

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

Since the beginning of civilization, human individual has found himself on the quest to find the nature of his own individual self that makes him distinct from all others. Numerous religions, faiths, and belief systems evolved with their own philosophy on life's sufferings and ways of overcoming sufferings through the realization of one's self. Buddha, born in Kapilvastu of Nepal around 6th century BC, is supposed to be one of the earliest spiritualist who denied following any God, prophet or belief systems and insisted that since man himself is responsible for whatever happens to him, he should seek enlightenment through his own individual efforts. However, Buddha himself is worshipped as a God by his followers.

Hermann Hesse's novel *Siddhartha* (1922) was written and published in the aftermath of the World War I and another world conflict seemed imminent due to rising ideological and political conflicts. The novel itself is set in the Buddha's time. However, *Siddhartha* is not Buddha's biographical story. The devastation of the World War I, economic and social breakdown in the 1920s, technological explosion and its misuse in warfare and subsequent ideological and political conflicts forced people to doubt the erstwhile confidence in human reason. With such intellectual and moral context in mind, Hesse wrote *Siddhartha* as a challenge to the established belief systems. Through *Siddhartha*, Hesse attempts to resist the material and military pursuits of his era by persuading each individual to embark on a personal pursuit of finding the inner self.

### **Hesse and his Literary Features**

Hermann Hesse (1877-1962) was born in Germany in a Protestant missionary family of the Pietist order and became a Swiss national after the World War I. Hesse was

awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946. In 1911, he visited India for the first time and then to China. This was to begin his life-long interest in Eastern religions and their mysticism. The devastating effects of the World War I and his own personal crises encouraged him to delve deep into the mysticism of Eastern faiths and practices. Hesse's works explore the duality of nature and individual's inward search outside social convention. Hesse's approach is eclectic: he borrows from all human pursuits found in both the Eastern and Western traditions and from ancient to modern intellectual history. In his own words, the idea behind *Siddhartha* was to discover a philosophy "which is common to all confessions and all human forms of religiousness and that which stands above all national differences, that which can be believed in and respected by all races" (qtd. in Teisch).

Hesse's novels including *Siddhartha* encourage the readers to follow their individual will than following conventional social or state authority. Stelzig points out *Eigensinn* or self-will as Hesse's leitmotif, "that combines Nietzschean contempt for the conformity of the herd, with a Jungian romance of individuation and a quest for the deep self" (111). Hesse's persistent concern is to find an escape for the individual from the societal bondage and political manipulations as well as from one's own dual and conflicting tendencies. Hesse's writings persuade the readers to acknowledge one's own self as the most important entity for any individual.

Hesse gives an alternative model to the military based politics and capitalism driven modernity of his times. At the time when he was working on *Siddhartha* in 1919, He calls for the creation of a new culture in the postwar era, "We must not begin at the end, with governmental reforms and political methods, but we must begin at the

beginning, with the construction of the personality” (qtd. in Bishop 50). He also questions the conventional values and systems imposed upon the individual in the name of religion, education, and even marriage. Hesse opposes the violence and war propagated in the name of national and racial pride. The novels written immediately after the World War I contain several references to the cruelties of militarism and warfare. Hesse’s own ‘supranational’ conviction to the questions of war and peace was to strive for guiding the reader “not into the world theater with its political problems but into his innermost being, before the judgment seat of his very personal conscience” (*If* 11).

Although Hesse rebels against following any form of organized religion, one of the hallmarks of his philosophy is to focus on spiritual way of life. Hesse’s opposition to religions is due to the dogmatism attached with the organized religions. However, as Christoph Gellner observes, Hesse accepts the spiritual aspect of religion, “as source of self-realization: religion as a possibility to accept life totally, far from all ethical limitations”. Hesse is a holistic and dialectical writer. He is especially fascinated with the mysticism and the role of paradox in the spiritual evolution of the individual, and he examines the dual tendencies of human nature, “to suffer and affirm life, to juxtapose idealism and reality, to be drawn to both good and evil” (qtd. in Teisch).

Hesse also seems to suggest in his writings a way of avoiding cultural and religious conflicts arising from contact between different value systems. Human suffering caused by the destructive politics in the European and American soils made Hesse to turn toward comparatively peaceful societies of the East. Along with his visit to India and other Asian societies, Hesse’s interest grew toward Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese traditions. Sire calls *Siddhartha*, “perhaps the most Eastern novel ever written by a

Westerner” (155). Hesse endeavors to create a dialogue between different cultures by attempting find a common philosophy agreeable to all cultures by persuading his readers to realize that the cause of human sufferings lay not in the outside world but inside oneself.

### **Self**

Humans are endowed with the capacity of reflecting upon the nature of their actions, feelings, and thought processes. Although it’s difficult to locate the self physically, every individual has a sense of the ‘self’ located at the center of their consciousness which is also the subject of all experiences of that individual. An individual is always in a dual conflict: with the society and with his own self. Being a component of the society he lives in, the individual is expected to observe societal norms and liabilities. The human individual often finds himself in a dilemma whether he should endeavor for the pursuit of one’s self or carry out the social responsibility of collective goals. The protagonist Siddhartha of *Siddhartha* in his quest for self struggles not only through different circumstances of life but also with different intellectual concepts related to the self. Hesse not only plays with the idea of personal self, but also with the concept of self found in the Eastern mysticism as well as the archetypal Self from the Jungian psychology. Hesse appears to use a variety of related concepts “to express the relationship between the personal self which absorbs the contradictory flow of experience and some higher or symbolic self in which its oppositions are resolved” (Freedman 29). Therefore, it would be relevant to discuss the definitions of the terms related with self found in both the Eastern and Western intellectual traditions.

The study of the self is an essential part of psychological, philosophic, and religious studies. Self may be seen as one's innermost nature or true essence, the referent of "I" - the ultimate locus of one's identity. In psychology, the self is the representation of cognitive and affective aspects of one's identity. In Jungian psychology, "The self is the master archetype . . . in a constant process of development which became fully realized when all aspects of our personalities are equally expressed" (Stokes 141). The self is both the agent and the knower involved in each person's actions and cognitions. *Webster's Dictionary* has the definition of Self as:

The individual as the object of his own reflective consciousness; the man viewed by his own cognition as the subject of all his mental phenomena, the agent in his own activities, the subject of his own feelings, and the possessor of capacities and character; a person as a distinct individual; a being regarded as having personality. (qtd. in Evatt 263)

Other terms closely related to and substituted for self are being, identity, personality, individuality, ego, soul, subject, and consciousness. One's search for self may be seen as one's search for personal identity. Since one's self is a unique feature of one's personal identity different from all 'others', the quest for self is also seen as an individual's quest for his distinct individuality. Similarly, one's assertion of individuality may also be seen as the assertion of one's unique self. Thus the quest for the self is an individual's quest for his uniqueness that makes him different from all others.

In the Hindu philosophic system, the Atman is an individual's essence or soul, or an individual's innermost or true self. Knowing the nature of one's true self or Atman has been one prime goal among the practitioners of Hinduism. Comparing Hesse's

*Siddhartha* with the Hindu Epic *Bhagavad Gita*, Timpe quotes from the *Gita*, “But verily, the man who rejoices in the Self and is satisfied with the Self and is content in the Self alone – he has nothing for which he should work” (351). This Atman or true self remains constant while everything else remains in a state of flux. The goal of a seeker would be to discover how one’s individual Atman dissolves into the Universal Self or Divine Self, the Brahman. Timpe further elucidates the importance of knowing one’s self emphasized by the *Gita*, “Knowledge of Self leads to knowledge of the Absolute and to the understanding that the Atman is identical with Brahman. Such knowledge purifies . . . The result of knowledge is peace” (352). Another idea regarding the self in the spiritual traditions is the idea of self-transcendence. The suffering an individual undergoes in the course of life results from their ego or self. Hence, to get rid of the suffering, one has to get rid of the idea of having a separate and constant self. Buddha through his doctrine of Anatta or non-self denied altogether the Hindu philosophy of the existence of a permanent unchanging self or Atman. The spiritual traditions focus on transcending the self or self-transcendence as an art of mastering one’s self. As Frifjof Capra states in his *The Tao of Physics*, one of the highest aims for their followers whether they are Hindus, Buddhists or Taoists, is to “transcend the notion of an isolated individual self and to identify themselves with the ultimate reality” (24).

In the Western philosophic traditions, Plato defined reason or Intellect as the true self of a being, while Aristotle took soul or the self not as a separate entity but as an activity of the being. Similarly, another Greek philosopher Diogenes preached a doctrine of mastery of the self or self-sufficiency. In the modern philosophical tradition, Descartes and Locke are credited to have begun the discussion on the idea of self. Since the

Romantic period the erstwhile religious and theological concept of self became secular and the idea of “unique personal self became fundamental to aesthetics, religion, philosophy, social sciences, and to the general construction of identity” (Hess 1031).

Rathbone in his essay “Survey of Literature on the Self” quotes from Richard Sorabji’s lecture on the historical overview of conceptions of the self:

. . . The conceptions of self employed in the 17th and 18th centuries were so thin that people have felt they were valueless. Descartes was certain of one thing: ‘I exist’ . . . John Locke thought of the self as tied together by memory alone . . . Kant thought we must decide how it is right to act by reference to what a rational being would do.

The literary works too are accounts of the protagonists’ quest for self. Hesse’s biographer Ralph Freedman emphasizes that *Siddhartha* is “the search of the source of self within the self” (qtd. in Hsia 157). The quest for self in literary works may be in the form of identity, individuality, or finding one’s unique existence in the society. The characters in quest for their self take an inward journey within and discover the true essence of their self based on their own intense reflections. The protagonists in quest of their self seem highly individualistic, thus take a bizarre path to self-discovery rather than following an ordinary social life. Often such individuals seem to challenge existing social norms, belief systems and authority while asserting the inner calling of their own self. In his essay “Self-Will”, Hermann Hesse valorizes such an individual as self-willed, a man who, “obeys a different law . . . the law in himself, his own ‘will’” (79). In *Siddhartha*, Hesse creates a highly self-willed protagonist Siddhartha, who refuses all doctrines and

preachers and achieves enlightenment insisting upon finding the true nature of his own self.

### **What is Enlightenment?**

Humans seem to desire self-transformation in their cognitive and affective faculties. Both in the Eastern and Western traditions, there are attempts of finding a peculiar state of mind which surpasses normal instinctual feelings. Being social animals of the highest order, humans have developed very complex societies. Creation of social systems has endowed the species superiority over other species. However, human individuals undergo intense anxiety in the course of their adaptation and survival in accordance with the complex social systems. The demands of the complex social life often become stressful for the individual. Moreover, there is also the natural process of decay and disease. The natural and social demands often persuade an individual to seek for a peculiar state of mind which remains untouched by the anxieties and suffering of normal life-cycle. The viscidities of normal social and personal life make some individuals to seek for a state of mind that may be called “enlightenment”.

However, the concepts of enlightenment differ between the Eastern and Western traditions. Eastern traditions see enlightenment as a spiritual phenomenon, while the Western concept seems to relate enlightenment with the acquirement of knowledge. Enlightenment is also an intellectual movement in the European history known as the Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. Despite the various strands of Enlightenment ideas of the 17th and 18th century Europe, there seems to be a common theme of, “a drive to break the power of dogmatic religion and throw off the shackles of superstition, appealing instead of the power of reason” (Stokes 93). Kant famously placed



his faith in human reason in his answer to the question of “What is Enlightenment?” with, “Enlightenment is man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage . . . *Sapere Aude!* ‘Have courage to use your own reason!’ – that is the motto of enlightenment” (15). Thus, while Eastern traditions see enlightenment as a mystic experience of an individual in the course of spiritual evolution, on the other hand, the Western focus on reason takes Enlightenment away from mysticism.

Enlightenment as a state envisaged in the Eastern traditions is an individual phenomenon. Perhaps, therefore, the phrases “self-enlightenment” or “self-realization” are also used in the Eastern traditions to denote the goal of every individual spiritual seeker. How and when enlightenment dawns upon a person differs from individual to individual. As Kupperman observes, “The Buddha provides only what amounts to a do-it-yourself kit for liberation, so that in the last analysis enlightenment is a matter of individual effort” (40). On the other hand, in the Hindu philosophic system, an individual must possess the knowledge of one’s Atman or real self, “both for enlightenment and for liberation” (Kupperman 12). However, once an individual has achieved his enlightenment, for him the duality of this world and the other world as well as the stages of enlightenment or non-enlightenment becomes irrelevant. Whether an individual is enlightened or not matters only to others, but not for the person who himself gets enlightened. The individual’s enlightenment, “would seem real from outside – from the point of view of those who still think of the world in terms of distinct individuals and are not enlightened – but not from inside” (Kupperman 14). Thus, even the distinction made between Atman and Brahman becomes meaningless, for Atman becomes Brahman for the enlightened individual.

However, there is also opposition to the concept of enlightenment that transcends all miseries as deception or illusion. Although enlightenment is supposed to vastly expand the individual's consciousness by getting rid of personal ego, the psychologist Jung who was immensely influenced by Eastern mysticism tried to convince the Hindus that ". . . it is impossible to get rid of the idea of the Ego or of consciousness, even in the deepest state of Samadhi" (Serrano 62-63). Even the Western concept of Enlightenment that celebrates the triumph of human reason and rationalism has been criticized as deception. The European Enlightenment superiority promoted more sophisticated violence and warfare, along with the call for democracy and personal freedom increased bureaucratic control over the individual, the natives' control over natural resources were robbed off in the name of free trade, and exploitation of the native population took place through the spread of European colonialism in Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas. Even in the postmodern era of the 20th and 21st century, Foucault feels the need to re-investigate Kant's question of "What is Enlightenment?" observing that, "From Hegel through Nietzsche or Max Weber to Horkheimer or Habermas, hardly any philosophy has failed to confront this same question, directly or indirectly" (103). Foucault further warns not to confuse Enlightenment with "faithfulness to doctrinal elements" (113). Similarly, justifying Hesse's model of aestheticism devoid of ideological dogmatism, Dollimore observes "In short, the Second World War confirmed, for many, the bankruptcy of Enlightenment humanism . . . not just of its inability to prevent barbarism, but its complicity with it" (39). Thus, while the proponents and followers see enlightenment as a liberating phenomenon, critics claim the idea of enlightenment itself to be illusory and deceptive.

This thesis intends to study how Hesse incorporates the intellectual history of his times in *Siddhartha*, using interdisciplinary approaches from philosophy, psychology, social science, and humanities both from the Eastern and Western traditions. First an analysis would be made on the spiritual, psychological, and existential position of the individual and his self in the light of contemporary intellectual history at the time of *Siddhartha*'s publication, the early 20th century. Further, a comparative analysis of Hesse's writings of the 1920s would be made with *Siddhartha* seeking for the parallels between Siddhartha's denials of doctrines in quest for his self and Hesse's concerns over ideological indoctrination of the youths for warfare.

## Chapter II: Perspectives on the Individual Self

### Individual and Religion

All religions preach for the individual's personal endeavor to free his self from life's miseries, and still every religion binds the individual in its faith. All religions have their respective gods judging every human activity, and every person will either deserve the heaven or the hell depending upon their conduct in relation to the religion of their faith. The fatal consequences religious and ethnic conflicts in the increasingly multi-cultural world have encouraged people to search for an individual spirituality free from religious fanaticism. It has been felt necessary to differentiate between the organized religions and spirituality. Spirituality is increasingly being seen as compassion, tolerance and understanding and contrasted with religious collectivism.

Hesse himself was born and brought up as a Pietistic Protestant. However, he does not associate the term Protestant to any particular variety of Christian faith, but as an individual's resistance against institutionalized religious dogmas. In an autobiography written in 1925, Hesse recalls how the religions were used to perpetuate the war, "even so-called spiritual people could find nothing better to do than preach hatred, spread lies, and praise the great misfortune" (Michels 13). The hazards of religions' control over the individual are also being felt in the 21st century world affairs in the form of religious extremism. Eric Hill justifies the reason behind adapting the dramatic version of Hesse's *Siddhartha* at the Berkshire Theater Festival in 2004 as to protect the humankind from those who cling to, "gods and guns as a way of protecting religion from threats real and perceived". Thus, the hazards of extremism in the name of religions have made the thinkers to refute that spirituality is necessarily a religious domain. Even Hesse's

contemporary and Austrian born philosopher cum scientist Rudolf Steiner founded a spiritual movement he named “anthroposophy” which was a philosophic and spiritual doctrine centered not on the gods but on the human beings.

However, as early as in the 6th century BC, Buddha had refuted the prevailing religious view that belief in some form of superior deity or the god was necessary for one’s enlightenment. He also rendered unnecessary all the rituals promoted by the then prevailing religion, Hinduism. Buddha rejected all prevailing doctrines and claimed that depending upon God’s mercy puts hindrance to an individual’s efforts on earning his own salvation. He also prohibited all philosophical discussions regarding the existence of god, afterlife, or Atman and insisted that the individual should discipline his mind through right conduct, right speech and right effort. Replying to a query by his disciple, Buddha once put forward his logic, “I haven’t taught the world is eternal or not, that it is finite or not, that the breath and the body are identical or not nor that a person after death will pass to future existence, or not, or both, or neither. . . Simply because these issues are pointless, unprofitable and a waste of time” (Kanekar 280).

Thus, Buddhism is also sometimes described not as a religion but as a spiritual method focusing on the individual’s quest for personal self. Hesse appreciates Buddha’s way in his lecture on *Siddhartha*, “Buddha’s way to salvation has often been criticized and doubted, because it is thought to be wholly grounded in cognition. True, but it’s not just intellectual cognition, not just learning and knowing, but spiritual experience that can be earned only through strict discipline in a selfless life” (qtd. in Freedman 233).

However, the irony with Buddhism is that Buddha himself is worshipped as a God by most of his followers with no less ritualistic and no less dogmatic than what Buddha had

accused of Hinduism. Hindus, too, worship the Buddha as one of their eight avatars. Such tendency of deification of the individual achievement and humanization of the supernatural God exists even during the post-modern era when religions have been on their defensive side. The God theory has not lost its charm even while humanizing the God as, “His qualities are human virtues, raised to the *n*th degree. His interest in man remains even when, as in modern Barthian theology, he is described as the ‘wholly other’” (Niebuhr 34).

After the European Enlightenment period, perhaps Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was the first philosopher who contemplated upon discovering one’s true self without necessarily believing in any religious system or the Gods. Schopenhauer thought life for the individual as an unavoidable suffering. For Schopenhauer, all the experienced activity of the self is will and the ultimate reality is one universal will. In his discussion of the nature and scope of subjective element of aesthetic pleasure, Schopenhauer hopes for, “the deliverance of knowledge from the service of the will, the forgetting of self as an individual, and the raising of the consciousness to the pure will-less, timeless, subject of knowledge, independent of all relations” (498). Thus, Schopenhauer advocates for the anguished individual to seek for deliverance from life’s sufferings through artistic, moral and ascetic forms of awareness. Schopenhauer’s idea that the world is not factual but mere projections of our mind not only echo with Hindu and Buddhist vision of life, but as Baumann claims even his salvation philosophy “. . . corresponds to the traditional ‘Tat tvam asi’ of the Upanishads and the Buddhist idea of salvation by overcoming ‘Thirst’ and egocentricity”.

Schopenhauer influenced many literary and philosophical figures including Nietzsche and Hesse. Hesse even sets the story of *Siddhartha* in Buddha's time and makes Siddhartha the Brahmin boy hold a discussion with the Buddha. Hence, *Siddhartha* has also been considered as a mythical narrative based on Buddha's early life. However, contrary to popular misconception, *Siddhartha* is not Buddha's biographical story. Hesse's Siddhartha who is awed by Buddha's persona and yet denies taking refuge in Buddha's Dhamma has a correlation with Hesse's own initial admiration of the Buddha and later disenchantment with Buddhism's too rationalistic generalization. While writing *Siddhartha*, Hesse seems to be influenced not only by Hindu and Buddhist views on life, but also by the religious philosophies of ancient China, such as Taoism. Hesse's biographer Mark Boulby claims that *Siddhartha* is an amalgam of Vedanta and Tao philosophies with, the Indian-Hindu "letting oneself fall into life (*tyaga*)" and the Chinese-Taoistic "enlightened passiveness (*wuwei*)" (143).

In his autobiography for the Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, Hesse discloses the reason why he could not accept the religion of Christian Pietism he was born into was because of its aim of, "subduing and breaking the individual personality" (Gale 349). And yet, his opposition to the institutionalized religions' suppression of the individual self seems to contradict with his observation in a 1930 essay, "I myself consider the religious impulse as the decisive characteristic of my life and my work" (qtd. in Ziolkowski 106). The contradiction can be understood if one appreciates that Hesse's "religious impulse" suggests an approach of consciously choosing one's own way of life. If any religion that Hesse believed in it was humanism, as Zipes writes in his evaluation of the influence of fairy tales in Hesse's works, "If there ever was a creed that he [Hesse]

devoutly followed, it was the German romantic Novalis's notion that 'Mensch werden ist eine Kunst' - to become a human being is art" (241).

Thus, Hesse attempts to establish the significance of the individual's personal quest for self through the interaction with diverse religions. Hesse proposes his own version of spirituality that dissolves the dichotomy of opposite pairs both within the individual and outside in the world, "For me, although brought up a Protestant Christian but then later educated in India and China, there do not exist all these twofold divisions of world and men into opposite pairs. For me, the first dogma is the unity behind and above the opposites" (qtd. in Herzog). Hesse's interest in finding unity behind opposites can also be seen in *Siddhartha*, in which the protagonist appreciates religion as a method for self-realization and yet refuses to accept any religious doctrine insisting upon finding the unity behind all opposites through his own search for self.

### **Individual and Psychology**

The fictional character's search for self often provides genuine psychological insights into the workings of an individual's mind. Freud often acknowledged his gratitude for the development of psychoanalysis to Dostoevsky's insights into his character's psyche. Hesse was also receiving psychotherapy sessions from Jung's assistant JB Lang while he was working on *Siddhartha*. The writer's contact with the psychotherapist led him to permanent association with Jungian psychology and Jung himself. As Spielvogel observes, Hesse's novels, "reflected the influence of both Carl Jung's psychological theories and Eastern religions and focused among other things on the spiritual loneliness of modern human beings in a mechanized urban society" (835). Hesse deals with the psychological concept of Unconscious in his own way. Like the



psychologists, Hesse too felt it necessary to look at human behavior in a completely different light than from the conventional Western concept of good and evil, for merely cursing the destructive forces that have their base in the primal instincts would only encourage digression from the real concerns of life. Hesse acknowledges the need for accepting the irrationality of human mind before devising ways for controlling human behavior, for even the “Chaos has to be recognized and lived through before it can be reintegrated into a new order” (qtd. in Harguindey 149).

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) gained popularity among the novelists for his psychoanalytic methods in analyzing the individual character's mind and motive. Freud divides the mind into three parts, viz. Id, Ego, and Superego and attempted to explain how the individual's motives oscillate between the two primal instincts, the pleasure seeking *Eros* and the death seeking *Thanatos*. Freud even claims that there is, “similarity between the process of civilization and libidinal development of the individual” (51). Moreover, Freud also insists that, “the two urges the one toward personal happiness and the other towards union with other human beings must struggle with each other in every individual” (106). Hence, for those interested in the workings of human mind, it was necessary first of all to accept all the forces of nature without any value judgment. Especially Freud's insistence on sex and the libido guiding all human behavior including the dreams and neuroses encouraged the novelists of the post-Victorian era to venture on hitherto a taboo aspect of human self. How the unnatural moral codes imposed on individuals result in the aberration of their behavior became popular themes for the novelists of post-Freudian era. That Hesse's *Siddhartha* moves from one extreme of repression to another extreme of indulgence may also be explained through Freudian

principles. However, Freud has also been sharply criticized for his obsession of describing every human behavior and motive as the manifestation of repressed sexual desires. The renowned psychologist Andrew Salter comes heavily upon Freud's portrayal of perverse and incestuous cravings as the only motive behind every individual's behavior, and even claims that, "Freud was less a scientist than a *littérateur*" (19).

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) and Alfred Adler (1870-1937), were the famous critics of Freud's excessive indulgence on libidinal theories while defining individual behavior. Jung who worked under Freud in his early years expanded the area of Freudian "unconscious" from merely a dark storehouse of unfulfilled desires into the vast realm of mythologies, spirituality and other symbolic systems. However, while Jung frees the individual from Freud's sexual determinism, he also leads one toward mysticism. Jung tried to discover the connection of an individual with the fellow humans and with nature in general through the "collective unconscious". Jung is better known for his personality theories of individual types like extrovert and introvert, and for his theories of archetypes and synchronicity. Jung was also heavily influenced by tribal and mythological traditions from Africa, America and India, including Hinduism and Buddhism. Like Hesse, Jung had profound interests in the Eastern mysticism and attempted to integrate Eastern philosophical principles into the mainstream of Western thought. Jung maintained that medical psychology can not ignore the ancient religions that have expressed the most basic and universal expressions of human thought. He saw men as the construct of rituals and taboos that were devised to protect them from the unruly and overwhelming drives of the unconscious. At the same time, Jung brought the mysticism of religions into the arena of psychology - the approach being scientific, empirical and phenomenological rather

than philosophical or metaphysical. For all those who were interested in the psychological basis of such mental phenomena as spirituality, supernatural, psychic and the universal found an authentic source in Jung for hitherto unexplained realms of the mind.

Hesse's *Siddhartha* can be analyzed according to the Jungian psychology. Both Jung and Hesse were interested in finding a definite and emancipating way to self through the process of individuation - if Jung's expertise was that of analytical psychology, then Hesse endeavored through literary projections. Both Jung and Hesse were fascinated with the lack of absolutes in Hinduism unlike the Christianity which divides the world between the God and Satan or Good and Evil. At the same time both believed in the impossibility of self-less state as perceived by the Hindu philosophy. In fact, Jung too had been to India so that he could study the application of psychological insights in an individual's life. Jung even claimed that, "Hesse was indebted to him [Jung] for his *Demian* and partially obliged to him for *Siddhartha* and *Der Steppenwolf*" (Mileck 103). On the other hand, Hesse in an undated letter to a friend wrote, "I have always respected Jung, but nevertheless have never been as impressed by his writings as by Freud's" (qtd. in Mileck 104). Pointing out at the debate on whether Hesse was more influenced by Freud or Jung, Mileck comments, "Hesse was much taken by the work of both Freud and Jung. His primary allegiance to one or the other is ultimately of no great moment. Both analysts left their imprint on him" (104).

That *Siddhartha* pursues his personal search instead of following Gotama the Buddha despite the his deep admiration for the Buddha shows that Hesse too believed like Jung that that hero worship has a direct association with the war-calls and hatred

among societies. Siddhartha's early life indulgences and later life transcendence of the opposites can also be seen as Jungian explanation of human journey from childhood to individuation into maturity. Between the two personality types propounded by Jung, both Siddhartha and his friend Govinda can be seen as the searcher of the Unconscious – the introverts. Siddhartha's hearing of the inner sound “*Om*” which brings him back to life from attempting suicide and his seeing the images in the river from his past dating back to his ancestors may be seen as an application of Jungian “archetype” in the novel.

However, as Mileck observes, “Hesse art bears the indelible imprint of psychoanalysis, but only its imprint. His tales never became merely applied Jungianism or Freudianism” (100). Like Jung, Hesse, too, wished to discover the alchemy of psychic projections and find the seed of unity or center of the “mandala” through the dialogue between the individual and his own shadow self that would lead every individual toward peace and thus decrease communal rivalry.

### **Existential Individual**

Although it's difficult to give a precise definition, existentialism can be seen as the analysis of human situation with the individual at the center of all phenomena. Thus, existentialism may be called the philosophy of the individual. Existential analyses of human individual are found in the works of early literary writers and philosophers as well. Thomas Flynn claims that even Socrates (469–399 BC) can be called an existential philosopher for the latter's practice of philosophy as ““care of the self” (*epimeleia heautou*)” (1). Buddha has also been considered to be one of the early existential philosophers since he refused to discuss God and held the individual himself responsible for all the consequences. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55) found fault with his times for

ignoring the individual self with, “Each age has its characteristic depravity. Ours is perhaps not pleasure or indulgence or sensuality, but rather a dissolute pantheistic contempt for individual man” (qtd. in Stokes 145). The Russian writer and thinker Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-81) whose works dramatize religious, moral, political and psychological issues is considered as an early existential novelist who portrayed his characters as anguished individuals struggling for their distinctive space in a harsh and hostile society. Hesse (1877-1962), too, who grew up during the last decades of the 19th century, is supposed to have been immensely influenced by his predecessors like Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche who were later identified as the forerunners of the existential movement.

Dostoevsky’s characters are involved in endless dilemma between right and wrong, good and evil and desperately struggle to free themselves from all societal bondage in quest of their own self. Coupled with his fine psychological insights into the anxieties and moral problems of the characters, Dostoevsky makes the existential point that human individuals can get salvation only by braving the intense suffering that life offers. Hesse seems to be very much influenced by Dostoevsky’s idea of salvation through suffering as Hesse himself makes all his characters including Siddhartha to go through intensely painful self-searching. Both Dostoevsky and Hesse were anxious at Europe’s political, social and moral disintegration during their times. In his analysis of Dostoevsky’s novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, Hesse reveals his admiration for the Russian novelist with, “It seems to me that European and especially German youth are destined to find their greatest writer in Dostoevsky--not in Goethe, not even in Nietzsche” (qtd. in Weber 248). Both writers believed that only a completely different kind of

spiritual awareness was able to unite Europe emotionally once again. Two years before *Siddhartha*'s publication, Hesse wrote a review on Dostoevsky's another novel *The Idiot* prophesizing, "The future is uncertain, but the road which he [Dostoevsky] shows can have but one meaning. It means a new spiritual dispensation" (qtd. in Girardot 303). While salvation was still a Christian idea for Dostoevsky, for Hesse, as *Siddhartha* shows, the new spiritual awakening was to come from Asia.

Another existentialist thinker, Nietzsche, who was to influence not only Hesse but generations of his posteriors called for a new species of human beings who could survive the God-less world. According to Stokes, Nietzsche wanted the individual to acquire, "what the existentialists would later give him, the power to be master of his own destiny" (147). In his allegorical work, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche makes his Zarathustra to proclaim that "Dead are all the gods: now do we desire the Superman to live" (51). Nietzsche was indicating that the traditional theological systems and their morality concepts which centered on the idea of all-powerful God would no longer hold validity in the new world. Nietzsche's Superman survives life's miseries and profound unhappiness through his will to power and affirms life joyously by going beyond the traditional boundaries of good and evil.

However, that Nietzsche opposed the Judeo-Christian worldview does not mean that he was anti-Semitic in his opinion. On the contrary, Nietzsche was outraged the way his prophet Zarathustra was maliciously misrepresented as the messiah of the anti-Semitic ideology. Nietzsche, in a letter, repudiates his sister for associating his works with the anti-Semitic propaganda:

You have committed one of the greatest stupidities – for yourself and for me! Your association with an anti-Semitic chief expresses foreignness to my whole way of life which fills me ever again and again with ire or melancholy . . . It is a matter of honor to me to be absolutely clean and unequivocal in relation to anti-Semitism, namely opposed, as I am in my writings . . . that in every *Anti-Semitic Correspondence Sheet* the name of Zarathustra is used, has already made me almost sick several times” (qtd. in Schacht 217).

Even during the World War I, the German government published Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and distributed to every soldier along with the Bible as a source of inspiration. Nietzsche’s call for a superhuman character antagonistic to the Judeo-Christian worldview also inspired such deadly historic figures as Hitler and Mussolini. The anti-Semitic Nazis propagandists collected Nietzsche’s works, manipulated and assembled them in such a way that the juxtaposition “wrongly gained the reputation of supporting Nazism, though his concept of the *Übermensch* or ‘superman’, is in fact closer to Aristotle’s man of virtue than the glorified Aryan hero” (Stokes 146).

Hesse himself was influenced by Nietzsche’s idea of equipping the individual with a magnificent “will to power” so that the individual could transcend his self and create the personal archetype of *Übermensch* – the Superman. However, Hesse was concerned over the way Nietzsche was being interpreted by the Nazi regime to brainwash German youths into racial war. Hesse published *Zarathustra’s Return* in 1919, just three years before *Siddhartha*. *Zarathustra’s Return* was Hesse’s own interpretation of Nietzsche’s philosophy. *Zarathustra’s Return* was written in the Nietzschean idiom to

appeal to the youths who were influenced by Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and were manipulated by the German State. Hesse made his Zarathustra to "reject German false gods, Kaiser, and the drill sergeant" (Galbreath 68) to awaken the hidden God residing within each individual. Hesse makes the protagonist of his Bildungsroman *Siddhartha* achieve the Nietzschean Superman status by rebelling against all Gods, prophets, and doctrines and asserting his individuality by following his own self.

### **Cross-Cultural Individual**

Hesse's time was also the time of cultural cross-fertilization. The industrial revolution also promoted visits to far off places for colonial, commercial, and even just for curiosity. Development of steam and the fossil fuel engines in the early twentieth century fueled the growth in the number of people travelling and settling to foreign lands. The interaction of different people also gave rise to interaction of different cultures. Hesse was aware that both the Eastern and Western cultures are going to misunderstand each other ultimately, since in their enthusiasm for finding the other exotic, in what Hesse saw as the West's too ready embrace of the East, and vice versa, he "plainly detected too much unavailing flight into the exotic half-known" (Mileck 165). Hesse seems to challenge both the Easterns and the Westerns to revalue their understanding of each other by overcoming all apparent contradiction and dichotomies through the realization of inner self. Hesse was aware of both the positivity and limitations of both the Western and Eastern ways, since he believed that ". . . basic truths about man and life were to be found behind the religious and philosophical trappings of the Orient and the Occident. . . (Mileck 165). All Hesse works seek to establish the individual's multi-dimensional identity during the times of great personal and cultural crises.



Although *Siddhartha* is subtitled as an Indian Tale, Mileck calls Hesse's protagonist Siddhartha not another Buddha from the East, but a Western Buddha or a "Western Possibility" (164). Hesse also seems to be making a criticism of Indian way of life as mired in too much pedantry and self-denial. The conflict of culture is latent in *Siddhartha*, since "Despite the Orient's strong attraction, Hesse remained a Westerner" (Mileck 165). However, Hesse wants his *Siddhartha* to transcend the binaries of East and West as well. The setting looks eastern only because Hesse says so, but his depiction of the landscapes could be anywhere. The characters sound eastern only in their names, otherwise as Mileck observes, the figures do not evoke any physical or psychological dimensions. In the words of Mileck, in *Siddhartha*, ". . . timeless substance (the human condition) found a consonant expression in timeless setting, characters, lives, and language. . ." (172). Thus, Siddhartha represents more of archetype than the actual people. Siddhartha's opposition to all prevailing traditional paths seems Hesse's call for rising above the trapping of all cultures regardless of whether one belongs to the Eastern or Western culture.

Mckay Jenkins, in his search for parallel ideas between Hinduism and Buddhism as seen by Salman Rushdie in the latter's *Midnight's Children*, alludes to Hesse's *Siddhartha* as an example of cross-cultural text that shows human existence as nothing but a collection of diverse and fragmented identities. In his essay, "Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Meditation, and the Postmodern Conception of History", Jenkins quotes a long passage from *Siddhartha* in which Siddhartha's friend Govinda, looking into the face of his old friend Siddhartha, watches his friend's face melt into the faces of countless other faces, ". . . each image representing another fragment in the psychological, historical,

and cultural makeup of the ‘individual’ man.” (67). Hesse’s concern in *Siddhartha* is not to establish the superiority of any particular culture over another. In the contrary, through the treatment different cultures in *Siddhartha*, Hesse shows his respect for the plurality of cultures. As Stelzig observes Hesse is a, “humanist and cultural pluralist for whom the microcosm of the individual self is integrally related to the macrocosm of history and civilization” (“Hermann” 270). Hence, *Siddhartha* can also be seen as a text by an author highlighting the need for celebrating cultural diversity and yet seek for the unifying elements among cultures.

### Chapter III: Quest for Self in *Siddhartha*

#### Questioning Father and God: First Assertion of the Individual Self

The quest for self in *Siddhartha* emphasizes on one's personal experience than accepting the scholarly or received knowledge before arriving at a conclusion.

Individuality in *Siddhartha* as the hallmark of Hesse's characteristics comes in the form of asserting one's own interpretation of the world. Siddhartha's initial dissatisfaction of the tradition he was born in may be seen as an adolescent's rebellion against established social norms. Siddhartha's first affirmation of his individuality comes through the denial of his father's instructions. Stelzig comments that in *Siddhartha*'s rejection of all gurus and guides, "unresolved father-son conflict of Hesse's youth is now transposed and spiritualized through a set of strategic rejections of father figures" ("Ticino" 211).

Even after performing the holy ablutions to the gods everyday as instructed by his father, Siddhartha discovers that he's not getting anywhere. The discovery makes Siddhartha to doubt the correctness of the whole procedure of finding the Atman or Self by worshipping the gods as taught by his father. Thus, Siddhartha arrives at the conclusion that to discover the ultimate essence of one's existence, one has to embark on the quest for one's own self:

Was it therefore good and right, was it a sensible and worthy act to offer sacrifices to the gods? . . . And where was Atman to be found . . . if not within the Self, this innermost, in the eternal which each person carried within him? But where was this Self, the innermost? It was not flesh and bone, it was not thought or consciousness. That was what the wise men

taught. Where, then, was it? To press towards the Self, towards Atman –  
was there another way that worth seeking? (5)

The father has been the symbol of authority in all cultures. Siddhartha too shares Sinclair's view in *Demian* that "It was the first rent in the holy image of my father, it was the first fissure in the columns that had upheld my childhood, which every individual must destroy before he can become himself" (14). Both Sinclair and Siddhartha share Hesse's view in *Steppenwolf*, "brought up by devoted but severe and very pious parents and teachers in accordance with that doctrine that makes the breaking of the will the corner-stone of education and upbringing" ( 15).

There, indeed, were autobiographical overtones when all the three protagonists of Hesse's successive Bildungsromans *Demian* (1919), *Siddhartha* (1922), and *Steppenwolf* (1927) felt their personalities crushed by parental authority. Interestingly, it is not only Siddhartha who goes against parental authority, later in the story, even Siddhartha's son runs away from Siddhartha's control. Stelzig comments while analyzing Hesse's letters about his childhood, "Young Hermann's aggressive complains against his parents and their religion are interlarded with passages of Rousseauistic self-pity and arch-Romantic longings for suicide" (114). However, Hesse sublimates the adolescent rebellion against parental authority as an individual's defiance against the tyranny of all authority.

Analyzing Hesse's letter to a friend written in 1918, Michael Limberg explains the identification of father with imposed conservative authority, "Hesse does not write about his father, but about 'the fatherly', i.e. subordinating authority, personalized by parents, pastors and ultimately by the state".

Hesse's father himself was a strict pastor of the Pietist order. Stelzing comments on how like Siddhartha, young Hesse had refused to conform to the "system of expectations and demands that defined his role in the well-regulated and strictly Pietistic atmosphere of the Hesse household, which . . . was informed by the ideal of paternal authority" (112). Hesse later realized that religion as an institution has been used to manipulate the masses and suppress the individuality of a being. Thus, it is necessary for Hesse's protagonists to look critically upon the religion they inherit from their parents. Sinclair of *Demian* confesses how naïve he had been while interpreting the Biblical authority, "Until now I had felt completely at home in the story of the Crucifixion. Now I saw for the first time with how little individuality, with how little power of imagination I had listened to it and read it" (51). Similarly, Siddhartha begins to doubt the rituals that he receives from his father and starts contemplating pursuing after his own self. However, while the guilt-ridden Sinclair of *Demian* narrates his story in a self-accusatory repentant tone, Siddhartha acknowledges that his father and other priests knew a tremendous number of things, but, "was it worth while knowing all these things if they did not know the one important thing, the only important thing?" (6). Siddhartha's doubt over his father's ways foreshadows that he would not accept any other authorial figure as his mentor.

### **The Samana Way: Self against the Self**

The second step of Siddhartha's assertion of self against authority comes when he decides against the Head Samana's will and leaves the austere Samanas practise that he had been successfully exercising for three years to subdue the cravings of human self. Although he becomes adept in the Samana way, Siddhartha expresses his doubt with his

friend Govinda, “. . . are we on the right road ? Are we gaining knowledge? Are we approaching salvation ? Or are we perhaps going in circles – we who thought to escape from the cycle ?” (15). Siddhartha grows impatient with the finding that despite he practised the arduous Samana way of self-denial through suffering and meditation, “. . . [he] was again Self and Siddhartha, again felt the torments of the onerous life cycle”(13) and concludes that, “we learn tricks with which we deceive ourselves, but the essential thing – the way – we do not find” (15).

That the denial or suppression of normal human instincts in the name of meditation was only temporary becomes evident when later, Siddhartha, who could control at will even such involuntary bodily functions like heartbeats, finds it difficult to control the sexual desires normal for a boy around twenty. Siddhartha as a learned Brahmin and excellent Samana could not admit his sexual desires explicitly like the confessional Sinclair of *Demian* who could admit of suffering from a bad conscience of the forbidden world. That he was only hiding from the true nature of his self as a Samana becomes evident when Siddhartha dreams of kissing a woman’s breast and drinking her milk. The Freudian symbols take a real meaning when Siddhartha the austere Samana, coming across a young village-woman with moist lips, “felt a longing and the stir of sex in him” (41). Further, that he has to struggle hard from succumbing to the sexual urge even upon hearing an inward voice “No” proves that Siddhartha’s disillusionment with the Samana ways was due to its method of deceiving oneself through the suppression of instincts instead of finding the true nature of his own self.

Thus, even as an accomplished Samana, Siddhartha still feels like he has not achieved anything. The reason he tells to Govinda that denying oneself of normal bodily

needs to dwell in the non-Self is nothing but, “a flight from the Self, it is a temporary escape from the torment of Self. It is a temporary palliative against the pain and folly of life” (14). Siddhartha reflects later the reason why he could not learn from the teachers and through self-denial was because, “I wanted to rid myself of the Self, to conquer it, but I could not conquer it, I could only deceive it, could only fly from it, could only hide from it . . . I was afraid of myself, I was fleeing from myself” (31). Timpe observes that despite the austere Samana practice of self-denial, Siddhartha discovers that, “Self is indestructible” (355). Thus, Siddhartha comes to realize that instead of futile efforts in destroying his self, he should follow the true nature of his self.

### **Contradicting the Buddha: Individual Self against Sheeplike Conformism**

Perhaps, Hesse’s greatest originality lies in making Siddhartha the Brahmin boy confront the Buddha. Siddhartha praises the coherent logic of Buddha’s worldview based on the incessant chain of causes and effects. However, Siddhartha also finds Buddha’s doctrine of salvation from suffering going beyond the laws of causes and effects. Thus, Siddhartha venerates Buddha as an enlightened being, but he also questions the consistency of Buddha’s logic, “But according to your teachings, this unity and logical consequence of all things is broken in one place” (27), thus preventing him from becoming Buddha’s follower. Siddhartha’s fascination with Gotama the Buddha and, at the same time, his refusal to enter into Buddha’s institution of the Sangha has drawn a great interest and diverse interpretations from both the critics and readers. Bishop marvels Siddhartha’s refusal of accepting Buddha as his Guru with, “In a moment of ‘epiphany’, which has been compared to similar moments of modernist novels, by for example, Joyce, Musil, or Proust, Siddhartha gains insight into the importance, not of

following the right teaching, but of accumulating the right experience” (50). However, by contradicting the Buddha, Siddhartha is not undermining what the Buddha is. Instead, Siddhartha would like to be a Buddha himself rather than just being a Buddha follower:

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 . . . No other teachings will attract me, since this man’s teachings have not done so. (29)

Baumann claims Siddhartha’s declaration of rejecting all teachers and gurus except finding and conquering his own self as, “. . . the most impressive manifest of Hesse’s individualism: In the face of the enlightened Buddha, Siddhartha reveals that he does not want to become a Buddhist but to become a Buddha himself”.

Interestingly, Hesse seems to make a counterpoint to Buddha’s enlightenment philosophy – that the search for salvation itself is illusory and just another cause of suffering. Paradoxically, he makes his Siddhartha to find his own path, very similar to the Buddha himself. However, it would be worth considering Siddhartha’s denying of Buddha as his guru or teacher in the context of the post-Nietzschean era of Kaiser and Hitler’s Germany. As Siddhartha tells Govinda, he was already prejudiced towards accepting anyone as his teacher during his Samana years experience, “I have grown distrustful and tired against teachings and learning, and that my faith in words, which are brought to us by teachers, is small” (19). This proves that Siddhartha would deny being Buddha’s disciple irrespective of whether he would agree with Buddha’s reasoning or not. Thus, Siddhartha’s assertion on individual search for self acquires a symbolic



meaning that goes beyond religious or intellectual interpretations – into the arena of everyday political and social life. Hesse was distressed by the World War I which he thought to be the result of rising collectivism in the form of racism, nationalism and communism. Like Nietzsche said, “Insanity in individuals is something rare—but in groups, parties, nations, and epochs it is the rule” (Nietzsche, *Beyond* 92), Hesse wished to persuade the youths and students against following the Nazi call for another racial war. In an essay written in 1922, the same year of *Siddhartha*’s publication, Hesse expresses his anger at the “ugliest and most inane” forms of new German nationalism promoted by the Nazi rulers in the form of anti-Semitism as “the idiotic, pathological Jew-baiting of the bards of the swastika and their numerous adherents, in particular among students” (*My* 126).

Hesse felt it necessary that the adherents, and in particular, the students and youths question what they were taught and being led to believe. Hesse began questioning the very idea of education itself, as the protagonist of *Steppenwolf* mocks how even professors didn’t know how they injured the whole humanity during the 1914 war, “Like nearly all professors, he is a great patriot, and during the war did his bit in the way of deceiving the public, with the best intentions” (99). The difficulty Hesse faced was that the Nazis were justifying their hatred rhetoric by portraying Nietzsche as their prophet. Nietzsche was a great influence on Hesse himself but, “not the Nietzsche festooned by the Nazis but the philosopher who condemned the greed and ‘sheeplike conformism’” (Wilde 87). In the year he began writing *Siddhartha*, Hesse attempted to re-interpret Nietzsche’s most read *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and most miss-understood concept *Ubermensch* or Superman and wished to invoke a different understanding of Nietzsche

by writing *Zarathustra's Return* (1919), appealing the German youths for the faculty of critical reasoning (Aschheim 150-51). Similarly, by making Siddhartha deny Buddha's institution of Sangha, Hesse may have been attempting to prove that assertion of one's individual self but not "sheeplike conformism" to the Nazi calls for war was the only way for a person to become the Nietzschean *Übermensch* or Superman. Like Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Hesse's Zarathustra too, "repulses would-be disciples and flatly contradicts the 'improvers of mankind'" (Galbreath 68). In fact, by denying to follow Buddha, Siddhartha's seems to be merely following what Nietzsche's Zarathustra asks all his believers, "I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you" (Nietzsche, *Thus* 51). Thus, through Siddhartha, Hesse seems to be making a call to the youths of his times that improvement of mankind occurs when each individual follows his own quest for self, but not by following any authority or preacher.

### ***Eigensinn* or Self-Will: The Awakening of the Self**

Hesse called his concept of strong self-will as *Eigensinn*, which was a combination of Nietzschean will to power and Jungian Individuation. Stelzig defines Hesse's *Eigensinn* as, "a stubborn and unyielding temperament, a headstrong nature, someone too persistent, inflexible, and fond of getting his own way, a personal eccentricity or bias pursued with a vengeance" (111). Hesse's protagonists face the confrontation between their *Eigensinn* or self-will and that of expectations of the community. In fact, *Eigensinn* seems to be a literary projection of Hesse's own unruly temperament. Hesse realized from his own experience that the *Eigensinn* may take a negative course than desired one, however he infused that peculiar human property into his characters as a sort of identity theme that would allow them to make a "nice balance

between [collective] determinism and free-will[of the individual]" (Stelzig, "A Child" 117).

Denial of the Buddha as his teacher awakens Siddhartha with a new insight. Since, Siddhartha himself acknowledges that he had left "the greatest and wisest teacher, the holiest, the Buddha" (30), he realizes that his attempts of learning the secret of life or the nucleus of all things without learning the nature of his own self was itself flawed. It dawns upon Siddhartha that all his efforts were doomed to failure simply because he was still denying his own individuality. The awoken *Eigensinn* or self-will makes Siddhartha assert that instead of fatalistic process of going through countless rebirths to achieve the Brahmanism's Atman or Buddhist Nirvana, he must solve the riddle in his one single life. Hesse calls the chapter "Awakening" in which the awakened Siddhartha no longer sees the world as the "magic of Mara" or the "veil of Maya" (32) despised by Brahmins who sought unity and despised diversity. It is interesting to note that endorsement of his own individuality makes Siddhartha recognize the existence of the apparent world of where, "Meaning and reality were not hidden somewhere behind things, they were in them, in all of them" (32). Siddhartha's awakening comes as an anti-thesis to the spiritual worldview he was hitherto following and anticipates a new journey toward the opposite pole - the hedonistic world of sensual pleasures. The awakening of his *Eigensinn* makes Siddhartha instead of seeking the abstract notions like Atman and Brahman, bravely appreciate the nature of his own true self:

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. (37)

Just like Demian asserts to Sinclair, “what Nature wants of man stands indelibly written in the individual, in you, in me. It stood written in Jesus, it stood written in Nietzsche” (*Demian* 119), Hesse seems to portray through the self-seeking and self-willed Siddhartha his own role-model of a individualistic hero to the youths indoctrinated by the Nazis with the rhetoric of heroic death at the war front. Defining his idea of *Eigensinn* or Self-Will, Hesse persuades the youths to defy the war-calls of what he calls “paid teachers” of the Nazi Government by making a prudent use of their self-will, “The obedient well-behaved citizen who does his duty is not a ‘hero’. Only an individual who has fashioned his ‘self-will,’ his noble, natural inner law, into his destiny can be a hero” (*If* 79). Hence, Siddhartha may be seen as Hesse’s model of a “hero”, who fashions his *Eigensinn* or self-will to find the inner law of the self.

### **What about the Female Self?**

*Siddhartha* is a men’s world - the female characters have not only a controversial role to play in Siddhartha’s learning, but have also been allowed comparatively little space in the novel. While comparing Charles Johnson’s *Oxherding Tale* with *Siddhartha*, Byrd comments that the worlds of both fictions are, “determined to a large degree by male interests, men are both competitors and allies, assassins and the vehicle for moksha or release, liberation, and enlightenment” (554). Of the three female characters, the readers know that Siddhartha has a mother only through the narrator’s point of view. The second, the village woman, who makes sexual advances toward Siddhartha the Samana also gets no more space. Moreover, is the only female character Kamala who gets some

space in the novel's world merely a sex teacher to Siddhartha? Kamakshi Murti calls Hesse's work as "androcentric Orientalism" and gives her three reasons for charging Hesse that India has been triply colonized in *Siddhartha* through the female body:

1st oriental man as feminized and passive.

2nd prostitute/courtesan – of the three women in the book, two are prostitutes.

3rd ultimate metaphor for redemption—it is only through her that Siddhartha gains *nirvana*.

Still, Isn't Kamala on her own quest for self? Kamala plays a vital role in Siddhartha's enlightenment as Kamala's "significance of woman is based on her 'mirror function', on her importance for the unfolding of the individuality of the subject" (Petropoulou 7). However, Kamala is no less unconventional when it comes to assert herself. Kamala possesses in herself a strong *Eigensinn* or self-will. Despite being a courtesan, Kamala commands respect from society even more than does Demian's mother Mrs. Eve. Kamala exercises her art of love for her own pleasure and to control those around her. Furthermore, she knows that Siddhartha would leave her, but she would not stop him. Of course, the unknown village-woman Siddhartha meets before Kamala is rather too bold for an Indian woman to make sexual advances, but does that make her what Murti calls a "prostitute"? Even if she were a prostitute, her advances toward to a beggar Samana in loincloths who comes from the jungle must be for some other purposes than that of "prostitution". Still, Petropoulou's claim sounds valid when she says, "the female character never occupies the organizing center of the narrative -- even when Hesse emphasizes the individual woman" (7). Hesse's difficulty in understanding the

female self may be because Hesse himself was a man and his writings were highly autobiographical. It may be equally true that Hesse's transcendental search was beyond the narrow division of male and female and the artistic combination of all polar opposites was bound to converge in a single individual. As a writer whose works are highly autobiographical, it would be but natural that Hesse finds male protagonists as his shadow self or mouthpieces.

### **Self and the Dichotomy of Existence**

What may be Hesse's logic behind Siddhartha's digression from the earlier extremely moral ascetic existence toward that of corporeal and commercial world of Kamala and Kamaswami? Stelzig points out that Siddhartha's immersion in the worldly pleasures after realizing the vanity of the austere Samana life shows Hesse's both psychological and religious view of, "dialectical integration of antithetical aspects of the self" ("Ticino" 215). Cremerius in his essay "Hermann Hesse and Freud" says that Hesse himself claimed that his concept of spirituality differed from the conventional definitions, and that his version of religion admitted not only the ascetic spiritualization but also the "sensual, the weird and other dangerous pursuits". Similarly, comparing *Siddhartha* with *Bhagwad Gita*, Timpe suggests the similarity of the dichotomy addressed in both the works, "Whereas in the *Gita* it relates to illusion and reality, in *Siddhartha*, it delineates the sensory and the spiritual – essentially the same dualism – neatly separated geographically by the river" (350). Siddhartha had already realized the limitations of the rigorous practices prescribed by the conventional morality. Someone who defies the conventions in search of his distinctive self must now create a different concept of morality. At a point, out of desperation, Siddhartha even thinks of going back to his

father and perform the same ablutions. However, Siddhartha persists in his way just like Hesse's another protagonist Harry of *Steppenwolf*, an individualist like Siddhartha who is in search of the way to innocence, "leads on, not back, not back to the wolf or to the child, but ever further into sin, ever deeper into human life" (68).

Siddhartha, after practicing his extremely self-denial stage of Samana life becomes sure that the suppressive practices instead of liberating from the bondages of the flesh would only turn him into another hypocrite Samana. Here, Siddhartha's conclusion regarding the austere Samana life and conventional morality seems to incorporate what Nietzsche calls the three dangerous prescriptions prescribed by the religions, ". . . solitude, fasting, and sexual abstinence" (Nietzsche, *Beyond* 62). Hence, as Siddhartha would reflect later, although he had denied all prophets and their doctrines, he was still a priest and a Samana and he had to lose himself in the worldly corruptions of power, women and money, so that ". . . the priest and Samana in him were dead" (79). However, that Hesse's makes Siddhartha to indulge in the worldly pleasures does not mean that Hesse is favoring self-indulgence over self-mortification. On the contrary, as Stelzing notes, Siddhartha has to realize that, "the road of ascetism is dead end . . . the same holds true for the contrary path of self-indulgence" ("Ticino" 215). Hesse's intention is to create a harmonious self by integrating the polar opposites of human experience. Ziolkowski mentions in the Foreword of *The Glass Bead Game* that Hesse wrote several essays around 1920 on Nietzsche and Dostoevsky in which, "Hesse argued that men must seek a new morality that, transcending the conventional dichotomy of good and evil, will embrace all extremes of life in one unified vision" (xi). Thus, Siddhartha has to

experience that the self constitutes all the dichotomies of existence. As Levinson describes the process of mid-life transition of an individual:

As a man becomes more individuated and more oriented to the Self . . . 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. (242)

Similarly, as Siddhartha gets more oriented to the Self, he realizes that the conventional dichotomy of polar opposites have to be reconciled into a unified vision of existence.

### **Suffering: Way to Self-Realization**

The stubborn self that was responsible for severing himself with everything from the past would cost Siddhartha dearly. Denial of all Gods, prophets, and doctrines would not only require Siddhartha to discover everything from his own experience, the obstinate assertion of proving his individuality also takes him on the verge of committing suicide. Once he becomes adept in the worldly ways with the help of Kamala and Kamaswami, he suddenly leaves everything again. What ails Siddhartha suddenly although he is at the pinnacle of worldly successes? Siddhartha's *Eugensinn* again warns that his individuality was at stake. He had left everything so that he could find his own self, but, "Had he left all these to become a Kamaswami?" (67). This stage when Siddhartha is ready to self-annihilate himself when he almost jumps into the river to end his life has been analyzed mostly from the psychoanalytic point of mid-life crisis. Gail Sheehy sheds light on how painful the search for distinctiveness may become by the time an individual reaches his



mid-life years, “The work of adult life is not easy . . . some magic must be given up, some cherished illusion of safety and comfortably familiar sense of self must be cast off, to allow for the greater expansion of our distinctiveness” (qtd. in Archie 90).

Contemplating suicide as the assertion of one’s distinctive self can be seen as another characteristic of Hesse’s characters. The narrator of *Steppenwolf* reflects, “As every strength may become a weakness, so, on the contrary, may the typical suicide find strength and a support in its apparent weakness” (50). However, the same *Eugensinn* or self-will that takes the protagonists to self-imposed isolation resulting in extreme anxiety also persuades them to stick to life against all suffering. Hence, Siddhartha, although tempted by the waters to end his life would finally decide to rejuvenate life-force by going through a temporary death – deep and dreamless sleep – and awakening from the sleep, “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” (71) and to be reborn again as a “Siddhartha, self-willed, individualistic” (72).

Suffering is an unavoidable part of one’s quest for self. One can not help not suffering, nor can one prevent one’s loved ones from going through their path of suffering. Siddhartha could not escape suffering by leaving behind his father’s house and other worldly responsibilities. Only by experiencing life he learns the true nature of his self. And one could not experience life without suffering. Siddhartha realizes that suffering is a necessary part of life experience, since, “Everything that was not suffered to the end and finally concluded recurred and the same sorrows were undergone” (104). The Harvard psychologist Dr. M. Scott Peck in his bestseller *The Road Less Travelled* puts it succinctly, “So if your goal is to avoid pain and escape suffering, I would not advise you

to seek higher levels of consciousness or spiritual evolution” (80). Even the hermit Siddhartha who lives in the jungle has to go through the immense suffering and pain for his son like every other worldly father before enlightenment finally dawns upon him. As Vasudeva asks the grieving Siddhartha when the latter’s son runs away from him to the world of suffering:

Who protected Siddhartha the Samana from Sansara, from sin, greed and folly? Could his father’s piety, his teacher’s exhortations, his own knowledge, his own seeking, protect him? Which father, which teacher, could prevent him from living his own life, from soiling himself with life, from loading himself with sin, from swallowing the bitter drink himself, from finding his own path? Do you think my dear friend, that anybody is spared this path? (96)

Hesse’s message is clear. That life’s suffering can be overcome only by experiencing suffering in all its forms, but not by escaping suffering.

### **Wisdom: Not Transferable**

Why would Siddhartha who denies following his own father’s religion, the ascetic Samanas, and even Gotama the Buddha ask refuge with an old illiterate ferryman Vasudeva? Hesse who had seen how the Nazis were brainwashing the young minds to war by misinterpreting Nietzsche wished to prove through Siddhartha that “Wisdom is not communicable” (111). Siddhartha does not follow but identifies with Vasudeva simply because the latter is not a theorist, and neither followed nor preached any doctrine. Just as Sinclair would find Demian, Siddhartha would find in Vasudeva a friendly facilitator who is peaceful and compassionate like Buddha and yet unlike both Buddha

and Demian would not preach any doctrine. In fact, Vasudeva only acts as the “catalyst for Siddhartha’s achievement of enlightenment” (Byrd 554). Thus, Vasudeva becomes the only Hessian role-model of a teacher for both the aspiring teachers and disciples.

Vasudeva only asks Siddhartha to listen to the river. Siddhartha finds that the river sounds give multiplicity of meaning according to his own feelings and perspectives.

Through Vasudeva, Hesse projects a strong individualist who would not adhere to any ideology nor preach any doctrine – a 20th century embodiment of Nietzschean Zarathustra.

Siddhartha too initially suffers from too much intellectualism resulting from the dichotomy in his own thinking process. Siddhartha expresses reservation to the Buddha, “To nobody . . . can you communicate in words and teachings, what happened to you in the hour of enlightenment” (28). While answering Siddhartha’s question, Buddha himself makes it clear that he does not teach any knowledge, but only the Way, “The teaching which you have heard, however, in not my opinion, and its 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” (27). Buddha further warns Siddhartha to be on guard against “thickets of opinion and conflict of words” (27). However, in his thirst for knowledge Siddhartha seems to miss Buddha’s point at that moment. Siddhartha later realizes that, “Too much knowledge had hindered him” (79). And toward the end of the novel, while explaining the nature of things to Govinda, the enlightened Siddhartha himself says, “Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom . . . everything that is thought and expressed in words is one sided, only half the truth” (112).

Hesse seems to indicate how a person's own distinctiveness makes the different interpretations of the same natural and linguistic symbols. Comparing Hesse's protagonists of different novels, Mileck observes that for Hesse, "The inherent shortcomings of language became a recurrent theme. For Klein words only complicate and confuse, Klingsor is suspicious of verbal exchange, Siddhartha argues the pitfall and ultimate uselessness of words, Kurgast laments the inadequacy of language vis-à-vis life's polarities . . ." (236). Hesse in his novel *The Glass Bead Game* even wonders at the persistent yet unsuccessful human attempts since the beginning of civilization to invent a language that would be able to "express the most complex matters graphically, without excluding individual imagination and inventiveness" (64). In fact, Hesse seems to incorporate the Zen idea with regards to difficulty in deciphering the meaning of human communication, as Shunryu Suzuki observes in *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, "Usually when you listen to some statement, you hear it as a kind of echo of yourself. You are actually listening to your own opinion" (qtd. in Archie 104). Through his persistent distrust of words in the transmission human communication, Hesse might have been hinting at the Nazi misrepresentation of Nietzsche's words to mislead the German youths into Anti-Semitic propaganda.

### **Enlightenment: Unity of Self with Existence**

The river plays an important role in *Siddhartha*. Both Siddhartha and his wise old friend Vasudeva get enlightenment by learning from the river about the unity of all things in nature. In fact, Vasudeva is himself a Buddha who takes people from the world of Sansara to the world beyond across the river of life. However, what many critics and readers seem to have ignored is that Vasudeva is not Siddhartha's Guru in the

conventional sense of a Guru. Even when Siddhartha expresses his desire to learn the art of listening from Vasudeva, the latter says to Siddhartha, “You will learn it . . . but not from me. The river has taught me to listen; you will learn from it, too. The river knows everything; one can learn everything from it” (84). Thus, Vasudeva does not teach anything to Siddhartha – he only asks Siddhartha to listen carefully to the river. In the beginning of his quest, after he decides of leaving behind the ascetic life to “learn from myself, be my own pupil” (31), Siddhartha finds that the river on his way divides the two worlds: the world of ascetism and that of the Sansara. And later, after Siddhartha gets nauseated with the worldly life, he finds that the same river divides the worlds of Sansara and Nirvana. Even in his first encounter with the river and Vasudeva, the latter had indicated Siddhartha that one can only learn from the river: “I have often listened to it, gazed at it, and I have always learned something from it. One can learn much from a river” (40). However, Siddhartha would have to experience and suffer in the world himself before he could understand what Vasudeva meant.

Siddhartha never returns to anyone or any place once he leaves them, but he has to go back to the River again and again. The River listens to all of Siddhartha’s sorrows and then it quietly flows away. Vasudeva and Siddhartha find that the River even laughs and mocks at them. It is interesting to note that Siddhartha gets his enlightenment by gazing into the river and not by being taught by any Guru or preacher. In fact, Siddhartha’s reservation to Buddha that, “But according to your teachings, this unity and logical consequence of all things is broken in one place . . . that is your doctrine of rising above the world, of salvation” (27) was simply the logic that enlightenment can not be taught by any Guru or doctrine. It is the River observing which Siddhartha achieves his

ultimate goal: the enlightenment. Comparing the role played by the river in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* and Hesse's *Siddhartha*, Awan observes, "Both the protagonists in *Kim* and *Siddhartha* get a sense of salvation only after finding the River. Symbolically, it stands for Oneness and Homogeneity; it teaches them to be at peace with the whole of existence in all its forms. It is not total rejection and renunciation of the world" (49). Thus, the river personifies the unity of everything in life. It is the River of Life. Hence, Siddhartha, too, has to conclude that, "I reviewed my life and it was also a river, and Siddhartha the boy, Siddhartha the mature man and Siddhartha the old man were only separated by shadows, not through reality" (86). Stelzig points out the role played by the river in uniting different polarities of the self as, "Hesse's paradigmatic patterning is everywhere evident: more so than any of his previous alter egos, Siddhartha—true to his name—achieves his goal; in his life's pilgrimage, the polarities of sinner/saint, mind/nature are symmetrically balanced and mediated by the unifying symbol of the river" ("Ticino" 212).

Hesse's characters are frequently reminded of the delusion of time. Siddhartha's experience of timelessness is innately related to his realization of the self. It is interesting to note that enlightened Siddhartha differs with his early Brahmanistic view that the world is an illusion. As Siddhartha tells to Govinda's bewilderment, "Time is not real . . . And if time is not real, then the dividing line that seems to lie between this world and eternity, between suffering and bliss, between good and evil, is also an illusion" (112). Again, if everything is illusion, then everything is real as well, as Harvard psychologist turned mystic Dr. Richard Alpert aka Baba Ram Dass explains the psychological basis for the self-realization, "living in this world of illusion at the same time you are not in the

world of illusion” (30). Hence, the enlightened Siddhartha does not despise the world as illusion, but he explains that time creates all illusions. Similarly, Mileck observes:

From the timelessness of his momentary self, Siddhartha now proceeds to the oneness of the momentary manifestation . . . The momentary manifestation is therefore also the all; the idea. The momentary Siddhartha incorporates the idea Siddhartha. And with this conviction, Siddhartha finds full philosophical approbation for the life he has led, for his ample and intense living of the self. It is imperative to concentrate on and to experience the immediate self as he has, for that self is the only, the whole, and the real self, and not just illusory and fleeting appearance, for phenomena are noumena. (167)

Thus, the transcendence of every dualism and at the same time recognizing every component that creates the binary opposites leads an individual to a very peculiar state of being - involvement at the physical level but with a detached compassion. This transcendental state which reconciles all conflicting tendencies within oneself also establishes unity with each existence as the outward manifestation of inward harmony.

The most important message from the enlightened Siddhartha in the historical context of Hesse’s writing of *Siddhartha* may be the declaration, “The world, Govinda, is not imperfect or slowly evolving a long path to perfection. No, it is perfect at every moment . . . everything is good, everything is perfect, everything is Brahman” (113). The enlightened Siddhartha’s statement bears a significant correlation with the times Hesse wrote the novel. The early 20th century was an era of revolutions and counter-revolutions. From the Bolsheviks, Nazis, Fascists and to Libertarians the ideologues

propounded their own version of historical truths with an aim of perfecting the world. Hesse came to realize the rising wave of Fascism, Nazism and Communism would dominate the minds of German youths for years to come. Hesse's makes his dislike of "improvers of mankind" known through *Zarathustra's Return* written pseudonymously in 1919, "This world wasn't made to be bettered. Nor were you made to be bettered. You were made to be yourselves" (qtd. in Galbreath 66). The Nazis went to the extreme of perfecting their entire race through anti-Semitism. Still, despite his dislikes Hesse was not vociferously against the Nazis' assumption of power during the early years because he did not believe that, "world peace can be brought about by rational ways, by preaching, organization, and propaganda" (Galbreath 68). Siddhartha's distrust of doctrines conveys Hesse's pacifist message to the world torn apart by ideological conflicts and warfare, as Schwarz observes, "In its insistence on the unity of the universe and the impossibility of acquiring wisdom in the guise of doctrine rather than experience, Siddhartha represents Hesse's desire to heal the wounds of war"(x). Thus, Siddhartha's mode and explanation of enlightenment based on personal experience also reveals the failure of the Western Enlightenment project of improving the mankind through knowledge acquired by reasoning alone.

### **Love: The Only Doctrine**

Hesse scholars have variously interpreted Siddhartha's ultimate enlightenment and his subsequent explanations to Govinda. The enlightened Siddhartha does not despise the world as illusion and believes in the only doctrine of love, "love is the most important thing in the world" (115), and similarly, Vasudeva remarks that, "gentleness is stronger than severity, that water is stronger than rock, that love is stronger than force" (95).



Siddhartha's emphasis on love makes some to baptize *Siddhartha* into Christianity; others resort to Jungian psychology to prove that Siddhartha achieves his individuation process at last through reflection and integration. Hesse scholar Ziolkowski argues that the highest lesson of the novel is not only a direct contradiction of Buddha's theory of the Eightfold Path, but also that Siddhartha's "reunification with the All at the end of the book corresponds to the miraculous union with God in Christian legends" (*The Novels* 80). However, whatever be the critics' and Hesse's own later interpretation of his work, Siddhartha himself doesn't seem to differ with the Buddha after he gets enlightened. Although Siddhartha's insistence on love makes critics claim of Hesse's own Christian sensibility against Buddhist sensibility, the enlightened Siddhartha seems to identify himself with the Buddha, "I know that I am at one with Gotama. How, indeed, could he not know love, he who has recognized all humanity's vanity and transitoriness, yet loves humanity so much that he has devoted a long life solely to help and teach people?" (116).

Siddhartha suffers immensely and commits many errors in his quest for self, but still he insists on turning his back on teachers and doctrines. Siddhartha's reasoning for distrusting others' teaching seems to echo with Demian when the latter gives a different interpretation of the story of Abel and Cain than that given in the Bible, "Most of the things we're taught I'm sure are quite right and true, but one can view all of them from quite a different angle than the teachers do--and most of the time they then make better sense" (*Demian* 23). Siddhartha knows that why his father, the Samanas, and even the followers of the Buddha do not achieve enlightenment despite their arduous and sincere penance was because they were always dwelling on words and doctrines given by others. As Hesse himself points out, the followers of even the living Buddha, because they are

lost in the words, miss to comprehend that “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” (*My* 383).

Interestingly, Siddhartha’s begins his quest for self because, “the love of his father and mother, and also the love of his friend Govinda, would not always make him happy, give him peace, satisfy and suffice him” (5), and even while with Kamala, he says, “Perhaps people like us cannot love” (59). However, after he leaves Kamala, gets over the suicidal feelings, and rises up from a deep sleep by the river, Siddhartha begins to be aware of the reason behind his agony, “it seemed to him that was just why he was previously so ill – because he could love nothing and nobody” (75). Through the love for his son, Siddhartha discovers the need for family values in one’s life, “Stronger than his knowledge was his love for the boy, his devotion, his fear of losing him. Had he ever lost his heart to anybody so completely, had he ever loved anybody so much, so blindly, so painfully, so hopelessly and yet so happily?” (96). And later, the enlightened Siddhartha places love as the only important thing in the world. His doctrine of love becomes so expansive that Siddhartha even claims to Govinda that, “I can love a stone, Govinda, and a tree or a piece of bark” (114).

It is also interesting to note that Siddhartha gets enlightened only after he immensely suffers in the love for his run away son. It is his suffering in the love of his son that makes Siddhartha to identify himself with other ordinary people whom he would otherwise ridicule as childlike. After meeting his son, Siddhartha would no longer ridicule ordinary people lost in their Sansara, since, “But now, since his son was there, he, Siddhartha, had become completely like one of the people, through sorrow, through

loving” (97). The recognition that he too was like everyone in the world humbles down Siddhartha’s erstwhile superiority complex. Identification with every other fellow being whom he would otherwise deride as “child-people” finally breaks Siddhartha’s self-imposed isolation. It is the love for his son that makes Siddhartha to see, “all the voices, all the goals, all the yearnings, all the sorrows, all the pleasures, all the good and evil, all of them together was the world. All of them together was [sic] the stream of events, the music of life” (107). On Siddhartha’s hearing of the great song of a thousand voices merging into the perfection of one word “Om” while watching the river, Stelzing comments that, “In this religious experience of higher self-realization, Siddhartha’s individual identity merges into cosmic unity: the metaphysical ground of self and world are one and the same; to reach the one is to touch the other” (“Ticino” 219). This discovery of the interwovenness of everything in the world that he recognizes after he suffers for his son’s love like every other ordinary father leads Siddhartha toward the enlightened state in which, “his Self had merged into unity” (108).

The assertion of discovering the nature of his self that initially alienates Siddhartha from his society and surrounding finally culminates into the individuation - the realization of unity with everything in the world. As Harry contemplates, “every ego, so far from being a unity is in the highest degree a manifold world, a constellated heaven, a chaos of forms, of states and stages, of inheritances and potentialities” (*Steppenwolf* 62), the self which exists only with a distant relation to others during Siddhartha’s early years finally humbles down into a co-existence with all – with the realization that there are multiple others within oneself that need to be synchronized through profound introspection. Perhaps, therefore, Hesse makes Siddhartha to go through a quest for self,

accept all his follies, confess all sins, and yet insist on his disbelief of words, preachers and followers - for attaching oneself to any doctrine or ideology would only dissociate one with other fellow beings. As Siddhartha preaches his only important doctrine of love to Govinda, “It may be important to great thinkers to examine the world, to explain and despise it. But I think it is only important to love the world, not to despise it nor for us to hate each other, but to be able to regard the world and ourselves and all beings with love, admiration and respect” (115).

However, unlike the melancholy approach of *Steppenwolf*, Hesse’s *Siddhartha* professes an attitude of active happiness, peace and love symbolized by the mysterious smiles of Gotama, Basudeva, and later that of the enlightened Siddhartha. While *Steppenwolf*’s excessive demand from life and his fellow beings ultimately makes him a misanthrope, Siddhartha learns to appreciate others’ and his own shortcomings. Still, both Siddhartha and *Steppenwolf* can be seen as Hesse’s archetypes of the same self, as Serrano quotes Hesse saying, “Some people can’t understand that I could have written both *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf*. But they complement each other; they are the two poles of life between which we move . . .” (33). Thus, the proposition seems justifiable that the chronological order of Hesse’s successive novels of the 1920s may be reversed as the characters evolve in their quest for self - with young *Demian* (1919) followed by middle-aged *Steppenwolf* (1927) finally individuating in wise, peaceful, and loving *Siddhartha* (1922).

## Chapter IV: Conclusion

### Harmonious Self for a Harmonious World

Siddhartha's insistence on quest for self defying all doctrines and teachings does not mean that Hesse wished to propound any sort of anarchism against the society. In fact, Hesse believed that only through some sort of individualism each individual can be made responsible for his actions. Hesse may sound just another romantic preacher; however, in a world mired by deadly ideologies seeking justifications from Jesus to Nietzsche, and to Marx, Hesse's concerns would hardly need any justification.

*Siddhartha* was born in the aftermath of the World War I and another great World War loomed large. Hesse through his allegorical message in *Siddhartha* makes an anxious call to the youths for defiance against growing material and military pursuits. Similarly, Hesse was also concerned over the individual's predicament in the capitalism driven modernity. The collapse of the whole European civilization seemed imminent due to rising political, cultural, and ideological conflicts. At the time of chaos in the Western Civilization's history, Hesse turns to the East in search of fresh ideas and values.

However, an individual can only be persuaded to turn inward when he realizes the futility of worldly pursuits of having power over others. The need to control and manipulate the outer world only evaporates when one recognizes that his existence as a being is relatively negligible in comparison to the vastness of the spatial and temporal dimensions of the universe. Therefore, through the excessive individualism of his protagonists like Siddhartha, Hesse as an eye-witness of the greatest human conflicts such as the World War I and World War II seems to be searching for an alternative society among the people divided into various ideological, religious and communal

identities. Hesse saw that despite humankind's tremendous accumulation of knowledge and prosperity the sheer disregard for diversity was leading the world toward perpetual conflicts. The duality of existence as in the mind and the real world and their address in various spiritual disciplines, the visits to psychoanalysis lessons, and subsequent profound interest in Freudian and especially in Jungian psychology were to influence him the most to arrive at his premises.

Hesse seems to realize that extreme nationalism and the desire to have power over others result in millions of innocent death and innumerable sufferings. In *Siddhartha*, Hesse creates a utopian world where power and wealth are ephemeral pursuits and chasing after them being an act of utter foolishness. Thus *Siddhartha* can be seen as Hesse's antithesis to collectivist tendencies in the form of nationalist, racial, cultural, and ideological doctrines, and an effort to establish the individual's inward quest for self as beneficial to both the individual and the society. However, Hesse knew how calls for peace would only be taken as quixotic idealism. He also knew that he would not be able to stop the next war that was sure to happen. Hesse seems to profess his belief that a true hero is not someone who dies in war or kills a fellow being, but one who synchronizes the conflicting tendencies present within himself. *Siddhartha* proves that the secret of life can not be taught by any teacher, nor by following any dogma, but can only be known through the individual's own inward journey into the self. *Siddhartha* also shows that initial disobedience that a self-willed person shows against authorial power is far more responsible than the sheepish conformity with respect to the universal law of humanity. Hesse's ideal back to nature world of *Siddhartha* may also be seen as another flawed utopia. However, the creation of utopia, no matter how flawed it may, was

nevertheless a deliberate attempt. For Hesse, it was necessary to create such a utopic world as the devastations of the World War I were not over yet, and the possibility of even a greater war seemed imminent.

To persuade his countrymen and the whole humanity against committing yet another civilizational blunder, Hesse wished to develop a new social movement himself. To dissuade the youths from the Nazi, Fascist and war calls other political clouts, it was necessary to detach their attention from politics of ideologies, militarism and nationalism. Hesse believed that the individual will should not identify itself with the collective will of the society or the nation. Thus, it was necessary to turn the youths' attention toward a very different culture than their own. Resorting to different Eastern concepts in *Siddhartha* seems to be just an excuse for Hesse to adapt Nietzschean *amor fati* or "will to power" into his own form of *Eugensinn* or self-will, so that individuals could be persuaded to take inward journey to self. However, Hesse wanted to emphasize that the Nietzschean concept of "will to power" referred to the will of an individual to have power over his own destiny, but not to have power over others. It was important for Hesse to elaborate Nietzsche's ideas, as the Anti-Semites, the Nazis, and other authoritarians were distorting Nietzsche's philosophy for their bigotry. *Siddhartha* may be seen as a truly Nietzschean model of *Übermensch* or Superman who does not follow any doctrine blindly, but dares for an inward search to find the true nature of his self. The concept of Superman was Nietzsche's call for the individuals to achieve their ultimate potential, but not for groups, parties, nations and epochs. Hence, through *Siddhartha*'s personal journey of seeking his self and realizing his potential, Hesse points out that perfection in world comes only when each individual establishes harmony with his own self.

Hesse's persistent concern is to find an escape for the individual from not only the societal bondage but also from one's own dual and conflicting tendencies. Hesse believed that outer conflict was only the manifestation of the conflicting instinctual drives within every individual. Hence, Hesse found it necessary to convince each individual to understand their own nature through intense self-examination and synchronize the polar opposites within themselves into a harmonious unity. Once an individual is persuaded to delve into the study of his own self, the desire to gain control over others would soon evaporate. Experimenting with one's own body and mind has been a favorite intellectual and spiritual activity of the ancient Orientals. In *Siddhartha*, Hesse makes his affluent and yet discontented Western readers travel through time and space to learn how the people from a distant past and distant culture with so little material possession had invented for every individual a way of happy and peaceful existence.

Thus, Siddhartha's extreme individuality can be seen as Hesse's method as well as belief in human capacity for self-cure without any external interference – and for Hesse self-cure was the only cure for treating the whole humanity's suffering. The rising confrontations between various forms of ideologies persuaded Hesse to profess his own version individualism with the belief that individuals who join the masses lose their rational faculties. It should be noted that Hesse is not making any authoritative elaboration or comparison of diverse concepts he borrows from both the Eastern and Western traditions in *Siddhartha*. From Atman to Brahman, from Buddha to Nietzsche, from psychology to mysticism, and from search for self to enlightenment, Hesse uses all these concepts as devices to demonstrate how the individual's *Eugensinn* or self-will can be used to create a more harmonious society by reconciling the conflicting tendencies



within every individual. *Siddhartha* shows that the world outside is not a hindrance but a succor in one's efforts for self-actualization.

In the initial days, when Siddhartha seeks for the mystery of his self as separated and different from others, he realizes that he is in fact fleeing from what he seeks – self-knowledge. The more Siddhartha grows toward enlightenment, more he identifies with other fellow beings thus expanding his empathy for others. Thus, even through intense self-will and individualism, Siddhartha ultimately learns to appreciate unity in the plurality of existence. It should be noted that by his denial of following Buddha, Siddhartha is not undermining Buddha's achievement. Siddhartha, by looking beyond Buddha's reputation, simply conveys Hesse's message that wisdom is not communicable through words and doctrines. The only doctrine of love than Siddhartha professes after his enlightenment was Hesse's call for humanity to appreciate their fellow beings instead of making war citing ideological, racial, and cultural differences. Through Siddhartha's denial of all doctrines, Hesse persuades each individual to be independent thinkers and arrive at a conclusion based on their own individual experience. Siddhartha's ultimate enlightenment transcending all sufferings and with perpetual bliss certainly seem like a utopist's dream. Despite its utopic vision, *Siddhartha* offers hope for humanity, a hope between the two greatest World Wars that threatened the very survival of the human existence. Through the protagonist's extreme individualism in quest for self and enlightenment, Hesse creates a utopic worldview in *Siddhartha* to prove his proposition that an individual's inward quest for self is the only antidote to humanity's collective madness for power.

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