

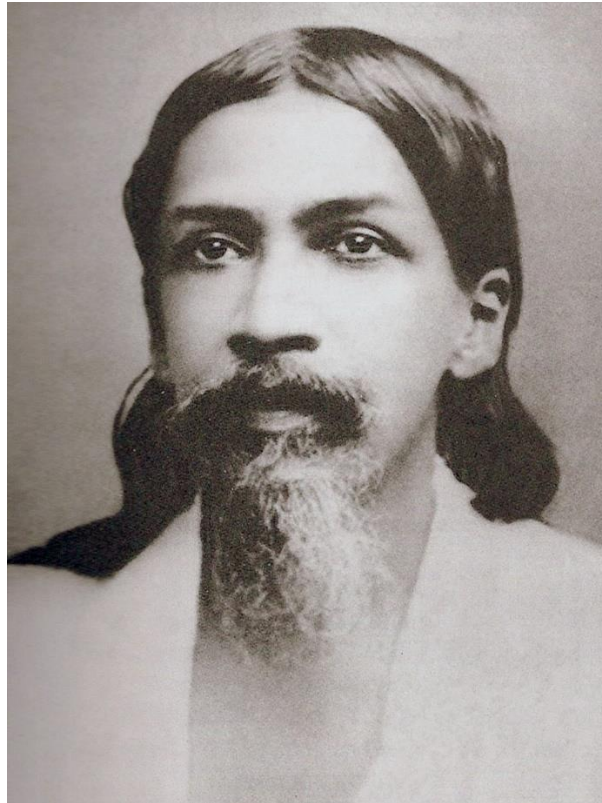
**Purification of the Human Soul:  
A Critical Study of Sri Aurobindo's *Rodogune***

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Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950)  
Courtesy: en.wikipedia.org

**Abstract**

Sri Aurobindo is one of the popular writers in the field of Indo-Anglian literature. *Rodogune*, the only tragedy of Sri Aurobindo, fulfills all the important concepts of tragedy and here we see a clear picture of the purification of the human soul. Here, through all his characters, Sri Aurobindo has established that love is the supreme force on this earth and is capable of

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causing the reawakening of human soul. The historical character of **Rodogune** describes this love very beautifully and it is perhaps for this reason that Sri Aurobindo chose to name the play after her.

**Keywords:** Sri Aurobindo, *Rodogune*, tragedy, purification of human soul

### **Introduction**

Born on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1872 in a highly educated and westernized father Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghosh in Calcutta, Sri Aurobindo is considered as one of the famous dramatist in the field of Indo- Anglian drama and a towering figure in modern Indian renaissance. Due to his father's strong belief and attraction towards the western thought and culture, he was sent in the Lorreto Convent school at Darjeeling at the age of five only and then at the age of seven sent to England, where he completed his rest of school education and college study. The central theme of Sri Aurobindo's *Rodogune* is the purification of the human soul which was essential for the attainment of the truth-consciousness that is closely attached with the spiritual evolution of the suffering soul. Antiochus, the male protagonist of the play, may face death at the end and accepts the outward defeat but achieves a spiritual victory inwardly and the spirit of Antiochus seems to defeat all the fear and horror of death. He says: "*What was Death then but wider life than earth, Can give us in her clayey limits bound?*" (p-453)

In the tragic world of Sri-Aurobindo, death and suffering are meant to make us perfect because he strongly believes that evolution is a concrete and continuous process through which the Divine Will works in the universe. Love is another important theme which helps in the spiritual evolution of soul and the harmonizing power of life. The plays of Sri Aurobindo reflect the vision not only of the whole man but also the whole society, a visionary society where man can live in a blissful state.

Love may be evaluated as the most important aspect in Sri Aurobindo's *Rodogune*. While in the beginning of the play it starts at the physical level but at the end it transcends to the soul level. Though at the beginning it describes the physical beauty of Rodogune, afterwards it is presented by Sri Aurobindo as a spiritual power that destroys all evils in human nature like ego, pride, jealousy, hatred etc and uplifts man to a spiritual level. This unconditional, spiritual love of Rodogune encourages Antiochus to destroy all his hatred, ego, and war-hunger towards his brother Timocles and helps him to face death fearlessly and allows his soul to achieve that level of divinity.

Evolution, faith, fate, freedom are the other important features or aspects of Sri Aurobindo's plays. Through the evolutionary principle, Sri Aurobindo creates the harmony, peace, and happiness at the end of the play *Rodogune*. It is through the supra-mental light or

truth consciousness of the Divine, the main characters of the play uplifts themselves from lower selves to higher selves. Due to this at the end of the play Antiochus goes above the feelings of any earthly pains or pleasures. He does not feel hurt by the time he is arrested. Death of Antiochus at the end of the play is not end but a beginning:

*What were Death then but wider life than earth  
Can give us in her clayey limits bound?  
Darkness perhaps! There must be light behind. (Act-V, Sc-iv, P-453)*

Fate and faith are another two major aspects of *Rodogune*. Faith in the Supreme power, mercy and love and His will as the Ultimate Law of the Universe, is clearly portrayed by Sri Aurobindo in his play as his evolutionary philosophy. The Divine will and the fate which in other words he calls the law governing the Universe, work peacefully to uplift man from the mortal world to the Divine world. In *Rodogune*, we come across such references moving round to spirituality that is found in the characters of Rodogune, Antiochus, Timocles and others. This shows the proof of the Dramatist's immense trust and belief in Divinity, which according to him, should be the sole purpose of his life. We can see the presence of fate through the dialogues of Phayllus:

*Fortune will bear me out; she's grown my slave girl,  
What liberties have I not taken with her  
Which she has suffered amorously, kinder grown  
After each handling. (Act- V, Sc- I, P- 447)*

So, we find both the perfect and deep implication of faith on the Divine and his implication of power, which we call fate throughout the play *Rodogune*, that the dramatist wants to show and creates awareness among us through the characters of the play. Sri Aurobindo basically wants to justify that man suffers due to his ignorance of the nature and purpose of fate. Only the arrogant and spiritually blind minds fight to go against fate to fulfill their narrow and baseless temporary interest. They consider themselves as the master of everything and forget the power of Divine will and His interest which we call fate or destiny that we must follow blindly. The intense connection among love, faith, and fate controls the theme of evolution in the tragedy *Rodogune* and also in other dramatic writings of Sri Aurobindo.

Freedom is another important and essential theme of the play. Syria's march forward is portrayed by the dramatist as his freedom from slavery of darkness towards a free world of light. Sri Aurobindo is against slavery and bondage of man in any way as it is against the divine principle of God.

## Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that the various themes and aspects in Sri Aurobindo's only tragedy *Rodogune* have their influence and presence in the other literary works of Sri Aurobindo. Man's evolution from ignorance and darkness to light and truth consciousness is the interest and will of the Divine power and this is achieved through the power of love, fate, faith, and interest for freedom. These themes and aspects show the deep and vital unity of thought and vision.

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