of learning. In no other research, such an idea is discussed.

The idea of '*life; hear and now*' is presented by Hesse. His ontology presents man as perfect when he lives in present. Education, as professed by Hesse should free the learner from past memories and future expectations. This is also a unique contribution of Hesse.

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