

## **Narcissus and the Guru**

### **Hesse's Transformation of the Hero in *Siddhartha***

by

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If *Demian* illustrates Hesse's transformation of the puer archetype with which his ego had been inflated as he approached the beginning of his mid-life crisis, and if *Steppenwolf* reveals the transformation of the senex archetype that came to possess him toward the end of his crisis, *Siddhartha* stands as Hesse's transformation of the youthful hero archetype with which he now identified.

At this point, however, we might ask why any further individuation would be necessary at all for Hesse after *Demian*, since in that novel he seems to have gone through the process of individuation in its entirety. But individuation is a recursive process—i.e., one can experience all of the phases at different times and on different levels:

The individuation process, as the way of development and maturation of the psyche, does not follow a straight line, nor does it always lead onwards and upwards. The course it follows is rather "stadial", consisting of progress and regress, flux and stagnation in alternating sequence. Only when we glance back over a long stretch of the way can we notice the development. If we wish to mark out the way somehow or other, it can equally well be considered a "spiral", the same problems and motifs occurring again and again on different levels. (Jacobi 34)

People just setting out on the adventure of individuation may have dreams of the anima, animus, or even the archetypal self—i.e., the “deeper” levels of the unconscious—yet these often appear not as signs of the completion of their journey, but as glimpses of the archetypes that they must work for many years to integrate. By the time *Demian* was written, we can see that Hesse had gone quite far in integrating his shadow and overcoming his puer inflation. Other archetypes, such as the anima (Beatrice), while they do influence his progress and development, have not been fully realized or depicted. Hesse’s individuation had only just begun.

With *Demian*, Hesse had objectified his puer dilemma and heroically struggled free of his inflation with the archetypal boy, an accomplishment that represents the first stage of the individuation process that had begun with his breakdown. Jolande Jacobi, in *The Way of Individuation*, describes the necessity of working out puer inflations—especially in analysands approaching mid-life:

Jung constantly emphasizes that the overcoming of the tasks of youth is a prerequisite for psychic development during the second half [of life]. Only then is a person capable of submitting himself to the far-reaching process which the second half of life requires of him. The validity of this is apparent when a man who already stands on the threshold of the change of life [mid-life crisis] has, with respect to his conscious personality, only reached the degree of development of an adolescent, a state of affairs that occurs more frequently than one thinks. In this case too the first requisite for maturation is the stability of the ego and the strengthening of consciousness, a typical task for the first half of life. *Only then* are the preconditions met for the venture which the second phase of the individuation process entails. This means that an eventual analysis must work with the viewpoints that apply to the first half of life even through the analysand is fifty years old but still possesses the psyche of a puer aeternus. (27)

Hesse was forty when he wrote *Demian* and forty-two when it was published in 1919, and as a result of therapy and his own confrontation with the unconscious his mental health improved during these years. When he began *Demian*, Hesse was in the throes of his crisis and in therapy with Lang, having just suffered the loss of his father, the antipathy of German nationalists, the loss of his wife to mental illness, and his son’s nearly fatal illness. His ego had deteriorated to the point of nervous breakdown, and he existed in a sort of limbo, denounced by most of his

countrymen and unable to keep his family intact. By the spring of 1919, he had emerged from his dark night of the soul stripped of his old persona as a bourgeois, Neo-Romantic aesthete, his wife now institutionalized and his children living in boarding schools and foster homes, his home in Bern all but empty, his job serving POW's ended, and his career on hold. Yet he had survived and, ironically, he had grown. If crises bring along with suffering the opportunity to confront and integrate unconscious aspects of the psyche, Hesse had seized on that opportunity and through his suffering, like Sinclair, he had become more aware. We might even say that *Demian* dramatizes Hesse's transformation from puer to hero. Instead of following the puer's uroboric flight out into the world and back to the mother without integrating his experiences, Sinclair takes up the challenge of going on the adventure into the unconscious, where he confronts and overcomes his own demons. As we have seen, he progresses along the Romantic hero's upward spiral path to integrate split-off aspects of the psyche and transforms himself, strengthening his ego and making it more flexible in order to achieve a wholeness of personality and expanded consciousness beyond the limited self of his childhood, which clung only to the "light world."<sup>1</sup> Hesse himself undertook such a heroic challenge by making the decision to enter into psychotherapy and courageously struggling along "the difficult path" with Lang and later with Jung. Evidence for his newfound strength of mind and spirit can also be found in his decision to move to Montagnola and reinvent himself:

He had again played a role and again violated himself. Neither aestheticism nor embourgeoisement had served Hesse well. He was now determined just to be himself, come what may...Hesse was now prepared to try to be the artist-outsider he knew he was...no way to salvation other than to the self. (Mileck 82 and 128)

By the painful process of stripping away a false persona and coping with his puer inflation, Hesse had found his path and as a result strengthened his ego enough to make a bold move. In her book

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note, however, that the Romantic hero, while his upward-striving path of integration is an advance over the true puer's uroboric loop back to mother, is nevertheless a "puer hero" in that he seeks

*The Way of Individuation*, Jolande Jacobi quotes a passage from *Demian* where Sinclair becomes aware of the truth and integrity of his own ego as a crystal in his heart, and she adopts Hesse's metaphor to identify the emergence of the ego from the collective unconscious that signals the end of the first half of individuation—i.e., the “crystallization of the ego” marks the strengthening and initial feeling of autonomy of the ego necessary to survive the rest of the individuation process (31, 41).

Not only did the act of Hesse's move to Montagnola signal his ego crystallization, but so did the place he chose for his new life. The room Hesse rented at the Casa Camuzzi (a nineteenth-century replica of a baroque castle) and the bachelor life he led there for the next ten years were radically different from the farm/country houses and the bourgeois-filtered version of a Romantic writer's life he had led in Gaienhofen and Bern. In Southern Switzerland he had the quiet, the freedom from distraction and the responsibility of fatherhood to be true to the lonely wanderer and introverted writer he, at heart, truly was and to continue the inward journey he had begun in Bern. We can even imagine that the second story apartment in the Casa Camuzzi, sitting atop a hill overlooking “narrow twisted roads, picturesque villages, primitive houses, wine grottos, weathered churches, and wayside chapels” (Mileck 130), provided Hesse with the opportunity to reflect on the course his life had taken in its first half and perhaps to ponder what path he would travel during its second half. Such a dwelling and perspective on the landscape would well suit Hesse's life stage—the noontime of life from which one may take a “time-out” to take stock, to assess the life journey so far. Jacobi asserts that such an assessment is an unavoidable aspect of the mid-life crisis:

Involuntarily one takes stock of one's assets in life, a sort of final reckoning is made regarding what has been achieved and what has still to be achieved, and this results in an unmistakable credit and debit account. At the same time one sees equally clearly what was missed and should still be recovered, as well as all the things that can be recovered no

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an ascent to a mystical experience of transcendent unity, as we shall see.

longer. To look such truths in the eye is a test of courage. It demands insight into the necessity of growing old, and the courage to renounce what is no longer compatible with it. For only when one is able to discriminate between what must be discarded and what still remains as a valuable task for the future will one also be able to decide whether one is ready to strike out in the new direction consciously and positively. (22)

Levinson reaches a similar conclusion regarding this mid-life reckoning, noting that a new balance must be struck between puer and senex whereby one comes to welcome aging and frees the self, “de-illusions” it from lingering and unrealistic puer fantasies and “life dreams” that have grown tyrannical, while at the same time identifying and nurturing legitimate dreams and potentialities that have long since been denied (193, 211). Looking down on the life path he had thus far taken, Hesse would see that he had in fact “de-illusioned” himself of the persona of the bourgeois country poet and Romantic aesthete from which he had unconsciously fled so often while at Bern.<sup>2</sup> He had de-illusioned himself from the roles of husband and father in a marriage marked more for its tensions than its joys—a process he dramatized in *Rosshalde*. At the same time, he had nurtured his new role as a politically involved voice, servant, and mentor for the young Germans returning from the front. Most importantly, perhaps, he had nurtured his new role as an artist of the unconscious—one who had undertaken the inward quest to confront the unconscious and had bravely chosen to record the journey for the benefit of his readers in a novel that amounts to a travel log of the soul (*Demian*). This new role he would continue to develop for the rest of his life. *Demian* and *Klein und Wagner* (written shortly after Hesse’s arrival in the Ticino Valley in 1919) mark the completion of the first half of Hesse’s individuation in that they focus primarily on the necessity to crystallize the ego from the puer archetype, from an overly rigid and false persona, and from the shadow created by over-identification with the false persona—the three events Jacobi identifies as the seminal tasks of individuation’s first half (27, 37, & 47). Indeed, Roman Anshin, in “Creativity, Mid-Life Crisis, and Hermann Hesse,”

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<sup>2</sup> Even earlier, while at Gaienhofen, Hesse had fled on his trip to Singapore, Sumatra and Borneo in 1911.

considers *Demian* and *Klein und Wagner* as the demarcation between the first and second phases of Hesse's life and works, with *Demian* as the novel where Hesse worked through his crisis, sculpted his creativity, and clarified his new identity (224). *Klein und Wagner*, however, in many ways serves as a counterpart to *Demian*.

#### Klein und Wagner: *The Nightmare of the Puer as "Good Boy"*

We have already seen how Hesse deals with the tasks of the first phase of individuation in *Demian*. With *Klein und Wagner*, Hesse makes his mid-life assessment, taking a look back at the passage of his life to date. Klein undoubtedly voices Hesse's experience having approached mid-life:

From the high tower of this awareness he now suddenly thought he could see over vast stretches of his life that for a long time had seemed nothing but small, disconnected segments. He looked back upon a great long line, upon his whole marriage, and the distance traversed seemed to him a weary, dreary road on which a man toils alone through the dust bearing heavy burdens on his back. (51)

But *Klein und Wagner* is more than a mid-life reckoning, for Hesse at this time had already begun to navigate successfully his passage of individuation, whereas Klein's little boat sinks into the unconscious by story's end. In effect, *Klein und Wagner* is an imaginative portrait of how tragically things might have turned out for Hesse had he remained a passive puer. It is a nightmare individuation, a failed individuation that might have been Hesse's fate had he not entered psychotherapy and struggled with the unconscious, as he did through *Demian*. Though critics like Mileck, Freedman, Maier and others have interpreted Klein as Hesse upon his departure for Montagnola, Klein is perhaps in many ways what Hesse had been as he approached his breakdown and not the Hesse who was now writing in Ticino and living a more authentic life. Granted, Klein shares some similarities with the Hesse of spring, 1919. Klein, like Hesse, is in

his early forties. Like Hesse, Klein is interested in scholarship, in love with Schopenhauer and moody toward Wagner as Hesse was. Further, Klein's travel southward, having left his family, through a picturesque countryside, through mountains and villages to a lakeside resort where he indulges in women and gambling mirrors Hesse's own flight south to Ticino, located near the lakeside town of Lugano that for years had been infamous for its casino (Mileck 143).

But Klein also differs from Hesse in several significant ways. He has not lost his father, nor does his wife suffer from mental illness. His job as a bank clerk, although routine, is not in jeopardy and he is not in financial difficulties, nor has his public reputation been destroyed, unlike Hesse's situation after the start of the war. He acts unconsciously in stealing money from his employer and abandoning his children and wife. In short, Klein has not even begun to confront his unconscious or deal with his crisis. By the time Hesse had left for the Ticino Valley, he had already begun his struggle for a degree of autonomy from his unconscious, as we have seen in *Demian*. His choice to leave was not an unconscious flight, but a conscious expression of his newfound vitality and individuality. Like Sinclair, he had been reborn, had risen from the ashes. Yet there was still work to be done. Hence, through *Klein und Wagner* Hesse portrays the nightmare of what might have been, in contrast to his successful individuation, as dramatized in *Demian*.

Of course, Klein's mid-life crisis arises from the same general cause as Hesse's—that of the man inflated by the puer aeternus sleepwalking into an inauthentic bourgeois role in which he becomes trapped for most of his adult life: "...he has a livable income, is married, has children, is mindful of his civic duties and domestic responsibilities, and is just as unhappy as Hesse had been" (Mileck 142). In his mid-life assessment, Klein blames his lost youth on his marriage:

It [his crime and flight] had all been done because of his wife, solely because of his wife...Somewhere far back, invisible now beyond the dust, he knew that the bright hills and rustling green treetops of youth had vanished. Yes, he had once been young, and no commonplace youth; he had dreamed great dreams, had asked so much of life and of

himself. But since then there had been nothing but dust and burdens, the long road, heat and weary legs, and a slumberous, aging nostalgia lurking in his parching heart. That had been his life. That had been his life. (50-51)

In essence, Klein (the name refers to the small persona he has made for himself—that of an obedient little boy) is the kind of puer type von Franz describes as vibrant young men turned into lap dogs after they marry:

They never move again; they don't dare look at other women, and they generally marry a devouring-mother type of woman. If she is not already that, they force her into the role by being submissive and boy-like and son-like. Then the marriage situation is changed into a kind of warm, lazy prison of habits with which they put up, with a sigh. Such men continue on the professional side quite efficiently...Meanwhile they stagnate on the Eros side. Nothing goes on there anymore for marriage is the final trap in which they got caught. (*Puer* 165)

The wife as devouring-mother crushes the husband's masculine spontaneity, vitality, and will, effectively transforming him into a little man (Klein), a boy. As von Franz points out, he unconsciously seeks out such a woman or helps to transform her into one and also asks to have his masculine will crushed. Moreover, because he "tends to be too impressed, too weak, and too much of a 'good boy' in his relationships, without a quick self-defense reaction where required" (47), he builds up increasing unconscious animosity so that "one day he has had enough, and just walks out of the whole situation in a completely cruel and reckless manner" (47) just as Klein does. Essentially, the milquetoast persona constellates the puer's shadow, which we have seen before in Sinclair's shadow, Franz Kromer. Inflated with his shadow (Wagner), Klein acts as Sinclair did under the influence of Franz Kromer—he steals money, rejects his family, and attempts to flee from his responsibilities.

The new discovery that Hesse makes in *Klein und Wagner* is that of the youthful and creative potential trapped along with that shadow. This kind of puer husband has ironically lost part of his youth—he has become the "good boy," rejecting what has become the "bad boy" (shadow) that also contains his passions, creativity, spontaneity, and willfulness of his youth, represented by

Wagner's music. As a "good boy," he follows all the rules, does everything by the book, becomes a slave to the law and suppresses all of the masculine potential of his youth with the shadow. Sinclair was able to struggle with the shadow long enough to constellate the archetypal self (Demian), through whom he could eventually integrate the shadow. Klein, on the other hand, has waited too long, and the explosive return of the repressed shadow overruns his weakened ego. On the surface, Klein lives the one-sided life of the "good boy," but also feels underground the shadow's deep-seated resentment and rage at allowing himself to be "entrapped" in this way—i.e., a latent aggressive rage to counter the passive persona. Mileck even goes so far as to suggest that Klein's suppressed desires to murder his family and commit suicide likely also plagued Hesse (142). Klein imagines the "bad boy's" (shadow's) creative potential in Wagner, a composer that Klein, like Hesse, loved in his youth for his wildly passionate and romantic music but later came to criticize for these same attributes:

In Wagner he was persecuting his own youthful enthusiasm, his own youth, his own love. Why? Because youth and artistic enthusiasm and Wagner and all the rest reminded him painfully of things he had lost, because he had let himself be married by a woman he did not love, or at any rate not in the right way, not sufficiently. Oh yes, and as he behaved toward Wagner he had in his official capacity behaved toward many persons and things. He was such a decent fellow, Herr Klein, and behind his decency he was concealing nothing but filth and iniquity. (*Klein und Wagner* 64)

The shadow's rage and destructive aspects Klein imagines in another figure also named Wagner, the schoolteacher he had heard about who had murdered his whole family and committed suicide. Klein had a few years earlier heard about and criticized this teacher, yet he comes to understand his own hypocrisy in doing so: "Wagner—that was the name of that madman who had killed his whole family. Hadn't his entire life for years been somehow connected with this man Wagner? Hadn't that evil shadow somehow pursued him everywhere?" (65).

Typically, it is the return of the shadow that overwhelms the ego and is responsible for the puer's tragic fall: "...the shadow suddenly attacking ego consciousness is responsible for the

sudden death, and the crashes, of the puer aeternus type. This shadow can save him or possibly destroy him” (von Franz, *Puer* 128). Klein’s shadow is certainly responsible in part for his ultimate suicide. Though he has moments where he is spontaneous, willful, creative, Klein is unable to permanently integrate the shadow, and as a result it turns on the ego, taking on its most destructive manifestation as the enraged madman and murderer of the deranged schoolteacher. The first sign that Klein is losing the battle, his “good boy” puer personality becoming overrun by the shadow, is the dream he has while on the train. Klein dreams he is a passenger in a car that is driving recklessly and rapidly through a city. An impulse overcomes him, and he punches the driver in the stomach and seizes control of the wheel, driving even more “wildly and terrifyingly over hill and dale, barely skirting horses and shop windows, grazing trees so closely that sparks flashed in his eyes” (50). He awakens still enraptured by the feelings of rebellious glee from his dream adventure. But he is also disturbed and tries to make sense of the dream, especially the identity of the driver he punched. He speculates that it was “someone he respected, whom he allowed to have power over his life, whom he bowed before yet secretly hated, and whom ultimately he punched in the stomach. Perhaps his father? Or one of his superiors? Or—or was it after all...?” (50). The last possibility, which Klein cannot yet admit, is that the driver is himself—the “good boy” puer-inflated ego that has been driving up to this point, becoming weaker and more erratic as the shadow gains strength enough to seize the wheel and indulge in a (suicidal) “bad boy” joy ride. Klein later admits this possibility when he again reflects on the dream:

...even if the vehicle thereafter acted capriciously, drove over sidewalks or into houses and people, it was still a delicious thing to do and far better than being sheltered and riding under the tutelage of others, *remaining a child forever*. A child? He had to smile. The recollection came that as a child and young man he had hated and cursed his name Klein because it meant “small.” Now that was no longer his name. Was that not important—a symbol, a parable? He had ceased to be small and a child; he would no longer let himself be led around by others. (73, emphasis added)

At the end of the novel, he identifies with Wagner, the insane school teacher, when murderous hatred for his wife and for Teresina, his present lover, overwhelms him: “Undoubtedly Wagner had also had these pangs, his teacher Wagner...Perhaps it was pointless...of Wagner to have killed. Those who did not know his torments, those who had not suffered his pain, could not understand it, of course” (133). He reflects on the sexual desire and fear of loneliness that had brought him to his wife and to all of his lovers and feels complete hatred for women, for the way they deceived him and entrapped him (132-134). Curiously, he sees all women as a type—and that type, associated with his wife, is that of the mother-devourer against whom he has struggled. This is why he wants to murder Teresina, but he catches sight of his face in a mirror and recognizes his own guilt in what he has become; he sees his own shriveled “good boy” puer ego (the weakened driver) and how it has allowed Wagner to take over. He decides to complete the process and destroy Klein (himself) altogether instead of killing Teresina. There is nothing left of the fallen puer to salvage, for he has been completely possessed by the shadow, hence his inevitable suicide.

The other figure that Klein is unable to integrate is the anima. It is not surprising that such a “good boy” puer type unable to break from the mother-devourer would be unable to integrate an advanced feminine form arising in his psyche. Neumann has explained that the appearance of such an anima figure marks a potential development of consciousness, in that, unlike the elementary, uroboric quality of the mother-devourer, the anima challenges the ego to act and functions to transform the ego to greater autonomy and independence (32-33). For Klein, such an opportunity arises in the form of the attractive Teresina, a young, beautiful and self-possessed woman who loves the night life of dancing and gambling—precisely the kind of anima figure we would expect of a Klein. From the moment he sees her, he struggles to see her through his own eyes and not those of the mother-devourer. He remembers that when he and his wife had seen

such women in the past, he had agreed with his wife's moral outrage and judgments of them, but then he questions the origins of these views and chides himself: "...these are your wife's views you are invoking. You are setting her up as judge, you are subordinating yourself to her again!" (70). Teresina is in touch with her body, unashamed to display her beauty in her dress and in her dancing; she dances a tango with an attractive young man as Klein looks on with desire and shame, for he cannot, could never, dance such a dance. Indeed, she has a transformative effect on him, for after seeing her Klein seems to see her with his own eyes, independent of the complexes that plague him. As she tells him later, at first he appeared to her as a "grumpy, disagreeable, middle-aged gentleman...taking out on others his anger over his own insufficiencies" (93) and soon after "It looked as if you were the only person in the world, and as if you didn't care one bit what happened to you or to the whole world" (93).

Her interest in gambling prompts him to invite her to visit the casino on a date, and he offers to give her money to play with (investing her with libido energy). But he is unable to stay with her long, and flees without even saying goodbye after their conversation. He finds himself in a village, where he stumbles into a one-night sexual encounter with an innkeeper's wife. Her marriage is troubled, and her husband has again run off and has been having affairs with other women. In essence, there are no strings attached for Klein, and this encounter does nothing to transform him—it is a regression from his emotional involvement with Teresina. At this point, he dreams of entering a theater with the name Wagner on the door, attacking a woman who reminds him of his wife as well as the innkeeper's wife and stabbing her in the belly, only to be attacked from behind by an identical looking woman who drives her powerful claws into his neck and strangles him (115). Klein struggles to interpret his own dream: the theater is his own psyche into which he probes further; Wagner is his shadow with both its creative and destructive potential (the composer and the murderer); and the women are his wife, the innkeeper's wife and Teresina

(116). He feels he must interpret this dream or suffer the consequences: “It was very important to understand it...perhaps, as in fairy tales, they were hints from the good spirits: you were beckoned to twice or thrice, or warned; and if in spite of this you remained as blind as ever, your fate took its course and no friendly power intervened again” (123). Unable to integrate the anima in her positive form and commit to a relationship with her (meet her challenge), Klein sees her in her negative aspect as a kind of harpy, tearing at his throat.

Yet, as Neumann indicates, even in her negative form, the anima still challenges the ego to develop and mature. Klein, however, fails to fully appreciate the significance of the dream and to live out its meaning. He does take Teresina gambling, but when, after they have left, she interrupts their passionate kissing and asks him to confront himself, he refuses. Teresina says, “What kind of a man are you, tell me...Listen, I do think you’re a criminal. Aren’t you?” (129), to which he replies, “Don’t talk Teresina...It’s important that we drain this cup. Nothing else is important” (129). In essence, Klein has refused the anima’s challenge to know himself and to transform himself into a more autonomous personality. His feelings toward her regress, and he comes to see her and all women as a single type, as manifestations of the mother-devourer whom he wants to murder but with whom he has struggled in futility. His suicide by drowning at story’s end is his defeat at the hands of the mother-devourer; the ego, unable to develop autonomy despite the opportunities presented it, drowns in the mother: “...he had let himself drop from the side of the boat with his whole volition, with complete renunciation of all volition, with total surrender, dropping into the maternal womb...” (138). Neumann emphasizes the tragedy of such a regression:

This process is...fraught with danger, often with mortal peril, but when it actually leads to the destruction of the ego, it is because the Great Mother or even the maternal uroboros is preponderant over the anima; i.e., the detachment of the anima from the mother archetype is incomplete. (34)

The transcendent vision of the interconnectedness and unity of all things that Klein has just before he dies is not indicative of a higher consciousness to which he has advanced but of a regression to the unity of infancy, before the individuation of the ego has begun. As Ken Wilber explains, in this infantile state,

The physical self and the physical world are fused—that is, they are not yet differentiated. The infant can't tell the difference between inside and outside—chair and thumb are the same. This early fusion state is often called the “primary matrix,” because it is the fundamental matrix that will be differentiated in subsequent development. It is also referred to as primary autism, primary narcissism, oceanic, protoplasmic, adualistic, indissociated, and so on...this primary fusion state doesn't transcend subject and object; it simply can't tell the difference between them...It's primary narcissism, where the physical world is swallowed by the autistic self—the infant is all mouth, the world is all food. (158-159)

We recognize this oceanic, infant psychology in Klein's vision as he drowns: “Water flowed into his mouth and he drank. From all sides, through all his senses, water flowed in; everything dissolved in it” (142). This is the puer's dream and fate—to return to that primal scene of the infant at the mother's breast and even further, to return to the womb of the Great Mother. Soon, Klein himself is “being drawn, breathed in” along with myriad other creatures.

Klein's vision, however, contains several elements of the transcendent, elements that contradict the nature of his consciousness—is his personality regressive and primal, as we have argued, or is it transpersonal? In his vision, Klein experiences a union of all opposites, an underlying interconnectedness and unity of all creatures, the progression of creatures toward death and reincarnation, and an immersion in God. He concludes that “there was only one art, only one teaching, only one secret: to let yourself fall, not to resist God's will, to cling to nothing, neither to good nor to evil. Then you were redeemed, then you were free of suffering, free of dread—only then” (140). We recognize in the nature of this vision and this philosophy elements of Eastern yoga, and we are confronted with a further dilemma: to what use is Hesse putting this Eastern doctrine in this story? David Richards has suggested that “the quietistic fatalism

espoused by Klein is based on Eastern models that Jung and Hesse reject as inappropriate for Western man” (103). He supports this view with a quote from Hesse’s “Journal 1920/1921” in which Hesse writes,

We cannot and should not become Chinese, and in our innermost being we do not want to. We may not seek our ideal and highest image of life in China and not in some past, otherwise we are lost and bound to a fetish. We must find and nurture China, or what China means for us, in ourselves. (qtd. in Richards 103)

Although there is nothing in the story to indicate specifically Chinese imagery or doctrine, Richards’ point regarding Hesse’s view of an Eastern “quietistic fatalism” seems to be on the mark. Jung reached a similar conclusion in his early writings on the East. As Steven Walker explains in his essay on Jung and yoga, “For Jung, the type of spiritual consciousness described in the Indian yoga tradition was mirrored by the Western unconscious, and thus had to be approached through radically different means” (261). Jung further concluded that yoga’s goal of abolishing the ego can only lead to unconsciousness and not a transcendent consciousness (265). In a letter to a friend in 1939, Hesse reveals his familiarity with Jung’s views and seems to agree with them:

Why don’t we learn to meditate? Here is the difficulty: we Westerners have problems with the art of meditation, which is so highly developed in Indian yoga, and in China, Japan, etc., not only due to the way we are and our bad education but also because the Asian models consist of sequences of images and ideas which we cannot understand or assimilate. The psychologist C.G. Jung knows a lot about this. (*Soul* 212)

Earlier, in a 1921 review of a translation of the Buddha’s speeches, Hesse warned against seeing Eastern meditation as “an emergency exit” for Westerners (*My Belief* 382). Hence, by this reading, *Klein und Wagner* stands as a warning to Westerners of the dangers of yoga, of allowing the ego to become overwhelmed and drowned by the unconscious, a danger to which puer personalities might be especially vulnerable.

Yet Hesse himself practiced yoga for much of his life and also recommended Eastern philosophical systems like Non-Dualistic Vedanta to young people asking him for religious

advice (J. Walker 8). He also reviewed Keyserling's *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* in 1920, noting that "yoga is exactly what Europe most wildly hungers for" and praising Keyserling for his "recognition of the absolute worth of yoga and its effective formulation in this book" (*My Belief* 368). The contradiction may be resolved if we consider what Hesse hoped to attain through yoga. In the 1921 review of Buddha's speeches, he notes that

When we Westerners have once learned something about meditation it will give us quite different results from those it produces for the Hindus. It will not be opium to us but rather a deepened self-knowledge, such as was the first and most holy requirement of the pupils of the wise men of Greece. (*My Belief* 382)

That same year, Hesse wrote in a letter to a friend interested in meditation,

It's not easy to practice the Indian-Buddhist form of "meditation," which you also mention in your letter. One cannot expect a sudden flash of insight...Given the lives we lead, it's difficult to imagine for more than a few seconds at a time that our physical, transitory self is absolutely insignificant...We're being held back...by all the duties and responsibilities we have assumed. We have to transcend those obligations or acknowledge them and live up to them as best we can. Few people, even monks, attain perfection or sainthood, and if that is indeed our goal, we must first try to attain the greatest amount of harmony possible in the present, an objective which we can never reach entirely: it will constantly slip away, but can always be found again. (*Soul* 110)

Yoga, then, for Hesse would serve modest ends for Westerners. His use of the expression "greatest amount of harmony possible in the present" suggests something more practical and psychological, as in "peace of mind," than anything metaphysical and transpersonal like "nirvana." Yoga might serve modest ends for Westerners, providing psychological peace of mind and insight. It would serve as an additional tool to know the self, not to eliminate the ego or regress to unconsciousness.

Overall, then, Hesse's various statements on yoga represent a consistent view. Understood rightly and adjusted to Western needs, yoga can serve as a helpful tool to lead to a greater understanding of one's own psyche, but idealized and misused, it can indeed be dangerous for Westerners, especially for puer personalities. Klein's fate illustrates the confusion of Indian yoga with regression into infantile consciousness and ultimately pre-consciousness and death. Hence,

Klein's journey is essentially the puer's Uroboric loop and not the Romantic hero's upward spiral, as was Sinclair's, to a higher awareness and transpersonal consciousness. As hero, Sinclair overcomes his puer nature, integrates the Great Mother and is transformed by her; trapped in his puer inflation, Klein is swallowed by her. The upward spiral of individuation is what is missing in Klein's story, and Hesse's vision requires this personal striving and development. But even the hero ideal may require some transformation in order to serve the needs of the individual at mid-life, an insight Hesse suggests in *Demian* by having the hero's journey conclude in a vision inspired by the Indian transpersonal self, thereby creating an ironic context for that journey and relativizing it. Hesse's task in *Siddhartha* would be to develop this irony even further by dramatizing the hero's rebellious and self-obsessed quest, a quest culminating in the realization of a transpersonal identity and a compassionate withdrawal from life, as represented by the old guru, Vasudeva. The hero's *passion* for life resonates with the wise old man's *compassion* and withdrawal from life, a combination Hesse would find in Buddha's life story. Hence, Hesse's warnings to Westerners regarding idealizing Eastern concepts and practices did not preclude him from using the Indian transpersonal self for literary and psychological ends—as a way to step outside of his mid-life crisis and better balance senex and puer.

*Siddhartha: German Romantic Hero Meets Indian Guru*

Hesse would need the concept of the Indian transpersonal self to gain a perspective from which to cope with the next bout of his crisis. It reached its nadir in the eighteen months of writer's block and depression that he experienced from June, 1920, when he put aside *Siddhartha*'s first part and much of the second, to the end of 1921, when he resumed work on the novel, finishing it in May, 1922 (Mileck 159). Hesse's initial surge of creativity in the summer of

1919, after having temporarily freed himself of his political and familial difficulties and re-settled in Montagnola, had begun to dry up:

The year 1920 was, according to Hesse, the most “unproductive year of my life” and therefore the saddest. “For a year and a half,” he wrote in his diary, “I now live like a snake, slowly and economically.” The artist’s self, such a bright figure in “Klingsor” despite intermittent shadows, had begun to fade: it had “run out,” was “finished”; it had “blown its top and burned out.” These remarks, while undoubtedly hyperbolic, bear out the image of Hesse, who had indeed “burned himself out” during that summer of fresh liberation when he had written, painted, and drunk with his friends. (Freedman, *Pilgrim* 222)

Besides the explanation that Hesse simply “burned out,” another way to understand his sudden loss of creativity is to consider the possibility that Hesse was again slipping into possession by the senex. The youthful, heroic dream of his new life in Montagnola was now running into the old, cold realities. Despite his hermetic artist’s existence, he was not in fact cut off from the outside world. Economic and political pressures began to impose on his artist’s haven and brought him down to earth. Although he cultivated an ascetic lifestyle and spent little, German royalties on his books carried little value in Switzerland after the war, and by spring 1921 he was ultimately driven to go on lecture tours to earn money—the very last thing the ascetic and introverted “Samana of the Alps” would have preferred (Mileck 130). And *Vivos Voco*, the new journal that he co-founded and that appeared in October, 1919, became a lost cause by the end of 1921 when Hesse left the editorship. He had hoped the periodical would, in Mileck’s words, “champion the cause of the destitute...focus attention on children and their educational needs...denounce anti-Semitism...acclaim pacifism and internationalism” (134) and thereby promote his vision of a new, post-war Germany. Such puer idealism was quickly shot down by the rising wave of Fascism and Communism that Hesse came to realize would dominate German youth for years to come (135). Hesse’s reaction to the limitations that he came to face at this time characterizes the senex. As Freedman puts it, “Hesse’s barrenness was real” (*Pilgrim* 222).

Barrenness, impotence, castration, sterility, coldness, isolation, miserliness, and melancholy are

all associated with the senex, as James Hillman illustrates in his discussion of Saturn (“Senex” 17-18). Hesse had to live like an ascetic Samana, tightening his purse strings, indeed living “like a snake, slowly and economically” as well as like a hermit, alone in his castle and isolated. While it is true that the lecture tours that had become an economic necessity also brought him social and intellectual stimulation, they would eventually end, leaving him to return to his castle, which he always complained was cold and drafty. Upon one such return in November, 1921—still in the midst of his depression and writer’s block—he discovered that his good friends Hugo and Emmy Ball had moved to Munich, further isolating him (Freedman, *Pilgrim* 228). Now, “unable to stand the solitude he valued so highly” (228), Hesse was mostly on the road, visiting friends in other parts of Switzerland and spending Christmas with the Wengers at their home in Delémont (228).

It is also important to note the point in *Siddhartha* at which Hesse stopped writing—the chapter “By the River” (Mileck 159). Like Hesse himself when he left for Southern Switzerland, Siddhartha becomes nauseated by the life he has led among the “ordinary people” and leaves home and family behind. Like Hesse, Siddhartha is in his forties and has been gradually disillusioned by the limitations of economic and social realities (personified by Kamaswami) that he has been forced to absorb in order to sustain his attachments to his loved ones (Kamala). While it is true that both Hesse and Siddhartha have progressed beyond their puer possession, the puer still survives as an integral part of their personalities and sustains them. But when the puer is overrun by the senex, as James Hillman explains, depression, catatonia, and possible suicide ensue:

The puer offers direct connection with the spirit. Break this vertical connection and it falls with broken wings. When it falls we lose the urgent burning purpose...if persuaded into the temporal world by the negative senex [consider Kamaswami], within or without, the puer loses connection with its own aspect of meaning and becomes the negative puer. Then, it goes dead, and there is passivity, withdrawal, and even physical death. (“Senex” 26-27)

Siddhartha is suicidal in the chapter “At the River,” again where Hesse stopped writing, perhaps afraid of his own suicidal thoughts. Like his hero Siddhartha and unlike the puer character Klein, Hesse had found the strength to consciously leave the inauthentic life of the puer that he had been living in Gaienhofen and Bern. Still, he was now unsure how he was to reinvent himself in this new life, unsure how he was to find peace. Clearly, the life of the puer artist would not work, for the puer would eventually “burn out” and come down to earth—also, he would be pulled down by senex limitations of money and politics. Along with the other major Hesse biographers, Freedman locates the source of Hesse’s block in his dilemma over having to write about a state he himself had never experienced, yet one that he deeply desired—i.e., a state of harmony, peace, fulfillment (*Pilgrim* 219). As long as Siddhartha struggled to follow his inner voice, Hesse could identify with him, but once he was to reach his goal and attain a nirvana-like state, Hesse was at a loss (219). In essence, Hesse was struggling with his own “search for unity within the self” (223), and he needed at least a fleeting glimpse of such a state in order to create the victorious Siddhartha of the novel’s ending. This inner unity would also reconcile the puer-senex duality from which he suffered.

Hesse needed a figure older and wiser than any he had yet imagined, one who would serve as the personification of such inner unity and peace. At the moment, however, he could only imagine the older figure as Kamaswami, the senex. He would have to wait for the Wise Old Man—Vasudeva—to arise from the unconscious as the transcendent, compensatory figure. As we have seen, Hesse might have found that figure in C.G. Jung, whose influence he had felt since the onset of his crisis in 1916 through his own reading and through Dr. Lang. Although he was close to Hesse’s own age, Jung, as discussed earlier, was wise beyond his years due to his survival of his own mid-life initiation triggered by the break with Freud in 1912. Now Hesse, in the midst of his writer’s block and depression, again turned to analytical psychology—this time to

Jung himself. A letter to Lisa Wenger dated May 2, 1921 indicates that after visiting his wife in Locarno in mid-May, Hesse planned to meet up with his sister, travel back to Zurich with her, and prolong his stay in an effort to see Jung (*Soul* 109). A subsequent letter to a friend reveals that Hesse was undergoing treatment with Jung by the end of May and that he was very grateful to Jung:

Dr. Jung is conducting my analysis with extraordinary assurance, even a touch of genius. I'm leaving tomorrow. I had really wanted to spend a few more days in Zurich...but I ran out of money, and may have to leave sooner. I would have liked to continue my analysis with Jung for a little longer. He has a lively personality and a brilliant intellect, a splendid human being; I owe him a lot, and am glad I had the opportunity to spend some time with him. (*Soul* 110-111)

Nevertheless, as shown earlier in relation to *Demian*, Hesse's relationship with Jung was problematic, and while he may indeed have perceived Jung as a wise mentor figure, he also found him to be reductive, arrogant, and presumptuous, as evidenced by his response to Maier regarding Jung's influence on *Demian*, *Siddhartha*, and *Steppenwolf* as well as his defense of Freud's ideas on sublimation against Jung's criticisms in 1934.

Finally, there is the fact that Hesse only met with Jung over the brief span of a few weeks, which is only partially explained by Hesse's monetary difficulties. While it is true that Hesse worried about how he would pay for his sessions, he also held out a serious hope that Jung would refuse payment (*Soul* 109). No one knows if Hesse in fact paid for his sessions and, if so, how much, but if money was not the issue, or at least not the only issue, then Mileck's conclusion seems possible: "That Hesse stopped seeing Jung after only a few sessions in May 1921, and that he never again sought out his company, suggests that Jung as a person may have aroused his personal antipathy, just as the professorial tone of Jung's writings was later to irritate him..." (103). For his part, Jung seems to have held a degree of animosity toward Hesse for at least a brief time following Hesse's departure from his analysis. In a letter dated January 28, 1922 (roughly eight months after they had last met), Jung compliments Hesse on some poems he sent

him, yet seems to mix in sarcasm with his compliments; also, he brings to Hesse's attention a negative review in the *New Zürcher Zeitung* of Hesse's recent public reading of an autobiographical essay:

Heartiest thanks for your beautiful poems, and at the same time congratulations on their publication...I see from the papers that you have given the Hottingen Literature Fraternity a touch of the horrors with your far-ranging autobiography...For a person like me, who never reads poetry, your poems are simply beautiful. (Jung, *Letters* 37-38)

Of this note, Ralph Freedman concludes that Jung "chided [Hesse] with the Olympian irony of the analyst" for Hesse's narcissism in "exploiting publicly a carefully edited picture of himself as the artist defined by his private agonies" and that such an act was indeed "tasteless in the mind of [Jung]" (*Pilgrim* 226).

It seems possible, then, as we concluded earlier, that Hesse's problematic relationship with Jung may be explained by Walker's characterization of the "patriarchal perplex"—namely, that Hesse was symbolically killing the "Bad Father" (Jung as senex) as preparation for his positive relationship with the "Good Mentor" (Wise Old Man). This does not mean that Hesse, with his puer projections of the negative senex, was solely responsible for the tensions in the relationship; Jung too seems to have been caught up in his archetypal role as senex. Once again, Hesse's solution (as was Jung's with Freud) was to wait for the unconscious to produce the reconciling "ghostly guru" or Wise Old Man as mentor. In this instance, Vasudeva was the figure that represented Hesse's imagined unity and peace of mind—i.e., Hesse's own Philemon. In the novel, Siddhartha plays out the same drama of the patriarchal perplex. He begins to chafe against Kamaswami's authority, sees him as arrogant and tyrannical, and in leaving him symbolically kills the bad senex father, thereby working through his negative projections and freeing himself to build a positive relationship with the good mentor or Wise Old Man. We shall return to the respective roles that Kamaswami and Vasudeva play in the novel.

First, let us trace the origins of Vasudeva, Hesse's "ghostly guru." He may have been inspired by both Jungian psychoanalysis and Indian philosophy. In defense of his psychotherapy, about which the Balls were skeptical, Hesse wrote in a letter to them dated June, 1921: "And so today's psychoanalysis...can have at bottom hardly any other goal but to create a space within ourselves in which God's voice can be heard" (qtd. in Freedman, *Pilgrim* 225). Through his work with Lang and Jung, then, Hesse was opening himself to the transcendent function, letting go of the ego's need to control and allowing the unconscious to come to him, as it were. Such a strategy reminds one of Buddhist meditation techniques designed to dissolve the ego and calm the mind pool. His therapy with Jung did not have any immediate impact on his writer's block and depression (227); he left his therapy in May, 1921 and didn't start again on *Siddhartha* until late winter, 1922. Still, it seems from his comments to the Balls that Hesse knew he had to wait and that he could not force the unconscious to abide by his ego's will (a lesson that certainly found its way into *Siddhartha*, who extols the virtue of waiting).

In the meanwhile, as Mileck explains, he began an "intense preoccupation with the *Upanishads*, The *Bhagavad-Gita*, and with Buddhistic scriptures...What had been a childhood attraction to India's lore, and had become a major intellectual interest in India's religions, now became a profound spiritual experience" (160). By the beginning of 1922, Hesse had trained his sights fully on India, going on a lecture tour to speak exclusively about Indian philosophy (Freedman, *Pilgrim* 229). In early February, a visit from his "Japanese cousin" Wilhelm Gundert on the latter's way back to Tokyo was perhaps the moment for which he had been waiting, for Gundert (a professor, missionary, and expert on Eastern religions) brought ancient India alive again in Hesse's imagination and perhaps answered many questions on India and the East for Hesse. In a letter to the Balls during the visit, Hesse wrote of his cousin: "I can live wholly in Indian thoughts and ideas. He lives in them as fully as I do, and it was good to taste all that

again” (qtd. in Freedman, *Pilgrim* 230). Weeks later, he wrote the Balls that he was “now entirely stuck in ancient India” and his lectures dealt exclusively with “Brahman and Atman, also with Buddha” (qtd. in Freedman, *Pilgrim* 230). It may be at this time that Hesse conceived the character of Vasudeva, for shortly after Gundert’s visit, his writer’s block dissolved and he was able to finish *Siddhartha*. In the context of Hesse’s work with Jung and his renewed interest in Indian philosophy, Freedman’s conclusion that “This professor and missionary from Tokyo stayed much too briefly to have been of decisive help” (229) seems to undervalue the significance of Gundert’s visit. Hesse, after all, dedicated the all-important second half of *Siddhartha* to his cousin. As he wrote to Romain Rolland by way of explanation, “Part One still bears a dedication to you; I have dedicated Part Two to a cousin of mine who...is steeped in Eastern thought; we are especially close” (*Soul* 117).

In Vasudeva, Hesse envisioned the ideal of the one in whom all opposites have been reconciled and who is completely at peace with himself and the world. Hesse imagined this same ideal in the novel’s depiction of Gotama, the Buddha—indeed, the radiant smiles of Gotama, Vasudeva, and finally Siddhartha at novel’s end are all identical. But Vasudeva was not a detached, transcendent saint steeped in quietude or a scholarly sage surrounded with scrolls and rigidly adhering to religious doctrine. Instead, he was a highly active and compassionate figure, finding his eventual peace through his life path and life experience in the world, and these are also the qualities that drew Hesse to the figure of the Buddha at this time. He was not interested in the stoic, detached, transcendent Buddha but in the actively striving Buddha. In a 1922 essay on the Buddha, he praises Gotama’s active life path and his will to work hard to establish a religion based on his beliefs:

The intellectual content of Buddha’s teaching is only half his work, the other half is his life, his life as lived, as labor accomplished and action carried out. A training, a spiritual self training of the highest order, was accomplished and taught here, a training about which unthinking people who talk about “quietism” and “Hindu dreaminess” and the like in

connection with Buddha have no conception; they deny him the cardinal Western virtue of activity. Instead Buddha accomplished a training of himself and his pupils, exercised a discipline, set up a goal, and produced results before which even the genuine heroes of European action can only feel awe. (*My Belief* 383)

Elsewhere, in a 1921 letter to the Swiss writer Lisa Wenger, Hesse reveals that what he admires most about Buddhism is its Protestant attitude, comparing Buddhism's relationship to Brahmanism to that between the Reformation and Catholicism (*Soul* 108).

In Hesse's imagination, then, the figure of the Buddha stands as a rebel seeker, like Demian and then Sinclair, and also like the German Romantic heroes of Goethe, Novalis, and Hölderlin that he admired so much. In the doctrine of Buddhism, however, Hesse also saw what he despised most about Protestantism: its "suffocating one-sidedness" (108). In the same letter, written in the midst of his work on *Siddhartha*, he complains that Buddhism "adopts a rational attitude toward the world without gods, and seeks redemption solely through the intellect" (108). He concludes that he is disenchanted with Buddhist doctrine and that his new hero, Siddhartha, will "not wish for Nirvana, but will be content with his reincarnation, and begin the cycle anew" (108). Again, Hesse seems to emphasize the modest goals Westerners should adopt when approaching Eastern systems: his rebellious and in many ways Western hero will not aspire to anything as supremely transpersonal as nirvana.

Nevertheless, Hesse's vision of Siddhartha at novel's end is anything but modest; he doesn't merely achieve peace of mind or gain deeper self-knowledge (Hesse's view of the goals Westerners should have when practicing yoga). Indeed, this vision is transpersonal and metaphysical. This hero does not merely content himself with reincarnation and accept an awareness only slightly keener than the "child people" to whom he feels at times superior. The goal he reaches is nothing less than Hesse's imagined version of what Gotama himself experienced. Why would Hesse criticize Buddhist doctrine only to have his protagonist serve as the embodiment of some of its core concepts, like emptiness and compassion? Clearly, Hesse

knew the dangers of idealizing nirvana as a reachable goal for Westerners. His purpose was not to tell his audience that anyone could become a Buddha in one lifetime. Instead, Hesse used Buddhist and Hindu concepts not as goals in and of themselves but to create irony—both for literary and psychological ends, for navigating the mid-life crisis requires an ironic view of one's self and one's life, a stepping outside of the hero path one has lived up to this point. Even more so than with *Demian*, Hesse in *Siddhartha* sets up the paradox of the intensely personal and individualistic life in the context of a transcendent vision that trivializes its significance, a vision Siddhartha experiences with the guidance of Vasudeva. The Romantic hero's grandiose vision of self-importance and striving to reinvent himself with each new philosophy he encounters is compensated for by the Indian guru's doctrine of timelessness: Romantic hero meets Indian wise old man, a balance Hesse needed to realize and articulate during his mid-life transformation.

Precedence for the use of India by Westerners to create irony and tension between the individual and personal on the one hand, and the cosmic and impersonal on the other, may be found in the late German Romantics and early Modernists. In *The Exotic: A Decadent Quest*, Dorothy M. Figueira explores the integration of the Buddhist concept of nirvana by German artists and philosophers. Schopenhauer, in his supplement to the fourth book of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, initially used the Indian concept of nirvana in a pessimistic fashion to mean emptiness from the action, guilt, and delusions of individuality of the Will, the animating force in the phenomenal world (a concept Schopenhauer derived from the Buddhist notion of Samsara with its driving forces of desire and thirst) (Figueira, *Exotic* 97). Later, however, he revised this view and defined nirvana as both emptiness *and* being—a definition closer to that in the Prajna-Paramita scriptures of Mahayana Buddhism, which Schopenhauer had read (99). In effect, Schopenhauer creates a resonance and irony with such a definition:

It would seem that negation of the will could produce only an unqualified nothingness, yet Schopenhauer is unwilling to posit a nothingness completely devoid of all

qualities. He denies the absolute in favor of an *irreconcilable tension between being and non-being*. (98-99, emphasis added)

The illusion of individuality created by the Will, then, may be seen through from the perspective of Schopenhauer's nirvana—that is, from the perspective of inter-being.

Influenced by Buddhism via Schopenhauer and, more directly, via Burnouf's introduction to Buddhism, which he studied in 1855, Wagner dramatized the tension between individual, romantic love and the universal compassion of the bodhisattva in several early versions of his operas (103). An early version of *Die Götterdämmerung*, for example, has Brünnhilde mounting Siegfried's funeral pyre not as an expression of her deep romantic passion and devotion for her deceased beloved, but as an attempt to break the bonds of maya, escape suffering and illusion, and free herself from the cycle of rebirth, and as an expression her pity for those still caught in the cycle of rebirth (103). *The Victor*, sketched in 1856 but never completed, featured Brahma incarnating and seeking liberation with the aid of Buddha, his teacher. In *Parsifal*, influenced by his reading of the *Suttanipata* (a Pali Buddhist text on sensual desire as the primary obstacle to nirvana), Wagner presents the renunciation of physical love and the purification of spiritual love as the path to redemption, all of which Parsifal experiences through Kundry (110). Moreover, Kundry's destiny resonates between the unique and individual and the predetermined and universal since her tragic love and redemption are both her own and the result of her previous existences and karma (110).

Unlike Schopenhauer, Nietzsche championed the individual will against what he saw as the nihilism of Indian nirvana, yet even Nietzsche allowed for the possibility that nirvana might serve some purpose in his philosophy. Strongly criticizing Buddhism for what he saw as its preoccupation with suffering to the exclusion of human aspiration, Nietzsche conceded that "Indian nihilism" might serve as a way for Westerners to escape their infantile dependence on an almighty creator, to liberate themselves from God's will and thereby clear the ground to discover

their own human will (115). In *Primitive Passions: Men, Women, and the Quest for Ecstasy*, Marianna Torgovnick explores the tension experienced by Modernist artists and scholars between the need for a mature and developed ego and ego-dissolution into an oceanic inter-being with the natural world. She cites Freud, among others, as one who deeply suspected any blurring of the lines between an autonomous ego and the outer world:

Such desires are often identified in Western thinking with what Freud called the “pre-Oedipal” or “oceanic” stages of human development, by which he meant fetal, infantile, or what he saw as “regressive” states in which individuals do not perceive the boundaries of the self and the inevitability of subject-object relations. When he articulated some of society’s deepest fears about this kind of pan-individual thinking, Freud saw it as connected to the “death wish,” the desire of animate beings to return to “the inorganic condition from which life arose”—a condition similar to what science today calls entropy and Eastern religions call nirvana and the Tao. (Torgovnick 15)

Yet Freud was not as decided in his rejection of a pan-individualistic consciousness as it might appear. Torgovnick goes on to cite Romain Rolland’s challenge to Freud to better understand the mystical experience of the East, using the example of the mystical experiences of the Hindu saint Sri Ramakrishna (11). According to Torgovnick, Freud took eighteen months to reply to Rolland and in his letter to Rolland, he confessed that “the idea of the oceanic ‘had left him no peace’” (12). Even Jung, Torgovnick contends, went only so far in his acceptance of the experience of the oceanic, ultimately backing away from a complete acceptance of it, “perceiving it as a danger to what Jung called ‘the mature European self’” (16).

Hesse was familiar with and arguably strongly influenced by each of the aforementioned figures, and it is from these sources that he perhaps inherited the notion of using Indian concepts like nirvana to create ironic tension between an Eastern depersonalized, universal identity and a Western, romantic individuation. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, who seem to have agreed upon a pessimistic interpretation of nirvana as a lack, absence, or even nihilistic emptiness, Hesse emphasized the fullness of inter-being more than the dissolution of an individual identity, especially in Siddhartha’s experience of the river. In fact, Hesse is unique in

his simultaneous emphasis on individual and universal identities—a resonance that perhaps served him therapeutically as a way to create an ironic portrait of his own mid-life crisis set in an impersonal, cosmic frame. Hesse began to use this therapeutic resonance in *Demian* and developed it much further in *Siddhartha*.

In some ways, *Siddhartha* seems to begin where Sinclair left off. Unlike Sinclair, *Siddhartha* has no inhibitions about questioning and breaking with family tradition and convention, and he has no need to seek out and integrate his inner daimon. Indeed, he has already internalized his daimon, trusting and following his inner voice as the final authority—*Demian*'s parting advice to Sinclair. When we first encounter him in the novel's opening, he is already identified as a bird of prey (falcon), a symbol similar to the one Hesse used to identify Sinclair's individuation (sparrow hawk).<sup>3</sup> Hesse's initial description of him includes much that is heroic. A brahmin's son, the young *Siddhartha* is born into a privileged caste; he is strong, handsome, intelligent, and loved and admired by everyone in the village, from the Brahmins to their daughters. He "[walks] through the streets of the town, with his lofty brow, his king-like eyes and his slim figure" (4). His father has good reason to hope that he will grow up to be "a great learned man, a priest, a prince among Brahmins" (4). But *Siddhartha* at this point is only a potential hero, for though he is farther along than Sinclair, he is still too one-sided, too obsessed with the "light world" of the spiritual and too rejecting of the body. In short, he is still too much influenced by the puer. Much of his life into early adulthood is spent on the "spiritual" side of the river, and it isn't until after his apprenticeship with the Samanas and his encounter with the Buddha that he crosses the river into the world of earthly experiences with Kamala and Kamaswami. Once he leaves home, he is possessed by wanderlust, rejecting not only his family's tradition and religion but also those of virtually every other teacher he comes across. He is always driven to the next philosophy that

promises to lead him to Atman, quickly becomes inflated with the potential of each newly discovered system, and soon grows dissatisfied, unable to commit to any single path for very long. Granted, he is only in his late teens when he leaves home,<sup>4</sup> but these qualities will define him for much of his life into middle age.

Each time Siddhartha indulges in a new philosophy or religious system he undergoes the puer's flight and fall. As the brahmin's son, he has a "thirst for knowledge" (4) and learns very quickly the rites, practices, and philosophies of his Hindu culture. As a youth, he has "already long taken part in the learned men's conversations" (3). He has learned to meditate successfully, to pronounce Om and breathe properly, and to recognize Atman, and he is eager to learn more. But despite his attributes and accomplishments, Siddhartha soon becomes unhappy. He reveals the puer's feeling that he is different, specially gifted and superior to the elder men, whom he sees as negative senex figures, clinging to rites and rituals in which they fritter away their lives:

He had begun to suspect that his worthy father and his other teachers, the wise Brahmins, had already passed on to him the bulk and best of their wisdom, that they had already poured the sum total of their knowledge into his waiting vessel; and the vessel was not full, his intellect was not satisfied, his soul was not at peace, his heart was not still. (5)

Siddhartha has no patience with these senex figures and their reverence for history and tradition, for none of them (by his reckoning) has actually experienced Atman. Siddhartha wants the *experience* of Atman, and he wants it—or at least the most direct path to it—as quickly as possible:

To press towards the Self, towards Atman—was there another way that was worth seeking? Nobody showed the way, nobody knew it—neither his father, nor the teachers and wise men, nor the holy songs. The Brahmins and their holy books knew everything...the creation of the world, the origin of speech, food, inhalation, exhalation, the arrangement of the senses, the acts of the gods. They knew a tremendous number of things—but was it

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<sup>3</sup> Hesse uses the phrase "der junge Falke" in the novel's opening line to describe Siddhartha, an important image that Rosner has omitted from her translation.

<sup>4</sup> Ziolkowski estimates that each of the novel's three sections is comprised of twenty years (161). According to *The Laws of Manu*, Brahmin's sons had until the sixteenth year to begin preparation for their initiation ritual (21). Hence, Siddhartha's rejection of his inheritance of the Brahmanic culture and religion for the life of the Samanas at this stage in his life would be considered particularly rebellious.

worth while knowing all these things if they did not know the one important thing, the only important thing?...where were the Brahmins, the priests, the wise men, who were successful not only in having this most profound knowledge [of Atman], but in experiencing it?...One must find the source within one's own Self, one must possess it. Everything else was seeking—a detour, error. (6-7)

Siddhartha cannot understand how the elder Brahmins, including his father, continue to study and practice the rites of their tradition without having ever, even in their advanced years, experienced the Atman in whose existence they have placed all their faith.

Such impatience for detailed practice, devotion, and learning indicate the puer:

Because of this vertical direct access to the spirit, this immediacy where vision of goal and goal itself are one, winged speed, haste—even the shortcut—are imperative. The puer cannot do with indirection, with timing and patience. It knows little of the season and of waiting...The puer therefore understands little of what is gained by repetition and consistency, that is, by work, or of the moving back and forth, left and right, in and out, which makes for subtlety in proceeding step by step through the labyrinthine complexity of the horizontal world. (Hillman, "Senex" 24)

Certainly, Siddhartha leaps to conclusions—that his elders are unconscious and well meaning hypocrites, that they have nothing left to teach him, and that he can and will find Atman by a more direct and genuine route. Never does he consider the possibility that his elders are aware that they have not experienced Atman but that they are content to wait through several incarnations if necessary to have such a rare experience and to accumulate as much good karma as possible now by attending to their rites so as to ensure a more favorable rebirth. Nor does he fully appreciate the fact that there is much more he can learn from this tradition—surely, he cannot have mastered the accumulated wisdom of centuries in the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads. Finally, he seems to conceive of the experience of Atman as a kind of Zen-like satori—i.e., as an experience that can happen to one at any moment, instantly. Curiously, he overlooks the very aspects of his inherited tradition that would help him to overcome his puer inflation; the doctrine of rebirth and the accumulation of karma support a faith based on patience, devotion, and attention to detail. Hence, his puer blinders and obsession with the bee-line ascent

necessitate his fall—once he is convinced his inherited tradition cannot give him the immediate and direct experience he seeks, he loses all interest in it, his former immersion in its ideals and philosophy now totally dissolved. The next “hot new philosophy” catches his fancy and the puer pattern plays out again.

Siddhartha’s friend Govinda represents a more positive puer shadow than Franz Kromer does (possibly a sign that Hesse had done much to assimilate his own shadow by the time he wrote *Siddhartha*). Govinda is not the cold, brutal gangster shadow, but the provincial, boring follower and conformist. Standing as an opposite to the dominant personality and persona, the shadow may manifest his opposition in various manifestations—even as brother or friend, like the Famulus Wagner to Goethe’s Faust (Jacobi 40). For all his simplicity and naïveté, Govinda possesses qualities Siddhartha, a prince among men, lacks. Most notably, he is able to devote himself to a philosophy or way and commit to its rituals and practices for the long term. He is prepared to stay with the Samanas before Siddhartha announces his dissatisfaction, and he remains a Buddhist monk into his old age while Siddhartha has lived several different lives in the same span. Of course, Govinda’s devotion is dependent and blind—he lacks Siddhartha’s ability to question, to act, to break ties, and to move on in order to grow and develop.

Likewise, Siddhartha’s puer penchant for the new and most promising and direct prevents him from gleaning the full benefits of any one system (that is, until he meets Vasudeva and learns to stop and to listen). The two compensate for one another—two halves of a whole personality—and Siddhartha will eventually integrate Govinda’s patience and devotion when he meets Vasudeva. Initially, however, Govinda’s shadow nature only serves to feed Siddhartha’s puer impulsiveness. Govinda depends upon Siddhartha’s strong intellect and strong will (the things he lacks most), and he fuels Siddhartha’s narcissistic myth as a specially gifted seeker: “He wanted to follow Siddhartha, the beloved, the magnificent. And if he ever became a god, if he ever

entered the All-Radiant, then Govinda wanted to follow him as his friend, his companion, his servant, his lance bearer, his shadow” (4-5). Hence, Siddhartha has a perpetual audience for his heroic quest to become more than just a “good stupid sheep amongst a large herd” (4).

Siddhartha’s departure from the Brahmins as well as from the Samanas is marked by a contest of wills between puer and senex. In the first instance, Siddhartha’s youthful exuberance about a religious approach outside of his own tradition is counterbalanced by his father’s negative senex efforts to suppress the new and innovative while clinging to the forms of a religion that has yet to bring him fulfillment. For his part, Siddhartha knows little of the Samanas when he commits to joining them. Clearly, their extreme form of devotion—of “still passion, of devastating service, of un pitying self-denial” (9)—appeals to his puer nature, for their way is an assault on enlightenment by way of severe austerity and asceticism, a much more zealous and (Siddhartha hopes) direct path. Before he sets out, however, he must first ask his father’s approval. Despite the fact that the puer personality has a weak ego, rigid and inept at adjusting to the everyday, workaday demands made on it, he can actually work quite hard and display a strong and passionate will, provided it is directed toward his spiritual goal (von Franz, *Puer* 5). And in pursuit of spirit, he can even effectively take on the role of the rebel and the revolutionary:

The devotion to an altered state of mind propels puer fantasy toward altering the mind of the state by setting fires of rebellion. The calling from the eternal world demands that this world here be turned upside down...No gradualism, no compromise because eternity doesn’t make deals with time. (Hillman, *The Soul’s Code* 282)

Siddhartha is determined to upend his father’s world, if necessary, and he digs in to defend his position against his father’s assaults. He knows that in following the Samana path he will be violating the hopes and traditions of his father and his family. The forest-dwelling Samanas differ radically from the Brahmin priests: “Wandering ascetics, they were three thin worn-out old men, neither old nor young, with dusty and bleeding shoulders, practically naked, scorched by the sun, solitary, strange and hostile—lean jackals in the world of men” (9). These are not former

Brahmin householders who, after having grown old and passed on their traditions and property to their sons, have gone into the forest to prepare for death. These are men who have chosen a path alternate to and in some ways contrary to that of the Brahmins.

In the ashrama scheme, Siddhartha is in the brahmacharya or apprenticeship stage, the central task of which is “the knowing of one’s dharma, which would consist in acquiring the skills in one’s caste and in winning an identity based on a caste identity and the identification with and the emulation of the guru” (Kakar 8). One’s dharma, or religious and moral duty, is determined by one’s caste, age, occupation and social position—all of which have been predetermined by one’s karmic inheritance from previous lives. Hence, one’s very identity has been predetermined, and one is expected not simply to wear but to *become* one’s social mask, one’s persona. Heinrich Zimmer explains the Hindu emphasis on the submission of the individual will to the social and cosmic order:

The individual is thus compelled to become anonymous. And this is regarded, furthermore, as a process not of self dissolution but of self-discovery; for the key to the realization of one’s present incarnation lies in the virtues of one’s present caste...There is to be no choice, no foundering around, no sowing of wild oats. From the very first breath of life, the individual’s energies are mastered, trained into channels, and co-ordinated to the general work of the superindividual who is the holy society itself. (*Philosophies* 154-155)

Siddhartha’s caste, age, and education have determined his dharma: he is to remain home, complete his apprenticeship with his father and the Brahmin elders, and be initiated into the Vedas’ teaching, at which time he will face a great transition:

Then, abruptly, when the stage of pupilship is finished, and without any transitional period, the youth, now a man, is transferred—one might say hurled—into married life, the stage of householdership...Taking over the paternal craft, business, or profession, he receives a wife (chosen for him by his parents), begets sons, supports the family, and does his best to identify himself with all the tasks and ideal roles of the *pater familias*, member of the guild, etc. The young father identifies himself with the delights and worries of married life, as well as with the classic interests and problems of property and wealth...(Zimmer, *Philosophies* 156)

Siddhartha faces the prospect of entering the role of householder, the limitations and practical responsibilities from which a puer might well seek to take flight. He is to assume his role as a Brahmin priest, representative of the leading caste of Indian society, and devote himself to the political and ethical aspects of his caste. He is to become a leader in his family and in his community. And he is not even to consider detaching himself from these responsibilities until middle to late adulthood—the vanaprastha stage of withdrawal to the forest. By this time, “his sons are now bearing the joys and burdens of the world; himself, in late middle life, may step away...to enter upon the path of the quest for the Self” (Zimmer, *Philosophies* 157).

Siddhartha seeks to circumvent this path, and Indian culture does provide certain escape routes, one of the most effective of which is becoming a monk or an ascetic: “joining, that is to say, still another institution, this time dedicated to isolation from, and insurance against, the ordinary human bondages...The craving for complete release from limitations...one may seek by turning homeless beggar-mendicant” (159). Following the Samanas allows Siddhartha to sever his ties to these obligations and focus exclusively on his spiritual practice. As a Samana, he will learn to see life and society as illusions, subjecting himself to all manner of tortures to deaden the senses and cultivating an unquestioning contempt for all life and society: “...all were not worth a passing glance, everything lied, stank of lies; they were all illusions of sense, happiness and beauty. All were doomed to decay. The world tasted bitter. Life was pain. Siddhartha had one single goal...to let the Self die” (14). Such spiritual discipline for the puer represents the prospect of escaping the mother’s world of progeny, family, and the home.

In a manner typical of the puer, Siddhartha pits his spirituality against his father’s sense of practicality and tradition. His kingdom is not of this world. His strength comes from his commitment to the spiritual quest, and the physical body is expendable as a sacrifice to this quest. He will stand and wait until his father is convinced of the strength of his will and his vision. The

senex father tries to intimidate him: “You will grow tired, Siddhartha... You will fall asleep, Siddhartha... You will die, Siddhartha,” (11) all of which Siddhartha admits to, except falling asleep. “And would you rather die than obey your father?” (12) the Brahmin retorts. There is something of Pilate’s questioning of Christ here—“Don’t you realize I have the power to free you or to have you crucified?” And like the puer Christ, Siddhartha presents a passive resistance, allowing the senex to exercise his power over his body and put him to death while remaining steadfast in his devotion to the spiritual mission: “Siddhartha will do what his father tells him” (12). At this point, however, Siddhartha’s father is freed from his possession by the negative senex and, perhaps overcome by love for his son, allows him to leave. His request that Siddhartha return to teach him the path to bliss, should he find it, underscores his senex nature—i.e., his faith in his own spiritual path is not absolute, and he clings to empty rituals.

Unlike his sources for the Buddha legend, Hesse exaggerates the puer-senex confrontation in the Buddha’s decision to leave home.<sup>5</sup> Of Gotama’s leave-taking of his aristocratic life for the

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<sup>5</sup> Hesse was undoubtedly familiar with Buddhism since his childhood, and the Buddha’s life story was probably among the first Eastern legends to draw his attention: “Hesses frühere Briefe berechtigen uns zu der Annahme, das Hesse sich zuerst nicht mit der Bhagavad-Gita, sondern mit der Lehre Buddhas beschäftigt hatte, und zwar in den Jahren des ausgehenden neunzehnten Jahrhunderts” (Cheong 40-1). Hesse drew on several sources to feed his interest in Buddhism, beginning with his grandfather’s library, as we have seen in his 1921 letter to Lisa Wenger: “Bücher über Indien, über Buddha etc. sah und las ich fast schon von den Bubenjahren an in der riesigen Bibliothek meines Großvaters” (*Gesammelte Briefe* 466). As an adult, he reviewed in 1921 Karl Eugen Neumann’s translation of *Buddha’s Speeches* (1896-1902) as well as in 1922 Hermann Oldenberg’s *Buddha* (1881). The latter is significant in that it is likely one of Hesse’s main sources for the Buddha’s life story; indeed Oldenberg’s purpose in this book was to distinguish from later literary legends, such as that of the first-century Mahayana poet Ashvagosha, an objective biography of Gotama Buddha based instead on the much older Theravada Pali texts. The result is a book that juxtaposes the legend of Buddha with an historical biography of Buddha, an approach that may have played no small part in Hesse’s revisioning and secularizing of the story in his *Siddhartha* (1922).

The orthodox Theravada tradition on which Oldenberg based his biography had as its ideal the Arhat, the initiate who follows closely the four noble truths and eightfold path taught by the Buddha in order to purge himself of all passions, desires, and defilements and hence attain the great extinguishing—nirvana. But Hesse may have also drawn on other Buddhist sources. In 1920, he reviewed Count Hermann Von Keyserling’s *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* (1919) which brought to his attention the Mahayana path of the Bodhisattva who works for the liberation of others before entering nirvana himself. Keyserling praised the Mahayana as “the religion of the future” (226) for the modern West. In addition to Keyserling, Hesse could have had several sources for the central tenets of Mahayana Buddhism: his grandfather; his cousin

life of a forest ascetic, the old Pali texts state merely that “his parents did not wish it” and that they “shed tears and wept” (Oldenberg 49). Ashvagoshā has Gotama escape during the night and avoid the confrontation with his father altogether. Yet Gotama’s decision to flee the confrontation may be a wise one, for Ashvagoshā, unlike his Pali predecessors, suggests a tyrannical and powerful aspect to Gotama’s father, the king. From the moment his miraculous son enters the world, “the king waxed mightier in riches, elephants, horses, and allies, as a river waxes with the inflow of waters” (20). Although he uses his power to establish peace throughout his realm, his power is undeniable. And it is as an extension of this power that he, in effect, arranges the imprisonment of his son. Mindful of the prophecy that his son would become an awakened one, a Buddha, the king seeks to keep him from his destiny and individual development as a spiritual teacher by surrounding him with seductive and skilled courtesans and by arranging for him never to see any sign of suffering or unhappiness:

The monarch, reflecting that the prince must see nothing untoward that might agitate his mind, assigned him a dwelling in the upper storeys of the palace and did not allow him access to the ground...Then, a captive to the women, who were skilled in the accessories of love and indefatigable in sexual pleasure, he did not descend from the palace to the ground...Kings who in this world desire to preserve their personal sovereignty guard their sons, but this dharma-loving lord of men by letting his son loose among the objects of sense kept him from dharma. (24-31)

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Wilhelm Gundert, a professor of Japanese religion whom Hesse consulted for the writing of *Siddhartha*; perhaps even the Mahayana Sutras, published in 1894 in Max Müller’s *Sacred Books of the East* series.

More evidence for the Bodhisattva paradigm may lie in another of Hesse’s possible sources for the Buddha legend--the popular and influential *Buddhacarita* of Ashvagoshā, a first-century Sanskrit poem of which Edward Conze has commented, “It is curious that the canonical writings nowhere recount his life from birth to death. The first and in many ways the finest full-length biography is [this] work of the first century Indian poet Ashvagoshā” (34). The work may have been known to Hesse through Max Müller’s popular *Sacred Books of the East* series, published in 1894, or through German translations of the text by Wohlgenuth in 1915, and those by Cappeler and by Schmidt that followed soon after (Johnston xiii and iii). Though debate still rages as to which school *the Buddhacarita* exemplifies, many scholars agree it is a Mahayana text. Ashvagoshā frequently uses the term *Bodhisattva* throughout to refer to Gotama, and Christmas Humphreys notes that “Ashvagoshā...was certainly one of the greatest poets of India, and by reason of the strong Mahayanist tendencies of his accepted writings has been called by Ananda Coomaraswamy the ‘Father of Mahayana Buddhism’”(53). Finally, we note a telling passage just following the birth of Gotama’s son: “But all the Bodhisattvas, those beings of incomparable natures, first tasted the flavour of worldly pleasures and then, when a son was born to them, left for the forest. Hence, though the motive cause was fully developed in him by the accumulation of past acts, he enjoyed sensual pleasure till he had reached Illumination” (Johnston 31).

The tyrant king here seeks to stymie the son's individuation by indulging him, tempting him with the rewards of following in his footsteps and becoming his heir.

Essentially, the tyrant king seeks to recreate himself through his son, to use his son as a vehicle for his own immortality rather than honoring and developing his son's unique calling.

Hillman finds these same qualities in the senex:

But the harvest is a hoard; the ripened end-product and in-gathering again...[Saturn] can show qualities of greed and tyranny, where in-gathering means holding and the purse of miserliness, making things last through all time...Saturn is in association with widowhood, childlessness, orphanhood, child-exposure, and he attends at childbirth so as to be able to eat the newborn, as everything new coming to life can become food to the senex. (Hillman, "Senex" 17-18)

Such a being as a Buddha—one who has conquered once and for all the cycle of phenomenal existence--would pose a serious threat to a certain type of earthly king whose power rests on phenomenal gain.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, the challenge was issued on the day Gotama was born, when, immediately after emerging from his mother's side, "with the bearing of a lion he surveyed the four quarters, and spoke these words full of meaning for the future: 'For enlightenment I was born, for the good of all that lives. This is the last time that I have been born into this world of becoming'"

(Ashvagosha 4). The irony, of course, is that Gotama's father gives him what virtually any person with earthly desires could ever want—a veritable pleasure palace. Moreover, he finds a beautiful and good wife for his son, with whom Gotama has a son, and he gives over to him princely powers and the prospect of the crown near at hand. This, however, is precisely Ashvagosha's point—i.e., that this enlightened being, though gluttoned with sensory indulgence and

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<sup>6</sup> Ashvagosha also makes the king a widower; his wife, so overwhelmed by her son's power and holiness, dies shortly after giving birth. Curiously, while exposing his son to all sorts of sensual desires, the king practices the most severe austerities, abstains from sensual pleasures, and rules with mercy. Ashvagosha explains that he is motivated by his son's holiness and future, yet we note that he also seeks to devour that future by playing the senex to his son's puer.

gratification, is being starved by his senex father, who keeps from him the spiritual food that will nourish his authentic development. We can well imagine that Ashvagosha's version would have appealed to Hesse, as one who believed himself perpetually misunderstood and stifled by his parents and teachers. The need constantly to re-invent and to develop himself he may well have found in the puritanical, puer emphasis of Ashvagosha's legend of the Buddha. Hesse's own Siddhartha would likewise do battle with and overcome the senex as tyrant father, finding the spiritual food he needed in the forest ascetics as the Gotama of the legend also did.

Only three years after leaving his father, however, Hesse's Siddhartha in turn grows tired of the Samanas' ascetic path, and he reenacts the puer pattern he has played through already with his father. As before, he has immersed himself in the doctrine and practice of a religion, and he has attained a level of mastery and established himself as a promising heir to a spiritual legacy, only to grow disillusioned, unwilling to live up to the expectations and hopes his elders have placed in him. As with the Brahmin elders, the old Samanas lose their luster as spiritual models for Siddhartha:

And Siddhartha said: "He [the Samana elder] is sixty years old and has not attained Nirvana. He will be seventy and eighty years old, and you and I, we shall grow as old as he, and do exercises and fast and meditate, but we will not attain Nirvana, neither he nor we. Govinda, I believe that amongst all the Samanas, probably not even one will attain Nirvana. We find consolations, we learn tricks with which we deceive ourselves, but the essential thing—the way—we do not find." (18)

Again, Siddhartha fails to consider the possibility of the Samanas' eventual liberation after successive incarnations. From the standpoint of the philosophy of rebirth on which most Indian religions are based, Siddhartha's inability to consider the long path to liberation through many lifetimes is unusual—a sign perhaps of his puer impatience and wanderlust. His uncompromising desire for the authentic ecstatic experience again prompts him to challenge the eldest male authority figure and expose him as a senex personality clinging to empty traditions. Disillusioned with the Samanas' ascetic exercises and meditations and enticed by another new teaching—this

time that of Gotama, the Buddha—Siddhartha informs the Samana leader of his and Govinda's decision to leave. Like the old Brahmin, the Samana grows angry and scolds the young men in an effort to intimidate them. As with his father, Siddhartha then subdues the will of the old senex—this time by hypnotizing him, making him mute, crippling his will, even eliciting several bows from him (23).

Unlike the experience of leaving the Brahmins, however, this time Siddhartha seems to become more aware of his puer inflation. Relaying his doubts about the Samanas to Govinda, he complains of going in circles in his ascetic practices and meditations (18); he considers that Gotama's teaching might be just another tempting fruit (23); and he tells Govinda that he has no desire to walk on water (24). Govinda objects that they are not caught in a loop with the Samanas, but that they are progressing upward as well: "We are not going in circles, we are going upwards. *The path is a spiral*; we have climbed many steps" (18, emphasis added). But Siddhartha realizes that he is indeed caught in the puer loop. In his spiritual flights with the Samanas he leaves his body and merges his consciousness with that of a heron and with a decaying jackal, but always he returns to his own body and his own consciousness without having advanced in his awareness of the self, no different from any drunk, gambler, or seeker of ecstatic experience. In order to progress in his awareness, he must integrate what he experiences and transform the self; escape is not enough, and simply leads to return without progress. Siddhartha's realization that he cannot look for such integration in teachers and doctrines signals a shift in his focus toward the authority of inner experience—to first understand and intimately know the self that he so dearly wants to fly away from.

Siddhartha will next encounter the negative senex in Kamaswami, but first he will begin his individuation out of his puer inflation through his encounter with Gotama, the Buddha himself. Ironically, from Gotama Siddhartha does not learn the teachings of Buddhism—its spiritual

practice, its laws, its ethics, etc.—but instead the inadequacy of all teachings. If Gotama means anything to Siddhartha, it is as a model of individuation. In Ashvagosha's version of the legend, Gotama, like Siddhartha, abandons his family's traditions and beliefs and sets out to join a group of forest-dwelling ascetics. He practices the harshest of austerities, starving and torturing his physical body for years until he finds that these techniques produce no useful results and only serve to weaken his resolve. Leaving the forest and reviving his body, he concludes that suffering can only be overcome by achieving inner calm, by taming the mind. While Siddhartha and Govinda are with the Samanas, they hear rumors about the Buddha's innovative, maverick path, a path that the eldest Samana scorns for its hypocrisy (21). When Siddhartha and Govinda finally meet Gotama, Siddhartha is far more impressed with the appearance and character of Gotama than with his teachings. Their debate about the Buddha's teachings, as Gotama correctly observes, revolves more around opinions and semantics than around truth. Siddhartha accurately identifies an inconsistency in Gotama's introduction of a doctrine of transcendence into a worldview that asserts the absolute unity and interdependence of all phenomenal existence based on eternal laws of causation and desire. According to Ashvagosha, Gotama himself was well aware of the difficulty in reducing the fullness of his transcendent experience to the dualities and contradictions of language, a difficulty that prompted him at first to remain immobile in nirvana and to refuse to teach a world lost in desires, that is, until the gods pleaded with him to teach (215). In Hesse's story, Gotama reminds Siddhartha that the goal of his doctrine is what counts, not the vehicle of his teaching: "[My teaching's] goal is not to explain the world to those who are thirsty for knowledge. Its goal is quite different; its goal is salvation from suffering. That is what Gotama teaches, nothing else" (33).

As their discussion continues, Siddhartha comes to realize that the goal and model that Gotama manifests in his bearing and character have come from an experience of intense self-

scrutiny and self-mastery, and that this goal cannot be captured in any teaching (a conclusion similar to Gotama's before the gods pleaded with him to teach):

...there is one thing that this clear, worthy instruction does not contain; it does not contain the secret of what the Illustrious One himself experienced—he alone among hundreds of thousands. That is what I thought and realized when I heard your teachings. That is why I am going on my way—not to seek another and better doctrine, for I know there is none, but to leave all doctrines and all teachers and to reach my goal alone—or die. (34)

Siddhartha, then, chooses to remain true to the spirit of the Buddha's radical path of self-investigation, if not to the doctrine of the Buddha's teaching. As Emanuel Maier puts it, "He must experience the "enlightenment" himself in order to become enlightened. The way to Self is not through asceticism, nor by means of acceptance of doctrines, but by experience" (159). In Gotama, he reads something quite different from the other followers; he sees more a model for the fully integrated self of Jungian individuation than a teacher of a new religion. James Hillman's description of "the transparent man," the individual who has reached such a state of complete self-revelation and acceptance, seems to capture Hesse's Gotama:

Now our image of the goal changes: not Enlightened Man, who sees, the seer, but Transparent Man, who is seen and seen through, foolish, who has nothing left to hide, who has become transparent through self-acceptance, his soul is loved, wholly revealed, wholly existential; he is just what he is, freed from paranoid concealment, from the knowledge of his secrets and his secret knowledge; his transparency serves as a prism for the world and the not-world. For it is impossible to know thyself; only the last reflection of an obituary may tell the truth, and only God knows our real names. (*A Blue Fire* 284)

The one who is fully individuated, then, achieves this state not by mere self-analysis and study, but by integrating formerly rejected and hidden aspects of the self. He is not a visionary preaching salvation through adherence to the perfect doctrine and seeking to change the world, but he nevertheless draws the world to him by his transparency.

In Gotama, Siddhartha sees just such a one who has achieved complete peace with himself—one who hides nothing from himself and who has achieved a wholeness of personality:

...his face and his step, his peaceful downward glance, his peaceful downward-hanging hand, and every finger of his hand spoke of peace, spoke of completeness, sought nothing,

imitated nothing, reflected a continuous quiet, an unfading light, an invulnerable peace...I have never seen a man look and smile, sit and walk like that, he thought. I, also, would like to look and smile, sit and walk like that, so free, so worthy, so restrained, so candid, so childlike and mysterious. A man only looks and walks like that when he has conquered his Self. I also will conquer my Self. (35)

This encounter may be based on Ashvagosha's account of Gotama's meeting with a mendicant after having attained his enlightenment. Impressed with the peace and radiance apparent in Gotama's physical bearing, the wandering mendicant inquires about his teacher: "Your features shine with intellectual power, you have become master over your senses, and you have the eyes of a mighty bull...who has taught you this supreme felicity?" (53). We can imagine the import of Gotama's response for Hesse: "But he replied, 'No teacher have I. None need I venerate, and none must I despise. Nirvana have I now obtained, and I am not the same as others are. Quite by myself, you see, have I the Dharma won'" (53). Curiously, the mendicant, though very impressed, chooses not to follow Gotama, but instead to go on his own way:

In reply the mendicant whispered to himself, 'Most remarkable, indeed!' and he decided that it would be better not to stay with the Buddha. He accordingly went his way, although repeatedly he looked back at Him with eyes full of wonderment, and not without some degree of longing desire. (53)

The account of Gotama's meeting with the mendicant perhaps inspired Hesse in the development of his own protagonist, who finds his goal in the quality of the Buddha's character and seeks to attain this state of peace himself not through teachings but, like Gotama, through an inward-directed journey into the mysteries of his own self. Ironically, Hesse will later (at the end of the novel) use the image of Buddha in the traditional sense, as one who has transcended ego. Buddha then serves as the linchpin of Hesse's irony—his path and his bearing serve Hesse as models of Western individuation while his image serves as a model of transcendence. As such, he serves both as passionate, rebellious hero and as withdrawn wise man—the figures Hesse was trying to balance in mid-life.

Having begun his individuation, Siddhartha commits himself to knowing and transforming the self from which he has hitherto tried to escape. The puer flies from true self-reflection, from accepting his limitations and flaws; he seeks to fly away from the self, a tendency that makes certain spiritual disciplines and mystical practices so appealing to him. Von Franz emphasizes this aspect of the puer:

If you accept your life, you really accept death in the deepest sense of the word, and that is what the puer does not want. He does not want to accept his mortality, which is why he does not want to go into reality: the end of it is the realization of his weakness and of his mortality. He identifies with the immortal and does not accept the mortal twin, but he would assimilate the mortal brother by going into life...life and meeting a woman mean coming together with reality; to work means to meet the earth—disillusion, stagnation, and death. (*Puer* 161)

In Siddhartha's case, the flight has been toward Atman—toward the immortal and universal—a self-deception of which he becomes aware after meeting Gotama:

I was afraid of myself, I was fleeing from myself. I was seeking Brahman, Atman, I wished to destroy myself, to get away from myself, in order to find the unknown innermost, the nucleus of all things, Atman, Life, the Divine, the Absolute. But by doing so, I lost myself on the way...I will no longer try to escape from Siddhartha. I will no longer devote my thoughts to Atman and the sorrows of the world. I will no longer mutilate and destroy myself in order to find a secret behind the ruins. I will no longer study Yoga-Veda, Athara-Veda, or asceticism, or any other teachings. I will learn from myself, be my own pupil; I will learn from myself the secret of Siddhartha. (39)

Such an acceptance of one's limitations and mortality is especially important for the individual entering mid-life. As Levinson explains,

Some reduction in illusions is now appropriate and beneficial...According to Jaques, the central issue at mid-life is coming to terms with one's own mortality: a man must learn now, more deeply than was possible before, that his own death is inevitable and that he and others are capable of great destructiveness...Bernice Neugarten identifies the basic mid-life change as a growing "interiority": turning inward to the self, decreasing emphasis on assertiveness and mastery of the environment, enjoying the process of living more than the attainment of specific goals. (193-196)

'Enjoying the process of living,' and in so doing revealing hidden aspects of himself so that he may accept and integrate them is the purpose of Siddhartha's journey across the river, an experience presaged in his dream of Govinda turned into a woman: "...out of the woman's gown

emerged a full breast, and Siddhartha lay there and drank; sweet and strong tasted the milk from this breast. It tasted of woman and man, of sun and forest, of animal and flower, of every fruit, of every pleasure. It was intoxicating” (48).

The breast and its milk, as Hillman explains, are essential in curing the puer personality, for at the breast, one becomes fully human and must accept the conditions of being human—birth, dependency, need, death: “...what one learns at the breast is knowledge of ourselves as we are in essence, as we are upon entering the world and leaving it, “sans teeth,” defenseless” (“Senex” 41). Hence, by choosing to cross the river into the world of samsara—i.e., of work, love, desire, fear, gain, loss, etc.—Siddhartha chooses to come down to earth, to reduce the puer illusion that has preoccupied him, by confronting his own limitations and mortality as well as by turning inward to understand the self. In effect, he moves from the attitude of the puer toward that of the hero when he decides to cross the river and descend into samsara.

Like Sinclair, Siddhartha must solicit the aid of the anima as teacher of self-reflection and as guide through the labyrinth of the self. The anima, as we saw in the image of Beatrice for Sinclair, draws the puer personality down from his detachment in spirit and into the twists and turns of human relationship through which he comes to reflect on his uniqueness and limitations (Hillman, “Peaks” 66). Unlike Beatrice, however, Kamala is much more autonomous, nuanced, and detailed. Rather than only existing as a vaguely interior figure that the protagonist must struggle to depict and envision, as Beatrice was for Sinclair, Kamala is much more fully realized and differentiated and is able to interact with Siddhartha as an equal and at times as a superior personality—perhaps a sign that Hesse’s anima had developed as a result of his therapy. And it is Kamala who enables Siddhartha to fully experience this world and to integrate those experiences so as to enlarge and develop his personality. She teaches him about the body, its language and its pleasures, which he had previously sought to abandon. She teaches him the art of lovemaking

and the lessons of giving pleasure to receive it, of balancing conquest with submission—essentially the art of relationship in lovemaking, the give and take instead of the narcissistic flight to ecstasy. She makes him aware not only of his virtues and talents but also of his limitations and the limitations and restrictions of the realm he has entered.

Discovering he can read and write, she uses her influence as the most sought after courtesan in town to have Siddhartha's name mentioned to Kamaswami, the aging, very rich and very powerful merchant, as a potential business partner. Before his interview with the merchant, she counsels him: "Be clever...Be friendly towards him; he is very powerful, but do not be too modest. I do not wish you to be his servant, but his equal...Kamaswami is beginning to grow old and indolent. If you please him, he will place great confidence in you" (59). Kamaswami, as we shall see, is once again the negative senex, aspects of which Siddhartha must integrate, and Kamala, as anima, is the guide who shows him how to relate to senex. Essentially, she tells the hero how to act, what to say and what not to say to the ogre-father figure.

Kamaswami is indeed a formidable, negative senex figure:

[the senex] has qualities of greed and tyranny, where in-gathering means holding and the purse of miserliness, making things last through all time. (Saturn governs coins, minting, and wealth.) Here we find the characteristics of avarice, gluttony, and such rapaciousness that Saturn is bhoga, "eating the world"... [the senex] in-gathers and hoards...As principle of coagulation and of geometrical order, it dries and orders, "builds cities" and "mints money," makes solid and square and profitable. (Hillman, "Senex" 17)

We recognize these qualities in Kamaswami. He is the miserly old businessman whose life has become his work, who hoards all he can, who frets over even the most trivial business accounts, and who seeks to exploit whomever he can, especially the gifted young puer, for even more gain. After hiring Siddhartha, he confides to a friend that the young Brahmin will never be a true businessman because he takes business as a mere game but that he seems to have a lucky knack for making money because of his fearless indifference. The friend suggests that Kamaswami tie Siddhartha's earnings to the profits and losses of the business he conducts, a suggestion that

Kamaswami uses to bind Siddhartha to him and to force him to commit body and soul to making a profit. He also takes every opportunity to force Siddhartha into submission to both himself and his business, scolding Siddhartha for spending too much time on a business outing, attempting to make his own worries those of Siddhartha, trying to make him feel indebted to him for all of his knowledge and learning, and seeking to convince Siddhartha that he is dependent on the old man for his daily bread. Thanks to Kamala's instruction, Siddhartha remembers never to act "servile to the merchant, but [to compel] him to treat him as an equal and even more than an equal" (66). Moreover, he never loses sight of the fact that his work for Kamaswami is only a means to an end, to the lessons and experiences he learns from Kamala: "Here with Kamala lay the value and meaning of his present life, not in Kamaswami's business" (66).

Nevertheless, as one heroically trying to individuate out of his puer inflation, Siddhartha is still vulnerable to enantiodromia—that is, to tilting over into inflation by the senex:

Then, instead of being a brilliant puer, such a person suddenly becomes a cynical, disappointed old man. The brilliance has turned into cynical disappointment, and the man is too old for his age and has neither belief nor interest in anything any longer. He is absolutely and thoroughly disillusioned, and thereby loses all creativeness...and all contact with the spirit. Then money, ambition, and the struggle with colleagues become paramount, and everything else disappears with the romanticism of youth. (von Franz, *Puer* 138)

Levinson also recognizes this danger, especially at the time of the mid-life crisis, which is why he emphasizes maintaining a proper balance between puer and senex and avoiding letting one completely dominate the other:

It is not easy to maintain the balance. A person of any age may become prematurely Old and lacking in youthful qualities...he loses all sense of excitement, play, anticipation for the future. He is emotionally a withered old man, fighting a futile battle against emptiness and decline...A man of 40 or 50 may be so in the grip of the Old that he is stagnant, dry, hardly connected to the world around him or to anything he can value in himself, having little to give others or to receive from them. It is as though Young had been totally extinguished. (212)

Since senex reveals itself more and more as one ages, and is particularly visible at mid-life, the danger of enantiodromia into senex inflation needs to be carefully monitored. For this reason, Levinson notes that while “de-illusionment” from puer idealism is necessary for a successful mid-life transition, some puer illusion and belief must be maintained in order for life to continue to have meaning (193).

The mid-life tragedy of falling into senex inflation accurately describes what happens to Siddhartha after years of living and working in samsara and working for Kamaswami. Slowly, he loses his sense of detachment from worldly affairs, he no longer hears his inner voice guiding him, and he loses himself in business and profit; he becomes addicted to dice, women, and drink, and wonders why he had left all he had learned with the Brahmins and Gotama “in order to become a Kamaswami” (84). He tries to hide from the senex, in youthful partying, gaming, and carousing, but “he wore himself out in this cycle, became old and sick” (80). Levinson describes this as the man who

becomes so anxious about aging and dying that he denies these concerns altogether and attempts to remain the perpetual Young...We see this clinging to the Young in the man of 40 to 50 who insists on remaining youthful in the early adult sense, trying to have now the good times that he earlier missed...His developmental task is to become older than he was—that is, middle aged. To do this, he has to make more use of the Old qualities than before, while finding age appropriate forms through which to express his youthful qualities as well. (212)

Vasudeva, the positive senex and wise old man, will serve as the one who enables Siddhartha to integrate the old and at the same time preserve the young, but he must first become aware of his crisis and have the courage and strength to find him.

As Siddhartha lies near Kamala one night, he begins to recognize the source of his depression—the influx of negative senex:

Then he lay beside her and Kamala’s face was near to his, and under her eyes and near the corners of her mouth, he read clearly for the first time a sad sign—fine lines and wrinkles, a sign which gave a reminder of autumn and old age. Siddhartha himself, who was only in his forties had noticed gray hairs here and there in his black hair. Weariness was written on

Kamala's beautiful face...and concealed and not yet mentioned, perhaps a not yet conscious fear—fear of autumn of life, fear of old age, fear of death. Sighing, he took leave of her, his heart full of misery and secret fear. (81)

With the dream of Kamala's small, rare songbird, which he finds silent and dead in its cage and which he then throws away on the road, the unconscious provides a diagnosis of his crisis. He has lost all sense of the spirit, creativity, inspiration, new life—the positive qualities of the puer—in many ways, "he [throws] away with the dead bird all that was good and of value in himself" (82). At this point, he is completely possessed by senex, "full of ennui, full of misery, full of death" (87), and he feels tempted to commit suicide.

What gets Siddhartha through this, the nadir of his mid-life crisis, is the return of the spiritual and philosophical experience of his previous life on the "other shore," which he had all but forgotten during his immersion in samsara. Specifically, he hears from the depths of his memory the sacred word "OM" repeated over and over again just as he is prepared to topple into the river and drown himself. As we saw earlier, the pronunciation of OM is the subject of the Mandukya Upanishad, a text with which Hesse was familiar before he wrote *Siddhartha*. Here, Hesse would find an explanation of the symbolic meaning of each of the four sound elements involved in this pronunciation of "OM": first "A" signifying waking consciousness, then "U" representing the dream state of sleep, next "M" symbolizing deep, dreamless sleep, and finally the all-encompassing silence of Atman, out of which all the other states emerge and back into which they go (*Upanishads* 83). In other words, to pronounce "OM" is to traverse the stages of consciousness, the passage to Atman. In meditating upon "OM," Siddhartha becomes aware of the fact that he has been living and suffering only on the superficial layer of existence and consciousness, the "waking life of outward-moving consciousness...[comprised of] the gross elements" (83). Indeed, he comes to understand that the source of his suffering arises from the

mistaken notion that this most superficial layer of consciousness is the one and only mode of experience.

He then falls asleep, still murmuring Om, and “His sleep was deep and dreamless...and it seemed to him as if his whole sleep had been a long deep pronouncing of Om, thinking of Om, an immersion and penetration into Om, into the nameless and the Divine” (90). With this deep and profound sleep, Siddhartha experiences a larger self, a more comprehensive identity. In short, he briefly identifies with the Atman within. The significance of his experience of this larger identity at the depth of his mid-life crisis is that it allows him to step outside of his inflation with senex. It allows him to step outside of his puer identity as well. In fact, by identifying with Atman, Siddhartha creates an entirely new context in which to contain and balance puer and senex, for Atman consists of “what was, what is, and what shall be” (*Upanishads* 83). When he awakens, he sees his life up to the present moment in this new context: “...at the first moment of his return to consciousness his previous life seemed to him like a remote incarnation, like an earlier birth of his present Self...” (90). He also comes to understand the limited ego-centered consciousness that had made him so prone to inflation, “his small, fearful, and proud self...Was it not this which had finally died today in the wood by this delightful river?” (99).

The experience of identifying with Atman, however, “lasts for only a moment, a flash” (90). The guru who will help Siddhartha develop his identification with Atman arrives in the form of the wise old man of the river, Vasudeva, who replaces the negative senex figures against which Siddhartha has struggled. Vasudeva’s identity intermingles with that of the river and that of Siddhartha’s “inner voice.” This voice tells Siddhartha to love the river, to learn from it, and to listen to it (101), the same advice Vasudeva gives him; also, the old man tells Siddhartha that he will learn, “not from me” (105) but from the river, yet Vasudeva often articulates for Siddhartha the experiences and lessons he has taken from the river. Hence, Vasudeva exists for Siddhartha

as an avatar of his inward self, of Atman, which is why Siddhartha, in seeking out the old man and apprenticing himself to him, does not contradict his vow to learn not from outside teachers but only from himself. From Vasudeva, Siddhartha learns to develop his identification with Atman, symbolized by the river. Specifically, he learns to listen for and identify with the river's sense of timelessness, omnipresence, and inter-being with all living things. Vasudeva teaches him to hear the river's pronunciation of the holy word Om within the river's seemingly myriad and diverse voices. Through his experience of the river, then, Siddhartha has effectively unified and balanced puer and senex, birth and death, within a new context in his identification with Atman:

“Have you also learned that secret from the river; that there is no such thing as time?” A bright smile spread over Vasudeva's face. “Yes, Siddhartha, he said. “Is this what you mean? That the river is everywhere at the same time, at the source and at the mouth, at the waterfall, the ferry, at the current, in the ocean and in the mountains, everywhere, and that the present only exists for it, not the shadow of the past, nor the shadow of the future?” (107)

By leaving Kamala and Kamaswami and his life as a merchant behind and by identifying with a larger sense of self, Siddhartha is in effect enacting the withdrawal indicative of successful passage through the mid-life crisis. As Levinson describes this mid-life transition,

As a man becomes more individuated and more oriented to the Self, a process of “detrribalization” occurs. He becomes more critical of the tribe...he is less dependent on tribal rewards, more questioning of tribal values, more able to look at life from a universalistic perspective...He forms a more universal view of good and evil, and a more tragic sense of their coexistence within himself and in all humanity. His spirituality may take the form of an explicit religious doctrine, but often he tries to free himself from formal doctrine in order to attain a personal understanding of what it means to be human. The turning inward and detrribalization are part of the shift toward less attachment. (242)

Overindulgence in riches, material possessions, and sensual gratification is no longer the measure of success for Siddhartha and acts instead as the source of the nausea that drives him from the village and nearly to suicide. Yet he also comes to see his experience in samsara as necessary:

I had to spend many years like that in order to lose my intelligence, to lose the power to think, to forget about the unity of things...I had to experience so much stupidity, so many

vices, so much error, so much nausea, disillusionment and sorrow, just in order to...experience grace, to hear Om again...I had to become a fool again in order to find Atman in myself. (96-97)

Only by knowing life in the world can Siddhartha then choose to withdraw from it. Jungians hold that sheer introversion and absolute retreat into the inner world are not the way of individuation; instead, one must interact with the outside world, then reflect on and witness where the projections arose in order to integrate them. One must interact with the world in order to discover and integrate the hidden aspects of the personality. The first half of life is typically dedicated to losing oneself in the world and in one's projections, while mid-life is typically the time to begin identifying and withdrawing those projections (Jacobi 25).

Erikson also acknowledges the phenomenon of withdrawal in the passage through mid-life crisis, which he formulates as "generativity vs. stagnation," with the emerging virtue of "care." According to Erikson, the task of early adulthood is to generate and produce for one's immediate society (i.e., one's family, village, company, institution, etc.)—this may include the generation of children, new ideas, new products, and the like. Erikson sees generativity as essential to the healthy psychological and social development of the adult. Crises arise at mid-life if the task of generativity has not been entirely fulfilled (This is nearly always the case to varying degrees, as one seldom chooses the perfect way to articulate generativity—i.e., the perfect mate, the perfect career, etc.). A counter-tendency emerges away from generativity and toward an obsessive preoccupation with self as one's own child (*Childhood and Society* 267). If one successfully struggles with these opposing drives (toward generativity and stagnation), however, one emerges with the virtue of a larger sense of self and the expanded consciousness of "care"—i.e., "a widening commitment to take *care of* the persons, the products, and the ideas one has learned to *care for*" (*Life Cycle* 67).

Widening one's commitment, however, also involves, perhaps ironically, a withdrawal. The intensity and passion for one's own group or family is expanded into a compassion for the society as a whole or even for the community of man or of all living creatures. Siddhartha's crisis by the river reminds us of such a crisis and resolution. As a successful merchant, business partner to Kamaswami, and lover to Kamala, he has been engaged in the generativity of adulthood for many years—Kamala will even have a son by him. As we have seen, when he approaches mid-life he feels less and less fulfilled by this role and more and more preoccupied with himself as someone who is sick and who lacks something vital, something he has perhaps lost. Hence, the counter-current of stagnation emerges. When he hears Om in the river's voice, he identifies with that greater self and interconnectedness with others. In the river's voice, he will come to hear the voices of those he has loved and learned from, those he has struggled against and left behind, and those he has never personally met—the community of humanity; he will even hear the voices of other living things and discover a shared identity with them and compassion for them.

Sudhir Kakar sees a parallel between Erikson's conception of withdrawal from one's immediate family and extended care or compassion for the society at large and the Indian mid-life stage of Vanaprastha, which follows a similar progression of withdrawal to extended compassion, extending out even to the society of all living creatures with which one may identify. We recognize in Siddhartha this same transformation, which begins, ironically, as he struggles with his possessive love for his own son. Years after his departure from samsara, Siddhartha again meets Kamala and discovers he has a son. With this discovery, Siddhartha takes another step into the next stage, that of mature adulthood (vanaprastha) with its crisis of "generativity vs. stagnation" and its virtue of "care":

Once, when the boy's face reminded him of Kamala, Siddhartha suddenly remembered something she had once said to him a long time ago: 'You cannot love,' she had said to him and he had agreed with her...It was true that he had never fully lost himself in another person to such an extent as to forget himself; he had never undergone the follies of love for

another person. He had never been able to do this, and it had then seemed to him that this was the biggest difference between him and the ordinary people. But now, since his son was there, he Siddhartha, had become completely like one of the people through sorrow, through loving. He was madly in love, a fool because of love. Now he experienced belatedly, for once in his life, the strongest and strangest passion; he suffered tremendously through it and yet was uplifted, in some way renewed and richer. (122)

By this time in the story, he has “grown gray” (112) and has perhaps missed his chance of “establishing and guiding the next generation” (Kakar 8), yet perhaps in letting his son run away he has, in his own way, guided the boy to the most important lesson he has learned—namely, that the best teacher and guide along one’s individual path is experience and being true to one’s own unique destiny. It is Vasudeva who reminds him of this: “Which father, which teacher could prevent him from living his own life, from foiling himself with life, from loading himself with sin, from swallowing the bitter drink himself, from finding his own path?” (121). Moreover, this newfound love and care for his son blossoms and expands to include a wider sphere of love, more a compassion for his fellow humans:

...he now felt as if these ordinary people were his brothers. Their vanities, desires, and trivialities no longer seemed absurd to him; they had become understandable, lovable, even worthy of respect...All these little, simple, foolish, but tremendously strong, vital, passionate urges and desires no longer seemed trivial to Siddhartha. For their sake he saw people live and do great things, travel, conduct wars, suffer and endure immensely, and he loved them for it. (130)

This experience of allowing his son to leave and allowing love for his son to expand to love of his fellow humans corresponds in general to the love of the vanaprastha stage, “an inner withdrawal from family affairs and family ties” and a “widened concept of generativity” (Kakar 9). This is also the “care” that Erikson speaks of—a widened sense of service and compassion to his fellow beings. The almost seamless progression from love of family to love of humanity may be explained by a tendency in some Hindu writers to combine the two stages, for “both deal with generativity and care, one in the narrow sense and the other in a widened sense” (9). In Indian

culture, this transformation is dramatized and ritualized as an awakening and leave-taking to the forest. As Heinrich Zimmer explains,

Having identified himself wholly with the functions of his social personality (his social actor's mask, or persona), he must now as radically step away from that...And so he enters upon the third asrama, that of the "departure to the forest" (vanaprastha). For we are not only social, professional masks, representing ageless roles in the shadow-world of time, but also something substantial; namely, the Self...To seek to reach that unnamed essence is to enter upon the path of the quest for the Self; and this is the aim and end of the third of the four life-stages. (*Philosophies* 157)

Siddhartha leaves behind kama, artha, and dharma, and he now pursues moksha—the liberation from samsara through the discovery of the Atman within. He has taken on the merchant's persona in order to reveal himself fully—especially his shadow aspects—so as to re-integrate what he has hidden from himself. With the release of his son, he is now ready to take off that mask and develop the larger identity that has always existed deep down. His widened sense of compassion for all beings and his sense of the interconnectedness of all life is borne out by his new life of service as a ferryman, one who remains in the liminal space at the edge of the society, who maintains contact with both samsara and the Om in the river's voice, and who selflessly takes anyone who asks where he or she would like to go while asking for nothing in return.

In Vasudeva, the wise old man, Siddhartha finds his destiny and identity; as time goes by Siddhartha not only learns from him but begins to act like him, looks like him, and eventually becomes him, taking his place as ferryman. Vasudeva balances puer and senex—much as Demian did for Sinclair. Like Demian, he is the puer-et-senex, both old and young at once, like the Indian god Krishna after whom he is named or the Chinese sage Lao Tzu. In effect, Vasudeva not only teaches but also represents in his person transcendence of time, for he seems ageless and timeless. In his radiant smile, which becomes Siddhartha's, one can see a face "lighting up with a thousand tiny wrinkles, equally childish, equally senile" (108). Later, Siddhartha comes to see in "Vasudeva's old childlike face" a personification of "harmony,

knowledge of the eternal perfection of the world, and unity” (131). Vasudeva, and Siddhartha by novel’s end, lives simply and expresses childlike glee at the lessons he learns from the river. Moreover, his childlike honesty and transparency make others trust him and confess to him. Yet he also possesses the benefits of old age: he works hard and efficiently (though his work seems almost like play), he demonstrates extreme patience, and he has learned the art of listening—not only to others but also to the voice of the river. In essence, Vasudeva represents the ideal balance of puer and senex with which Siddhartha begins to identify. As Hillman phrases it,

The therapeutic key to the midpoint would lie in the secret identity of the two faces of the same archetype...the healing for which we long will combine puer and senex in one. This union of sames brings out the positive qualities of each face...the ego must first re-find the psychic connection within its split root. This it cannot do itself, since its every act reflects the split...In the *absence of ego* and into its emptiness an imaginal stream can flow, providing mythic al solutions for the psychic connections or “progressive mediation” between the senex/puer contradictions. (Hillman, “Senex” 32-38)

In a sense, Siddhartha practices such a release of ego by learning to listen to the river, “to listen with a still heart, with a waiting open soul, without passion, without desire, without judgment, without opinions” (106). By relinquishing the ego’s need to control and to choose—the aspect that makes it vulnerable to neurosis and inflation—Siddhartha allows the archetypal level of the unconscious (through what Jung termed the “transcendent function”) to produce an imaginal solution, one embodied in Vasudeva and in the river, which balances and transcends the puer / senex conflict.

But how can the release of ego and identification with a transcendent self agree with the intensely personal, Romantic striving along one’s individual path? Siddhartha’s goal seems to contradict his life path. It seems likely that *Siddhartha*, even more so than *Demian*, maintains a tension and resonance between a distinctly Western romantic (puer-influenced) path and an Eastern, classically Indian-inspired goal. Hesse seems to honor the individual’s heroic quest to overcome his puer inflation while at the same time embracing that quest in an impersonal,

universal, and timeless context—in effect, the Romantic puer hero is compensated for by “the salutary wisdom of the Wise Old Man” (S. Walker, *Jung and the Jungians* 83).

### *Siddhartha's Upward Spiral of the Romantic Hero*

Every man in the Mid-life Transition starts to see that the hero of the fairy tales does not enter a life of eternal, simple happiness. He sees, indeed, that the hero is a youth who must die or be transformed as early adulthood comes to an end. A man must begin to grieve and accept the symbolic death of the youthful hero within himself. He will gradually discover which of the heroic qualities he can keep, which new qualities he can discover and develop in himself, and how he might be a hero of a different kind in the context of middle adulthood. (Levinson 215)

As we saw in the previous chapter, with *Demian* Hesse had begun to cope with his mid-life crisis by using the objective and impersonal context of Indian mythology to break out of the narcissism of the Romantic puer hero's quest. That context, however, was relatively undeveloped, limited to Sinclair's battlefield vision at the end of the novel. Up to that point, the hero was made to feel (by Demian, and by Frau Eva especially) the importance and centrality of his unique quest and destiny. One might even argue, as have Sammons and Stolte, that Sinclair's feeling of embodying in his own individual destiny the fate of Europe served to magnify his sense of self-importance into a megalomania and did not represent the humbling through depersonalization that we have suggested. As Eugene Stelzig explains,

It is not surprising that some critics have expressed strong misgivings about [Demian's] apocalyptic purple prose because it seems to align Hesse with a strain of irrational thinking that later helped to pave the way for Hitler and the Nazi ideology...As Stolte observes, Hesse's application of individual psychology to the destiny of nations in *Demian* is fraught with “dangerous consequences” because “a nation simply isn't an individual.” (151-152)

The confusion may arise from the emphasis Hesse places on the hero's quest and the lack of emphasis he places on the hero's goal—identification with the Self, which happens all at once at the novel's end in the climactic and brief battlefield vision, a vision followed by very little if any

reflection by the hero. With *Siddhartha*, Hesse develops to a far greater degree the depersonalizing context and goal of the hero's quest; Siddhartha's awakening to this context (the river) spans the last five chapters of the novel, is accompanied by intense reflection, and derives directly from an Indian philosophy whose very purpose lies in self-divestiture. The lessons Siddhartha learns from the river serve to distance him or "de-illusion" him from the importance of his own quest, to depersonalize his hero's quest rather than inflate it with the weight of historical developments. History indeed plays virtually no role in *Siddhartha*, and perhaps it was Hesse's intent to choose the ancient Indian setting to relativize the individual heroic quest within the context of cosmic, impersonal forces rather than associate it with historic and cultural ones. Let us begin, then, by exploring Hesse's use of the Romantic puer hero's quest in Siddhartha's journey.

In many ways, Siddhartha exemplifies the Romantic hero. As Bharati Mukherjee Blaise points out in her dissertation, Siddhartha is handsome, favored, troubled, preoccupied with an exaggerated sense of self, isolated, and contemptuous of formal learning in favor of life experience (106-112). Anti-traditional and iconoclastic, he continually breaks free of established traditions to strive and to seek a new belief system that will bring him the experience of mystical harmony he desires; in other words, he learns from an established tradition, then "moves on to new discoveries...to break out of the circle and *into a spiral*: towards freedom" (117, emphasis added). He "must travel the *spiral of self-discovery* before attaining Buddhahood" (122, emphasis added). Other critics besides Blaise have identified the Romantic upward spiral in Hesse's thinking and writing. In his analysis of Hesse's use of triadic patterns, Ziolkowski carefully analyzes Hesse's own theory of individuation in "A Bit of Theology" (1932):

There he sketches at length a "developmental history of the soul" which he regards as a sacred truth. "The course of humanization," he writes, "begins with innocence (paradise, childhood, a pre-stage without a sense of responsibility). From there it leads into guilt, into the knowledge of good and evil, into the behests of culture, morality, religion, human

ideals.” But the realization that these various ideals are unattainable in reality plunges the individual into despair. “This despair, now, leads either to a downfall, or, on the other hand, to the Third Kingdom of the Spirit, to the experience of a condition beyond morality and law, an advance to grace and redemption, to a new and higher kind of irresponsibility, or in short: to faith.” Hesse concedes that the process of development as he has outlined it here is European and almost Christian; but, he continues, the same pattern can be found among all peoples and all religions. (*Novels* 54)

While Ziolkowski does identify the Christian origins of the upward spiral and briefly identifies its literary and psychological inheritors in Nietzsche, Jung, and Schopenhauer (58), he does not in any detail link Hesse’s paradigm to that of the German Romantics, though we are struck by his description of Hesse’s theory and its similarity to the Romantic upward spiral: “The third [final] stage of individuation, however, turns back upon itself, for it implies reunification with totality on a higher level...One is absorbed, almost fluidly, into the whole again” (Ziolkowski 56).

From this description and Hesse’s own account of the paradigm, we see that Hesse’s theory is in essence a revival of the German Romantic upward spiral, with Hesse’s added claim of universality, both in the major world religions and in the lives of individuals. More recently, scholars such as Eugene Stelzig have delineated in greater detail Hesse’s debt to the German Romantics. Stelzig describes Hesse as the inheritor of “the German preoccupation with the course of one’s life, or self-examination, and the drive to self-knowledge” (72 ). More importantly, he recognizes the Romantic spiral and Romantic individualism, with its emphasis on a life based on the primary commitment to an inner law, in Hesse’s theory of *Eigensinn* (self-will) and of the life stages in “A Bit of Theology.” Stelzig even goes so far as to argue that Hesse’s 1919 theory of *Eigensinn* became the author’s central creed, and his fascination with the life legends of saints, artists, and philosophers served primarily to confirm and develop this creed (74). But while Stelzig does link Hesse’s theories to Abrams’ characterization of the upward spiral in *Natural Supernaturalism*, he stops short of analyzing manifestations of this paradigm in Hesse’s novels.

The Hesse critic who perhaps goes the furthest in placing *Siddhartha* in the German Romantic tradition is Mark Boulby, who sees in Siddhartha the echo of Faust's impatient striving, his absolutism, and his contempt for the intellect. Govinda, for Boulby, echoes Wagner in his patience and inability to understand Siddhartha's striving, settling instead for gradual progress and mediocrity on the journey to metaphysical truth. Like Faust, Siddhartha stumbles early on, seeking fulfillment in all the wrong places, his comment to Govinda regarding escape of the self being found "in every tavern" (qtd. in Boulby 135) conjuring Faust's experience in Auerbach's Cellar. Finally, like Faust, Siddhartha "succumbs to triviality" (Boulby 144), losing his quest in the world of the senses and the ordinary people. In the ironical comparison of Wagner and Govinda, Boulby notes, we see Hesse's disdain for the dogmatic, prescribed ladder of both educational and spiritual institutions, East and West (136). How much better for Hesse (and for Goethe) is the way of experience. Despite this excellent analysis, Boulby never sees the parallel in the overall paradigms of both works.

M.H. Abrams also included Faust in his study of German Romantic works based on the Neo-Platonic upward spiral. For Abrams, *Faust* also shows this structure of alienation and redemption, but in purely secular terms despite its biblical background (244). Mephistopheles' role is to incite Faust's striving and in so doing to frustrate and torment him. But Mephisto's sowing of discord is presented as a necessary step toward Faust's achieving a new unity on a higher plane (244). As Mephisto himself admits, he is just "a part of that power / Which always wills the bad and always effects the good" (qtd. in Abrams 244). After the betrayal and death of Gretchen in Part One, Faust undergoes a "sleep of self-purgation" (244) and awakens in spring in a kind of paradise. He is a "secular new Adam" (245) and continues his journey toward an earthly redemption. Faust is ultimately saved because he is never satisfied with the finite, never relaxes into stasis, and continually strives, albeit often unconsciously, toward the infinite goal of

redemption (245). Siddhartha seems to travel along the same spiral path. Faust's fall at the hands of Mephistopheles into the realm of the senses, intoxicants, and his unintentional corruption of Gretchen remind us of Siddhartha's fall, at the hands of Kamaswami (to whom he at first feels superior), into the realm of money, gambling, and drink as well as his unintentional corruption of Kamala. Like Gretchen, Kamala is ultimately redeemed and leaves her frustrated lover to continue his quest. Siddhartha too indulges in a sleep of self-purgation after failing to find fulfillment in the senses, and awakens as if reborn, in love with the world and ready to continue his striving for an earthly redemption.

We also recognize in *Siddhartha* another manifestation of the heroic upward spiral—the German Romantic version of the Prodigal Son. According to M.H. Abrams, Schiller, who interpreted this story in the influential essay entitled *On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* (1795), emphasized the hard road of experience necessary for the attainment of a higher unity with self and with nature (Abrams 214). In Schiller's view, the sibling who stayed home is symbolic of that pre-rational, natural state to which we desire to flee whenever the complexities of civilized life become too much to bear (214). But, as Abrams explains, Schiller stressed that this was not the path of salvation but an escape and regression to infancy (214). Like the Prodigal son, Schiller argued, we must struggle along our fallen path to “return” to a higher, more comprehensive unity which includes all our rational experiences, or, in Abrams' words, “The way of the poet, the individual, and the race alike is thus imaged as a circuitous journey from self-unity through multiplex self-consciousness back to self-unity. The unity we seek at the end, however, is higher than the unity we abandoned at the beginning—infininitely higher...” (215).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Abrams routinely uses the term “circuitous journey” to refer to this Romantic paradigm of the dialectical upward spiral journey into greater wisdom and consciousness. Following Abrams, I shall use “circuitous journey” and “Romantic upward spiral” interchangeably.

Hölderlin's *Hyperion*, Abrams further explains, dramatized the temptation to regress and escape back to infantile self-unity that Schiller described (238-239). In the first two installments, Hyperion laments his life's course and the suffering he has endured, and, indeed, his life has been a succession of disillusionments. In his innocent youth, he felt peace of mind and harmony with nature but experienced grief at the painful departure of his beloved teacher Adamas. As a young man, he experienced fraternal love for a new friend, Allabanda, but then angrily parted from him over his disdain for his friend's secret society. When he met and fell in love with Diotima, he seemed content to stay with her forever, but out of this love, he misinterprets her advice to re-enter the world and use his gifts as a call to arms against the Turks and is soon parted from her. After his reunion with Allabanda and his high expectations of using his talents in battle, he suffers a complete disillusionment with life, which results in his rejection of Diotima and her untimely death. In his first bitter installments to Bellarmin, Hyperion would just as soon not have been the Prodigal Son, finally returning from a brief stopover in Germany to Greece, his homeland: "Oh, man is a god when he dreams, a beggar when he thinks; and when inspiration is gone, he stands like a worthless son whom his father has driven out of the house, and stares at the miserable pennies that pity has given him for the road" (Hölderlin 4). But after recounting his life's tale to his friend, Hyperion relives his most recent moments in Germany from a new perspective, experiencing a mystical harmony with his dead beloved, through whom he is reunified with nature. He now understands that his initial desires to trade in his life's suffering for a return to childhood were merely an immature wish to regress: "But as Schiller had said, civilized man can't go back again...Or in the terms of Hölderlin's own preface, the way back is the way on, for the only lasting way to regain the integrity we have lost is by 'striving and struggle'" (Abrams 242).

While Siddhartha never seeks a regressive shortcut back to childhood bliss, never regrets his life experiences and moves bravely on to the next stage, like Hyperion he does follow the same spiral version of the Prodigal Son. Initially inspired by the Samanas' ascetic quest for the Self over his father's empty Brahmanic rituals, he squanders the knowledge and freedom his father has given him, only to become disillusioned with the Samanas, terminating his apprenticeship with them. Equally excited by the prospect of being initiated into the world of the senses and playing the game of the ordinary people by becoming a merchant, he eventually grows nauseated at this life, losing most of what he has to gambling, unable even to stay with his beloved, unaware that she is also carrying his son. Siddhartha himself recognizes his own wasted efforts when he confesses to Govinda that they have achieved with the Samanas nothing more in fleeing the self than the drunken man in the tavern, and when he contemplates suicide after a wasted night of carousing with women and intimidating his friends. But like Hyperion's self-delusions in the world of human relationships, Siddhartha's are also part of the necessary stage of the fall required of the Romantic Prodigal Son, something Siddhartha himself later recognizes:

I have had to experience so much stupidity, so many vices, so much error, so much nausea, disillusionment and sorrow, just in order to become a child again and begin anew. But it was right that it should be so...I had to sin in order to live again. Whither will my path lead me? This path is stupid, *it goes in spirals*, perhaps in circles, but whichever way it goes, I will follow it. (97, emphasis added)

As with Hyperion, this insight only comes to Siddhartha after he struggles through the collapse of fragile unions on his dialectical journey toward a more permanent union.

Like Hyperion, Siddhartha also eventually feels disgust after living among and leading the ordinary men, disgust which leads to a pivotal parting with his beloved and abhorrence for human life, including his own. Jacob Boehme described this "bottoming out" or nadir as the point of salvation, the point at which the epistrophe back toward the One commenced (Abrams 162). Like Hyperion, Siddhartha begins the journey back and up to a higher unity (a unity, however, that is

more Indian than German Romantic, as we shall see). Contemplating suicide, he hears Om arising out of the lowest depths of his despair and turns himself around, awakening from his prior life as a rich merchant and heading back toward the river and toward Vasudeva with a “higher” or wider consciousness. After leaving his father, falling into the material world of the senses and losing his inner voice, Siddhartha finds Vasudeva, his spiritual father, who initiates him into the ways of the river. Through his painful dealings with his son, he is also reunited with his brothers, the “child-people”: “At the same time, he felt that it [love for his son] was not worthless, that it was necessary, that it came from his own nature. This emotion, this pain, these follies also had to be experienced” (122). The circle is complete when Siddhartha becomes aware of how his love for his son has placed him directly in the position of his own father, whom he sees again in his own reflection. With this realization, he hears the river laugh and soon learns to laugh too: he is like his father but more like his spiritual father Vasudeva, like his brothers the “child-people” but with the added consciousness of the unity of all things (he has become *as* a child, in Jesus’ description, and not *childish*).

The Romantic upward spiral may have also come to Hesse through his interest in the life of St. Francis, the legend that fascinated so many of his Romantic predecessors. Many scholars focus on the influence of St. Francis on Hesse in relation to Hesse’s early biography of the saint and in relation to *Peter Camenzind* (1904): “Like Wordsworth, Peter sees himself as a combination of recluse, wanderer, and sage who has *found his way back home from the alienating forces of the modern world through the connection with nature* . . . Hesse finds Franciscan spirituality attractive because of its veneration of the simple and the natural” (Stelzig 90, emphasis added). Hesse also found in the events of Francis’ life echoes of his own struggles, contextualized in the heroic life path of the saint who falls into the social and political traps of his day only to be reborn out of the depths of his despair to find his own path back to a union with God and with his fellow men. As

G.K. Chesterton tells us in his landmark biography of the saint, Francis spent his early years in blissful peace, the son of a merchant father who was obsessed with his profession and without tolerance for spiritual idealists (39 & 54). We are reminded of Kamaswami, a merchant and father figure for Siddhartha. Chesterton also relays that Francis became a young man immersed in the world of the senses and politics of his day, fancying himself first a troubadour and then a crusader, impressed with himself and eager to test himself in the world (39, 50-51). Siddhartha too immerses himself in this world as Kamaswami's "son," and becomes a successful lover and businessman. But according to Chesterton, Francis came to feel bitter disillusionment with this world of desires and suffering, and after several illnesses thwarted his efforts to join the crusades, he turned inward to know himself by facing his greatest fears (as for example his embracing a leper on the road and giving him all his money), realizing that his path lay in an uncharted direction (51-52).

This realization led inevitably to a conflict with his father, whom Francis challenged with all the strength and conviction of his new path and emerging self. Chesterton tells us that when Francis "stole" from his father to try to rebuild a decaying church (Francis considered it a charitable donation that he was making on his father's behalf), the merchant had the authorities hunt his son down mercilessly (54-55). Francis went underground and hid in caves until, finally caught and brought to justice, he stripped himself of all his clothes, threw them and the money he had "stolen" from his father down in front of the court, and proclaimed that he had no father now but God (56). Hesse would dramatize this confrontation and departure from the father in several pivotal scenes in *Siddhartha*<sup>8</sup>—first, the young hero leaves the Brahmin path of his biological father, and later, the paths of the old Samana and Kamaswami (both father figures) respectively. In the break with Kamaswami, Siddhartha finds himself disillusioned with the merchant life and

detaches himself from the world of Samsara, disgusted with the world of the “ordinary people,” sinking into a deep depression that nearly ends in suicide. In what amounts to a conversion scene, Siddhartha is awakened by the river to a higher calling—the voice arising from the depths within, uttering the word Om—and soon finds his spiritual father in Vasudeva. He then comes to love the “ordinary people” once again, ferrying all manner of patrons across the river and feeling deep empathy for their suffering. Francis too underwent a spiritual conversion on his new path: in essence, he emerged from the underground caves as a man reborn, casting off his biological father and embracing God as his new spiritual father. He also came to feel deep compassion for all people (merchants included, some of whom joined his order) and devoted his life to serving (and saving) them.<sup>9</sup>

Curiously, both Siddhartha and Francis seem to discover their respective paths of individuation at the moment of darkest despair; in a sense, they undergo a death of a worldly persona and a rebirth to their own inner callings: “[Francis] underwent a reversal of a certain psychological kind; which was really like the reversal of a complete somersault, in that by coming full circle it came back, or apparently came back to the same normal posture... The man who went into the cave was not the man who came out again; in that sense he was almost as different as if he were dead, as if he were a ghost or a blessed spirit” (Chesterton 70). Chesterton goes on to explain the nature of Francis’ reversal and awakening. In that cave he had to confront the reality of his failures, for he had made a fool of himself by returning frustrated from military campaigns as a coward in his own eyes, and by botching the renovation of a church for which he believed himself a failure. Also, his father condemned him as a thief (72). This was the bottom

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<sup>8</sup> We recall the young Hesse, who in 1891 ran away from the Protestant theological seminary in Maulbronn and protested to his parents, who had sent him there, that he would be “a poet or nothing at all.”

<sup>9</sup> Some of the major Hesse critics, notably Ziolkowski, Stelzig, and Boulby, emphasize the Christian influence on and characterization of Siddhartha’s compassion. Boulby, in particular, claims that Siddhartha’s “doctrine of universal love points away from Indian teachings altogether toward that of St.

of his fall, which, paradoxically, was also the “moment at the centre when he would seem to climbing up and up” (73). We can’t help but recognize in this Boehme’s epistrophe or “bottoming out” as the nadir of the Neo-Platonic cycle, which is paradoxically the point of return upward to salvation. Similarly, Siddhartha plunges into despair and contemplates suicide by the river, repulsed by his own foolishness and desires. At his low point, he hears Om and rediscovers the Self that has existed all along beneath this latest illusion of the merchant persona. He too faces himself and returns to the world of men the wiser for his fall, emptied but perceiving the world with a child’s eyes: “Nothing is mind. I know nothing. I possess nothing. I have learned nothing...I have had to experience so much stupidity, so many vices, so much error, so much nausea, disillusionment and sorrow, just in order to become a child again and begin anew” (95-96).

According to Chesterton, Francis too begins anew as one emptied, as a child, for “It was by this deliberate idea of starting from zero, from the dark nothingness of his own desserts, that he did come to enjoy even earthly things as few people have enjoyed them” (75). Having returned from the abyss with new eyes, the phenomenal world, which had once nearly drowned them, appears in a new light. In a sense, the reborn man sees the world from the opposite perspective from ordinary men. For Francis,

Being in some mystical sense on the other side of things, he sees things go forth from the divine as children going forth from a familiar and accepted home, instead of meeting them as they come out, as most of us do, upon the roads of the world...For us the elements are like heralds who tell us with trumpet and tabard that we are drawing near the city of a great king; but he hails them with an old familiarity that is almost an old frivolity. He calls them his Brother Fire and his Sister Water. (76)

For his part, Siddhartha hears the voices of all things emerging from the river and understands the miraculous unity and interdependence of all living things. Both of these men, it would seem,

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Francis” (138). I shall challenge this claim and analyze the nature of Siddhartha’s compassion later in this chapter.

have awakened to a larger vision of the divine cycle of the One, its emanation, epistrophe, and return, and both, having attained this higher vision, see the human hierarchy with a semi-comic detachment, and, as Chesterton puts it, “will always have something of a smile for its superiorities” (79). This is the divine smile Govinda recognizes in both his friend and in Gotama. Hence, in Francis’ life, Hesse found a manifestation of the Romantic spiral, and he perhaps borrowed this pattern of individuation.

Finally, in addition to the direct influence of the Romantic hero’s upward spiral through the works of his favorite writers (Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin, to name a few) and the saints’ lives, Hesse also encountered this structure through his experience with the theories of C.G. Jung. As we have seen, Hesse was familiar with Jung’s texts, particularly *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912), which he read in 1916 (Mileck 102). That same year, the year of Hesse’s breakdown, Hesse briefly met Jung himself and experienced Jungian analytical psychology firsthand with one of Jung’s former students, Dr. J.B. Lang (102-103). From that time onward, he confided in Lang, not only in formal therapy from 1916 to 1917, but also in subsequent sessions, and finally in friendship. Hesse acknowledged the influence of psychoanalysis on artists and writers in his “Artists and Psychoanalysis” (1918), published one year before *Demian* appeared. Furthermore, in this essay he implies that psychoanalysis influenced his own writing and references Jung and his works several times. During the eighteen months of writer’s block he experienced between the first and second parts of *Siddhartha*, Hesse underwent treatment with Jung himself in 1921, and corresponded sporadically with Jung from 1921 to 1950 (Mileck 103). Reading knowledge and practical experience of Jungian therapy may have found their way into Hesse’s confessional novels, and his plots may even have been strongly influenced by the Jungian paradigm of individuation—in many ways a variation of the Romantic hero’s upward spiral.

With his theory of individuation, Jung was able to find an empirical, psychological parallel for the German Romantic spiral. Like his Romantic predecessors, Jung as early as his 1916 “On the Structure of the Unconscious” assumed a paradisiacal state of innocence, harmony, totality, and unity present in the minds of both children and in primitives—i.e., the undifferentiated psyche. After he began his first experiments painting mandalas and studying their presence in dreams, he arrived at the conclusion three years later that the mandala is an image for what he called the archetypal Self (i.e., the true center and “director” of the entire psyche, as opposed to the “lead actor” or ego center of consciousness) and that the process toward a reintegration of the psyche (the psychic rebirth) involved a journey around and toward this center, toward the Self:

When I began drawing the mandalas, however, I saw that everything, all the paths I had been following, all the steps I had taken, were leading back to a single point—namely, to the mid-point. It became increasingly plain to me that the mandala is the center. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the center, to individuation. During those years, between 1918 and 1920, I began to understand the goal of psychic development is the self. There is no linear evolution; there is only circumambulation of the self. (Jung, *MDR* 196)

But Jung’s course is also linear in the sense that it is through consciousness that individuation takes place. The unity of the psyche that was largely unconscious in childhood is now approached at a higher, more conscious level through the striving, integrating, and increasingly flexible ego. In other words, one who succeeds along the path of individuation unites unconscious elements with consciousness, as opposed to the unified but largely unconscious or preconscious condition of the immature psyche. Hence, Jungian individuation involves reconciling the mature ego with the archetypal Self, recognizing the ego as an organ of the archetypal Self, and in so doing becoming aware of one’s unique and individual standpoint toward the personal and impersonal psyche.

While we may not be able to determine precisely when Hesse became aware of Jungian individuation, we do know that Lang mentioned the term in an unpublished letter dated 1918 in which he interprets one of Hesse’s dreams (Richards 3). We also know that prior to this Hesse

had read one of the earliest essays in which Jung begins to formulate his theory, the 1916 essay “The Structure of the Unconscious” (2). Even though he has yet to define the specific stages of individuation or the typical archetypes involved, Jung in this essay presents enough of his theory for us to consider it as a possible major structural influence on *Siddhartha*. In the essay, he refers to his process as “differentiation,” “path of self-realization,” and eventually “individuation.” After mapping out the regions of personal and collective consciousness, then the personal and collective unconscious, Jung claims that certain elements from these regions may stand as obstacles to the free development of the ego (“Structure” 283). The first such element, and perhaps the most deceptive, is the persona, the mask one uses to present oneself to society. For Jung, it is a wolf in sheep’s clothing, a collective element masquerading as a uniquely individual trait, for by choosing a mask from which to differentiate oneself from the group, one inevitably chooses a collective mask—i.e., one that many others have also chosen to distinguish themselves from the pack:

Only the fact that the persona is a segment more or less arbitrarily cut off from the collective psyche can explain why we are in danger of taking it, altogether wrongly, for something individual; for as its name implies, it is nothing but a mask for the collective psyche: a mask which simulates individuality pretending to others and to itself that it is an individual, while it simply plays a part in which the collective psyche speaks. (“Structure” 289)

Hence, as Jung explains, the first task in individuation involves differentiating collective elements of the psyche from uniquely personal ones: “To find out what is truly individual in ourselves, the first necessity is profound reflection: we may then suddenly realize what extraordinary difficulties this discovery of individuality presents” (“Structure” 287). Jung suggests that this profound reflection, accompanied by analysis, serves to counteract imitation and to dissolve the persona, a necessary step in individuation. At this point, unable to cope with emerging unconscious elements shining through the mask, we may either regress, with an attempt to restore the persona and reduce the emerging elements as “nothing but” images of repressed sexual energy (Freud), or

over-identify with elements of the collective and risk inflation or being swallowed up by the unconscious.

To avoid either Scylla or Charybdis, then, we must learn to identify the individual apart from the collective, a process that we can only initiate by separating the individual from the persona:

We must rigorously separate the concept of the individual from that of the persona, for the persona itself can be entirely dissolved in the collective. But the individual is precisely that which can never be absorbed into the collective and which moreover is never identical with it. That is why both the identification with the collective and the will to segregate oneself from it are alike synonymous with disease. ("Structure" 296)

Once differentiation from the persona is accomplished, we can begin the long journey of assimilating elements of the collective unconscious as they appear. Jung is careful to point out that pure detachment from the objective psyche is impossible (quoting Faust as an example) just as is full integration with it, since the collective unconscious is so large and since it is eternally creative. But through the right use of imagination and hermeneutic therapy, which involves the analysand reflecting on a dream symbol and constructing layers of subjective analogies around it, followed by the analyst's adding of objective analogies, one can discern one's "life-line," a life path which follows the course of libido energy and allows one to maintain the individuality one has fought to attain. This life-line, however, is only temporary as it is only a symbolic pattern of an organic process; hence one must be vigilant to stay aware of one's life line and be flexible enough to adapt to a new one when the psyche indicates the time has come. Overall, in this early essay familiar to Hesse, we come upon some of the central elements of Jung's theory: first, that individuation is a process whereby the individual must define himself apart from the deceptive persona; second, that he must avoid identifying with or repressing the arising elements of the collective unconscious; and, finally, having developed a mature, individual psychic posture in relation to the elements of the collective, he may perhaps undergo several symbolic deaths and rebirths (life-lines) in order to maintain that posture.

Even in this early incarnation, Jung's pattern may be discerned in *Siddhartha*. Born a Brahmin's son, Siddhartha's early life, we may infer, was one of peace and contentment, and we first see him in an idyllic setting: "The sun browned his slender shoulders on the river bank, while bathing at the holy ablutions, at the holy sacrifices. Shadows passed across his eyes in the mango grove during play, while his mother sang, during his father's teachings, when with the learned men" (3). Having entered into the pupil or apprenticeship stage of his life, however, Siddhartha feels compelled to alter the course of his life. Hence, his first defining moment comes when he decides to throw off the persona of "the Brahmin's son," for he has discovered a part of himself deep within that is simply not satisfied with his role or with his father's teachings. He holds the Brahmins up to their own ideal—namely, finding and identifying with Atman—and finds them unfulfilled and hypocritical. What is remarkable about Siddhartha is the enormous strength and conviction he derives from identifying with this self apart from the persona, a conviction that allows him to subdue his father and persuade him to allow him to leave. In this battle of wills with the father, we might argue, Siddhartha changes life-lines, staying close to his inner voice and leaving behind a world of rituals and philosophies that the Brahmins do not live out. In effect, he undergoes a symbolic death and rebirth, going so far as to consider actual death preferable to a regressive regeneration of the persona: "I will stand and wait.' ` You will grow tired, Siddhartha.' `I will grow tired.' ` You will fall asleep, Siddhartha.' `I will not fall asleep.' `You will die, Siddhartha.' `I will die'" (11). It is almost as if the father at first stands as a personification of the Brahmin path, and it is this shell that Siddhartha must dissolve in hopes that his father and not the Brahmin will give him his blessing. Intuitively, he knows this will happen, which is why he does not disobey his father and simply maintains his position and waits.

In following this inner self and doing away with the persona, however, Siddhartha immediately identifies with an element arising out of the collective unconscious, what Jung

would later describe as the shadow. In many ways, the forest dwelling Samanas function as the shadows of the Brahmins: “Wandering ascetics, they were three thin worn-out old men, neither old nor young, with dusty and bleeding shoulders, practically naked, scorched by the sun, solitary, strange and hostile—lean jackals in the world of men” (9). In this last image, we can’t help but think of another Hesse character devoured by his shadow, a lone wolf and outcast in the world of men: the Steppenwolf. These are not former Brahmin householders who, after having grown old and passed on their traditions and property to their sons, have gone into the forest to prepare for death. These are men who have chosen a path alternate to and contrary to that of the Brahmins. If Siddhartha had stayed home, he would have completed his apprenticeship and been initiated into the Veda’s teaching and into the role of householder. He would have carried out the organized and complex daily rituals and sacrifices to the gods, as his father had done. He would have assumed his role as a Brahmin priest, the leading caste of Indian society, and devoted himself to seeking Atman and union with all life. Instead, he learns to see life and society as illusions and seeks escape, and he subjects himself to all manner of tortures to deaden the senses. Siddhartha’s inflation with the shadow is most apparent in his unquestioning contempt for all life and society: “...all were not worth a passing glance, everything lied, stank of lies; they were all illusions of sense, happiness and beauty. All were doomed to decay. The world tasted bitter. Life was pain. Siddhartha had one single goal...to let the Self die” (14).

In time, however, Siddhartha recognizes and compensates for his inflation; his inner voice compels him to question the shadow just as he had questioned the persona, to question the Samana path just as he had questioned the Brahmin path. It is time again to die and be reborn, time to change life-lines to stay true to his inner life and individuation. Siddhartha must disengage from his identification with the shadow. This takes place again in a confrontation—this time with the Samana leader—and again the power of Siddhartha’s contact with and devotion to

life enable him to disengage from the personified element of the collective unconscious, from the shadow. We note, incidentally, that the Samana represents a shadow of a collective, cultural nature—i.e., in joining the Samanas, Siddhartha has identified with the collective antithesis of his persona as Brahmin's son. But he has a personal shadow as well in Govinda, who is continually described as a "shadow" throughout the novel. As we noted earlier, like Wagner in Goethe's *Faust*, Govinda is complacent and remains devoted to whatever path he is on. He deludes himself into thinking this path is the right one, fixating on one goal, even when he must realize that he is gaining no insight into truth.

When they meet as old men, Siddhartha accuses Govinda of being blinded by his obsession for his goal. When Govinda cannot defend his path, he bows before principle and authority, even to the point of deluding himself and Siddhartha: "We are not going in circles, we are going upwards. The path is a spiral; we have already climbed many steps" (18). The irony in Govinda's protestation, of course, is that Siddhartha is on the spiral path and Govinda, fearful of change, is content to remain going in circles. Siddhartha, however, is not fooled and changes life-lines again, allowing Govinda to seek his security with the Buddha's monks. Perhaps his taking leave of Govinda signifies this disengagement from the personal shadow, just as his rejection of the Samanas signifies his detachment from the cultural shadow. But there is also truth in Govinda's appraisal of their apprenticeship with the Samanas. There *is* a difference between the Samanas' ascetic escape from self and that of the town drunkard—namely, the disciplined training of the senses and mind Siddhartha has mastered. In his sudden criticism of the Samanas, Siddhartha tips abruptly over from an identification with the shadow into a partial reduction of this element of the collective unconscious, the other danger Jung described in his essay. Still, he does not cut himself off from shadow altogether. Instead, he integrates it, honoring the skills he learned in his

life as a Samana—to think, to wait, to fast—skills that will serve him well in his next life-line, as a merchant.

Before he can set out on this next life, however, Siddhartha must discover what this next life should be. For this, the Buddha proves an excellent guide, not so much in what he says, but in how their conversation helps Siddhartha to become more aware of his individuation. Through his debate with Gotama, whose being and teaching stand as models of perfection for him, Siddhartha comes to realize that there is no teacher or doctrine that can lead him to wisdom better than self-knowledge and awareness: "...he has given to me Siddhartha, myself" (36). As he meditates on this realization in the following chapter, "Awakening," he casts off the remnants of the personae he has worn, dedicating himself to the mystery of his own unfolding: "I will learn from myself, be my own pupil: I will learn from myself the secret of Siddhartha" (39). With this declaration, he awakens from an impulse toward what Jung in his essay calls a "regressive restoration of the persona," for just prior to this awakening Siddhartha had briefly considered returning home to the life of a Brahmin: "...it was his intention and it seemed the natural course for him after the years of his asceticism to return to his home and his father" (40). Now in touch with his own individuation and the "true direction of the currents of the libido" (Jung, "Structure" 301), he opens himself to whatever life-line the psyche calls him to, but he is also "obliged to take the path of individual life which is revealed to him, and to persist in it until and unless an unmistakable reaction from his unconscious warns him he is on the wrong track" (300).

The psyche does indeed reveal his next path in the dream of Govinda as androgyne:

Thereupon he embraced Govinda, put his arm around him, and as he drew him to his breast and kissed him, he was Govinda no longer, but a woman and out of the woman's gown emerged a full breast, and Siddhartha lay there and drank; sweet and strong tasted the milk from this breast. It tasted of woman and man, of sun and forest, of animal and flower, of every fruit, of every pleasure. It was intoxicating. (*Siddhartha* 48)

The androgyne, a unifying symbol of the psyche (Jung would later call it the archetypal self), which Hesse would have been familiar with from having read Jung's 1912 *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, here unites the spiritual (the monk Govinda) with the sensual, emphasizing the latter to Siddhartha as a representation of an unlived life that he needs to experience in order to be true to himself and to be more complete. Siddhartha heeds this message and in the life as Kamaswami's apprentice merchant and in his love affair with Kamala, the wise and beautiful courtesan, he lives out and integrates this undeveloped side of his psyche. But just as he had done with the Samanas, Siddhartha again falls into the trap of identifying with the emerging elements of the unconscious. Here, Kamaswami and Kamala both represent aspects of what Jung would later call the anima—here, Siddhartha's undeveloped relationship to the feminine, to the material world, and to his own emotions. Inflated with the life of power, money, and sex, he again loses his individuation, and only after turning back thoughts of suicide and a deep sleep does he find it again: "...in the first moment of his return to consciousness his previous life seemed to him like a remote incarnation, like an earlier birth of his present Self" (*Siddhartha* 90). This rebirth follows a dream in which he finds Kamala's rare songbird dead in its golden cage, in Jungian terms the spiritual hero dying in the anima's trap. In Jungian terms, this is an "unmistakable reaction from his unconscious [warning] him that he is on the wrong track" ("Structure" 300).

The right track, and the final life-line Siddhartha follows, is the path of the river and life as a ferryman. But again he first tips over from identifying with the unconscious contents to reducing them all to Samsaric distractions and corruptions. When he rejects his life as a merchant and walks away from Kamala, he forgets all he has learned from her and overlooks all she has meant to him:

He learned many things from her wise red lips. Her smooth gentle hand taught him many things. He, who was still a boy as regards love and was inclined to plunge to the depths of

it blindly and insatiably, was taught by her that one cannot have pleasure without giving it...Here with Kamala lay the value and meaning of his present life, not in Kamaswami's business. (66)

Kamala, in fact, has taught him to give of himself and has prepared him to love, something he appreciates much later after her death when he worries about the son she has given him:

Once, when the boy's face reminded him of Kamala, Siddhartha suddenly remembered something she had once said to him a long time ago: 'You cannot love,' she had said to him and he had agreed with her...he had never undergone the follies of love for another person. He had never been able to do this, and it had then seemed to him that this was the biggest difference between him and the ordinary people. But now, since his son was there, he Siddhartha, had become completely like one of the people through sorrow, through loving. He was madly in love, a fool because of love. Now he experienced belatedly, for once in his life, the strongest and strangest passion; he suffered tremendously through it and yet was uplifted, in some way renewed and richer. (122)

It is only now, "belatedly," that Siddhartha becomes "renewed" and "richer," and comes to honor and deepen his emotions, a side of himself first brought to life by Kamala. She has not killed the songbird in the cage, as in Siddhartha's dream; her release of the actual bird after he leaves doubles as a metaphor for her role in his liberation. In a sense, he has evolved from the sensual love she taught him to a broader parental love for his son.

In another sense, however, in his love for his son Siddhartha undergoes another "regressive restoration of the persona," of the Brahmin persona of his own father. Temporarily blinded again to his own individuation, he fails to honor that of his son. Fortunately, Vasudeva helps him out of this regression and guides him back to his own path. Of Siddhartha's son he says, "Which father, which teacher could prevent him from living his own life, from oiling himself with life, from loading himself with sin, from swallowing the bitter drink himself, from finding his own path?" (121). Gradually, Siddhartha learns to accept his son's running away, and ironically, it is this selfless love for his son that brings him back to his own path, eradicates any remnants of arrogance, and broadens into compassion for the ordinary people and indeed for all things, with which he now feels akin. In healing the wound of Siddhartha's parental love, Vasudeva (the

archetypal Wise Old Man) has developed that love into an all-encompassing compassion, symbolized by Siddhartha hearing Om beneath all the river's voices: "Vasudeva's smile was radiant; it hovered brightly in all the wrinkles of his old face, as the Om hovered over all the voices of the river. His smile was radiant as he looked at his friend, and now the same smile appeared on Siddhartha's face. His wound was healing, his pain was dispersing; his Self had merged into unity" (136). As we have seen, this unity, this integration of the archetypal Self, was for Jung the goal of individuation, something he had understood in his early work (1916-1919) with mandalas, prior to Hesse's completion of *Siddhartha* and just before his sessions with Jung.

Hence, it is possible that *Siddhartha* was modeled in part on the Jungian paradigm of individuation: i.e., reflection and dissolving of the persona, overcoming identification with and/or reduction of the emerging elements of the collective unconscious and integrating them, staying true to the flow of libido by following various life-lines and undergoing psychic deaths and rebirths, and following the spiral path back and up to the unity of the personality and integration of the Self on a higher level. Even though Jung had not specified the particular archetypes and their sequence in the individuation process prior to Hesse's completion of *Siddhartha*, we can't help but wonder at the similarities. In her discussion of the Jungian individuation process, Marie-Louise von Franz asserts that after the dissolving of the persona, the archetypes emerge into consciousness as images in the following sequence: shadow (the personal unconscious inversely proportional to ego development), anima / animus (the deeper, collective contrasexual archetypes), and Self (the unifying symbol of the psyche's totality) ("Individuation" 170-227). This is the same sequence we have outlined in *Siddhartha*. It may be, as David Richards has suggested, that art prefigures science and that Hesse intuited this process in his characters before Jung could formulate an empirical theory (2). Or it may be that Hesse built intuitively on what he had read in Jung's 1916 essay and what he had heard in therapy with Lang

and Jung. Or it may be that he was simply articulating what he himself had experienced directly or indirectly. Jung, after all, never claimed to invent individuation, only to discover it, and he and his followers emphasized that the process itself was applicable to all humankind in all times, an archetype in its own right: “The symbolism of life, death, birth, and rebirth is part of the pattern of the individuation process. From the remotest times man has tried to express it in the imagery of myths and fairy tales, in rituals and works of art, to capture the archetypal events in forms that are valid for all men” (Jacobi 60).

While the degree of Jung’s influence on Hesse’s novels remains debatable, we can at the very least acknowledge that it assumes a role comparable in importance to those of Hesse’s other influences. As Ralph Freedman notes in *The Lyrical Novel*, Hesse, because of his background and the psychological analyses he underwent, was in a unique position to add a psychological dimension to the German literary paradigm of the *Bildungsroman*. Hesse shows us the inner development of his characters and then how these developments translate into outer world experiences. Moreover, the supporting characters themselves seem to play double roles as autonomous personages in the outer world of the novel and as allegorical figures for the protagonist’s inner development, and the heroes end up actually becoming the symbols of their higher selves--Siddhartha becomes Vasudeva (Freedman, *The Lyrical Novel* 62-65). Hesse, then, unites the literary paradigm of the *Bildungsroman* with the psychological paradigm of Jungian individuation to create the modern lyric novel as psychological allegory. This literary achievement grew out of Hesse’s personal crisis and psychoanalytical sessions with Jung himself in 1921.

The Romantic hero’s circuitous journey or upward spiral quest, then, influenced Hesse directly and indirectly in the forms of the character development and plot of his German Romantic models, in the legend of St. Francis, and in Jungian individuation. But while we may characterize

this path as the upward progression of a hero who achieves greater self-understanding and self-realization, there yet remains a puer element in this quest. The true puer, as we have mentioned earlier, fails to integrate experience and returns to the mother in a glorious arc or loop. The Romantic puer hero, while developing from his struggle to integrate experience, is nevertheless still an ascender, a climber—one who strives for a transcendent experience, which in the worst cases, culminates in ego-inflation, in absorbing the world in the ego and making the world a reflection of the “I.” As Lilian Furst has described him, the Romantic hero is naturally endowed with youthful charm and talent, yet he has continual difficulty reconciling the ideal (which he vividly imagines) with the mundane real, revels in his suffering, becomes self-obsessed, and seeks his salvation in vague longings for a mystical transcendent state (Furst 97-99). Indeed, we might characterize the puer element of the Romantic hero as narcissistic. Henry Murray has identified in his puer patients “a connection, if not fusion, between ascensionism and...narcissism: the way to attract all eyes is to be very tall, to stand erect over the multitude, and best of all to rise in the air like a god” (93). Murray has also identified sources for this puer narcissism in romantic poetry, mythic philosophy, or “some form of up-yearning mysticism” (98). And Thomas Moore describes Narcissus’ “visual contemplation in the hidden hollows of nature...absorbed in the images formed in imagination” (“Artemis” 184)—words that could also accurately describe Romantic heroes such as Goethe’s Werther and Faust, Hölderlin’s Hyperion, and Novalis’ Heinrich.

In his recounting of the evolution of the Narcissus myth, Mario Jacoby singles out the Romantic period for its seminal role in articulating and developing the myth:

At the end of the eighteenth century the development of the Narcissus theme was lent new impetus by Herder and the Romantics. The mirror symbol became very important and was frequently used. One of the prominent themes of the period was that of genius, the glorification of the great individual’s creative power. The soul of the artist was seen as a mirror of the world, thus justifying artistic subjectivism despite the attendant danger of self-admiration. The artist-as-Narcissus motif cropped up first in the works of W.A. Schlegel

(1798), who said: ‘Artists are always Narcissi!’ The more that attention was focused on Narcissus and his reflection, the more the story as a whole receded into the background. This narrowed view is often blamed on the psychoanalytic concept of narcissism, but in fact it goes back to the Romantic tradition....(15)

Jacoby goes on to investigate a potential puer aspect to psychotherapy as well (21).

By inheriting the German Romantic hero, then, Hesse also inherited his narcissistic, puer aspect—an aspect that agreed all too well with his own puer inflation. As early as *Peter Camenzind*, we can see in Hesse’s thinking a conviction that, as Mark Boulby phrases it, “Love of God is love of nature, love of nature is love of soul, love of soul is love of self—all these are one; thus what might appear at first sight a moving outward is...a narcissistic turning inward” (Boulby 17). And, as we discussed earlier, even Sinclair’s vision and intense self-reflection at the end of *Demian* might be interpreted as “an act of narcissism” (Boulby 157).

### *Siddhartha’s Goal: The Atman of The Wise Old Man*

But India was more to Hesse than a symbolic means to explain Western individuation; it was more than psychological allegory. India also served Hesse as the goal of that individuation, for the ego-less, transpersonal goal that Siddhartha attains at the novel’s end is distinctively Indian, and not, as Bharati Mukherjee Blaise contends, an “adaptation of Hinduism for Romantic purposes...the difficult to attain Romantic goal” (112). We might be wise to heed Boulby’s warning, that “In the interpretation of Hesse’s works it is inadmissible to suppose these Indian influences largely subordinate to, or simply an intensification of, the stimuli of the German

Romantic tradition” (122). Blaise’s claim that “Hesse’s symbolic use of Indian myth is explicitly Romantic” (105) and that in *Siddhartha* “there is no effort to depersonalize the individual hero” (112) is both overstated and based on a very specific and limited definition of the term “Atman” as the individual’s soul. She uses terms like “individualized Atman” (102) and claims that “The degree of depersonalization, therefore, extends only as far as the *personal Atman*” (111, emphasis added). But her association of the Hindu concept of Atman with the individual and personal self and her assumption that Hesse interpreted Atman in this way rests on shaky ground, for Atman, according to the Upanishads that Hesse was familiar with and that strongly influenced him, is a relative and resonant term. Atman takes into account all aspects of phenomenal existence and transcends them, yet it paradoxically remains immanent within them. It is the cosmic energy (Brahman) made manifest in individual beings as an eternal Self (Atman). In the Chandogya Upanishad, for example, we find the following: “Believe me, my son, an invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole universe. That is Reality. That is Atman. Thou art that... There is a bridge between time and Eternity; and this bridge is Atman, the Spirit of man...” (118-121). Of the Atman, Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, says “it is eternal, all pervading, fixed; it is unmoving and primeval (II, 24). Heinrich Zimmer explains that

The inner experience of [Atman], its visualization by virtue of a descent into the inmost cave, is proof enough that it exists everywhere, as the true core indwelling every being. Indestructible and not susceptible to change, it both transcends the universe and inheres in every particle of it; yet in both aspects remains undisclosed. (*Philosophies* 367)

The nature of Atman, then, is transpersonal as well as personal, and this is the paradox and balance that Hesse sought.

As noted in the previous chapter, we know of Hesse’s familiarity with and long-standing high regard for the Bhagavad Gita from his initial reading of the Gita in 1905 in Franz Hartmann’s translation (Mileck 160), his favorable review of Schroeder’s translation in 1912, and his short essay on the Gita written in 1920 for the newspaper he founded for German POW’s (J. Walker 5-

6).<sup>10</sup> Based on the important role that Indian philosophy plays in *Demian*, *Siddhartha*, and *Steppenwolf*, the novels that mark Hesse's progression through the mid-life crisis, we concur with Janet Walker when she concludes that

There is no question that Indian philosophical and religious works sustained [Hesse] during several periods of crisis in his life: during the years just after the turn of the twentieth century when he was becoming disillusioned with bourgeois life, and as he was attempting to find a new basis for his life after he had left his wife, children, and country. (8)

The "new basis" Hesse may have discovered in the Hindu concept of Atman, and in many ways, the psychological and philosophical mindset that Siddhartha reaches at novel's end, resembles the peace of mind Arjuna attains in the Bhagavad Gita.<sup>11</sup> In the beginning of the Gita, Arjuna finds himself in a crisis and a stage of life similar to those of Siddhartha: like Siddhartha when he reached his crisis by the river, Arjuna is a householder when he reaches his own spiritual and ethical crisis on the battlefield. The two are in a sense reborn at this point in that they only begin to learn to discover another basis for identity, another Self, from which to perceive their problems and in which to contextualize their lives.

While Arjuna learns of this self through the teaching of the young/old chariot driver Krishna and through the experience and vision of Krishna's divine form, Siddhartha learns of it from the teaching of the old/young ferryman and his experience and vision of the river. Each learns to identify with the eternal and impersonal Self, the Self that is not only within their respective bodies but that they also share with all other creatures. This Self is eternal and constant despite the illusion of varied experiences and actions in which it cloaks itself. Indeed, when revealing his divine nature to Arjuna, Krishna takes on a form appropriate to Arjuna's particular caste, the

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<sup>10</sup> In "Hermann Hesse and Asian Literature," Janet Walker notes that she has located and surveyed Hesse's reviews using Joseph Mileck's *Hermann Hesse: Biography and Bibliography* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1977, Vol. II, pp. 787-835) (J. Walker 4, n.26).

<sup>11</sup> Emerging from his crisis after seeing Krishna's divine form and hearing his teachings on the various yogas, Arjuna at the end of chapter eighteen of the Bhagavad Gita says, "My delusion is destroyed and I have gained wisdom through Your grace, Krishna. My doubts are gone" (XVIII, 74).

form of a splendid warrior guide “of many divine ornaments, of many uplifted divine weapons...Crowned, armed with a club and bearing a discus, a mass of splendor, shining on all sides...(XI, 11 & 17). His appearance shifts to also include a Shiva-like image, the god of death and destruction—again an image appropriate to Arjuna’s personal dilemma, for Krishna has already tried to explain to him that he is but a vehicle for a larger Self that has already played out an illusory battle with illusory warriors already slain:

They [all of the chief warriors] quickly enter Your fearful mouths, which gape with many tusks; some are seen with crushed heads, clinging between your teeth. As the many torrents of rivers flow toward the ocean, so those heroes of the world enter your flaming mouths. (XI, 27-28)

In addition to witnessing Krishna’s destructive Shiva aspect as world-destroyer, Arjuna also recognizes His true, constant, and eternal nature:

...You, oh Great One, who are [also] the original Creator...Infinite Lord of Gods, you are the dwelling place of the universe, the imperishable, the existent, the non-existent, and that which is beyond both...You are the supreme resting place of all the universe...All the universe is pervaded by you, O One of infinite forms. (XI, 37-38)

Siddhartha has a similar experience in his vision of the river. Like Krishna’s divine revelation, the river takes on multiform images, some relating to the aspirant’s personal dilemma, others moving outward to impersonal forces and a sense of the eternal Self. Vasudeva (whose name is another name for Krishna) brings Siddhartha to the water’s edge and tells him to listen. He hears voices and sees images of suffering and death, especially those relating to his personal experience, but the vision also comes to include universal suffering, universal joy, and a thousand other voices underneath which he experiences the Self that suffuses all:

Siddhartha tried to listen better. The picture of his father, his own picture, and the picture of his son all flowed into each other. Kamala’s picture also appeared and flowed on, and the picture of Govinda and others emerged and passed on. They all became part of the river...the river’s voice was full of longing, full of smarting woe, full of insatiable desire...Siddhartha saw the river hasten, made up of himself and his relatives and all the people he had ever seen...other voices accompanied it [the sorrowful voice], voices of pleasure and sorrow, good and evil voices, laughing and lamenting voices, hundreds of voices, thousands of voices...When Siddhartha listened attentively to this river, to this song

of a thousand voices; when he did not listen to the sorrow or laughter, when he did not bind his soul to any one particular voice and absorb it in his Self, but heard them all, the whole, the unity; then the great song of a thousand voices consisted of one word: Om—perfection. (136)

Siddhartha sees his own life in the river, his own troubles, and is able to reflect on it all within the context of his new identification with Atman. As a result, he can act selflessly out of the experience of his mystical experience with Atman, ferrying people across the river and discovering his dharma in this role. Also identifying with Atman, Arjuna is able to see his life as warrior in a new light. Devoid of ego-gratification, he sees himself as a vehicle for Atman and the deeds he has to perform as having been performed already within the eternal presence of Atman. Hence, he is finally able to fight, detached from his desire for victory, rediscovering his warrior dharma.

The realization of Atman, as we have seen, enables Siddhartha to identify with the puer-et-senex, beyond the confines of time. As he explains to Govinda, he has come to realize that “all small children are potential old men” and that “all sucklings have death within them, all dying people—eternal life” (144). In perhaps his most selfless and compassionate act, he asks Govinda to kiss his forehead, and in Govinda’s vision Siddhartha appears to harmonize and transcend puer and senex:

He saw the face of a fish...a dying fish with dimmed eyes. He saw the face of a newly born child, red and full of wrinkles, ready to cry...He saw [myriad] forms and faces...helping each other, loving, hating, and destroying each other and become newly born...and over them all was...Siddhartha’s smiling face which Govinda touched with his red lips at that moment. (151)

This is, of course, Vasudeva’s smile, “lighting up with a thousand tiny wrinkles, equally childish, equally senile” (108). By harmonizing puer and senex, Siddhartha, like Arjuna struggling through the mid-life transformation of generativity vs. stagnation, as we have seen in this and the previous chapters, is able to move into the broader virtue of advanced adulthood—compassion and care.

It is also possible that Mahayana Buddhist texts supplied models for Siddhartha's goal. Ever since Ziolkowski insisted in his landmark *The Novels of Hermann Hesse* that *Siddhartha's* goal completely contradicted that of the Buddha, citing comments to this effect in Hesse's letters and diary entries, Hesse scholars have largely turned away from Buddhist influences on *Siddhartha* (Kaplan 3). Yet the facts remain that Hesse's protagonist shares with the Buddha the epithet of "Siddhartha" or "one who has reached his goal," that he is a contemporary of the Buddha and witnesses the rise of Buddhism in India, that he meets and has an important debate with the Buddha himself, and that his path of individuation is analogous to that of the Buddha. Also, there is Govinda's impression of the enlightened Siddhartha, so reminiscent of Siddhartha's impression of Gotama earlier in the novel:

...[Siddhartha's] glance and his hand, his skin and his hair all radiate a purity, peace, serenity, gentleness and saintliness which I have never seen in any man since the recent death of our illustrious teacher...And Govinda saw that this mask-like smile...was exactly the same as the calm, delicate, impenetrable...wise, thousand-fold smile of Gotama, the Buddha...It was in such a manner, Govinda knew, that the Perfect One smiled. (151)

It seems clear that Hesse intends to equate Siddhartha's state at novel's end with that of the enlightened Gotama, the Buddha.

Unfortunately, many Hesse scholars are only generally familiar with Buddhism, and usually reduce it to its basic tenets without an understanding of the many variations and traditions that have grown up around them over the last 2,500 years. When they used the term "Buddhist," it seems as though many of the early Hesse scholars were referring to Theravada Buddhism, though they only use the generic term "Buddhist" throughout their commentaries. Ziolkowski focuses only on the eight-fold path and the four noble truths of Buddhism, demonstrating that these cannot be structural influences since the novel is triadic in nature. But he and Boulby also emphasize the "world-negating" aspect of Buddhism (Boulby 137), which they see in harsh contrast to the life-affirming, self-sacrificing compassion of the novel's ending. The Buddhism

they refer to is that of the Theravada, the Buddhism that stresses the liberation of the individual from the wheel of suffering via asceticism and devotion to the rules of moral discipline. This is the path of the arhat who focuses all his energies on the quest for nirvana and “[attaining] full extinction immediately following this life” (Bercholz and Kohn 313). Indeed, this seems alien to the universal compassion, love, and sacrifice that Siddhartha embodies as the ferryman at novel’s end.

But there is another Buddhism and another paradigm that matches the final state of Hesse’s protagonist more closely, that of the Mahayana with its ideal of the Bodhisattva:

...a being who...renounces complete entry into nirvana until all beings are saved. The determining factor for this action is compassion, supported by highest insight and wisdom...the Bodhisattva ideal replaced in Mahayana the [Theravada] ideal of the arhat, whose effort is directed toward his own liberation, since this was regarded as too narrow and ego oriented. (315)

The love that Siddhartha experiences toward the end of the novel need not be limited solely to a Christian interpretation. And, as Madison Brown acknowledges, there is something beyond the Theravadan ideal in Siddhartha’s loving compassion:

There is for Siddhartha a somewhat unorthodox Moksha in keeping with his being the new Buddha, bearer of the new wisdom. His achievement is indeed a sense of liberation from the life cycle as he overcomes time and space in his vision but his achievement is also marked by a loving acceptance of life in its entirety. Hesse has described for us his own “Moksha.”(Brown 196)

Actually, what seems like Hesse’s unique brand of compassionate liberation in Siddhartha’s enlightenment may be explained by the Mahayana virtue of *Karuna*, the concept and practice of a universal and empathic love arising from the experience of emptiness, a concept essential to Mahayana belief. This emptiness, however, is not the emptiness of nihilism or world-negation that Boulby and others take it for; instead, it is the necessary prerequisite to the experience of an identification with all things. As the Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh explains, *emptiness* is not a vacuum but simply a vantage point, for if something is *empty* of one thing it is

invariably *filled* with something else (Hanh 247). The empty glass is also filled with air. When Mahayana Buddhists say all things are empty, they mean empty of a separate individual existence; an individual piece of paper is an illusion since it is dependent on and comprised of the tree from which it was cut, the rain, soil, and sun that nourished the tree, the logger who felled and cut the tree, and so on, into one immense interdependent web (247-249). Hence, our sheet of paper exists in a state of *inter-being* with all other things, and this is the basis for *Karuna's* empathic, universal love.

Some Hesse scholars have identified *Karuna* as the quality of Siddhartha's love (Kassim 241), especially in his final awakening when Vasudeva has him listen again to the river, and he experiences emptiness, inter-being, and universal compassion. We also recognize *Karuna* in Siddhartha's decision to work the ferryboat and to work for the enlightenment of those who wish to learn from him—in the same light as Gotama, who in the tradition of the Bodhisattvas refuses entering nirvana and agrees to teach at the request of the gods. Rather than simply ignoring Govinda or refusing to discuss philosophy with him when he turns up again as an old man to cross the river on the ferryboat, Siddhartha chooses again to reveal his identity to his friend and to try to explain to him in words what he has learned. When this fails, he responds to the struggling Govinda's request to ease his suffering by summoning his friend's love and compelling him to kiss his forehead, the result of which, as we have seen, is a liberating vision, a vision, we might add, that seems remarkably similar to that of the young Bodhisattva of the Avatamsaka Sutra when he touches his teacher and receives a vision of his friend's previous lives and the inter-being of all things (Kaplan 20). The image of the ferryboat, moreover, should not be lost on us, for it is not the little ferryboat (Hinayana) of personal enlightenment but the great ferryboat (Mahayana) of the Bodhisattva that Siddhartha pilots, guiding others out of *Karuna* toward enlightenment before he himself enters the yonder shore of final liberation. Even though scholars

have not been able to pin down specific Mahayana texts as influences on *Siddhartha*, Hesse's characterization of his protagonist's ego-less compassion seems at least in part derived from these sources and helps to create a depersonalized, ironic context for Siddhartha's Romantic quest.

To be sure, Hesse would have been exposed to the ideals of Mahayana Buddhism while writing *Siddhartha*. Count Hermann von Keyserling, in his enormously popular *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, extolled Mahayana Buddhism and praised the Bodhisattva path:

The Bodhisattva says "yes" to the most evil world, for he knows himself to be one with it. Rid of himself, he feels his foundation in God, while his surface is intertwined with everything which exists. Thus, he must love all beings as he loves himself, thus he cannot rest until every one mirrors divinity in everything. The Bodhisattva, not the sage, embodies the aim of human aspiration. (372)

Hesse reviewed Keyserling's book in 1920 while he was in the midst of writing *Siddhartha*, and in the review, he praised the author of the travel diary, saying of Keyserling, "in what is most essential, most alive, he has everywhere strengthened me, reassured me, often led me, supported and aided me" (*My Belief* 369). In an essay on the Buddha's speeches in 1922, the year *Siddhartha* was published, Hesse downplays the philosophy and dogma of Buddhism and praises instead Buddha's life and activity. Significantly, he emphasizes the quality of compassion as a significant benefit of reading Buddhist texts; as readers progress, they become aware of not only "a harmony in them...a smiling transcendence, a totally unshakable firmness, *but also invariable kindness, endless patience*" (*My Belief* 383, emphasis added).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, there was that all-important visit from Hesse's cousin Wilhelm Gundert in February, 1921, just before Hesse emerged from his writer's block, of which we have spoken earlier. We recall that for weeks after the visit of this "Japanese cousin" Hesse was "entirely stuck in India," that his lectures dealt

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<sup>12</sup> While numerous Hesse scholars have already analyzed the influence of Oriental religions and philosophies on Hesse's works, very few have linked the quality of compassion in *Siddhartha* to Buddhism, as Kaplan has done in his recent essay. None have placed Hesse's use of Oriental material in the context of his psychological crises. For important studies on the influence of Chinese religion and philosophy on Hesse, see Adrian Hsia's *Hermann Hesse und China: Darstellung, Materialien, und Interpretation*.

exclusively with “Brahman and Atman, also with Buddha” (qtd. in Freedman, *Pilgrim* 230), and that he decided to dedicate the second half of *Siddhartha* to his cousin. As an expert on Eastern religions and one with whom Hesse could “live wholly in Indian thoughts and ideas” (qtd. in Freedman 230), Gundert too may have helped to draw Hesse’s attention to the ideal and goal of the bodhisattva that appears to play such a significant role in the second half of the novel.

Despite the Mahayana nature of Siddhartha’s enlightenment, the spirit of his quest seems ironically Western and Romantic. As we have seen, Schiller and the German Romantics came to emphasize the quest and striving for a return to harmony and totality on a higher plane, over the goal itself. Rather than the ideal goal of spiritual enlightenment achieved through disciplined and ordered training, it was the emotional extremes and the drive and will of the protagonist to plunge headlong into life, seeking wisdom through personal suffering and experience, that characterized Hölderlin’s *Hyperion*, Goethe’s *Faust*, and the literature of the German Romantics. Likewise, one element in Hesse’s novel that stays with us is Siddhartha’s quest—his devoted immersion in and subsequent disillusionment with each of his lives, his suicidal despair by the river, his bittersweet love for his son, his ecstasy in hearing the river speak to him, and his drive and integrity in suffering and struggling through samsara in order to remain true to his own *Eigensinn*, his own self-will. Siddhartha seems to follow that most recent incarnation of the Romantic upward spiral—i.e., the path of Jungian individuation—in casting off his persona along with all teachers and doctrines, integrating shadow and anima, and placing his faith first and foremost in his own “inner voice,” his own Self. Yet his experience hearing the thousand voices of the river and achieving a mystic union with and compassion for all beings suggests a dissolution of self-will and ego indicative of Mahayana emptiness and enlightenment.

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Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974. For important studies on the influence of Indian religion on Hesse, see, besides Kaplan, essays by Kassim, Brown, and Timpe.

It is essential to note here that Siddhartha's experience lies not with the Jungian Self, but with the metaphysical realization of Eastern liberation—i.e., identification with the Hindu Atman or the Mahayana Buddhist void. Govinda, through his own experience when kissing his friend's forehead, is a witness to the metaphysical reality of Siddhartha's liberation. We must be very careful not to confuse the Jungian goal of individuation—i.e., the ego's integration of the archetypal Self—with the Eastern goal of ego-dissolution either through attainment of nirvana or through identification with Atman. As Joseph Campbell, a student of both Jung and Vedanta, noted in a lecture on Jung, the Self is the totality of the psyche and is not equivalent to the Hindu notion of Atman, which he characterized as the cosmic ocean into which the dewdrop (ego) dissolves—i.e., the one is a psychological experience and the other a metaphysical one (*Symbol & Psyche*). The confusion is due in large part to Jung's use of the Indian term "mandala" to describe the circular image of the Self in dreams and his use of Indian images and concepts to find evidence and analogues for his own theories.

Overall, then, we might conclude that Hesse in *Siddhartha* was able to find a new cosmic identity and context based on Indian sources outside the Romantic hero's upward spiral with which to envision his own mid-life crisis. This is not to suggest that Hesse himself experienced anything like nirvana or Atman, for he was well aware that the kind of experience Siddhartha has at the novel's end is in the various Indian traditions extremely rare and typically the result of the spiritual practice of thousands of lifetimes. Rather, Hesse used the idea of, and perhaps a faith in, such a universal identity as an imaginative salve for the disillusionment that comes with identifying with the striving, upward-bound Romantic hero. In effect, he wrapped the Romantic quest for individuation in the transpersonal context of the Eastern Self, having his ascending hero awaken to the Wise Old Man's cosmic vision, which both humbles and validates his individual climb. It is the irony and resonance this context makes possible that would enable Hesse to step

outside of and to temper his puer narcissism, enabling him to become a different kind of hero, a middle-aged hero like Arjuna, who can continue striving while at the same time smiling and compassionately accepting the cosmic irony of that quest. Perhaps, after writing *Siddhartha*, Hesse was finally able to smile at himself and his own life thus far.

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