



## 'The Internal Revolution' in Hesse's *Demian*

### KEYWORDS

Internal chaos, Self- realization, Inner Bliss.

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### ABSTRACT

The underlining theme of most of Hesse's works is the quest for a spiritual regeneration in mankind. *Demian* is a landmark in the journey of discovering through the boundless regions of human mind. The protagonist seeks the mystic and restively tries to identify with the "vital energy" floating in the universe, attempting throughout to unravel LIFE. He has projected this accurately in his character of Sinclair who like all aware souls is in a state of becoming. Sinclair develops into a self- cognizant man after experiencing true friendship and the purity of life. Hesse's life itself was a zealous pursuit to explore the uncharted territory of the inner world of human beings. His novels have been described as 'Bildungsroman' which means novels that deals with the growth of Youngman into maturity through some kind of education.

### INTRODUCTION

Hermann Hesse- the German-Swiss Nobel Laureate remains one of the best – selling scintillating German writers of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries as he addressed the most common issues of a human being- Human Ideals and Freedom, Life as a journey towards a spiritual realm . He advanced to write about the search, the problems that touched the innate spirit of human beings. For Hesse each experience was an internal reaction of a human being. The so called cosmos as well as the chaos resided within the innate being of an individual. This was an internal revolution.

**Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth (1919)** was his breakthrough novel written during the most critical time of his life (political turmoil as well as personal crisis) which transformed Hesse into the "exciting and probing author of *Demian*" revealing his intense innate turmoil. He found himself a "beginner in his own circumstances." His inner schism is reflected in what Sinclair says, "Nothing in the world is more disturbing to a man than following the path that leads him to himself." As Hesse says, *Demian* is a story of Jungian individuation, the progression of the soul in extraordinary ways into one's own unconsciousness. The Introduction projects the process of Individuation (The Way To Self Leads To Childhood and its experiences: the contents of the Personal Unconscious).

His meeting with Max (who is in complete harmony with himself) makes him more desperate in his search for true self. He grows up in search of his individuality, faith, spiritual fervor and social aesthetic. Secondly, 'Übermensch' the Version of Nietzsche is reflected in Hesse's works. He too, believes that individuals must not be confined by the norms set by the society, the different groups they belong to, set standards of families and religions. Freedom from all these confinements is the only way to realize the true self. Independent of all bondages they can focus on self introspection and succeed in becoming better human beings.

*Demian* is the factual picture of his personal catastrophe and can be called a saga of his voyage to Discovery of his 'self'. In 1916 his father's death, the serious illness of his youngest child, the stress of War, the fatigue caused

by his services to the Prisoners and his marital crisis led him to depression and he had to undergo psychoanalysis in the Sonnmatt private clinic in Lucerne. Dr. J.B.Lang, a student of Jung's treated him quite successfully. This period was also known as "Sinclair period". Dr. Lang cleared all his mental blockages resulting in the great work *Demian* which signified his liberation a new beginning in his life. His work was a torchbearer to the young soldiers and aware youngsters of the age.

Only Harmony (union of brain and Soul), a balance between the existent world with the imaginative world is the sole key to lead human beings back to the Home where lies BLISS!

Few "Marked" people disbelieve in conforming to the norms of society who find each other. These bold souls question everything told to them and they think quite differently. With clarity of their innate vision they find the deeper meaning in life.

Hesse wonderfully talks about a conflict between an individual with a spiritual inclination remains an outsider in the society and the common humanity who are neither spiritual nor seek such a growth. They hanker after mere unreflective, temporary contentment.

This research paper aims to study and to focus on the eternal truths brought out by Herman Hesse through his protagonists and characters. Hesse with the vision of a Seer delves deep into the workings of the subconscious and like a proficient psychoanalyst deals with his difficult to be handled characters. *Demian* carries a tragic overtone as it is based on the realities of life.

### DEMIAN AND INTERNAL REVOLUTION

"Ich wolteja nichts als das zu leben versuchen,

Was von selher aus mir heraus wollte, Warum war das so sehr schwer?"

I wanted only to try to live in accord and the promptings which came from my true self. Why was that so very difficult?"- This was the motto of *Demian*, initially published as Hesse's autobiography under the pseudonym Emil Sinclair.

Sinclair, the prepubescent protagonist of *Demian* is raised in a traditional home in a middle class in Germany. As a boy, Sinclair becomes aware of the two contradictory worlds - the world within the walls of his home the "world of light" representing Godliness and the outside world, representing the dark aspects of life. He fails to become a part of the family as he is more attracted towards the outer realm and dwells in conflict.

While playing with Franz Kromer, Sinclair fabricates a story in which he and his accomplice stole a bag of apples from a neighbor. Franz blackmails Sinclair with exposure if he disagrees to yield to his demands. Sinclair eventually becomes a victim of the "forbidden realm" committing all the sinful acts. Torn between the good and the bad he gradually sinks into Paranoia and Depression. Meanwhile, a mysterious classmate 'Demian', with a strange aura attracts him.

Sinclair is impressed by his first encounter with Demian who surprises him by his radical perspective of the biblical story of Cain and Abel. He gives a heroic characterization of Cain who by his strength killed Abel- a misfit. This unthought-of radical version draws Sinclair away from the set traditions which eventually awaken him into a realization of his self. Later, he is freed from Kromer's bondage due to Demian's timely intervention. After confessing everything to his parents Sinclair seeks shelter in the "world of light" but realizes that he is not made for this world due to his waning innocence.

After years Sinclair happens to meet Demian. This time ironically, Sinclair is facing, not an external threat but an inner conflict between his two worlds. The teacher recounts the story of Cain and Abel, Sinclair feels motivated by the bold perspective of Demian. This moment makes their friendship more strong and lasting. Demian's friendship itself becomes more challenging to Sinclair's "world of light" as he impregnates Sinclair with radical ideas and perspective. This challenge motivates Sinclair towards entirely new ways of thinking and feeling, and in the end detachment from his childhood, his family, and the "world of light". The fourth chapter brings the separation of Sinclair and Demian, as well as Sinclair's separation from his family, when Sinclair is sent off to boarding school. Here Sinclair is surrounded by loneliness and insecurity and mis-adjustment. In this foreign land Sinclair undergoes great isolation which drives him to search for his self, to search the meaning of life. Out of desperation, he resorts to drinking and loses his image among faculty and friends.

Finally, his father is summoned and Sinclair is threatened with expulsion. These harsh experiences make him realize the worthlessness of his life, later the sight of a young lady relits his dying spirit.

His infatuation uplifts his mood and finds expression in painting. Suddenly, he paints the face of a woman that alters his life forever. "It resembled a kind of image of God or a holy mask, half male, half female, ageless, as purposeful as it was dreamy, as rigid as it was secretly alive."

Sinclair remembers Demian's interpretation of Cain and Abel and his interest in an old coat of arms that hung above the door of his house. The emblem is that of a sparrow hawk. Sinclair paints the old emblem which depicts a sparrow hawk emerging or fighting its way out of a globe or a giant egg. He then mails this painting to Demian and to his surprise, receives a long awaited response

from him.

Demian embedded the truth in Sinclair that an individual must delve into the self to discover his fate. Sinclair spends a long time in isolation, with his paintings of the hawk, Demian, and his dreams.

Once while strolling Sinclair happens to hear a playing of an organ and immediately develops a mysterious connection with the player whom he finally meets. Pistorius- the talented organist is a theologian, an expert in ancient religions and philosophies, who teaches meditation to Sinclair and directs him in his journey towards himself. Later, he leaves Pistorius as he is not ready to accept anything new.

Meanwhile Sinclair meets a younger schoolmate, Knauer who seeks his guidance about spiritualism and white magic. Sinclair is awakened at midnight and to an unknown place where Knauer is planning to commit suicide. After this experience, Knauer clings to Sinclair to guide him and lead him to salvation. In the process Sinclair, too, evolves internally.

After leaving his boarding school Sinclair visits Demian's old house which is now occupied by an old woman. She shows an album containing old pictures of the mother and son. Immediately, Sinclair's Fantasy turned to reality when he saw a picture of Frau Demian, his dream woman, his adored guide whom he had unconsciously painted. During his vacations he spends time in finding her but all in vain. Then one night, accidentally while strolling he comes upon Demian. Sinclair is overwhelmed to find that both Demian and his mother awaited his arrival. Both were sure that Sinclair would definitely find the path to himself. While listening to her, Sinclair felt as if she had experienced all the pain and suffering with him. She understands all his dreams, pains and conflicts. He soon becomes a part of the family and attends all the meetings of those with the mark who believe in each religion and God. Meanwhile, during World War I Demian and Sinclair leave behind the comforts of life to participate in it. They meet in the end when Demian is dying. The long search of self for Sinclair ends when he realizes that Sinclair realizes Demian is his salvation. This Spiritual realization saves him.

Thus, Emil innocent, unaware and immature boy is led to his path of self-understanding by Demian, his confidante who makes him aware of the frailty of life, and the true purpose of existence- Self Awakening.

#### CONCLUSION:

Hesse is the most Believable Human writer as all characters project the reality of being a human. Today, too, all individuals suffer like Hesse's characters who are thrown to the wild whims of nature, agony of life turns and twists their destiny. *Demian* is not about one's growing up or the ways of the world. It can be understood only by those individuals who understand themselves and treat themselves apart from the crowd. Hesse is meant for those few bold ones who resign to severe loneliness and isolation away from self and society.

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