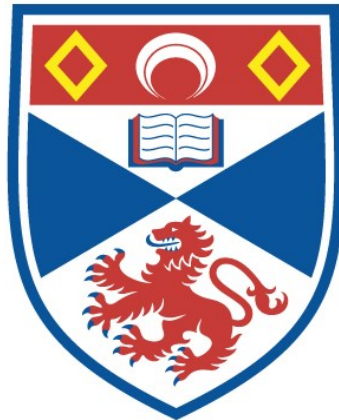


A LACANIAN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED NOVELS BY
HERMANN HESSE

Stefan Gullatz

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
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**A Lacanian Analysis of Selected Novels
by Hermann Hesse**

By Stefan Gullatz

**University of St. Andrews
October 1998**

**This thesis was submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**



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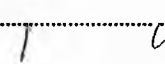
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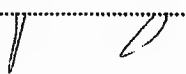
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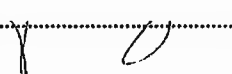
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Abstract

This dissertation takes the many existing, predominantly Jungian psychoanalytic approaches to Hesse as its starting point and then proceeds to an original recasting of some of Hesse's key novels (particularly Demian and Der Steppenwolf though a brief outline for Das Glasperlenspiel is provided in the concluding chapter) in the light of a Lacanian psychoanalysis and philosophy and a generally 'structuralist' understanding. My aim is to uncover how strategies of narrative signification in the complex architecture of Hesse's novels *retroactively* produce the spark of meaning which Jungians consider evidence of an *intrinsic, archetypal* essence at the core of the self. The Steppenwolf chapter in particular is also devoted to an investigation of the way in which meaning and mourning as functions constitutive of the subject crystallise in the use of metaphorical and allegorical devices.

Lupton's After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis which outlines a comprehensive paradigm for the interrelation of tropic narrative devices and their psychoanalytic undercurrents is a constant point of reference in this thesis, along with the works of Slavoj Žižek, arguably the most creative and influential contemporary Lacanian critic.

Acknowledgements

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Raymond Furness, whose advice and support throughout this period of study has been unflinching. Dr. Bill Barnes-Gutteridge at the University of Stirling and some of his research student were instrumental in the formation of my original interest in undertaking a Lacanian study of Hermann Hesse.

Beyond the University and Department Libraries in St. Andrews, important sources for this study were found in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, at the University of Heidelberg and at the University of Leuven.

Without a grant for tuition fees from the Scottish Education Department this project would not have been possible. Loans and grants have been made available also by the Assistant Hebdomidar of the University of St. Andrews, Mr. Douglas, and by the School of Modern Languages.

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Stefan Gullatz

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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION: HESSE AND LACAN?

In this dissertation we attempt a methodological examination of key works by Hermann Hesse in a Lacanian framework. What can be achieved by bringing together such apparently diverse figures as Hesse and Lacan, by viewing Hesse from a Lacanian angle?

It is well-known that the emergence of the counter-culture in the United States and Europe in the 1960's led to a resurgence of interest in Hesse, both popular and critical. Hesse's Der Steppenwolf in particular, with its hostility towards the bourgeoisie and its stream of surreal imagery provided a point of identification for young readers disenchanted with the stale culture and conformity that dominated most Western democracies in the 1950's and early 1960's.

As a result of the counter-culture's immersion in Eastern mysticism a number of works by Hesse that reflected the author's own, life-long preoccupation with Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism and Taoism also became prominent. These included Siddhartha and Das Glasperlenspiel. Other cultural factors conducive to the Hesse renaissance of the time included Timothy Leary's foreword to the English edition of Die Morgenlandfahrt establishing the credentials of that work in the eyes of a counter-culture intrigued by the exploration of inner space through an experimentation with mind-altering, psychedelic substances. In the context of this climate it is hardly

surprising that academic Hesse criticism also experienced a resurgence. The centre of gravity of this academic appraisal of Hesse was located in the United States. Two key, authoritative studies that remain important today were written on the cusp of the Hesse revival: Ziolkowski's The Novels of Hermann Hesse (1965) and Boulbys Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art (1967).

Yet the importance of Hesse waned in the 1970's and 1980's so that the time may have arrived for a re-evaluation or a new approach to reading Hesse. The Lacanian approach with its manifold ramifications cannot easily be encapsulated in a few words but it may be described as an 'existential psychoanalysis' broadly faithful to Freud which retains Freud's rational basis as opposed to Jungian mysticism. Crucially, Lacan brought the insights of modern, structural linguistics and structural anthropology - of which Freud himself was ignorant - to bear on psychoanalysis and his work also clearly betrays his early influence by the philosophies of Hegel and Heidegger. While Lacan's detractors point out that his famous 'baroque' rhetorical style which, in some respects, echoed the stance of Zen Buddhist sages appears to be in contrast to the rationality of his system, it can be argued that the opposite is the case, that it practically embodied one of Lacan's key theoretical claims: there is no metalanguage, no Other of the Other. It is hoped that the Lacanian angle which has demonstrably served as a potent tool in French and English literary criticism (the works of Proust and Shakespeare have been subjected to extensive Lacanian analyses) will illuminate aspects of Hermann Hesse's

literature that have escaped the net of previous Hesse studies, in particular the wide array of Jungian oriented texts that exhibit a non-critical infatuation with a 'Romantic unconscious'. Since a Lacanian approach to criticism is always text rather than author-based it is ideal to examining the minutiae of the complex structural fabric of Hesse's key works. Lacan will allow us to identify Hesse's great capacity for composing an intricate narrative that reflects the structure of the psyche. But a Lacanian criticism also emerges as a powerful tool in determining the nature of certain implicit 'essentialist' or ideological strands in Hesse's work, expressions of the 'faith' he inherited from his Christian background and his later immersion in non-Christian mysticism.

The discussion will focus on two novels (Demian and Der Steppenwolf) but reference will be made to other texts. Chapter Two contains a section contrasting Hesse's often sinister and brutally honest Demian with works from the first phase of his writing, his 'neoromantic' period that featured novels such a Peter Camenzind, Knulp and Gertrud with narcissistic heroes striving for an inner harmony. In terms of our analysis of ideology, a brief look at Hesse's 'political' pamphlet Zarathustra's Wiederkehr written like Demian under the pseudonym Emil Sinclair emerges as helpful. In Chapter Three, some more light is cast on Der Steppenwolf by drawing on analogies from, amongst others, Klein und Wagner and Klinsor's letzter Sommer which predated Der Steppenwolf, as well as Narziss und Goldmund and Das Glasperlenspiel which were composed subsequently. On

the basis of the insights derived from our discussion, we will draw a brief outline for possible future studies of Das Glasperlenenspiel in the concluding chapter.

Quotations from Hesse will be taken from the Suhrkamp edition of his works with the abbreviations D. and S. representing Demian and Der Steppenwolf respectively. With regard to Lacan's work I have relied predominantly on the German Quadrige Verlag edition of the two key pillars that constitute his discourse: the Schriften and the Seminar. To ensure consistency quotes are mostly from this edition. However, there is a Lacanian essay of key significance to our analysis in Chapter Three, Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet, which is not contained in the Quadrige edition so that quotes will be in English. The same applies to the occasional transportation of Lacan quotes from English secondary literature as well as some quotes at the onset of individual sections that 'set the tone'.

Amongst the Lacanian critics cited in this dissertation the Slovenian philosopher and critic Slavoj Žižek stands out. Žižek, who has applied Lacanian psychoanalysis to a wide variety of cultural and social phenomena, is generally acknowledged as central figure within the community of Lacanian critics which includes, amongst other, Ellie-Ragland Sullivan, Mark Bracher and Juliet Flower McCannel. While Žižek's style is frequently provocative, incisive and witty, in substance he remains scrupulously faithful to the rigour of Lacanian theory. In privileging Žižek somewhat above other Lacanian critics in this

thesis I hope to ensure theoretical consistency and, in view of Lacan's often 'baroque' style, to make the difficult web of Lacanian ideas more accessible. Given the dialectical nature of Lacan's teaching, most Lacanian approaches to literary criticism aim not merely to illuminate the work under consideration but also, in the process, to shed more light on the theory itself and I hope that our discussion of Hesse will partake of that effect.

CHAPTER TWO

DEMIAN: SUBSTANTIALISM VERSUS STRUCTURALISM

I. Outline

The events in Hesse's life preceding the composition of Demian are well documented. In the years leading up to 1916 when he suffered a nervous collapse requiring his temporary hospitalisation in a sanatorium in Sonnmatt, Hesse had been under severe strain through a coincidence of numerous factors. These included his gradual estrangement from his wife, her descent into a psychotic autism and their eventual divorce as well as the severe illness and eventual death of one of his children. Furthermore, Hesse had a wrought ambivalent attitude towards the First World War. Initially reluctantly in favour of Germany's involvement, he later developed a more distanced stance and published numerous pacifist articles from his new home base in Switzerland that led to severe, vitriolic attacks from writer colleagues in Germany branding him as a traitor. Hesse's voluntary involvement in an organisation responsible for the provision of books and cultural material to German prisoners of war clashed with the demands of his own literary productions and led to overwork. Apart from this, the confrontation with the harsh reality of the First World War led to debilitating doubts about the value and authenticity of the often rather derivative, neo-romantic literature he had written up to that point. Works such as Peter Camenzind or Gertrud had been commercial successes and had established Hesse as a writer but he wondered if he had

not betrayed his earlier idealistic literary ambitions and become a mere writer of 'Unterhaltungsliteratur' lacking any real artistic value. It was, however, the death of his father with whom he had been locked into a difficult, highly ambivalent relation since his adolescence which finally triggered his nervous collapse. There had been an attitude of rebellion against his father's authority and strict Pietist values and early attempts at an assertion of his own individuality. Nonetheless he had developed a gradually growing, deep respect for his father's principles of morality and belief.

To restore his health Hesse was subsequently hospitalised in a sanatorium in Sonnmatt for about two months. It was here that he established his first contact with psychoanalytic therapy. Regular sessions with Dr. Lang, a pupil of Jung who shared Jung's deep interest in the psychological evaluation of mythology, continued well beyond Hesse's stay at Sonnmatt and delineate the essential 'discursive context' out of which his Demian emerged in 1918.

According to Volker Michels, Hesse was familiar with Jung's work Symbols of Transformation (1912) even before his sessions with Dr. Lang and was likely introduced to Septem Sermones ad Mortuos, a work that reflects Jung's preoccupation with the Gnosis, by Lang himself.¹ In Septem Sermones, the Gnostic deity Abraxas holds seven speeches answering the questions of the dead who returned from Jerusalem 'where they did not find what they sought.' The work stresses the importance of an active individuation process culminating in the realisation of one's innermost

self and exposes the discordance of this goal with any passive reliance on Christian dogma. It is now of course a commonplace in Hesse criticism that Hesse's direct experience of both Jungian psychoanalytic theory and practice is reflected in the structure and content of his Demian. The common basis of most critical approaches to the work may be summarised in a few statements: The novel lacking any coherent plot in a conventional sense is rather to be considered an account of the main protagonist's individuation process. Strong autobiographic elements and Hesse's own psychoanalytic journey form the fundamental blueprint of the quest for identity depicted in the novel. Thus projections of the hero's inner psychic reality, dreams and fantasies, are interwoven with the texture of the narrative.

The plethora of phantasmatic imagery that has emerged in the work has given rise to Jungian inspired interpretations throughout the history of Hesse reception and criticism. (Baumann, Weaver, Ziolkowski etc.) Rix Weaver, for example establishes a map of the text which correlates each of its characters with a concept from the Jungian universe such as the shadow, the anima, the psychopomp or the self.² Thus critics of a Jungian orientation conceptualise the work as a 'map of the psyche' which combines an account of the specific personal stages of development of the central character (Sinclair) with a presentation of material of the 'collective', 'archetypal' unconscious which can only be expressed in terms of enigmatic, mythological imagery. (i.e. the God Abraxas , the world egg , mother 'Eva' etc.). In his examination Ziolkowski presents what he considers to be compelling evidence for Demian being based on

the grail story, which he argues was 'in the air' in literary and intellectual circles at the time.³ Weaver notes that Jung considered the grail story to be an embodiment of the quest for the archetypal self yet she concludes that while both the grail story and Demian tap into the same 'archetypal stream', Demian is probably not modelled consciously on the story of the grail.⁴ On the other hand, the concepts of the world egg and the Gnostic God Abraxas figured in Septem Sermones give direct evidence of the conscious interweaving of mythological strands into the novel.

A survey of the secondary literature on Hesse reveals considerable homogeneity in the approach of Jungian oriented critics. From a Jungian perspective, the structure of the novel appears to be such that the frequently stated parallels appear to virtually impose themselves. Kromer, Knauer and Beck are thus aligned with the 'shadow', Sinclair's sister, Beatrice and mother Eva with the 'anima', Pistorius with the guru or psychopomp, Demian with the 'self' while Sinclair himself occupies the position of the 'ego' at the centre which structures and organises the process of assimilating all these expressions of the personal and collective unconscious to consciousness. (i.e. Weaver, Baumann)

In combination with Hesse's documented close contacts with the Jungian school, this Jungian approach appears therefore to possess an intrinsic persuasiveness. In view of this, how are we to model our Lacanian re-evaluation? It is important to define our methodological framework precisely. First of all, a conventional 'psychologising' approach to interpretation is a trap to be avoided. It would be a definite mistake to search

documents on or by Hesse for clues of specific complexes, childhood disturbances, neuroses, to reconstruct the exact causal factors and dynamics of Hesse's breakdown and then to apply such speculation to themes or motifs in the novel. A limited reservoir of documents for such an approach might be the recently published Materialien zu Hermann Hesse's 'Demian'. Entstehungsgeschichte in Selbstzeugnissen edited by Volker Michels. Such an approach would not only contradict the general spirit of the French structuralist school in the widest sense which posits that there 'is nothing outside the text', but it would also be radically alien to a specifically Lacanian hermeneutics which must situate itself in the dimension of the synchronous symbolic order. In Seminar II, Lacan advised his students that any analysis of deceased authors is inconceivable.⁵

In terms of a consideration of material outside the novel itself, we shall therefore strictly limit ourselves to an investigation of two pivotal dreams noted in Hermann Hesse's dream diary which he kept in 1917 as part of his analysis, taking into account a general awareness of Hesse's situation preceding his breakdown as outlined above. A Lacanian perspective on these dreams will enable us to identify elements in the novel that elude the Jungian hermeneutic grasp.

Two crucial dreams from Hesse's dream diary

These two dreams have previously received some critical attention since they inspired Hesse to a number of key protagonists

and motifs in the novel (i.e. the name Demian appeared in one of the dreams, inspiring the title of the novel, the image of the sparrow hawk struggling to free itself from the world egg is derived from the other), yet these discussions have tended to be cursory and the dreams have so far not been subjected to a comprehensive psychoanalytic reading.

A meticulous Lacanian investigation of these two dreams from Hesse's dream diary can serve as an introduction to our discussion of Demian, since it will provide us with the central coordinates within which the novel as a whole can be meaningfully situated in a new orientation opposed to the conventional Jungian readings. We shall set our discussion of Hesse's dreams in the context of a comparison with Freud's dream of 'Irma's injection' which was originally presented as a 'specimen dream' in his work Die Traumdeutung. Freud's own interpretation was later recast by Lacan in his famous discussion of this dream in Seminar II as a paradigmatic example of the mode of interrelation of his three registers: the real, the imaginary and the symbolic. A reception at a house in Bellevue given by the Freuds forms the setting of the dream. Amongst the various guests present Freud encounters Irma, one of his more problematic patients who had so far resisted Freud's 'solution' (Lösung) to a cure of her hysterical-neurotic symptoms. She reports intense pain in her throat, stomach and abdomen so that Freud, noticing with alarm her uncharacteristically pale and puffy face, decides to proceed to a physical examination.

Ich nehme sie zum Fenster und schaue ihr in den Hals. Dabei zeigt sie etwas Sträuben, wie die Frauen, die ein künstliches Gebiss tragen. Ich denke, sie hat es doch nicht nötig. Der Mund geht dann

auch gut auf und ich finde rechts einen grossen weissen Fleck, und anderwärts sehe ich an merkwürdigen krausen Gebilden, die offenbar den Nasenmuscheln nachgebildet sind, ausgedehnte weissgraue Schorfe.⁶

Freud then discusses Irma's case with various of his colleagues also present at the reception. He instinctively senses that Irma's infection derives from an injection that his friend Otto had earlier applied to Irma with an impure syringe. Finally the precise chemical formula of a chemical substance (Trimethylamin) appears to Freud in bold letters. In his own interpretation, Freud proposes that Irma in the dream is a composite of Irma and some of his other patients. He identifies his wish to exculpate himself from any responsibility for Irma's failure to respond positively to psychotherapeutic treatment as the central unconscious motive of the dream, the ultimate meaning uniting all its dispersed elements. This exculpation is effectively accomplished in the dream by blaming Irma's state on deteriorating physical-organic health brought about by Otto's injection and therefore beyond the scope of Freud's psychoanalytic approach.

A dispersed network of associations and allusions to the diseased, infected area in Irma's throat emerges in Freud's reflection: the use of impure syringes by some of his colleague-friends was responsible for disease and death in earlier instances; the injections remind Freud of a friend who had poisoned himself with cocaine which he had prescribed; a well-known professor had drawn links between turbinal bones (similar in appearance to the object in the throat) and the female vagina in an article etc. Freud's main point then is that far from

constituting a disassociated sequencing of fragmentary images produced contingently, the entire network of concealed associations to the manifest dream content suggests a coherent underlying meaning - the wish to exculpate himself. The dream of 'Irma's injection' as a specimen dream functions to prove that dreams 'have meaning' in general. According to Lacan this insight is condensed in the sudden appearance of a strange chemical formula, which has repeated 'tri-furcations' evoking the magical number three in the biblical oracle 'Mene, Tekel, Upharsin'. This formula does not signify this or that, but hermetically only refers to itself as a formula, indicating that Freud's 'solution' lies in nothing other than the word, in the fact that dreams signify symbolically.

Lacan finds an additional dimension in the dream, a climax that precedes its culmination in a symbolic solution. He focuses his main attention on a moment of discontinuity, an intrusion, linked to the appearance of the horrifying formless object at the back of Irma's throat. The atmosphere at the reception prior to Freud's discovery of the infected area, Lacan argues, can be situated in a line of continuity with Freud's waking life, his professional concerns and preoccupations. In other words, the same narcissistic and discursive framework that organises his relations to his colleagues and clients is reproduced on the level of the dream. Freud's wish to exculpate himself is, in this light, not entirely unconscious since it is already evident in Freud's written account of Irma's case history. Thus the key questions around which Freud's professional existence revolves

also appear in the dream as implicit questions to the big Other: 'Where do I stand with respect to Irma's cure ? ' 'Where does the truth lie ?' 'Am I guilty or not?' etc.

However, according to Lacan, on the reverse side of symbolic identifications and imaginary lures that allow the subject to constitute himself in his social world lies the non-representable, hard kernel of the real: the traumatic-impossible substance of *jouissance*. As Freud comes face to face with the horrifying image in the throat, something akin to a privileged moment, a revelation, a 'penetration into the heart of a mystery', occurs. It is one of the key insights of the Freudian analysis of dreams that dreams 'signify symbolically', i.e. that dream images are never to be taken at face value but in terms of their signifying dimension, their value as metaphoric substitutions or metonymic associations. At privileged moments, this movement of signification may be suspended as the dream reaches its 'navel', where it is linked to something unknowable, an element or object that the symbolic process of hermeneutics cannot integrate since it effectively constitutes its concealed reverse, the abyss around which the symbolic universe itself is ultimately structured. The encounter with such an object is a rare, privileged occurrence precisely insofar as it designates the point where frame or limit of the symbolic process - the real that cannot be integrated - is inscribed *within* the picture as one of its elements:

Es gibt da eine schreckliche Entdeckung, die des Fleisches, das man niemals sieht, den Grund der Dinge, die Kehrseite des Gesichts, des Antlitzes, die Sekreta par excellence, das Fleisch, aus dem alles hervorgeht, aus der Tiefe selbst des Geheimnisses,

das Fleisch, insofern es leidend ist, insofern es unförmig ist, insofern seine Form durch sich selbst etwas ist das Angst hervorruft.⁷

In what sense exactly does this anxiety provoking image correspond to the abyss of the real, the element that resists integration in the symbolic fabric? Lacan argues that since the *Thing in itself* is inaccessible per se, it is negatively, through a process of symbolic overdetermination that the void of the real is approached here. As remarked earlier, a diffuse set of signifiers - the throat, the nose, the female genitalia and even death - is condensed in the image of a veritable 'Medusa's head', so that this 'knot' of meaning no longer has a stable signifying function but rather becomes the site of the termination of meaning.

At this point of an encounter with a formless, anxiety provoking object the void of the real is revealed as the subject's 'objective correlative' - that is to say as the real object that emerges as the concealed truth of the subject's (symbolic) reality. This shift in the dream can also be illustrated with reference to the aphanasis implicit in Lacan's formula of fantasy ($\$ \langle \rangle a$). This formula illustrates the radical de-centring of the barred subject of symbolic identification with respect to its object, the Lacanian *objet petit a*. Whenever the subject effectively attains his object, this necessarily implies a temporary eclipse, a dissolution of symbolic reality. Alternatively, for symbolic reality to emerge fully, the *Thing* of primordial *jouissance* must drop out, its status must be no more than that of a small hole, a senseless stain in the symbolic

fabric. This dialectic is epitomised succinctly in the transition from ordinary symbolic signification to the formless object at the back of Irma's throat in Freud's dream. In a manner reminiscent of the topology of a Moebius strip, we move from the constituted symbolic reality organising the space in which ordinary objects can appear (i.e. the guests at the party, professional concerns etc.) to its other side, the gruesome infected area in Irma's throat intimating the massive inert presence of the *Thing*.

With this theoretical background in mind we can now proceed to the interpretation of the two dreams which Hesse noted in his dream diary with great attention to detail and some literary stylisation. The dreams were recorded on the 27th of August 1917 and the 12th of September 1917 respectively, yet in our discussion we shall not follow that chronological order so that the full implications of the first dream can be elucidated with reference to the results of our discussion of the second dream.

As Hesse notes at the beginning of his description the night of this dream (12th September) was characterised by a hot, humid weather and heavy thunderstorms ('Gewitternacht, schwül, schwere Gewitter'). Numerous critics have noted the significance of this dream since Hesse was inspired to the title of his novel by the appearance of a character named Demian. Let me provide a brief account of the dream. Hesse finds himself in a small Swiss village - his evocation of the atmosphere of the town suggests a mixture of fantastic and realistic elements, a kind of magical

realism - and wanders through a labyrinthine network of alleys and passages. After encountering various figures - i.e. a group of skiers, a possible glimpse of the poet Emanuel v. Bodman - he meets another apparently drunk character and a physical fight between that person and Hesse ensues.

.. ich glaubte , ihn leicht zu Fall bringen zu können, erst mit meinem Stock aber er war sehr stark und bezwang mich. Am Schluss hatte er mir beim Ringen Geld abgenommen und deutete an, dass er das nun als Lohn behalte.⁸

Hesse notes that the character who initially seemed somewhat non-descript appeared to become ever more dangerous and uncanny and that his name was Demian. Significantly, some critics have remarked on the dissymmetry between the figure of Demian in the novel and the one in the dream. The 'dream Demian', a proletarian ruffian stealing Hesse's money appears to correspond far more closely to the figure of the dark antagonist of Sinclair's youth in the novel, the blackmailer Franz Kromer.

Our further analysis is designed to reveal however that there are substantial psychoanalytic grounds for drawing parallels to the more idealised figure of Demian in the novel. Subsequently in the dream, Hesse is enclosed in a room together with Demian lying prostrate on a bed and apparently ill. He experiences the vague claustrophobic sensation that he may not leave the room. The following passage reveals a striking homology to certain elements in Freud's dream of Irma's injection.

Demian schien jetzt krank zu sein, und deutete auf einen kleinen Schaden, eine kleine Wunde oder Schorf, in der Gegend der Nasenwurzel zwischen Auge und Nase. Es schien nur eine kleine Verletzung zu sein und als er daran drueckte und das Ding mit einem Fingernagel öffnete, hielt ich es für eine Art Hitzebläschen oder so, denn es kam etwas Eiter heraus. Aber dann

erschrak ich sehr, denn Demian lüpfte mit seinem Finger ein Stück Haut und einen Deckel in die Höhe und darunter war alles, die ganze Gegend um Auge und Nase, krank und scheusslich, voll von einem brandig eitrigem Saft, wie verfault. Er klagte über grosse Schmerzen.⁹

We encounter here once again this moment of aphanasis, a subjective eclipse, as the reverse side of the texture of symbolic identification is revealed in a sudden, visceral shock, an almost paranoid insight. The elements up to the confrontation with the anxiety provoking object may be situated in terms of an imaginary-symbolic topology, a topology where each element will have a stable signifying function in relation to other elements in the signifying chain of the unconscious. (Hesse reports that the Demian figure in the dream at one stage strikes him as reminiscent of an old school comrade, he also reports that he associates the name Demian with a certain mystical, Catholic atmosphere etc.) But this stable gliding of signification comes to an abrupt halt: a 'trap door' opens and the lid above Demian's apparently small wound suddenly opens onto the nauseous substance of *jouissance*, the abyss of the real. As noted earlier this void is strictly homologous to the subject.

The state of a horrific shock, of a traumatic revelatory discovery is both implicit in Hesse's description of the dream and explicitly noted twice ('*Furchtbar war im Traum der Moment, wo der kleine Schaden sich als gross erwies, wo ich unter dem Hautdeckel in lauter Fäulnis sah, furchtbar ekelhaft und grau-sig*').¹⁰ Such a sudden eclipse of symbolic reality and the immersion in an excavated area surrounded by palpitating flesh

implies a shaking of the very ontological foundations grounding the subject. At the navel of the dream, the subject is forced to identify his being with the abyss of the real. This of course implies a co-extensive insight in the ultimate 'groundlessness', the lack of substantial foundations of the symbolic order, which is therefore revealed as null and void. It is in this implicit realisation that the really traumatic impact of the dream inheres. (We may note that in the Lacanian dialectic the symbolic is ultimately only an articulation in positive terms of the void of the real).

Let us now turn to the other dream fragment recorded on 27.8. 1917. This is the dream that later emerges as the basis of the crucial symbolic image of the sparrow hawk struggling to free itself from the world egg in the novel. Instead of the sparrow hawk Hesse encounters another bird of prey in this dream, an eagle. Hesse describes his dream as follows: He desires to show the curious etching of an eagle in an oval picture frame to his wife.

Eine Art Relief in einem runden Rahmen. Es war ein junger Adler, der aus dem Ei kroch und der Kopf des Adlers war echt und lebendig. Er arbeitete sich aus dem Rahmen heraus, vielleicht war er unter Glas, jedenfalls standen die Spitzen der Krallen und des Schnabels fühlbar heraus, während das übrige gewissermassen künstlich und Bild blieb. Ich wollte ihn meiner Frau zeigen (gerade jetzt im Augenblick des Ausschlüpfens, obwohl sie aber nur drei Schritte von mir sass, kam sie doch nicht, zeigte gar kein Interesse)... Ich war gekränkt und böse. Diese Stimmung voll Elend, in der sich Wut und Selbsterkenntnis, Projektion nach aussen und Wissen um das eigene innere mischte war genau wie in der Wirklichkeit, wo ich das fast täglich erlebte.¹¹

A typical Jungian reading of this dream would state that the eagle in the dream signifies the numinous, indestructible, eternal spirit, the archetypal self hidden from the subject's consciousness. This spirit is 'enchained' by obstacles in the material world but it is seen in the dream as it strives to liberate itself. Similar readings are offered by Jungian critics apropos of the analogous dream of the sparrow hawk in the novel. The Jungian collective archetype 'is always already there', the subject must integrate it into consciousness in an individuation process possibly against the resistance of mundane external circumstances such as Hesse's disintegrating marriage. However, from a Lacanian perspective we arrive at the opposite conclusion. We take as our starting point the fabric of symbolic reality and the symbolic dysfunction which is indicated in the dream by the repeated stress on strained, disintegrating marital relations but which must be situated in the wider context of Hesse's disastrous situation at this time. The eagle then, which literally breaks through the fabric of symbolic representation (it erupts from the picture frame as the embodiment of ordinary symbolic representation) materially embodies a failure in the functioning of symbolic relations. In its inert, fascinating presence, its 'anamorphic distortion' of reality, the eagle therefore does not function as a symbol or signifier, but rather materialises the failed functioning of signification. It is the point in the dream, like the void of Demian's wound, at which the process of articulation and association ceases and where the ultimate failure of this process is reflected into itself.

Our subsequent sections will further elaborate the intimate relation between the 'sublime' object and the horrifying site of *das Ding*. The eagle can be seen as a sublime object in the Lacanian sense of an 'object elevated to the dignity of the Thing', or in Žižek's dictum a grimace of the real inscribed onto reality by means of an anamorphic distortion.¹² In terms of the relation between the two dreams, the traumatic *jouissance* associated with the sudden visceral shock in the Demian dream could then be considered the 'energetic source' that endows the image of the eagle with its 'numinous', fascinating quality.

We therefore have a relation of 'inversion' between a Jungian conceptualisation of the eagle as a representation of the numinous self, which exists as an archetypal essence in the unconscious irrespective of the ego's external circumstances and the Lacanian notion of the sublime as a distortion of the very fabric of symbolic reality. Because of the radical de-centring of the subject with respect to his object there is an inherent obstacle to integrating that element in any 'individuation process'. By definition it is a hard traumatic kernel that can never be integrated. Our analysis of the novel will serve to further clarify many of these concepts, as the following subdivisions will show.

II. Kromer - Reassessing the Jungian 'Shadow' from a Lacanian Perspective

Let us begin an investigation of the novel's first chapter entitled 'Zwei Welten' which deal with Sinclair's childhood. The two worlds, referred to in the title, emerge as a key structuring principle for the early stages of the novel. They allude to the 'realm of light', the ordered, serene sphere of bourgeois respectability and religious piety designating the official social text on the one hand and its dark, obscene underside - a realm of secret sex, violence, and chaos - on the other. Referring to the 'second world', the narrator asserts,

... es gab da eine bunte Flut von ungeheuren, lockenden, furchtbaren, rätselhaften Dingen, Sachen wie Schlachthaus und Gefaengnis, Betrunkene und keifende Weiber, gebärende Kuehe, gestürzte Pferde, Erzählungen von Einbrüchen, Totschlägen und Selbstmorden.

(D.14)

Sinclair is initially submerged thoroughly within the bourgeois sphere epitomised by the righteousness and sheltered security of his parental home, but through a school comrade, Franz Kromer, a proletarian, rough-hewn character who knows no scruples, he is suddenly confronted with a second, darker world which represents the radically 'other'. The novel then evokes the drama of a loss of childhood 'innocence' utilising the topology created by the confrontation of the 'two worlds'.

Kromer, the leader of a disreputable gang, represents the debris of society but nonetheless exerts a strange fascination upon Sinclair. When on one occasion, Sinclair and Kromer meet, Sinclair is keen to win Kromer's appreciation and respect and

spontaneously fabricates a tale of a daring nightly venture. He casts himself as the sly villain in an operation to steal a sack full of apples from the mayor's garden. The apples in this story serve an evident symbolic function as they allude to the biblical fall in Genesis, with its simultaneous attainment of knowledge and a loss of innocence. Sinclair's scheme, however, goes horribly wrong. Far from gaining Kromer's appreciation, he effectively delivers himself to a vicious blackmailing campaign. To keep Sinclair's 'crime' secret, Kromer not only demands money and other favours but persistently escalates his demands. Ruthlessly exploiting his position of power, his brutal intimidation becomes so severe that Sinclair's naive sense of stability and security is undermined with a sense of impending dissolution and chaos, a foreboding of doom. Sinclair's misery and pathetic impotence is counter-pointed with Kromer's viciousness and unpredictability - traits that lend this sly enemy an air of 'omnipresence'. Kromer's obscene, penetrating whistling, a secret signal to Sinclair, is heard frequently in close proximity to Sinclair's home where it undermines any remaining sense of stability.

In Jungian readings, Kromer is assigned the role of Sinclair's 'shadow', which is conceptualised in the Jungian universe as the suppressed, dark and inferior aspect of one's personality, an unacknowledged evil negative of the conscious ego. In his description of the shadow in Aion Jung characterises it as having **an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy and accordingly an obsessive or better, possessive quality.**¹³

According to Jung, the shadow, while being a 'present and real' aspect of the subject's own unconscious, usually enters the stage of phenomenal experience only in terms of projections onto others because a 'strong moral resistance' ordinarily prevents a recognition of the shadow as part of the self. As a result, the carriers of these projections are perceived by the subject as intrinsically inferior, obscene or evil. This is seen as harmful by Jung, as carrying the potential of capturing the subject in the illusory web of his own projections and thus isolating him from 'reality'. The projection of the shadow thereby becomes a factor in the aetiology of obsession or neurosis. Naturally that influences the structure of the Jungian therapy so that the first step in the psychoanalytic process consists in a 'confrontation' with the shadow. The recognition of the shadow as part of the self will facilitate a withdrawal from external reality, an 'integration', which is seen as the first, necessary step in the 'individuation process'.

In common with this Jungian approach, our analysis will also focus on the pathological significance associated with Kromer. However, a Lacanian conception sees the unconscious not as a pure, substantial entity existing independent of the subject's symbolic representations but as inextricably bound up with discursive practices. Thus the best way into a Lacanian re-assessment of Kromer is through an investigation of the relation between the 'two worlds', and the way in which Sinclair's social and symbolic frame of reality is constructed by reference to them.

It is crucial to note that the 'two worlds' as they are represented in the early stages of the novel do not constitute two genuinely autonomous philosophical alternatives. The initial vantage point of the narrative, which is from within the sheltered bourgeois sphere towards an external, threatening element, hints at a reproduction of the official system of values and classification. Thus despite all the apparent fantasmatic richness of the second, darker, realm - which is evoked well in the descriptive passage quoted earlier - its identity is ultimately founded upon nothing but a categorical differentiation from the 'realm of light'. To the extent that the 'second world' amounts to the sum total of everything that is excluded, forbidden by the predominant social text, it can be derived from that discourse and thus lacks ontological self-sufficiency. This is reflected in the use of the frequently recurring phrases, 'erlaubte Welt' and 'verbotene Welt', which implicitly derive their semantic content by reference to the official legal and linguistic framework constituting society. In his assessment of Demian, Seckendorff also maintains that Hesse does not replace a bourgeois, Christian system but moves *within* its codes of adherence and transgression - a judgement which is correct only with respect to these early chapters but requires a modification later on:

Das Kriterium für die jeweilige Zuordnung liefern die herrschenden Moralvorstellungen und als deren Grundlage bestehende Gesetze.¹⁴

From a Lacanian perspective, any given social and legal system organising a society is rooted in the Other, the locus of the signifier, which guarantees its identity. However, for the

'cultural field' to gain its consistency as an organised system of *structural* relations, the *substance* of *jouissance* must be sacrificed, must 'drop out' from the field: it is henceforth *forbidden* to the one who speaks as such. In figuring this subjective signifying structure geometrically, Jaques Alain-Miller has pointed out that the object that has dropped out leaves over 'both a void and its frame'.¹⁵ The radical de-centring of the cultural subject with regard to his object can thus be figured by conceiving of an extended, convoluted frame which simultaneously bounds **and** is inscribed within the symbolic field from which the *Thing* had been excavated. The external boundaries describing the horizon of the open field of cultural meaning within which subjects move and where objects are disclosed as determinate entities therefore also delineate the subject *qua* void at the very heart of the structure. As Žižek notes, we are thus confronted with the topology of a Moebius strip where the subject proceeding sufficiently long along the side representing symbolic reality may suddenly find himself alongside the impossible-real whose extraction establishes the consistency of the symbolic field.¹⁶

In view of this topology, the outlines of the psychological space in Demian's first chapters become discernible. We can identify a paradoxical relation between an 'inside' and an 'outside' which lack a common centre but are rather located on the same surface or encased within each other. On the one hand we find the signifying space of bourgeois morality and stability epitomised by the bordered space of Sinclair's parental home, and

on the other hand an 'outside' synonymous with the forbidden domain beyond the law which subverts that sphere from within. In terms of its position in libidinal economy, the key to this bourgeois realm lies in its 'empty' morality, in the fact that it is a dead structural scheme drained of life substance. It represents the homeostasis of moral law from which genuine enjoyment is excluded. In its evocation of the bourgeois realm the narrative displays a Janus like duplicity. On the one hand, it casts the bourgeoisie in sentimental, Romantic tones as a beautiful 'Apollonian' world emitting a marble glow. The narrator adopts a stance of reverential distance and repeatedly stresses its awe-inspiring stature and its virtues of piety, stability and moderate joy (i.e. love). The most frequently used adjective to describe it is the somewhat vacuous and outmoded 'hold'. On the other hand, there is rarely any doubt that its condition is that of a sterile homeostasis devoid of enjoyment.

**Ich lebte sogar zuzeiten am allerliebsten in der verbotenen Welt,
oft war die Heimkehr ins Helle fast wie eine Rückkehr ins
Langweilige und Ödere.**

(D.15)

By contrast, the language used to evoke the other, 'darker' world betrays a certain excess, it is suggestive of organismic vitality, of the protuberance of the Real.

**Überall quoll und duftete diese andere Welt .. (D.14)
...wie ich mit neuen saugenden Wurzeln draussen im Finsteren
verankert
wurde. (D.29)**

This poetic evocation of a menace posed by groping tentacles is highly suggestive of the forbidden Thing, traumatic-impossible *jouissance* which the homeostatic realm of law and bourgeois peace attempts to keep at bay. In terms of a Lacanian dichotomy we would align the idealised sphere of the bourgeoisie in the first chapter with the big Other, the discursive field of signification, law and language while the 'other' world has the status of the traumatic void of the real. Crucially the two worlds are therefore not external to each other but are located on the same surface of a Moebius strip. A figure frequently recurring early in the narrative is the biblical parable of the prodigal son, who rejecting the laws of the symbolic community lives outside of its sphere for a while. The element that has 'dropped out' from within the symbolic field here simultaneously stands for the forbidden realm beyond its borders. The symbolic community can only define itself in relation to this traumatic kernel and gains its very consistency only in relation to its disavowal. It is thus founded upon a radical negativity. A dissolution of the structure is threatened if the fragment of the real is approached too closely as in Hesse's own Demian dream. It is perhaps not surprising then that the Demian figure in that dream bears a striking resemblance to Kromer in the narrative.

Thus from a Lacanian perspective, we might say the function of Kromer who represents an element excluded from the bourgeois world in which Sinclair is rooted consists in a 'subjectification effect'. He represents the addition of a 'meaningless' element

amidst a well-ordered system of signs and precisely thus inaugurates the dimension of subjectivity. The subjectification of any signifying structure requires the presence of a meaningless element, an element 'sticking out' from a tableau. As Žižek points out, the only evidence we have of the presence of a 'subject' in a picture or tableau we look at is not meaningful signs but a 'phallic', meaningless stain embodying surplus enjoyment.¹⁷ This point in the picture materialises the horrifying void of non-meaning at the very heart of the structure and thus designates our 'objective correlative' - the element in which our entire being is condensed. Kromer with his inexplicable, phantom-like presence within the structure has the status of such a 'pathological stain' smearing over the transparency of the picture with a substantial density. The terrifying spell he casts threatens to disintegrate the fabric of Sinclair's bourgeois world from within precisely because he represents *object a* as the material remnant which is left over when the process of symbolic identification is completed. A closer analysis of what constitutes the repulsive horror of Kromer in the text will reveal that he represents the surplus object *qua* gaze and *qua* voice.

Kromer as object-voice

The *object qua voice* is traumatic insofar as it represents a senseless objectal remainder, a left-over which remains after any determinate meaning has been subtracted from a vocal communication so that it becomes a foreign kernel, a stain in the midst of meaning. Žižek cites the hypnotist's voice whose endless

repetition of a certain phrase finally deprives it of all meaning so that the voice remains as an object in its mesmerising, inert presence.¹⁸ Kromer's obscene, penetrating whistling subverting the stability and security of Sinclair's home functions as an object-stain, a 'voice' without meaning that disrupts the harmonious flow of symbolic continuity.

Kein Ort, kein Spiel, kein Gedanke, keine Arbeit, wohin dieser Pfiff nicht drang, der mich abhängig macht.... Aber mitten hinein, immer erwartet und immer doch entsetzlich aufstörend, klang der Kromersche Pfiff von irgendwoher und schnitt den Faden ab.

(D.35)

Thus Kromer's whistling has a phantom like quality, it can not be definitely attached either to Kromer or any other objects in his surrounding environment into which it penetrates. Its subversive powers rest precisely on the excessive quality of the object-stain as a disembodied entity which does not belong to any clearly delimited object in positive reality but hovers in a mysterious 'in-between' space. As an obscene 'superego' entity, Kromer's whistling is here literally a foreign kernel emanating from nowhere which 'cuts through' the thread of symbolic continuity and which by introducing abyssal double meanings into the bourgeois domain subverts it as a stable order from within.

Kromer as object-gaze

Correspondingly, the gaze describes the point in the field of subjective vision which escapes the subject's eye, a point where the subject can see nothing but a meaningless stain amid a tableau in which all other objects are clearly determined and signified. It thus corresponds strictly to the objective

correlative of the subject, the point where the subject itself is inscribed in the field of vision as an amorphous object-stain, where the 'picture looks back at the subject'. Lacan's favourite example of the gaze as object-stain is Holbein's painting 'Die Gesandten' where this function is assumed by an anamorphotically distorted skull hovering in the foreground of the picture.¹⁹ At a fundamental level, Kromer embodies such gaze as object-stain in the narrative. Before falling asleep one night, Sinclair conjures up the image of his tormentor.

'Dann kehrte ich zu den Dingen zurück und sah meinem Feind ins Auge. Ich sah ihn deutlich, das eine Auge hatte er eingekniffen, der Mund lachte roh und indem ich ihn ansah und das Unentrinnbare in mich frass, wurde er grösser und hässlicher, sein böses Auge blitzte teuflhaft.' (D.30)

According to Lacan, the sublime object is a 'grimace of the real' within symbolic reality. This grimace transforms a part of reality into a meaningless stain where the subject can see nothing so that the gaze is inscribed onto the object. There is a structural homology here between Kromer's nauseating grimace and the anamorphic distortion of the picture of the eagle in Hesse's dream. Both represent the intrusive protuberance of a foreign, hostile element in which the subject's being is condensed. Shortly after this passage in the narrative, Sinclair leaves his home for another meeting with Kromer. On his way, the city is strangely transformed and the houses he passes as he makes a de-tour through a dark web of alleys and passageways 'look at him', that is they are subjectivised. We should note that the 'gaze' and the 'voice' first introduced in the narrative

in connection with Kromer become recurrent themes in the novel and are of particular significance in the evocation of Demian.

The following statement from the text may serve to further elucidate these dynamics. Returning to his parental home, Sinclair asserts

Ich trug Schmutz an den Füßen, den ich nicht an der Matte abstreifen konnte, ich brachte Schatten mit, von denen die Heimatwelt nicht wusste.

(D.26)

The 'dirt stains' in this passage allude to a foreign kernel of the Real, a traumatic element resisting all attempts at an integration, neutralisation by the symbolic structure. The function of these dirt stains that cannot be removed is homologous to the bloodstains on the hands of Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's play that cannot be washed away. The excessive Real defined by Lacan as the element 'which is always in its place' persists outside the network of symbolic permutations and substitutions. Crucially since this element has the status of an 'antagonistic effect' of the structure, it possesses no substantive ontological consistency but exists only as a materialisation of symbolic failure. In both Demian and Macbeth the appearance of an irreducible remnant of the symbolic order signals a catastrophic trespass of symbolic injunctions (against theft or murder) threatening to place the perpetrator beyond the realm of cultural signification.

It would thus be a definite mistake to reduce the function of these stains to a mode of metaphoric signification. The entire

thrust of the narrative indicates that Sinclair's 'sin', his symbolic theft of apples, threatens to undermine Sinclair's place within the socio-symbolic order that frames and discloses ordinary objects as meaningful, determinate entities and thus indicates a progression from object to Thing in the psychic economy. The phantom-like surreal quality of the stain (blood stains, dirt stains) derives from the fact that it does not so much signify anything in particular but materially embodies a certain catastrophic dysfunction of the structure which organises the process of signification. Thus we might say that while the apples in Sinclair's fabricated story which never existed in reality function on a purely symbolic level as a signifier of Sinclair's sin, Kromer (and the 'stain' associated with him) viscerally materialises the traumatic consequence of this sin.

However, despite his terrifying, fascinating presence Kromer only gives body to the abyss on the reverse of symbolic narratives. And in the Lacanian ontology this is the only element one can never do away with: the stain of surplus enjoyment which is simultaneously intrinsic and alien to the subjective structure, which forms its 'ex-timate' core.

The key question is what exactly we have achieved by this analysis in terms of a progression from standard Jungian readings of Kromer as the manifestation of the 'shadow'. According to Žižek, the 'anal father', the obscene little man who definitely does enjoy unlike the symbolic father, epitomises the phenomenon of the uncanny.

He is the subject's double who accompanies him like a shadow and gives body to a certain surplus, to what is 'in the subject more than the subject himself.'²⁰

This surplus which is 'in the subject more than the subject himself' of course refers to *objet petit a*, the traumatic kernel in relation to which the discursive self is radically de-centred. It is thus precisely by the irreducible dis-symmetry between Sinclair and his 'shadow' that the phantom like Thing is intimated in the narrative as the uncanny object which eludes the vicious circle of any symbolic-mirror relations. In other words, we have to reverse the Jungian reading that a sense of the uncanny is produced through the process of a projection of unconscious material onto another. It is rather the identification of the self with an irreducibly alien element which proves traumatic for the subject. Hesse's horrifying discovery of the hollow, wounded area in his Demian dream which entailed the sudden revelation of a 'forbidden domain' perceived both as alien and representing the subject's hidden core, is subject to precisely the same structure.

Kromer as the embodiment of the object stain therefore has two purposes in the narrative. On the one hand his nauseating, obscene presence, his unpredictable appearances in close proximity to Sinclair's home, undermines the texture of his bourgeois world from within and threatens the suspension of his support in ideal symbolic identification.

Er liess mich plötzlich wieder los, unser Hausflur roch nicht mehr nach Frieden und Sicherheit, die Welt brach um mich zusammen.

(D.22)

The reverse of this threatening dissolution of symbolic reality is a reduction of Sinclair himself to the object-stain, a reduction of his entire being to the pure void at the heart of the symbolic order. According to the last sentence which closes the first chapter

Mein Zustand zu jener Zeit war eine Art Irrsinn. Mitten im geordneten Frieden unseres Hauses lebte ich scheu und gepeinigt wie ein Gespenst, hatte nicht teil am Leben der anderen.

(D.37)

Sinclair is now identified with a non-substantial spectral appearance, a void amidst the symbolic substance of bourgeois social relations. It is therefore clear that instead of a simplified dialectic of projections from a unified self, we are faced with an irreducible disparity, an alien foreign kernel, a traumatic intrusion which simultaneously coincides with the subject, with the innermost self.

III. The Jungian Archetype of the 'Self' as an Ideological Construction

The next two chapters organised around biblical motifs, 'Kain' and 'Der Schächer', continue to outline Sinclair's early development. It is here that Demian who holds a pivotal position in the novel makes his first appearance. Developed in the narrative from the perspective of Sinclair's gaze to which he 'sticks out' from a tightly circumscribed, conformist culture, Demian emerges as a supremely confident and charismatic yet ultimately indecipherable figure. An initially tentative friendship develops between the two. Demian repeatedly engages Sinclair in profound, philosophical conversations that take their cue from the rigid, dogmatic reading of biblical parables in school. Subverting received interpretations, Demian astonishes Sinclair by casting an intriguing new light on the story of Cain and Abel or the significance of the criminal on the cross next to Jesus. While Demian's 'dangerous', enigmatic aura alternately fascinates and repels Sinclair, he no doubt exerts a tremendous impact on his intellectual development. In Jungian readings his symbolic function as spiritual guide and leader to the innermost self is to liberate Sinclair from the stifling constraints of his alienating bourgeois environment and from Kromer's (the projected shadow's) pernicious influence.

As indicated earlier, Hesse was familiar with Jungian discourse, both theoretical and practical (in terms of Jungian analysis), and the development of Demian as a self figure is widely seen as the evident sign of Jungian influence. Since this alignment is not only central to specifically Jungian readings

(i.e. Baumann, Weaver), but is discernible also in important and respected studies pursuing a wider agenda (i.e. Ziolkowski, Boulby) we cannot afford to ignore the Jungian perspective entirely.

The Jungian Self

To facilitate a Lacanian discussion of Demian's function in the novel, the best approach could well be an unexpected detour whereby we proceed via an attempt to situate the Jungian notion of the self as an *a priori* entity within our structuralist Lacanian paradigm. This reading will employ a Lacanian 'critique of ideology', an approach elaborated in detail by Žižek in his innovative subsumption of Althusser's notions of ideology into a Lacanian context.²¹ Using this de-constructive method we can then isolate two significant aspects underlying the Jungian archetype of the self: its contingency upon a symbolic construction and the *a posteriori* production of a sublime, intangible surplus of the real that follows in the wake of this process of symbolic identification. This investigation will serve to establish a framework or paradigm for analysis within which the Demian figure in the narrative can finally be elucidated outside the conventional Jungian approach.

Jung provides his best accounts of the archetype of the self in Symbols of Transformation, The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, and Aion. The self, one of the archetypes of the *collective unconscious* in the Jungian universe designates a numinous image of psychic wholeness or totality. Like the other

archetypes in the system it is deemed to possess an innate, intrinsic quality. That is to say, it has an 'invariable nucleus of meaning'²² that exists a priori and has to be distinguished from the multiplicity of concrete, phenomenal manifestation in different individuals and cultures that constitute the 'incarnation' of the archetype. Jung casts the self as a 'conjunctio oppositorum', the paradoxical conjunction of contradictory elements that points to a sublime, transcendent state beyond opposites. An early example for the self in Jung's work appears in the pamphlet Septem Sermones at Mortuos in the guise of the Gnostic God Abraxas (Lichtgott Luzifer) who transcends the dichotomies between light and darkness, good and evil, benevolence and malice etc. Crystallising as the intersection of the diabolic with the divine, animal nature and the life of the spirit etc., religious tradition has captured the self in potent symbols such as the cross and the mandala:

The cross or whatever other heavy burden the hero carries, is himself, or rather, the self, his wholeness which is both God and animal - not merely the empirical man, but the totality of his being which is rooted in his animal nature and reaches out beyond the merely human towards the divine. His wholeness implies a tremendous tension of opposites paradoxically at one with themselves, as in the cross, their most perfect symbol.²³

Given this status of paradoxical perfection, it is not surprising that the self holds a special, privileged status in the Jungian psychoanalytic edifice. Jung repeatedly stresses the central position of the self within his essentially hierarchical system of archetypes which assigns them different 'affective qualities' according to their status within the structure. At the pinnacle of the system, the self therefore possesses a dangerous affective

level that might threaten psychic stability or even trigger a psychosis. To the extent that the Jungian analytical process is oriented towards a confrontation with the lower archetypes and culminates in the integration of their external projections into the self, we might conceptualise the self as the pivot on which the entire structure is hinged. For the sage or analysand who manages to realise the ever present potentiality of the self in the course of an individuation process, the lower, differential elements of the Jungian universe (ego, shadow, syzygy [the anima/animus pair]) collapse into a paradoxical, numinous unity.

Wholeness is thus an objective factor that confronts the subject independently of him, like anima and animus. And just as the latter have a higher position in the hierarchy than the shadow so wholeness lays claim to a position and a value superior to those of the syzygy.²⁴

It is impossible to overlook that the central, privileged position of the self is deeply entwined with its religious dimension. This religious aspect which is the most striking mark of Jung's departure from Freud is evident in Jung's frequent assertion that spontaneous symbols of the self (i.e. the painting of a mandala by a mental patient) are indistinguishable in practice from the image of God in man - or as he considers manifestations of the divine in different cultures, Christ, the concepts of Atman or the Tao, as concrete expressions of the same unalterable, underlying archetype of the self. The self points to the 'untouchable, divine centre, the numen'. (Weaver)

The totality images which the unconscious produces in the course of an individuation process are similar reformations of an a

priori archetype (the mandala). The spontaneous symbols of the self, of wholeness, can not in practice be distinguished from the God image.²⁵

According to Jung, as soon as we try to conceive this notion of a conjunction of opposites intellectually we are faced with a pure vanishing point where reason dissolves. The Self is placed beyond the domain of hermeneutics or signification as an unfathomable mystery which necessarily escapes our intellectual grasp. This leap of faith required at the point in the system that provides all its other elements with their ultimate meaning in conjunction with the sublime quality of the self will serve as the key in our understanding of the self as an 'ideological' construction.

Quilting the Ideological Field

In his stimulating work The Sublime Object of Ideology, Žižek investigates the structure of the ideological field focusing on what 'creates and sustains the identity' of an ideological field beyond any permutations of content within the field. Žižek provides a deeply ramified and sophisticated analysis but unfortunately we only have the space here to evoke its spirit in broad brushstrokes. According to Žižek, an ideological field is established by means of a unification of a dispersed field of initially 'floating' signifiers into a totality by means of a phallic 'master signifier'. The master signifier functions as a privileged 'signifier without signified' which occupies a different logical space with respect to all the others. Conferring a unifying metaphorical surplus signification on the

other signifiers beyond their literal signification, the master signifier thereby retroactively enchains them with each other and determines their very identity relationally as elements within a particular field. To illustrate these rather abstract, theoretical notions, Žižek provides a number of examples including the establishment of the socialist ideological field. Thus, we can conceive of an initially dispersed field of floating, proto-ideological elements such as 'freedom', 'democracy', 'market exchange', 'war' and so on in which each signifier is polyvalent, non-determined in advance in relation to other ideological elements. The constant gliding of signification at this stage is halted only by the intervention of a master signifier (Communism) which fixes the identity of each element by endowing it with a metaphorical surplus meaning. 'Freedom', for example, is inconceivable in a market economy, which necessarily entails the capitalist exploitation of the proletariat and thus requires the firm rule of the socialist state.²⁶ Further along this ideological signifying chain, 'war' is inherent in class society as such so that only socialist rule can ensure lasting peace. 'Democracy' cannot be guaranteed by a pluralistic electoral system but only by the dictatorship of the proletariat as the genuine expression of the people's self-rule. 'Market exchange' can never be free and equitable but lies at the basis of ruthless exploitation and so on. The series is complete when the identity of all signifiers in the dispersed field has been determined *après le coup* through reference to 'Communism', the master signifier 'quilting' the field, enchaining each element with all the others.²⁷ The same, dispersed field could, of course,

equally have been integrated by an alternative signifier, for instance 'Democratic Market Economy', in which case each constituent element would have acquired a different metaphorical surplus. The crucial point is this: since the identity of any given field is supported only by a pure signifier which is itself devoid of meaning, a 'signifier without signified', no particular approach to quilting an ideological field predominates naturally over any other. A totalised, synchronous field of differential signifiers in which each element signifies only in relation to all others by definition lacks extra-linguistic support and is founded in nothing but its own circular enunciation. Since there is no 'language of the real' which would prescribe a particular mode of symbolisation and since meaning does not unfold progressively from diachronous origins, naming is ultimately 'radically contingent' (Žižek). Given this insurmountable abyss between the real and modes of its symbolisation, it is clear that the preponderance of any empirically existing ideological field over possible alternatives derives solely from a struggle for ideological hegemony.

It follows that the nature of identification with an ideological master signifier is radically performative: since the 'Other does not exist' as substance, since its nature is ultimately pure, abstract difference, it has to be actively 'posited' in order to be effective. While the performance of this signifying operation is **constitutive** of subjectivity, the subject must fall under the spell of the 'transferential

illusion' that he has become what he has 'always already' been, that he has actually uncovered his immanent, essential being.²⁸ This is another way of saying that for the operation of quilting to be successful, it must 'erase its own traces'.²⁹ In the wake of any successful process of identification with an ideological master signifier the subject therefore misapprehends himself as the addressee of an ideological call (Communism, God, Nation). In terms of the established field of signification, the signified of any given term then appears to be necessary so that democracy in the Communist ideological field, for instance, implies -in its very essence- the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is ultimately the '*staying behind of the signified with respect to the stream of signifiers*'³⁰ that supports this transferential illusion. 'Time runs backward' in the symbolic register since the identity of any term in the structure is contingent on the retroactive determination by a pure signifier. Operating on a different logical plane with respect to all other signifiers, this 'master signifier' functions as a self-reflective index of differential signification, it designates the inversion of the 'lacking signifier into a signifier of lack'.³¹

Referring to the tautological signifier, Žižek asserts

The element which represents, in the structure of the utterance, the immanence of its own process of enunciation is experienced as a kind of transcendent Guarantee, the element which only holds the place of a certain lack, is perceived as a point of supreme plenitude. In short, pure difference is perceived as Identity exempted from the relational-differential interplay and guaranteeing its homogeneity.³²

A good example for this signifying structure is provided in another text by Žižek.³³ The Old Testament phrase, 'God is God' is a perfect exemplification of the quilting of a structure by a (religious) master signifier. The phrase has two slopes. The 'first God' in the phrase suggests the benevolent God of love and peace who envelops all of his particular content and might be taken to represent the universal genus. The 'second God', however, is its exact opposite - the unpredictable, 'mad' God of divine fury and jealousy who gives body to, represents the empty place in which the genus is inscribed. The self-reference of the universal genus striving for a particular determination, coming across itself on the level of one of its species, leads to the absolute contradiction of a tautology and this tautology 'opens a void in the substance' (Žižek). In order that this void which coincides with the subject can be represented for all the other elements in the set one particular element has to come out, except itself from the ordinary elements in the set- 'to be in surplus or deficit': the 'phallic' signifier without signified, which reveals its senseless, tautological and violent aspect in such phrases as 'God is God' or 'Law is Law'. It follows that the universal genus, or the totalised ideological structure, comes into existence only insofar as it is represented in the form of its opposite by a particular element which therefore logically precedes it.

'Law is Law' alludes to the originary, obscene violence at the foundation of even the most impartial-rational field of symbolic law.

Žižek's passage above suggests that the operation of quilting is non-symmetrical, that the dialectical movement from the dispersed field to the master signifier and then back to the newly integrated field creates a surplus, a remnant of the real that endows the master signifier - an index of pure differentiability - with a mysterious, sublime aura. Thus he asserts

Therein consists the ultimate paradox of the Lacanian notion of cause qua real: it is produced ('secreted') by its own effects.³⁴

The operation of quilting retroactively secretes 'in all senses of the word' an uncanny-sublime surplus of the real which is nothing but the objectification of the void of symbolic non-functioning and as such the 'objective correlative' to the master signifier of symbolic identification.

Jung with Žižek

Neither Lacan nor Žižek provide a systematic analysis of Jung's notion of archetypes but both have made sporadic references to Jung in their work. In Seminar II, for instance, Lacan criticised Jung's notorious methodology, his tendency to search for analogies to his psychoanalytic concepts in a wide range of mythological sources:

Freud ist nicht Jung. Er amüsiert sich nicht damit ueberall Anklänge zu finden.³⁵

In his book on Schelling, Žižek explicitly identifies the Jungian concept of the 'transformation of libido' which ascribes to the libido a neutral, non-sexual function as an ideological misrecognition.

Therein resides the gap that separates forever Freud's and Jung's respective notions of libido. Jung conceives of libido as a kind of neutral energy with its concrete forms (sexual, creative, destructive libido) as its different 'metamorphoses' whereas Freud insists that libido in its concrete existence is irreducibly sexual - all other forms of libido are forms of ideological misrecognition of this sexual content.³⁶

On the basis of the comprehensive theoretical framework developed above I would like to expand on these suggestive statements - which intuitively strike at the core of Jung's ideas - and subject the Jungian edifice to a somewhat more systematic 'critique of ideology'. The task of such a critique, according to Žižek, consists in identifying the performative-structural nature, the radically tautological, self-referential function behind the 'sublime' element which holds the ideological edifice together. That is to say, one must identify the particular element which overdetermines all the others and thus determines 'the horizon of the totality'.³⁷ How specifically can we proceed with such a critique in terms of the basic elements of Jungian thought outlined in Symbols of Transformation , Aion or The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious? In a first approach, one might argue that the archetype of the self unifies all the others into a coherent system, given its privileged position in the hierarchy, its exemption from the differential interplay to which the others are subject and its ethereal, numinous nature. While this is indeed the case, it is insufficient to grasp the significance of the Jungian innovation, his departure from Freud in terms of the notion of the *collective unconscious*. The interplay of specific archetypes (shadow, anima, self) operative in any given subject who engages in analysis or an individuation

process follows a certain code, a certain modality of interrelation, but what precisely makes these archetypes transindividual? Given the logic internal to the Jungian system, the theory of a collective, non-personal content of the unconscious requires the evidence of a multitude of phenomenal manifestations from which the underlying archetypes can be abstracted. Not surprisingly then, Jung devoted a considerable portion of his project to identifying these manifestations in his expansive research of mythological source texts. What a Lacanian critique of this approach must accomplish is to demonstrate that 'archetype' does not denote a cluster of descriptive features, an underlying, immanent essence common to a diversity of mythological discourses, but rather the point where the agency of pure signifier erupts in the field of mythological discourse (the signified) integrated by Jung.

It might be useful then to conceptualise the Jungian system in terms of a simplified model of two intersecting axes which both denote the integration of a dispersed field of signifiers by a tautological master signifier. On the vertical axis we find a dispersed network of 'floating' mythological sources. A pure signifier (archetype) totalises this field so that 'myth motifs' begin to emerge from the chaos which are aligned with the elements of the Jungian cosmos - shadow, anima-animus, self, etc. The integration of the archetypes themselves into a coherent psychoanalytic edifice within which a given individual can be analysed is a separate task, performed on the horizontal axis in our model. Let us investigate these two axes in greater detail.

The Archetypes

The mythological source material Jung investigated in great detail during his long career encompassed amongst others nature religions around the world, classical Greek, Egyptian, Roman and Gnostic texts, medieval alchemy, Christian scriptural material and far-Eastern philosophical texts. Jung organises this vast material into a pattern based on the emergence of 'myth motifs' which he considers expressions of eternal forms - the archetypes. Let me quote at length a passage from Jung's Symbols of Transformation which makes the mechanisms governing the construction of the system of archetypes transparent.

Hitherto the myth interpreter has found himself in a somewhat unenviable position because he only had exceedingly doubtful points at his disposal such as astronomical or meteorological data. Modern psychology has the distinct advantage of having opened up a field of psychic phenomena, which are themselves the matrix of all mythology. I mean dreams, visions, fantasies and delusional ideas. Here the psychologist not only finds numerous points of correspondence with myth motifs, but also has an invaluable opportunity to observe how such contents arise... We can in fact discover the same multiplicity of meanings and the same apparently limitless interchangability of figures in dreams. On the other hand we are now in a position to establish certain laws, or at any rate rules, which make dream interpretation rather more certain.... Furthermore investigation of the products of the unconscious yields recognisable traces of archetypal structures which coincide with the myth motifs, among them certain types which deserve the name dominants. These are archetypes like anima, animus, wise old man, witch, shadow, earth mother and the organising dominant, the self.³⁸

Prior to advances in modern psychology, all approaches to research in mythology were hampered by the lack of a unifying hermeneutic system, a mode of interpretation that would

facilitate access to a dispersed body of 'floating', unrelated myths. It was modern Jungian psychology then which provided the key, the 'matrix underlying all mythology'. 'Recognisable traces of archetypal structures' discovered in dreams, delusions and fantasies provide the master key which allows Jung to discern the underlying 'myth motifs' which establish an ordered pattern within mythology. The application of the notion of 'archetypes' to mythology thus facilitates the identification of a priori eternal objects in the body of myth that remain identical to themselves beneath the surface of a continuous flux of their descriptive features [manifestations]. To see how this essentialist illusion is brought about we only have to reverse the perspective from which Jung is considering the operation and take into account the contingency and retroactivity of the production of meaning. It then emerges that it is Jung's *performance* of a signifying operation - his active positing of a radically contingent, tautological (empty) master signifier intervening in the dispersed field - which allows for the formalisation of motifs and the establishment of stable, namable objects. 'Archetype', as a pure signifier without signified, retroactively confers a metaphorical surplus meaning to any specific myth or myth motif under consideration. This overdetermination halts its initially floating signification and stabilises its meaning as the embodiment of an archetype but it does so 'after the fact', once we are already within the established symbolic field. What Jung fails to apprehend therefore, is that archetypes simultaneously designate and constitute myth motifs.

This can be further illustrated by references to Lupton's investigation of the significance of 'motif' in literary history. According to Lupton, the formalisation of a motif by literary critics correlating and evaluating a body of dispersed texts that span a given historic period is radically performative. *Motif* therefore retroactively constitutes a literary tradition or telos, which does not exist prior to a unifying theme.

In terms of literary history, a later text causes earlier texts through the repetition and formalisation of a motif thereby constituting a tradition of which it is the telos. This nachträglich construction of a cause, however, is itself the effect ...of a radical failure of historical and linguistic connection and influence.³⁹

Lupton relates the notion of literary motif to the Lacanian concept of 'cause'. For Lacan cause, as the sudden eruption of the impossible-real, for instance in terms of a psychological symptom such as a nervous tick or a lapsus of speech, denotes something that doesn't work, a traumatic failure of signification which forces the subject to consider *why* it happened. It is in that sense that motif retroactively 'causes' a literary tradition and paradoxically it does so by objectifying the void of non-relation of the texts which comprise that tradition. In exactly the same way, Jungian archetypes and myth motifs possess no positive consistency, they do not designate positive properties of the myths under consideration but merely give positive substance to, embody their failure of connection. But precisely in objectifying this void of failed signification, Jung produces a surplus, an unattainable X, something 'in the object more than

the object' which subsequently associates archetypes with an uncanny ,sublime quality.

It is precisely because the signifying operation paradoxically 'secretes its cause qua real' after the fact that 'archetype' as the embodiment of the agency of pure signifier, as the intrusion of pure, structural difference within the field of the signified, appears as the transcendent guarantee exempt from its differential signification. Because of the double movement whereby 'archetype' first connotes a field of mythological discourses and this field is then itself condensed in 'archetype' as its signifying representative, it appears that in their very essence myth motifs are the expression of an underlying archetypal truth. 'Archetype' as pure signifier thus secretes 'archetype' as an object in the real, a 'hard, traumatic kernel' that resists repeated attempts at an integration into the field of the signified. The analogies Jung uses in the rendering of his archetypes are telling. He likens the archetype to the axial system of a crystal, which is the only element that remains constant amidst mutations in the crystal's shape.

The only thing that remains constant is the axial system or rather the invariable geometric proportions underlying it. The same is true of archetypes. In principle it can be named and has an invariable nucleus of meaning - but always only in principle, never as regards the concrete manifestation.⁴⁰

Jung also cites the following passage from Schopenhauer's Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung in his Symbols of Transformation to illustrate the sublime nature of the archetypal libido.

The will as a 'thing-in-itself' is quite different from its phenomenal manifestation and entirely from all forms of phenomenality which it assumes only as it becomes manifest and which will therefore attest its objectivity only and are foreign to the will itself.⁴¹

Both passages intimate the equivalence of a hard kernel of the real (invariable nucleus of meaning) with the objectified void of the non-relation of phenomenal manifestations.

The Jungian subject

Let us then consider the horizontal axis of our model of Jung's system. In precisely the same way in which Jung's performance of a signifying operation on a body of myth retroactively produced the archetypes which he posited as its a priori, underlying matrix, it is the intervention of the master signifier of the self which constitutes the Jungian system proper as an ideological edifice. As we will see, the Jungian notion of 'individuation', crucial also to Hesse, implies that only the realisation of the self constitutes someone as a 'genuine subject' so that the self emerges as the point where the pre-subjective individual is interpellated into a 'Jungian' subject. The identity for Lacan of the master signifier quilting any given discourse with the point of the subjectification of the signifier's chain, the point where the mythic, pre-subjective individual, addressed with an ideological call, is interpellated into subject, 'sewn' to the signifier that represents him for the other, then allows us to unambiguously assert the function of the self as the nodal point in the Jungian system.

Our earlier discussion of the privileged position of the self in the hierarchy of archetypes already hinted at its function as a 'nodal point' quilting the other terms into a totality and thus determining their identity as elements in a structure in which the signification of each element is sustained only in relation to the signification of all the others. It is this enchainment of the various differential couplings - consciousness/the unconscious, man's animal and human nature, anima-animus etc.- with each other that is constitutive of the Jungian **system** as a structured, coherent discourse. The totalised network of meaningful differences is condensed in the self as the particular element which quilts the universal structure, which functions as the 'envelope which is simultaneously inscribed within the text'. It is on condition of the overdetermination of one of the elements as a 'point du capiton' that the ramified network of meaningful relations between elements that we find elaborated in great detail in Jung's work is made possible, i.e. that the shadow stands in a certain relation to the anima and both stand in a certain relation to the division between consciousness and the unconscious and so on. At one point in The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious Jung casts the functioning of his master signifier in almost Lacanian terms,

A kind of central point within the psyche to which everything is related, by which everything is arranged and which is itself a source of energy.⁴²

overlooking only that he is referring to the ideological structuring of his system rather than that of the psyche itself. In that section, Jung proceeds to explain that this energy

confronts the subject independently of him, that it compels and urges him to become what he always has been. From the perspective of the established structure, the self as the 'conjunction of opposites' appears numinous, exempt from the differential relations governing the other terms. In Aion, Jung therefore conceives of the conjunction of opposites as paradox and proposes that this union can be apprehended only in terms of their annihilation. He then proceeds to cast paradox as characteristic of all transcendent situations because '*it alone gives expression to their indescribable nature*'.⁴³ These descriptions effectively render the self as a '*causa sui generis*' possessing a supreme density of meaning, a characteristic which is further confirmed by the alleged identity of the self with the '*imago dei*'. The self as numinous and autonomous then appears as a kind of transcendent support of the consistency of the system, a point of fantasmatic richness which is impenetrable to further analysis. However, if we nonetheless approach this point of rigid identity more closely and subject it to analytical scrutiny, it is suddenly disclosed as the material embodiment of the kind of pure, self-reflective difference lying at the core of any signifying structure and reveals the logic of the signifier elucidated earlier in terms of such phrases as 'God is God' or 'Law is Law'. That is to say, it emerges as the point where the meaningless, 'phallic' signifier of lack erupts within the constituted field of meaning. The fact that this nodal point of the system coincides with the point where the mythic, pre-subjective individual is interpellated into the [Jungian] symbolic subject, where he/she is faced with a call from the

Other, is crucial. The injunction to realise the self is perceived by Jung as a primordial law and anyone who takes this mandate upon himself becomes a subject. This position of the self as the point of the subjectification of the signifier's chain is poignantly encapsulated in the name Jung gives to the realisation of the self: 'individuation' process. Jung illustrates the dynamics of the self by invoking the Greek terms Daimon and Daimonium which express 'a determining power which comes upon man from the outside, like providence or fate, though the ethical decision is left to man'.⁴⁴ A good example can be found in Jung's Septem Sermones at Mortuos, a privately distributed pamphlet which Hesse is thought to have known before the composition of Demian. It is not written in Jung's usual academic style, but rather in a poetic mode reminiscent of Nietzsche's Zarathustra. It revolves around a group of recently deceased who return from Jerusalem where they 'could not find what they have sought'. An omniscient observer addresses them in seven speeches and asserts that their reliance on Christian dogma was insufficient. He admonishes them and suggests that they neglected their only genuine duty during their lifetime, to realise their essential being (Wesen):

Nicht euer Denken, sondern euer Wesen ist Unterschiedenheit. Darum sollt ihr nicht nach Verschiedenheit wie ihr sie denkt streben, sondern nach Euerem Wesen.⁴⁵

This firmly situates the Jungian self in the dimension of the paternal metaphor, the law the name-of-the-father. The omniscient observer enacts the role of the 'dead father', of his symbolic function, and anybody **subjecting** himself to his primordial law ['ihr sollt'] becomes a subject. He/she will then be in the

'imaginary transference' captivated by the illusion that he has become what he 'always already was' and realised his underlying, intrinsic being. Let us state the temporal dynamics of this identification precisely: in the event of a successful ideological identification with the master signifier of the self, the subject will misapprehend himself as the addressee of a call emanating from the Other *subsequent* to his act of identification. This is the link that is missing in Jung's own conception. He fails to grasp how 'truth arises from misrecognition'⁴⁶, how man's 'ethical decision' does not so much realise as constitute the self and how, when transposed to the collective level of the Jungian symbolic community, this ethical decision 'animates' the cosmos of Jungian theory.

It follows that the self is radically immanent to the enunciation of the system. If we approach the problematic from a Lacanian angle which holds that there is no metalanguage, that the 'Other doesn't exist' as substance but is pure structural difference and has to be actively posited by the subject to be effective, then the self does not exist as the a priori 'nucleus of meaning' envisaged by Jung. But insofar as it is posited by a Jungian subject against the background of the Other, the Jungian symbolic community of analysts and scholars, it is the effective centre of a discursive field which retroactively secretes a sublime objective correlative in the real in which the subject finds its support, in which his being is condensed.

IV. Demian I - Demian as a Cipher for the Sublime

With regard to a psychoanalytic deciphering of Demian we can distinguish two separate functions in the narrative. The present section is concerned with isolating Demian's function as 'sublime object', as a non-representable remnant retroactively produced by the symbolic order itself while the next will discuss the extent to which Demian emerges precisely as the support to Sinclair's symbolic identification.

The Lacanian *object a* as the subject's objective correlative within the field of phenomenal, constituted reality has a highly ambivalent quality. On the one hand the 'stain' introducing a substantial density may smear over the transparency of the fabric of symbolic reality and threaten it from within. This was evidenced in Hesse's own Demian dream at the point of the traumatic discovery of an amorphous, wounded area near Demian's eye as well as by the analogous position of Kromer in the narrative as an invasive foreign body materialising the 'voice and gaze qua object'. On the other hand, as our analysis of the Jungian self revealed, the surplus of the real may assume the function of a sublime object guaranteeing the consistency of the symbolic order. Thus the transphenomenal Thing entering the stage of symbolic reality through an anamorphic distortion of symbolic reality may be perceived ambivalently either as 'negative excess' (Lupton), as the site of a vacuous horror or as a sublime surplus. The opposition is inherently unstable

precisely because *object a* possesses no empirical reality but only materialises the void at the heart of the Other.

Taking these reflections into account, we begin this section by gathering evidence for an underlying structural equivalence between Kromer and Demian in the narrative which may easily be concealed by their surface distinctions as unspeakably abhorrent or sublime characters. The fact that Kromer in the narrative crystallizes many characteristics of Hesse's 'dream Demian' is intuitively suggestive of an underlying proximity in their narrative function but a direct conflation of the two figures also occurs at one point in the narrative itself, again in the shape of a dream. In the 'Kain' chapter, Sinclair states that his 'shadow' pursues him in recurring nightmares where he inflicts even more terrifying tortures on him than in real life. Interestingly, as Demian substitutes for Kromer in one of those dreams, Sinclair's reaction of horror and pain is transformed into an experience of *jouissance* (Wonne) which is highly volatile and retains traces of the traumatic, 'nauseous enjoyment' associated with his previous encounters with Kromer.

...alles was ich von Kromer unter Qual und Widerstreben erlitten hatte , das erlitt ich von Demian gerne und mit einem Gefühl , das ebensoviel Wonne , wie Angst enthielt.

(D.48)

In his relation to Sinclair, Demian also manifests some of Kromer's unfavourable characteristics as he occasionally reacts to Sinclair's confusion and pain with cruel indifference. There is, of course, a further, crucial point of correspondence between

Demian and Kromer. Both represent a strange foreign kernel within the social fabric - a level of psychic energy is attached to both of them that places them outside bourgeois homeostasis, outside the field of ordinary culture and signification. In a passage evocative of Nietzsche, another key influence on the composition of Demian, Sinclair perceives Demian as inhabiting his own ethereal world, as an island isolated from the social worlds that surround him

**Ich sehe ihn fremdartig, einsam und still,... wie gestirnhaft zwischen ihnen wandeln, von einer eigenen Luft umgeben.
(D.68)**

Demian's status as 'outsider' is not restricted to Sinclair's own perception, however, but is reflected in a host of fantastic rumours that surround him in school. This gossip associates Demian with social groups excluded from the mainstream of society - he and his mother are possible atheists who never attend church, they might be secret Jews or Muslims or even belong to a strange religious cult. In terms of the psychoanalytic relevance of these rumours, it is irrelevant whether Demian literally belongs to any of these groups. (Arguably he belongs to the final category considering his involvement in the community of 'those who bear the 'mark of Cain' surrounding Frau Eva, which is revealed much later in the novel). The point here is rather the link between Demian and the nature of psychological projections that often inspire suspicion of religious minorities. In terms of the functions that the religious *other* can assume in the organisation of a society, let us take the example of anti-

Semitism. Žižek sees the basis for the paranoid construction of anti-Semitism precisely in the Jew's supposed access to a life substance (*jouissance*) prior to symbolic mortification. In this construction the Jew begins to function as

an external element , a foreign body introducing corruption into the sound social fabric. In other words, what is excluded from the Symbolic (from the frame of the Corporatist socio-symbolic order) returns in the real as the paranoid construction of the Jew.⁴⁷

Far from designating any objective, empirical properties associated with Jews, this construction relates to the unquantifiable surplus object, to what is supposed to be 'in a Jew more than Jew', which materialises the void at the heart of the symbolic order. Alongside the other factors examined below it is this perception of Demian within the conventional bourgeois social order, this suspicion that he may have access to some surplus enjoyment, which constitutes his sublime, fascinating aura. The libidinal connotations of the gossip surrounding Demian generally require psychoanalytic decoding but they are more immediately evident in the assertion that Demian as the sole student in his class '**knows everything about girls**'.⁴⁸

Insofar as the gossip of the young bourgeoisie elevates Demian to 'the dignity of *das Ding*' (Lacan) he can be aligned with Kromer who also represents an element excluded from the 'sound social fabric' who comes back to haunt the socio-symbolic order.

The uncanny space '*between two deaths*'

The Lacanian concept of the state '*between two deaths*' can be used to further illuminate Demian's status as sublime object, as

well as the dialectical relation of the sublime object to linguistic structure in Demian. The structure of human subjectivity elaborated above implies an irreducible split between the subject's symbolic reality and his biological being which can never be fully integrated into the symbolic order - and it is this split that opens the possibility of a distinction between two deaths. Since our being as *subjects* is determined by our position within the intersubjective network of the symbolic order, any definitive exclusion from the symbolic community denotes a suspension of subjectivity, a 'symbolic death' as distinct from the biological death of the organism. The ideal coincidence of these 'two deaths' ensures the smooth operation of culture and society but their divergence - symbolic death preceding biological death or vice versa - creates a haunting, liminal space. Lacan frequently illuminated this rather abstract concept with literary examples, which may have been the original source of inspiration for his idea. His constant reference point was of course the fate of Antigone whose uncompromising persistence in her demand for a burial of her outlawed brother led to her exclusion from the community of the city and so opened up a gap between her symbolic and real/biological death. Antigone's banishment to this liminal realm endowed her character with sublime beauty. Stripped of her symbolic subjectivity she became, according to Lupton, a '*fascinating fragment that has been buried alive*' and was subsequently adopted as a '*symbol of the unsymbolizable*'⁴⁹ par excellence in both literature and criticism. Alternatively, Hamlet's father exemplifies real death without symbolisation, without a '*settling of accounts*' (Žižek)

and appropriate funeral rites which would have ensured the symbolic-historic inscription of his death. His return as a ghost lingering 'between-two-deaths' and demanding a settling of accounts from his son is a result of this. According to Žižek

The 'between-two-deaths' is a place of sublime beauty as well as terrifying monsters...the site of das Ding , of the real traumatic kernel in the midst of the symbolic order.⁵⁰

The state 'between two deaths' is associated with the site *the Thing* because we can have any form of cognitive access to death only insofar as the natural cycles of generation and corruption have already been historicized, caught in the symbolic network. As the uncanny interstice '*between two deaths*' implies a radical annihilation of the symbolic order itself, death at that point loses its *significance* and becomes associated with the substance of forbidden, incestuous enjoyment. A case in point is Edgar A. Poe's short story The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar. Valdemar agrees to be kept in a state of artificial life after his death by his doctors in order to enable him to deliver a report on the afterlife. The deceased Valdemar, who is at the same time uncannily alive, represents the traumatic *jouissance* of *das Ding* precisely because he persists in a forbidden domain, in a realm of damnation, from which it is his only wish to be redeemed as the sporadic, horrified screams that punctuate his slumber indicate. The dreary remnants, the pool of disgusting, stinking slime into which he finally disintegrates is a poignant allusion to the forbidden surplus of the symbolic - a seething, searching, palpitating and perfectly meaningless amorphous life substance.

I elaborated on this phenomenon at length because it will shed new light on key passages in Demian. Hesse utilises the biblical tale of Cain and Abel as the backdrop against which the first encounter between Sinclair and Demian is staged. To Sinclair's initially sceptical reaction, Demian subverts the conventional reading propagated in school by casting Cain in the role of a Nietzschean *Übermensch* whose slaying of his 'weaker' brother unfolds naturally from his inner self, from his strong, heroic character. In Demian's version Cain does not receive his mark as a punishment or emblem of shame subsequent to the killing but is deemed to have carried an 'invisible' sign from the beginning - a mark of distinction that sets him apart from the herd of his unremarkable contemporaries.

**Er hatte ein Zeichen...Leute mit Mut und Charakter sind den anderen immer sehr unheimlich.
(D.42)**

Before elaborating on this reading, let us consider the biblical text in its conventional setting. Cain murders his brother in a fit of uncontrolled anger and is punished for the transgression of divine law by the exclusion from this archaic symbolic community. In order to 'protect' Cain the Lord puts a mark on his brow that places violence against him under a taboo. In a brief address, God informs Cain of his sentence

You are placed under a curse and can no longer farm the soil...you will be a homeless wanderer on earth...No, if anyone kills you , seven lives will be taken in revenge.' So the Lord put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who met him not to kill him.⁵¹

In the light of Lacanian theory, the original biblical version confronts us with a surprising conclusion: Cain's mark was linked originally to the cruel intention to suspend him in the uncanny space '*dans l'entre deux morts*', between his symbolic death and his eventual natural decay, for as long as possible. In this cursed state, he ceases to exist as subject and thus materialises the '*pure Nothingness of the hole, the void in the Other*'.⁵² It is as if this cruel subjective destitution transforms him into a fascinating fragment of the real permeated with the substance of enjoyment. From this perspective, Cain does embody similar 'numinous' qualities both in Demian and the Bible - yet in terms of the biblical version the contingency of that condition on a structural framework is more transparent. Juxtaposing the original version with Demian's revision, we may conclude that despite their divergence they are linked by inter-textual influence: the Bible's *a posteriori* secretion of a terrifying-sublime fragment is transmitted to Hesse's text where it is transformed into an *a priori*. This transformation is, of course, itself dependent on a symbolic construction. We find it consistent with the Jungian ideology that strongly influenced Hesse at that time and which was probably instrumental in erasing the traces of the external determination of Cain's 'numinosity'.

The biblical parable in the narrative has a pivotal role. It introduces the notion of the mark of Cain as one of the central narrative motifs that recurs incessantly. Along with the equally important motif of the sparrow hawk, Jungian criticism has always

taken these motifs as ciphers for the self. I see them as imposing a structure, a network, on a tale of biographical development that would otherwise lack defined contours, as providing linkages between the different stages of development. As motifs they are signifiers but they function as pure signifiers without clearly delimited signifieds, they aim at what is in the subject 'more than the subject himself' and as such are located at the intersection of the symbolic and the real. In a somewhat more radical approach, it might be tempting to consider the archaic biblical tale in Demian which gives rise to the 'mark of Cain' as the central motif defining Sinclair as a **primal scene** around which the narrative is articulated in the same way Der Steppenwolf is organized around the Traktatus.

Demian and the uncanny gaze of the 'living dead'

We now proceed to examining a number of detailed, descriptive passages of Demian in the narrative and thereby weave together some of the strands of analysis developed thus far including the gaze as object and the liminal state 'between two deaths'. We will situate our discussion of Hesse's approach to rendering Demian as a cipher for the sublime in the context of widespread charges against him that cast him as a second-rate or even incompetent writer.

Perhaps the best characterisation of the dialectical relation of eye and gaze can be found in Lacan's Seminar XI.⁵³ Here, Lacan dismisses as flawed the renaissance conception of vision based on the geometric laws of optics, which situates a unified and

transcendental subject at the apex of a triangular visual field. Lacan's notion of the subject as split and barred, as the void that is left when all the substance has been drained is reflected in his conception of the visual field as constituted in relation to the subject's foundational experience of lack: *'Für uns wird das Privileg des Blicks fassbar in der Funktion des Begehrens, indem wir,...die Adern entlanggleiten über die der Bereich des Sehens dem Feld des Begehrens integriert worden ist.'*⁵⁴

That is to say, we find evidence of the subversion of the unified-transcendental subject calmly surveying the surrounding scene, the 'subject as eye', in terms of the desiring subject encountering the gaze as object outside. This material correlate to the subject can be figured as the 'centre of gravity' around which the entire perceptual field revolves. Lacan explained that this function of the gaze has been intuitively recognised by painters such as Goya who resorted to the **mask** to evoke its inert presence.⁵⁵

Applying this theory to the appearance of Demian within Sinclair's 'perceptual field' we can gain further insights into Demian's narrative function. At one point in the narrative, Sinclair notices the ascetic rigour of his friend who is immersed in a state of deep meditative absorption. Demian's self-immersion corresponds on the outside to the petrification of his body into a 'statue'. Sinclair is enthralled by Demian's face rendered in the passage below as a 'death mask'.

Er ist tot!, dachte ich, aber ich wusste, dass er nicht tot sei. Ich hing mit gebanntem Blick an seinem Gesicht, an dieser blassen, steinernen Maske und fühlte, das war Demian... Der wirkliche Demian sah so aus, so wie dieser, so steinern, uralt,

tierhaft, steinhaft, tot, und heimlich voll von unerhörtem Leben.
(D.88-89)

A reading which would reduce Demian's death mask face to a symbol, to a mere poetic externalisation of his focused contemplation, would be insufficient for this would overlook the dimension of the mask as real in the Lacanian sense. Such a reading would also remain fundamentally situated within the basic paradigm of unified-transcendental subjectivity. We can only understand the true significance of this tantalising image by grasping the dialectical nature of mask as evoking, precisely through its inert rigour, a life substance that transcends the delimited field of culture and signification. In his account Sinclair suggests that Demian's face veils a mystery, that underneath his mask he is permeated with a seething life substance which eludes rational apprehension [*'heimlich voll von unerhörtem Leben'*]. The implication is that beyond his ordinary body, Demian possesses a 'second body' composed of a sublime substance which is 'exempt from the cycles of generation and corruption'.

An analogy to the function of the 'living dead' such as vampires who populate Gothic fictions strikes the eye. Žižek explains that the place of the 'undead' is not somewhere between the living and the dead, that precisely as dead, as persisting in the forbidden domain excluded from symbolic mortification, they are more alive than ordinary mortals. Because of this supposed access to a primordial life substance, the paradoxical death of the 'living dead' emerges, in Žižek's gloss, as 'a mask

sheltering a life far more 'alive' than our ordinary daily lives'.⁵⁶

In contrast to the speaking reality of the symbolic, Demian's 'mask' alludes to the 'mute reality of the real'⁵⁷, an inert, impenetrable, traumatic element that cannot be mediated, that persists outside the permutations and substitutions of language and yet coincides with the subject's innermost psychic being. As such, it is an opaque object in Sinclair's perceptual tableau which 'returns the gaze' and undermines his stable subjectivity from within, designating him as radically *other* to himself. Žižek explains that the boundary between life and death is destabilised by the uncanny gaze of inanimate objects which nonetheless 'possess a gaze of melancholic expressiveness'.⁵⁸ He cites Munch's evocative painting 'Spring Evening on Carl Johan' depicting a ghostly procession of spectral, green-hued pedestrians whose 'goggling eyes' contrast with their death mask faces.⁵⁹ The uncanny gaze of blind, unseeing eyes epitomises the phenomenon of 'das Unheimliche' described by Freud as a return of the repressed which is perceived by the subject ambivalently as both radically alien and yet strangely familiar.

The passage in Demian immediately preceding the quote above echoes its evocation of pre-symbolic life substance but allows us to trace the insistence of the object-gaze more closely.

Ich glaubte, er habe die Augen geschlossen, sah aber, dass er sie offenhielt, sie waren starr nach innen oder in grosse Ferne gerichtet. Vollkommen regungslos sass er da, auch zu atmen schien er nicht, sein Mund war wie aus Holz oder Stein geschnitten, sein Gesicht war blass, gleichmässig bleich wie Stein und die braunen

Haare waren das Lebendigste an ihm. Seine Hände lagen vor ihm auf der Bank, leblos und still wie Gegenstände, bleich und regungslos, doch nicht schlaff, sondern wie feste Hüllen um ein verborgenes, starkes Leben.

(D.88)

Initially the focus is on Demian's rigid and unseeing yet 'melancholically expressive eyes' but his uncanny petrification into statue or mask transforms his entire being into an opaque stain within Sinclair's perceptual field which returns the gaze. While this passage literally objectifies Demian's body ['leblos und still wie Gegenstände'], its status is not that of an ordinary object disclosed by language but rather as the sublime *Thing* that persists outside figuration and introduces an abyss into the visual field. Earlier we referred to this *object a* as an objectified void, a conception that is poignantly captured in Lupton's Zen-like designation of the *Thing* as 'an enclosed void, a structure of occlusion whose contents are its dis-contents'⁶⁰ which allows her to align the Lacanian *Thing* with Freud's *Kasten*. Despite the apparently massive, inert presence of the Lacanian *Thing*, 'a petrified fragment of the liquid flux of *jouissance*'⁶¹ it is a phantom like entity which designates a forbidden domain that should be left unseen, for if we approach too closely, constituted, phenomenal reality threatens to dissolve. This is why Demian's status as an ethereal/sublime object depends on a certain error of perspective. One could say that if we were to alter the angle from which he is viewed at slightly, we would 'discover Kromer' instead. This fluid, unstable border between the horrifying and the sublime is underscored by the ease of substitutability of Demian for Kromer in the dream cited earlier, and by the general alignment of the two figures in the text. Not

least, this connection is exemplified by the parable of Cain and Abel - to which both Kromer and Demian are linked metonymically - where we find that the progression from the original, biblical version to Demian's revision mirrors the uneasy opposition of traumatic horror and sublime beauty.

Let us further illustrate these issues by focusing on a final descriptive passage of Demian in the text. By coincidence, Sinclair comes across Demian who is sketching a horse that had stumbled and fallen and lies bleeding on the ground. To elucidate the elaborate relation between signification and the site of *das Ding* I will quote at length.

Ich musste ihn lange ansehen und dann fühlte ich, noch fern von Bewusstsein, etwas sehr Eigentümliches. Ich sah Demian's Gesicht, und ich sah nicht nur, dass er kein Knabengesicht hatte, sondern das eines Mannes, ich sah noch mehr, ich glaubte zu sehen oder zu spüren, dass es auch nicht das Gesicht eines Mannes sei, sondern noch etwas anderes. Es war, als sei auch etwas von einem Frauengesicht darin, und namentlich erschien das Gesicht mir für einen Augenblick nicht männlich oder kindlich, nicht alt oder jung, sondern irgendwie tausendjährig, irgendwie zeitlos, von anderen Zeitläufen gestempelt als wir sie leben. Tiere konnten so aussehen, oder Bäume, oder Sterne, ich wusste es nicht,... Vielleicht war er schön, vielleicht gefiel er mir, vielleicht war er mir zuwider, auch das war nicht zu entscheiden. Ich sah nur, er war anders als wir, er war wie ein Tier oder Geist, oder wie ein Bild, ich weiss nicht wie er war, aber er war anders, unausdenkbar anders als wir.

(D.69-70)

From the Jungian perspective, of course, this passage expresses the numinous, timeless self as a conjunction of opposites. But apparently vague, diffuse passages like this in Hesse's literature have also given rise to the impression amongst some critics that Hesse is a second-rate or even incompetent writer incapable of accurately rendering his figures [i.e. Koch]. I

would argue that the reverse is true. On the level of representation, we have a long 'signifying chain' which is kept in motion by the gap between the irresolution of meaning and the longing for closure. Since each individual representation is seen by Sinclair as ultimately insufficient, as a distortion or misrepresentation, every provisional signifier is instantly retracted, displaced onto another. This could potentially lead to an endless chain of metonymic displacements, a 'bad infinity' of misrepresentations in search of the 'proper' metaphor but the gliding of significations is finally halted by a definite, assured statement - '*..ich weiss nicht wie er war , aber er war anders, unausdenkbar anders, als wir.*'. This finally found definition, however, does not operate on the same logical level as the others, but in renouncing any further attempts at arriving at a conclusive description of Demian, reflects the impossibility of representation into itself and thus resembles the phallic signifier which represents the subject. In Lacanian terminology, this is the place of the reflective inversion of the '*lacking signifier into the signifier of lack*'. On the level of meaning we discern the outlines of the subjective signifying structure described by Lacan. But this very process of signification produces its 'negative'. It is the repeated, failed attempt to integrate the essence of Demian's being into the signifying network which produces an empty, traumatic kernel that escapes representation. The crucial point to grasp is that this *Thing* cannot be rendered directly '*by-passing the circuitous route of meaning*' but emerges only as a by-product of the text. The subtle, elegant 'production' of this sublime element makes this

passage an index of Hesse's poetic skills rather than incompetence.

The many references to the infinite or to vast expanses of time in Hesse's passage point us to the contradiction between the symbolic which is co-extensive with the flow of time and the abyss of the *Thing* at its heart which threatens to stall its movement. All knowledge is mediated by the symbolic order but since the 'Other does not exist' but is continuously posited by the subject, the knowing subject is not 'part of the universe' as an overwhelming material totality but is on the contrary correlative to and ontologically constitutive of the world. It is impossible then to *know* the infinite given that the medium of language irreducibly binds the subject to the finite. Lacanian thought leads to the Kantian conclusion that the inaccessible 'Thing-in-itself' must remain hidden from phenomenal reality since '*reality can only appear within the horizon of the subject's finitude*'.⁶²

The diachronous flow of language in Sinclair's statement replete with insufficient *metaphors* for the infinite contrasts with the intimation of the black, timeless space of the *Thing* it produces retroactively and this tension creates a sense of danger as well as poetic potency. In conclusion, we can say that Hesse's skilful orchestration of an array of literary devices used to render Demian - the rumours that surround him, the poetic evocation of his uncanny gaze and death mask face etc. - combine to elevate him to the dignity of the *Thing* which can never be

represented directly. Critics who accuse Hesse of literary incompetence because of his refusal to render some of his figures and social constellations with 'precision' therefore miss their target completely.

According to Žižek the Lacanian formula of fantasy ($\$ \langle \rangle a$), designating the confrontation of the empty subject with the amorphous presence of the real, reveals the truth of the mirror relationship ($a - a'$).

It is therefore clear why vampires are invisible in the mirror. Because they have read Lacan and consequently know how to behave - they materialize object a , which by definition cannot be mirrored.⁶³

V. Demian II - The Creation of the (psychoanalytic) Subject

Despite the fundamental equivalence between Kromer and Demian elaborated above we can identify a dimension of meaning that is of crucial importance to the role of Demian in the text yet appears to be absent in Kromer. One of the letters Hesse received from his readers posed the question of Kromer's own potential for self-realisation and development, an issue never raised in the narrative. In his response, Hesse carefully rejects this idea and seems to convey the notion of an insurmountable divide that separates these characters in terms of their textual function.

**Natürlich lebt auch der Knabe Kromer das, was aus ihm herauswill, er tut es auf niederer Stufe...
Mir schien es wichtig was zwischen Demian und Sinclair vorgeht, was zwischen Demian und Kromer Fruchtbares hätte vorgehen können, sehe ich nicht.⁶⁴**

The obvious fact of Demian's pivotal position in the narrative further underscores the psychological significance in the relation between Sinclair and Demian that is missing in Kromer's otherwise analogous role as uncanny/sublime object. What precisely is this irreducible surplus of meaning that is essential to Demian but lacking in Kromer?

We are of course, already familiar with the Jungian answer which associates Demian with the archetype of the self, the most privileged archetype in the Jungian edifice which certainly eclipses the shadow (Kromer) in terms of prestige and significance. In opposition to this Jungian reading, I want to argue, in a first approach, that the source of the significance of the relation Sinclair-Demian is to be sought in its analogy to

the dialectics of psychoanalytic discourse - that is to say, the intersubjective field in which the analyst occupies for the analysand the status of the 'sujet supposé savoir'.

In this intersubjective dialectic, the client assumes that the pathological symptom which escapes his conscious grasp and appears to constitute an opaque stain 'sticking out' from the field of established symbolic reality, will retro-actively acquire meaning - i.e. be re-integrated into the subject's history so that its destabilising dimension will be neutralised. From the perspective of the analysand who is in a relation of transference with the analyst, it is the mere presence of the analyst as a 'subject supposed to know' [to know the true meaning of the stain] that functions as a guarantee that the symptom will be re-inscribed into the subject's symbolic field.

Lacan suggests that we should consider the original formation of the symptom as a result of a process of 'primary historization'. In the process of the subject's accession to the symbolic order a (contingent) point where repeated attempts at symbolic formation fail is encountered. At this juncture, we have the symptom, a metaphorically overdetermined signifier which 'sticks out', a stain disturbing the transparency of symbolic continuity which by exceeding its signification points to the subject's traumatic core beyond any of the permutations of consciousness.

In that sense, the purpose of the psychoanalytic intervention is a 'secondary historization' of subjective truth or a re-organisation of the symbolic formations that circulate around the signifier of the symptom. The process of psychoanalysis requires

that the subject recognises that he himself, his being is tied to the symptom, that the 'stain' is his objective correlate. The symptom, according to Lacan's precise definition, may dissolve as soon as this 'knowledge' is transposed to the level of the subject's symbolic reality, as soon as it is fully realised as subjective truth. This occurs when in the psychoanalytic exchange, the subject ceases to indulge in 'empty speech', by which Lacan designates any diverting strategy of alienated discourse or the captivation in imaginary lures which does not in any way impinge on the subject's truth and when he finally pronounces the 'full word'.⁶⁵

It is crucial therefore, that the psychoanalytic field within which the symptom can be alleviated is circumscribed or delineated by language and speech. Since the symptom itself is a metaphor substituting for an unconscious trauma, there can be no effective psychoanalytic intervention outside language. The symptom has to be tackled on the same level on which it was formed. Lacan was opposed to the naive assumption that we have to uncover an objective traumatic event in the subject's past that has been repressed into the unconscious. On the contrary, he stresses the significance of a purely contingent element in the subject's present, synchronic symbolic network which has only retroactively acquired a traumatic quality. Accordingly, Lacan considers an orientation of the cure towards a recovery of unconscious material relating to an objective past, which might be effected, for example, by means of a regression through hypnosis, as a flawed approach. Such a procedure would imply that the unconscious is a positive, substantial entity. However, in view

of the Lacanian notion of the unconscious as relational and structural, the psychoanalytic procedure in itself can only be 'intersubjective', situated within the linguistic relation between analyst and analysand. Thus, it must be geared towards a technique of language association or linguistic dream analysis, which will lead to an acknowledgement of a traumatic element within the subject's synchronic symbolic network. According to Lacan it is absolutely fundamental that any approach of psychoanalysis which remains faithful to Freud will locate itself within the medium of the dialectic between articulated speech ('parole') and the Other (the symbolic order, 'langue') which establishes the dimension of the unconscious.⁶⁶

Throughout his career, Lacan has consistently rejected any orientation of analysis toward a therapeutic stabilisation or strengthening of the subject's ego, a practice he attacked in post-war American psychoanalysis as a deviation from the Freudian psychoanalytic model.

To understand the operation of valid psychoanalytic discourse we must not conceive of the communication between analyst and analysand in terms of the naive model of communication theory in which we have a two-way exchange between two individuals 'expressing themselves', conveying a substantive content of 'facts corresponding to truth' to each other by recourse to the neutral medium of speech. According to Lacan, language can never be neutral. We have to confront the more sophisticated, dialectical notion of the Other, the 'transcendent' agency of the symbolic order which creates the field of reality and transforms any collection of atomised individuals into a community of barred, split

'subjects'. In any exchange between two subjects, the locus of the Other then functions as the guarantor of the truth of articulated speech, as the mediator or circuit which facilitates the dialectic of intersubjective exchange. In his article Subversion des Subjekts, Lacan poignantly expresses the dialectical and circular nature of the process of signification, as well as the split this process introduces in the subject and the lack of any substantial reality in this process.

Die auf der Bahn $s(A)$ zu A und von A zurück zu $s(A)$ stattfindende Unterwerfung des Subjekts unter den Signifikanten bildet eigentlich einen Kreis, weil nämlich die Asserteration, die so entsteht, auf nichts als auf ihre eigene Skandierung hinausläuft - anders gesagt: bei der ein Akt fehlt, in der sie sich ihrer selbst vergewissern konnte - und allein auf ihre eigene Antizipation in der Komposition des Signifikanten verweist, die in sich insignifikant ist.⁶⁷

In that sense, in addressing their analyst, analysands always unconsciously address, try to elicit recognition from, the Other and it is on this level that the analyst strives to dissolve the symptom.

It is thus characteristic of the Lacanian approach to psychoanalysis that in identifying and dissolving the symptom, the analyst's interpretation 'reaches' the analysand strictly on the linguistic level of unconscious symbolic formations which transcend the imaginary ego as well as conscious, 'empty', discourse. The exchange becomes fruitful as soon as the analysand goes beyond transference and addresses the psychoanalyst not as his imaginary, alienating alter ego (the mirror relation), but rather as his own Other. In this dialectical exchange, the unconscious dimension is revealed as the client addresses the Other and receives back 'his own message in its true, inverted

form'⁶⁸, for instance when he commits a revelatory slip of tongue or error of speech etc.

Daraus folgt, dass der Ort des Unter-sagten (inter-dit), den die Zwischenrede (intra-dit) eines Zwischen-zwei-Subjekten bildet, eben der Ort ist, an dem sich die Transparenz des klassischen Subjekts aufspaltet und in jene fading-Effekte übergeht, die die Besonderheit des Freudschen Subjekts damit begründen, dass es durch einen zunehmend reineren Signifikanten abgedeckt wird..⁶⁹

It is crucial to this conceptualisation that the psychoanalyst can never disclose the true meaning of the symptom directly but strives to elicit a response through subtle evocation which encourages the analysand to articulate in such a way that this articulation triggers a resonance or echo in the Other. This then corresponds precisely to the return of the subject's message in its true, inverted form and allows for the eventual dissolution of the symptom. In order to illustrate this and also to facilitate an application of this rather abstract theory to the fiction of Demian we will resort to Žižek's development of important analogies between psychoanalytic discourse and the classical detective story. (i.e. Arthur Conan Doyle). Žižek identifies a circular, parabolic structure in the classical detective story, which encircles the void of a traumatic incursion - the murder at the beginning of the narrative. This fascinating, mysterious 'void' sets the interpretative train in motion. The traumatic disruption upsetting the social balance within a community will acquire its 'meaning' only retroactively, towards the end of the novel or short story when the detective's investigation of a collection of clues allows him to re-establish the original, linear sequence of causes and effects. The

detective is supposed to possess, through his mere presence, an 'omniscience' which will guarantee that the clues which are 'articulated' throughout the story will acquire their true meaning by the end. The detective here functions as the equivalent to the psychoanalytic 'sujet supposé savoir'.

It is crucial that the detective does not succeed in assembling the clues into a coherent narrative despite but because of the cunning of the criminal trying to evade the law. Typically the detective apprehends the criminal precisely because he takes into account the very falsity of the appearance of clues laid by the criminal as a deception or lure and because he may identify the very absence of a clue as a clue in itself. (i.e. in Silverblaze Holmes identifies the fact that a dog did not bark at the crime scene as a positive clue). In Žižek's analysis, these features underscore that both the classical detective story and psychoanalysis are a matter of 'truth' rather than 'fact'. Both 'make sense' only in relation to a network of differential signification, in which each signifier signifies only in relation to other signifiers, but not in relation to any supposed factual reality independent of language. Žižek goes on to argue that the detective's supposed omniscience in fact derives from a relation of transference between the detective and the detective's Watsonian companion. In an apparent homology to the psychoanalytic procedure, clues provided by the fumbling companion inadvertently, unconscious of their true dimension are then returned by the detective in their true form allowing the linear sequence of events to be re-established.

To summarise and complete our comparison we may establish as essential that the analysand (Watsonian companion) articulates an incomplete message riddled with lacunae which is directed to an oracular Other (in effect neither the analyst nor the detective but the transcendent symbolic order) '*supposed to know*' or to be omniscient, who in a sudden illumination reveals the true meaning of the original message. In psychoanalytic terms, the Other which dialectically unites analyst and client IS the unconscious. 'The unconscious is the discourse of the Other', as Lacan frequently put it.

I. The structural 'skeleton': Lacanian notions of psychoanalytic discourse and the structure/functional framework of Demian

Our next task is to relate this model of psychoanalytic discourse to Hesse's novel. As Rix Weaver has pointed out, although we do not have any detailed accounts of Hermann Hesse's psychoanalytic sessions with Dr. Lang (in Hesse's letters information on this is rather patchy), Demian itself is ultimately to be seen as a record of these sessions in an aesthetic-poetic form. However, in the widespread Jungian readings, Pistorius rather than Demian is considered to be a veiled reference to Hesse's analyst Dr. Lang, while Jungian critics converge in considering Demian as the embodiment of the archetype of the self. The function of Pistorius as 'psychopomp' is seen ultimately to guide Sinclair to the realisation of that archetype.

However, in terms of a Lacanian reading we find sufficient indications in the narrative as well as in Hesse's letters to suggest that Demian functions as the '*subject supposed to know*' in relation to Sinclair. Thus while Demian cannot be regarded as an oblique literary reference to any empirical psychoanalyst in the same way as Pistorius in the final chapters, he can be shown to possess 'knowledge' analogous to that any analysand presupposes in the analyst according to Lacanian theory. An allusion to such a function of Demian can be found in one of Hesse's letters in which he states that Demian is ultimately based on Pistorius (Dr. Lang).

Im Leben hatte ich keinen Demian, nur einen Pistorius, und doch habe ich mir den Demian daraus geformt.⁷⁰

Demian's position in the novel vis-à-vis Sinclair marks him as the supposed subject of knowledge for he appears to speak from the locus of the Other. The general structure of their relation reminds us of psychoanalytic discourse and exhibits the unconscious as the '*discourse of the Other*'. The fantasy of Demian's '*omniscience*', one of the novel's key characteristics, is a case in point: Demian is cast as Sinclair's own '*inner voice*' which knows everything better than he does.

Sprach da nicht eine Stimme, die nur aus mir selber kommen konnte? Die alles wusste ? Die alles besser, klarer wusste, als ich selber?

(D.54)

Unlike the voice as traumatic object we encountered earlier, this voice is firmly situated in a discursive, symbolic dimension.

Demian's interpretation of a variety of biblical parables is one manifestation of his supposed omniscience for it is his presence which effectively guarantees the true meaning of these tales. Because of this relation of transference between Sinclair and Demian all significant insights or discoveries that Sinclair derives from this discourse are perceived as revealing something that has 'always already' been present in his self, that discloses to him an inner eternal essence. We have earlier described the structure of the transference illusion, which lends the products of symbolic discourse the appearance of immanence. Particularly striking manifestations are Demian's supposed magical capabilities, which allow him to read Sinclair's thoughts as well as his mysterious constellation in the narrative whenever Sinclair is most in need of him.

Demian's part in the Kromer affair is a perfect example. His intervention which occurs mysteriously at the right place and right time allows us to uncover traces of psychoanalytic discourse in Sinclair's relation to Demian. Just following another encounter with Kromer who savagely exploits his terrifying hold over Sinclair by steadily escalating the nature of his demands [at one point he insists on being introduced to Sinclair's sister for dubious reasons] Sinclair is unexpectedly approached by Demian who begins to engage him in a conversation. He swiftly steers the conversation towards Kromer, as if by coincidence, but his patronising attitude and his haughty aloofness convey a sense that he 'knows', that he is well aware of Sinclair's 'enslavement'. Nevertheless, Sinclair is initially reluctant to make any

confessions. The mere mention of Kromer leads him to mobilise his resistance so that he goes no further than admitting that he loathes Kromer. His profound emotional turmoil indicates that Demian has touched upon a point of traumatic failure. Our previous discussion of Kromer, of course, revealed his status as a traumatic stain within symbolic discourse, but the nature of the symptom always undergoes a transformation in the context of analysis. In the framework of Demian's participation in the Kromer affair, it is tempting to consider Kromer as functionally equivalent to a psychological symptom which is addressed to the Other in the analytic exchange and thus points forward to its dissolution. To elucidate this, let us focus on the purely formal, linguistic elements in the following fragment of dialogue:

"Gewiss, du hast ganz recht,... aber es geht nicht, du weisst ja nicht..."

"Bist du ihm etwa Geld schuldig?"

"Ja, das auch, aber das ist nicht die Hauptsache. Ich kann es nicht sagen, ich kann nicht!"

(D.85)

We might say that in his psychoanalytic discourse with Demian, Sinclair suddenly, painfully encounters a 'cause' in the Lacanian sense as something that doesn't work, as a traumatic failure of articulation. In their designation of this point, the gaps punctuating Sinclair's statement are pregnant with meaning. This sudden discursive manifestation of the unconscious represents a jolt out of ordinary, alienated discourse for at this point Sinclair receives back his own message from the Other in its true, inverted form. At their next meeting Demian indicates that

he has met Kromer and elicited a promise from him. Kromer will refrain from any further blackmail. Significantly, the precise way in which this is achieved remains unelaborated in the narrative as Demian refuses to disclose any details. He goes only so far as to suggest that he indicated to Kromer that leaving Sinclair alone would be 'in his own interest'. The impression we get is that the author wants to leave this aspect of the narrative deliberately shrouded in mystery.

From our Lacanian perspective, it is important to note that this is not a coincidental omission or even a narrative failure as some critics have suggested. Rather, it is crucial to the psychological dynamics that prevail between Demian and Sinclair. We might argue that this mysterious blank in the narrative is actively constitutive of the psychological effect achieved. There simply cannot be any equivalent to this 'liberation' within the space of the narrative's 'objective reality'. Insofar as Kromer as the embodiment of the symptom has been dissolved or contained this event is situated on the plane of Sinclair's identification with, determination by, the Other as an abstract, linguistic entity which is irreducible to any empirical person but is rather constitutive of the intersubjective field in which empirical individuals are situated and installed as subjects. Demian as an empirical person in the narrative space emerges as a mere mediator or conduit to the Other as the place or 'locus' where symptoms are formed and dissolved. To the extent that Demian's encounter with Kromer is a figurative rendering of a key moment in the psychoanalytic process it must necessarily remain opaque

for as Lacan has pointed out, psychoanalysis is a matter of truth, not of reality.

At any rate, following Demian's intervention, Kromer's whistling, the emblem of his terror, remains conspicuously absent. His spell has been dissolved. Initially Sinclair is still wary, doubtful about his new freedom but when, at one point, he meets Kromer by accident, it is evident that a dramatic change has occurred.

Er kam die Seilergasse herab, gerade mir entgegen. Als er mich sah, zuckte er zusammen, verzog das Gesicht zu einer wüsten Grimasse und kehrte ohne weiteres um, um mir nicht begegnen zu müssen. ... Mein Feind lief von mir davon! Mein Satan hatte Angst vor mir!

(D.58)

Here we note that the stain, the uncanny-sublime element elevated to the dignity of the Thing, which captivates and fascinates the subject, loses all its powers of attraction or repulsion once it is reduced to its 'ordinary corporeity'. A quote from Žižek, referring to a film '*Experiment in Terror*' which relates the story of a young bankclerk who falls victim to an asthmatic blackmailer, perfectly captures these dynamics and corresponds very closely to the situation in Demian.

When at the very end of the film, the police shoot him down in the empty illuminated stadium, it is by no accident that the blackmailer, with his asthmatic wheeze, recalls a fish choking on dry land, out of its natural element. He is effectively like an octopus, who once out of the water, loses its terrifying fascination and changes into a powerless slime - this is the fate that befalls the phantomlike 'acousmatique' being as soon as it is reduced to its ordinary corporeity.⁷¹

Let us consider another exemplification of the kinship of psychoanalytic discourse and the Sinclair-Demian relation. As Sinclair reaches adolescence, the sudden emergence of sexual strivings which he associates with the 'dark', forbidden world constitutes a traumatic challenge to his psychic structure. This challenge effectively re-iterates the Kromer episode on a different level. He perceives sexuality as a traumatic shock, a foreign kernel which transcends the fixtures of his conscious self.

Das was Kromer gewesen war, steckte jetzt in mir.
(D.67)

Jungian readings stress the dichotomy between Kromer as an external, disruptive agent and the more introspective nature of Sinclair's concern with his emergent sexuality. Thus the movement from the resolution of the Kromer episode to Sinclair's sexual awakening is interpreted conveniently as an integration of the shadow which had formerly been projected externally (Kromer) - a process which advances and matures a person's character. However, there is simply something missing in this static juxtaposition of alienating projections and the subject's supposed unalterable inner reality. What this fails to take into account is the dependence of the subject's inner reality on his symbolic identification. In fact, Sinclair's statement indicates a traumatic, foreign element whose integration does not fully abolish its alterity. Does that not point us towards the Lacanian model which posits a stain in the midst of the subject's symbolic reality, an 'ex-timate' kernel implying the identity of an

irreducibly foreign, alien element with the subject's inner self? We earlier noted v. Seckendorff's observation that the prevailing morality of bourgeois law constitutes the ultimate measure for the attribution of any element to either the world of light or that of darkness. In that sense, Kromer on the one hand and Sinclair's emerging sexuality on the other both function as elements excluded from a *given* symbolic field. If we consider them 'symptoms', events which originally acquired their traumatic quality as a consequence of a failed assimilation to the linguistic field of reality in the process of the subject's primary historization [accession to the symbolic order], their containment or dissolution in both cases can be seen to involve a 'secondary historization', a modification of the subject's synchronic symbolic network with the assistance of an analyst. In contrast to the Jungian conception, the symptom cannot be integrated into the self regardless of the prevailing symbolic structures but requires the modification of the structure of the linguistic field within which the symptom exerts its effectiveness. The aim of the 'secondary historization' of the subject in the analytic exchange is an integration of the element that sticks out into a **modified** symbolic network.

In another 'therapeutic' exchange with Sinclair, Demian subtly employs the distancing, mediating dimension of language. Referring to fertility cults in Greek culture, he weaves a symbolic texture which promises to contain the traumatic nature of sexuality.

Du hast jetzt zum Beispiel seit einem Jahr etwa einen Trieb in dir, der ist stärker als alle anderen, und er gilt für 'verboten'. Die Griechen and viele anderen Völker haben im Gegenteil diesen Trieb zu einer Gottheit gemacht und ihn in grossen Festen verehrt.

(D.85)

A final point: some critics have noted that many of the topics discussed by Sinclair and Demian considerably exceed the intellectual grasp of young schoolboys. Viewed from a Lacanian perspective, Demian emerges not so much as a linear recasting of Sinclair's biography aspiring at 'verisimilitude', but rather a biography which is seen through the refraction of the subject's present symbolic network. To the extent that it reflects psychoanalytic discourse, the narrative is set in the narrator's present, its timeframe is determined by the narrator's 'working through' of his synchronous symbolic field in which past events do not figure in terms of their objective reality but in terms of their value as present signifying traces. We might say that it is precisely Demian's inclusion in the narrative as an embodiment/allusion to the narrator's Other, which prevents the text from being a linear, realistic biography of a young schoolboy. This corresponds closely to Lacan's conceptualisation of the 'psychoanalytic time'. The subject's history manifests itself only in terms of present subjective truth, its only real dimension, not in terms of any actual-physical past which is no longer effective, nor the past of an 'epic history'.

Diese Grenze ist in der Tat jeden Augenblick in dem gegenwärtig, was die Geschichte als Erreichtes besitzt. Sie repräsentiert das Vergangene in seiner realen Form, d.h. weder die physische Vergangenheit, deren Existenz ausser Kraft gesetzt ist, noch die epische Vergangenheit, wie sie sich im Werk des Gedächtnisses

vervollkommenet hat, sondern die Vergangenheit , die sich in der Wiederholung als umgekehrt manifestiert.⁷²

II. Divergence between the Lacanian and Jungian psychoanalytical models and the deconstruction of ideology

We cannot avoid the difficult issue of the significant divergence of the Lacanian model of psychoanalysis which serves as our paradigm for interpretation from the universe of Jungian notions in which the novel is submerged. Important implications for our strategy of analysis inhere in this divergence.

Our analysis can be aided by distinguishing two different levels in the novel. On the one hand, there is the 'structural skeleton' of the narrative in which we consider the relation between the figures and the nature of subjectivity in largely functional terms conducive to a **direct** interpretation by the Lacanian model. On the other hand we have the concrete manifestation of ideological ideas and influences in the narrative which requires a more **indirect** approach to analysis.

The preceding section is a good example of structural level. That section utilised elements of the Lacanian theory on the modalities of psychoanalytic discourse that can be generalised. For instance, the Lacanian notion of the relational-discursive framework in which the analysand takes his analyst as the subject 'supposed to know', i.e. to know the true meaning of the symptom may be taken as a Lacanian concept that is non-specific to a

Lacanian analytical setting but is rather applicable to any analytic set-up. According to Žižek,

The subject of psychoanalysis is the modern subject of science, which means - amongst other things - that his symptoms are by definition never 'innocent', they are always addressed to the analyst qua subject supposed to know (their meaning) and thus as it were imply, point towards their interpretation. For that reason, one is quite justified in saying that we have symptoms which are Jungian, Kleinian, Lacanian etc.⁷³

At this level, we do not examine the meaning of concepts and ideas expressed in the narrative but relate Lacanian notions such as the 'sujet supposé savoir', the unconscious as the discourse of the Other, the subject receiving back his own message from the Other in its true, inverted form, to *structural* features we identify in the narrative.

However, we have to disentangle the basic relational framework characterising analytic discourse and subjectivity from the 'ideological' subtext with which we are confronted in Hesse's novel. In Johannes Cremerius' article on Hesse's super-ego development we find a collection of passages from Hesse's letters which succinctly elucidate the gap that separates the pragmatic, functional purpose of psychoanalysis ('Gewinn von Entscheidungsfreiheit') from Hesse's attempt at its ideological stylisation.

So assoziiert er Psychoanalyse mit höheren Bedeutungen: "Und so will und kann auch die heutige Psychoanalyse ...im Grunde kaum ein anderes Ziel haben als die Schaffung des Raumes in uns, in dem wir Gottes Stimme hören können." Und "... das Böse bis zum Ende erleiden." Und "... Mir wurde zum Weg der Heilung und Entwicklung die Psychoanalyse, welche wir nicht als eine

Heilmethode ansehen , sondern als wesentliches Element der 'neuen Lehre', der Entwicklung eines neuen Stadiums der Menschheit, in dem wir stehen."⁷⁴

This conceptualisation of psychoanalysis evidently diverges significantly from our Lacanian model. Here we use the Lacanian approach more indirectly in its facility to designate the parameters in the construction of 'ideological space' (i.e. that of the Jungian universe). Hesse's notion of psychoanalysis as serving a deeper spiritual purpose and ushering in a new stage in the development of mankind can be seen in this light. Like the Jungian archetype of the self, this notion deviates from neutral-functional, 'libido based' analysis and thus designates a move into 'ideological space'. Hesse's conceptualization of the function of psychoanalysis as creating the space which allows us to 'hear the voice of God inside us' reminds us of active symbolic identification with a contingent master signifier totalizing ideological space which is misperceived on the level of the subject performing this act (through a retroactive erasing of the traces of the contingent symbolic process) as an imposed mandate, an address by the Other. What we find here is the non-critical view of the subject caught within ideological space experiencing an appeal by the big Other (here God) addressing him. Hesse's phrase 'deeper spiritual meaning' accurately defines this gap between a Lacanian pragmatic, functional, non-ideological view of psychoanalysis and the ideological construction of its purpose , its integration into a symbolic universe.

In conclusion, we may expect the figure of Demian in the novel to crystallize as an anchor of symbolic identification which fuses elements of the Lacanian psychoanalytic 'subject supposed to know' with elements of a 'spiritual' appeal by the Other. The potential for such an ambiguity or progression derives from the fact that both aspects refer as to the Other, the discursive network of the symbolic order outside of which there can be no reality. Thus they emerge as two distinct modes of the same frame of reference which we distinguish in order to analyse fruitfully different layers of meaning in the novel.

VI. Beatrice

In his attempt to devise a structural map of the text of Demian, Ziolkowski argues the text can be divided roughly into three main groups of chapters that correspond to Sinclair's age and the site of the action. According to Ziolkowski the first group comprises chapters 1-3 encompassing Sinclair's early youth in his home town. The next section of three chapters (4-6) is set in the town of St. where Sinclair lives in a boarding home to attend high school (Gymnasium). Chapters 5-6 of this section revolve around Sinclair's preoccupation with the figure of Pistorius and are fundamentally anchored in the mythical notion of the non-dualistic deity Abraxas. The final group of chapters cast against the sinister background of the impending war focuses on Sinclair's encounter with Demian's mother 'Eva' and the elitist circle of intellectuals and artists surrounding her which anticipates the community of glassbead players in Das Glasperlenspiel or the realm of the Immortals in Der Steppenwolf. In terms of our psychoanalytical perspective, chapter 4 entitled 'Beatrice' describes a new developmental stage in Sinclair's life but simultaneously displays significant continuity with the first group of chapters as we can discern the re-emergence of some of the key motifs we identified there (i.e. the 'stain', the gaze). Sinclair here at first descends into a maelstrom of orgiastic enjoyment and debauchery - a degradation which is followed by a subsequent purification through his Apollonian cult of the figure of Beatrice. Eventually the significance of Beatrice's image recedes into the background as Sinclair discovers his 'essential

self' in the wake of his execution of an abstract watercolour portrait of his muse.

It is useful to cast these developments in ch.4 in the context of Ziolkowski's classification of the text since this allows us to establish a pattern of recurring structures in the novel, which will be valuable for the analysis of subsequent chapters as well. An initial focus on Jungian readings with an attendant evaluation of their shortcomings is again the best avenue to a Lacanian approach for then a specifically Lacanian reading will have the potential to 'subsume' and complement the Jungian analysis, thus enriching our understanding of sub-conscious processes at work. In terms of a Jungian understanding the Beatrice chapter follows a rather straightforward, schematic and predictable trajectory which corresponds closely to the textbook progression of a Jungian psychoanalytic session. Sinclair's initial debasement is once more aligned with the Jungian concept of the 'shadow', the dark and inferior aspect of one's personality. The confrontation with and 'working through' of the shadow as an initial step in self-awareness then progresses to a manifestation of the archetypal anima evident in Sinclair's Beatrice cult. However, the eventual withdrawal of the anima from external reality facilitates the emergence of internal relatedness and totality that is the Jungian 'self'. (i.e. Weaver). Our evaluation of this chapter shall replace this static Jungian triad shadow-anima-self with the Lacanian schema of the subject involving the registers real-imaginary-symbolic. In this endeavour, however we shall never lose sight of the complex

interrelation of these three orders which are configured to dynamically interlock, as in a Borromean knot, to compose the subject.

The Beatrice chapter lends itself to an examination of structure of the libidinal economy (i.e. the organisation of drives) which finds a corollary in the Lacanian registers. I suggest that Sinclair's development in this chapter can be seen to progress from another traumatic incursion of the real as he descends to a 'degenerate' lifestyle threatening a disintegration of self towards a 'fetishistic' focalisation of drives in an 'Apollonian' image which serves a stabilising function. This narcissistic-aesthetic crystallization of sexual energies (in terms of the Lacanian imaginary) is emblematised in Sinclair's Romantic worship of the fantasy image Beatrice. Both stages are transcended towards the end of the chapter where we can discern a clear rupture. Sinclair's assumption of his 'fate' signals an implicit disavowal of an aesthetic sense of self and a move towards a radical mode of symbolic identification typical of the 'non-pathological', substanceless subject. This uncompromising mode of identification provokes the question 'Che vuoi?' in any 'bourgeois' observer still captivated in the 'pathological'-aesthetic stage according to Lacan and Žižek. We shall illustrate the extent to which this radicalised mode of identification corresponds to Hesse's beliefs and ideological influences at the time (Jung, Nietzsche, Hesse's Pietist heritage) and the psychoanalytical situation on which the novel is modelled.

The next three sections designate respectively one of the three key Lacanian registers (real, imaginary, symbolic) according to progression of psychological development in the chapter. While we argue that the appropriate Lacanian label specifies the main focus in each segment, this analysis reveals that at every stage the three orders remain in a dynamic interrelation.

I - The Real

Let us analyse the Beatrice chapter in more detail. Sinclair arrives in St. as he leaves his home-town in order to attend high school. Initially he is considered an outsider in his new school, but this situation is dramatically reversed as he befriends Alfons Beck, a sordid rogue figure who introduces Sinclair to a wider group of students hell-bent on a drunken, debased style of life and immersed in coarse, boastful talks about sexual exploits. The narrative vividly portrays Sinclair's descent into this vortex of degradation, which designates a clear departure from the sheltered security in his parents' home and is thus seen to indicate the beginning of a new developmental stage. Sinclair affects a new style of arrogant, cynical posturing inspired by this clique of rogues. His drunken nights passed in run-down bars are occasionally depicted as exciting/adventurous and even as entailing an element of progress and novel insight but the narrative mostly conveys a sense of an unredeemed decline into depravity. There are even semi-religious undercurrents which convey a sense of damnation. Sinclair begins to lose his foothold in reality and the crisis escalates. He is forced to confront the spectre of his father called in by the school's director. This

encounter is rendered allegorically as a confrontation between bourgeois socio-symbolic reality and its 'pathetic residue/out-cast'. In a similar vein, Sinclair's dramatic decline is also rendered palpable during a visit home for Christmas. His descent into a dark vortex of drives is very effectively contrasted with the healthy-bourgeois backdrop, the idealised 'world of light' and righteous decency in his family.

We are of course already familiar with the Jungian reading of the Beck episode as another exemplification of a confrontation of Sinclair with his 'shadow' self in the same vein as the earlier Kromer episode. But what further light may a Lacanian reading cast on this section in the text ? We might argue that Beck, just like Kromer, functions to represent a traumatic 'stain' in a secure, social world constituted and regulated by the symbolic law. As we saw earlier, the consistency of the frame of reality depends on the homeostasis of a moderate pleasure principle (the imaginary) in which 'real' enjoyment or *jouissance* represents a forbidden traumatic kernel which persists outside the law. Since *jouissance* is 'forbidden to the one who speaks as such' the pleasure that anyone subjected to the symbolic order of social reality may find is strictly equivalent to the delusionary imaginary appearance of meaning within that order - that is to say it is an alienated pleasure intrinsic ultimately only to the symbolic order itself to which real *jouissance* had to be sacrificed. Viewed in these negative terms the subject to the symbolic order is finally a purely structural, dead subject. Thus the narrator consistently evokes a 'warm glow' of the bourgeois order in idealising, Romantic hues as a light in which its loyal

participants may bask - and yet this is precisely the alienated, sublimated pleasure, the enjoyment of the Other which is designed to keep 'real' enjoyment at bay.

This idealisation is encapsulated in the following sequence of adjectives '*wunderbar, goettlich und rein*'. Yet the truth of this realm is a fundamental lack of substance. In contrast to Sinclair's excessive, forbidden exploits its reality is that of a hollow shell shrouded in a lifeless pallor. Sinclair's enjoyment is of a different order. Precisely insofar as he persists in his pursuit of pleasure to the point where it is no longer 'pleasurable' - i.e. to the point where the narcissistic-imaginary appearance of meaning which provides the glue to the social order is eroded by his relentless, compulsive moves beyond the pleasure principle and beyond the boundaries of the prevailing codes of good [i.e. acceptable, moderately enjoyable] social conduct, his pleasure becomes traumatic. He is thus tainted with an 'excessive sprout' of surplus enjoyment:

Ich weiss wirklich nicht, ob das Saufen und Renommieren mir eigentlich jemals Vergnügen machte, auch gewöhnte ich mich an das Trinken niemals so, dass ich nicht jedesmal peinliche Folgen gespürt hätte. Es war alles wie ein Zwang.
(D.100)

Sinclair is plunged into an orgy of self-loathing, and a sense of degradation and decay takes hold of him, which seems tantamount to his banishment from the mainstream social order or at the very least the immediate threat of such an ejection. It is significant to stress that Sinclair's debauchery is cast as a debasement not merely in relation to the idealised world of his parents but also

in relation to his previous intellectual and spiritual bond with Demian which was beginning to establish itself as the anchor of a new ideological-symbolic construction of the self [a 'secondary historization'] replacing Sinclair's traditional cultural and family ties.

Thus in contrast to his pathetic current state, both previous poles of his symbolic identification - Demian and parents - are styled in mournful tones as realms from which his actions have banished him, a paradise lost. The bourgeois world

..gehörte mir nicht mehr, stiess mich aus, sah mit Ekel auf mich....(D.97)

It is hardly necessary to point out the evident parallels between this situation and the previous Kromer episode. Sinclair now enacts Kromer's role himself: tainted with the stain of surplus enjoyment he is identified with the element which the symbolic order, the social community must disavow or banish in order to gain its consistency.

So sah ich aus, ein Auswurf, ein Schweinigel, betrunken und beschmutzt.

This designates Sinclair as a disgusting Thing lacking support either in narcissistic or symbolic identification. Here layers of representation once again seem under threat from a dissolution into the '*anamorphic topology of the real*'.⁷⁵

II - The Imaginary

This de-construction of imaginary unity and de-stabilisation of value is reversed as Sinclair embarks on a new stage in his adolescent development. The town is in the throes of autumn decay as Sinclair takes a walk through a municipal park in a

beautifully poeticised, melancholic mood but suddenly he notices a young woman. Her radiant beauty immediately entrances him and continues to captivate him long after the chance encounter. Sinclair then embarks on a quasi-religious cult of the image of the girl which transforms his degradation and Dionysian excess into a worship of Apollonian form and beauty. The narrative leaves no doubt that Sinclair worships a Romantic, ethereal image which is completely detached from the real person who never even enters the frame of the narrative space as an actual speaking subject: despite his captivation Sinclair never approaches her. In his romantic fantasy this figure merges with that of a girl he recalls from an English pre-Raphaelite painting portraying a graceful figure with a sublime narrow face who radiates an ethereal beauty. It is on account of that painting that he baptises his fantasy image Beatrice.

This evident detachment of an idealised image from any concrete social relation facilitated the alignment of Beatrice with the archetype of the anima by critics of a Jungian orientation. (i.e. Weaver, Ziolkowski). Jung conceptualised the anima as the imprint of a 'feminine essence' in the male unconscious, which assumes phenomenal existence or 'personified form' when it enters the subjective stage in dreams, visions and fantasies. As a result, concrete persons may become transient carriers for the projection of this omnipresent, timeless entity:

Every mother and beloved is forced to become the carrier and embodiment of this omnipresent and ageless image which corresponds to the deepest reality in man.⁷⁶

Jung saw the anima implicated in the genealogy of psychopathology. He considered the attachment of this archetypal

image to empirical others as the potential source of 'disastrous entanglements' such as obsessive love or failed marriages.

We have delineated the role of imaginary, transferential illusion in the ideological construction of the Jungian edifice in detail above, but I would argue that this particular Jungian archetype can be associated with the Lacanian register of the imaginary and of imaginary fantasy more immediately. In Seminar II, Lacan aligns the Jungian archetypes with the register of narcissism and thus acknowledges that Jung has come very close to identifying a genuine element in the psychic structure. However, he sharply criticises Jung's failure to apprehend the crucial subordination of this 'typical' image -i.e. his own imaginary register - to a symbolic discourse and also strictly denies that these 'archetypes' designate any substantial self:

Es gibt im grundlegenden Symbolismus eine Beugung hin zum Bild, hin zu etwas, das der Welt ähnelt und die Vorstellung vermittelt, es gebe da etwas Archetypisches. Man braucht übrigens nicht arche zu sagen, es ist ganz einfach typisch. Aber es ist wohl gewiss, dass es sich ganz und gar nicht um dieses substanzialisierte Etwas handelt, dass die Jungsche Theorie uns unter dem Namen des Archetypus liefert. Diese Archetypen selbst sind immer symbolisiert, einbezogen in das, was Sie den gewöhnlichen Diskurs genannt haben, Fragmente dieses Diskurses.⁷⁷

Lacan suggests that the discursive construction of images makes them appear arche-typal. A good example of the symbolic determination of imaginary fragments that impinges on our discussion of the anima can be found in Lacan's essay Das Drängen des Buchstaben im Unbewussten (1957).⁷⁸ This paper contains the famous diagram of two identical toilet doors with the differential pair of signifiers 'Males', 'Females' inscribed

above them. The diagram illustrates the mechanisms of the precipitation of the signifier into the signified in a way which according to Lacan 'abolishes the nominalism debate with a low blow'.⁷⁹ Thus the meaning of the image, its signified, does not inhere in any pre-existing substance [both doors are identical] but depends on the external determination by the agency of the signifier, the law of sexual segregation which regulates society. In terms of his archetype of the anima, Jung fails to comprehend this complex relation between an *imago* and its associated conceptual content - femininity, sexual allure etc.

In a Lacanian conception, a perfectly contingent object can become an object of desire if it enters the subjective space structured by the Lacanian imaginary fantasy ($\$ \leftrightarrow a$). In the Beatrice chapter, the actual mysterious woman in the park is of course this contingent object which becomes relevant only because she enters the frame of the fantasy, because she assumes a position in Sinclair's symbolic fantasy space. While this mechanism may suggest a surface homology with the external projection of the Jungian archetype of the anima there is a crucial difference which relates to Jung's naive conception of reality. For Jung, both the anima and the fabric of external reality are 'real' or 'substantial', but the projection of the anima onto a carrier, like mother or beloved, introduces a distortion into reality. For Lacan, by contrast, reality is a fiction created by the Other, the symbolic order as incomplete, articulated around a hole. The purpose of the narcissistic fantasy is precisely to conceal the lack of any inherent,

essential substance in the fabric of social reality, to paper over a gap in being, and thus its primary function is to deny symbolic castration.

Žižek's term '*fantasy projection in the real*' perhaps comes closest to expressing the deceptive nature of the fantasy as an imaginary veil, a reflective 'two-dimensional' narcissistic surface, which disguises the traumatic void of the Thing at the core of the symbolic order and yet derives its fascinating presence precisely from the underlying truth it strives to hide: the trauma of real-impossible *jouissance*. For Lacan, the fetish is a fantasy object par excellence as it does not so much disguise the absence of a lost object but rather strives to deny that the maternal phallus (i.e. the traumatic Thing) never really existed. The imaginary fetish is situated in the interstices of the impossible real and reality structured by the symbolic order, it functions as an intermediary filling in the gap between them. As such it is a monument designating a relation of the incommensurable, an irreducible split between the symbolic reality of the subject and the vertiginous absence of the Thing as 'the absence of an absence' [Lupton] towards which all the movements of the subject of the signifier are ultimately oriented. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the subject himself who 'hallucinates' a narcissistic identity with the fantasy object, the fetish appears to re-create the sense of an originary unity and wholeness.

This theoretic framework allows us to delineate more clearly the logic of the progression from Sinclair's degradation in a

maelstrom of debauchery towards his narcissistic worship of imaginary form. Instead of the timeless archetype of the anima, we focus on the notion of the fetish object as subordinate to symbolic determination. Sinclair's compulsive debauchery and excess, his delivery to the 'death drive', opens up an abyss of self-loathing and disgust. Approaching the void of the real too closely, he is confronted with a libidinal excess which corrodes the deceptive appearance of an imaginary unity underlying social reality and entails the genuine threat of a subjective destitution or fragmentation of self. However subsequent to this decline, he adopts a compensating mode of subjective identification which focuses heavily on the shimmering surface of the fantasy object. Into the vacuum which has opened up beneath him he projects a stabilising fetish image that emits the reassuring glow of an alabaster statue. He erects a shrine on which to revere a Romantic *imago* of the feminine in which his self is narcissistically focused:

Plötzlich hatte ich wieder ein Bild vor mir stehen, ein hohes und verehrtes Bild - ach und kein Bedürfnis, kein Drang war so tief und heftig in mir, wie der Wunsch nach Ehrfurcht und Anbetung.
(D.105)

Thus Beatrice allows him to reconstitute himself as a stable subject and this stability derives from the fragile and deceptive support the fantasy object lends to a symbolic self. This implies that the fantasy of an imaginary unity which provides the glue to the bourgeois world, a fantasy that is thoroughly decomposed for Sinclair as he descends into the darkness of drives, re-emerges after it has undergone a meta-

morphosis. Its new incarnation is Sinclair's Beatrice cult. This view is consistent with assertions in the narrative that align the righteous realm of Sinclair's parents with the worship of Beatrice because both are expressions of the Apollonian 'world of light'. These two realms are differentiated in the narrative only by one crucial factor. The Beatrice cult is associated with the dignity of a personal choice which is distinct from the submission to a conventional social norm:

**Wieder versuchte ich mit innigstem Bemühen aus Trümmern einer zusammengebrochenen Lebensperiode mir eine 'lichte Welt' zu bauen. [...]
Immerhin war diese jetzige 'lichte Welt' einigermaßen meine eigene Schöpfung.
(D.106)**

The close kinship between Sinclair's attitude towards the world of bourgeois righteousness and his Beatrice cult is reflected also in a homologous language of mournful, poetic idealisation. The narrative's rendering of the Beatrice episode is suffused with a pseudo-religious rhetoric of reverence, worship and awe which mirrors the narrator's stance towards the bourgeoisie. The following passage from Lupton poignantly summarises the two key factors which we have been trying to elucidate in relation to the Beatrice episode. By means of the fetish, which entails a disavowal of symbolic castration and by extension also of death, the 'vacant' subject of the signifier gains the illusion of substantial being. Yet because of the proximity of the fantasy projection to the traumatic void of the *Thing*, emblematised by the Freudian motif of the Kasten, a figure for a paradoxical container 'whose contents are its

discontents', the fetishistic phantom image contains elements of the uncanny and is related to the death drive:

The fetishist 'reveres his fetish' - suggesting mournful idealization - but also finds it uncanny, indicating the kinship between femininity and the death drive. These lines are situated in a dense network of motifs in Freud's writing that tie the scandal of maternal flesh to the invention of castration and the disavowal of death, motifs emblemized above all in the Freudian motif of motifs, the Kasten.⁸⁰

In conclusion we may phrase Sinclair's progression from the Beck episode to his obsessive preoccupation with a stable image of the feminine in terms of the subject's libidinal economy. The eruption of traumatic energies of the real is contained through narcissistic channelling and focalisation which manifests itself in the subject's libidinally motivated wish to worship an image. The identification with an Apollonian ideal thus replaces traumatic enjoyment (*jouissance*) by restituting the kind of controlled, measured enjoyment which also fundamentally characterises the idealised righteousness of the Christian realm of Sinclair's parents. There is one passage in the narrative, which almost explicitly designates Sinclair's aesthetic sublimation and purification as a narcissistic organisation of drives:

**Den Lebensanteil, den ich den finsternen Mächten entzog, brachte ich den lichten zum Opfer dar, nicht Lust war mein Ziel, sondern Reinheit, nicht Glück, sondern Schönheit, Geistigkeit.
(D.106)**

Beatrice as a figure for the alienating imaginary Gestalt that characterises mirror stage identification crystallises from the dispersed reservoir of energies composing the chaotic, primordial real. In terms of libidinal economy, the dichotomy between Dionysian and Apollonian elements which is manifested here is closely

paralleled by the Lacanian orders of the real and imaginary. Boothby's Death and Desire contains a section examining the structure of the unconscious organisation of drives in Nietzsche's Geburt der Tragödie where he succeeds cogently in aligning Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian with the Lacanian real while Nietzsche's notion of the Apollonian emerges as closely related to the aesthetic register of the Lacanian imaginary.⁸¹

III - The Symbolic

Sinclair's Romantic '*Schwärmerei*' and adoration of Beatrice eventually motivate him to paint her portrait. In executing a watercolour painting subsequent to various preliminary studies he decides to eschew a realistic approach in favour of a technique of creative experimentation giving free reign to dreamlike intuition. The image of Beatrice here only serves as an initial focus or anchor and swiftly gives way to a more abstract or impressionist style. This technique bears testimony to the structure of Jungian analysis which stresses the value of dynamic and spontaneous artistic productivity designed to facilitate a confrontation with, or a bringing into awareness of submerged unconscious material. Weaver refers to this type of Jungian technique as '*active imagination*', a hypnotic, dreamlike state characterised by an '*abaissement du niveau mental*', in which the ego nonetheless retains a modicum of control organising the flood of images produced by the unconscious.⁸² Correspondingly, Sinclair notes that the production of the sketches and the portrait which

is protracted over days occurs in a period also marked by intense, creative dreams. Subsequent to this creative ex-stasis and encounter with the maelstrom of the unconscious, Sinclair contemplates the finished painting attempting to make sense of it. This section in the narrative is rendered in a lyrical mode that seemingly aspires to provide a vivid narrative equivalent to the evocative, personal nature of Sinclair's painting. The attentive reader will note a striking, almost uncanny resemblance between Sinclair's impression of the painting and an earlier impression of Demian:

**Als ich vor dem fertigen Bild sass, machte es einen seltsamen Eindruck. Es schien mir eine Art Götterbild oder heiliger Maske zu sein, halb männlich, halb weiblich, ohne Alter, ebenso willensstark wie träumerisch, ebenso starr wie heimlich lebendig.
(D.109)**

Yet Sinclair himself fails to discern the resemblance at that point. However, waking one morning from a stream of absorbing dreams, he is struck with the sudden insight that he has in fact produced a painting that evokes Demian rather than Beatrice, that Beatrice has somehow faded into Demian. He refers to an abstract-impressionistic resemblance of the portrait to Demian rather than a strict realistic correspondence.

Let us first sketch the outlines of a typically Jungian reading of the emergence of Demian in the portrait. Rix Weaver suggests that the Beatrice chapter signals an 'intensification of Sinclair's search'. Sinclair, no longer bound by the conventional

moral codes he has inherited from his background, embarks on a search of '*his own moral judgement*'.⁸³ Thus according to Weaver:

He is seeking the self and in order to find the self, the anima leads.⁸⁴

This relates to the classical Jungian understanding of the role of the anima in the analytical process. The anima which enters the stage of phenomenal experience in dreams or visions is bound to emerge in the stream of creative activity employed in analysis. Acknowledged as a projection from the subject's unconscious, as lacking substance in external reality, it can then be 'withdrawn' to facilitate the emergence of the integrated inner 'self' - the paradoxical union of opposites. This sublime state is conjured in Sinclair's description of the portrait as a holy mask or God image representing a cosmic transcendence of the division between male and female.

As elaborated, Lacan does not accept the Jungian notion of a stereotype of feminine essence ('*La femme n'existe pas*') within the male subject nor any essential self detached from the subject's symbolic representations yet Weaver herself provides us with an important clue. Her notion of Sinclair's background with its structure of norms and traditions calls to mind the Lacanian Other, the symbolic register which grounds any society and its transmission of cultural traditions through the generations in a law of exchange. Lacan conceives this cultural dimension to be effectively constituted by 'subjects' mutually 'exchanging lack' in their socio-linguistic discourse.

While Demian presents us with a fundamental conflict between the alienating demands of culture and Sinclair's own moral judgement, between subordination to the 'false' authority of society and the 'genuine' authority of his self, a Lacanian analysis must strive to discern, beneath the surface of this ideological anamorphosis, an irreducible **Other** as Sinclair's de-centred cause. Seen in that light, the Beatrice chapter appears to be predicated on the anticipation of a radical shift from Sinclair's preoccupation with prevailing bourgeois norms towards the 'quilting' of an alternative universe of meaning which revolves not only around the master signifier of Demian/'self' but also the equivalent concept of the Gnostic God Abraxas encompassing both the diabolic and divine. But how can we grasp the principle of a transition to a different mode of symbolisation?

According to Lacan, symbolisation itself is an essential factor in the humanisation of man (*'Der Mensch spricht, ...aber er tut es, weil das Symbol ihn zum Menschen gemacht hat'*).⁸⁵ As we saw in our section on Jung, however, the lack of any necessary connection between the symbolic and the real makes symbolisation radically contingent. Alternative, competing approaches to symbolising the same 'mute reality of the real'⁸⁶ are conceivable. And yet in terms of the subject's self-experience the effect of a transition to a new symbolic identity is momentous. The signifier is indispensable in the forging of any subjective ontology which makes truth and being dialectically dependent on meaning and signification. Any changes in the relation between man and signifier thus strike at the core of man's ontology, his 'Being'.

Referring to the role of Erasmus of Rotterdam in the reformation, Lacan states:

..eben wenn man, so wenig es auch sei, an der Verbindung rührt, die der Mensch mit dem Signifikanten unterhält - hier die Umwandlung der exegetischen Verfahrensweisen - ändert man den Lauf seiner Geschichte, modifiziert man die Vertäuung seines Seins.⁸⁷

On this basis we can dispense with the essentialist notion of archetypes that has dominated the criticism of Demian and argue that Sinclair's journey of self-discovery can be interpreted 'structurally', in terms of the dialectics of his constitution in the Other - the source of much of the dramatic tension in the novel. Let us focus briefly on a passage in one of Hesse's letters which was written in 1930 well beyond the composition of the novel but explicitly relates the structure of Hesse's own symbolic identity to Demian. By subsequently juxtaposing this with key elements in the Beatrice/Demian portrait we will be in a position to identify its relation to symbolic identification and the gaze of the Other.

Rejecting the prevailing conformist political and religious ideologies of the state and the church, Hesse outlines his own, seemingly individualistic 'faith':

Wenn Sinclair Kraft oder Glauben hat, so kommt Demian zu ihm, er zieht ihn mit seiner Kraft zu sich. Der Glaube, den ich meine, ist nicht leicht in Worte zu bringen. Man könnte ihn so ausdrücken: Ich glaube, dass trotz des offensichtlichen Unsinnns das Leben dennoch einen Sinn hat. Ich ergebe mich darein, diesen letzten Sinn mit dem Verstand nicht erfassen zu können, bin aber bereit, ihm zu dienen, auch wenn ich mich dabei opfern muss. Die Stimme dieses Sinnes höre ich in mir selbst, in den Augenblicken, wo ich wirklich ganz lebendig und wach bin. Was in diesen Augenblicken das Leben von mir verlangt, will ich versuchen zu verwirklichen, auch wenn es gegen die üblichen Moden und Gesetze geht.⁸⁸

A reader familiar with Hesse's biography might discern in this proclamation 'trace elements' of some of the key influences on the author: the Pietist belief of his parents, the Jungian self as an 'ethical' injunction to self-realisation, to a lesser extent perhaps Nietzsche and Eastern philosophy. However, the creed formulated here carefully and in the vaguest possible terms aims at the espousal of a stark individualism and appears remote from any of these models.

But as we shall see, in this very abstraction and deliberate dissociation from system and dogma, Hesse effectively discloses all the more clearly the parameters of the signifying process by means of which the subject constitutes itself in the Other and at the same time mis-perceives itself as interpellated: through an identification with a 'phallic' master signifier, a signifier without intrinsic meaning. As Lacan notes in Das Drängen des Buchstaben im Unbewussten (1957), positive signification, the generation of the spark of meaning is a precipitate of senseless metaphoric substitutions so that meaning emerges precisely at the intersection of sense and non-sense, a structure that is evident in jokes as well as the psychopathology of everyday life.⁸⁹ Thus the dimension of subjectivity implies constant oscillation between lack and surplus meaning. Žižek refers to the subject of the signifier as a 'zero which is counted as one'.⁹⁰ This is transparent in Hesse's statement which substitutes the one, the tautological master signifier, for the zero, the blatant non-sense of life. In asserting that the ultimate source of meaning is inaccessible to rationality (*'Ich ergebe mich darein, diesen*

letzten Sinn mit dem Verstand nicht erfassen zu können'), Hesse alludes to an opaque point within the structure of reason and meaning where reason collapses and yet he identifies this very point with the source of his sense of subjective identity. This opaque point can of course be related to the gaze which the subject imagines in the field of the Other and which serves as an anchor to his symbolic identity. In his self-experience, which is an experience of interpellation ('*Die Stimme dieses Sinns höre ich in mir selbst*'), Hesse becomes a subject insofar as he fully identifies with this mandate of the Other, insofar as he assumes the destiny that has been imposed on him.

Having laid this groundwork, we are in a position to revert to our discussion of the Beatrice/Demian portrait. Following Sinclair's recognition of Demian in the painting, his assessment of the painting undergoes a further degree of abstraction. One evening in early summer he attaches the painting to the window of his room and contemplates it from some distance. At this point, he perceives a hallucinatory dissolution of clearly delimited features, an anamorphic distortion:

**Das Gesicht verschwamm ohne Umrisse, aber die rötlich umrandeten Augen, die Helligkeit auf der Stirn und der heftig rote Mund glühten tief und wild aus der Fläche.
(D.110)**

Thus Sinclair no longer identifies the painting with Demian or Beatrice, but with himself. It does not so much represent a physical resemblance but rather '*his inner self, his fate, his daemon*':

So würde mein Freund aussehen, wenn ich je wieder einen fände. So würde meine Geliebte aussehen, wenn ich je eine bekäme. So würde mein Leben und mein Tod sein, dies war der Klang und Rhythmus meines Schicksals.

(D.111)

Since this is an oblique reference to the Jungian self, we can resort once more to the dynamics underlying its construction. A 'rigid designator' in the Kripkean sense, a signifier without signified, totalises the Jungian edifice, retroactively 'secreting' a traumatic surplus or remainder that cannot be assimilated to this symbolic construction. An application of this 'structuralist' understanding to the Beatrice portrait decomposes the monad of the Jungian self into two separate entities: on the one hand, the inert presence of the eerie-luminous face as an element in excess of meaning, a surplus object of the real 'secreted' by a field of representation, and on the other the abstract, *structural* notion of Sinclair's 'destiny' as a paradigmatic example of subjective identification with a gaze in the Other. The impression of '*Klang and Rhythmus meines Schicksals*' which the painting conveys all of a sudden is incommensurable with what could be seen before, it appears to emanate from nowhere and shakes Sinclair at the core of his being. Hesse's recourse to musical metaphors poignantly illustrates the progression from aesthetic form to a linguistic domain which is beyond visual representation. It is because of the sudden emergence of this notion of destiny that the sequence of events which compose Sinclair's life, such as love, friendship and eventually death, suddenly acquires contours. Reference to 'Schicksal' interweaves these contingent events, 'quilts' the

life process into a totality, a coherent, meaningful phenomenon. Once this signifying operation has transformed fate into destiny, everything appears to 'make sense', to be imbued with meaning. 'Schicksal' thus functions as the phallic, privileged signifier which has to come out, to except itself, for the Other to exist and to inaugurate the dimension of subjectivity. Insofar as this anchor for Sinclair's symbolic identification is a self-reflexive index of representation, a pure abstraction without any foundation in the real, we can discern the same oscillation between lack and surplus meaning that underlay Hesse's personal creed formulated in his letter.

Lacan casts the subject's relation to the Other which founds his being, and the mystery of his/her sexual identity as an implicitly articulated question : *'What am I there ?'*

.., dass für das Subjekt die Frage nach seiner Existenz gestellt wird als artikulierte Frage: 'Was bin ich da ?', die sein Geschlecht und seine Kontingenz im Sein betrifft, dass es nämlich einerseits Mann oder Frau ist, andererseits nicht sein könnte, da beide ihr Geheimnis verbinden und es in die Symbole der Zeugung und des Todes flechten.⁹¹

Demian as a cipher for Sinclair's destiny crystallises as a 'conduit' to agency of the Other, as the locus 'from where' a determinate configuration of subjective identity is formed. Let us return to Seminar XI, where Lacan's discussion of Holbein's painting *'Die Gesandten'* provides us with an enlightening analogy to Sinclair's Beatrice portrait. The famous, anamorphotically distorted skull floating in the foreground may be considered as the materialisation of the master signifier dominating this painting. This 'pure' signifier signifies death/destiny and

totalises the painting's 'field of signification' by endowing the collection of beautiful objects in front of which the ambassadors proudly pose - baroque status objects epitomising wealth and knowledge - with their metaphoric surplus determination: the utter nullity of narcissistic pretensions. The skull, initially perceivable only as a meaningless stain, 'de-natures' the portrait on closer inspection, rendering it uncanny by 'opening the ground of established signification'.⁹² When a viewer's lateral glance encounters this deformed object, he is taken by surprise, his position as neutral observer contemplating the painting from a safe distance is subverted, for he encounters the abyss of an enclosed void in his visual field. From this spot, the painting itself 'returns the gaze', it is as if the viewer is linked to that element by an invisible umbilical cord. This example is instructive as it allows us a privileged insight into the way in which narcissistic fantasy objects can be deconstructed through structural identification. What emerges here are the outlines of a genuine, 'non-pathological' stance of subjective identification, an attitude which persists in the unbearable enigma of the desire of the Other. The subject who identifies fully with his symbolic mandate does not 'give way to his desire', does not disguise the void of subjectivity with narcissistic fantasy constructions. In that sense, Holbein's *The Ambassadors* embodies the Lacanian notion of the subject as, in the final analysis, not a substantial entity, but 'a name for the gaze by which we confront the utter nullity of our narcissitic pretensions'.⁹³ Symbolic identification with the absolute Other beyond empirical others implies this identification with an

external gaze which constitutes the subject as nothing more than object, either an object of economic exchange in the intersubjective network of the community or an object, a plaything in the hands of God or destiny depending on your preferred mode of symbolisation.⁹⁴

This provides us with the key to grasping the fading of the image of Beatrice and the progression to Demian and then the protruding, luminous face as rendering of Sinclair's destiny. We read Sinclair's worship of Beatrice as narcissistic fantasy projection which creates a sense of substantial, self-sufficient being by denying symbolic castration. The narcissistic fantasy represents the subject's endeavour to be both object and subject of his own gaze simultaneously in order to partially recuperate the sense of a stable and autonomous, 'self-reflective' being prior to the subjective split.⁹⁵ This is, in essence, a 'hysterical' strategy to avoid the full assumption of a symbolic mandate, to avoid one's 'destiny'. In his 'narcissistic' worship of Beatrice, his contemplation of a beautiful Apollonian image, Sinclair establishes himself in a deceptively stable, safe position, in the energetic homeostasis of a 'neutral' viewer. This position of a 'Renaissance subject' situated at the apex of a triangular visual field is undermined, however, when the symbolic identification with his 'Schicksal' deconstructs the narcissistic surface and inscribes himself into the picture as an uncanny *object*: this luminous, distorted face emerging beneath the re-assuring image of Beatrice which corresponds to Holbein's floating skull. This uncanny protuberance which Jungian critics

take as their 'numinous' starting point, is in fact a left over from this process of subjective constitution and it objectifies the 'pure void' of subjectivity. That which is inherently invisible is here made visible by an anamorphic distortion which inscribes the impossible gaze of the Other onto an element within constituted symbolic reality. We have already encountered this topology of subjectivity in relation to Kromer where it could be figured in terms of the continuum of a Moebius strip: if we proceed sufficiently long along the side representing symbolic reality we encounter on its reverse the void of the real which had to be extracted.

The sparrow-hawk in Sinclair's nightmare

To further elucidate the difference of our conception from a Jungian perspective, let us consider the concluding passages in the Beatrice chapter which illustrate how an element cast as the sublime guarantee of representation (the luminous face serving as a support to Sinclair's fate) can suddenly change into its opposite - horrifying negative excess. Not long after his preoccupation with the Beatrice/Demian portrait, Sinclair whose desire for Demian has been rekindled as a result of his introversion and artistic self-expression, has a brief encounter with his friend during a visit to his hometown. At this meeting Sinclair maintains a complacent, cynical facade while Demian does not entirely disguise his disappointment with Sinclair's waste of potential in the taverns. The atmosphere is rather antagonistic but the narrative does not dwell for too long on their exchange. However, the encounter triggers a resonance in Sinclair's

unconscious. The following night he has a significant dream in which Demian along with the recurring motif of the heraldic bird make an appearance:

In der Nacht träumte ich von Demian und dem Wappen. Es verwandelte sich beständig, Demian hielt es in den Händen, oft war es klein und grau, oft mächtig gross und vielfarbig, aber er erklärte mir, dass es doch immer ein und dasselbe sei, zuletzt aber nötigte er mich, das Wappen zu essen. Als ich es geschluckt hatte, spürte ich mit ungeheurem Erschrecken, dass der verschlungene Wappenvogel in mir lebendig sei, mich ausfülle und von innen zu verzehren beginne. Voller Todesangst fuhr ich auf und erwachte.

(D.116)

The dream resonates with the two dreams from Hesse's dream diary which we discussed in the introduction. The sparrow hawk is an echo of the eagle which is trying to emerge from its frame, but the horrifying animation of the bird inside Sinclair's stomach also evokes Hesse's traumatic, nauseous discovery of Demian's decaying wound. In Sinclair's dream, the 'magical' position of Demian is, of course, crucial. Demian as the conduit to the Other, as the supposed subject of knowledge vis-à-vis Sinclair, tells Sinclair that all the birds in the dream, whatever their variations in shape or colour are ultimately always the same. While we have, on the one hand, this constant metamorphosis which produces an endless flux of novel forms, Demian's 'knowledge' transforms this orgiastic stream into a symbolic universe, he captures the procession of objects in a net of meaning so that a metaphoric surplus determination becomes attached to each bird. This 'signifying operation' produces the uncanny sense that there is an unattainable X, something in the object 'more than the object'. According to Žižek:

That surplus in the object which stays the same in all possible worlds is something in it 'more than itself', that is to say the Lacanian objet petit a:....⁹⁶

Sinclair swallows the heraldic bird which, mysteriously animated, begins to devour him from within materialising a nauseous protuberance of the real, an incestuous, mortal enjoyment. In swallowing the bird he came too close to the *Thing*, he approached the traumatic abyss of the real on the reverse side of symbolic reality, which must be kept at a distance, too closely. This is why he awakes. [*'Voller Todesangst fuhr ich auf und erwachte'*] Lacan observed that dreamers frequently wake up when such traumatic incursions occur precisely because they want to avoid an encounter with the real and to continue the dream, the fiction, of their symbolic identity. In other words, they awake so that they can continue dreaming. The traumatic impact of such nightmares resides after all in the horror of a revelation of the subject's 'truth' outside his symbolic support. This climax in Sinclair's dream corresponds closely to Freud's discovery of the gorge at the back of Irma's throat in his dream of *Irma's injection*, this veritable '*Medusa's head*' embodying the '*anxiety provoking object par excellence*' insofar as it persists outside any possible form of mediation. According to Lacan, the fact that Freud continued dreaming at this point can be attributed to his toughness. We recall the structure of Freud's dream: after the first climax of an encounter with the real it reaches a second culmination as the full notation of the chemical formula of Trimethylamin suddenly appears to Freud. This strange formula with its fractal structure of repeated 'tri-furcations' hinting

at the magical number three has an oracular density reminiscent of the biblical 'Mene, Tekel, Upharsin'. Lacan argues that this formula functions as a pure symbol and encapsulates Freud's *solution* to his dream, the fact that dreams 'signify symbolically'.

The progression from a real climax to a symbolic one is reflected in Demian, for subsequent to Sinclair being 'devoured' within this abyss in the real in his dream vision, the narrative emphasises his attempts to contain the traumatic impact of this encounter, to reconstitute himself as symbolic subject 'from' the locus of the Other. He paints the image of a sparrow hawk partially protruding from an egg. On closer inspection this strikes him as reminiscent of the heraldic bird encountered in the dream. However, in striking contrast to the libidinal excess that characterised the dream, his painting activity is situated in a thoroughly discursive context, for it is implicitly addressed to Demian as his 'analyst', as the supposed subject of knowledge. Motivated by a spontaneous intuition, Sinclair encloses the painting in an envelope and sends it to Demian's former address uncertain if it will reach him. Žižek uses the example of a 'Flaschenpost' (message in a bottle) to illustrate that the true addressee of a message is not the empirical other but rather the symbolic order '*which receives it the moment the letter is put into circulation*', the moment the sender is delivered of responsibility for the message.⁹⁷ In a similar vein, Sinclair does not look for a response from Demian as an empirical person, but rather tries to 'subject' his dream-image painting to

signification by the Other, i.e. the locus of the signifier determining his symbolic identity or fate. Demian's response reaches Sinclair mysteriously. In a break between classes in school he finds a small note in one of his books containing this oracular message:

Der Vogel kämpft sich aus dem Ei. Das Ei ist die Welt. Wer geboren werden will muss eine Welt zerstören. Der Vogel fliegt zu Gott. Der Gott heisst Abraxas.

(D.119-120)

We might say that, as Sinclair encounters Demian's mysterious note in one of his books he receives back his own message from the Other in its 'true, inverted form.' According to Lacan, the subject is '*shaken in its very being*' by the shadow that is cast back on it from the Other in response to its own articulated message. The circular trajectory of Sinclair's letter and Demian's response, this circulation of objects of exchange between subjects establishes Sinclair in the dimension of 'symbolic lack'. In sharp contrast to the horrifying, inert presence of the abyss of the real in which he had been swallowed up, this circuit installs Sinclair as subject. However, at this point we have to revert to our distinction between the 'neutral' structural framework of analytic discourse in Demian and its ideological content. Their exchange is not 'neutral' insofar as it is not functionally oriented towards a cure within an established social context but aims at philosophical innovation. Demian's message provides the master signifier (Abraxas) for the quilting of a new 'ideological' field which is distinct from bourgeois discourse. The Sphinxian message that reaches Sinclair at the very beginning of the fifth chapter can be interpreted as

the first Law, as the pure signifier residing in the Other which facilitates the integration of a unified semantic field:

Der erste Spruch dekretiert, gibt Gesetze, aphorisiert, ist Orakel, er verleiht dem realen anderen seine obskure Autorität.⁹⁸

In terms of its position in the topography in the novel, this 'oracle' can be cross-referenced with Der Traktat vom Steppenwolf associated with the Immortals in Hesse's Der Steppenwolf. The Tract also holds a privileged position in the topology of Der Steppenwolf as the pivot around which the rest of the narrative is structured and it represents a new 'metaphysical' mode of identification subversive of bourgeois discourse. The way it mysteriously reaches Haller - outside of ordinary cause-effect relations - emblematises, as we shall see, the encounter with gaze of the Other. It is the incongruous, luminous 'Leuchtreklame' on an ancient wall in an old quarter of town personally 'addressing' or interpellating Haller which anticipates both the Tract and the Magic Theatre.

Conclusion

David G. Richards criticises Dehorn's view of 'Demian' as an Oedipal fantasy with Demian '*supposedly representing the father and the Apollonian principle of form*'. By contrast, Richards advances a classically Jungian reading:

As Sinclair's daimon, fate and goal, Demian is the inner voice guiding Sinclair along the path from the guilt and despair of the fallen child to the third kingdom of the unitary consciousness.⁹⁹

A Lacanian view advances a reading which progresses from both perspectives. Demian is to be seen not as a representation of the real father, but rather of the dead father, the symbolic paternal metaphor of the name-of-the-father (the pure signifier). To illustrate this, let me refer to a dream of one of Freud's clients which features a dead father re-appearing in a dream as a ghost. In this dream, the father is not aware that he is dead (*'He did not know that he was dead'*) and the son himself knows that the very existence of his father depends on his keeping the horrible information a secret. The father thus resides in a sublime state *'between two deaths'*, real and symbolic. He only keeps living because the information of his death has not reached him yet. If the existence of the father hangs in such a precarious balance, Lacan wonders, what about the subjective constitution of the son himself on whom the father's survival depends. Taking the existential state of the son as his paradigm, Lacan is led to the pessimistic conclusion that *'a true survival is abolished by a knowledge of itself'* and that in symbolic discourse it *'is death that sustains existence'*.¹⁰⁰

This little parable encapsulates the essence of Sinclair's relation to Demian as the embodiment of both the Other (the 'dead' symbolic father founding him as subject) and the sublime/horrible *Thing* residing in a state *'between two deaths'*.

VII. Pathological and Radical Evil

I propose that the best way to make sense of the 'quilting' of the symbolic field beginning with chapter five under the sign of the paradoxical deity Abraxas is via Lacan's distinction between radical and pathological evil. This distinction can be seen to emerge as ancillary to Lacan's juxtaposition of the ethics of Kant and de Sade in Kant mit Sade¹⁰¹ which surprisingly aligns the formal structure of the Sadean libertine's ferocious will-to-*jouissance* with Kant's categorical imperative, i.e. the law of the good. Lacan further elaborates on this apparently paradoxical outcome in Seminar VII where he investigates the psychoanalytic contours of the ethical will. Analysing Antigone's radical ethical stance, her unwavering persistence in demanding the burial of the corpse of her outlawed brother Polynices despite the fact that such an action is placed under the penalty of death, Lacan derives a definition of the ethical subject as

the subject who does not give way on his/her desire¹⁰²

This universal formula pertains to the form, not the content of the ethical will and so does not concern itself with whether the motivations of the subject are good or evil. The ethical subject in that perspective is then simply the subject who in the face of any conceivable obstacle will not compromise his/her desire but unequivocally follow the precepts of a categorical ethical will. It is in the context of these Lacanian reflections that 'pathological evil' may be classified as a pathological deviation from

the law by a subject still fundamentally anchored in a 'morality of the good' of which the supreme manifestation is perhaps the Kantian categorical imperative. Unlike radical evil, this form of pathological deviation only bears testimony to confusion or moral weakness in the subject, to a 'pathological stain', but is definitely not to be seen as the symptom of a general renunciation of the moral law.

The fact that this 'pathological' subject essentially remains grounded in an ethics of the good is betrayed, on the level of the subject's self-experience, by signs of a profound agony and self-torment, a tendency to repent etc. which can be observed in the wake of the perpetration of any evil actions that oppose the moral law. We might summarise this by stating that any devious actions perpetrated emerge as 'pathological stains' within the field of the moral law. By contrast to this 'pathological evil' which is defined by its dialectical dependence on a morality of the good, the Lacanian category of 'radical evil' possesses an autonomous ontology. It conforms closely to the 'empty', formal structure of Kant's categorical imperative even while '*dialogically opposing itself*' to the moral law. But how precisely can we define this structure?

Kant's 'categorical' imperative requires the subject to assume an ethical will which is abstract and universal: the dimension of ethical law emerges as soon as an imperative imposes itself as non-negotiable, as soon as it is to be pursued regardless of any blandishments in the realm of constituted, phenomenal reality

such as 'pleasure' or 'beauty'. Since the essence of Kant's law of the good thus rests in its formal nature, its very abstraction from phenomenally apprehensible reality, it conforms strictly to the Lacanian mode of symbolic identification. The subject acceding to the symbolic order must assume the external imposition of a senseless, tautological and categorical 'No': the primordial metaphor of the name-of-the-father. This accession is co-extensive with a separation from the pleasure of narcissistic union with the mother.

We can further expand on this proximity between the Kantian ethical imperative and Lacan's register of symbolic identification apropos of Lacan's enlightening comparison between a modern, Kantian ethics and that of classical Greek philosophy. Lacan finds that any attempt to derive the outlines of an ethical will by positing an identity of the good and the beautiful - or ethics and aesthetics - is ultimately doomed to failure. This utopian project characterises much of Plato's philosophical system. Yet the articulation of a conflict between law and pleasure, between moral injunctions and unconscious, narcissistic drives, lies at the very heart of notions of inexorably split subjectivity that define modern psychoanalysis. From this modern vantage point any idealistic conception of ethics as a pursuit of the beautiful elevated to the level of law will inevitably entail internal contradictions and cannot be successful in formulating a **consistent** ethical will. If this conceptualisation was put into practice, it would yield a subject constantly at the mercy of a flux of conflicting drives and motivations the pursuit of some of

which would be intrinsically opposed to any coherent conception of the Good. Thus, from a modern Kantian and Lacanian perspective, an individual captivated in the loop of narcissistic self-gratification would effectively fail to attain the status of subjectivity since 'subject' corresponds strictly to what remains after all substance has been taken away. The formation of a coherent ethical will depends in its very essence on an 'empty', formal-structural gesture and is incompatible with the implicitly substantive notion of a pursuit of the beautiful.

However, given this thoroughly structural nature of any genuinely ethical will, de Sade's ferocious will-to-*jouissance* does amount to a manifestation of a Kantian 'Universal Will'. Sade's libertine is defined by his presumption to a 'right' entitling him to enjoy others absolutely while simultaneously acknowledging the other's absolute right to enjoy him/her. Formally, nothing prevents the transposition of the ethical will of one individual Sadean libertine to the level of a coherent social law governing an entire hypothetical society. Such a society would be regulated by a structural system from which genuine *jouissance* would paradoxically have been evacuated. Any self in this hypothetical society could be conceived to be 'subjectified' by the assumption of his/her status as an object of exchange in a structural network. It is precisely this superimposition of a symbolic law of exchange on a purely biological substratum, on nature 'given to the law of mating', that constitutes the foundational feature of culture. Furthermore, there is no trace of a 'pathological' deviation in

this form of Sadean evil which perfectly meets the formal-structural Kantian standards for 'ethical' behaviour. [Lacan, Kant mit Sade] On the contrary, in the stance of the Sadean libertine we encounter 'radical evil' as the establishment of a quasi-moral will in its own right which, while '*dialogically opposing itself*' to the Law of the Good on which an ideal bourgeois society may be based designates a mode of symbolic identification in terms of its formal structure:

Refusal to pursue repentance acquires the status of a non-pathological, quasi-moral reproach of God, of the Universal Good.¹⁰³

There has been some discussion amongst Lacanian critics whether, in aligning Kant with Sade, Lacan aimed at unveiling a concealed sadistic superego agency lurking beneath the Kantian imperative or whether his intent was, on the contrary, to 'purify' the Sadean imperative. While a close reading of Lacanian texts will yield evidence for both cases, on balance Lacan's emphasis on *jouissance* sacrificed to an ethical system, to the enjoyment of the Other in Sade, seems to indicate that a purification of a Sadean ethics is indeed at stake here.¹⁰⁴

We can further elucidate these issues by referring to Žižek's discussion of Schelling's conceptualisation of evil as the '*perverted unity of Existence and Ground*'.¹⁰⁵ In Schelling both Good and Evil designate a unity of Existence and Ground, of spirit on the one hand and nature's vortex of instincts and drives on the other. However with regard to Evil this unity is

inverted or 'perverted'. As long as we conceive the vortex of drives, of generation and corruption in nature on the one hand, and of realm of the spirit on the other as self-enclosed, separate entities which do not unite in a particular focal point (i.e. man) a conflict need not necessarily arise. It is not the juxtaposition of a 'disembodied' spirit to a dark, spiritually 'unenlightened' vortex of natural drives that is at the core of the problematic of evil in the Schellingian universe.

Rather, the potential for Evil arises because in man, Existence and Ground, spirit and nature are combined. This unity implies that Ground, a neutral quantity of pure being in its pre-spiritual state, may be 'self-illuminated', raised to the level of spirit or logos thereby acquiring the status of a will which 'has found itself', a ferocious will which wills nothing but itself as will:

This is the true perversion of Evil: in it 'normal' animal egotism is 'spiritualised', it expresses itself in the medium of the Word - we are no longer dealing with an obscure drive but with a Will which finally, 'found itself'.¹⁰⁶

In explicating Schelling's Weltalter, Žižek goes on to argue that by means of the unity of Ground and Existence which occurs only in man, their difference is finally explicated or posited as such. By contrast, in nature per se, self-recognition of Existence has not yet been attained - the 'Light of Existence' in nature prior to the emergence of man remains implicit. But because man experiences in himself the unity of spirit and nature, he is capable to posit their difference. He is aware of

*'being split between the obscure vortex of natural drives and the spiritual bliss of logos.'*¹⁰⁷ As a result, Evil as Ground, self-illuminated and raised to the level of logos may find itself in the 'centre' of man's psychic organisation usurping Reason or Light's 'natural' position in that place. Both Good and Evil thus crystallise only in man as the singular point of unity of Existence and Ground, but Evil represents a perverted unity of Existence and Ground in Schelling, or a perturbed tautology where *'centre is no longer centre'*.

Žižek successfully relates these notions in Schelling to the Lacanian dichotomy of the Real and the Symbolic. His key thesis here is that evil can occur only within the context of a symbolic universe, its possibility is opened up by a minimal distance separating the self-referential register of the symbolic from the real elements inscribed or re-duplicated in that register. In the Lacanian system we are confronted with the potential for a disjunction between the paternal metaphor of the name-of-the-father and the actual, empirical person occupying its place. This disjunction implies that someone who is not the natural father may nonetheless occupy the function of the paternal metaphor, i.e. the pivot or centre on which the symbolic universe is hinged. Thus in Schellingian terms we may no longer find Reason/Light - the *'natural centre'* of the structure - in the actual centre but encounter in its stead the self-illuminated Ground. As Žižek asserts in succinct summary of these dynamics:

For that precise reason, evil can occur only within the symbolic universe: it designates the gap between a real entity and its symbolic reduplicatio, so that it can best be defined as a perturbed tautology - in Evil, 'father is no longer Father' or 'Centre is no longer centre'.¹⁰⁸

How can these reflections be integrated into our discussion of Demian? Our analysis so far served to illustrate how Sinclair's 'shadows', Kromer and Beck, represented 'stains' of surplus enjoyment within the field of bourgeois moral law in which Sinclair remained fundamentally anchored. The intriguing notion of the Dionysian, dark, other world excluded from this Apollonian realm of light, i.e. from the bourgeois social reality with its emphasis on decency and beauty, corresponds precisely to Schelling's concept of a vortex of irrational drives, of an obscure Ground. When Sinclair's confrontation with his 'shadows' symbolising this excluded realm catalysed an orgy of self-torment he was haunted by the constant fear of a collapse of his sheltered existence in a bourgeois world. These factors also led to a 'reaction formation', i.e. to the countervailing tendency to engage in an exaggerated idealisation of the virtues of the realm of light, exemplified by his frequent designation of the bourgeois realm as 'hold'. Moreover, Sinclair's indulgence in his 'inferior, darker side' was accompanied by an acknowledgement of his own moral weakness and the temptation to resolve the crisis by means of penance and confession to his parents. The broad picture that emerges from all these factors taken together clearly suggests that Sinclair's deviations constituted 'pathological stains' within moral law, that the nature of his

'evil' at that stage of his personal development was thoroughly 'pathological' rather than 'radical'.

Despite Sinclair's overall anchoring within a staunchly conventional background, on the discursive level of the narrative his inspirational discussions with Demian gradually begin to introduce an increasing sense of ambiguity into this monolithic block of bourgeois discourse. Thus Demian concedes that the patriarchal, biblical God at the heart of bourgeois moral law may well represent positive and rational values such as light, spirit, beauty and the good. But he also notes the manifest existence of phenomena which represent the radically other in relation to this scheme: suffering, hatred, murder, war and plagues etc.

Thus he chastises the scope defining bourgeois values as too narrow and deplores the ensuing arbitrary, dualistic division of the world. Behind the surface of the warm, marmoreal glow of the bourgeois social universe lies a tendency to castigate 'perfectly natural', vital instincts as taboo and to assign the vortex of obscure drives a place far removed from the centre of societal and religious organisation. Unlike Sinclair himself, who openly or implicitly acquiesces to the ingrained bourgeois-Christian designation of the repressed Other as dark or inferior, Demian advocates the radically subversive notion of a need for revering the world as a whole, as an integrated unity.

Aber die Welt besteht auch aus Anderem und das wird nun alles dem Teufel zugeschrieben, und dieser ganze Teil der Welt, diese ganze Hälfte, wird unterschlagen und totgeschwiegen. Gerade wie sie Gott als Vater alles Lebens rühmen, aber das ganze

**Geschlechtsleben, auf dem das Leben doch beruht, einfach
totschweigen, und womöglich für Teufelszeug und sündlich
erklären!'**

(D.82-83)

Demian concludes his monologue by emphasising the necessity of re-encompassing this 'natural' part of the world which has been artificially severed from its official representation and suggests that this could be achieved by worshipping a Devil alongside God or alternatively finding a God who incorporates the attributes of the Devil within himself. We note that the basic 'semiotic parameters' in Demian's monologue (God, the Devil, instinctual drives and so on) remain exactly the same for both the bourgeois world and the proposed alternative ontology. What is at stake is therefore essentially a re-centring of the representational system by means of a re-organisation of already existing parameters. It is significant to note that the notion of Abraxas as a key symbol in the novel is carefully anticipated here, as well as in other early passages of the novel, but never explicitly mentioned. This is not to be seen as a minor detail or a mere coincidence, but lies at the core of Hesse's narrative strategies and the principles of the generation of meaning in the novel. As we will see, this meaningful elision which heightens the impact of the eventual introduction of this 'pure' signifier emerges as a crucial element in Hesse's masterly orchestration of the narrative.

In conclusion, we are confronted with a highly complex narrative structure with Sinclair initially fundamentally anchored within the realm of bourgeois law illuminated by reason and light and Demian introducing a range of new ideas dialogically opposing

this moral law. The co-existence of a multiplicity of diverse semiotic strands in the 'pre-Abraxas' section of the narrative is of course responsible for much of its dramatic tension. It also gives rise to a sense of freedom or openness, a lack of resolution, and therefore entails the explosive potential for the genuine leap in personal development which we witness in chapter five: in Lacanian terms, the narrative structure in earlier sections of the novel, in which all of Sinclair's 'deviations' essentially constitute 'pathological evil', conveys the impression of a floating, dispersed, non-totalised network of signifiers, an amalgam of opposed meanings and loyalties, clamouring for an 'ideological' integration in the One. The outcome of this integration, the project of the 'second part' of the novel, can be conceived as the transition from 'pathological' to 'radical' evil, that is to say the raising of nature to the level of logos in such a way that nature is posited as such, self-illuminated and placed in the very centre of the system.

Abraxas: The Ideological Quilt

The final four chapters in the novel (4 - 8) convey a dark, sinister, at times rather menacing atmosphere. How does Hesse achieve this effect? In chapter five as we saw, Abraxas is effectively introduced for the first time in Demian's enigmatic, oracular reply to Sinclair's letter which functions as the founding enunciation of the new field. This concept is then further elaborated by Sinclair's teacher of religion, Dr. Follen, and in particular by Sinclair's new guru or 'sage' Pistorius. Pistorius,

a middle-aged organist specialising in the metaphysical compositions of Bach and Buxtehude is a lapsed theology student still devoted to pursuing religious and mythological studies. He is generally acknowledged to be an oblique reference to Hesse's own analyst, the scholarly Jungian Dr. Lang who had been absorbed in the studies of the Gnosis and of Eastern philosophies. In his psychoanalytic relation to Sinclair in the narrative, Pistorius occupies a position analogous to, though not identical with Demian as a conduit to the Other, a 'subject supposed to know'.

In the same session in which Sinclair mysteriously receives Demian's Sphinxian riddle, the teacher introduces Abraxas as a focal point of pagan, mystical circles in antiquity, a deity unifying good and evil. Naturally, Sinclair harkens back to the earlier conversation with Demian originally anticipating this notion. He is delighted with a spontaneous sense of insight and recognition:

**... und nun war also Abraxas der Gott, der sowohl Gott wie Teufel war.
(D.122)**

This is one of a number of passages in the text which is revealing of the mechanism by which the initially floating, dispersed semiotic space characterising the first part of the novel is finally folded back, 'quilted' by adding a signifier with a privileged position in the system, a nodal point or 'knot' of meaning to which all other signifiers refer. This master signifier providing the spark of metaphoric creation is perfectly empty in itself, a *'chasm of non-sense gaping in the midst of*

meaning'.¹⁰⁹ The material signifier in itself is the only new element introduced here. And yet, the spontaneous, 'ex-nihilo' emergence of a new master signifier folding existing meanings into itself changes the centre of gravity of the entire field of signification so that all of a sudden everything appears to attain its genuine, natural, signification. As a result of this transferential illusion we suddenly find ourselves 'within' a new semantic universe and this cannot but appear mysterious and uncanny. Previous to Dr. Follen's articulation of the 'magical' signifier, Sinclair had been immersed in his own meandering stream of thoughts. But as soon as the teacher conjures Abraxas he is jilted into an almost visceral state of presence and heightened awareness.

In analysing this new symbolic field we have to consider two separate issues. Not only do we have to demonstrate now that Abraxas constitutes the master signifier at the centre of a semantic field but also that the consequent mode of subjective identification which anchors Sinclair's being can genuinely be categorised as founded in Law. Let us first consider the way in which Abraxas as a non-dualistic divinity is portrayed by Sinclair's new friend Pistorius. Emphasising the emancipating aspects of a belief in Abraxas, Pistorius asserts that any ideas or fantasies, however gruesome or macabre, are legitimate once their true source in Abraxas is recognised. In a statement recalling Demian's interpretation of the biblical Cain story, Pistorius even goes so far as to suggest that the actual murder of an enemy could be justified. He quickly adds that this would

usually be a superfluous mistake. The brooding, meditative contemplation of the '*mystery of sacrifice*' over a glass of red wine would be more enlightened. This construction of a psychic organisation placing Abraxas in the centre is poignantly encapsulated in the following statement:

Wenn ihnen wieder einmal etwas recht tolles und sündhaftes einfällt, Sinclair, wenn Sie jemanden umbringen wollen oder irgendeine gigantische Unflätigkeit begehen möchten, dann denken Sie einen Augenblick daran, dass es Abraxas ist, der so in Ihnen phantasiert.

(D.147)

Such statements install Abraxas as the 'guarantor of meaning' and thereby create a surplus in the real conveying the impression of a dark, sublime, fascinating aura attached to this deity. Abraxas becomes the sublime object of ideology.

Sinclair pays frequent visits to Pistorius' flat which, furnished with an immense stock of books on a wide range of topics, is depicted as the ethereal sphere of a learned scholar. In this sanctuary amidst a shallow, war obsessed society he not only greatly expands his horizon with regard to profound philosophical questions but also learns the art of self-immersion and meditation. Frequently Sinclair and Pistorius interrupt their dialogues to quietly stare into the flames of Pistorius' fireplace. Sinclair's subdued contemplation of the fire and the discovery of an intricate network of fine, glowing lines on the burning coals as well as the dance of curling flames brings about a hypnotic state, a heightened awareness of his self in which the

boundaries between his self and nature appear to tremble and to gradually dissolve:

... wir lernen die Stimmung kennen, in der wir nicht wissen, ob die Bilder von unserer Netzhaut und äusseren Eindrücken stammen oder aus unserem Inneren..... Vielmehr ist es diesselbe unteilbare Gottheit, die in uns und der Natur tätig ist und wenn die äussere Welt unterginge so wäre einer von uns fähig sie wieder aufzubauen, denn Berg, Strom, Baum und Blatt, Wurzel und Blüte, alles Gebildete in der Natur, liegt in uns vorgebildet, stammt aus der Seele, deren Wesen Ewigkeit ist.

(D.137)

The central idea in this passage is of course the ultimate identity of eternal nature with the essence of the human soul. Earlier, both Kromer and Demian were cast as 'stains', respectively horrifying and sublime, 'sticking out' from constituted, bourgeois reality. What we witness here is the transposition of eternal nature as an element which could previously only be represented indirectly as the very point of traumatic collapse of representation -recall the spectre of the abyss of eternity evoked by Demian's frozen, death mask face- to the very centre of the spiritual self. This central signifier is glossed in the statement above as the 'indivisible divinity' active both within us and nature, a reference to the diabolic deity Abraxas. In terms of a Lacanian/Schellingian category of evil, the fact that the driving force of the cosmos and the spiritual 'centre' of man now coincide testifies to the way that the unity of Existence and Ground in man is transformed by means of a signifying operation. The unity of Existence and Ground which always characterises man, is 'perverted', with the self-illuminated Ground now residing at the core of the spiritual self

instead of the 'spiritual bliss' of reason and light. What used to be an obscure, disavowed vortex of drives has finally become a will which 'found itself'. Sinclair's new sense of self is encapsulated in the statement

**So haben wir in uns alles was je in Menschenseelen gelebt hat,
alle Götter, alle Teufel...**
(D.138)

From the perspective of a Jungian interpretation of the narrative, the point is that the virtual, a priori existing potentiality of an archetypal realm in which all of man's possibilities are prefigured can only be realised if it is confronted by the subject and integrated into consciousness in the painful spiritual journey of 'individuation'. Yet this mode of signification is profoundly ideological precisely because there is a minimal difference between a real entity and its inscription in the symbolic network. Thus the symbolic construct of the identity of nature with divine-diabolic spirit and pre-symbolic nature itself as the inaccessible *Thing-in-itself* are by no means the same. In any subjective configuration the symbolic is always superimposed over nature so that the apparent discovery of a 'true self' amounts to a teleological illusion, to the transference illusion by which the subject of symbolic identification appears to become, at any stage, what he has 'always already' been, even though this apparently intrinsic state never existed in objective reality. Evil can exist only in a symbolic universe. Yet as a result of this 'ideological anamorphosis' (Žižek) pure ideology appears in the guise of its opposite as anti-ideology. A certain danger, not least a politi-

cal one, inheres in presenting essentially semiotic strands as natural ones. A passage in the text which has frequently been attacked for its misanthropic content can be used to elucidate the ideological gesture which is genuinely at stake here. Contemplating a stream of pedestrians on the street below from a window, Pistorius asserts:

Sie werden doch nicht alle Zweibeiner, die da auf der Strasse laufen, für Menschen halten. Nun in jedem von ihnen sind die Möglichkeiten zum Menschen da, aber erst indem er sie ahnt oder bewusst macht gehören die Möglichkeiten ihm.
(D.139)

Sinclair and Pistorius (and by extension Jung himself because of his symbolic status) create the outlines of a symbolic field to which an individual accedes as a *subject* only if he actively identifies with its master signifier. This scheme naturally leads to the emergence of an inside and outside of the field (just as in the case of bourgeois discourse), so that people who for whatever reason fail to conform to that mode of representation, are defined as non-subjects, as not quite human. Thus, where previously certain elements were excluded from bourgeois discourse, this new discursive field as a self-sufficient ideological entity, creates its own zone of exclusion. It is perhaps hardly surprising that numerous critics regard such sections in Hesse's text as proto-fascist (i.e. v. Seckendorff)¹¹⁰. I think that, given Hesse's humanism and his documented commitment to pacifist ideas which originated during the period of the First World War such claims are deeply misleading. Seckendorff, in making mean-spirited and rhetorically highly charged accusations of a proto-fascist ideology in Hesse

also stands isolated with respect to a generally more balanced view in Hesse criticism. A good defence against these accusations can be found in Richard's book on Hesse's Der Steppenwolf. In his view, there is a common 'vertical' influence of Romanticism on both Hesse and fascism which, on the surface may suggest a connection. Yet in substance there is little evidence of any direct, 'horizontal link'.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, our Lacanian approach may serve to heighten our sensitivity to the underlying 'ideological' nature, the appearance of 'pure' ideology in the guise of anti-ideology in Hesse's novel.

The subject not prepared to cede his desire

Let us consider the issue raised earlier of whether it is possible to align Pistorius' Abraxas religion with the radical ethical will of a subject not prepared to 'cede' his desire. Does the narrative present us with a genuine ethical will, a genuine law or are we condemned to the ethical cul-de-sac implicit in the ancient Greek law of the good which is based in an illusory sense of substance and contains no trace of subjective negativity? The issue is thus whether the Abraxas religion can be 'purified' in analogy to the Sadean libertine, who despite an apparent commitment to enjoyment, paradoxically follows a radical ethical stance in the same way as Antigone or the Kantian subject.

To resolve this question we need to consider the internal tension between the formal-structural and the dialogical levels within the new symbolic field. That is to say, given the sanction which Abraxas is now conceived to provide to any fantasies or

actions, however horrid or macabre, it may appear that the floodgates have been opened to ethical anarchy, that law has been reduced to the injunction 'Do as thou wilt!'. On the evidence of Pistorius' portrayal of Abraxas it might appear that we are confronted with the effective abolition of ethics, with the same implicit foundering of an ethical will which we can identify in the classical Greek identification of ethics and aesthetics. However, this is clearly not the case. The text furnishes numerous passages which convey the sense of an internal conflict between the dialogical level of the 'new thought' elaborated by Pistorius and its rigorous formal structure which imposes itself as pure negativity. Thus, Pistorius asserts:

Ich habe damit viel verloren, dass ich in Ihren Jahren meine Liebesträume vergewaltigt habe. Man darf das nicht tun. Wenn man von Abraxas weiss, darf man es nicht mehr tun. Man darf nichts fürchten und nichts für verboten halten, was die Seele in uns wünscht.

(D.146)

This is a paradoxical statement which abolishes the forbidden but at the same time imposes itself as a definitive moral injunction ('man darf nicht!'). The skeletal outlines of a radical, uncompromising ethical will thus begin to shine through clearly from below this statement which ostensibly advocates a radical, unlimited freedom. We still have to demonstrate however, that the injunction to the formation of a quasi-moral will here effectively predominates over the substantive, positive elements on the dialogical level, that is to say, that the ultimate objective is the draining of *jouissance*, its sacrifice to the Other.

At the very end of the two chapters dealing with Pistorius the text provides by far the most explicit formulation of the radical, categorical imperative of a subject persisting in the abyss or enigma of the desire of the Other. Sinclair had at that point decided to abandon Pistorius as his spiritual guide or leader. He was disappointed with, as he saw it, Pistorius' alienating devotion to the study of antiquated mythological sources and began to discern a lack of focused self-centredness and existential seriousness in his friend. Distancing himself from that 'dispersion', he concludes that the only genuine duty of spiritually awakened man lies in his own self-realisation:

Es gab keine, keine, keine Pflicht für erwachte Menschen als die eine: sich selber zu suchen, den eigenen Weg vorwärts zu tasten, einerlei wohin er führte.

(D.166)

The narrative leaves no doubt that this categorical imperative is indeed connected to the placement of self-illuminated Ground or nature into the heart of logos so that nature is transformed from a neutral entity into a will which found finally itself. This is poignantly revealed by the following statement which follows shortly after the one above:

Ich war ein Wurf der Natur, ein Wurf ins Ungewisse, vielleicht zu Neuem, vielleicht zu Nichts und diesen Wurf aus der Urtiefe auswirken zu lassen, seinen Willen in mir zu fühlen und ihn ganz zu meinem zu machen, das allein war mein Beruf. Das allein!

(D.166-167)

The above passages are all set in the context of Pistorius' 'confessions' to Sinclair concerning his own lack of ethical resolve. He admits that this weakness gives rise to fantasies

such as becoming a priest for the new Abraxas religion and says that he cannot conceive of sacrificing certain ingrained elements in his life, particularly his preoccupation with mysticism and mythology. Yet at the same time he realises:

Das ist meine Schwäche. Denn ich weiss manchmal, Sinclair, ich weiss zuzeiten, dass ich solche Wünsche nicht haben sollte, dass sie Luxus und Schwäche sind.

(D.167)

He adds that it would be more authentic as well as a sign of greater stature if he were freely at the disposal of destiny 'without any demands'. The contrast between this attitude and his former pronouncement that no wishes or fantasies are forbidden could hardly be more striking. Considering this narrative thrust, we may conclude that the foundation of an ideal ethical will laid in these two chapters does seem to be on par with that of heroic-saintly Antigone resisting all the lures provided by Kreon's moderate compromise solutions, or the ferocious will-to-*jouissance* of the Sadean libertine. Unlike these heroic characters, however, Pistorius fails to persist in the groundless abyss that **is** the subject of symbolic identification and instead fills that void of the desire of the Other with a positive answer as to what the Other wants with him. His desire to become a priest, his fondness for extensive mythological research and the mystical trappings with which he likes to surround himself represent the commitment to a moderate, 'bourgeois' ethics, an ethics tempered by narcissistic self-reflection. In that sense, his absorption in personal demands can be seen to represent 'fan-

tasy projections' into the subjective void by which he strives to conceal the phallic signifier of lack. These somewhat abstract ruminations can be further illuminated by setting Pistorius' condition in the context of Žižek's poignant distinction between the priest as a 'bureaucratic functionary of the holy' and the saint as a radical ethical subject.

The priest is a "functionary of the Holy": there is no Holy without its officials, without the bureaucratic machinery supporting it, organising its ritual, from the Atztec's official of human sacrifice to the modern sacred state or army rituals. The saint, on the contrary, occupies the place of object petit a, of pure object, of somebody undergoing radical subjective destitution. He enacts no ritual, he conjures nothing, he just persists in his inert presence.¹¹²

Since the desire of the Other can never be phenomenalised, Pistorius' 'positive answers' to the enigmatic question of the Other are inevitably 'wrong'. As a sage, as the intellectual and spiritual leader in these two chapters he is well aware of this. This is the reason why Sinclair who himself is aspiring to the radical self finally abandons him.

The Knauer episode

Within the two chapters that deal with Pistorius, Sinclair also encounters the third manifestation of his 'shadow' in the novel, a character called Knauer. A comparison of this figure with the two earlier incarnations of the Jungian 'shadow', Kromer and Beck, may yield further insights into the nature of Sinclair's 'spiritual development'.

Knauer, a fellow student in Sinclair's class, appears to have esoteric interests that attract him to Sinclair so that a tentative friendship between the two emerges. It soon becomes evident that in many respects, Knauer is very unlike Sinclair's two previous shadows. His main concern appears to be an intellectual-spiritual purification of his self, an attempt that constantly collides against the barriers of his repressed, unacknowledged sexuality which is asserting itself. He recounts entire evenings spent concentrating intently on elevated intellectual concepts and meditative exercises. But he is haunted by a constant fear that this intellectual sublimation is prone to a debasement by his instinctual urges, i.e. that his sublime geometric constructs will be 'stained' by impure thoughts and actions. His nightly struggles against his irrational drives are not always successful

Wenn ich schliesslich doch den Kampf nicht durchführen kann, wenn ich nachgebe und mich wieder unrein mache, dann bin ich schlechter als alle anderen, die überhaupt nie gekämpft haben. Das begreifst du doch? '(D.152)

Where we could unambiguously relate the two previous shadows in the narrative to Sinclair's stain of surplus enjoyment, the inevitable correlate of identification with a symbolic structure, Knauer confronts us with a somewhat more intricate problem. Surprisingly, Knauer himself rather than Sinclair now appears to incarnate the Lacanian dictum that you '*can never get rid of the stain of surplus enjoyment*'¹¹³. Nonetheless, what we said about the relation of Kromer and Beck to Sinclair can be maintained with regard to Knauer as well - he does represent a stain within

Sinclair's field of symbolic identification. The theoretical insight we have to accomplish here is that Knauer functions as a debased, inferior element vis-a-vis the symbolic structure, as a traumatic kernel the structure cannot integrate, but that this is not due to the sense of sexual obscenity that clings to this character per se, but rather because he fails to adopt the right attitude towards his sexuality. Unlike Sinclair who is now thoroughly identified with a symbolic system in which nature is self-illuminated and placed in the very centre of a representational system, Knauer fails to accomplish this step. Knauer represents the amorphous remnant or leftover of the signifying process despite his elevated intellectual pursuits precisely because in his own highly respectable system of representation, the vortex of natural drives remains an obscure Ground.

Within the representational structure of the new 'Abraxas faith', there is therefore an element that is assigned a position on the periphery, a traumatic kernel that must be excluded or disavowed. The positive consistency of any symbolic system, as we saw, is ultimately achieved negatively as the reaction formation to a traumatic kernel. We can discern here the fascinating outlines of an 'abyssal inversion' in the narrative structure whereby Knauer, a ghostly semblance of Sinclair's former self who cannot get rid of the stain of surplus enjoyment in his own system of representation, in turn represents an amorphous leftover in Sinclair's new system. Sinclair's cruel lack of empathy towards Knauer highlights the irreconcilable

incompatibility of the two systems. In relation to Sinclair's 'Abraxas faith' he is nothing but an element to be disavowed:

Ich nickte, konnte aber nichts dazu sagen. Er begann mich zu langweilen, und ich erschrak vor mir selber, dass mir seine offensichtliche Not und Verzweiflung keinen Eindruck machte. Ich empfand nur: ich kann dir nicht helfen.

(D.152)

Knauer is presented from the start as a somewhat weak character, prone to illness and insecurity but at one point he begins to lose his grasp completely exclaiming pathetically '*Alle sind wir Schweine!*'. This is perhaps a poignant summary of his status as a stain of surplus enjoyment he holds in relation to Sinclair. Yet he acquires this status not because of any excessive sexuality but merely because of his attitude towards it, because of the structural position the vortex of obscure drives holds in his symbolic universe.

The Knauer episode in the narrative is concluded when one night Sinclair graciously saves Knauer from suicide. On this occasion also an impenetrable barrier separates them, their souls do not touch. With regard to our revision of Jungian analyses of Hesse, this episode serves to underscore once more that '*you can never get rid of the stain of surplus enjoyment*'. The position of the shadows or 'stains' within the narrative is thoroughly contingent upon a self-referring representational structure and it is so in a dialectical manner. That is to say, these shadow-stains are retroactively secreted as traumatic, amorphous left-overs by the structure itself. In that sense, Knauer is another a *contrario* proof that Sinclair is now fully identified with a new, - autonomous symbolic order subject in turn to its own 'patho-

logical secretions'. This does not appear to conform to the Jungian conception of projections entering the stage of phenomenal experience that can be withdrawn from external experience and then integrated into the ethereal unity of a higher self. Such an idealistic notion presupposes the existence of a meta-language free from the stain of pathology.

VIII. The Incest Dream

A dialectical oscillation heavily influencing the structure of these last chapters is the movement between lush narcissistic fantasy constructions, i.e. the imaging of the impossible gaze witnessing the subject's own conception which is evident in Sinclair's incest dream and an austere, radical ethical identification which does not give way to desire but persists in the unbearable abyss of the desire of the Other.

A paradigmatic example of such a fantasy construction is Sinclair's incest dream which occurs shortly after Sinclair's reception of Demian's oracular message. Sinclair describes this frequently recurring dream as highly significant during his entire life.

Ich kehrte in mein Vaterhaus zurück - ueber dem Haustor leuchtete der Wappenvogel in Gelb auf blauem Grund - im Haus kam mir meine Mutter entgegen - aber als ich eintrat und sie umarmen wollte, war es nicht sie, sondern eine nie gesehene Gestalt, gross und maechtig, dem Max Demian und meinem gemaltem Blatte ähnlich, doch anders, und trotz der Mächtigkeit ganz und gar weiblich. Diese Gestalt zog mich an und nahm mich in eine tiefe, schauernde Liebesumarmung auf. Wonne und Grausen waren vermischt, die Umarmung war Gottesdienst und ebenso Verbrechen.

(D.124)

Sinclair frequently awakens from this traumatic dream with a sense of despondency and mortal sin. In analysing this dream, let us consider the standard Jungian interpretation before casting it in a Lacanian light. Essentially we find a similar progression here from an anima figure to the self which characterised the dissolution of features in the Beatrice portrait. While the female figure in the dream is described as Sinclair's personal mother, she in fact prefigures the Jungian mother archetype which

enters the stage of the narrative in the final two chapters in the guise of the Eva figure.

In Jungian theory the anima and mother archetypes are nominally separate entities but are in practice almost indistinguishable. We do not have the space here to lay out in detail the subtle divergence of these two archetypes. Suffice it to say that both archetypes constitute an important intermediate stage in the individuation process which aims at the realisation of the self. The crucial aspect here is that the confrontation with the mother archetype introduces the prospect of incest and that incest fantasies find different psychological explications in Freud and Jung. In his memoirs Memories, Dreams, Reflections, Jung recalls that he anticipated the split from Freud when he laid out his conception of a non-sexual concept of libido undergoing stages of transformation as well as his own conception of incest in Symbols of Transformation. To Jung, incest designated a personal problem only 'in the rarest of cases':

Usually incest has a highly religious aspect, for which reason the incest theme plays a decisive part in almost all cosmogenies and in numerous myths. But Freud clung to the literal interpretation of it and could not grasp the spiritual significance of incest as a symbol.¹¹⁴

To Jung these cosmogenic myths reveal an unconscious formation whereby the mother archetype and incest are related to the self. Due to this constellation the reborn emerging from this incestuous union is his own begetter so that 'a content of the unconscious ('child') has come into existence without the natural help of a human father ('consciousness'). In Symbols of Transformation Jung cites the immaculate conception in the bible

as an example: God conceives a Son who is identical to the father. He then aligns the mother archetype with the 'virgin anima' who is 'turned towards the inner sun' and avoids corruption by means of detachment from the outer world. Thus she inaugurates the archetype of transcendent wholeness, the self.

In our section on Beatrice we saw that Lacan did by no means dismiss Jung's discovery of the anima entirely. Instead he related it to his own register of the imaginary and identified Jung's failure to grasp the importance of symbolic determinations outside archetypal imagery, i.e. the preponderance of the symbolic over the imaginary. An analogous operation can be accomplished with regard to the Jungian mother archetype and conception of incest. Žižek's elaboration on fantasies of incest as revelatory of the fundamental time loop of fantasy will allow us to re-align all these conceptions which are significant for a reading of Hesse in a Lacanian framework.

The key to Žižek's conception of the fantasy of incest lies in his understanding of the symbolic order as a register which does not emerge in terms of a linear, ordered teleological path following cause-effect relations, but which arises all of a sudden, quasi ex-nihilo, because it is a self-referential structure in which all elements signify only in relation to all others. Thus the symbolic order which is not supported by the real circulates around its constitutive void attempting to 'catch its own tail'. We have already seen that the narcissistic fantasy covers this void but are now in a position to delve deeper into the precise structure of that fantasy. According to Žižek,

precisely because fantasy formations bear witness to the subject's attempt to retroactively furnish the 'missing link' in the genealogy of the symbolic order, 'the "original fantasy" is always a fantasy of the origins'.

The elementary skeleton of the fantasy scene is for the subject to be present as pure gaze before its own conception, or more precisely, at the very act of its conception. The Lacanian formula of fantasy ($\$ \langle \rangle a$) denotes such a paradoxical conjunction of the subject and the object qua this impossible gaze: the 'object' of the fantasy is not the fantasy scene itself, its content (the parental coitus, for example) but the impossible gaze witnessing it.¹¹⁵

As an example, Žižek cites a famous scene from Lynch's film 'Blue Velvet'. Isabella Rosselini and Dennis Hopper engage in a sexual game with strong sado-masochistic overtones which is secretly witnessed by Kyle McLachlan who is hidden in a closet. Rosselini is forced to assume alternately the role of Hopper's mother and daughter. The game itself here is not the 'object' of the fantasy but rather its 'subject' or topic/content while its 'object' is *'the hero himself reduced to the presence of pure gaze'* witnessing its own conception. With regard to Demian, Sinclair's sensation of mortal shame in his incest dream reflects the nauseous enjoyment induced by this reduction to the object gaze.

However, there is an affective ambivalence in Sinclair's dream which oscillates between tortured mortification and a sense of orgiastic fulfilment. Why? The subject assimilated to the object-gaze has entered the realm of the absolutely forbidden and finds himself reduced to the horror of the *Thing*. Yet at the same time, the result of this 'fantasy projection in the real' is

the retroactive construction of an origin. In consistence with this reading, Sinclair notes that the love experienced in the dream was no longer the threatening obscurity of animal drives (the real) nor sublimated devotion of beauty (narcissism), but both and more:

Liebe war nicht mehr tierisch dunkler Trieb, wie ich sie beängstigt am Anfang empfunden hatte, und sie war auch nicht mehr fromm vergeistigte Anbeterschaft, wie ich sie dem Bilde der Beatrice dargebracht, sie war beides und viel mehr, sie war Engelsbild und Satan, Mann und Weib...
(D.124-125)

Thus Sinclair's fantasy of incest progresses to the image of Abraxas. As such, it is disclosed as a 'fantasy of origins' lending support to his new symbolic self. The function of this impossible gaze witnessing the subject's conception is to ground a faith in Abraxas [or the self] in a substance: a substance of enjoyment. In this construction we have a linear, teleological progression from nature to the symbolic universe. The key point for our analysis is this: Since the subject of the signifier is the embodiment of pure negativity lacking any 'genetic support' in the real, fantasy formations ultimately tarnish the 'purity' of any formal, symbolic law, regardless of its orientation towards either Good or Evil, with an existential falsity.

Correspondingly, when Sinclair later joins the circle of the elect surrounding Frau Eva, the text stages a fundamental conflict between his indulgence in a stream of romantic fantasy scenarios tinged with incestuous undercurrents on the one hand and the need for a courageous, 'groundless', assumption of his fate on the other.

The insights we have derived from discussing the incest dream can be integrated into our discussion of Sinclair's relation to Pistorius. There are two crucial factors to be taken into account.

First, Pistorius' own fantasies, his wish to become a priest for the new Abraxas religion etc. provide positive answers as to what the Other wants from him and thus designate 'pathological stains' smearing his ethical will. In terms of their status in the psychic economy they hold a fundamentally analogous position to Sinclair's incest fantasy which is radically incompatible with genuine symbolic identification. Thus Sinclair's internal conflicts mirror those of Pistorius.

Second, there are implications for understanding the processes of the generation of meaning in the text. We have seen that for a symbolic determination of identity to work effectively, it is necessary that the process of 'capitonnage', of quilting the symbolic field, erases its own traces. When Sinclair finally abandons Pistorius because of the latter's lack of resolution, this decisive act plays a key role in the overall narrative strategy of the text. Sinclair's 'banishment' of Pistorius serves a similar function as Demian's death at the novel's conclusion. In both instances, the effect achieved is a transferential illusion which ensures that the symbolic determination of identity through the Other, through an external causal chain, is perceived as an immanent essence which has been there from the

beginning. Pistorius and Demian were the external agents who conveyed all the fundamental parameters for Sinclair's symbolic identification but when they abruptly leave the narrative stage this enhances the impression that they only encouraged him in his own path towards his independent self.

Thus close to the end of chapter six, Pistorius proclaims

**Es hat Märtyrer gegeben, die sich gern ans Kreuz schlagen liessen, aber auch sie waren keine Helden, waren nicht befreit, auch sie wollten etwas, was ihnen liebgewohnt und heimatlich war, sie hatten Vorbilder, sie hatten Ideale. Wer nur noch das Schicksal will, der hat weder Vorbilder noch Ideale mehr, nichts Liebes, nichts Tröstliches!
(D.168)**

This radical path, according to Pistorius, anybody ought to follow. Yet he himself recoils in fear from this fathomless abyss. The richness of his desires based on fantasy scenarios serves as a 'protective screen' against the unbearable anxiety provoked by this enigmatic desire of the Other. Sinclair is subject to essentially the same basic conflict throughout the narrative but he is finally less timid. It is, ironically, in sacrificing his friendship with Pistorius, in performing a radically structural, 'groundless' act which substitutes the principle of an ethical will for the pleasure of friendship, that he can be seen to approach the very model Pistorius advocates. This is another instance in the narrative where '*a letter arrives at its destination*'.¹¹⁶

Thus, Sinclair's cruel abandonment of Pistorius allows him to prove himself as a radical ethical subject. This 'enhancement' of his subjectivity has an impact on the 'psychoanalytic modalities' underlying their relation. For the largest part of the two Pistorius chapters, Pistorius as the embodiment of Dr. Lang constituted for Sinclair the psychoanalytic subject supposed to know. However, the moment Sinclair abandons Pistorius, the tables are turned, as it were, and Sinclair becomes a psychoanalytic Other to Pistorius who receives back his own message from the Other in its true inverted form:

Er hatte mich niemals so reden hören, und ich selbst empfand im selben Augenblick blitzhaft mit Scham und Schrecken, dass der Pfeil, den ich auf ihn abschoss und der ihn ins Herz traf, aus seiner eigenen Rüstkammer genommen war.

(D.161)

IX. The Earth Mother and the Outbreak of War

Chapter seven revolves around Sinclair's relation to Demian's mother, Frau Eva who emerges as the living embodiment of the fascinating dream image in the incest dream. The prose in this chapter is dense and allusive as it resonates with themes and ideas that had been laid out before but appear to blossom here. We shall examine the key narrative principles which produce the sense of spiritual commensuration in an enchanted, fabled realm.

Sinclair moves to the town of H. and embarks on a course in the history of philosophy at the local university. Dissatisfied with the irrelevant courses and the vacuous, mechanical nature of student life at a mass university he wanders around town and one day encounters Demian by mere chance. Demian introduces him to his mother Eva, a mysterious, unfathomable creature who lives in a little villa surrounded by lush gardens. This house is at the epicentre of a spiritual-intellectual elite composed of artists, searchers, Kabbalists, astrologers etc. which prefigures similar communities in Der Steppenwolf, Narziss und Goldmund, Die Morgenlandfahrt and Das Glasperlenspiel.

The best way to approach this chapter is to disentangle some its key underlying principles, that is, firstly, a gratuitous proliferation of the two central motifs in the novel that function as sublime signifiers of the self, the mark of Cain and the heraldic bird. Secondly, a division of the world into two contradictory realms (spiritual and mundane) which inversely

reflects the organization in the novel's early chapters. And thirdly, Sinclair's union with the 'earth mother' producing a sense of ecstatic fulfilment (*jouissance*) which is finally transmuted into the assumption of the destiny imposed on the subject (symbolic castration) at the very end of the chapter.

I. The abundant citation of the narrative's key motifs as Sinclair's quest culminates in a state of transfiguration is by no means a coincidence but emerges as an important element in narrative strategy. As we have seen, both the incest theme which lurks beneath the surface of Sinclair's mesmerising relation to Frau Eva and the mark of Cain/sparrow hawk motifs are linked to the object-gaze as the 'indivisible remainder', the residue of the signifying operation. The multiplicity of ciphers of the self at this stage thus accomplishes a further validation and reinforcement of the sense of a culmination of Sinclair's quest as he encounters Frau Eva. When Sinclair first encounters Demian by chance in H., Demian recognises his old friend by the mark of Cain.

**"Du kanntest mich also gleich ? " - "Natürlich, du hast dich ja verändert, aber du hast ja das Zeichen" ,....., "Wir nannten es früher das Kainszeichen, wenn du dich noch erinnern kannst. Es ist unser Zeichen. Du hast es immer gehabt, darum bin ich dein Freund geworden, aber jetzt ist es deutlicher geworden."
(D.174)**

And when he enters the villa of Frau Eva and her son for the first time, he is startled and transfigured by the discovery of his own painting of the sparrow hawk above one of the inside doors. This is a significant moment in the narrative.

Ich sah mich um und sogleich war ich mitten in meinem Traume. Oben an der dunkeln Holzwand, über einer Tür, hing unter Glas in einem schwarzen Rahmen ein wohlbekanntes Bild, mein Vogel mit dem gelben Sperberkopf, der sich aus der Weltschale schwang.
(D.180)

Sinclair's discovery of the painting causes a quasi-epiphany whereby in rapid sequence he recalls all previous encounters with the heraldic bird in the novel. For the reader, this spontaneous encounter with the image of the sparrow hawk produces an almost visceral shock of recognition, a sense of the "uncanny" in the Freudian sense - a certain object alludes to a repressed element in the unconscious and is therefore experienced as strange and alien yet uncannily familiar ('*ein wohlbekanntes Bild*'). Like the mark of Cain, the sparrow hawk is not an ordinary symbol that signifies this or that but aims at the non-definable surplus of what is '*in the subject more than the subject*', the impossible-real kernel of the subject around which all of its movements are organised and which can be conceived of only as the negative excess or sublime surplus of signification. According to Lacan, the *Thing*, lacking any objective-empirical reality, is only constituted as lost in the act of refinding it, and yet it persists as '*the residue of the subject's relation to reality*'.¹¹⁷

In terms of Sinclair's discovery of his sparrow hawk above a doorway, there is thus a short-circuit whereby we are led to experience a retroactive product of narrative signification as the visionary recovery of a lost, eternal soul. The text repeatedly intimates a spontaneous re-cognition of concealed archetypal knowledge - '*Es ist unser Zeichen. Du hast es immer ge-*

habt..' - which under the critical gaze dissolves into the objectification of a void.

From then on, the motif of the mark of Cain also recurs frequently as a descriptive device, a unifying feature of the spiritual community around mother Eva which sets it off from the surrounding mundane world. All its members are marked by this sign. An important element in generating the uncanny-sublime effect, the sensation of Thing-ness, can be traced to the mantra-like, gratuitous proliferation of this motif depriving it of meaning and placing it outside quantification. According to Lacan, although a sublime object is an object elevated to the dignity of the *Thing* this sublime character does not imply an ideal quality but

like Kant's mathematical sublime, a "multiplicity", a quantity in excess of quantification having a "completely gratuitous, proliferating and superfluous, almost absurd character."¹¹⁸

II. Another key principle in this chapter is the schematic division of the world into the inside of the spiritual community of individualists marked by the sign, and a mundane society on the outside composed of the common 'herd' following obsolete values.

Draussen war die "Wirklichkeit", draussen waren Strassen und Häuser, Menschen und Einrichtungen, Bibliotheken und Lehrsäle - hier drinnen aber war Liebe und Seele, hier lebte das Märchen und der Traum.

(D.186-187)

This constitutes a definite reversal with respect to the early organisation of the narrative when the point of view was from inside bourgeois, conventional society towards a more sinister

realm. This inversion is implicitly linked to Sinclair's maturation and development and therefore suggestive of the discovery of his authentic self. The best way to approach the distinction between these two realms is via Žižek's differentiation between subordination to an inauthentic authority alienating the subject and submission to a 'genuine' authority by which the subject achieves self-identity and fulfilment. This is precisely the feature that distinguishes Eva's spiritual enclave from a predominantly inauthentic society. The members of that enclave strive to realise themselves through subordination to a 'genuine authority' by executing the will of the 'effective kernel of nature' inside themselves:

Wir empfanden einzig als Pflicht und Schicksal, dass jeder von uns so ganz er selbst wurde, so ganz dem in ihm wirksamen Kern der Natur zu Willen lebe,... (D.189)

However, those who do not bear the sign are seen to 'flee from their true self' out of anxiety and join the herd where they are subjected to the 'false', alienating authority of state and church who propagate outdated values and represent a system that is foul and corrupt beyond reprieve, ripe for annihilation. An identical rhetoric to the one we discern in the closing chapters of Demian can be found in Hesse's pamphlet Zarathustra's Wiederkehr, an essay stylistically reminiscent of Nietzsche's Also sprach Zarathustra, in which he admonishes the disillusioned youth emerging from the catastrophe of the First World War to renounce society's obsolete value system and to live according to the dicta of their 'inner selves'. Žižek's point is that the

dichotomy between false and genuine authority is false. We are confronted with an 'ideological delusion' precisely when the subordinated subjects themselves consider their subordination as 'genuine' and 'authentic' and entailing a commensuration of their true identity. Behind this delusive front '*critical analysis should be able to discern the traces of (internalized, "naturalized") external coercion*'. In Lacanian theory, the will of the **Other** is the basis of any - ultimately contingent - form of symbolic identity formation.

In terms of Hesse's Demian we can discern a stance of 'ideological naturalisation' in the frequent references to an underlying essence, a kernel of nature. Of course, this ideological operation which naturalises an ethical will constitutes 'pure' ideology, or ideology in its zero-degree - that is, it represents the structural skeleton of ideology as an abstraction from the diversity of particular ideological conflicts and antagonisms. For this process to be effective it has to present itself in the guise of anti-ideology. A vigorous rejection of system and dogma is of course the red thread woven into both the final chapters of Demian and Zarathustra's Wiederkehr which purport to vehemently reject any form of ideology. (*'Uns schien jedes Bekenntnis, jede Heilslehre schon im voraus nutzlos'*). Žižek concocted the following phrase which poignantly encapsulates a supreme form of ideology appearing in a deceptive anti-ideological guise:

Let's leave aside our petty political and ideological struggles, it's the fate of our nation which is at stake now.¹¹⁹

If we substitute 'the fate of our self' for 'the fate of our nation' in this admonishment, we come very close to capturing Hesse's posture in Demian and Zarathustra.

In terms of the interrelation of the inauthentic society on the outside and the enclave of those who bear the sign we find a very interesting development in this chapter. While this chapter emphasises Sinclair's ecstatic fulfilment in Eva's realm, there is a simultaneous sense of ominous foreboding which derives from the perception of a society crumbling under the weight of its corruption and edging towards war. This apocalypse is anticipated in Sinclair's dialogues with Demian who portrays it as inevitable but also loaded with promise of purification.

What is at stake in this casting of the impending war which functions as an allusion to the First World War as 'purifying'? From a Lacanian perspective, apocalyptic visions hold a definite position in the psychic economy: they designate the site 'between two deaths', the traumatic site of the *Thing* which resists integration into the symbolic order. Žižek hypothesises that the apocalyptic notion of a global, universal destruction refers us to the desire of the empty, drained subject for the destruction of the signifier's network, an urge which is motivated by the lethal attraction of *das Ding*. As there is no language of the real, nature's cycles of generation and destruction are always historicised or symbolised, they exist for us only insofar as they are inscribed in the signifying network. Thus, death is usually 'intelligible' for us insofar as natural decay has been caught in the symbolic network. The prospect of a 'second death'

arises once we conceive of nature's liberation from the cycles of generation and corruption, an idea advanced in the fifth volume of de Sade's Juliette. This absolute death, according to Žižek is always the destruction of the symbolic universe, the symbolic web in which the natural cycles have always already been caught. Žižek concludes,

The Freudian 'death drive' is nothing but the exact theoretical concept for this Sadean notion of the 'second death' - the possibility of the total 'wipe-out' of historical tradition opened up by the very process of symbolization/historicization as its radical, self-destructive limit.¹²⁰

Considering the rhetoric in the final chapters in Demian it is clear that war is not seen as one horrible, catastrophic event amongst others, a particular element that signifies in relation to others within an existing signifying system, but rather as the apocalyptic, 'self-destructive limit' of the process of symbolisation. Thus the narrator's conception of war fulfils a specific function in terms of the psychological underpinnings of the text. It is far removed from any attempt at an objective analysis of the geo-political situation.

**Diese Welt wie sie ist, will sterben, sie will zugrunde gehen,
und sie wird es.
(D.177)**

Characteristically, Demian also designates the soul of Europe as a shackled animal which has lain dormant for a long time and whose 'first twitches' would not be pleasant. This is clearly suggestive of a vital real beneath the thin layer of an inauthentic morality and social organisation which will be swept

away as soon as the beast is unleashed. For the elite of the elect as Demian points out, 'humanity' is nothing definite, it does not conform to any concrete phenomena within constituted society but is only the possibility of a distant future - *'eine Zukunft ... deren Bild niemand kannte, deren Gesetze nirgend geschrieben standen.'* The impending apocalypse is thus seen as a global annihilation, as the wipe-out of traditions and culture anchored in the Other so that nature is liberated for realisation of the sublime.

The spiritual enclave around Eva is portrayed as an avant-garde, as the model on which a future utopia might be based. Demian explicitly asserts that those who bear the sign serve such a model function. Furthermore, Demian's answer to Sinclair's question as to what would happen to the elect if a war were to break out is revealing.

**"Und was wird dabei aus uns?", fragte ich. "Aus uns? Oh, vielleicht gehen wir mit zugrunde. Totschlagen kann man ja auch unsereinen. Nur dass wir damit nicht erledigt sind."
(D.177)**

We recall that the biblical Cain excluded from the symbolic community persisted in the state 'between two deaths', between his symbolic and real death, and that this excommunication elevated him to the sublime site of the Thing. It is precisely this quality that inheres in those marked by the sign, they may be slain in war but ultimately cannot be destroyed as they possess a sublime second body that resides outside the cycles of generation and destruction. It is this supposed access to a

sublime substance which forms the link between Sinclair as an individual embarked on a spiritual journey and the wider context of the impending catastrophe. By means of this 'nodal point' the two previously radically opposed realms of personal development and social life are drawn together at the very end of chapter seven.

III. However, in drawing these distinctions between Eva's sublime spiritual community and the outside world edging towards dissolution we must not overlook the inherent conflicts in Sinclair's own development. His ecstatic union with Eva in an enchanted dreamscape vibrant with intoxicating colours and images is portrayed as a commensuration but it is always seen as temporary. Eva, combining traces of Beatrice and the image in the incest dream should be understood as a fantasy construction filling in the abyss of Sinclair's radical mode of symbolic identification and thus conveying the sense of a substantial density underlying this stance. On their first meeting, her gaze is described as fulfilment, her welcome as signifying a return home. A resonant, poetic phrase in the text poignantly renders Sinclair's relation to Eva,

Ihre Stimme war tief , ich trank sie wie süssen Wein.
(D.181)

Beneath this metaphor which renders Sinclair's entrancement, we can also discern a tendency towards regression. The phrase evokes the *jouissance* of the flux of vital juices from mother to suckling in a dyadic relation undisturbed by symbolic separation.

The text abounds with allegories which evoke a dyadic union and an orgasmic flux prior to the boundaries of a separate identity. In dream visions, Sinclair sees himself as a river which abandons itself into an ocean represented by Eva, or he sees the pair as a system of twin stars rotating around each other in resonating circles.

However, the text frequently stresses the temporary, transitory nature of their relation in woeful, melancholic tones and soon a dark shadow is cast on their blissful union. The transition from the 'sweet destiny' of Sinclair's romantic fantasy construction to the 'cruel destiny' which ruptures this bond is indicated by ominous, foreboding visions experienced both by Sinclair and Demian. The text here carefully creates a sinister atmosphere. One day Sinclair leaves town on a walk towards the surrounding mountains and is surprised by a sudden change in weather. While the ground is perfectly still, above an ominous wall of dense grey clouds is torn by a violent storm. Against the background of this dark wall, a yellow cloud suddenly assumes the shape of a giant bird which liberates itself from the blue vortex and ascends majestically. Sinclair also encounters Demian frozen in an ominous state of mask-like rigour experiencing prophetic dreams of impending doom which he differentiates from his other, personal dreams as having a collective relevance, i.e. as stemming from the 'collective unconscious'. Thus at this stage of the narrative, we have the interesting confluence of two factors. On the one hand, as Sinclair prepares to fully assume the destiny that is imposed on him, he betrays a 'non-pathological' stance of symbolic identification persisting in the abyss of the desire of

the Other. In this gesture, the *jouissance* of Sinclair's mystic union with Eva which functioned as a screen covering that void is effectively drained so that we are faced with a 'symbolic castration'.

Alle Kraft hatte ich zusammengerissen, um das süsseste Bild zu beschwören, und nun sah mich das Schicksal plötzlich neu aus einer drohend grauenhaften Maske an.

(D.207)

At the same time, since the coming war and the 'purifying' annihilation of the corrupt social fabric occupies the position of the 'second death' and is seen as unleashing a potential for the sublime this is the precise juncture in the narrative where the fate of those residing in Eva's spiritual enclave is effectively fused with that of the outside world:

Merkwürdig war nur, dass ich nun die so einsame Angelegenheit 'Schicksal' mit so vielen, mit der ganzen Welt gemeinsam erleben sollte. Gut denn! (D.208)

The outbreak of war

In chapter eight we learn that war has indeed broken out and both Demian and Sinclair are conscripted into the army and sent into the field on different assignments. While Sinclair is severely wounded but stable, Demian dies from the injuries he has incurred in the war but he is briefly reunited with Sinclair before his death in the field hospital. In the final touching scene of the novel the ambiguity of Demian's status is raised once again. Is he real or a projection from Sinclair's unconscious? His death certainly implies an end to his role as

guide or psychopomp and at this point he is revealed as an integral part of Sinclair's psyche.

This last, short chapter has a slightly vague, incomplete, even dissatisfying quality despite its poetic maturity and its seamless integration with the rest of the narrative. This is intimately related to the expectation that the war would accomplish a 'second death', facilitate access to the sublime. Hesse orchestrating a repertoire of devices could evoke this well on the small scale of Sinclair's personal development but there are more formidable obstacles in terms of the global context. The global annihilation of the signifier's network is an expectation intrinsic to a particular subject, it is the radical limit of his/her symbolic identification and so has very little to do with the reality of the war. Rendering war and its grim aftermath realistically in the style of, for instance, Im Westen nichts Neues, would be inherently at odds with Hesse's intention. At the same time leaving out this realism means that something is missing. Hesse proceeds by simply extending the motifs and allegories that had until then been restricted to Sinclair's personal development to the collective social body. In this process, socio-historic and personal evolution appear to become synchronised. Sinclair who had looked down upon the shallow, conformist bourgeoisie with contempt from within the confines of Eva's enclave finds that war has instilled in them a '*magnificent will towards fate*'. This is of course the kind of phrase critics trying to identify fascist tendencies in Hesse's writing tend to pounce upon (i.e. v. Seckendorff). While Sinclair believes that

the masses still commit the fundamental fallacy of holding on to mundane, political/ideological goals, he sees their ethical stance as holding promise and matching his own in essence. Reading the subtext we can identify the following message: even though the masses may still be bound to obsolete, inauthentic values, in embryonic form an entirely new model is emerging which will begin to take hold once the old structures have been shattered.

Let us consider the employment of metaphors which hint at a fusion of the personal and the collective. We begin with an image that still operates on a personal level. As war draws closer, Sinclair attempts once more to conjure the image of Eva but dissipating his energies, he fails:

... ich hatte einen Augenblick die Empfindung, ich trage einen Kristall im Herzen und ich wusste, dass war mein Ich. Die Kälte stieg mir bis zur Brust.

(D.205)

This is a poignant image which captures the Lacanian conception of an ex-timate kernel at the core of the self, an invasive foreign body that doesn't lose its externality in the wake of its incorporation, *object petit a* which materialises the void around which the symbolic order circulates. A reading which interprets the crystal as a mere metaphor or signifier of the transition from a period of Romantic fulfilment to Nietzschean heroic status would therefore be inadequate. From here we can move on to images that incorporate the collective level. A brief, prosaic account of the war and its underlying necessity

culminates in the following poetic phrase which is a variation of a theme we are already familiar with:

**Es kämpfte sich ein Riesenvogel aus dem Ei, und das Ei war die Welt, und die Welt musste in Trümmer gehen.
(D.211)**

This statement very closely resembles Demian's cryptic formula about the sparrow hawk in Sinclair's dream and the subsequent painting. It has the same oracular density and poetic rhythm. The reason that the original formula can so easily be adapted to the situation of the war is the factor uniting these two aspects in the narrator's mind: reference to the sublime-horrifying *Thing*. Suffice it to recall Sinclair's dream in which he saw the heraldic bird in an infinite variety of shapes and sizes, which were nonetheless always one and the same bird. Because Sinclair came too close to this unquantifiable X, the object cause of desire by swallowing the bird, he experienced a traumatic eclipse of the symbolic universe guaranteeing a stable identity of the subject and his objects. It is exactly this 'second death', this global annihilation of the symbolic network which he also expects from the war.

One evening, when Sinclair is on sentry duty outside an occupied farm-house, he has another dream-like vision as he contemplates the dark clouds. He discerns a huge city in the clouds from which millions of people begin to emerge streaming into a boundless landscape. A mighty Goddess, the size of a mountain who bears a luminous mark on her brow appears amidst these masses. This Goddess is uncannily reminiscent of Frau Eva:

In sie hinein verschwanden die Züge der Menschen wie in eine riesige Höhle und waren weg. Die Göttin kauerte am Boden nieder, hell schimmerte das Mal auf ihrer Stirn.
(D.212)

A Jungian critic would emphasise the duplicitous nature of the Goddess as mother archetype. Like the Hindu deity Shiva she has a benign, creative aspect which became evident in Sinclair's erotically charged relation to Frau Eva but also a destructive, chthonic aspect which manifests itself here. Yet such a mystification leaves over much of the psychological significance of this image. I would argue instead that this fascinating image of the womb of death is multiply overdetermined, a nodal point which evokes many of the previous themes in the narrative. The narrator confronts us again with the empty site of the Thing as *'an enclosed void, the contents of which are its discontents'* (Lupton). This is the same *'black hole'* which Hesse came across in his own Demian dream when he lifted the lid from Demian's wound and was faced with a fathomless chasm. Yet instead of covering this gap in reality with narcissistic fantasy constructions - as in the Eva chapter or the worship of the Beatrice image - Sinclair persists in the groundless void of the desire of the Other. In much the same way in which his personal cipher, the sparrow hawk freeing itself from the world egg was earlier adapted to the collective level of the war, the transition from the image of Beatrice to that of Demian's death mask is reiterated here. We might say that the image of Eva as mesmerising siren is drained of *jouissance*, mortified. Turned

into a death mask, however, this gaze of the Other no longer concerns the fate of Sinclair exclusively, but that of millions.

The dreaming Goddess finally emits a terrifying scream which can be seen to embody the 'object-voice' and from her brow a fountain of luminous stars springs forth. One of these hits Sinclair who loses consciousness. This is a rather successful metaphor for Sinclair's war injury. As he regains consciousness he senses Demian's presence and is overcome with an overwhelming pull in his direction. The two are united in a field hospital where Demian's wounds appear more serious. As Demian dies, the sentence concluding the novel appears to suggest that Sinclair has become an autonomous personality who is no longer in need of his guide. Or from a Jungian perspective, the externally projected self has finally been integrated.

**Aber wenn ich manchmal den Schlüssel finde und ganz in mich selbst hinuntersteige, da wo im dunklen Spiegel die Schicksalsbilder schlummern, dann brauche ich mich nur über den schwarzen Spiegel zu neigen und sehe mein eigenes Bild, das nun ganz Ihm gleicht, Ihm, meinem Freund und Führer.
(D.214)**

The wrong approach here would be to assume that Sinclair becomes an autonomous personality by no longer identifying with Demian. Rather it is precisely by identifying with Demian on a structural-symbolic rather than narcissistic level, that he becomes an independent person. That is to say, he genuinely becomes like Demian to the extent that he adopts the same radical approach to symbolic identification, a tendency which became initially discernible towards the end of the Beatrice chapter and

which culminates in the darkly poetic phrase concluding the novel. And yet we are confronted here with the transferential illusion by which the subject of symbolic identification with the Other (represented by Demian) appears to become what he always already was in his essence. This transferential illusion is based on the domination of the imaginary mirror relation by symbolic determination which retroactively 'fixes' the image. That is to say, it is supported by the fact that the infant, in order to gain self-identity must alienate itself into the image of another during the mirror phase and that this externally imposed image is then taken as its own, implying an autonomous agent who was there from the beginning. When a symbolic identification retroactively determines the significance of this image, it is taken as the essence of the subject that has been there from the beginning. And through his poetry and impeccable narrative construction, Hesse very successfully erases the traces of this process, a concealment which is necessary for its functioning.

X. Demian and Hesse's pre-Demian Romantic literature

What insights, if any, can be derived from this close Lacanian reading of Demian in terms of the position this novel occupies with respect to Hesse's neoromantic pre-Demian literature? Hesse's nervous breakdown caused partially by the death of his father and partly by the catastrophe of the war and his subsequent submission to Jungian psychoanalysis are factors known to have radically altered Hesse's outlook and are seen as instrumental in his conscious departure from his pre-Demian style.

In his essay on the evolution of the *Dichter* figure in Hesse's work, Kurt Fickert tried to trace the factors inherent in the format of Hesse's pre-Demian literature which made a radical re-assessment logically necessary. Many of Hesse's letters describing his transformation, his shift away from the neoromantic first phase of his writing, point to a strange dichotomy between the central theme in his novels articulating an affinity with the beautiful soul or *Dichter* in conflict with the bourgeoisie and his own enjoyment of the socially respectable role of the successful author of popular, sentimental fiction. In early novels such as Peter Camenzind or Knulp that established Hesse as a widely read and critically acclaimed author, a recurring motif is the sentimental figure of the Romantic outsider, the aesthete attempting to realise a vision of beauty in his work (Camenzind) or life (Knulp) but emerging as ultimately doomed because of an unbridgable gap separating this vision from the cruel realm of social reality. While Hesse's literature

regurgitated this motif in novel after novel, in his own life Hesse had become thoroughly integrated into the predominant system of social mores. He had married for reasons of respectability and felt secure in his established position and his peace with society:

Mein äusseres Leben verlief nun eine gute Weile ruhig und angenehm. Ich hatte Frau, Kinder, Haus und Garten. Ich schrieb meine Bücher, ich galt für einen liebenswürdigen Dichter und lebte mit der Welt in Frieden.¹²¹

Thus, on the surface we have this conflict between Hesse's integration into the bourgeoisie that clashes with the central theme of his novel and therefore introduces an element of inauthenticity into his writing. A closer look however, reveals that his literature suffers from inauthenticity even if we disregard the chasm between art and life, for his literature is to a large extent derivative, derived from the influence of Romantic models such as Goethe and Keller. Hesse's key motif of the Dichter figure, the aesthete, martyr or saint on the margins of society suffering for his ideal, is indebted to his Romantic predecessors:

What happened to me was that under the influence of models such as Goethe, Keller, etc. I constructed as a Dichter a beautiful and harmonious world - but a false one because I submerged all that was dark and wild in me....¹²²

In a first approach to this situation from a Lacanian perspective we might assert that in his social and professional strategies of identification, in terms of his ego ideal, Hesse was happy to submit to bourgeois norms as the primary anchor of identification. By contrast to this mode of symbolic identification, his identification with the *Dichter* ideal

appeared to be predominantly narcissistic. It can, perhaps be figured as a fantasy scenario enabling Hesse simultaneously to sustain and veil his dominant identification with bourgeois respectability. This reading allows us to discern a congruence between Hesse's public and literary stance which appear to clash at first sight. To explicate this further let me elaborate on Lacan's condemnation of the stance of the Romantic '*belle âme*' as existentially false. This falsity derives from the determination of identity in terms of the three successive stages of the real, imaginary and symbolic. Lacan finds chaos and disunity at the heart of the natural being preceding the mirror stage. The subsequent alienation into the image of the m(other) which is taken as its own by the infant of the mirror stage thus serves as the foundation for a vision of harmony and unity of the subject - a vision of immanence that is based on fiction and delusion given the transcendent or external structural dialectics of the mirror stage. Lacan argues that the Romantic '*belle âme*' is caught in this circuit of specular delusion which fails to take into account that the chaos or disorder which it denounces in the other or in society is 'primary in being'. In this light, Lacan dismisses the '*belle âme*' as tauto-ontic and concludes:

Whatever dialectic it is, this remark cannot shake the delusion of the presumption to which Hegel applied it, remaining caught in the trap offered by the mirage of consciousness to the I infatuated with its feelings which it erects into a law of the heart.¹²³

Lacan then contrasts this false construction of subjectivity characteristic of the 'beautiful soul' with the legal I, the subject as determined by the symbolic order and asserts that this symbolic subject cannot - as Hegel has also pointed out - be

abstracted or dissociated from the 'real' being. From this vantage point we can discern a basic flaw in Hesse's persistent contrasting of the Romantic aesthete's autonomous, beautiful soul - for instance in terms of Peter Camenzind's narcissism, his '*mirage of consciousness*' - with the fabric of social reality. The *belle ame* denouncing the chaos and inauthenticity in the other pretends to speak on the basis of a pure metalanguage, a neutral medium of designation, but fails to see how that position of enunciation is belied by its own moans and groans by which he/she participates in that chaos.

If the dramatic tension in Hesse's early novels thus rests on the gap between reality and the protagonist's vision of harmony and beauty, a vision which is reflected in the style of the prose itself, then we can find a lack of authenticity at the core of these novels. As Hesse's statements above reveal, he appears to have intuited the falsity or impossibility of his 'position of enunciation'. The first inklings of a departure are given in the final major work of Hesse's per-Demian literature Rosshalde which, autobiographically, depicts the crumbling marriage of an artist which had been a symptom of '*a mistaken effort to do justice both to his sense of Dichtertum and his sense of obligation to society.*'¹²⁴ According to Fickert, it was Hesse's '*growing concern for his artistic integrity*' which induced a statement of principle in the closing pages of Rosshalde.

Was ihm blieb das war seine Kunst,..., und diesem Stern ohne Abwege zu folgen, war nun sein Schicksal. ¹²⁵

Thus, according to Fickert 'upon the wreckage of his marriage Hesse built the structure of his determination never to be misled in the pursuit of his ambition to become the ideal of Dichter.'¹²⁶

In this transition from ideal ego to ego ideal, do we not find here the reflection of a key structuring principle in Demian? In Demian we were faced with the transition to a radical mode of symbolic identification which does not define itself falsely/negatively by its opposition to society while in fact remaining symbolically identified with it. In a similar vein Hesse himself appears to have sought a genuine mode of symbolic identification supplanting the false ideal of Romantic harmony, a genuine antithesis that is not derivable from bourgeois identification.

- ¹ Michels ed, Materialien zu Hermann Hesse: Demian Entstehungsgeschichte in Selbstzeugnissen , 25-26
- ² Weaver, Spinning on a Dream Thread: Hermann Hesse. His Life and Work and Contact with C.G.Jung , 87
- ³ Ziolkowski ed, Hesse: A Collection of Critical Essays , 150-151
- ⁴ Weaver, op.cit, 77, 84-87
- ⁵ 'Ebenso wie's nicht in Frage kommt, verstorbene Autoren zu analysieren, kann die Rede davon sein, seinen eigenen Traum besser als Freud zu analysieren.' , Lacan, Schriften II, 196
- ⁶ Freud, Vol.II, Die Traumdeutung , 110-111
- ⁷ Lacan , Das Seminar BuchII , 199-200
- ⁸ Michels, op.cit, 112
- ⁹ Ibid., 112
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 113
- ¹¹ Ibid., 101
- ¹² 'The state of sublimity is therefore ultimately that of a "grimace of reality" (as Lacan puts it in *Television*). Lacan's definition of the sublime ("An object elevated to the level of the Thing") could be rendered as "the sublime is an object upon which the real of desire is inscribed by means of an anamorphic grimace".', Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 140
- ¹³ Jung, Vol.9 PartII, Aion , 8
- ¹⁴ v. Seckendorff, Hermann Hesse's Propagandistische Prosa: Selbstzerstörerische Entfaltung als Botschaft in seinen Romanen vom Demian bis zum Steppenwolf , 37
- ¹⁵ Jacques Alain Miller, Montré Premontré, in *Analytica* 37 (1984) , 28-29 , Miller's quote appeared in Žižek , Looking Awry , 94-95
- ¹⁶ Žižek, op.cit., 94-95
- ¹⁷ Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 8
- ¹⁸ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 103-104
- ¹⁹ see Lacan, Das Seminar Buch XI, Kapitel VII: Die Anamorphose, 85-96
- ²⁰ Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom! , 125
- ²¹ see Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, chapter 3, 87-129
- ²² Jung, Vol9 PartI, The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, 80
- ²³ Jung, Vol.5, Symbols of Transformation , 303
- ²⁴ Jung, Vol.9 PartII, Aion, 31
- ²⁵ Ibid., 40
- ²⁶ This is exemplified poignantly by Bill Clinton's recent visit to China. When Clinton was lecturing students at Peking University on freedom and *universal* human rights, one of the students echoing the official ideological line responded, 'In China, the prosperous development of the nation is actually the free choice of our people.' , *The Independent* , 30.06.1998
- ²⁷ This is a slightly modified version of the ideological signifying chain presented by Žižek in The Sublime Object of Ideology, 102
- ²⁸ 'Ein Umkehrungseffekt, durch den das Subjekt auf jeder Stufe zu dem wird, was es wie von vorneherein schon war und sich allein im Futurum exactum – es wird gewesen sein – kundgibt.' , Lacan, Schriften II, Die Subversion des Subjekts, 183
- ²⁹ see Zizek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 102-104
- ³⁰ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 102
- ³¹ These dynamics of retroactive signification are captured in the diagrams in Appendix B which derive from Lacan's essay *Subversion des Subjekts* in Schriften II. Žižek's analysis of ideology is based on this Lacanian article in particular which he considers to be one of the most significant in Lacan's writing.
- ³² Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 99
- ³³ Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do, see especially Chapter 1, *On the One*, 7-140
- ³⁴ Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 124
- ³⁵ Lacan, Das Seminar Buch II, 171
- ³⁶ Žižek, The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters, 104
- ³⁷ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 89
- ³⁸ Jung, Vol.5, Symbols of Transformation, 390
- ³⁹ Lupton, Reinhard , After Ödipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis, 150-151
- ⁴⁰ Jung, Vol.9 PartI , The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, 80
- ⁴¹ Schopenhauer, as quoted in Jung, Vol.5, Symbols of Transformation, 137
- ⁴² Jung, Vol.9 PartI, The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious, 357
- ⁴³ Jung, Vol.9 PartII, Aion, 70
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 2

- ⁴⁵ Jung, Septem Sermones ad Mortuos, as quoted in Michels, op.cit., 26-27
- ⁴⁶ see Žižek's essay The Truth Arises from Misrecognition, in Lacan and the Subject of Language
- ⁴⁷ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 126-127
- ⁴⁸ "Dass Demian vertrauten Umgang mit Mädchen habe und 'alles wisse' ", D.47
- ⁴⁹ Lupton, op.cit., 134
- ⁵⁰ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 135
- ⁵¹ The Good News Bible, 8
- ⁵² Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 8
- ⁵³ see Lacan, Das Seminar Buch XI, Vom Blick als Objekt Klein a, 73-126
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 91
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 90
- ⁵⁶ Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 116
- ⁵⁷ Lupton, op.cit., 165
- ⁵⁸ see Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, chapter 4
- ⁵⁹ A further example cited by Žižek is the corpse with pecked-out eyes in Hitchcock's 'The Birds'. One is also reminded of the doll in E.T.A. Hoffman's Der Sandmann.
- ⁶⁰ Lupton, op.cit., 158
- ⁶¹ Žižek refers to the Lacanian *Thing* as a 'coagulated remnant of the liquid flux of jouissance' in Lacan and the Subject of Language, 203
- ⁶² Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 137
- ⁶³ Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 126
- ⁶⁴ Michels, op.cit., 224
- ⁶⁵ see Lacan, Schriften I. Funktion und Feld der Sprache in der Psychoanalyse, 71-169, particularly I. *Leeres Sprechen und Volles Sprechen in der Psychoanalytischen Darstellung des Subjekts*, 84-105
- ⁶⁶ see Lacan, Schriften I. Funktion und Feld der Sprache in der Psychoanalyse, 71-169, particularly II. *Symbol und Sprache als Struktur und Grenzbestimmung des Psychoanalytischen Feldes*, 105-131
- ⁶⁷ Lacan, Schriften II, 181, for the corresponding diagrams see Appendix B
- ⁶⁸ 'Die menschliche Sprache bildet also eine Kommunikation, bei der der Sender vom Empfänger seine eigene Botschaft in umgekehrter Form wiederempfängt.', Lacan, Schriften I, 141
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 175
- ⁷⁰ Michels, op.cit., 185
- ⁷¹ Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 121
- ⁷² Lacan, Schriften I, 164-165
- ⁷³ Žižek, The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters, 202
- ⁷⁴ Cremerius, Schuld und Sühne ohne Ende: Hermann Hesse's Psychoanalytische Erfahrung, 195
- ⁷⁵ Lupton, op.cit., with reference to Shakespeare's King Lear. Lupton refers to an 'incurvative topology of the Thing', 159
- ⁷⁶ Jung, Vol9 PartII, Aion, 13
- ⁷⁷ Lacan, Das Seminar Buch II, 267
- ⁷⁸ Lacan, Schriften II,
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 24, 'Das haut nicht nur mit einem Tiefschlag die Nominalismusdebatte um, sondern zeigt auch, wie das Signifikante tatsächlich ins Signifizierte eingeht, in einer Form nämlich, die, da sie keine immaterielle ist, die Frage nach seinem Platz in der Realität aufwirft.'
- ⁸⁰ Lupton, op.cit., 155
- ⁸¹ see Boothby, Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud, 196-203
- ⁸² Weaver describes the process of 'active imagination' in these terms: 'It is necessary, before discussing the material, to say something of the way in which active imagination is done. As the name suggests, it is the opposite of passive fantasising. In the latter, the ego is not involved, the fantasy just happens. In active imagination the ego is aware and initiates the fantasy. It becomes emotionally and intellectually involved and at the same time pauses and awaits spontaneous eruptions from the unconscious.' Weaver, op.cit., 74
- ⁸³ Ibid., 89
- ⁸⁴ Ibid., 89
- ⁸⁵ Lacan, Schriften I, 117
- ⁸⁶ Lupton, op.cit., 165
- ⁸⁷ Lacan, Schriften II, 147
- ⁸⁸ Michels, op.cit., 203
- ⁸⁹ 'Ein Wort für ein anderes ist die Formel für die Metapher, und wenn Sie ein Poet sind, bringen sie, indem Sie sich ein Spiel daraus machen, einen ununterbrochenen Strom hervor, ein betörendes Gewebe von Metaphern.' Lacan, Schriften II, 32

- ' Man sieht, die Metapher hat ihren Platz genau da, wo Sinn im Unsinn entsteht..' , Ibid., 33
- ⁹⁰ Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do, 50
- ⁹¹ Lacan, Schriften II, 82
- ⁹² Žižek, Looking Awry, 91
- ⁹³ Ibid., 64
- ⁹⁴ This is reflected in Lacan's discussion of the fate of Ödipus: ' The moment Ödipus fulfills the 'word' of the oracle, he becomes a subject but is reduced to nothing at the same time. ' "Verhält es sich so, dass ich in dem Moment, da ich nichts bin, zu einem Menschen werde?" Das ist ein Satz, den ich aus dem Kontext gerissen habe, und ich muss ihn wieder einfügen, ums ihnen zu ersparen, sich hier irgendeine Illusion zu machen, nämlich zum Beispiel, dass der Ausdruck Mensch bei dieser Gelegenheit irgendeine Bedeutung hätte. Er hat strenggenommen keine, in ebendem Masse, in dem Ödipus zur vollen Verwirklichung des Worts des Orakels gelangt ist, das, noch ehe er geboren war, sein Geschick bestimmte.', Lacan, Das Seminar Buch II, 292
- ⁹⁵ Because the subject in this perceptual mode appears to 'centre' itself in a state of self-sufficient plenitude , Lacan drew a comparison to the Cartesian cogito which 'elides' the function of the gaze. See Lacan , Das Seminar Buch XI, 90
- ⁹⁶ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 95
- ⁹⁷ Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 10
- ⁹⁸ Lacan, Schriften II, 182
- ⁹⁹ Richards, Exploring the Divided Self: Hermann Hesse's Steppenwolf and its Critics, 15
- ¹⁰⁰ 'So kommt das Ich als Subjekt herauf, das sich vereint mit der doppelten Aporie eines wahrhaften Fortbestehens, das sich durch sein Wissen liquidiert, und eines Diskurses, in dem der Tod die Existenz aufrecht erhält.' Lacan, Schriften II, Die Subversion des Subjekts, 176
- ¹⁰¹ Lacan, Schriften II, 133-163
- ¹⁰² Lacan, Le Seminaire, Livre VII, 285-333
- ¹⁰³ Hanlon, Pathological Stains and Moral Law, 3 (section5)
- ¹⁰⁴ see Žižek, The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters, 171-73
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 63-67
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 63
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 64
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 66
- ¹⁰⁹ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 100
- ¹¹⁰ Referring to the portrayal of war and fate in Demian, v. Seckendorff argues 'Zur Apologie des Krieges gehört auch Demian's Auslesetheorie von der Notwendigkeit "schicksalsbereiter Exemplare, die das Neue und Unerhörte vollziehen und ihre Art durch neue Anpassung retten!". Die Faschisten müssen an solchen Sprüchen ihre reine Freude gehabt haben', v. Seckendorff, op.cit., 34
- ¹¹¹ see Richards, op.cit., 77-84
- ¹¹² Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 114-115
- ¹¹³ see Žižek, Enjoy Your Symptom!, 22
- ¹¹⁴ Jung, Dreams, Memories, Reflections, 162
- ¹¹⁵ Žižek, For They Know not What They Do, 197
- ¹¹⁶ Žižek uses the term 'a letter arrives at its destination' to designate the 'logic by means of which one mis-recognises oneself as the addressee of an ideological interpellation.' This is also encapsulated in the phrase 'A letter arrives at its destination because its destination is wherever it arrives.', Enjoy Your Symptom!, 10
- ¹¹⁷ Lupton, op.cit., 173
- ¹¹⁸ Lupton, op.cit., 188
- ¹¹⁹ Žižek, The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters, 201
- ¹²⁰ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 135-136
- ¹²¹ Hesse , Kurzgefasster Lebenslauf, Gesammelte Dichtungen, 475
- ¹²² This quote appeared in Fickert, Hermann Hesse's Quest: The Evolution of the Dichter Figure in his Work
- ¹²³ Lacan, Écrits: A Selection, The Freudian Thing, 126
- ¹²⁴ Fickert, Hermann Hesse's Quest: The Evolution of the Dichter Figure in his Work, 50
- ¹²⁵ Hesse, Gertrude, 178
- ¹²⁶ Fickert, Hermann Hesse's Quest: The Evolution of the Dichter Figure in his Work, 50

CHAPTER THREE

DER STEPPENWOLF: MELANCHOLY AND ALLEGORY

I. Outline

Let me start by providing a brief synopsis of an article by Johannes Cremerius which impinges on a Lacanian reading of Der Steppenwolf. Johannes Cremerius' meticulous and enlightening discussion, published in 1983, focuses on both Hesse's Pietist background and his extensive involvement with psychoanalysis. It stands out from the bulk of Hesse literature in its modern investigative format and highly focused Freudian bias.

Conventional readings have tended to either display a strong Jungian influence stressing the importance of archetypes, the 'shadow' (i.e. Baumann, Boulby) or to subordinate psychological aspects to matters of literary genealogy and influence or the relation of structure and content (Boulby, Ziolkowski, Seidlin). By contrast Cremerius, a professional Freudian psychoanalyst, accentuates Hesse's Pietist background, his upbringing by Pietist missionaries in Calw and diagnoses a hypertrophied super-ego as the most significant feature in Hesse's biography. While other commentators have also pointed out the importance of conscience and the Pietist background in Hesse's work (i.e. Boulby), this feature constitutes the crucial thematic anchor informing Cremerius' analysis. As the subsequent analysis will reveal, that approach is highly illuminating in the investigation of Hesse's biography but it must be judged as too reductionist in terms of an application to Hesse's novels.

In Cremerius' reading Hesse's recurring phases of severe psychological distress that led to successive batches of therapeutic psychoanalytic sessions, roughly from 1909 to 1926 (involving Dr. Fraencke around 1909/1910, Dr. Lang around 1916, Dr. Nohl, Dr. Jung), can be traced back to a super-ego pathology originally inculcated by an uninspired, religiously tinged upbringing by Pietist parents. Hesse's education, Cremerius points out, was based on a simplistic division of the world into good and evil and relied largely on conditioning ('Dressur') rather than rational insight in setting up boundaries to behaviour. Cremerius' Freudian reading pivots around his analysis of a letter in which Hesse's mother, Marie, describes the behaviour of her 4-year old son. That letter poignantly reveals how the young Hesse interprets his natural organismic vitality, his normal infantile exploration of his environment, as a transgression in religious terms that calls for punishment.

.. dann wütete er toll herum. Heute betete er morgens angelegentlich, um lieb zu sein.¹

Thus, even at this very early stage in Hesse's life, the matrix of an internalised paternal agency observing the ego, as it were, from the outside and censoring the ego's behaviour in terms of the narrow parameters of 'evil' and salvation from evil had already been inculcated. What is at stake here is not the internalisation of parents as persons per se but rather an introjection of paternal injunctions, the mapping of a relation between parent and child (intersubjective relation) onto the intrasubjective level of the individual. According to Freud, the

agency of the super-ego designates an introjection of relations on which the transfer of historic traditions is based.

According to Cremerius, this mode of an unenlightened Pietist education adopted by Hesse's parents had resulted in a permanent inscription of a pattern of super-ego tyranny against Hesse's weakened ego. Once inscribed this pattern then became the structural basis for a repetition compulsion of 'rituals of crime and punishment'. Cremerius then proceeds to relate these fundamental psychological characteristics to a highly detailed account of Hesse's encounter with psychoanalysis. He also illustrates how the 'eternal recurrence' of patterns of crime and punishment in his life is intertwined with prevailing themes in his work. Hesse's involvement in psychotherapeutic sessions, encompassing the extensive period from 1909 to the severe crisis around 1926 that accompanied the composition of Der Steppenwolf was motivated by psychological states that interfered significantly with his private and professional functioning.

Hemmungen, Arbeitsstörungen, Depressionen...²

Von 1916 an ist Hesse psychotherapeutischer Dauerpatient, kann sich aus der Patientenrolle nicht mehr lösen.³

Cremerius traces the ultimate failure of such prolonged psychoanalytic interventions to a failure of his analysts to recognise super-ego terror as the source of Hesse's crises. The bulk of his analytical sessions took place before Freud had elaborated his theories on super-ego formation in Das Ich und das Es. Therefore analysis was focused chiefly on the release of repressed, unconscious material but circumvented the crucial dynamics of projection/introjection that determine the relations of ego ideal

and ideal ego. Cremerius argues that the approach adopted in these sessions facilitated a 'transference' between Hesse and his analysts and provided opportunities of venting feelings of revenge against his father. By restoring Hesse to a condition of private and professional functioning in the short term these sessions created a deceptive appearance of success and resolution. But as the excessive length of Hesse's psychoanalytic journey demonstrates, the short term restorations to psychic health and functioning, which were often accompanied by bursts in creativity (Demian, Klein und Wagner, Klingsor's letzter Sommer, Der Steppenwolf were associated with such phases) were not matched by any stable, long-term improvement. Two failed marriages and frequent re-lapses into crisis testify, in Cremerius' reading, to an underlying deep structure of super-ego pathology that successive rounds of psychoanalytic sessions throughout Hesse's life had failed to tackle.

A recursive rhythm can be discerned in Hesse's life. He ceaselessly alternates between a celebration of the senses (famously on his first arrival in Montagnola which set in motion one of his creative bursts) and a subsequent decline into melancholia and despair. This pattern derives from the underlying matrix of a mind that is fundamentally defined, through fixation in early childhood, by the need for auto-aggressive punishments as soon as the internalised paternal agency of the super-ego registers an unbinding of repressed, organismic or 'Dionysian' energies.

Die durch die Analyse freigelegten Triebhalte konnten nicht zu tragenden Elementen seines Lebens werden, nicht in ein freies und selbstbewusstes Ich integriert werden, weil sie, kaum aus dem

Unbewussten ins Bewusste gehoben - sofort dem Über-Ich zum Opfer fielen. Und dieses Über-Ich war unverändert derselbe lebensfeindliche Zensor wie die pietistische Moral im Elternhaus.⁴

These patterns, Cremerius argues, are also reflected in Hesse's work and account for the puerile, adolescent depiction of women in his novels which are characteristically reduced to formulaic (self)-projections. Boulby, for instance, has pointed out that the features of Hermine in Der Steppenwolf are virtually indistinguishable from those of Teresine in Klein und Wagner.⁵ A personal, truly intersubjective basis to these relationships is almost always missing. In this Der Steppenwolf encodes a veiled, rebellious message to his father, the Pietist missionary. This revenge against super-ego terror is nonetheless moulded in a dialectic in which the super-ego continues to occupy a central position confirming rather than negating its hegemony. Thus Cremerius situates the origin of one of the dominant thematic anchors on the narrative level in Der Steppenwolf - Haller's relation to Hermine - in Hesse's personal struggle with his father.

Furthermore, the glorification of suffering that emerges as a recurring motif in Hesse's novels is ascribed to Hesse's identification with his superego. Cremerius traces the striking elevation and idealisation of an anti-bourgeois radical extremity in Hesse's novels to a masochistic identification with the paternal agency of the ego ideal. This is reflected in a persistent rhetoric that tends to project radical devotion, martyrdom and intense suffering (i.e. in Klingsor's letzter Sommer , Der Steppenwolf, and Das Glasperlenspiel) as superior values. Cremerius succinctly sums up these dynamics:

So bleibt Hesse verloren in die Leiden, die er sich selber im Wiederholungszwang Calwer Schuld-Sühne Rituale bereitet.⁶

Cremerius integrates Hesse's tendency to indulge in fantasies of suicide, in both life and fiction, into these dialectics of transgression and sadistic punishment and links Hesse's nervous breakdown following his father's death in 1916 to a reaction formation ('Reaktionsbildung'), transparent in light of Hesse's intimate identification with a paternal super-ego.

In evaluating Cremerius' achievement of a psychoanalytic investigation of Hesse, we have to draw a distinction between his assessment of Hesse's life and of his art. Cremerius' pioneering article on Hesse certainly succeeded in exposing crucial elements in Hesse's character formation which are credibly set in relation to Hesse's biography, the nature of his psychoanalytic sessions and the logical failure of these sessions in which the fundamental source of Hesse's crises, super-ego tyranny, remained essentially eclipsed. He also correctly notes a fundamental misunderstanding underlying Hesse's inference of a metaphysical dimension to psychoanalysis, for instance when Hesse mistakenly describes the objective of psychoanalysis in religious terms - 'to enable us to hear the voice of God inside us'.⁷ The function of psychoanalysis is essentially pragmatic.

Yet, in neglecting the aesthetic level of Hesse's work, his analysis probably falls short of providing a comprehensive framework for a psychology based analysis of Hesse's novels. His approach entails a visible reduction of the highly complex, multi-layered and interconnected structures in novels such as Der

Steppenwolf or Das Glasperlenspiel to the terms of Hesse's personal super-ego pathology. It is indeed striking for Hesse, the son of devout missionaries, to write about his alter ego Haller's association with prostitutes in Der Steppenwolf and this may be decoded as an inverted message, a veiled, 'metonymic' rage against super ego terror. Harry's encounter with Hermine certainly signifies a clear break with asceticism as Boulby has pointed out.

Yet in the reduction of Der Steppenwolf to this simplistic formula, Cremerius ignores the transposition of the author's psychological reality onto the aesthetic level of the work of art. If there is a 'creative spark' in Der Steppenwolf it inheres in this substitution. The imbrication of literary structure/aesthetic style with psychological content in a novel such as Der Steppenwolf then necessitates a more supple approach to criticism. From a Lacanian point of view, this involves granting to the work of art a dimension of self-containment beyond the parameters of the author's biography. The precise and penetrating psychological investigation of Hesse's life that emerges in Cremerius' account does not necessarily illuminate all the significant features of his work. Though Hesse's novels may constitute literary 'Seelenbiographien', spectral decompositions of the soul, their literary aspect must be integrated meaningfully into any psychological discussion of Hesse's works.

A Brief Discussion of the "Traktat" in the Light of Insights Gleaned from Cremerius

Let me stress that this section does not aim at an exhaustive analysis of the "Traktat" but rather to inquire into the

"Traktat"'s possible relation to super-ego dynamics. This will serve as an appropriate reference point on which to build our subsequent Lacanian analysis. The "Traktat", another incidence of the mise-en-abyme, the book within the book which we also encounter in Morgenlandfahrt, constitutes a paradoxical 'self-portrait' of Haller written from the vantage point of a virtually omniscient outside observer:

**..kühl und mit dem Anschein hoher Objektivitaet gezeichnet, von einem Aussenstehenden von aussen und oben gesehen.
(S.58)**

These characteristics would appear to align the "Traktat" with the agency of the super-ego to which Cremerius has ascribed such significance. Boulby's examination of the "Traktat" emerges as relevant here. As Boulby points out, Hesse was familiar with the tradition of Pietist religious tracts designed to convert and awaken from his childhood in Calw. The "Traktat" in Der Steppenwolf has therefore been placed in this lineage.⁸ While the Pietist Tracts point to a religious transcendence, the Steppenwolf "Traktat" embodies, in a psychoanalytical critical reading, the '*immanent transcendence*' of an internalised paternal agency. There are some further indicators within the "Traktat" itself that tend to corroborate this alignment. For instance, the "Traktat" criticises the Steppenwolf's sentimental attachment to the bourgeoisie from the position of its own, apparently sovereign and detached vantage point. In the editor's introduction, Haller's weak sentimental ties to the bourgeoisie had been linked to his sense of 'Heimweh' that casts the bourgeois background from which he descends as a 'maternal sphere'. There is a pervasive theme in the "Traktat" of a

conflict between weak attachment and heroic, tragic dissociation. In line with that theme the "Traktat" conveys a sense of encouraging greater resolve in the Steppenwolf. Thus, the narrator of the "Traktat" wonders whether Haller may eventually be able to dissociate himself from 'das schwere mütterliche Gestirn des Bürgertums', a phrase which allegorically renders the modalities of an Oedipal paternal injunction to forsake the mother. In that sense the "Traktat" emerges as an embodiment of a 'castrative' paternal agency, positioned in an outside observing relation to Haller. A Freudian reading will link this to Haller's tendency to sadistic self-punishment, evident in his melancholia, that permeates the narrative. It is important to note that the "Traktat", in materialising a 'paternal agency' related to yet somehow transcending Haller is on the same level as the Immortals (Mozart, Goethe) who always hover somewhere in the background of the novel and are in fact projected as the potential sublime apotheosis of the development of a Steppenwolf. Indeed in the afterword, Hesse associates the "Traktat" with the Immortals.

...dass über dem Steppenwolf und seinem problematischen Leben sich eine zweite, höhere, unvergängliche Welt erhebt, und dass der "Traktat" und alle jene Stellen im Buch, welche vom Geist, von der Kunst, von den Unsterblichen handeln...

(S.266)

The close, structural proximity of the Immortals with the "Traktat" is here put quite explicitly. A Freudian oriented psychological reading will surely posit the introjected agency of paternal law as the common denominator underlying the kinship of these two aesthetic manifestations of a 'transcendent agency' - the "Traktat" and Immortals - in Hesse's novel. Our Lacanian

analysis will shift the emphasis to an investigation of the conflation of psychological structure with literary devices in Der Steppenwolf as well as the correlation of themes in the "Traktat" with subsequent developments in the narrative.

The Issue of the Novel's Complex Structure within Existing Hesse Criticism

On his completion of Der Steppenwolf Hesse indicated in a letter that it was construed around the "Traktat" 'so streng und straff ...wie eine Sonate'⁹ and also that

Der 'Steppenwolf' ist so streng gebaut, wie ein Kanon oder eine Fuge und ist bis zu dem Grad Form geworden, der mir eben möglich ist.¹⁰

This remark has instigated a wave of extensive analyses of the structure of Der Steppenwolf in Hesse criticism that was pioneered by Ziolkowski with an elaborate analysis focusing on the modalities of interrelation between the distinct sections in the novel (i.e. editor's prologue, "Traktat", Magic Theatre). This approach to analysis is based on the assumption of a precise correlative adherence of narrative structure to the 'sonata format'. Although Ziolkowski's chapter on Der Steppenwolf in his studies of Hesse's novels entitled 'A Sonata in Prose'¹¹ was influential and has been reprinted in an anthology of Hesse criticism, some reviewers charge that Hesse's evocation of the sonata analogy was designed largely metaphorically as a cipher for the sophisticated, interrelated structure of Der Steppenwolf and its general affinity to classical and modern music.

However, the concept is taken up by Boulby who relates Der Steppenwolf to the sonata form by casting its narrative themes in terms of musical analogies. The introduction and the "Traktat" of the Steppenwolf emerge as the First Movement, *'having a tonic and a dominant, a development and a recapitulation.'*¹²

In his analysis, Boulby asserts that Hesse's adoption of the musical metaphor relates to the introduction of two different poles or themes - Steppenwolf and bourgeois - that are introduced, developed, repeated and resolved in the course of the novel in a way that evokes the structuring of a sonata vindicating Hesse's analogy between literary and musical spheres. Critics taking up the sonata analogy have tended to follow a certain trajectory in their investigation, an approach of analysis involving the scanning of different sections in the novel for the transposition of known themes onto novel planes or vantage points. For instance, before Haller's entry into the Magic Theatre, the central figure of Der Steppenwolf had been evoked mostly in its symbolic dimension, in metaphoric references to claws and teeth that served to designate episodes of unbearable antagonism and tension produced by encounters with representatives of the 'bourgeois world order' (i.e. Haller's visit to the professor of Oriental Studies). Yet as Haller enters the Magic Theatre, he is faced with a captivating mirror image that produces a psychedelic vision of the wolf, struggling inside him.

Or consider the realisation of the infinite possibilities for a reconfiguration of the personality beyond the narrow dualism of the Steppenwolf-bourgeois antagonism in the Magic Theatre. That

theme had been indicated on a purely theoretical level previously in 'Traktat vom Steppenwolf', but is brought to an active realisation only in a stream of phantasmagoric imagery in the Magic Theatre where the infinite booths and mirror images facilitate the dissolution of constraints set by 'reality' and the stifling boundaries of individuation. The suffocating 'thin air' of loneliness which had brought the narrow dualism of the Steppenwolf's path to the critical impasse characterising the 'First Movement' - before Harry's life altering encounter with Hermine - fluidly dissolves into the spectral decomposition of Haller's soul in the Magic Theatre. The mode that dominates the Magic Theatre as the conclusion of the novel, then, is one of rigorous visualisation or resolution of themes that had been developed and repeated in the main sections of the novel.

Methodology of a Specifically Lacanian Approach

This section on the methodology of examining Der Steppenwolf serves as an introduction to key Lacanian concepts that are relevant to the analysis. Lacan's investigation of desire in Hamlet comprises a detailed account of the structure of 'fantasy' as a key element in the constitution of the subject.

His celebrated article analysing desire and fantasy in Shakespeare's Hamlet which maps the subject's relations to the signifier succinctly demonstrates the usefulness of these terms in literary criticism.¹³ In this account, therefore, reference will be made to both pure theoretical aspects of the Lacanian fantasy and the potential for their practical application in investigating character and narrative structures. In his analysis

of double figures in Hesse's work, Zimmermann acknowledged the value of Freud's treatise Über das Unheimliche.¹⁴ One function of this methodology section is to explore the equivalence between the Freudian psychoanalytic conceptualization of the uncanny and the Lacanian notion of fantasy in terms of the impact on an analysis of Der Steppenwolf. Crucial Lacanian terms around which our psychoanalytic investigation of Der Steppenwolf will pivot, the Other, the paternal metaphor of the Name-of-the-Father or the phallus will hopefully emerge as clarified sufficiently to enable the launch of a meaningful investigation of Der Steppenwolf. The formula of fantasy ($\$ \langle \rangle a$) denoting the object cause of desire structures the subject's object relations and emerges as a crucial element in the organization of the subjective field.

What we're concerned with here is the short circuit in the imaginary register between desire and that which is across from it, i.e. the fantasy; I express the general structure of the fantasy by $\$ \langle \rangle a$, where $\$$ is a certain relation of the subject to the signifier - it is the subject as irreducibly affected by the signifier - and where $\langle \rangle$ initiates the subject's relationship to an essentially imaginary juncture, designated by a , not the object of desire but the object in desire. (..) This is our starting point: through his relation to the signifier, the subject is deprived of something of himself, of his very life, which has assumed the value of that which binds him to the signifier. When the subject is deprived of this signifier, a particular object becomes for him an object in desire. This is the meaning of $\$ \langle \rangle a$.¹⁵

In Lacanian terminology, the fantasy is 'located at the end-point of the subject's question'. It designates a residue or remnant of what is left-over after the subject has emerged into the discourse of the Other, the alienating realm of signification and language at the price of 'something of himself, his very life'. The birth of the speaking subject depends on the bar of repression and substitution that alienates the subject from the

corporal sense of *jouissance* associated with the pre-discursive phase. Subsequent to this castrating entry into the symbolic order, the subject maintains an essentially imaginary relation with an object that compensates for his loss - the fantasy.

To facilitate a more concrete grasp of these rather abstract notions, I shall follow Lupton in focusing attention on a famous scene in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice involving the 'pound of flesh'.¹⁶ This scene almost graphically literalizes Lacanian notions of an inaugural Oedipal trauma implicated in the generation of fantasy and desire. There are numerous references both implicit and explicit to this scene in various stages of Lacan's thought. Lupton focuses on the following excerpt from the play.

**Portia.: Therefore lay bare thy bosom
Shylock .: Ay your breast
So says the bond, doth it not, noble judge?
Nearest his heart, those are the very words. 17**

How does this scene impinge on the Lacanian notion of fantasy?

The 'pound of flesh' in this scene is emblematic of the subject's prediscursive, corporeal sense of *jouissance*. Through castration, the subject is deprived of something 'of himself, his very life', which is mortgaged against the signifier of lack, the phallus as the symbol of the subject's alienation in language. This alienation is expressed here by the 'bond' tying the subject to signification. The word in the Lacanian universe 'hollows out reality', makes a hole in the real. This act of mortgaging designates the way by which the subject can only accede to the phallic signifier - conceptualising the Other of the symbolic

Order for him - by giving up through castration something of his own life, his own 'flesh', that will remain forever forbidden to him.

It is only through the symbolic order, according to McCannel, that a dialectic of truth and being is opened up. The oppositional pair true/false only assumes meaning in the context of the symbolic sphere. Through its capacity to conjure the absent into presence or deny presence the symbolic code introduces the subject to a new dimension of being, radically different from the real of the organismic substratum.¹⁸ In that sense, Shakespeare's scene emblematises how libidinal energy or charge can be displaced from the vital substratum to the level of the word: the pact or 'bond' with the Other. The symbolism is highly evocative from a psychoanalytic perspective. The knife in this scene is associated with the phallus (as the instrument of execution of 'symbolic castration' stipulated in the bond) whereas the breast and the heart in Lacanian discourse evoke associations of the real sphere of organismic vitality and corporeality, the symbiotic non-differentiation between self and other predating any sense of representation.

Furthermore, this Oedipal accession designates a pivotal moment. Once the subject has acceded to the phallic signifier, that is once it has both grasped and been grasped by the symbolic Other, the foundations for the wider realms of cultural and social orders have been laid. The shallow social games and rituals of bourgeois culture, a key motif in Der Steppenwolf are also embedded in this symbolic register. The phallus then

emblematises subjective acknowledgement of lack as the basis for a social self.

The barred subject \$, as 'irreducibly affected by the signifier', stands in a certain relation to the Other. It is at this stage that the Lacanian genealogy of the subject can be seen to touch on ontology. The genealogy of the subject as set out above poses the 'question of the subject' as an existential question. The subject is caught up in the dialectic of truth and being. In fact, the subject must search for what was lost to him in a dialectic with the Other, the very agent of his loss. The 'theatre of fantasy' as the imaginary compensation for and repetition of that loss, is irrevocably bound up with 'suffering being' since the subject traumatised by castration must be conceptualised as being present in and relative to the fantasy. The formula of fantasy at *'the tip, the end-point of the question of the subject..'* is ordinarily strictly confined to the unconscious - it only crosses over to the message level when it substitutes the phallus.

It is only through the evidence of such 'pathological shifts' in the modality of the subject that the structure of the unconscious becomes visible and can be subjected to theoretical formulation. When the fantasy surfaces it takes the place of the symbolic phallus as the primary signifier of lack in the Other. In that sense the fantasy dialectically both 'masks and marks' the lack in signification and *object a*, as an essentially imaginary remnant, a left-over from the real in the wake of castration crystallizes as the subject's object of desire which

compensates for the loss of corporeal *jouissance*. As Lacan put it,

The object of fantasy, image and pathos, is that other element that takes the place of what the subject is symbolically deprived of.¹⁹

Thus the 'theatre of fantasy' stages a primordial loss by replacing the phallus with an Imaginary substitute object. This may be manifested in the fantasy of perversion or the fantasy of neurosis. In terms of our analysis of Hesse's Der Steppenwolf, the pathological crossing-over of the fantasy from its register in the unconscious to the message level has two crucial implications in the Lacanian system.

A. According to Lacan, it serves to capture the essence of what Freud has designated as 'unheimlich', instances where the subject encountering irruptions of his unconscious experiences a sense of depersonalisation characterised by a shift and ambiguity in object relations. Freudian manifestations of the 'uncanny' denote a break-down of frontiers within the psychic economy. It is precisely at this juncture that Freudian discourse on the uncanny and the Lacanian discourse on the structure of fantasy can be seen to overlap. The sexual ambivalence and liminality associated with the Freudian 'uncanny' is clarified and recast by Lacan.

There is something mysterious about the fantasy; indeed it is ambiguous and paradoxical.²⁰
...an imbalance that arises in the fantasy when it decomposes crossing the limits originally assigned to it and rejoins the image of the other subject.²¹

Here Lacan implies that a sense of the 'uncanny' is produced when the crossing of the fantasy into the conscious sphere entails a projection of the unconscious material onto another.

B. Designating an existential dimension, the formula of fantasy maps the matrix of the existential drama associated with human suffering and subjectivity. 'However bizarre the fantasy', Lacan asserts, the fundamental matrix of fantasy is delineated by the subject's presence in and relation to it. As Lupton has pointed out, the empirical relations determining the subject including the 'formula of fantasy' also imply that fantasy is formulaic. The fantasy as the end-point of the subject's question operates as an integral part within the framework of the fundamentally distortive and alienating linguistic structures of metaphoric condensation and metonymic displacements that determine the subjective economy. As an imaginary secondary level reference to the real trauma of loss, the fantasy disguises a profoundly existential dimension. The fantasy is thus staged by the subject to chart a relation between a non-signified traumatic kernel, that is 'profoundly enigmatic' and remains usually hidden from the subject and the structured layers of imaginary and symbolic orders. In this mediating position, the fantasy becomes the focus in which the subject's real suffering in his existential and sexual configurations crystallizes on an imaginary level which in turn holds a precise, 'formulaic' position within the subjective field of symbolic signification. In Lacanian terminology it is a traumatic 'hole in the real' that mobilises the symbolic and imaginary registers - that sets the signifier as well as the

existential drama of the 'theatre of fantasy' in motion.²² Thus following the paradigm of Lacan's analysis of desire and fantasy in Hamlet we have a blueprint for bridging the gap between a psychological investigation of Der Steppenwolf and an investigation of the narrative use of imagery as well as tropic and linguistic devices. In terms of the complex sonata mimetic structure of Hesse's Der Steppenwolf, our analysis will exploit the Lacanian notion of fantasy as a key to unravelling that structure.

An Example from the Narrative to Exemplify that Approach

Using the notion of fantasy as a pivotal theme in our analysis will also anchor this discussion in a lineage of previous investigations of Der Steppenwolf. Ziolkowski in particular has emphasised that one of the crucial features of Der Steppenwolf is the superimposition of the phantasmatic dimension onto the realistic level, a phenomenon that today, in post-modern literary circles, is often referred to as 'magic realism'. Thus unlike many of Hesse's Romantic predecessors, Hesse sets out from a realistic base, and all the phantasmatic elements in Der Steppenwolf derive their meaning from being situated in relation to Harry Haller's plight, his despair and alienation from society. The narrative has a realistic setting, a city which is not explicitly named but is based on either Basel or Zürich in a post WW1 period. Der Steppenwolf is a modern novel rooted in a Romantic tradition. It is not a Romantic fairy tale.

Harry Haller's initiation into the Magic Theatre with its wild stream of phantasmagoric imagery that concludes the novel is very carefully prepared in the course of the narrative evolution. Outside reality usually dissolves fluidly into the phantasmatic dimension - the narrative skilfully creates a sense of superimposition of the two modes implying a projection of unconscious material onto external reality. These irruptions of the unconscious escalate over the course of the plot line in both their rate of incidence and the level of intensity and ultimately lead to the climax of the Magic Theatre that concludes and resolves the novel.

Two factors should be noted. The irruptions of the phantasmatic dimension paradoxically derive their significance from ties that link them to the realistic level of the narrative. This quality of logical consistency is rooted in the modalities of the novel that imply a parallel between Haller's subjective economy and the evolution of narrative line - that is Haller's fantasies and the allegorical dimension of the key sections of the novel combine to mirror Haller's subjective states. This interrelation is encapsulated in Karalasvili's designation of Hesse's novel as 'Seelenbiographien'.²³ The consistency is underlined by the re-appearance in the Magic Theatre of most of the novel's central protagonists in various guises that relate back to and retroactively throw new light on the position of these characters in the plot. The relevance of a Lacanian conception of fantasy to Der Steppenwolf can be illustrated by investigating Harry Haller's first encounter with the phantasmatic dimension in the novel.

As he follows the winding, labyrinthine pathways in an old, historic part of the town set out from the noise and bustle of the modern quarters he indulges again in his characteristic reflections on the decay and decline of contemporary culture with its flashy bars and jazz cellars ('Scheinkultur'). He notices flashing letters above a passageway carved into an old wall which he initially interprets as another commercial advertisement ('Leuchtreklame') disfiguring even that idyllic part of town. Eventually however, he distinguishes a message in the flashing sequence of letters.

Magisches Theatre - Eintritt nicht für jedermann

Later that day, he passes the same site once again and reflects on the significance of the message.

Das alte Stadtviertel nahm mich auf, erloschen und unwirklich stand im Grau die kleine Kirche. Plötzlich fiel mir das Erlebnis vom Abend wieder ein, mit der rätselhaften Spitzbogentür, mit der rätselhaften Tafel darüber, mit den spöttisch tanzenden Lichtbuchstaben.... Prüfend blickte ich zu der alten Mauer herüber, heimlich wünschend der Zauber möge wieder beginnen, die Inschrift mich Verrückten einladen, das kleine Tor mich einlassen. Dort vielleicht war das was ich begehrte, dort vielleicht würde meine Musik gespielt?

(S.53)

These objects - the flashing letters that Haller compares to such modern commercial excesses as 'Leuchtreklame' and the enigmatic figure appearing and disappearing suddenly - are still situated in an overall credibly realistic framework. It is their subjective importance to Haller, to whom they 'stick out' from the surrounding fabric of reality that endows them with the qualities of 'object a', the gaze as object cause of desire. In Lacanian theory, there is a constitutive 'pathological' stain in reality, a vestige of what had to be extracted from the field of

reality for this reality to acquire its consistency. A somatic substratum remains forever forbidden and inaccessible to the subject whose relations to that traumatic kernel are mediated through the disfiguring imaginary and symbolic layers. When the imaginary fantasy transgresses the limits assigned to it in the unconscious, the subject's gaze - distorted by desire - transforms a piece of 'objective reality' into a sublime object. Thus according to Žižek, the fantasy object is an object that 'does not exist for the objective gaze.'²⁴

In this light, Haller's encounters with these strange objects, the flashing letters and the little man who suddenly enters and then disappears from his field of vision can be deciphered as a cross-over of the fantasy into objective reality. The phallus, designating what the subject is 'symbolically deprived of' is replaced by the unconscious fantasy and therefore external reality assumes an air of subjective significance. The scenario set up by Hesse conveys a sense of 'pregnant meaning' and a magical dimension precisely because these objects in Haller's psychic economy now occupy the precise site in the field of the Other that should designate the emptiness, the lack in the Other, subjective *alienation* in signification.

Because of their symbolic associations, their power to evoke a space separated from common, everyday reality, doors or windows are ideally suited to delineate the subject's fantasy.²⁵ In that light, the enigmatic portal ('Spitzbogentür') in Der Steppenwolf emerges as the focus of Haller's fantasy space, it acts as an empty screen for the projection of his desire. To the extent that

the passage cited earlier is permeated with an undercurrent of longing, the close association with an economy of desire is evident: *'...heimlich wünschend, der Zauber möge wieder beginnen....dort vielleicht war das, was ich begehrte.'* In a Lacanian ontology, desire is a cipher for a 'lack of being' and the real object transformed by the desiring gaze only materialises the void at the heart of constituted reality. According to Žižek:

The gaze capable of discerning the fascinating contours of the object of desire where a normal view sees nothing but a trivial, everyday object is literally a gaze capable of seeing nothingness.²⁶

Thus while Haller's encounter with a 'magical realm' at the outskirts of the city is highly improbable from a realistic perspective it is nonetheless psychologically as well as existentially 'accurate', it 'touches some chord in our unconscious'²⁷ and illustrates how narrative devices in Der Steppenwolf, far from being arbitrary, align textual structure and subjective content.

However, if we left our analysis at this point, asserting only that Haller's encounters designate fantasy projections into the constitutive gap within the established social field of the bourgeoisie we would reduce their import to mere 'Romantic escapism'. In a second theoretical approach to this problem I would like to suggest that these passages in Der Steppenwolf also announce another dimension. The mysterious objects Haller comes across suggest a 'communication' from the field of the Other,

evoking a sense that Haller, all of a sudden, finds himself the addressee of a meaningful 'metaphysical' message that punctuates the despair and ennui of his everyday existence. This 'message' holds a key strategic position within the intricate, overall composition of the novel as it anticipates important later developments including Haller's acquisition of the "Traktat" and the Magic Theatre which are both linked with the 'realm of the Immortals'.²⁸ How then are we to read this apparent external 'intervention' in Haller's life? In our Demian chapter, we outlined in some detail the mechanism by which active symbolic identification with a master signifier in the Other (God, Nation and so on) is retroactively transcoded into a 'call' or an interpellation, a misapprehension that results from a 'transferential illusion' which is itself an essential component in this the process. From that perspective, the sublime objects encountered in the liminal zone at the outskirts of town which are aligned with the motif of the 'golden trace'²⁹ in the narrative function as material corollaries to this 'metaphysical Other' which appears to interpellate Haller. As little 'pieces of the real', sublime retroactive products of the processes of identification that are depicted in the novel, they constitute Haller himself, or his material correlative within the visual field. They are poetic evocations of the gaze qua object. In this respect the emphasis on flashing lights ('Leuchtreklame') in announcing this metaphysical dimension in Der Steppenwolf is important. In Seminar XI, Lacan emphasised the significance of light in the function of the gaze which is outside stating: '*Was Licht ist, blickt mich an*'.³⁰ He also contrasted a fallacious view

of visual perception based on the geometric laws of perspective and the mirage of the Cartesian cogito with the crucial role of light in genuinely *subjective* perception:

Das wesentliche an der Beziehung zwischen Schein und Sein, zu dessen Herrn der Philosoph bei seinen Eroberungen auf dem Feld des Sehens sich aufschwingt ist anderswo. Es ist nicht in der Geraden, es ist im Lichtpunkt~ dans le point lumineux, im Strahlpunkt, in dem Riesel, dem Feuer, dem Sprühquell der Reflexe.³¹

We note that the insistence of the fantasy object, of the object gaze, is central to both our theoretical approaches. The issue is in relation to which big Other the manifestations of *objet petit a* should be considered: the Other organising bourgeois reality from which Haller seeks to escape or the Other supporting the 'metaphysical field' in which he becomes progressively immersed. This is ultimately a central ambiguity within the text itself, an ambiguity that lends these passages their air of mystery and depth.

Lacanian Analysis to be Modeled around Threshold in the Narrative

An analysis of tropes - metaphor, metonymy and allegory - will emerge as crucial to our analysis of Der Steppenwolf. The portrait of Haller that emerges in the first half of Der Steppenwolf - prior to his encounter with Hermine in 'Der Schwarze Adler' - can be shown to crystallize fundamentally around central allegorical gestures. We will investigate the psychological substratum inherent in these allegories on the basis of the Freudian/Lacanian paradigm that underlies this analysis and determine the relation between the use of tropes and the unfolding of the narrative.

To aid this analysis, I propose a division of the analysis of Der Steppenwolf into two parts. The first part can be designated as the narrative prior to Haller's first meeting with Hermine while the second part encompasses the novel's increasing shift into the magical dimension (the masked ball, the Magic Theatre). Adopting this structural approach will afford a Lacanian perspective on Der Steppenwolf that diverges from the preponderance amongst critics to investigate the narrative structure of Der Steppenwolf in terms of its 'sonata structure'. A division into two distinct parts appears to me to be justified on the basis of a clearly palpable dividing line in the narrative itself that is apparent on a number of levels.

Emotionally, there is a shift in the mood from the Steppenwolf's alienation, his despair and ostentatious despondency with frequent allusions to the possibility of suicide to a spirit of absorbed fascination engendered by Haller's introduction into Hermine's circle. Haller's initiation into Hermine's demi-monde is portrayed vividly in the narrative and forms a stark contrast to his sense of despair tangible throughout the first half of the novel. Furthermore, in terms of narrative structure, the second part can be seen to mirror the first, in that both appear to be intrinsically geared to a cathartic, climactic conclusion by their internal dynamics. The end of the first part is marked by the maelstrom of despair that sees Haller seriously poised on the brink of committing suicide. The reversal is only effected through the intervention of Hermine or rather through the dimension that she is coded to represent in the narrative.

Harry's encounter with his 'semblable' in the 'second part' then sets the stage for an interconnected series of events. His unfolding relation to Hermine leads to the masked ball and eventually culminates in Harry's exorcism in the Magic Theatre and his murder of Hermine. This climactic scene had been as skilfully insinuated and prepared along the narrative line as the climax that precedes Haller's encounter of Hermine.

The central aim of subjecting these two rather distinct parts to separate, detailed investigations from a Lacanian perspective is to identify the common psychological subtext that can be shown to underlie both sections. For instance, it will be demonstrated that the two climactic scenes that are rendered in an analogous stylistic and semantic framework point to the same kind of underlying psycho-dynamic dialectics. In our layered analysis, this opens up the possibility of a mutual signification, that is a deeper understanding of each section on the basis of the analysis of the other.

II. Steppenwolf's Allegorical Mode as its Process of Enunciation

'So it is between the signifier in the form of the proper name of a man and the signifier that metaphorically abolishes him that the poetic spark is produced' Jacques Lacan

The novel's central protagonist, Harry Haller, has clearly been construed as an alter ego by Hesse. Identical initials of author and central protagonist as well as a certain phonetic congruence of the two names attest to the self-reflective autobiographical nature of the work. However, it is only in an act of aesthetic sublimation that Hesse transposes his real biography, dominated by the crises of two failed marriages and a sense of alienation from an increasingly militarist bourgeois society in Europe onto the artistic plane of the novel. To grasp the narrative modalities of Der Steppenwolf this move should be conceptualised in terms of an allegorical or mirror relation. Hesse's [relatively brief] return from the idyllic sanctuary of his 'Zaubergarten' in Montagnala to city life in Basel at the time of composition of Der Steppenwolf had accentuated his sense of a deep chasm separating him from urban-metropolitan society in general. He could not identify with its shallow diversions and felt that the bourgeoisie shared none of his own deeply-felt artistic aspirations and humanitarian-utopian objectives. Shortly before the publication of Der Steppenwolf, Hesse had expressed his sense of intense crisis and frequently physical suffering in his often cynical and bleak Krisis poems that share their intimate, confessional nature with Der Steppenwolf. In the afterword of Krisis Hesse states that he had reached one of those

'stages of life where the spirit tires of itself and lets nature, chaos and all that is animalistic reign free.'³²

Thus Hesse's sense of crisis and alienation from society becomes the basis of Haller's experiences in the novel. In letters to friends written at that time Hesse sometimes refers to himself as a Steppenwolf, the central trope for Haller in the novel.³³ And yet there is a creative spark that inheres in the substitution of Harry Haller for the author in the novel that both liberates that work from the constraints of autobiographical context and generates an allegorical 'surplus of meaning' that is irreducible to either the author or his alter ego but inheres in the moment of difference, in their dialectical relation. According to Lacan it is precisely through the substitution of signifiers that relegate the substituted signifier to the level of the signified that a poetic spark, a subjective meaning is generated.³⁴ From that perspective, Der Steppenwolf emerges as a 'displaced' autobiography whose aesthetic quality resides in the creation of a 'transcendent' allegorical space.

A further feature that underscores the importance of a mirroring in 'Steppenwolf' is Hesse's wider conception of Harry Haller, explicitly articulated in the narrative by the editor in his foreword, as encapsulating in his personal pathology the peculiar neurosis of his time:

Haller gehörte zu denen, die zwischen zwei Zeiten hereingeraten, die aus aller Geborgenheit und Unschuld herausgefallen sind, und deren Schicksal es ist, alle Fragwürdigkeit des Menschenlebens gesteigert als persönliche Qual und Hölle zu erleben.

(S.32)

This echoes the constellation of the pathology of Dostojewski who had a significant influence on Hesse. The neurosis of his time crystallizes in Haller who is semantically encoded in the narrative to allegorically transcend his own personality, to assume the function of a 'medium', a focalising point exemplifying wider societal dynamics. Harry Haller can therefore be seen to have been consistently construed in terms of a complex metaphorical-allegorical relation, in relation to both the author and the cultural-historical context. This intertwining of life and art whereby Der Steppenwolf as a focused artistic endeavour can be seen as a 'magic mirror' of the real Hermann Hesse then defines the novel's process of enunciation, the modalities of its constitution. In that sense, it is in the chain of signifiers that compose the text that Hesse innovatively constitutes his own subjectivity.

As critics of the Hesse literature have pointed out (Seidlin, Freedman), a feature peculiar in Der Steppenwolf is the theme of mirrors which permeates the narrative. The role of mirrors as ciphers for identity is therefore by no means confined to the 'Magic Theatre'. There is a consistent motif of mirroring surfaces (mirrors, reflecting puddles of rainwater and so on) and our analysis will reveal that numerous scenes in the novel are construed in a tropic, figurative sense as allegorical 'mirrors' of Haller that not only reflect his synchronous state of mind but diachronically allude to the novel's psychological subtext. Many of the literal allusions to mirroring surfaces partake of the allegorical gesture:

Mit gespielter Munterkeit trabte ich über den feucht beschlagenen Asphalt der Gassen, tränend und umflort blickten die Laternenlichter durch die kühlfeuchte Trübe und sogen träge Spiegelbilder aus dem nassen Boden.

(S.39-40)

In order to understand the signification and affective quality of these as well as purely figurative mirror scenes in the narrative (i.e. Haller's interpretation of a funeral scene, his visit to a professor of Oriental Studies) in their allegorical and psychoanalytic dimension, we must relate them to the Freudian-Lacanian conception of the formation of subjectivity around earliest experiences of loss. This will also facilitate an analysis of the connection between the "Traktat" and the subsequent narrative. It is a commonplace in the Hesse criticism that Hesse's conflict between self and world is portrayed in his literature in 'symbolic and allegorical self-representation'.³⁵ However, only a detailed psychoanalytical approach can isolate the psychological subtext from these allegories.

III. Melancholia in Freud and Lacan as a Key to Unravelling Haller

Harry Haller's melancholic disposition is clearly articulated in precise, often psychologically correct detail in the theoretical abstract of the "Traktat" (see section IV) and underlies the allegorical mode of the passages that occur subsequent to Haller's reading of the "Traktat", for instance in the funeral scene (section V). The major focus of our analysis consists in identifying the extent to which these scenes operate functionally as signifiers for an occluded meaning - that is, to isolate the psychological substratum from Hesse's allegories.

It is with that perspective in mind that the connection between allegory, melancholia and the conflictual dialects of hermeneutic discovery in the Oedipalization of the subject that appears to inform these scenes can be critically elucidated from a Lacanian vantage point.

Lacan's article Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet suggests that in the economy of human desire mourning and (obsessional) neurosis are linked. In this pivotal article Lacan also examines the link between mourning and the 'constitution of the object in desire'. In examining the interimplication of mourning and desire in constituting subjectivity Lacan follows Freud's earlier enunciation on that topos in Trauer und Melancholie. In Trauer und Melancholie, Freud suggests that the mechanism of mourning forms a suitable matrix for analysing melancholia. However while mourning is presented as straightforward, the text casts melancholia in terms of a

regressive return to a primordial 'Oedipal mourning' designating an effective enthrallment of the subject in his unconscious. While Freud hypothesises that the reaction to a traumatic 'object loss' underlies both mourning and melancholia he shows that the specific modalities of both reactions differ crucially. Mourning emerges as a slow and painful process of decathexis of libido (Freud posits an initial hypercathexis) from the lost object that initiates a trajectory back to psychic equilibrium. In the ultimate resolution of mourning, the decathected libido is then free to be invested in other objects. However, the melancholic's grief appears to be determined by powerful, subconscious dynamics that may be rooted in a previous 'ambiguous' or conflictual attachment to object of loss.

So wurde uns nahe gelegt, die Melancholie irgendwie auf einen dem Bewusstsein entzogenen Objektverlust zu beziehen, zum Unterschied von der Trauer, bei welcher nichts an dem Verluste unbewusst ist.³⁶

For instance, the melancholic's original object choice may have been narcissistically motivated. Such libidinal narcissistic projections into the object could then prevent the resolution through decathexis that characterizes mourning. In the next stage of his approach, Freud accounts for the characteristic melancholic phenomena - absorption, loss of interest, an encompassing 'depletion' of the ego and fierce, masochistic self-reproach - with reference to a dialectical mechanism that reconfigures the ego in the image of the lost object. In that narrative the lost object actually re-emerges as '*a shadow on the ego*'. Freud thus conceptualises an 'introjection' of the lost

object into the self that reconfigures the self by turning the loss of the object into the 'lack of the ego'. An en-cryption of loss into the self therefore lies at the heart of melancholic subjectivity. The ego's depletion then renders the subject susceptible to 'superego terror'. In this narrative, melancholia can be deduced to a suppressed aggression or hostility that was originally aimed at the ambivalently or narcissistically loved object and subsequently reappears within a 'divided ego'. According to Freud

Die Melancholie entlehnt also einen Teil ihres Characters der Trauer, den anderen Teil dem Vorgang der Regression von der narzissistischen Objektwahl zum Narzissmus.³⁷

In Freud's earliest theoretical elaborations on melancholia, the melancholic identification with the 'introjected' mourned object is cast in terms of a regressive return to the modalities of 'introjective', pre-Oedipal oral cannibalism. On the other hand, Trauer und Melancholie anticipates the symbolic-Oedipal introjection of a paternal agency of Law which is also based on a process of integration of the object into the self.³⁸ Freud's explication of mourning and melancholia in terms of narcissism and the incorporation of the object is recast by Lacan as a dialectic between his imaginary and symbolic registers at the decline of the Oedipus that gravitates around the necessity of mourning the object of loss - the phallus.

Well, in terms of our discourse, 'narcissistic' has something to do with the imaginary register. Let's start by saying the subject must explore (faire le tour de) his relationship to the field of the Other, i.e. the field organized in the symbolic register, in which his demand has begun to express itself. It is when he emerges from that exploration, having carried it to the end, that

the loss of the phallus occurs for him and is felt as such, a radical loss. How does he respond to the necessity of this loss? Precisely with the composition of his imaginary register and with nothing else.³⁹

This theory then provides us with a paradigm for analysing crucial features of Der Steppenwolf. The unstable oscillation between masochistic self-reproach and a sadistic projection of hostility to the outside that characterises Harry Haller in Der Steppenwolf can then be cast in terms of melancholic object relations that entail an interpretive construction of subjectivity around object loss (detailed discussion in section V).

Secondly this framework provides a key to understanding the relation of two major themes in Der Steppenwolf: Harry Haller's melancholic despondency and his narcissistic relation to his double Hermine in the second part. The Freudian narrative which suggests a link between Oedipal regression, melancholic grief and the refusal to decahct libido from narcissistic projections thus emerges as an extremely useful tool for a psychoanalytic investigation of Der Steppenwolf. Significantly the novel culminates in the murder of Haller's 'semblable' - his narcissistic counterpart - in the 'Magic Theatre'. Hermine is construed as maternal Other in relation to Haller (section VIII) and 'metamorphoses' into a ghostly immortal subsequent to her death in a scene that evokes the Oedipal elision of the maternal flesh and the transformation of object loss through symbolic introjection (discussion in IV and XI).

Let me therefore examine the outlines of melancholia and Oedipal desire in greater detail. As we have seen, Lacan recasts Freudian notions on mourning and melancholia in terms of his three registers and focuses on the necessity of 'mourning the phallus' at the decline of the Oedipus. According to Lupton, these processes can be seen to crystallize in the famous FORT/DA game of Freud's grandson. The pre-Oedipal trauma of maternal loss that initiates the dialectics of expulsive, narcissistic projection ('Fort', the imaginary) and symbolic, relational introjection ('Da', the father's name) relevant in the process of personification therefore re-emerges as a crucial factor in melancholia.

Lupton has argued that the transition from the pre-Oedipal, dual-specular relation that conforms with the Lacanian register of the imaginary, to the tertiary Oedipal structure consists in the infolding, or introjecting of the primary narcissistic projection into the self. This process establishes the self by dividing it and setting it up in relation to an external linguistic or symbolic structure, the discursive framework that retro-actively (en)genders the subject on the basis of the infolding of the primary pre-linguistic narcissistic projections. It is therefore crucial to conceptualise the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal phases as interconnected through a retro-active translation or re-troping, a process that superimposes the subject's symbolic identifications with signifiers such as gender and the father's name onto the primary, dual-specular imaginary framework:

(this) evokes the spatially contiguous and infolded rather than temporally distinct relation of pre-Oedipal to the Oedipal while exemplifying the interpretive tendency of the former to disappear into the latter.⁴⁰

In formulating this topology of subjectivity we can revert to the aforementioned dream of a 'dead father returning as a ghost' analysed by Lacan. Lacan emphasises as crucial that the father in the dream did 'not know that he was dead' and that his survival depended only on not telling him this truth of which he was unaware. The didactic point that Lacan derives from this dream refers to the fact that the subjective 'I' on whom survival depends is by implication an equally virtual construction, that 'I as subject' comes on to the scene as 'being of non-being' (In the same article, Lacan points out that the idea of the ideal father is a dream held by the neurotic).

In the light of these considerations the role of the theme of the realm of the spirit (Geist) in Der Steppenwolf can be further elucidated. Freedman has pointed out that the recurring theme of 'Geist' in Hermann Hesse, apart from signifying the realm of intellect also connotes a '*regulating paternal force of control*' and the '*clarity of a divinely rational spirit*'.⁴¹

As suggested above, in a Lacanian reading the figures of 'Immortals' such as Goethe or Mozart that embody 'Geist' and art, psychoanalytically signify 'dead fathers' that have been introjected into the self and in that sense are useful in illustrating the modalities of subjectivity in the novel. This can be exemplified by Haller's Goethe dream which accompanies his first meeting with Hermine - by contrast construed as maternal

Other. In that dream Goethe literally appears as a 'ghostly' paternal figure who is confronted by Haller with a barrage of fierce accusations condemning his complacent and established role in the spiritual realm. On the basis of our reading of Cremerius, these charges may be taken to connote an Oedipal anger. Haller accuses Goethe of pompous gravitas and unjustified optimism, of 'mummifying the moment' in his attempt to transform nature into spirit through his art - though this results only 'in petrifying nature into a mask'. In essence Haller's charges here are aimed at the transformation of living *jouissance* into 'dead' symbolic structure. This parallels the paradigm of a subjective 'de-substantialisation' in the wake of Oedipal introjection that informs the Lacanian analysis of the dream of the 'dead father'. There are further indications of an underlying Oedipal theme in that dream. Haller does not visit 'Goethe' as an individual but acts on the commission of a paper and immediately expresses deep misgivings about this state of affairs. Deep-seated difficulties to accept 'symbolic mandates' associated with the realms of language and culture lie at the heart of Lacanian discussions of the structure of post-Oedipal subjectivity.

There is a discontinuity in the dream as 'Goethe' does not respond to Haller's accusations on an intellectual level - i.e. does not engage in the discourse on the symbolic phallus or the name-of-the-father - but responds by shifting to an ironic play representing the vicissitudes of the 'imaginary phallus':

**In der Tat war kein ernstes Wort mehr mit dem Mann zu reden, er tänzelte vergnügt und gelenkig auf und nieder und liess die Primel aus seinem Stern bald wie eine Rakete herausschiessen, bald klein werden und verschwinden.
(S.100-101)**

Projection-introjection dynamics also play an important role in the events surrounding the Magic Theatre and the masked ball in Der Steppenwolf which features numerous instances of gender ambiguity and uncanny superimpositions. There are also retroversion effects in the 'Magic Theatre' when Haller suddenly recognizes his friend Pablo in Mozart, one of the Immortals in the novel which we have associated with the symbolic agency of the Name-of-the-Father (see outline).

The relation of the Oedipalization of the subject to allegorical modalities in the narrative will be discussed in greater detail in section V.

Haller's allegorizing gaze in a key scene in the 'Editor's Prologue' as a mirror of psychological substrata

The modalities of allegorical self-representation in Steppenwolf can be illustrated by analysing a crucial scene in the 'Editor's Prologue': Haller's over-reaction to a cultural critic and philosopher who is delivering a disappointing talk. This figure allegorises Haller's despair by embodying the malaise of the 'condition humaine'. The editor describes Haller's reductive, hostile gaze thus:

Dieser Blick sagte .: 'Schau, solche Affen sind wir. Schau, so ist der Mensch. Und alle Berühmtheit, alle Gescheitheit, alle Errungenschaften des Geistes, alle Anlaeufer zu Erhabenheit, Grösse und Dauer im Menschlichen fielen zusammen und waren ein Affenspiel.'

(S.100-101)

The editor takes great pains to emphasise the 'overdetermination' of that allegorising gaze, its capacity to encapsulate the 'essence' of Harry Haller's character. He even assumes a position of critical distance from this sudden flash of allegorical insight which he senses at the core of Haller's subjectivity - *'Ich habe damit ... eigentlich gegen meinen Willen schon das Wesentliche über Haller gesagt.'* He would have preferred what he considers a more appropriate, gradual organic evolution of a characterisation of Haller in the course of the narrative.

From our Lacanian perspective, Haller's allegorising gaze traces a characteristically melancholic mode of identification. A detailed analysis of this scene reveals the infolding of narcissistic projections in an act of hermeneutic introjection, an operation that is relevant in the creation of both subjectivity and allegorical meaning. Hesse's allegory begins on the level of purely imaginary capture, focusing on the general sense of unease in the audience and the disappointment of high expectations in this cultural critic in whom many had expected a kind of prophet (*'eine Art von Propheten vermutet'*). Thus the text explicitly indicates the philosopher's functioning as ideal ego, an imaginary, transference object for audience desires and identifications and alludes to the shattering of these projective illusions through the philosopher's excessively vain and conceited demeanour. But as soon as Haller casts his despondent, allegorising gaze, we discern the superimposition of a symbolic mode of identification. The phrase *'Schau, so ist der Mensch'* denotes the subjection of the imago to the signifier and

succinctly captures the allegorical spark that is created by a linguistic abstraction from the here and now. In that sense, the modalities by which the text arrives at the 'transcendence of the allegorical space' trace the trajectory of the contiguous transformation of pre-Oedipal narcissistic projections into the dimension of Oedipal law that lie at the heart of subjective identification.

A dialectic of narcissistic investments (expectations and disappointment) functions as the initial focal point of Haller's attack that prepares and founds the allegorical gesture. But this transferential level subsequently disappears into the tropic valuation. The moment of abstraction, the threshold at which the imaginary level starts to vanish into the symbolic can be identified in the text. *'Dieser Blick kritisierte nicht bloss jenen Redner, ...das war das Wenigste daran.'* (In the circular and paradoxical motion characteristic of allegory Haller's symbolically framed denunciation of culture and existence effectively 'blots out' the immediate human encounter which is then relegated to the level of the signified for the allegorical signifier. It is by means of this dialectical operation that semiotic content is carried and embodied. Allegorical enunciation, subjectivity and ontology are inextricably intertwined in this key scene confirming the editor's intimation of its essential and paradigmatic character (see section IV and V on the function of allegory). The editor's contrasting of an organic evolution of characterization with the succinct, even instantaneous revelation inherent in the allegorical mode reveals

a self-reflective insight into Steppenwolf's narrative and allegorical modalities.

IV. An Investigation of the "Traktat"

The "Traktat" falls into two sections, one largely psychological and the other predominantly 'metaphysical'. By equating psychology with the empiricism of physics, the narrator of the "Traktat" dismisses a purely psychological investigation as insufficient to fully elucidate the phenomenology of the Steppenwolf and therefore supplements encompassing cosmic or meta-physical considerations about individuation and symbiosis with the all. Clearly, a detached Lacanian analysis will not take this distinction at face value, as any Jungian approach with its emphasis on supra-individual archetypes would be tempted to do, but rather consider both sections in their mutual signification using a psychological and psycho-philosophical rather than a metaphysical model in the investigation.

The 'psychological' section of the "Traktat" outlines two fundamental characteristic features of a Steppenwolf ('*Kennzeichen, Signaturen*'). First, the Steppenwolf is defined in reference to an almost physically palpable atmosphere of isolation, a dissociative gliding away of all social relations that threatens to suffocate him and which mirror Hesse's own situation at the time. Secondly he is cast as a suicide ('*Selbstmörder*'). Both criteria evoke the Freudian narrative of the interiorization of loss, the mortifying en-cryption of absence or loss as lack that underlie the melancholic's depletion of the ego (see section III).

Allegorical desire: mourning and meaning

'Desire as quintessentially Oedipal desire defines a relation of slippage and return' Lupton

A sense of solipsism and 'depletion', forming one of the most significant features of any *Steppenwolf*, is founded on psychological substrata that can be identified by investigating its 'antithesis': the numerous nostalgic passages in the novel that usually evoke an imagined ideal state in the past and lament its irrevocable loss. Since 'allegorical desire' lies at the heart of these laments, we consider Hesse's nostalgic evocations as a prototype of the structure of the allegories in Der Steppenwolf that will be examined in greater detail in section IV.3. Many of Steppenwolf's mournful, nostalgic passages outside the "Traktat" tend to be rendered in a passionate, lyrical style. These 'prosepoems' frequently evoke the preoccupation with isolation and loss in Hesse's early, elegiac, neo-Romantic poetry. Let me provide just one example:

**Oh Vater und Mutter, o ferne heilige Feuer meiner Jugend, o ihr tausend Freuden , Arbeiten und Ziele meines Lebens. Nichts von allem war mir geblieben, nicht einmal Reue, nur Ekel und ~~und~~ Schmerz.
(S.82)**

Critical charges of 'kitsch' and sentimentality or a persistent fixation in the 'Schwärmerei' of youth that are frequently directed against Hesse tend to focus on such passages.⁴²

However, from a Lacanian perspective, the statement reveals a nexus of desire and melancholic regression which is instrumental

in subjective constitution. It is suitable in explicating the interweaving of Hesse's typically lyrical use of language with the modalities of the construction of identity in his novels. The first crucial point to note is the 'metonymic slippage' of desire in Haller's lament which corresponds uncannily to psychoanalytic conceptualisations of libidinal transformations encapsulated, for example, in a passage by Ragland/Sullivan. Libidinal charge is attached *'first to parents, later to their substitutive replacements and finally to collective ideals'*.⁴³

To unravel Haller's mournful mood we should recall the underlying link between melancholic despondency and the decline of the Oedipus. Lacan has specified the decline of the Oedipus by the exigency of 'mourning the phallus' which marks the crystallising point at which the true object of mourning (loss of the 'maternal phallus') is re-constituted in the field of signification and language as the elusive, metonymic string of imaginary objects 'in' desire.⁴⁴

This is to suggest that if we take Haller's ostentatious display of melancholic excess too literally, we will miss the point. The genealogy of the poetic effect which is present here crucially depends on the disjunction between what is enunciated and what is ultimately aimed at but missed in the enunciation: the presence of a traumatic kernel within in the psychic economy which is beyond representation in language. From that perspective we may distinguish between Haller's manifest nostalgia for a number of determinate objects ('ferne heilige Feuer meiner Jugend', 'Arbeiten und Ziele meines Lebens'), and an underlying

traumatic, primordial loss in relation to which the particular objects are configured as metonymic displacements. From a Lacanian perspective which specifically links the poetic devices of metaphor and metonymy to subjective identification⁴⁵, the evocative quality of Haller's lament therefore rests on a filtering of a primordial loss through the medium of language. This is to suggest that the poignancy of these passages derives from their allegorical mode of enunciation which, as our further investigation will reveal, may be considered a prototype of other allegories in Hesse.

The traumatic Thing or object of pre-Oedipal mourning, resisting representation, is forever beyond grasp to the human being subjected to the signifier and is therefore present 'in' the subject only through elision and rebirth in the field of meaning. In that sense, it is meaning or signification as an ultimately self-referential system itself which bars immediate access to lost the paradise of primordial *jouissance* and it is this relation of subjectivity and language that lies at the core of the underlying mournful mode in the narrative. It is therefore precisely at this nodal point, the point of intersection between meaning and mournful desire that the genealogy of the allegorical effect in Hesse should be sought.

According to Walter Benjamin, '*meaning is the reason for mournfulness*' and '*mourning is the mother of the allegories and their content*'.⁴⁶

There is considerable evidence from previous analyses of Hesse's work that Hesse considered language and signification - the medium of the writer's work - as deficient. Further, that it is precisely this perception of a language crisis which led him to the adoption of an allegorical mode of enunciation in his works. In his work on the novels of Hermann Hesse, Ziolkowski devoted an entire chapter to this phenomenon. In this chapter entitled 'The Crisis of Language'⁴⁷, he explicitly links Hesse's standard modes of literary expression - the use of allegorical devices, complex structural arrangements in Der Steppenwolf that evoke musical analogies, a harkening back to Romantic motifs and so on - to Hesse's perception of a language crisis ('Sprachkrise'), the perception of an inherent deficiency of language as the medium of literary expression, in contrast for example to the media of painters and musicians who find themselves in a privileged position in terms of their potential to express affective immediacy. It is in this context that Ziolkowski quotes Hesse on Demian and Mother Eva as figures '*that encompass and signify far more than is accessible to rational consideration; they are magical conjurations*'.⁴⁸

Hesse's awareness of a constitutive disjunction in signification in his work illustrates the significance of an allegorical function that lies at the heart of his prose. This allows us to establish the relation between allegorical signification and melancholia in Hesse. From the perspective of a psychoanalytic Lacanian interpretation the signified of Hesse's melancholic laments relates to the loss of the maternal phallus,

that is the pre-castration wish of the child to 'be' what is lacking in the (m)other - the 'phallus'. As we have seen earlier in our discussion of the homology between melancholia and the Oedipus, the pre-Oedipal catastrophe of maternal loss tends to feature as a crucial aspect in the melancholic sensibility (section III). It is in that sense that we can designate melancholia, characterised by the gliding of a signified that remains unenunciated beneath a string of manifest signifiers, as the 'prototype' of the predominant allegorical mode in Der Steppenwolf or in Benjamin's terminology as the 'mother of allegory'.

How are these dynamics linked to the construction of subjectivity? In the passage above, Haller pronounces all his libidinal objects as lost and thereby simultaneously construes himself as subject, but as a subject which arises in terms of a negative enunciation of absence or void in the symbolic order ('*nichts von allem war mir geblieben*'). This construction of self derives from an 'introjective' transformation, the 'encryption' or re-tropeing of loss as lack of the ego that characterises a melancholic subject held in the thrall of primordial Oedipal modalities (see section III).

These considerations may appear rather abstract. Are there more tangible indications that traces of a primordial trauma may underlie the predominant melancholic mood and the allegorical mode of the first part of Der Steppenwolf? There is in fact evidence for the great significance of such a traumatic event -

which can never be represented directly or in straightforward realistic terms - in the drama of Haller's desire: Hermine's tragic yet surreal death in the Magic Theatre.

Our analysis of the second part of Der Steppenwolf will focus in detail on the extent to which Haller's double Hermine is constructed - in a regressive mode - with distinct maternal connotations as Haller's imaginary Other: his m(other). Hermine later is stabbed in the heart by Haller and thereby provides an image of the object of traumatic loss par excellence - the dead mother. From our critical perspective, we can then read her strange death in the surreal, mirrored world of the Magic Theatre as an innovative literary approach to representing the traumatic loss of the maternal object which constitutes an essentially non-representable kernel underlying all psychic structuring.

The primary advantage of this Lacanian reading of Haller's melancholic mood as the encoding of a primordial Oedipal scenario lies in the remarkable consistency of this approach with the psychological undercurrents of the developments that conclude the novel - in particular Haller's murder of Hermine in the Magic Theatre. The architecture of the novel as a whole is geared - with compelling logic - toward Haller's murder of his double Hermine. Hermine holds a position as a force of life and sensuality in the novel and effectively rescues Haller from the brink of suicide. However, subsequent to her stabbing, she metamorphoses, her face frozen into a gorgonic mask, and evokes the realm of the spirit and the Immortals. This appears like a

theatrical re-enactment of the Oedipal suppression of the maternal object in favour of the realm of language and culture.

**Schaudernd starrte ich auf die steingewordene Stirn, auf die starre Locke, auf den bleichkühlen Schimmer der Ohrmuschel. Die Kälte, die von ihr ausströmte, war tödlich und war dennoch schön.: sie klang, sie war wunderbar, sie war Musik.
(S.254)**

It is evident from the thread of narrative evolution that Hermine's death and transfiguration, far from being coincidental, should be read in terms of Haller's deepest unconscious wishes and thus functions as the expression and culmination of the death drive which informs the entire structural framework of the novel. The main insight that can be derived from this - at this stage - relates to the striking similarity in the language rendering the spiritual realm of the Immortal in this and other passages and the style in which Haller's melancholia and isolation tend to be cast.

Haller's shifts from an identification with Hermine as his projective mirror 'semblable' or maternal (m)other, toward the introjective re-trope of her loss: her death is imbued with symbolic significance which metaphorically substitutes their former relation in his psychic economy. Haller's identification with a transcendental realm in the Magic Theatre replaces not the 'maternal' object as such but rather the loss of that object and may thus be considered as an archetypal blueprint of the inscription of a 'void' into the self. Psychodynamically, Hermine's death as the apotheosis of the developments in the 'Magic Theatre' and the modalities of the allegorical construction of identity in the first part are on the same level.

From that perspective we can now more comprehensively appreciate the "Traktat's" treatment of Haller's isolation within the claustrophobic enclosure of his private intellectual world. Haller's spiritual realm emerges as an 'Oedipal', metaphoric substitution that connotes an abs-traction from the fullness of life. This is suitably captured in the German term 'Geist' and is captured very well in Haller's own accusation against Goethe in the Goethe dream:

Sie haben so getan, als sei ... Ihre ganze Weimarer Altersexistenz ein Weg, um den Augenblick zu verewigen den Sie doch nur mummifizieren konnten, und die Natur zu vergeistigen, die Sie doch nur zur Maske stilisieren konnten. (S.98)

The rhetoric in this passage with its references to mortification uncannily anticipates Hermine's transformation indicating how deeply this fundamental structure is inscribed into the text. The main thrust of Haller's accusation may be discerned in his charging Goethe with 'impotence' in attempting to accede to the realm of the spirit. In other words, symbolic castration is at stake here. According to Žižek

... the symbolic order is conceived as having a mortifying effect on the subject , as imposing on him traumatic loss - and the name of this loss, of this lack is of course symbolic castration.⁴⁹

In terms of these psychodynamic considerations, it is then not surprising to find that the text frequently juxtaposes Haller's isolation/melancholic despair with references to the realm of the spirit in the text. Correspondingly, the rhetoric - sometimes

echoing Nietzsche - that Hesse adopts in the description of Haller's isolation is highly reminiscent of the imagery that accompanies Hermine's transfiguration into spirit.

Es umgab ihn jetzt die Luft des Einsamen, eine stille Atmosphäre, ein Weggleiten der Umwelt, eine Unfähigkeit zu Beziehungen, gegen welche kein Wille und keine Sehnsucht etwas vermochte. Dies war eines der wichtigsten Kennzeichen seines Lebens.

...jener äusserten Vereinsamung, die um den Leidenden, den Menschwerdenden alle Bürgeratmosphäre zu eisigem Weltäther verdünnt, jener Vereinsamung im Garten Gethsemane.

(S.98)

Is there sufficient evidence for identifying the residue of the originary loss of the Thing, impossible maternal *jouissance*, in the emotional charge which appears to be invested in Haller's melancholic laments? Let us analyse this question by considering some major preoccupations of Hesse's literature outside Der Steppenwolf. While Haller's elegiac eruptions appear to represent his desire in terms of the linguistic distance inherent in metonymic troping, in the foreword to Demian we are confronted with a mythical representation of a primordial source that could later mutate into allegorical desire. The following passage reads like an oblique allusion to the real phallus, the Lacanian Thing.

Jeder trägt Reste von seiner Geburt, Schleim und Eischalen einer Urwelt, bis zum Ende mit sich. Mancher wird niemals Mensch, bleibt Frosch, bleibt Eidechse, bleibt Ameise. Mancher ist oben Mensch und unten Fisch. Uns allen sind die Herkünfte gemeinsam, die Mütter.

(D.11)

Lacan has indeed designated the real of organismic flux, the 'abyss of the maternal' as a traumatic kernel, an Ur-category

that lies at the core of psychic experience. Let us further explore the mutual constitution of mourning and allegoresis which we already sketched earlier on. In Lupton's reading of Benjamin's elaboration on allegory and allegorical desire, the disjunctive mode at the heart of allegorical signification (allos) is rooted in the interimplication of mourning and meaning. These two 'negatives' determine the subjective relation to the abyss of the maternal - it is the register of signification and meaning itself barring access to the lost object of maternal *jouissance* that causes mourning. Allegorical enunciation is therefore always a self-reflexive articulation of the role of the field of meaning in castration and loss.

In both Benjamin and Eliot, the connection of two negatives (mourning and meaning ..) is implicated in the Abgrund or abyss of the maternal, the Grund, ground, foundation or reason of mourning.⁵⁰

Of course, notions of a primordial or Ur-category of the maternal represent a key theme in Hesse which tends to be infused with suggestive connotations - a sense of overdetermination. For instance in the case of Eva in Demian who 'encompasses or signifies more' than is somehow rationally comprehensible, or the womb-tomb enclosure of the Ur-Mutter in Narziss und Goldmund, which constitutes one of the central structural anchors of that novel and dialectically informs Goldmund's departure from the monastery as he embarks on his sensual quest, as well as his eventual return that -again- casts his death as a consummation in the womb-tomb of the Ur-Mutter. It thus emerges that there is a degree of opacity in all of Hesse's constructions of the 'maternal abyss', which tends to be cast in fantasmatic, mythical

(Demian) or allegorical terms (Narziss und Goldmund). This figurative approach to representing the abyss of the unconscious is of course also relevant to the death of Haller's maternal other, Hermine, in the ambiguous, mirrored world of the Magic Theatre in Der Steppenwolf. These different elaborations of maternal figures therefore occupy a nodal point of 'mourning and meaning' in the drama of the desire of Hesse's heroes and thus their role in general becomes crucial to understanding the foundation or genealogy of the pervasive allegorical mode that characterises Hesse's literature.

The dialectical relation of the two opposing poles of nature and spirit, the sensual-artistic sphere which is cast as the realm of the mother on the one hand and the austere intellectual and metaphysical worlds as the realm of the father may be considered as the anchor of many of Hesse's works including Der Steppenwolf. Again in the Goethe dream, Haller refers to

die brennende Sehnsucht nach dem Reich des Geistes, die mit der ebenso brennenden und ebenso heiligen Liebe zur verlorenen Unschuld der Natur in ewigem tödlichen Kampfe liegt, dieses ganze furchtbare Schweben im Leeren und Ungewissen.
(S.140)

A Romantic, melancholic mood then essentially characterises the friction between these poles - it derives from the impossible translation of a real and therefore ineffable maternal abyss as the Ur-category of psychic structuring onto the self-referential level of signification and meaning.

The allegorical mode then refers to a self-reflexive articulation of the layer of meaning (which may be manifested as

'culture' or 'spirit' in the narratives) as a radical barrier to any return to the origin or ground. That is, allegory denotes the expression of the division between the 'maternal abyss' and the self-referential field of signification within the medium of signification.

This is evident as Haller demonises the realm of the spirit in a dialogue with Hermine.

**Ja das sind wir, der Teufel ist der Geist und wir sind seine unglücklichen Kinder, wir sind aus der Natur herausgefallen und hängen im Leeren.
(S.140)**

This psychoanalytic reading would therefore situate the Geist-Natur opposition in Hesse in a relation of contiguity and infolding that is very different from the vague notions of a 'unity of opposites' that is common in Hesse criticism. In that sense, Haller's refined, lyrical evocations are subject to desire as a metonymy of loss. In illustrating the functioning of the mode of metonymy, Mueller states

Hence it is important to see that desire, the residue of a lost paradise, seeks its term by eternally stretching forth, towards the desire for something else.⁵¹

In the Lacanian system, the symbolic field of language and signification is structured around a central void or missing link, it is precisely the 'articulation of this void'.⁵² The subject caught in the synchronous signifying chain as a self-enclosed field of meaning is captivated in its circular structure and is therefore subject to an inherent impossibility to re-

establish the 'missing link' between the synchronous symbolic code and its diachronic origins - nature, the opaque abyss of the real. It is precisely at this juncture that the genealogy of Hesse's central allegories must be sought.

To provide a final example, the intrinsic correlation of melancholic desire and meaning structuring post-Oedipal subjectivity is illustrated very well in Haller's brief relapse into his melancholic condition in the second part of the novel. Following a concert of classical music featuring pieces by Buxtehude, Pachelbel, Bach and Haydn that triggers a nostalgic evocation of Haller's youth, Haller observes:

...von Gedanken und vom Nachklang der Musik erfüllt, das Herz schwer von Trauer und verzweifelter Sehnsucht nach Leben, nach Wirklichkeit, nach Sinn, nach unwiderbringlich Verlorenem. (S.153)

Desire ('Sehnsucht') holds a privileged position in this evocation and is associated both with mourning ('Trauer') and another metonymic associative train ('Leben, Wirklichkeit, Sinn'). The attempt to construct meaning ('Sinn'), in any event a function of the abstract field of signification, is linked to a fervent desire for something irrevocably lost- in other words for the central void that sets the signifier in motion, that gives rise to the subject of language. This lament almost forms a paradigm of the birth of the subject in the synchronous signifying chain groping for its diachronic origins and thus also of the nature of allegory in Hesse. (Klingsor's letzter Sommer, on the other hand is based on a retroversion effect that projects the spectre of a future void into the present. The title which

alludes to Klingsor's death at the conclusion of the novel forms an intrinsic part of its mode of enunciation. It lends to the events of that summer an air of sadness and impending extinction that infuses a melancholic intensity into Klingsor's creative efforts.)

The suicide topos in the "Traktat" - death as trope and fantasy

'Being of non-being, that is how I as subject come on to the scene, conjugated with the double aporia of a true survival that is abolished by knowledge of itself, and by a discourse in which it is death that sustains existence'

Jacques Lacan

The "Traktat" defines the Steppenwolf as a suicide [*'Selbstmörder'*] while crucially marking that characterisation as essentially figurative. Suicide is designated as an 'abstract' personality trait of the Steppenwolf, not necessarily a physical act. According to the Traktat to 'be' a Steppenwolf and therefore qualify for the status of *'Selbstmörder'*, suicide must be the most likely cause of death in the imagination. We could therefore argue that the "Traktat" essentially equates 'suicide' to the death drive. As Peter Cersowsky has pointed out in his investigation of the relation of the literature of Kafka to the decadence movement, many authors of the 'literary decadence' have adopted such images as the 'abyss' purely as a cipher for a dimension of the individual psyche (i.e. Baudelaire) that does not necessarily impinge on external reality.⁵³

There are essentially three dimensions to the "Traktat's" treatment of the suicide topos. First, suicide is portrayed as a

ruse, a sublime object of self-deception, a more or less remote option, that paradoxically functions to prolong life. In fact, the Steppenwolf elaborates a constructive philosophy around his commitment to suicide which functions as a source of strength and perseverance.

**Die Vertrautheit mit dem Gedanken, dass jener Notausgang beständig offenstehe, gab ihm Kraft, machte ihn neugierig auf das Auskosten von Schmerzen und üblen Zuständen ,...
(S.11-"Traktat")**

Then suicide is also presented in terms of the staging of an imaginary scenario and thus assumes the role of a 'fantasy object':

**...neigen bei der kleinsten Erschütterung dazu, sich intensive der Vorstellung des Selbstmordes hinzugeben.
(S.8-9-"Traktat")**

And finally it is used as a cipher for the Steppenwolf's constant sense of insecurity and danger designating a central abyss that lies at the core of his subjectivity:

**dass er sein Ich,...,als einen besonders gefährlichen und zweifelhaften and gefährdeten Keim der Natur empfindet ,..., so als stünde er auf allerschmalster Felsenspitze, wo ein kleiner Stoss von aussen oder eine winzige Schwäche von innen genügt, um ihn ins Leere fallen zu lassen.
(S.9-"Traktat")**

If we read these designations as ciphers for aspects of the psyche, all three elements of this figurative approach to suicide designate a strategy of translation, a transposition of a concept that ordinarily denotes an event in the physical world (soma) into a trope for self-identification (sema) revealing a close correspondence to Lacanian notions of subjective constitution. We

could therefore consider the "Traktat's" definition as a poetic encoding that poignantly captures the Steppenwolf's melancholic-neurotic sensibility. Elaborations of a non-literal death drive and of fantasies of death lie at the core of the Lacanian system. We have already discussed the Lacanian analysis of the dream of the dead father which follows the trajectory of a construction of subjectivity based on projections and virtuality.

In a first approach, we consider the possible relationship between the Steppenwolf as 'Selbstmörder' and Lacan's re-evaluation of the Freudian death drive. Lacan considered the notion of a death drive within the human psyche to lie at the heart of Freud's work but rejected the idea of a self-destructive principle within organic matter formulated in Freud's Jenseits des Lustprinzips. Richard Boothby devoted an entire book to the issue of the death drive in Lacan and Freud.⁵⁴ 'Returning Freud to himself' under the auspices of a Lacanian reassessment he focuses on the phenomenon that originally gave rise to the articulation of the death drive: Freud had observed the paradoxical tendency in some of his neurotic patients toward an obsessive repetition of behavioural patterns involving the infliction of often extreme psychic pain on the ego - for instance the repetition of a traumatic event in dreams. As this contradicted his notion of the ego's endeavour to maintain an energetic homeostasis, he felt compelled to formulate a theory of an organic death drive 'beyond the pleasure principle.'

However, in terms of a Lacanian re-interpretation any ultimately highly inconsistent and contradictory notions of an

organic death drive are abandoned while the central Freudian idea of an antagonism between a repetition of trauma and the ego's homeostasis is retained. This conflict is resolved by re-visualising the death drive as the return of a traumatic real that has been excluded by the narrow narcissistic organisation of the ego:

The activity of the death drive involves a profound service of pleasure if we understand by death drive not the self-destructiveness of organic matter but rather the struggle toward discharge of vital energies against the constraints of the ego.⁵⁵

This re-evaluation in terms of a discharge of vital energies against the imaginary organisation of the ego provides us with a key to understanding the particularly visual-fantasmatic character of the Steppenwolf's suicide scenarios as well as their role in his construction of his sense of identity. Foetalization and prematuration at birth lay the foundation for a first layer of identification in the real. Since the Lacanian 'moi' is an alienating narcissistic construction poised over this real void or abyss, Lacan has designated any unravelling of the 'moi' as a 'symbolic death'. To the extent that the imaginary ego can be visualised as a tiny 'enclave' of narcissistic representation of drives which is suspended above a vast reservoir of non-represented organismic energies, it is indeed death that 'sustains existence' so that a knowledge of the presence of death within life can be said to form an ontological constituent of the human psyche.

*'The imaginary order opens up a gap which allows the subject to imagine himself as mortal.'*⁵⁶ From that perspective we can

apprehend the "Traktat's" image of the Steppenwolf's poise over an abyss at the edge of a tiny precipice. It is an image that poignantly captures the existential position of the Steppenwolf as a being on intimate terms with the delusionary, 'surface' nature of the narcissistic structure that hides a real void as its concealed truth. Hesse's frequently enunciated notion that his journeys to the interior reveal the entire chaos of the world within himself (i.e. Blick ins Chaos) can also be approached from this angle.

However, Boothby's analysis also opens up another perspective on the Lacanian death drive. Beyond the dialectic between the imaginary and the real which is configured in the Lacanian death drive and which has led us to interpret the Steppenwolf's fantasies of death as a 'deshisance' of the imaginary ego through the return of a traumatic kernel, 'death' within the Lacanian system can also be conceived in terms of a disintegration of the narrow, dualistic, imaginary personality as it is strung along the signifying chain with its potential for variation and combination. In this accession to the signifier, the imaginary ego 'fades' and the Lacanian subject of the signifier comes onto the scene as ontologically negative rather than substantive.

From that perspective, fantasies of suicide emerge as a corollary of the modalities of post-Oedipal subjectivity based on a primordial repression of immediately lived experience. The fantasy of suicide could then be considered a fantasy in the Lacanian sense, which occupies the space of a non-representable traumatic kernel amidst the symbolic organization of the signifier (see outline).

The subject comes into existence only by virtue of a primordial eclipse, but the void or missing link that is generated in this accession may become the screen for fantasy constructions. We have already seen how the 'fading' of Hermine in the Magic Theatre is concomitant with her re-emergence as a cipher for a symbolic realm and how this re-enactment of an Oedipal scenario is deeply intertwined with Harry's existential mood in the first part of Der Steppenwolf - an existential mood that can now be seen to be recast in the Traktat as a propensity to 'suicide'.

According to Lacan:

The Imaginary object is in a position to condense in itself the virtues of the dimension of being and to become a veritable delusion of being.⁵⁷

From that perspective, we can appreciate the "Traktat's" designation of the Steppenwolf as "being" a 'Selbstmörder' irrespective of any actualisation. In section VII we shall examine in greater detail how these dynamics that are indicated in the "Traktat" are translated to the level of the narrative. It will emerge how suicide as an imaginary object of desire that replaces the phallus gets caught up in the demand of the Other, reducing the fantasy to pure drive - in this case literally the death drive.

A Lacanian conceptualization of the subject as a vanishing point may also shed light on the imaginary suicide that Haller is required to enact as 'condition' for his entry into the Magic Theatre. Haller's 'Scheinselbstmord' at the entrance of the theatre refers strictly to a narcissistic death that is embodied

by his destruction of a mirror image representing his narrow, dual self-image of man and wolf.

Dieses entbehrlich gewordene Spiegelbild werden Sie jetzt auslöschen, lieber Freund, mehr ist nicht vonnöten.. Das trübe Spiegelbildchen zuckte auf und erlosch, die runde Spiegelfläche war plötzlich wie verbrannt, war grau und rauh und undurchsichtig geworden.

(S.208-209)

Again, in this evocative scene, suicide is calibrated as the extinction of a mirror image - a narcissistic, 'symbolic death' that liberates Haller from the constraints of his personality. It crystallizes as an imaginary object that does not affect Haller's physical being and thus prepares him for the more expansive - symbolic - realm of the Magic Theatre with its infinite potential for permutations and combinations. Another aspect emerges as significant here. This purely narcissistic death of the Steppenwolf emerges as the outcome of a dialogue between Haller and Pablo who represents the enigmatic figure of a guide or paternal-symbolic reference point for Haller in the Magic Theatre. Pablo actually 'demands' the virtual suicide as an object of exchange that will facilitate Harry's entry into the Magic Theatre. Thus Haller's mysterious extinction of his mirror image crystallizes as the object of exchange in a dialectical-interpersonal play with Pablo as a representative of the symbolic Other. This distinct constellation recalls notions of the role of fantasies of death in earliest subjective constitution.

The first object (the infant) proposes for his parental desire whose object is unknown is his own loss. Can he lose me? The phantasy of one's death, of one's disappearance is the first object that the subject has to bring into play in this dialectic.⁵⁸

Further, death as an object in a dialectical play forms "the" crucial anchor of Haller's relation to Hermine. When Haller first meets Hermine, his possibly immanent suicide becomes the first 'object' in their discourse, and their exchanges take on an uncanny dimension, when Hermine implores Harry to obey 'her final command' - a dark allusion to her 'death' in the Magic Theatre. (According to Boothby's reading of Lacan 'along the axis of reflection in the imaginary double, suicide and murder amount to the same thing.'⁵⁹ The intuitively accessible notion of a coincidence of 'suicide' with the 'murder' of Harry's semblable Hermine in the mirror world of the Magic Theatre points to the relevance of a Lacanian based reading of the suicide topos.)

By recasting a somatic act as fantasmatic image and existential sign the "Traktat"'s enigmatic rhetoric captures the structure of the Lacanian fantasy. It thereby injects an element of existential but unconscious subjective truth into literary discourse. The concluding remarks of this section of the "Traktat" '*..hätten wir so etwas wie eine Anthropologie, so etwas wie eine Psychologie, so wären diese Tatsachen jedem bekannt*' allude to a sense of truth and psychological potency in the definition, which is confirmed by our Lacanian reading.

The abstract elaboration of the "Traktat" on suicide as a fantasy object finds an equivalent on the narrative level in the motif of the razor ('Rasiermesser') in Der Steppenwolf which is frequently evoked as a trope in which Haller condenses feelings of the ultimate meaningless and absurdity of existence. This razor later 're-emerges' as the knife implicated in Hermine's

murder. It might appear far-fetched to ascribe significance to this object in characterising Haller, but one should recall that the knife that kills Haller's 'semblable' Hermine in the Magic Theatre is assembled from the chess pieces that previously featured in the game of the compositions of Haller's personality. It is thus tempting to consider the motif of the knife to be invested with substantial subjective significance. The frequent mention of this object, which is evocative of suicide and may conjure rather visceral imagery in the reader, appears to connote a totemic or talismanic dimension in the narrative or the 'real of a fantasy construction'.

A quote from the text reveals that it is not to be taken literally in terms of genuine suicidal intentions.

**Die Herren Generäle und Schwerindustriellen hatten ganz recht. Es war nichts los mit uns Geistigen, wir waren eine entbehrliche, wirklichkeitsfremde, verantwortungslose Gesellschaft von geistreichen Schwätzern. Pfui Teufel. Rasiermesser.
(S.153)**

Žižek has examined various kinds of objects in Lacanian discourse that help the subject maintain a safe distance from the 'traumatic central abyss' inside oneself. One such object is a real object that encapsulates and focalises the lack of the symbolic order. (This object designated by a symbol for the barred, incomplete Other is located between the imaginary and the symbolic in Lacan's triangle in Seminar XX, see Appendix A)

In that sense, Haller's razor can be seen as a left-over of the real, an object that crystallises as a signifier of the lack in the big Other, that is to say, of the inconsistency and 'ultimate

senselessness of the symbolic universe'. The deficiencies of the senseless symbolic universe are thus focalised and incorporated in this object, which operates in terms of a 'talismanic' or fetishistic encapsulation of lack and thus, paradoxically, allows the subject to sustain itself in the midst of inconsistency and absurdity.⁶⁰ We can therefore perceive a consistency between the treatment of the suicide topos in the "Traktat" revolving around the precarious construction of subjectivity above a traumatic void, and the motif of the razor knife in the narrative that functions as an object crystallizing and defusing feelings of absurdity and existential anxiety and yet hinting at a traumatic abyss underneath. As such it paradigmatically exemplifies Lacanian notions of subjective relations to an object in which an existential dimension is crystallised.

The abyss in the middle of the diagram (Appendix A) represents 'jouissance, the whirlpool of enjoyment, threatening to swallow us all' which Žižek has linked to a pond in a story by Patricia Highsmith. This object of *jouissance* exerting a 'fatal attraction' appears at the end of Klein und Wagner as Klein's death drive leads him to suicide by drowning in a lake. The flow and flux of Klein's strange, 'transcendent' death in the lake, which is never explicitly marked as a physical death, strongly evokes the abyss of *jouissance*.

Individuation - a re-evaluation of the "Traktat"'s 'metaphysical' section in terms of the phenomenology of desire

There is a clear dividing line within the "Traktat" that demarcates a border between its 'psychological' and 'metaphysical' section.

**Was wir hier über die Selbstmörder sagten, bezieht sich alles selbstverständlich nur auf die Oberfläche, es ist Psychologie, also ein Stück Physik. Metaphysisch sieht die Sache anders und viel klarer aus.
(S.10-"Traktat")**

The "Traktat" then goes on to elucidate the Steppenwolf's condition as a 'sense of guilt' inherent in his individuation, and describes his suicidal tendencies as a fervent desire for a dissolution in his pre-individuation origin. *'Zurück zur Mutter, zurück zu Gott, zurück ins All.'*

It can be seen then that despite the apparent shift from psychology to 'metaphysics', the "Traktat" continues its predominant theme: the death drive. From a Lacanian perspective there is a definite underlying continuity between both sections. We might refer to it as a meta-psychological perspective that can be shown to inform both parts of the "Traktat". Schopenhauer's concept of principium individuationis which probably provides the ontological background to the "Traktat's" elaborations on individuation, has been related to the Freudian-Lacanian death drive by Richard Boothby. Boothby's search for an underlying unity between Schopenhauer's metaphysical approach to individuation which views the individual as a particular manifestation of the universal will in time and space and the psychology of the Freudian death drive which opposes trauma to

narcissism crystallises in a Lacanian metapsychological perspective.

In both the metaphysics of Schopenhauer and the concept of the psychoanalytic death drive, what is at stake is the dissolution of the individual ego that poses an obstacle to the further unfolding of the forces that constituted it.⁶¹

The Lacanian ego constitutes an alienating narcissistic structure of Gestalt identification, a 'discontinuity' in the real and is perpetually threatened by a symbolic 'death' through the subversive intrusion of the reservoir of excluded organismic forces that initially gave rise to it. This equivalates to Schopenhauer's idea of the dialectic between the illusory phenomenal world and the primordial universal will which occasioned it. Boothby notes some striking parallels between the conceptualisations of Lacan and Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer emphasises the distance between the universal will and the phenomenal world and considers all manifestations of the will in particular individuals as illusory. He frequently relates this illusionary nature of phenomena to Eastern notions of the veil of Maya. To illustrate this insubstantiality and alienation of the individual self, Schopenhauer resorts to an analogy comparing the principium individuationis to a mirror image which reflects the universal will. The terms of this analogy are highly evocative of Lacanian notions of subjective alienation in the mirror phase as Boothby points out:

This knowing and conscious ego is related to the will, which is the basis of its phenomenal appearance, as the image in the focus of the concave mirror is that mirror itself; and like that image,

it has only a conditioned, in fact properly speaking, a merely apparent reality.⁶²

All this is to suggest that an underlying psychological subtext, a death drive in the Lacanian sense as an antagonism between the imaginary ego and an excluded reservoir of traumatic life force which originally gave rise to it, informs both the psychological and the 'metaphysical' section of the "Traktat". In practical terms, these tendencies crystallise, for example, in Haller's 'Scheinselbstmord' in the Magic Theatre which consists in the extinction of his mirror image. The proximity of these two approaches is also indicated by juxtaposition of these two booths in the Magic Theatre.

Genussreicher Selbstmord! Du lachst dich kaputt.

**Wollen Sie sich vergeistigen? Weisheit des Ostens.
(S.226)**

The underlying congruence and homology of the metaphysical and merely psychological interpretations can be elucidated by referring back to Ziolkowski's famous conceptualisation of the Steppenwolf's position in the "Traktat". Within the objectifying structure of the "Traktat" that views the Steppenwolf *sub specie aeternitatis* the Steppenwolf is cast in terms of his position within a triangular conception of society in which the bourgeois mentality is conceived as the stable normative centre which is encased on either side by the extreme poles of the saint and the libertine. These figures are presented in their allegorical dimension - the libertine's ultimate dissolution into decay and the saint's mystical fusion with divine perfection - which unites

them in a common tendency toward dissolution within the unbounded. Ziolkowski has allegorised this cosmology in the following terms:

The cosmology which is developed here can best be visualized by the analogy of a sphere situated on an axis whose poles represent the opposite concepts of nature and spirit.⁶³

This metaphysical conception which presumably situates the ego of the bourgeois norm, based on firm notions of security and control in the middle of the axis, conjures up images of psychological approaches to the self in terms of either Freud's triangulation of id-ego-superego or the corresponding Lacanian triad real-imaginary-symbolic. The ego's alienating imaginary structure is encased on either side by the disruptive forces of death that transcend the homeostasis of the ego's pleasure principle and threaten its narcissistic integrity. But significantly they herald the possibility of access to the subject's *jouissance*, the traumatic real of desire that remains forever beyond the grasp of the 'bourgeois ego' - a compromise formation - that dreads the possibility of boundary disintegration.

Significantly, in their common opposition to the stable, bourgeois ego, the "Traktat" somehow places the embodiments of nature and spirit, the libertine and the saint on an equal level. According to the "Traktat's" metaphysical interpretation, it is the renunciation of the self, some symbiosis with the All, that unites these extreme poles. But from our Lacanian vantage point, we can identify another underlying factor that links the saint and the libertine as figures of equivalent status within the subject's libidinal economy. It is precisely in the radical

renunciation of moderate enjoyments common to both figures that a surplus joy can be gained.

**Der eine Weg führt zum Heiligen, zum Märtyrer des Geistes, zur Selbstaufgabe an Gott. Der andere Weg führt zum Wüstling, zum Märtyrer der Triebe, zur Selbstaufgabe an die Verwesung.
(S.14-"Traktat")**

While the libertine follows a persistent, regressive path that will ultimately surrender him to a traumatic kernel of an organismic real (*Verwesung*), the saint's sacrifice leads him progressively toward God. This strange alignment of two opposed figures is therefore based on a common attitude - both are martyrs who derive a surplus enjoyment from a radical renunciation of ordinary-moderated, 'bourgeois' enjoyment. This can be shown to accurately reflect the dynamics of the psychic economy. The "Traktat's" elaborations strongly evoke Lacanian notions on the relations of *jouissance* and the superego, expressed in article Kant mit Sade and in Seminar VII, that may initially appear counter-intuitive. As we saw earlier, Lacan provocatively aligns Kant and Sade to reveal how de Sade's subversive ideology of radical enjoyment is structured like an ethics, like a super-ego injunction. Yet this conceptualisation also entails a disclosure of the superego as an inverted version of the id. Lacan locates the position of the Sadean libertine as the 'truth' of the Kantian ethics, of ethics in general, which may appear to be libidinally neutral but effectively hides an obscene enjoyment. It is consistent therefore that in Seminar XX Lacan aligns a Kantian categorical imperative with *jouissance*.

Ich zeige da auf eine Reserve, die das Feld des Rechts auf den Genuss impliziert. Das Recht ist nicht die Pflicht. Nichts zwingt

jemanden zu geniessen, ausser dem Über-Ich. Das Über-Ich das ist der Imperativ des Geniessens. Geniess!⁶⁴

The upshot of our analysis is therefore the following: the saint and the libertine in the "Traktat" are on an essentially equal plane from a libidinal perspective. Both follow a radical superego injunction to attain a surplus enjoyment by forgoing moderate, bourgeois pleasures in a radical dissolution of subjectivity.

From a bourgeois perspective, both figures embody the desire of the Other as 'a terrifying abyss' that provokes the question 'Che Vuoi?' - 'What do they really want?'. The saint and the libertine, in their obstinate persistence that leads them to self-dissolution, undergo a 'radical subjective destitution'. In their inert presence they become objects as they assimilate to the functions of 'God' or 'decay' and thus provide a radical alternative to the stable 'subjectivity' of the bourgeois. The saint and the libertine as ciphers for a metaphysical or metapsychological realm are situated on the trajectory of the death drive beyond the homeostasis of the ego's pleasure principle (- here identified with the realm of the bourgeoisie). This indicates how much libidinal energy is infused in Hesse's idealisation of saints - a persistent theme in both his own personal life and many of his novels.⁶⁵ Accordingly, Cremerius also designated Hesse's veneration of saints and his persistent 'ideology' of suffering as a willing identification with radical superego injunctions.

The following passage in Žižek's The Sublime Object of Ideology that distills the common psychological factor in the action of three figures - Antigone, the saint, de Sade's promiscuous Juliette and the terrorist Gudrun Ensslin, reads like a psychoanalytic interpretation of Steppenwolf's distinction between the saint/libertine dyad and the bourgeoisie.

Three at first sight incompatible figures: ... That is why all three of them provoke the same 'Che vuoi?', the same 'What do they really want?' Antigone with her obstinate persistence, Juliette with her a-pathetic promiscuity, Gudrun with her senseless terrorist acts: all three put in question the Good embodied in the State and the common morals.⁶⁶

The appearance of the outlaw as the third factor in the conspiracy against the bourgeois pleasure principle should not surprise us: The idealisation of the criminal is woven into the texture of Hesse's literature like a red thread. In Demian the 'Kainsmal' is portrayed as a mark of distinction, Klein's metamorphosis into the criminal Wagner in Klein und Wagner is treated as a progressive step, Harry Haller's refusal to live in some kind of criminal netherworld is presented as an affectation of 'bourgeois cowardice' in Der Steppenwolf and Goldmund's murder of a travel companion in Narziss und Goldmund is seen as a sign of maturation and necessary loss of naivety.

The "Traktat's" cosmology is presented deliberately in 'mythical' terms so that it serves as a basic anthropological blueprint expressing fundamental, 'arche-typical' truths that transcend the specificity of any given society (das 'Bürgerliche

nun als stets vorhandener Zustand des Menschlichen'). The "Traktat" then maps the Steppenwolf as an inherently ambiguous and conflictual character in relation to its triangular model. It implies an inherent predisposition toward either of the extreme poles of divine-mystical or 'decadent' fusions but simultaneously notes a gravitational pull that firmly grounds the Steppenwolf in a fundamentally bourgeois discourse. As Elizabeth Bronfen has pointed out, a tendency to exteriorise existential anxieties about boundaries between self and other or life and death that are inherent, inevitable characteristics of the split or barred subject onto an Other, has been a dominant feature in Western cultural discourse. Extreme figures relative to the norm, such as the prostitute or the saint, Bronfen points out, have frequently functioned as the focal point for these projections. In their tropic valuation, they therefore function as the site of *Unheimlichkeit* par excellence because of their ambiguous role as ciphers for the self.⁶⁷

The "Traktat" then locates the problematic position of the Steppenwolf in the triangle saint-bourgeois-libertine. Ostentatiously idealising the figures of the libertine and the saint and celebrating their radical distance from societal norm as well as their non-conflictual devotion to unbounded symbiosis the Steppenwolf is cast as an intrinsically weak figure poised in an uncertain position with conflictual dispositions towards either side.

This structural indeterminism also has strong implications for the dramatic potential of the narrative since the indefinite

positionality will allow the narrative space of this introspective novel to unfold on the basis of a mobility between the particular reference points sketched in the model. The triangulation of libertine-bourgeois-saint thus provides the fundamental parameters that figure in the drama of Haller's desire. Thus, the narrative subsequent to the "Traktat" again emerges as the manifestation of potentials that have been implied or elaborated in the "Traktat". Conversely, these concrete manifestations derive their genuine significance only in relation to the set of interpretive models that have been coded into the "Traktat".

V. Allegory and Signification in relation to the Central Motif of the Wolf of the Steppes

In this section we shall concern ourselves with the meaning and genealogy of one of the novel's central ideas, the 'wolf of the steppes' that has provided the title. In a first approach, we might consider a conversation between Harry and Hermine that dwells on the topic of Harry's division.

..."Und der Steppenwolf bist du? Das sollst du sein?" "Ja ich bin es. Ich bin einer, der halb ein Mensch ist, und halb ein Wolf, oder der sich das einbildet." ..."Es ist natürlich eine Einbildung von dir", sagte sie, sich zurück ins Heitere wandelnd, "oder, wenn du willst, eine Poesie. Aber es hat etwas. Heute bist du kein Wolf, aber neulich, wie du da in den Saal hereinkamst, wie vom Mond gefallen, da warst du schon ein Stück Bestie, gerade das hat mir gefallen."
(S.122-123)

In this little excerpt we can already discern one of the central features of the device: it plays on an ambiguity or overlaying of different registers crucial to the structure of allegory. Risking some degree of simplification it is tempting to isolate in this conversation strands of the three key Lacanian registers - the real, the imaginary, the symbolic - that interlock like a Borromean knot to give rise to the subject. Haller first literally refers to himself as 'half wolf' while Hermine later designates him as a 'beast' ('ein Stück Bestie') evoking a regression to an organic real outside the symbolic order. This overtly literal designation swiftly transmutes to indicate a 'symbolic fantasy formation' ('oder der sich das einbildet', 'Es ist natürlich eine Einbildung von dir') which can be taken to form part of a literary device, to be situated in the supremely

symbolic dimension of poetry ('oder, wenn du willst, eine Poesie').

This overlaying of different registers suggests an intrinsic complexity of this device which results from the imbrication of psychoanalytic and narrative layers. We shall thus investigate the narrative in greater detail for further hints.

The narrative space between the end of the "Traktat" and Haller's encounter with Hermine is occupied by a single central idea: the failure of the subject's signifying representation that produces a profound sense of alienation. In the narrative this is articulated directly but it is also embodied in a sequence of allegorical scenes that are designed to lend palpable substance to this alienation. This is evident immediately in Haller's partially dismissive stance toward the insights that can be gained into his own character through reference to the "Traktat". Haller takes a highly sceptical attitude towards the "Traktat's" aloof and objective description of the character of a Steppenwolf which he deems too broad an approach to capture the exceptional singularity of his own specific life.

The "Traktat" is immediately succeeded by a poem in which Harry Haller attempts to express the condition of his existence in terms of an imaginative repertoire of metaphors, that evoke a sense of movement ('ich Steppenwolf trabe und trabe'), predatory violence ('tränke mich satt an ihrem hellroten Blut') and the oneiric dimension ('trabe und träume von Hasen'). [S.57]

Stylistically the poem displays a strong repetitive pattern and austere rhythmic motion echoing the wolf's constant movement and predatory violence in a barren and climatically hostile environment ('*Die Welt liegt voll Schnee..., Tränke mit Schnee meine brennende Seele, Trage dem Teufel zu meine arme Seele*'). [S.57] The poem has an almost hypnotic effect.

Thus both stylistically and in relation to its themes, the poem with its sense of raw immediacy and organic physical reality provides a stark contrast to the cold abstractions of the "Traktat". The contrasting of these two diverse modes of expression allows a bi-focal view of Haller's character in which the poem, embodies [gives concrete body or flesh to] the signifying dimension of the "Traktat", which on its own would be deficient to articulate the modalities of Haller's life. There is thus a dialectical and dynamic relation between the symbolic/universal and the particular 'suffering flesh' and through Der Steppenwolf's allegorical mode this dialectic is self-reflexively enunciated.

As we saw earlier, the universal order of language is a radically independent register of alterneity that can never be traced genealogically since there is no linear, cause-effect path from any 'origin' to language. Rather, the nature of language as a self-enclosed, comprehensive field of meaning in which all the elements diacritically ultimately only refer to each other implies that it arises all of a sudden - or 'ex nihilo'. Lacan conceives signification as always relating back to another signification. Thus according to Lacan:

Auf diesem Weg lässt sich allenfalls demonstrieren, dass es keine Bedeutung gibt, die nicht notwendigerweise auf eine andere Bedeutung verweist, womit man letzten Endes zu der Bemerkung kommt, dass keine wirkliche Sprache existiert, von der fraglich wäre, ob sie das Feld des Signifizierten abzudecken vermag, denn eine Wirkung ihrer Existenz als Sprache ist es, Antwort zu wissen auf alle Bedürfnisse.⁶⁸

Due to the nature of that circular movement, language lacks any external anchor or reference point in 'objective reality'. In this autonomous drift it thus circles around a constitutive void. As a result the subject acceding to this radically self-sufficient symbolic universe finds himself in a realm of reversed causality, of 'retroversion effects', he effectively encounters a constitutive 'missing link' between his pre-discursive and discursive self.⁶⁹

It is thus through a 'constitutively failed encounter' between the Universal semantic order of language and the Particular individual that the 'subject' arises as that 'missing link'. There are two crucial features of the "Traktat" that enable us to relate it to the Universal realm of the symbolic order in the Lacanian sense.

Firstly, the "Traktat" appeared in the narrative mysteriously and all of a sudden - virtually ex nihilo - when it is handed to Haller by a gnomic, enigmatic figure. Its genealogy and acquisition remain shrouded in mystery - there is a definite break in the logic of the narrative's linear causal chain. For the first edition of Der Steppenwolf Hesse had stipulated that the "Traktat" should appear as a clearly visible 'book within the

book' with its own garish yellow cover. Hesse prevailed on this against the pressure of his publishers indicating that he wished to stress the special status of the "Traktat" as an autonomous, self-enclosed semantic field - a 'mise en abyme'.

Thus in the context of the novel's architecture, the "Traktat" as a comprehensive examination of the Steppenwolf nature from a transcendent vantage point functions as a self-enclosed semantic field which forms a gap in the 'linear causal chain' of the narrative. The circumstances of Haller's acquisition of the "Traktat" which don't make sense from the perspective of linear cause-effect relations thereby form the first intrusion of the 'irrational' in the novel in an hitherto realistic setting. Commentators usually refer to the trappings that prepare and precede Haller's acquisition of the "Traktat" - the sudden 'Leuchtreklame' on the wall announcing the Magic Theatre, the appearance of the enigmatic figure - as the projections of subjective significance onto external reality and stress the use of such devices in the Romantic tradition that influenced Hesse (see Ziolkowski). This perspective on the dialectic between external and subjective realities relies on a common sense, colloquial usage of the term 'subjective'. However, an interpretation that views these dynamics from the point of view of the rigorously defined Lacanian 'subject' will arrive at similar conclusions. In terms of a Lacanian analysis, the subject holds the status of a 'missing link' within a linear causal chain and 'subjective' therefore suitably describes Haller's relation to the "Traktat". The "Traktat" forms a 'mise en abyme' in the

narrative and the way it falls into Haller's hands is shrouded in enigma and mystery indicating a 'missing link' in his relation to the "Traktat", a negativity that is constitutive of his subjectivity in the novel. The "Traktat" is mysterious, self-referential and Other. Within the narrative structure it therefore occupies a position that is closely analogous to the realm of the symbolic order which introduces a chasm within the subject, or rather which constitutes the subject as this chasm.

In its very being the subject is constituted as the missing link of a causal chain - the chain in which no link is missing is the positivity of a substance without subject. 'Substance is subject' means that there is always a link missing in the causal chain.⁷⁰

Secondly, the "Traktat" is abstract in the sense that it deals with the Steppenwolf in general as a Universal genus - it does not concern itself with any particular Steppenwolf nor are there any references to Harry Haller. It is precisely in this dimension of abstraction that the central deficiency of the "Traktat", its 'constitutive void' emerges most clearly. This shortcoming is articulated by Haller.

**Was da von Steppenwölfen und Selbstmördern geschrieben stand, mochte ganz gut und klug sein, es galt fuer die Gattung, für den Typus,..., Meine Person, meine eigentliche Seele schien mir mit so grobem Netz doch nicht eingefangen.
(S.64)**

The Universal as a genus encompassing a variety of Particular species is deficient since it is by definition a structure that abstracts from all determinate content. In that sense it is itself Particular and there is a defining lack at the heart of the "Traktat". Haller's image of the "Traktat" as a net which

fails to encompass the specific tension of his life therefore evokes the notion of a void or abyss at the heart of the Universal structure.

In its abstraction as well as its sudden, enigmatic appearance, the "Traktat" forms a pure discontinuity in the narrative line, a self-enclosed field of meaning, that is radically Other to Haller. Haller's composition of a poem, rich in evocative metaphors and other stylistic devices, that depicts a roaming, blood-thirsty wolf of the steppes then emerges as a reaction to the "Traktat" as the embodiment of the Other. The poem thus functions as a metaphoric substitution that seeks to fill in or embody the void at the heart of the "Traktat" and aims to dynamically integrate the specific tension of Haller's life with the "Traktat". Hesse himself was very aware of the status of the "Traktat" as a structural anchor. As mentioned earlier, he indicated that the novel was constructed around the "Traktat" *'so streng und straff...wie eine Sonate'* and that *'Der 'Steppenwolf' ist so streng gebaut wie ein Kanon oder eine Fuge und ist bis zu dem Grad Form geworden, der mir eben möglich war.'*⁷¹

From a Lacanian point of view, the "Traktat" performs this function because it can be seen as an embodiment of the abyss of the signifying network which determines subjectivity.

Hesse had adopted the complex, sonata-like structure of the novel because it allowed him a multi-layered view. This expansion into allegorical space allows a transcending of the shortcomings

of language as the writer's medium by employing language self-reflexively. According to Joel Fineman, the device of allegory employs the two axes of language - metaphor and metonymy - simultaneously.

Every metaphor is a little metonymic because in order to have a metaphor there must be a structure, and where there is a structure, there is already piety and nostalgia for the lost origin through which the structure is thought.⁷²

From that perspective, the 'tight and taut' structure of 'Steppenwolf' as a whole can be conceptualised as an allegorical device that is organised around a central 'missing link' - the signifying abyss of the "Traktat". This links in with the dialectical relation of 'origins' and signification that we discussed in our section on melancholy. That is, subsequent sections in the novel that constitute variations on themes in the "Traktat", for instance the masked ball or the Magic Theatre, are linked to the "Traktat" metaphorically or metonymically, and in that sense the modality of interrelation of the novel's various sections is akin to allegorical expression. In terms of the novel's large-scale, then, the different sections or 'movements' of the novel are linked into a whole through metaphoric substitutions or metonymic combinations, and the anchor for this allegorical mode of expression is, as Hesse has noted, the mise-en-abyme of the "Traktat".

The poem itself is very suitable in paradigmatically illustrating these allegorical modalities of the overall architecture of the novel.

"Traktat" and poem are linked like a Moebius band and signal the allegorical construction of the subject as a 'vanishing point', as the outcome of a constitutively failed encounter between the Universal and the Particular. Haller's poem is dynamically locked in with the "Traktat" in both metaphoric and metonymic terms. It metaphorically substitutes the void at the heart of the "Traktat", its failure to refer to a Particular by positing a specific individual identity ('*Ich Steppenwolf trabe und trabe*'). At the same time it holds a metonymic relation to the "Traktat" since it can only be understood by its metonymic reference to that structure as a unified field of meaning that ultimately functions as the transcendent, external reference point for Haller's sense of identity. It is the combination of the poem's metaphoric and metonymic associations with the "Traktat" that effects the dynamic 'integration' of Haller into that signifying structure. The simile of the Moebius band is appropriate for that 'integration' in the sense that neither the field of meaning in itself, nor any specific individual independent of the Other could ever create the effect of 'subjectivity'. Rather the subject is produced in terms of a complex-dynamic, substitutory and combinatory interrelation between Universal and Specific - an encounter that is constitutively failed because neither can encompass the other without loss or remainder. If that was the case, if a complete usurpation of one by the other without remainder was possible, substance could be represented 'objectively' and would not give rise to the problem of subjectivity.⁷³

And of course, allegory, in its essence, is a self-reflective expression of the intrinsic failure of that encounter.

Let us examine that in some detail. The poem of the wolf of the steppes appears to allude to an organismic-real substratum, the wild dynamics of a substantial life process. However, it must be conceived as 'poetic' or allegorical precisely because it does not posit an 'actual' wolf of the steppes that is juxtaposed to the abstractions of the "Traktat". Rather, the wolf that appears here functions as a fantasy and trope, as a self-reflexive articulation of the disjunction that language introduces in the subject along with the desire that is originally installed as a result of this disjunction. That is to say, there is an element of the real in that wolf, but only to the extent that the fantasy takes the place of what the subject has been deprived of in acceding to language - the flesh or primordial *jouissance*.

It is language and meaning itself that separates the castrated subject from primordial organismic *jouissance*. Language's self-referential nature and lack of reference in the real means that it is inherently barred and encircles a void as we have noted. According to Žižek,

Subject ... is the very abyss that forever separates language from the substantial life process. ... In other words the barrier separating the Symbolic from the Real is impossible to trespass since the Symbolic is this barrier.⁷⁴

Though it is impossible to trespass that barrier of the symbolic this barrier can be self-reflexively articulated through allegory. The poem then expresses allegorically - in terms of the

media of fantasy and trope - the chasm or disjunction within the subject which is introduced by the barrier of the symbolic.

The imaginary fantasy of the wolf then functions as a substitute for real loss which at this stage is embodied by the "Traktat", the abyss or missing link of the synchronous signifying network which entails a loss of origin. This creates a situation in which the real can only be retroactively (re)-constructed through trope and image and this is precisely what happens in the poem. We have started out this section by citing a conversation between Harry and Hermine which appeared to suggest the presence of the three Lacanian registers - the real, the imaginary, the symbolic - in the device of the Steppenwolf and have been able to confirm that relation in our investigation. The first appearance of that theme in the narrative strongly suggest its genealogy from a confrontation with signifying structures.

The metaphors in this poem depict Haller as a carnivorous wolf radically alienated from an organismic origin - i.e. castrated - and therefore driven by desire.

Sogar mit einem Hasen wär ich zufrieden, süß schmeckt sein warmes Fleisch in der Nacht - Ach ist denn alles von mir geschieden, was das Leben ein bisschen fröhlicher macht? (S.57)

Together the two portraits of Haller - "Traktat" and poem - compose an allegory of Haller's existential condition.

Und diese beiden Bildnisse zusammen, mein schwermütig stammelndes Gedicht, und die kluge Studie von unbekannter Hand, taten mir beide weh, hatten beide recht, zeichneten beide ungeschminkt meine trostlose Existenz, zeigten mir deutlich die Unerträglichkeit und Unhaltbarkeit meines Zustandes. (S.57)

Let me now move on to examine the anatomy of Haller's alienation. Following extensive reflections on suicide as an escape route from his overwhelming sense of nausea, suffering and despair, Harry comes across a funeral procession as he roams around the city. He immediately articulates a hostile reaction against the hypocrisy of the priest and the mourners to whom he ascribes a lack of any genuine emotion or grief amid a welter of pious talk. Again, a 'disjunctive signification' is central to Haller's attack on the hypocritical mourners. While the external appearance, the procession and the Christian obsequies appear as signifiers of grief, there is no genuine empathy beneath. However, the crucial point is that this attitude is construed by Haller as a metaphor for his own alienation from the standard networks of cultural representation to which the vitalistic substratum within him that crystallizes around the wolf-half of the Steppenwolf trope must react with aggressive hostility.

A traumatic kernel: Haller's alternation between melancholia and sadism

Subsequent to the poem, the use of lupine imagery is often evoked in concrete social situations and contributes to a vivid description of clashes between Harry Haller and the field of 'bourgeois discourse'. To allow an analysis of these encounters, we shall first continue our investigation of the three Lacanian registers 'in' that device by turning our attention to the representation of the wolf theme within the surreal world of

Magic Theatre, where it is presented as largely disentangled from bourgeois social discourse. Subsequently we can consider the integration of these elements into concrete social contexts. There are two key scenes on the topic of the 'wolf' in the Magic Theatre that concern our analysis. As Harry is introduced to the Magic Theatre by his friend Pablo he is presented with a mirror which visualises his dual vision of himself dividing him into wolf and man.

Er hielt mir das Spieglein vor die Augen (ein Kindervers fiel mir ein: 'Spieglein, Spieglein in der Hand'), und ich sah, etwas zerflossen und wolzig, ein unheimliches, in sich selbst bewegtes, in sich selbst heftig arbeitendes und gärendes Bild: mich selber, Harry Haller, und innen in diesem Harry den Steppenwolf, einen scheuen, schönen, aber verirrt und geängstigt blickenden Wolf, die Augen bald böse, bald traurig glimmend, und diese Wolfsgestalt floss in unablässiger Bewegung durch Harry, so wie in einem Strome ein Nebenfluss von anderer Farbe wölkt und wühlt, kämpfend, leidvoll, einer im anderen fressend, voll unerlöster Sehnsucht nach Gestaltung.

(S.206)

From a Lacanian perspective it is not difficult to discern an association of this vision with the register of the real, the organismic substratum that predates any sense of representation ('voll unerlöster Sehnsucht nach Gestaltung'). This vision might best be described as a mythical representation of the flux of primordial jouissance. The real as inherently beyond representation has led Lacan to evoke it in specifically mythical terms as the idea of the lamelle - a provocative recasting of the myth of Aristophanes. The diffuse floating of organic life force, the constant energetic flux and desire of Haller's vision of the wolf echoes the Lacanian lamelle - a flat, floating, uncanny creature that Lacan has used to illustrate the organismic nature of desire and his theory of libido as literally an organ in the

real. The lamelle as the embodiment of the return of the real that has been excluded in the genesis of psychological structure is pictured as active and seeking. Lacan likens it to 'a large crepe which spreads out like an amoeba, ultra flat in order to pass under doors, omniscient as it is guided by the pure instinct of life, immortal as it is capable of splitting itself'.⁷⁵ By analogy, Haller's hallucination in Der Steppenwolf clearly suggests a constellation of dissolute, organismic flux with desire. Significantly this is manifested as a desire for 'Gestaltung'. Of course, Gestalt identification with a defined image is the developmental stage that follows the organismic chaos of identification in the real in the Lacanian system. In terms of a mythical invocation of a primordial, founding aspect of the psyche, the vision of wolf is essentially on the same level as the whirlpool or abyss of jouissance in the final drowning scene in Klein und Wagner or the slime and eggshells of a primordial world evoked in the introduction to Demian. In terms of analysing the vision of the wolf, the evocation of the primordial world in Demian as a fundamental category of the psyche is very revealing.

Jeder trägt Reste von seiner Geburt, Schleim und Eischalen einer Urwelt in sich. Mancher wird niemals Mensch, bleibt Frosch, bleibt Eidechse bleibt Ameise. Mancher ist oben Mensch und unten Fisch. Uns allen sind die Herkünfte gemeinsam, die Mütter, wir alle kommen aus demselben Schlunde.

Again, an organismic real is cast in mythical terms. In the beginning, it is suggested, there was a 'central traumatic abyss' ('Schlund'), the mothers we all derive from. As in Der Steppenwolf, this mythical rendering of an origin relies on the

constellation of the traumatic abyss of organismic flux with the animalistic that can be identified in Haller's vision in Der Steppenwolf. (In this translation from a real substratum to mythical image we can recognise a prototype of the allegorical mode of metonymic desire in Haller's nostalgic evocations or the poem of the wolf of the steppes which designate a move into the further distancing realm of the symbol, of (poetic) language.)

Let us move on to the second aspect of the wolf theme in the Magic Theatre. One of the booths in the Magic Theatre bears the inscription: 'Wunder der Steppenwolfdressur'. That booth stages a circus performance which sets out with the profoundly alienating subjugation of a wolf to his human master who distorts the wolf by humanizing it. It is not surprising that conventional critical approaches to this scene posit a distortion of the instincts of the id in the process of sublimation. This is the case, but while references to an undomesticated substratum of an organismic real are clearly contained in this passage, there are also more sophisticated dialectics that suggest psychic remnants from the mirror stage as an important element in the formation of the device of the wolf of the steppes. These are evident here not in terms of a captivation in the image of the other which is taken as one's own - as in Harry's relation to Hermine - but rather in terms of the modalities of interaction that correspond closely to the mirror 'moi' and its dialectical relation to its libidinal object. In the middle of that scene, the wolf recuperating its dignity suddenly assumes mastery over his human counterpart and, in turn, reduces him to the status of a submissive animal. This

sudden, bizarre role reversal in the middle of this scene constitutes a 'symmetrical inversion' that evokes the confusion between self and other during the Lacanian mirror stage. Two brief passages from the text succinctly encapsulate the reversal.

Der Mann, mein verfluchter Zerrspiegelzwilling, hatte seinen Wolf allerdings fabelhaft gezähmt. Der Wolf gehorchte aufmerksam jedem Befehl, reagierte hündisch auf jeden Zuruf und Peitschenknall, er fiel in die Knie, stellte sich tot, machte das Männchen,...

(S.232)

Und nun befahl der Wolf, und der Mensch musste gehorchen. Auf Befehl sank der Mensch in die Knie nieder, liess die Zunge heraushängen, riss sich mit den plombierten Zähnen die Kleider vom Leibe.

(S.233)

Lacan has repeatedly emphasised that the imaginary identification of the ego entails reflexivity and an intrinsic boundary uncertainty between self and other. According to Lacan, *'the other, ..., isn't an other at all since it is essentially coupled with the ego in a relation that is always reflexive, interchangeable.'*⁷⁶

Crucially in terms of the dynamics of 'Steppenwolfdressur', this reflexivity and boundary uncertainty at the heart of the Lacanian ego - implying a condition of 'constituted rivalry' at the core of the self - can be seen as the structural cause of aggressivity as well as plays of mastery and submission. In the Magic Theatre scene, we have a distribution of dominant and submissive roles that subsequently undergoes a mirror inversion. And yet the overall structural framework of interaction - the rules of this dialectical game distributing to one the position of 'master' and to the other the position of 'slave' - remains intact. In terms of our discourse, the 'libidinal object' of the

Lacanian ego is never the other per se but rather - dialectically - the desire of the other. It is through this imaginary capture in the other, this alienation in the other's desire, that a permanent war of hostile exclusion, the constituted rivalry of an 'either you or me' is inscribed at the heart of the ego's relations. This fundamental structural condition of the ego is graphically depicted in Hesse's 'Wunder der Steppenwolfdressur'.

It is pertinent in that respect that, in explicating his notion of the mirror stage 'moi' which installs a primordial confusion between self and other, Lacan found a fitting analogy in Hegel's master-slave struggle that allegorises an originary aggressivity at the heart of the human being. Hegel's conflict, in which the ultimate stake is death, is in perpetual flux for the master remains such only with respect to a slave who must by definition be perpetually subjugated, while the slave seeks to usurp the place of the master. In terms of the dialectics of the Lacanian mirror stage, the ego of the master is not independent from his libidinal object - the submission of the slave - but is rather constituted in it. The conflict thus emerges as a 'struggle for pure prestige' which is calibrated on either side's aggressive attempt at self-assertion at the expense of its alter ego. Crucially, according to Lacan's re-evaluation of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, the signifying dimension of a 'pact' is required to mediate in this conflict between an ego and its alter ego.⁷⁷

Correspondingly, 'Steppenwolfdressur' in the Magic Theatre is informed by recognition dialectics. The assertion of mastery, before and after the symmetrical inversion, can be seen to depend

dialectically upon the respective 'master's' alienation in his libidinal object: if we follow Lacan's emphasis on the symbol in Hegel's parable, it is ultimately the desire of recognition from the Other, the triggering of an echo in the Other, which is sought via the de-tour of the submission of the empirical other or alter ego.

The mirror vision of the floating wolf at the outset of the Magic Theatre is specifically located outside any form of individuation by the text and therefore denotes the most primordial mode of psychic representation, which Sullivan has designated as the merging with fantasmatic imagines.⁷⁸ By contrast, 'Wunder der Steppenwolfdressur' reveals the more sophisticated modalities of the subject enthralled by its constitutively alienated imaginary ego which takes its root in reference to its other and depends on the other for its perpetuation. In that sense, the circus performance in the Magic Theatre can be seen to depict in broad brushstrokes the essence of the alienation of desire along with its corollaries: a constituted division, rivalry and aggressivity within the self. It is a variation on a theme that is prolific in the novel and is also manifested in Harry's imaginary capture in his 'semblable' Hermine. That relation explicitly articulates connotations of mother-child dyad and is based on Harry's submission to Hermine's 'orders' as the structural foundation or *raison d'etre* of their bond.

From a Lacanian perspective we can read the interaction of the two protagonists in this scene in the Magic Theatre booth as a

decomposition of the subject back to its identificatory roots revealing the 'truth' of the alienated ego. That is to say, this little vignette, which like Hegel's master-slave conflict, presents us with something primordial, with the simplicity of a 'primal scene', poignantly dramatises an intra-subjective conflict which contains, *in nuce*, the kernel of Harry's dynamic conflicts in his social worlds, his inter-subjective conflicts.

In Boothby's reading of Lacan, the sadistic fantasy associated with the mirror of the imaginary, both hides and motivates a more archaic masochistic impulse.⁷⁹ This equivalence, perfectly encapsulated in the following quote by Lacan, captures the dynamics of Hesse's 'Steppenwolfdressur', if we read it in terms of mirror-stage, master-slave dialectics.

For a sadistic fantasy to endure, the subject's interest in the person who suffers humiliation must obviously be due to the possibility of the subject's being submitted to the same humiliation himself.⁸⁰

Thus the important point to grasp with respect to this scene is that its sophisticated dialectic elaborates more than merely the idea of subjugation and subsequent liberation/revenge of the instinctual id. From a Lacanian point of view it reflects the phenomenology of the alienated ego. The triumph of mastery that accompanies the constitution of the Lacanian ego is also expressed in Hesse: '*nachdem der Bändiger über die Lamm und Wolfsgruppe sich triumphierend mit süßem Lächeln verbeugt hatte.*' (S.233)

What happens when we integrate this basic structure with Harry Haller's more complex social interactions in the bourgeois world of Der Steppenwolf?

When Haller leaves the scene of the funeral, he has a chance encounter with an old acquaintance, a young professor of Oriental Studies near a library, and is invited to dinner by the professor in the course of a polite, friendly conversation that seemed to epitomize the 'bourgeois' mode for Haller. In his aggressive self-reproach for his indulgence in bourgeois chatter, the figure of the Steppenwolf in hostile opposition to Haller's own bourgeois self emerges.

..stand der andere Harry daneben und grinste ebenfalls, stand, grinste und dachte, was ich doch für ein eigentümlicher, verdrehter und verlogener Bruder sei, dass ich vor zwei Minuten noch gegen die ganze, verfluchte, grimmige Welt die Zähne gefletscht hatte und jetzt beim ersten harmlosen Gruss eines achtbaren Biedermannes gerührt und übereifrig ja und amen sagte und mich im Genuss von ein bisschen Wohlwollen, Achtung und Freundschaft wie ein Ferkel wälzte.

(S.70)

This passage indicates a self-loathing that originates in Haller's own participation in bourgeois discourse. A close reading of the text which abounds with examples of Haller's tendency to indulge in masochistic self-denigration suggests that it constitutes a vital element in the tropic use of vivid lupine imagery. It is on that basis that we can go beyond the usual vague notions of the 'schizophrenia' of Haller's division into wolf and man.

In terms of our Lacanian discourse, the speaking 'je' of language is an object of the Other while the specular 'moi' is an object of its alter ego or ideal ego, that is to say it is alienated in the desire of the other. Thus the device of the wolf as allegory is construed duplicitously in two ways - it clearly entails reaction formation against a mode of social discourse (manifesting a force of nature, a traumatic kernel that can't be integrated into symbolic or social representation) but at the same time it inflects Harry Haller's own participation within that discursive field as a speaking subject, Haller's own 'bourgeois self', into its representation. This suggests that Hesse's adoption of that trope is complex, and cannot be reduced to any two-dimensional conflict - in terms of either the 'wolf' in antagonism to society or as an internal conflict that arises from a traumatic, non-representable kernel within Haller. It is rather a superimposition of the two modes, a coalescing of Haller's self and world relations, projection and introjection, sadism and masochism, that establishes the relational, 'three-dimensional' quality of the device as a restaging of Oedipal alienation in a synchronous context. This reading also emerges as consonant with the frequent alternation between projection and introjection, misanthropic aggression and masochistic self-reproach that determines Haller's world and self-representations and that permeates the narrative as a Leitmotif.

The inter-implication of the two forms of aggression is encapsulated in the statement above. It hints at a transformative relation of equivalence between Harry's aggressive projection of hostility against hypocritical discursive networks ('gegen die

ganze Welt die Zähne gefletscht ') and Haller's vividly expressed self-denigration ('und mich... wie ein Ferkel wälzte').

Another passage from the text illustrates this relation of contiguity, an infolding of projection and introjection in Haller's self and world relations.

War die Schweinerei allgemein menschlich, nun dann konnte sich meine Weltverachtung mit neuer Wucht darauf stürzen; war es nur meine persönliche Schwäche, so ergab sich daraus Anlass zu einer Orgie der Selbstverachtung.
(S.70)

This dilemma, a 'fierce struggle between the two Harrys', can be illuminated with reference to Elizabeth Bronfen's articulation of a 'nodal point between melancholia and sadism' as a characteristic that is deeply rooted in anthropological residuals (references to the phenomenon can be found in Freud's Totem und Tabu).

According to Bronfen there is an unstable overlap between sadism and melancholia precisely because the boundaries between self and other, which arise in the process of subject formation, are blurred. Since the other is initially established in the context of an unstable, alienating dialectic, the divisions of self and other remain opaque to the subject of consciousness. Bronfen postulates an intrinsic uncertainty that precludes any precise determination of otherness. The other may be perceived as either pure alterity or part of the self. This originary ambiguity can then give rise to unstable alternations between sadistic projection or melancholic introjection. If the other is perceived as part of the self, this may generate introspective,

melancholic self-reproach. If it is associated predominantly with alterity, associated with an external discursive network, then we may expect a projected sadistic response.⁸¹ This duplicitous alternation then accurately mirrors the ambiguity that is central to Haller's insertion in his social context. 'Steppenwolfdressur' indicated an alternation between submission and dominance founded on uncertain boundaries between self and other that echoes the modalities of the ego in the earliest phase of its development. The structure of the Lacanian mirror stage 'moi' implies a 'formula of equivalence of aggressiveness as part of libido and paranoid states.'⁸²

In terms of Haller's insertion into the field of his social signifying relations - bourgeois discourse - this structure of the ego re-emerges as an alternation or confusion between masochistic self-reproach and misanthropy. This strange image of the wolf in Haller's reactions to the bourgeoisie then leads us to presuppose a dialectic between a synchronous symbolic network, the bourgeoisie, and an unravelling of subjectivity into the layers of its composition. According to Ragland-Sullivan any unravelling of the illusion of narcissistic wholeness can lead to a regression to 'primary corporeal narcissism', the first layer of identity that was built in a perceptual merging with fantasmatic images of an organismic real at the level of traumatic *jouissance*.

This suggests that Hesse's use of lupine imagery in which Harry Haller's clashes with the bourgeoisie are cast allegorically echoes the unstable boundaries intrinsic to the 'three-

dimensional', relational and self-divisive quality of Oedipal identification that inaugurates the subject's alienation into signification. However, it is crucial to bear in mind the principle of retroactive translation in the relation between the traumatic kernel of the pre-Oedipal and the Oedipal.

The Steppenwolf trope, in all its complexity, can only be understood then, in terms of a dialectical relation between a diachronous sexual trauma and Haller's present synchronous symbolic network, the bourgeois social order. A similar relation is reflected in Žižek's reading of Freud's famous analysand, the wolf man.

The most famous case in psychonanalysis, the wolf man, Freud's Russian analysand who as a child witnessed the parental coitus a tergo,..., all his later symptom formations were nothing but so many endeavours to integrate this primal scene in the present, synchronous symbolic network, to confer meaning upon it, and thus to contain its traumatic impact, or to locate it within the dimension of truth.⁸³

Haller's mirror vision of a wolf and the circus scene in the Magic Theatre can be understood as mythic evocations of a primal scene or a sexual trauma. The mobilisation of lupine imagery in clashes with the bourgeoisie suggests that amidst the homeostasis of bourgeois discourse there is a traumatic element that cannot be represented.

In that sense, the effectiveness of Steppenwolf imagery as a literary device that structures the evolution of the narrative can be seen to derive from its allegorical complexity, from transcending the immediate critique of social context and hinting at deeper psychological substrata. Most critics have noted the

depth and unconscious quality of visceral lupine imagery adopted by the narrator, and this has frequently been linked to vague notions of Jungian archetypes (see Baumann). From a Lacanian base however we can perceive a remarkable consistency between tensions that arise in particular social situations, the allegorical rendering of these conflicts in the narrative and primordial unconscious dynamics. This coherence can be established because of the intimate connections between the unconscious, the symbolic order and displaced, tropic valuation as crucial to Lacanian thought. According to Lacan, a Jungian investigation, with its emphasis on the 'collective unconscious' stripped of any social or symbolic context, operates purely on the level of the captures of the dual-specular, imaginary mode. Therefore it should be considered inadequate to establish any coherent connection between symbolic literary devices such as the allegorical mode in the narrative of Der Steppenwolf and unconscious dialectics in their relation to social context. A Jungian analysis will thus remain inherently incommensurate to elucidating the intricacies implied in Steppenwolf's symbolic, literary devices that ultimately depend on a complex dialectical relation between self and Other. We shall now investigate these associations between allegory and psychological subtext in greater detail.

The funeral scene: negativity, allegory and Oedipal subtext

Let us now turn to the use of allegorical imagery that dominates the further sections of the narrative until Haller's encounter with Hermine. Following his encounter with the

professor which poignantly dramatised the inter-implication of Harry's self-division with the gap between himself and bourgeois society, he escalates his despondent allegorical reflections to their highest pitch so far in the novel by harkening back to the funeral scene he had witnessed earlier. He indulges in dark, sinister reflections, which take their cue from the memory of the corpse that had been buried earlier in a dirty hole (*Lehmloch*). Haller metaphorically substitutes himself for the unknown deceased in his allegorical fantasy that stages a gloomy re-casting of the earlier concrete scenario. He progresses from that fantasy of self-loss to even more encompassing scenarios of the demise of all ambition, culture, faith or joy in life. There is a determined, uncompromising tone to these bleak reflections that seem to posit a void, a negativity to existence extending to the personal, cultural-intellectual and historical spheres. We can say that Haller arrives at these conclusions by transforming the real funeral scene he had witnessed into a trope for the negativity of existence through his allegorizing gaze. That gaze in turn is conditioned by his self-divided, melancholic disposition analysed above.

I want to illustrate how those reflections reveal the anatomy of allegorical structure in Hesse's Der Steppenwolf to the extent that this scene can be shown to exemplify that structure. The funeral scene had been used earlier as a signifier for Haller's alienation in a bourgeois discourse, and the failure of its signifying representations in the face of death. This time, from a certain distance to the immediate event which allows for its allegorical transformation, it functions somewhat more radically

as a signifier that self-reflexively inflects the impossibility of any signifying representation as such, i.e. that reflects the failure of signification into signification itself and thus indicates a different plane or 'logical space'. As such it transparently reveals the modalities of allegory in its association with a primordial crystallization of subjectivity in the narrative. To evaluate the link we have to delve somewhat deeper into Lacanian theories of the phallic signifier. Slavoj Žižek has pointed out that in the Lacanian system no signifying representation ever fully re-presents the subject but that the move to the symbolic register always already implies, however slight, a distortion or mis-representation. The subject who accedes to the symbolic order undergoes a dialectical transformation of organic loss into symbolic lack. That is, the loss of organic, maternal affectivity is dialectically retroped as the lack of the phallus - the subject trying to find what was lost to him in primal repression within the symbolic register encounters the Other as barred while that symbolic lack in the Other constitutes a reflection or articulation on a discursive level of the real loss. In Lacan's linguistic reinterpretation of Freud's castration complex, the subject is symbolically castrated by encountering the Other, the linguistic and discursive network of the symbolic order which situates the subject in his cultural, linguistic and social context, as decompleted - it is the phallic signifier that inverts this lack into its representation and thereby functions as a key or 'master' signifier for the lack in the Other. Only in relation to this signifier does the

multiplicity of others assume its function of 'representing',
distorting and alienating the subject.

**Dieser Signifikant wird also der Signifikant sein, für den alle
anderen Signifikanten das Subjekt vorstellen. Das heisst, dass
ohne diesen Signifikanten alle anderen nichts vorstellen können.
Denn nichts wird vorgestellt, wenn nicht für etwas.⁸⁴**

The subject then can only orient itself in the symbolic field by
acceding to 'symbolic castration' - i.e. assuming the phallus or
master signifier of lack which is so crucial to the organisation
of the symbolic field as a whole. Both Lupton and Bronfen have
noted the analogy of that phallic signifier with the modalities
of allegory and tropic valuation. As the signifier which embodies
the lack of the signifier, the phallic signifier mirrors the
modalities of disjunctive signification of allegory which also
centres on the double gesture -a dialectical substitution of
semiotic valuation for the somatic real which - by allegory's
elliptical motion - in turn depends on the somatic level to
'embody' that exchange in the generation of allegorical meaning.
(For instance Baroque allegories of death which semiotically
value abstract, symbolic notions of death (~ castration) over
physical existence paradoxically depend on a 'physical body' to
allegorically materialize that idea). This conception of allegory
alludes to an irrevocable incommensurability between the somatic
and semiotic levels. If allegory always emblematises the
disjunction in signification by alluding to an occluded
signifier, it does so by self-consciously articulating the
figurative nature of its gesture, its speaking of other [allos]
things.⁸⁵ The impossibility of tropic valuation to ever adequately
represent or coincide with the somatic level which it has

substituted is thus self-reflexively inscribed into the very heart of allegory.

This was evident in the poem of the wolf of the steppes that followed the "Traktat", for instance. This wolf -while alluding to an organic real- 'makes sense' only as a figurative device in which an irrevocable disjunction from an organic origin is focalised. In that sense, allegory partakes of the phallic signifier's self-reflexive enunciation of the general impossibility of signification, of alienation as the condition of signification, and thus operates in 'a different logical space' relative to non-allegorical enunciation. The discrepancy between organic loss and signification that is installed in the subject as it accedes to the Oedipal therefore resurfaces in allegorical representation. The trope of allegory operates on the basis of the '*impossible restitution and repetition of losses*'⁸⁶ and is thus situated in the field of intersection of language and sexuality, or representation and emotion - embodying their disjunctions. According to Lupton who recasts Benjamin's theory of mourning as '*the mother of allegory*' within a Lacanian framework, in allegory the trauma of an inaugural maternal absence splits into

the imaginary Traum of the object and the symbolic drama of castration.⁸⁷

The allegorical mode thus follows the modalities of projective, imaginary displacements and introjective en-ryptions of loss elaborated earlier. As such it is fundamentally contradictory and

re-stages the modalities of mourning the phallus that constitute the subject subsequent to the accession to the Oedipal.

Let me now quote at length from Haller's allegorical reflections on the funeral scene to illustrate the relation to the phallic signifier of lack that is so important in constituting subjectivity.

Und waehrend ich mich einseifte, dachte ich an das dreckige Lehmloch im Friedhof, in das man heut den Unbekannten hinuntergeseilt hatte, und an die verkniffenen Gesichter der gelangweilten Mitchristen, und konnte nicht einmal darüber lachen. Dort endete, so schien mir, an jenem dreckigen Lehmloch, bei den dummen, verlegenen Worten des Predigers, bei den dummen, verlogenen Mienen der Trauerversammlung, bei dem trostlosen Anblick all der Kreuze und Tafeln aus Blech, bei all den falschen Draht- und Glasblumen, dort endete nicht nur der Unbekannte, dort würde nicht nur morgen oder übermorgen auch ich enden, verscharrt, unter Verlegenheit und Verlogenheit der Teilnehmer in den Dreck gescharrt, nein, so endete alles, unser ganzes Streben, unsre ganze Kultur, unser ganzer Glaube, unsre ganze Lebensfreude, die so sehr krank waren und bald auch dort eingescharrt werden würden. Ein Friedhof war unsre Kulturwelt, hier waren Jesus Christus und Sokrates, hier waren Mozart und Haydn, waren Dante und Goethe bloss noch erblindete Namen auf rostenden Blechtafeln,...(S.71-72)

Haller's tendency to equate not only himself but all culture to an existential void is vividly focalized in the claustrophobic image of the dirt hole, the grave, in which the instabilities of all signifying representations, or in Lacanian terminology, the dreadful lack of the Other, are graphically embodied. From our psychoanalytic hermeneutic perspective, the underlying allegorical meaning in this scene requires decoding. This also implies that the intense emotional charge in the enunciation is attached neither to the prospect of Haller's physical death, nor to the bleak, apocalyptic vision of a demise of culture in a realistic sense, but rather to the tropic use of these images for

configuring the set of relations of Haller as barred, split subject to the Other in terms of the essentially 'mythical', post-Oedipal modalities that characterize the retrospective, tropic valuation of primordial loss. This allegorical scene, recalling Haller's allegorizing gaze in the editor's prologue is very radical and succinctly descriptive of Haller. It emerges as pivotal in our investigation then, because it situates one of the novel's central themes, that we have expressed as the complex, conflictual and antagonistic insertion of the Steppenwolf in his bourgeois, social field, at its Oedipal origin and lends a certain transparency to the consistent psychological subtext of Der Steppenwolf that, at a certain level at least, transcends the particularities of the immediate setting. We can usually identify it by gestures of emotional or rhetorical excess which we also encountered in Haller's nostalgic evocations (section IV) and his attack against a Goethe sketch (see section VI). To decode the allegorical meaning that has been produced here, we need to read the preacher, the 'bored Christians' with their crosses and vacuous rituals in this scene as allusive to the cultural signifying dimension and perhaps to the field of signification in general (A more detailed discussion of the connection in Lacanian thought between the social and symbolic sphere will follow in section VI). We can then proceed to elaborate how the statement above allegorically materialises both illusions of imaginary wholeness and projects the signifier of lack, the phallic signifier of symbolic castration which is being evoked by bleakly casting the world of culture as a graveyard.

We know that allegorical meaning is produced precisely in the disjunction between *sema* and *soma*. Thus to decode any allegorical enunciation one must distinguish its two central components: the secondary layer of displacements and the primary material-somatic substratum. With regard to Hesse's funeral scene, where can we locate the somatic-real base continuing to inform the allegory beneath the layers of the imaginary/fantasy scenario and its symbolic encoding? The 'somatic' base that informs this allegory is simply the actual funeral that Haller had encountered, situated on the level of material reality in the real time linear unfolding of the narrative. The Lacanian notion of a real loss or '*hole in the real*' that sets the signifier in motion is succinctly encapsulated in the novel in the claustrophobic image of the '*Lehmloch*' into which a dead body had actually been lowered. But from this base Haller proceeds to an allegorical transformation by activating the displacing registers of the imaginary and symbolic that ultimately function to veil that loss in the real (we elaborated these dynamics in the outline).

Through a strategy of semantic encoding the 'real hole' or '*Lehmloch*' of the actual funeral functions to embody the symbolic phallus, the signifier of lack in the Other. The narrative here evolves in two stages: first, the intrinsic failure of the symbolic sphere, the ultimate senselessness of the Other, is represented in terms of the hypocrisy and indifference of priest and mourners with their vacuous rituals and symbols. These function as ciphers for the inadequacy of the cultural-discursive networks of the bourgeois world in the face of death or

irrevocable real loss. This association of real loss with lack in signification crucial to the allegorical enunciation is articulated in terms of direct juxtaposition. Haller here juxtaposes the 'Lehmloch' as a graphic image of real loss - a hole in the real - with a repetitive articulation of inadequate cultural representation: *'an jenem dreckigen Lehmloch.. bei den verlogenen Mienen der Trauerversammlung, bei dem trostlosen Anblick all der Kreuze und Tafeln aus Blech, bei all den falschen Draht und Glasblumen.'*

Subsequently, there is a dramatic escalation in Haller's despondent reflections which makes the nature of this allegory transparent. In his comparison of the world of art and culture to a graveyard we can discern both the accession to the 'different logical space' of the allegorical sign, its tendency towards a self-reflexive articulation of the failure of signification, as well as allegory's disjunction from and continuing dependence on a substratum of the real.

**Ein Friedhof war unsre Kulturwelt, hier waren Jesus Christus und Sokrates, hier waren Mozart und Haydn, waren Dante und Goethe bloss noch erblindete Namen auf rostenden Blechtafeln.
(S.71-72)**

This articulation describes an arc from an originary reference to physical loss [the 'hole in the real', the 'pound of flesh', the 'Lehmloch'] to a reflection of the failure of the cultural signifying field into signification - from the somatic to the semiotic level - whereby the semiotic level is cast stylistically in terms that visually evoke the originary somatic reference point - imagery of graves and memorial signs. The abstract semantic encoding thus apparently eclipses the level of soma.

However, as a result of the circular motion intrinsic to allegory, the somatic-real level remains active beneath the hermeneutic shell - it functions to materially embody the allegorical meaning. The two layers can therefore be seen to be intertwined in a circular, dialectical relation.

This conceptualization of allegorical signification echoes Lupton's description of the genesis of signification around the real of the Lacanian Thing.

Das Ding describes the genesis of signification not as a mise-en-abyme - the infinite regress of rhetorical figuration, but as a mise-en-bouteille - the constellation of the signifier around a Thing full of emptiness, the singularity of zero.⁸⁸

The realm of culture and signification emerges as flawed and doomed because of its genesis as a left-over of real vacuity, a Thing full of emptiness.

In her discussion of the relation of allegorical meaning to psychological substrata, Lupton has noted that death, which featured as the most prominent of Baroque allegories, most suitably embodies the artificiality and temporality of the signifying world - that is, it poignantly embodies symbolic castration. The references to blindness in the passage above also tend to align Haller's meditations on death and cultural demise with the theme of castration.

The projection of the phallic signifier is thus taken to a radical limit of self-reflexivity as it is cast in terms of an apocalyptic articulation of the annihilation of the cultural-symbolic universe. According to Žižek:

...the second death , the radical annihilation of nature's circular movement is already symbolized/historicised, inscribed, caught in the symbolic web - absolute death, the 'destruction of the universe', is always the destruction of the symbolic universe.'⁸⁹

However opposing this self-reflexive display of division, failure and alienation in cultural signification on the level of semantic encoding, allusions to the dream of imaginary wholeness are clearly discernible in the sense of a despondent, melancholic lamentation of lost significance. It is precisely the entailing tension and disjunction, the presence of the figurative dimension [allos] that is productive of the allegorical spark. Haller's highly-charged mournful evocation of loss, recalling the modalities of subjective presence 'in' the imaginary fantasy, has a repetitive rhythm and casts a rapidly escalating list of losses against the background of an indifferent group of bourgeois 'mourners' (ciphers, as we have seen, for the intrinsic failure of cultural representations). As indicated in the outline, the imaginary fantasy holds a mediating position between symbolic alienation and real loss in the subjective economy, establishing the fantasy's relational and existential dimension as a link to what the subject has been deprived of, the 'pound of flesh' or 'hole in the real'. Thus, the contrasting of Haller's isolated, private, mournful mode with society's vacuous signification ('*bei dem trostlosen Anblick all der Kreuze aus Tafeln aus Blech*') generates the imaginary, restitutive undercurrents in that allegory.

The first projected death in this fantasy scenario is Haller's own. Haller thus actively constitutes himself in that scene on a

predominantly imaginary level, he literally is 'in' this fantasy of the fading subject that compensates for abstract phallic lack by establishing a more immediate and intimate relation to a primordial physical loss. In terms of its underlying mechanisms this fantasy describes the trajectory of an imaginary, projective displacement of an earlier introjection of loss that configures the ego in acceding to symbolic castration. Thus, Haller displaces the castrative-Oedipal, mortifying en-cryption of loss vividly symbolized by the enclosure of the 'Lehmloch', to the imaginary level, staging an impossible '*restitution and repetition of loss*' in the theatre of fantasy. These dynamics can be seen to be closely analogous to the imaginary, projective displacements of Oedipal introjections in the Kasten memory of Freud's childhood, where Freud configures his absent mother in terms of mortifying enclosure of the Kasten.⁹⁰ According to Lupton, this type of fantasy symmetrically reverses the dynamics of melancholia with its introjective incorporations of primary narcissistic projections. Haller's reflection of himself in the funeral scene asymptotically approaches the '*imaginary Traum*' of the object. He can be seen to re-enact a prehistoric trauma in terms that fleetingly seem to restore, denying symbolic castration in a melancholic, recuperative mood. From the tropic, symbolic retrospection of the post-Oedipal individual the illusion of this imaginary restitution is here maintained precisely by the sense of opposition to the failure of the signifier. This scene also confirms the dynamics of the subject which constitutes itself only by means of its fading which we

have elaborated in connection with the 'suicide topos' in the "Traktat" in section V.

In essence then, this allegory contrasts two negatives: Haller's private mourning with culture's vacuous meaning.

This scene radically projects the phallic signifier, thematizing negativity in signification, the dreadful lack of the Other as the ultimate absurdity or lack of meaning of the symbolic universe. Notions of death and existential voids are here cast in contrast to cultural attempts to signify or represent and this contrast is simultaneously embodied in scenarios of the vanquishing of all cultural significations. Lacan has chosen the sign -1 for the phallic signifier to distinguish it from the others. The algebraic operation of squarerooting this signifier will yield an irrational number indicating the unconscious nature of this signifier that can never be conceived in terms of the transparent Cartesian cogito of consciousness. Following Lacan, Muller conceives of the subject in the following terms:

...if we are to conceive of it at all, it will have to be in terms of the faded subject that, through its withdrawal, undergoes a kind of death and therefore resides in a place 'from which a voice is heard clamouring the universe is a defect in the purity of non-being.'⁹¹

The terminology in this passage illustrates the significance of negativity in subjective constitution and we encounter a projection of this in Hesse's allegorical enunciation.

VI. The Novel's 'Bourgeois World Order' and the Lacanian Other

In the preceding section we found it useful to read the social and cultural orders in Der Steppenwolf as an extension of the symbolic field in the Lacanian sense in order to decode in depth the allegorical meaning of the funeral scene. The subsequent narrative further develops the theme of the antagonism between Haller's complex individual identifications and alienating alterity illustrating the extent to which the Other as the locus of the symbolic code is implicated with the functioning of the social games and mechanical routines of modern life in Der Steppenwolf. In fact, the narrative line prior to Harry's encounter with Hermine in the 'Schwarzer Adler' can be seen to pivot around Haller's fraught relation to the alienating Other. Since this intertwining of the social codes of the bourgeoisie that repel Haller and the Lacanian notion of the symbolic order is so crucial for our psychological investigation, we should analyse the theoretical aspects of that link in some detail. Particularly MacCannel has stressed the importance of the connection of the social and symbolic orders in Lacan's thought. She argues,

The symbolic order becomes, as in Pierce, literally the social order, the prototype of the other forms, imaginary and real.⁹²

The unconscious then, is radically external, 'in' social and cultural scenes.

MacCannel's analysis emphasises in particular the importance to Lacan of the 'cultural unconscious', the social and economic orders through which the individual apprehends the symbolic order in practical terms. Lacan frequently refers to the phallic signifier which integrates the subject into the symbolic field as the 'paternal metaphor', or the 'Name-of-the-Father' designating an alienation of the subject into a mode of understanding based exclusively on metaphoric inference rather than direct access to inter-human meaning. Since this alienating mode of metaphoric substitution underlies every individual's apprehension of the cultural and social field, McCannel argues that these Lacanian concepts are to be seen in their relation to Lacan's critique of modern, bourgeois society evident in his texts.

The modern fictions of paternity, legitimacy, the law of the law and so on that are encapsulated in Lacan's various designations of the phallic signifier are experienced by the subject of Oedipal identification as intrinsic to itself and therefore denote an alienating misconception or 'méconnaissance' in subjectivity. That is, they disguise the effective imposition of the symbolic and social Other from the outside. In that sense the fictions of paternal law or the Name-of-the-Father - forming part of alienating subjective self-conceptions - effectively veil the operations of power implicit in the relation of the subject to the Other or to the modern bourgeois social code.

'Power' as an organizing force of social discourse is exerted by imposing the exclusive significance of the phallic or Oedipal veil and thereby foreclosing access to polyvalent, inter-human meaning. From this perspective a reduction of multiple meaning to

significance and of prediscursive *jouissance* to an alienating love of the Other is coextensive with the operations of power in modern society. As Žižek has pointed out, there is no such thing as an 'innocent social game' unaffected by the dialectics of authority that organise the field of cultural and social signification. A hegemonic phallic signifier '*quashing multiple meaning*' underlies all forms of social and cultural interaction. Thus the individual is subjected to the Other in Lacanian discourse.

The main thrust of McCannel's analysis centres on the modalities by which the symbolic order, the word hollowing out the real, becomes the basis of bourgeois social life by constituting the tertiary dimension of the Other. The Other functions as the effective glue of the symbolic order, the bond binding any dual set of participants into the tertiary social dimension. This presupposes as crucial an affirmative belief in value and significance at the site of the Other.

A word is not a word (parole, oath, vow are implied in the term) except in so far as one believes in it ...the given word thus turns speaker and listener to the Other as guarantor of its significance, its value.⁹³

The symbolic order thus emerges as a fiction, the Other does not exist in the sense that it doesn't have a basis in the real. '*There is no Other of the Other*'.⁹⁴ Rather it designates a circular, self-referential and artificial construct that is only maintained '*in so far as one believes in it*'.

However, despite this fictional status, the Oedipal veil of cultural signification, with its illusory promises of value at

the site of the Other, constitutes the effectual and cohesive force behind the organisation of real behaviour. Thus all manifest authority structures and all the real behaviour associated with the mechanism of daily routines and the structure of the existing social and economic orders are ultimately rooted in the alienating fiction of the Other.

In the light of these theoretical reflections we can derive a novel, illuminating perspective on Harry Haller's conflictual imbrication in bourgeois discourse. As we have seen, Harry Haller casts his own melancholic despondency as a corollary to an epistemological awareness (sections II and V). His reflections subsequent to his allegorical use of the funeral scene reveal that he attributes the bourgeois' typically naive, affirmative belief in life to an illusory confidence in the realm of cultural signification which, he reflects, merely functions to disguise the dreadful void in being. From a Lacanian perspective we could argue that he holds a relativising vantage point vis-a-vis the fiction of the Other which effectively crystallizes in his critical elaborations on the vacuity of life. His own ambiguous imbrication in bourgeois discourse then, which is the source of tremendous suffering, also opens the possibility of an objective gaze to the human condition unalloyed by the 'Oedipal veil' that facilitates the comforting mechanical routines of daily life for the 'herd people'.

...und diese ewig fortlaufende Mechanik ist es, die sie hindert, gleich mir Kritik am eigenen Leben zu üben, seine Dummheit und Seichtheit, seine scheusslich grinsende Fragwürdigkeit, seine hoffnungslose Trauer und Öde zu erkennen und zu fühlen.

(S.73)

By contrast, in a symmetrical inversion of these dynamics of an integration of epistemological awareness and melancholy, Haller describes his colleague, a scholar in Oriental Studies as the epitome of the predominant social order, whose naive, unconflictual happiness is grounded in an affirmative belief in value and significance at the site of the Other.

...sucht nach Zusammenhängen zwischen vorderasiatischen und indischen Mythologien und ist vergnügt dabei, denn er glaubt an den Wert seines Tuns, er glaubt an die Wissenschaft, deren Diener er ist, er glaubt an den Wert des blossen Wissens...
(S.74)

This uncritical, positive belief in the value of his work, as Haller notes dismissively, demarcates the stance of the insider, it has an absolute quality unaffected by either the preceding war or by Einstein's theory of relativity and thus accounts for the robust and naively constructive subjectivity of the 'stout burger'.

If these passages relate happiness to epistemological naivety, and depression to existential awareness, this configuration established by the narrator can be seen to be founded in the novel's coextension of the concrete social sphere of the bourgeois world order with an artificial, abstract dimension structuring subjectivity (i.e. Lacan's symbolic register, the Other, that is founded on an illusory belief in its value).

Narrative Evolution and Haller's Enthrallment and Suspension in the Other

'The dependence of his desire on the other subject forms the permanent dimension of Hamlet's drama' (Lacan)

'Here now is the second factor I ask you to recognise - Hamlet is constantly suspended in the time of the Other, throughout the entire story until the very end.' (Lacan)

Above (sec. V) we encountered a consistent relation between narrative structure and the topology of subjectivity. Thus Haller's ambiguous insertion in his discursive field, reflected in his alternation between melancholia and misanthropy could be related to a constitutively alienated subjectivity. The gap between manifest surface content and psychological subtext in Der Steppenwolf is bridged by means of literary and tropic devices. For instance, the trope of the 'wolf' is multi-layered, it both encapsulates Haller's synchronic reaction to a concrete social situation in the narrative and diachronically alludes to deeper psychological substrata. Similarly, we have traced the trajectory from a real funeral to an allegorical expression of unconscious truths by means of semiotic and imaginary transformations.

Thus far our analysis of these relations has been confined mostly to the micro-level of individual sequences. However analysing the wider narrative space prior to Haller's encounter of Hermine will reveal a formal elegance in the integration of the individual sequences that epitomises Steppenwolf's taut narrative structure. It is probably not excessive to designate this 'narrative space' as a stream of interfolded sequences that are connected metonymically by their relation to subjective meaning and desire and in their progressive orientation toward

the climactic scene - a *final victory* for the Steppenwolf and Haller's poise on the brink of suicide. Examining this narrative space, we perceive what may be conceptualized as the central position in the novel occupied by the Other. The "Traktat", around which the narrative is structured tautly according to Hesse, can be considered an entification of the super-ego in Freudian terms or as the abyss of the Lacanian Other. In the narrative space preceding the "Traktat", Haller is dialectically positioned to the Other's gaze suggesting a meaningful communication from a metaphysical Other, the Immortals or the golden trace (see outline). These dialectics culminate in Haller's acquisition of the "Traktat". Subsequent to the "Traktat", the allusions to the magical and transcendental dimension recede somewhat into the background while the "Traktat's" Steppenwolf theme (Haller's dynamic relation to the bourgeois Other) is developed. Within this space, we can discern the dialectics of a 'narrative spiral' involving self and Other, a dynamic interimplication of external events with their contrastive subjective perception by Haller that is central to the internal logic of the narrative evolution. We might say that the modalities of Haller's complex and ambiguous subjective perceptions, whenever they precede subsequent concrete developments serve to shade these events with the specific emotional colour of Haller's moods. Any manifest developments in the plot thereby appear to assume a subordinate, relative and reflective position with respect to Haller's subjectivity (the funeral, the encounter with the professor and so on). However, as our analysis indicates they appear to function dialectically in

triggering novel perspectives in terms of Haller's subjective-hermeneutic assessments and thereby function to progressively clarify and articulate his relations to the social and symbolic Other. Since these dynamics are rooted precisely in Haller's neurotic and melancholic sensibilities that reveal a tendency toward an obsessive projection of the ordinarily unconscious fantasy to objects in the external world we can observe a discernible, progressive increase in dramatic tension and potential in Haller's clashes with the bourgeois world order along the narrative thread. This designates a key feature of Steppenwolf's narrative structure.

Thus, an analysis of the first part of Der Steppenwolf reveals a progressively intensifying emotional force that endows Haller's perception and interpretation of real events with a quality of excess, which as we have seen with regard to the funeral scene, properly establishes the allegorical and psychoanalytically revealing dimension of the novel. This is how Haller characterises his emotional state in the young scholar's flat which sets the stage for the subsequent climactic eruption: *'...mir, der ich schon hinlänglich gereizt und geladen war...'*. This emotional intensity is linked to cuts and ruptures in the continuity of discourse that are significant. According to Muller, *'the result is that irruptions of unconscious processes become more manifest - and these are the focus of psychoanalysis.'*⁹⁵

Far from forming an arbitrary string of events, the developments in the plot in the first part of Der Steppenwolf thus reveal a systematic directedness and orientation that

confirms Hesse's own assessment of tight structure. From that perspective it is probably not difficult to discern the conditions for an explosive vicious circle in the narrative culminating in the climactic scene to which the narrative evolution has been inclined by its internal logic - a complete disavowal of the social code by Haller.

Let us trace these dynamics in some more detail. Following the abstractions of the "Traktat" as entified Other, there is an introspective section in which Haller critically reflects on the Traktat. He opposes the "Traktat's" detached, generalising abstractions with his raw poem and discusses specific, devastatingly real turning points in his life - the separation from his wife and an unsuccessful suicide attempt. These bleak reflections are then threaded skilfully into the funeral scene which returns the narrative to present tense and to an anchor in the external world. However, despite the temporal shift, thematically and stylistically this scene continues in the vein of the previous reflective mode since Haller's 'involvement' in the funeral scene is purely contemplative. But Hesse then inserts a deliberate contrast to this mode of bleak, contemplative continuity by construing a clash with the outside world as Haller accidentally meets the young professor in Oriental mythology. The mobilisation of vivid lupine imagery at this juncture - crystallizing Haller's torn subjectivity and alienation (section V) can then be seen to be tangibly *authenticated* by the sense of an acute disjunction between the complex nature of Haller's self-perception as it has been carefully evolved in the novel up to

that point and his overtly compliant and polite behaviour in the actual encounter with alterity. Despite deep underlying misgivings that are later expressed in a sense of foreboding, Haller gratefully accepts an invitation to a dinner party. This can be seen to reflect the Lacanian paradigm of a constitutive alienation of human desire in the desire of the Other - here personified and articulated by the scholar. In that sense Haller's own imbrication in bourgeois discourse conditioning his spontaneous compliant behaviour semantically encodes that fundamental alienation of desire in the desire of the Other. In his compliance, Haller spontaneously stages the Other's desire as his own desire, he receives his own desire back from his acquaintance. This becomes manifest in his sense of narcissistic wounding and self-division that is channelled into an aggression which has a misanthropic and masochistic side. These responses are rooted in his intuition of these alienating dynamics. The Other as an element that is not only external but intrinsic and constitutive of the subjective economy thus 'pulls the strings' that propel the narrative forward towards the inevitable dramatic disruption to the dinner evening. Until that event there is a sense of passive, impotent subjection in Haller's position which finds its most poignant expression in the trope of the wolf, the colourful, lyrical evocations of natural aggression. This reading accords with a Lacanian conception of aggression as a correlative tension of alienated subjectivity that predisposes the individual to an inherent misrecognition of the nature of identity and consciousness.

Thus this specific use of the stylistic device, the trope of the Steppenwolf at this stage, emerges as appropriate and justified in terms of the internal logic of the narrative thread precisely because it is charged with the full force of the tension and discontinuity between subjective perceptions and the alterity of external realities, self and Other - a gap which functions as a screen for the allegorical projection of underlying psychological depth. This suggests that the concrete narrative evolution unfolds in terms of a radical external determination on Haller's action reflecting his suspension in the desire of the Other, which paradoxically defines the modalities of his own subjectivity.

What follows is Haller's transformation of the funeral into an encompassing allegory for negativity, an escalation which can now be seen to be based on a structurally 'organic' utilisation of his recent memory of the funeral which functions to allegorically bind the excessive emotional charge in one signifier. In that sense a circular, dialectical superimposition of Haller's intensifying emotional perspectives on real events and encounters feeds the propulsion of the narrative thread as an interconnected, cohesive structure that is allegorically expressive of Haller's subjectivity. A narrative dramatisation of the phenomenology of human desire thus founds the logical consistency within the novel.

Hesse can therefore be seen to have skilfully orchestrated an encompassing interconnected sequence of events that eventually culminates in Haller's hostile eruption at the end of a fraught

dinner evening with his bourgeois acquaintance. When Haller storms out of his friend's flat he effectively real-izes the sense of foreboding he felt when he entered. The dramatic, climactic nature of this scene is encapsulated in Haller's defiant proclamation of a radical disavowal, a dissolution of all bonds to the polite, bourgeois world.

**...für mich aber [es] ein letztes Misslingen und Davonlaufen, war mein Abschied von der bürgerlichen, der moralischen, der gelehrten Welt, war ein vollkommener Sieg des Steppenwolfes.
(S.81)**

This is cast by the narrator as a final victory for the Steppenwolf and a defeat for his socially sublimated self. Later we will examine in more detail the underlying psychological structure of that dramatic passage which launches Haller into his despondent fantasies of suicide. With regard to that pivotal scene, we can see that Hesse characteristically renders Haller's alienation in the Other which propels the narrative in terms that evoke the vicissitudes of fate (*'und ich ergab mich ins Geschick, obwohl ich Unheil ahnte'*). [S.76]

In his analysis of Hamlet, Lacan has indicated the permanent dimension of the play to be Hamlet's alienation in the desire of the m(Other), his suspension in the time of the Other, and he casts the vicious intrigue by Claudius and Laertes that leads to the fatal duelling scene as a trap laid by the Other to which Hamlet is susceptible precisely because of his own alienation and suspension in the Other. Yet the 'fulfilment of the drama of Hamlet's desire' although precipitated by these events entails his identification with the 'mortal phallus' beyond these lures.⁹⁶ According to Lacan's careful formulations that duel finally

allows Hamlet the realisation of his will and his act, to avenge the murder of his father and pay back his 'symbolic debt', however not in terms of a confident assertion of his conscious ego but only as a corollary of his death, his disappearance as a subject:

It is the consequence of the immanent presence of the phallus which will be able to appear only with the disappearance of the subject himself.⁹⁷

The appearance of the symbolic phallus eclipses Hamlet as a flesh and blood agent so that Hamlet can be seen to melodramatise a relation of aphanasis or mutual exclusion between the attainment of symbolic truth and an underlying organic substratum of the real. In broad terms narrative developments in Der Steppenwolf appear to reflect Hamlet's intertwining of an inner psychological dimension with the narrative evolution. But with regard to the issue of the 'appearance of the mortal phallus' it can be shown that they do so inversely. One aspect of Haller's preceptitous departure from the professor's flat is the threat of his immanent disappearance or death as a social subject. The 'mortal phallus' which threatens to enter the stage here should definitely be conceived as a 'real' phallus in contrast to Hamlet's symbolic one, a psychotic kernel within Haller which is troped as the fascinating image of the wolf of the steppes, as the next section will further clarify.

In both Hamlet and Der Steppenwolf dramatic developments reflect the protagonists' 'neurosis', their suspension in the

time of the Other and the evolution of the narrative thread in each case possesses an internal consistency, the appearance of a teleological orientation towards a climax. In terms of the narrative strategy underlying Der Steppenwolf, the 'trap' into which Haller was led by the Other, manifested by his professor friend, was designed to bring forth the first dramatic eruption in the novel which in turn sets in motion further key developments.

In my discussion of the "Traktat", I indicated that the allegory of Steppenwolf, the polarized conception of self, is set up so as to engender the dramatic potential in the narrative in terms of a mobility between the extreme poles. A significant transformation in the balance of power between Haller's two selves designating a final victory for the Steppenwolf informs the lyrical shape and emotional colour of Haller's tortured reflections.

The impotent gaze through the eyes of Slavoj Žižek

'Symbolic truth emerges via the imitation of imitation' (Žižek)

Once Haller is received into the scholar's flat, his sense of entrapment is rendered almost palpable and he misses his last chance of escape when the scholar's wife greets him in the hall. To his dismay, Haller perceives a pencilled sketch of Goethe. The drawing portrays Goethe as figure of cultural heritage appropriated by the bourgeoisie - the portrait thus functions as a signifier for the reduction of vitalistic, artistic ingenuity

and creativity that always has polyvalent meaning to the 'hegemonic' signifier of vacuous bourgeois cultural discourse ('ihn, alles in allem zu einem wahrhaft schönen alten Herrn zu gestalten, welcher jedem Bürgerhause zum Schmuck gereichen konnte.' (S.75) and is therefore an appropriate figure for embodying Haller's sense of 'fatal dissonance'.

The sketch thus effectively crystallizes Haller's sense of alienation but as we shall demonstrate later also embodies deeper psychological substrata.

The focus of attention then shifts to Haller's confrontation with the rampant militarism of the time. It is in this confrontation that the mechanisms of the creation of irony and the relation of style to psychological subtext can be critically elucidated. The scholar, brandishing one of the militarists' papers, jokingly refers to a certain namesake of Haller, an opponent of the government's military policy ('ein übler und vaterlandsloser Geselle'), who is being attacked in the paper's editorial. Significantly at this stage, Harry Haller does not admit to his authorship of the article.

...und die beiden dachten nicht in ferne daran, dass das Scheusal vor ihnen sitzen könnte und doch war es so, dass Scheusal war ich selbst.

(S.77)

The effectiveness of this sequence which conveys the tension of Haller's position and an impeccable sense of dark sarcasm in equal measure, can be seen to hinge on a subtle and implicit expression of the symbolic truth of Haller's subjection to the

Other. The dialectics of this scene produce a symbolic point, a virtual object that is absurd ('Scheusal') but equally encapsulates the truth of Haller's subjection to the bourgeois code. According to Žižek, such a symbolic, virtual point emerges within the dialectical movement of perception and depends on a double reflection.

...neither what I immediately see ('reality itself') nor the way the others see me ('the real inverted image of reality') but the way I see the others seeing me.'⁹⁸

Žižek's statement graphically encapsulates the Lacanian conception of the subject's relation to the symbolic order.

What is at stake then is the double remove of Haller's perception of himself through bourgeois eyes. This designates a complex linguistic, symbolic operation, the different 'logical space' opened by metaphoric substitutions that installs the subject of the signifier. It is this dimension that facilitates the ironic distance in this scene and allows the narrator to allegorise the tension of his fracturing into two selves. It throws into sharp relief the Steppenwolf's fragmentation and alludes to the genealogy of the Steppenwolf figure in the search for metaphoric meaning and psychological truth, reflected later in Hermine's designation of the Steppenwolf trope as '*eine Poesie*'.

Thus Haller is forced to dissimulate to maintain the consistency of the social field. Continued social functioning implies that he must not protest by clarifying or disavowing the despicable and degraded object into which he has been transformed

in his virtual reflection. By acquiescing to the scholar's discourse, Haller also effectively acquiesces to the modalities of the bourgeois codes that have generated his virtual-symbolic reflection and in his impotence he is therefore subjected to an experience akin to symbolic castration. This experience thus succinctly encapsulates the modalities of his participation in bourgeois discourse. This is what symbolic identification is in its essence: an enforced identification with a virtual reflection that is radically alien to the subject's 'being' and yet ensures the consistency of the field of discourse of which he is a part. The structural framework of this scene is constructed around the implicit injunction not to reveal the hidden truth beneath the apparent consistency of the social field. It is not surprising that this entails a significant build-up of emotional charge as we elaborated above. Haller refers to a physically palpable feeling of depression and an anguished sense of danger and fate that is stalking him:

In diesem Augenblick nämlich...verdichtete sich in mir das schlimme Gefühl von Depression und Verzweiflung, das sich seit der Begräbnisszene in mir angehäuft hatte, zu einem wüsten Druck, zu einer körperlich (im Unterleib) fühlbaren Not, einem würgend angstvollen Schickssalsgefühl. Es lag etwas gegen mich auf der Lauer, es beschlich mich von hinten eine Gefahr.

(S.77)

Lacan locates psychosomatic reactions of this sort in the register of the real or somatic substratum in Seminar II. We may surmise that the suppressed Steppenwolf here reacts to the unbearable burdens imposed by the subjugation to an identification with an 'indigestible' symbolic reality.

This leads us to Slavoj Žižek's elaborations on the dialectics of the impotent gaze as the most useful paradigm for a further detailed investigation of the ramifications of that scene. According to Žižek, Lacan first developed his notion of the impotent gaze in connection with his analysis of Edgar Allen Poe's The Purloined Letter. That tale epitomises to Lacan the unconscious as radically external and manifest 'in' social scenes. Lacan has identified two players in the story, the passive victim (the Queen whose compromising letter had been stolen by the minister) and an active agent (the minister) who both conduct their 'social game' in a dialectical relation with a third party embodying a normative and seemingly impartial Other (the King). The presence of the King as the embodied social code inscribes an asymmetrical relation of power and impotence into the social game that subjects the Queen to the terrible, passive position of the 'impotent gaze' with respect to the minister's sinister scheming:

The agent under the guise of simply following the rules of the social game deals a decisive blow to the adversary.⁹⁹

Recall also our earlier elaborations on the connection of the social sphere, the cultural unconscious and power in discussing McCannel, which served to illustrate how the Other, even though 'it doesn't exist' is nonetheless effectual in determining real behaviour and underlies all authority structures.

The crucial point to note is that the victim, subject to the impotent gaze, perfectly apprehends the real implications of any hostile actions of the agent, but cannot escape from the dynamics of the 'impotent gaze' because the party embodying the social

code of the Other 'must not know all', for otherwise the victim's bonds to the social Other would threaten to dissolve and a catastrophe would ensue. According to Slavoj Žižek

The fundamental pact uniting the players is: The Other must not know all.¹⁰⁰

In Hesse's scenario, Haller has fallen into the trap of the 'impotent gaze' through his own entanglement in the bourgeois Other. The young scholar here personifies the normative, bourgeois, social code of the Other, the guarantor of the consistency in discourse and therefore he 'must not know all'. There is no active agent here since the virtual-symbolic reflection that turns Haller into a despicable, degraded object is produced by the young scholar unwittingly. This is the basis for the ironic and sarcastic mood in this scene. The injunction that the Other must not know holds since that would raise the spectre of the surfacing of a traumatic kernel, the complete 'victory' of the Steppenwolf. The fact that social games are never innocent or mere surface constructs, but are charged with the dialectics of power is here impeccably rendered by Hesse. To summarise, we can conclude then that Harry's reaction of physical anguish and disgust is related to the suffering imposed upon him by subjection to the 'impotent gaze' and that it is that position that gives rise to both the sense of an unbearable tension and, on the aesthetic level, the distancing dark irony in that scene.

Emotions and their representation

The symmetrical inverse of the impotent gaze, as we have seen, is the power of the bourgeois who has thrust an agonising state of disequilibrium, a long sequence of lies and insincerities upon Haller. Haller's entire being is now focused in his endeavour to recover his narcissistic equilibrium through a release of his pent-up emotional charge. His use of language strongly suggests a climactic, pivotal stage in the narrative.

Ich war wie besessen von dem Gefühl, dass die Situation unerträglich sei, dass er mir jetzt gelingen müsse meine Wirte...auf meinen Ton zu stimmen oder einer Explosion herbeizuführen.

(S.78)

Harry Haller attempts to break his enclosure by fiercely criticising the Goethe portrait in a calculated offense against his hosts. The lifting of the previous claustrophobic entrapment thus crystallizes in Haller's attack on the Goethe portrait marking a sudden break or discontinuity in discourse. But what is the link between Haller's strong affective charges and the object in which they are crystallized?

The narrative seems to suggest that in his sudden outburst, Haller aims at far more than merely reacting to an intolerable social situation. The rhetoric he uses in evoking a 'final victory' of the Steppenwolf indicates the emergence of deeper, subconscious substrata. That is to suggest that in reacting to one particular manifestation, one particular entrapment in the social Other, Haller aims at the symbolic Order in general.

From a Lacanian perspective the binding of Haller's emotional charge in one particular signifier, the Goethe sketch, can be

considered as a neurotic overreaction following the narrative's prevalent allegorical mode. As Haller departs from his hosts, he indeed apologizes by hinting at his neurotic disposition. According to Lupton

It is precisely the difference between 'arousing' a feeling and adequately 'representing' it, a negative quantity rather than a positive quality that explains...excessive emotion, the emotion of excess.¹⁰¹

Sloterdijk also conceives of the nature of neurotic overreactions in terms of energetic displacements that reveal an existential dimension. In that reading, the condition of existence mobilises a primordial 'No', a hatred that may focalise traces of negativity in object relations as neurotic overreactions. This theme of an alignment of a psychoanalytic and existential dimension that we have developed throughout this paper is evident in the following passage by Sloterdijk.

An allen Unlusterfahrungen des späteren Lebens wird ein unausgesprochenes Ur-Nein mobilisiert ohne dessen dramatisierende Wirkung die Entstehung von Neurosen und anderen schweren seelischen Störungen unerklärlich bliebe. Im Kern psychischer Störungen finden wir stets 'Überreaktionen' - das heisst mächtige Energieverschiebungen und affektive Fehlschlüsse, die zu Erregungen am falschen Ort führen. Der Hass, in seinen heissen Formen und gefrorenen Masken, speist sich somit stets in nachträglichen Bündelungen in Objekten späterer Erfahrung.¹⁰²

To the extent that Haller's vicious attack on the sketch denotes a revelatory gap in discourse, the binding of his emotional charges in one signifier in a disjunctive representation therefore points to displaced energetic charges and thus functions allegorically in analogy to the funeral scene.

That tropic function then implies that Haller's attack, beyond the specific, hegemonic signification of bourgeois discourse that is implied in that sketch, aims at the signifying world, the generation of meaning in signification in general which is constitutively distortive, alienating and artificially construed. According to Lacan, psychological substrata can then be seen to be 'in' the semantic surplus of Haller's overreaction, to be both manifested and concealed in Haller's venomous 'backlash' at the Goethe sketch that allegorically crystallizes the general failure and distortion of signification, the cancellation of the flesh by the symbol. From a Lacanian perspective we are faced with an excessive meaning or overdetermination when the vestiges of a diachronic traumatic kernel infuse themselves into the synchronic signifying chain (Haller's attack on the sketch). As we have indicated in our discussion of McCannel it is in the manifest social sphere that the subject apprehends his relations to the symbolic order. Haller's reaction can then be seen to be intertwined with his relations to the bourgeoisie that have always already been fraught with psychological undercurrents, and therefore his spontaneous expression of underlying psychological depths is facilitated *'because the present symbolic universe of the subject is structured in a way that is susceptible to it'*.¹⁰³ There is a certain logic in crystallizing energetic charges in an image since the ego's imaginary function first establishes subjective alienation from an organic substratum charging all subsequent object relations with a primordial aggression that derives from that primordial exclusion.

There is strong support in the narrative that this reading does not amount to an overinterpretation. When Harry discusses the issue of the representation of their respective idolised cultural or religious figures with Hermine, Hermine indicates the pure power of an obliteration in the move towards representation. Referring to a saint she reveres, she remarks: *'Wozu hat er gelebt und so furchtbar gelitten, wenn den Leuten schon so ein dummes Bild von ihm genügt?'* (S.104) And in Haller's Goethe dream, Goethe himself is accused of mummifying nature into a mask in his artistic endeavours.

Thus in suggesting that Haller's attack on the Goethe sketch is inappropriate we aim to designate excess or overdetermination in his synchronic signifying network. This overdetermination then indicates an underlying trauma - the 'original murder of the thing' by the symbol.¹⁰⁴

When Haller storms out of the professor's flat, he fully appreciates the dramatic, pivotal nature of his hurried departure. This is manifested in his perception of a crucial assymetry in the reaction of both parties to Haller's fatal, social faux pas. Haller believes that while his outburst likely constitutes a mere nuisance, a minor disruption to his friend, in his case there is an irrevocable victory for the Steppenwolf, an irrevocable departure from his social, sublimated and 'moral' self. As we have pointed out above the climactic scene is pregnant with unconscious motivations. His dramatic outburst had been triggered precisely by his reduction to the status of an

object implicit in the subjection to the impotent gaze. The subjection to the 'gaze' always carries the possibility of a subversion of the illusion of autonomous consciousness and the irruption into subjectivity of the repressed unconscious truth of the subject's radical contingency. According to Sullivan, the gaze has the power *'to activate within consciousness an awareness of unconscious motivation and intentionality.'*¹⁰⁵ (Recall that the "Traktat" in designating the Steppenwolf figure as a 'suicide' had alluded precisely to the subject's poise over the abyss of the real.)

Thus we may assert that the social game Haller has played with his hosts has escalated into a meeting with a traumatic, real kernel that has subverted Haller's subjective consistency and led to his proclamation of a dissolution of the social bond. According to Žižek the unconscious must be conceived of as a domain of forbidden thought that must remain hidden from the subject to ensure the perpetuation of subjective consistency and to prevent the disintegration of his very being: the Other must not know all. The functioning of the social field hinges on this exclusion, on the implicit injunction not to trespass too far into the forbidden realm of the unconscious. According to Žižek

What Freud called the Oedipus complex is such an unhistorical traumatic kernel, to understand the other means to pacify it, to prevent the meeting with another from becoming a meeting with the real that undermines our own position.¹⁰⁶

When Haller ceases to 'pacify the other' and launches into an initially liberating outburst against his hosts, subjective disorganization ensues. A traumatic real - his Steppenwolf self -

emerges in pure, undiluted and substantive form. A reversion to the traumatic real is also indicated by Hesse's use of language that alludes to an organismic, 'real' substratum.

**Ich hatte von meiner ehemaligen Welt und Heimat, von Bürgerlichkeit, Sitte und Gelehrsamkeit nicht anders Abschied genommen als der Mann mit dem Magengeschwür vom Schweinebraten.
(S.81)**

The use of physical imagery at this stage has also been noted by Boulby. This eruption of the real now sets the stage for a pure reflection of the phenomenology of Haller's neurosis in the narrative.

VI. The Phenomenology of Haller's Death Drive

Haller proclaims a total victory for the Steppenwolf while simultaneously diagnosing an utter defeat, a declaration of bankruptcy of his 'civilized' or sublimated self.

Angst-ridden Harry Haller then roams aimlessly through the streets of the city, poised on the brink of killing himself by cutting his throat with a razor blade. Yet lacking sufficient determination he equivocates - protracting his poise on the brink of self-annihilation into an ostentatious pose that has an intricate structure revelatory of the phenomenology of his neurosis. These passages in the text particularly yield to a Lacanian based analysis since they expose in great detail the anatomy of the neurotic's relation to time that concerned Lacan in his Écrits and his analysis of desire in Hamlet.

Let me therefore recapitulate some of the pertinent elements of Lacan's reflections. In the outline we were concerned with the relation of the phallus, as the signifier of the lack in the Other, to the subject's fantasy, denoted by Lacan as [$\$ \langle a \rangle$]. The fantasy [$\$ \langle a \rangle$] describes the barred subject's ($\$$) relation to the object-cause of his desire and is ordinarily strictly confined to the unconscious system as a reference point, or anchor, that allows the subject to get a hold of himself in the 'space beyond demand', beyond the field organised by the symbolic register. It is situated as the 'endpoint of the subject's question' describing the barred, split subject's relation to an essentially imaginary object that compensates him for his separation from the Other, for the lack in the Other that is designated by the

phallic signifier. According to Lacan, in neurosis and perversion, this imaginary fantasy then replaces the phallus as the signifier of what the subject has been deprived of, it situates the subject in an imaginary, 'fetishistic' relation to its object of desire implying an irruption of unconscious forces, an infiltration of the imaginary fantasy into the conscious system.

Thus adopting very precise structural definitions, Lacan recasts Freud's less rigid conceptions of neurosis. In its simplest form this can be summarized by saying that the fantasy of neurosis situates the subject in a certain, imaginary relation to his object. With regard to our investigation of Harry Haller's suicide fantasies, two factors of that relation emerge as crucial to any understanding of the relation of narrative style to psychological structure in Hesse.

I. Since the neurotic 'identifies the lack in the Other' with his demand, he tends to conflate his fantasy, a fundamentally imaginary scenario, with the demand of the Other. According to Lacan, since the demand of the Other is perceived by the neurotic as an object of the fantasy, the dialectical relation between demand and desire that usually strictly confines the imaginary fantasy to the unconscious system, is annulled or short-circuited. This implies an infiltration of the fantasy into the subject's conscious object relation. Deprived of any of the dialectical subtleties that usually situate the fantasy 'beyond' demand, the fantasy is literally identified as a demand of the Other and is therefore being reduced to pure drive.

II. These essentially pathological irruptions of the unconscious into object relations have far-reaching implications. As the following analysis of Haller's suicidal fantasies will illustrate, the neurotic charges the fantasy object with 'his sense of time', it is by means of this object that he attempts to orient himself in time. According to Lacan

That is at the base of neurotic behaviour, in its most general form: the subject tries to find his sense of time in his object, and it is even in the object that he will learn to tell time {lire l'heure}.¹⁰⁷

In Harry Haller's stance, his actions and his vacillation, and the stylistic rendition of these elements on a narrative level, we can perceive a mirroring of the modalities of neurosis. The language in these passages is clearly suggestive of drive, pure and non-dialectal, as the main structuring force.

**Hin und her lief ich durch die Strassen, vom Elend geritten.
(S.81)**

Furthermore, it is apparent that Haller perceives his drive toward self-destruction, which he colourfully evokes in fantasies of 'an execution', of cutting his throat with a razor blade, not so much as an act of free, conscious determination, but rather as an unconscious 'demand' that decentres him as self-transparent, conscious subject - for on a conscious level he recoils from his act in mortal fear. In the narrative Haller's determination is indeed cast in terms of a demand:

Geh heim Harry, und schneide dir die Kehle durch! Lang genug hast du gewartet.

(S.81)

Haller's perceives his determination to end his life as 'imposed' so that it can be linked to a super-ego injunction but his erratic roaming betrays an ambivalence, a simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from his act. We might say that suicide as a fantasised object of the demand of the Other functions as the projected lure which, given the simultaneous repulsion, keeps his frantic, angst-ridden cruise through town in motion.

In a very fundamental way, Haller attempts to find his sense of time in relation to that object. While Lacan suggests that the neurotic's object is imbued with a significance that he casts as the 'hour of truth', he simultaneously exposes an asymmetrical relation between time and the object

in which the object is always at another hour, fast or slow, early or late.¹⁰⁸

When Hamlet wavers in his determination of revenging his murdered father, of striking out against the shameless usurper Claudius, this is because the '*phallus, even the real phallus, is a ghost.*'¹⁰⁹ For both Hamlet and Haller there is, then, a subliminal perception that what they search for, their hour of truth, can never be satisfied by any tangible, empirical object and it is this suspicion that elicits the never-ending deferral, the pulsation of the drive. In Haller's imagination, the fateful return to his room describes the point in time where the drive is immobilised, where he can no longer transform his despair into

the kinetic energy. At this point, the object of his fantasy would coincide with his act, it would 'collapse' into the real.

Immer mehr, immer deutlicher begann ich das Gespenst zu sehen, vor dem ich mich fürchtete,... Es war die Heimkehr, die Rückkehr in meine Stube, das Stillhaltenmüssen vor der Verzweiflung.

(S.82)

This allows us to further elucidate Haller's ambivalence. While he perceives his suicide as demanded by the Other, its imagined realisation announces the dimension of a catastrophic real, a mute, inert real from which there is no escape ('Stillhaltenmüssen vor der Verzweiflung'). The horrifying spectre ('Gespenst') from which he recoils in panic thus points to a central traumatic kernel within him. It is this abyss around which his neurotic death drive circulates illustrating how in neurosis fantasy reduced to pure drive is subverted by the real.

The wavering, the constant sense of poise and oscillation that is the perpetual dimension of the drama of Hamlet also shines through in the passage by which ends what I have designated as the first section of Der Steppenwolf immediately before Haller meets Hermine in 'Schwarzer Adler'. This is an elegant 'prose poem' which echoes the insistent rhythm of the poem that follows the "Traktat". It encapsulates the 'pulsing' of Haller's drive no less than a moment of tragic impossibility in his relation to the fantasy object.

Zuckend riss es mich weiter durch die Stadt, im weiten Bogen umkreiste ich meine Wohnung, stets die Heimkehr im Sinn, stets sie verzögernd, da und dort blieb ich in einer Kneipe hängen, einen Becher lang, zwei Becher lang. Dann jagte es mich weiter, in einem weiten Kreis um das Ziel, um das Rasiermesser, um den Tod herum. Todmüde sass ich zuweilen auf einer Bank, einem

Brunnenrand, auf einem Prellstein, hörte mein Herz klopfen,
wischte mir den Schweiss von der Stirn, lief wieder weiter, voll
tödlicher Angst, voll flammender Sehnsucht nach Leben.

(S.83)

Casting death as the object(Ziel) around which Haller is
'chased' by his own drive this passage evocatively
melodramatises the relations which govern the neurotic subject
in the thrall of unconscious motivations. The circle and motion
of the drive are very effectively contrasted with its immobile
end and aim, the visceral death by razor blade. This
juxtaposition intimates the existential dimension which Lacan
discerned in neurotic behaviour, it throws into sharp relief how
the subject's relation to its object - the 'attainment' of which
is structurally impossible - is permeated with the 'pathos of
existence'.

XIII. Hermine

On the basis of the extensive investigation of the first half of Der Steppenwolf we can now proceed to an psychological investigation of Harry's relation to Hermine that dominates the second part.

Within the scope of previous psychological readings of Der Steppenwolf the Hermine figure has almost universally been associated with the Jungian idea of the anima, an aspect of the 'archetypes of the collective unconscious'. (i.e. Weaver, Boulby, Baumann, Zimmermann). This reading has its roots in Hesse's rather extensive contact with Jungian concepts and his own experience with Jungian psychoanalysis.

Jacques Lacan, however, has rejected the validity of concept of archetypes of the collective unconscious and has designated such notions as 'anima' or 'animus' as arising from purely imaginary relations that are not anchored in any symbolic context. Lacan concedes that as an insight into the imaginary structure , the idea of archetypes might be illuminating.¹¹⁰

The task of this section of our analysis is thus to reinterpret the Hermine figure in the light of the subject's imaginary relations that were founded in the mirror phase. This investigation will reveal that Hermine could almost be considered to be a paradigmatic example of the structure of the imaginary framework allowing us to expand our horizon beyond the limits of a Jungian approach. This Lacanian re-evaluation will allow us to examine the relation of psychological content to the novel's intricate architecture - an approach that the Jungian perspective does not facilitate.

Let us therefore begin by summarizing in detail the features that align the Hermine figure with the Lacanian conception of the imaginary function. Harry first meets Hermine as he enters the 'Schwarze Adler' in a state of suicidal despair. Hermine manages to calm Haller and progressively lures him from his isolation in his intellectual world into a sensual demi-monde where all bourgeois norms are defied. The narrative evolution unfolds along progressively more surreal lines proceeding from Haller's dance lessons and his initiation into the world of jazz bars where he is introduced to a set of new exotic friends, Maria and Pablo, to the sensual whirl of the masked ball and finally to the Magic Theatre which concludes the novel. As we pointed out in the outline, the modalities of the novel are such that the narrative proceeds from a realistic base and a credible setting. Irruptions of the phantasmatic dimension mark superimpositions or projections of the unconscious.

So one dimension of Haller's relation to his new set of exotic friends is simply a plot evolution in terms of conventional narrative. The world of Pablo, Hermine and Maria is construed as radically Other to the seclusion in his austere intellectual and spiritual realm and at this level his new friends should be seen as real figures rather than projections. However, beneath that text, there is a subtext of psychological projections that are superimposed onto the realistic level - endowing these characters with subjective significance - and that becomes more and more evident as the narrative proceeds to its culmination in the Magic Theatre.

Up to that point, Jungian and Lacanian approaches of interpretation are essentially in agreement. However, the Jungian line of analysis sees the projective aspect of the Hermine figure as the 'anima' - a feminine archetype in Haller's soul, a highly speculative concept that has little support in empirical research. In terms of methodology, there is an intrinsic difference between the Lacanian and Jungian lines of investigation. Since archetypes in the Jungian systems are viewed as manifestations of a collective rather than personal unconscious, they are inherently ineffable in terms of their genealogy and structure. That is, whereas the origin of collective archetypes by definition transcends individual developmental dynamics, the Lacanian conceptualization of the subject is firmly rooted in personal developmental phases, in the dialectic of relations between self and other (mirror phase) and self and Other(symbolic identification). While the Jungian approach to Hesse's literature has been enormously widespread, it has been constrained by these inherent weaknesses so that none of the major Jungian commentators (i.e. Weaver, Baumann) provides any structural evidence from the narrative that would conclusively relate the Hermine figure to the Jungian 'anima'. The theory of Hermine as anima, as a hypnotic or mesmeric feminine projection of one's soul that might be constellated in situations of crisis is highly suggestive since Hermine often does radiate a hypnotic presence. Relating Hermine to Jungian notions then can be seen to be rooted in a surface analogy between Hermine and Jungian concepts as well as Hesse's well-known sympathetic stance toward Jungian analysis. However, as

Grubacic has pointed out, these vague notions of a Jungian approach might be suggestive but reduce the aesthetics of the work of art with its intricate structure.¹¹¹

By contrast, our Lacanian approach to Hermine based on the interaction of the real, imaginary and symbolic registers seeks to firmly relate psychological and narrative structure: this will lead to a more comprehensive analytical framework that can subsume the notion of 'anima' as merely one element in the Lacanian architecture - the imaginary which Lacan sees as luring, hypnotic and deceptive.

Haller's relation to the prostitute Hermine is defined by certain parameters that suggest a taut structure and a specific meaning in that relation.

Firstly, following Haller's despair and melancholia in the first part, the Hermine figure functions as a stable anchor of identification allowing Haller as a split or divided subject to regain a sense of unity. Evocatively she is described as a sensual force of life that may reanimate Haller's 'petrified heart'.

**Sie war die Erlösung, der Weg ins Freie. Sie musste mich leben
lehren oder sterben lehren, sie mit ihrer festen und hübschen
Hand musste mein erstarrtes Herz antasten, damit es unter der
Berührung des Lebens entweder aufblühe oder zu Asche zerfalle.
(S.110-111)**

Secondly Haller's dyadic relation to Hermine is based on a mode of regression, fairly explicitly stated in the narrative, in which Haller is relegated to the position of a little boy while

Hermine assumes the function of a maternal figure issuing commands that Haller must promise to obey. While these dynamics are presented as erotically playful and subtly ironic in the text, unconscious mirror stage dialectics are clearly discernible. According to Lacan, it is in the alienating mirror of the mother that a first narcissistic identity - by Gestalt identification - is formed in the infant.

Weiss Gott woher das Mädchen diese Stimme hatte, diese etwas tiefe, gute Stimme, eine mütterliche Stimme. Es war gut dieser Stimme zu gehorchen, ich hatte es erfahren. Gehorsam machte ich die Augen zu, lehnte den Kopf an die Wand..

"Du hast mir gesagt, dass du dir nichts besseres wünschtest, als Befehle von mir zu erhalten, es sei dir nichts lieber, als mir zu gehorchen."

(S.113)

Here, in line with the central notion of the Lacanian mirror phase, Haller essentially defines his desire dialectically as the desire of the (m)other. That is in his submission he indicates that he does not desire Hermine per se but Hermine as herself desiring and as such his entire relation to Hermine is defined by his wish to 'be' what is lacking in her - the phallus. We have already commented on Lacan's adoption of the Hegelian master-slave model as a metaphor for his mirror phase in section V. The Lacanian mirror 'moi' is the first layer of identification, an alienating narcissistic construct which is built over the abyss of a primordial chaos. Psychodynamically, the double figure Hermine saves Haller from the chaos and despair that dominates the first half of Der Steppenwolf by re-animating his desiccated heart. From a Lacanian perspective she represents Haller's mirror 'moi' in which his sense of self is narcissistically generated

over and above the abyss of his threatening disintegration that almost led him to suicide. When Haller spontaneously 'guesses' Hermine's name, she briefly assumes the appearance of a boy and responds to Haller's perplexity.

"Oh, das hast du selber gemacht. Begreifst du das nicht gelehrter Herr.: dass ich dir darum gefalle und dir wichtig bin, weil ich wie eine Art Spiegel für dich bin, weil in mir innen etwas ist, was dir Antwort gibt und dich versteht ?"

(S.115)

Harry perceives Hermine as a 'Seelenbruder' of his former classmate Hermann. Hesse here ironically underscores the strong autobiographical elements in the Harry - Hermine double relation. This might be taken as a typically ironic signature of the author within the text.

There are three crucial elements that define the Lacanian mirror moi as a developmental feature and that can be discerned in Harry's relation to Hermine:

- a narcissistic sense of self that is generated by the Gestalt identification in the mirror of the (m)other.

- this is inherently alienating since desire is thereby caught in a dialectical circuit - the desire of the other. Hence the fixed parameters of dominance and submission in Harry's relation to his double.

- this imaginary relation that animates the subject by establishing a first layer of identity is an artificial construct over a real void.

Allusions to a real void formed one of the central elements of the first part of the novel and were manifested in Haller's melancholic gloom, his suicidal fantasies or the allegory of the funeral scene before Harry met Hermine in the 'Schwarzer Adler'. These three elements can be seen to underlie Haller's relation to Hermine as the three stable parameters that persist throughout their acquaintance and thus clearly set off that relation from Haller's infatuation with Maria who holds a different position in his psychic economy (see discussion below). We can therefore establish that this Lacanian reading is consistent with but subsumes previous readings of Hermine as an anima figure (i.e. Boulby, Weaver, Ziolkowski).

Lacan has considered the evocative Jungian notion of 'anima' to approximate to his imaginary but devoid of any systematic integration to real or symbolic functions. We can here see already the advance that can be made over a Jungian reading - as an element within a defined structure, we can situate it in the wider context of the psychic economy which includes the real and the symbolic. Thus we have already seen the relation of Hermine as an alienating mirror construct over a real void that sets this figure against the background of the previous development in the novel and we shall comment later on Hermine's transfiguration

into an anchor for a more symbolic mode of identification in the Magic Theatre.

IX. The Uncanny, the Death Drive and the Conflation of Demand and Desire

To link the figure of Hermine as Harry's mirror semblable with the evolution of the plot and the structure of the novel, the concept of the uncanny from a psychoanalytic perspective, originally developed by Freud, emerges as useful. This has the further advantage of integrating the important concept of the death drive, developed in our analysis of part one into the investigation.

In his article on the uncanny, Freud has associated uncanny double figures with the castration complex implying that in the image of the double something that had undergone repression returns so that the double is simultaneously strangely familiar and alien. Elisabeth Bronfen has investigated the Freudian concept of doubles, the uncanny and the death drive. Let me quote at length:

In the figure of the double, death returns as something known but defamiliarized by virtue of repression. Instances of the uncanny mark psychic moments where that which returns points to the 'castration' of human existence, more globally understood as its fragmentary, imperfect and mortal aspect... The double is an ambivalent figure of death since it signifies an insurance that one will continue to live, that the soul is eternal even as the body decomposes and as such signifies a defence against death. The composition of representation serves as a triumph over and against material decomposition in the realm or system of the real.¹¹²

We have already indicated how the double figure Hermine, a force animating Haller's frozen heart, functions as a 'triumph against death' in countering Haller's desolation and suicidal inclina-

tions. However, since the double is inherently also a sign for a gap or a castrative split, indicating that something that was whole or unique has been split apart, Bronfen argues that the double functions as a cipher for castration and fragmentation.

She concludes:

The double simultaneously denying and affirming mortality is the metaphor of the uncanniness of the death drive, of 'Unheimlichkeit par excellence', grounding all other versions of the uncanny namely because it points to what is most resistantly and universally repressed, namely the presence of death in life and at the origin of life.¹¹³

Most critics who have interpreted the Hermine figure from a Jungian background as a projection of 'anima' have been puzzled by Hermine's death in the Magic Theatre -an event that is inconsistent and unaccountable from the perspective of the Jungian system- and have resorted to vague allusions to Haller's immaturity which may have prevented a further 'unfolding' of the anima. Zimmermann, for instance, comments that Haller's immature incapacity to relate to Hermine as another subject, an autonomous personality rather than a mere projection of his self-centred ego, ultimately causes this murder which is mitigated only by the illusionary nature of the Magic Theatre.¹¹⁴

There is some validity in that reading which ultimately remains flawed since it fails to situate that event within the wider framework of the logic of Der Steppenwolf's narrative evolution.

However, in terms of Lacanian reevaluation, a coherent connection between Hermine as a double figure, the uncanny and

the death drive emerges. This connection can be shown to be central to the novel's architecture.

First of all, a constitutive ambivalence characterizing the double figure is clearly discernible in Hermine. Hermine does function as Haller's 'mirror' through which he effects a reanimation following the living death that preceded, but a sense of the uncanny is introduced when Hermine's issues her 'final command' to Haller, an allusion to her stabbing in the Magic Theatre.

"Ich will mit dir um Leben und Tod spielen, Brüderchen, und ich will dir meine Karten, noch ehe wir anfangen zu spielen, offen zeigen." Wie schön war ihr Gesicht, wie überirdisch als sie das sagte! In den Augen kühl und hell schwamm wissende Trauer, diese Augen schienen alles irgendetdenkliche Leid gelitten und ja dazu gesagt haben. Der Mund sprach schwer und wie behindert, etwa so wie man spricht, wenn einem grosser Frost das Gesicht erstarrt hat...

Ich hatte Wort fuer Wort ihrer unheimlichen Rede deutlich gehört, hatte, sogar ihren 'letzen Befehl' erraten.

(S.119)

The sudden change in Hermine's appearance and demeanour is here beautifully rendered to indicate an uncanny ambiguity. A sense of *Unheimlichkeit* is generated by a blurring of boundaries between Haller and his double - a self-reflexive recognition of Hermine as a mirror reflection. This superimposes a divisive symbolic dimension [a knowledge of castration, death] on the symbiosis of their imaginary mirror play. Symbolic truth thus emerges through this modality of self-reflexivity - as the 'reflection of a reflection' (see section VI).

Haller's uncanny capacity to intimate Hermine's 'final command' relates to this additional dimension beyond their purely reflective relation. The uncanny effect is thus supported by an allusion to the trauma of symbolic castration, to the progression from the mirror stage to the symbolic register whereby the imaginary other (the double) - once it has become a lost object - is 'sublated' into a mortified, depleted self. This is represented in Der Steppenwolf by Hermine's stabbing and her metamorphosis. In that sense, it is significant that the uncanny anticipation of Hermine's death and her stabbing in the Magic Theatre are cast in similar styles.

Subsequent to her stabbing, Hermine freezes into a statue, while in this scene her face and voice are similarly on the verge of petrification, indicating the priority of symbolic (the content of her speech evoking death) over the disappearing imaginary function.

The evocation of death at this stage is uncanny then since it relates to a knowledge of death not in terms of conscious thought but purely in terms of the return of repressed unconscious knowledge 'at the origin of life'. It relates to the death of the m(other) as a psychological function as it might be experienced in a dream or in a Magic Theatre.

This strikingly parallels the Lacanian idea - discussed earlier - of an identification with the 'mortal phallus' beyond the deceptive play with the double that leads to Hamlet's final act,

which paradoxically gives birth to Hamlet as a symbolic subject only through his disappearance or death.

The concept of the uncanny is also suitable in illuminating the role of the figure Maria in the novel, another 'prostitute', whose function can be distinguished from the role held by Hermine.

We have outlined the crucial role Hermine plays in the narrative, and indicated the extent to which Haller becomes absorbed in his double. The question arises what function Maria can fulfil alongside this powerful double figure. It might be argued that Haller's relation to two different women serves to indicate an indulgence in promiscuous adventures, an abolition of all bourgeois inhibitions. This might be part of the explanation on the surface level of the novel which follows the conventions of realistic narrative. However there also appear to be deeper psychological substrata. A detailed examination will reveal a distinct difference in the quality of the relations of Haller to Hermine and Maria and a connection to the death drive and the uncanny.

The narrative indicates these distinct roles in Haller's psychic economy quite clearly. Since Hermine is construed in terms of an imaginary mirror relation to Harry, a maternal other whose orders he must obey, and who 'magically' reflects the deepest aspects of his own personality like a mirror, this surreal figure does not constitute an erotic 'object' of desire - in any conventional sense - for Haller. She is too closely interwoven with his 'subjectivity' as a projective extension. On

a practical level, their relation is determined by a defined structure, firm rules and a certain distance. (*'Sie war streng und unerbittlich...Sie zu besuchen oder auch nur zu wissen wo sie wohnte, war mir noch immer verboten'*).[S.161] Indeed, Hermine teasingly projects the prospect of making Haller fall in love with her as a distant goal for the future on a similar rank as her allusion to her death in the Magic Theatre.

The character Maria, on the other hand, is construed as a straightforward 'object' of love and desire for Haller from the start. Significantly while Haller's love for Hermine remains essentially platonic, his acquaintance with Maria leads to extensive sensual and carnal relations that are colourfully depicted in the novel. In a Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalytic reading it is therefore tempting to align Hermine with the maternal other of demand while designating Maria as object of desire, the fantasy that functions as substitute object or compensation for pre-castration *jouissance* subsequent to the subject's accession to language.

Lupton stresses that these two distinct functions ordinarily remain separate and that their integration is of considerable psychological significance. In terms of Shakespeare's Hamlet she aligns the role of Other of demand with the figure of Gertrude, Hamlet's incestuous m(other) and designates Ophelia as object of desire in 'the fundamental fantasy of Hamlet and Hamlet'. In the drama of Hamlet's desire these two diverse psychological

functions - demand and fantasy object - have become 'short-circuited'.

Lupton notes:

Thus Hamlet's early conflation of Ophelia and Gertrude in the fantasmatic projection of their voracious sexuality is borne out in Ophelia's erotic songs...¹¹⁵

In the first part of our analysis we have seen the phenomenology of Haller's neurosis reflected in the narrative. His fantasy of suicide became entangled with the demand of the Other, reducing this fantasy to pure drive, a ghostly object at the centre of his frantic cruise through the city after he has left his acquaintance's house (section VII). We are now in a position to shed further light on Haller's attraction to the fatal, his poise on the brink of suicide at the end of the first part by examining the dialectic of separation and conflation within his psychic economy of his Other of demand (Hermine) and his object of desire (Maria) that is crucial to the second part. According to Lupton:

Fatal attraction - the obsessive's attraction to the fatal - describes the neurotic's conflation of demand and desire, in which the object of desire uncannily merges with the maternal figure of demand, insisting, unrelenting, and increasingly driven, an embodiment, that is, of pure drive.¹¹⁶

In this generation of the sense of the uncanny, Lupton suggests an intrusion or subversion whereby the maternal other afflicts (heimsucht) the foundations of Oedipal home from within.

In designating two separate functions to Hermine and Maria in Der Steppenwolf we have a key to comprehending the dialectic of the two levels in Der Steppenwolf noted above - the realistic and

fantasmatic levels - and the progressive move into surreal realms as the narrative proceeds to the masked ball and the Magic Theatre.

In that reading, Maria and all she represents in the narrative provide an anchor in the 'realism' of conventional post-Oedipal subjectivity - with its sophisticated dialectics of desire. The progressive move into surrealism then implies an uncanny subversion of the Oedipal subject from within by pre-Oedipal and Oedipal modalities.

Let us trace these dynamics in detail. Harry Haller's new life style is briefly disrupted as he attends a concert of classical music featuring pieces by composers whom he revered in his youth, and he suffers a relapse into his condition of melancholic gloom. However, as he returns home, he is delighted and surprised to find Maria in his room, a 'present' he immediately speculates, from Hermine. Haller then indulges in a sensual adventure with Maria that is rendered by Hesse in lush, lyrical language. However, the hidden truth of her relation to Haller, her 'conflation' with Harry's double and maternal other is revealed by the narrator.

Und wunderlich! - beständig blieb die schöne Blume dennoch das Geschenk, das mir Hermine gemacht hatte! Beständig stand jene hinter ihr, war maskenhaft von ihr umschlossen!
(S.158-159)

The exclamation marks may be taken to indicate a sudden insight or revelation of that conflation. Subsequent to that encounter, the narrative focuses on further sensual adventures with Maria

which, on the surface, appear to fully delight, fascinate and absorb Haller. However, a subversion of Maria as object of desire by the Other of demand becomes increasingly evident in the course of narrative progress.

In fact, a conversation between Haller and Hermine rather explicitly links Haller's eventual 'radical' relinquishing of Maria - as the figure embodying desire - to the dynamics of the death drive.

"Was hast du gegen das Glück, das du jetzt mit Maria gefunden hast? Warum bist du nicht zufrieden?"

"Ich habe nichts gegen dieses Glück, o nein ich liebe es, ich bin ihm dankbar. Es ist schön wie ein Sonntag mitten im Regensommer..."

Es schläfert den Steppenwolf ein, es macht ihn satt. Aber es ist kein Glück, um darum zu sterben."

"Also gestorben muss sein, Steppenwolf."

"Ich glaube ja!...Ich sehne mich nach Leiden, die mich bereit und willig machen zum Sterben." (S.170)

This recalls our elaborations on the involvement of an obscene super-ego injunction (Jouis!) underlying the motivations of both saint and libertine who forgo all ordinary bourgeois desire in order to attain to some absolute desire (section IV). Hermine, at that stage, represents to Haller his 'maternal superego' (Žižek) which induces him to transcend the homeostases of the pleasure principle.

X. The Masked Ball

These dynamics become particularly evident as the narrative of the second part moves to a first climax, the masked ball which immediately precedes the culmination of the novel in the Magic Theatre. Initially, the sumptuous ball which is held in the labyrinth of the 'Globussäle' and features a variety of attractions fails to absorb Haller who is in a sombre mode, grumpily refuses the offer of a dance, and is on the verge of returning home. However, all of a sudden he is drawn into the maelstrom of the proceedings with enthusiasm as he is handed a little note with a reference to the Magic Theatre. This sudden re-animation of Haller's spirit is rendered in a language which is suggestive of a libidinal component and drive. He is said to be drawn into the carnival of the masked ball like a puppet which re-enters the play after it had lain limp for a while (*'so lief ich, am magischen Draht gerissen ins Getümmel'*).

Haller then loses all his inhibitions, is carried by the ebb and flow of a magical, sensual feast, dissolves in a 'unio mystica' of the music and the dances. He dances with Maria, whom he only recognizes under her mask as they kiss. However, this erotic dance with Maria, whose 'mouth blossoms like a summer rose' is suffused with sadness since it marks her final appearance in the novel. Her disappearance as Haller's 'object of desire' and the simultaneous diversion of this libidinal energy to the object which represents to him the Other of demand - Hermine - is rather explicitly indicated in the text along with the generation of obsessive drive, which any such conflation of

the two objects entails. As Haller leaves Maria, the sense of finality is obvious.

**"Aber sie, Hermine hat mich gerufen. Sie ist in der Hölle."
"Ich dachte es mir. Leb wohl Harry, ich behalte dich lieb."
(S.192)**

Instinctively Haller is then drawn downstairs into 'hell' - a room shrouded in black walls and decorated with garish-'evil' lamps. Here he meets Hermine 'in drag', wearing a suit and exuding a hermaphrodite magic. Thus Haller encounters a novel dimension to Hermine as the narrative indicates a shift or watershed in the modalities of Haller's subjectivity. It is now for the first time in the novel that he feels drawn to her erotically, that seduction and sensual love enter their relation. This function, previously associated exclusively with Maria now emerges for the first time in Hermine. Hermine had been superimposed on Maria before - but that link was somewhat elusive and tentative and in terms of narrative tension had a preparatory and anticipatory function.

At the masked ball, Maria completely disappears from the scene and Hermine, as embodiment of pure drive becomes invested with an irresistible hypnotic lure. At the same time, the erotic allure is heightened by a taboo. In a way she is still distant, untouchable - Haller can't dance with her since she is now 'Hermann', the friend of Haller's youth. And yet Harry appears to be linked to Hermine by an invisible bond, a dyad that eclipses all his other sensual adventures and dances at the ball.

An evocative passage from the text illustrates how this single-minded attraction to Hermine beyond all other seductive lures that Haller encounters functions as a structural anchor amidst

the whirl of the masked ball. In these dynamics we can again perceive the nagging persistence of the drive toward death as a function 'beyond' the pleasure principle.

...Schlangen blickten mich aus grünen Laubschatten verführend an, Lotusblüte geisterte über schwarzen Sumpf, Zaubervögel lockten im Gezweige, und alles führte mich doch zu einem ersehnten Ziel, alles lud mich neu mit Sehnsucht nach der Einzigen.

(S.196)

We can perceive how Haller's semblable Hermine, whose uncanny merging of desired object and Other has literally transformed her demand into *Haller's* fantasy, imply that all seductive lures inexorably drive him to the one 'energetic centre' at the heart of the masked ball - Hermine. The same dynamics of the death drive that underlie Haller's earlier proclamation of a willingness to suffer and die are present here. The final event of the masked ball, Haller's dance with an enchanting 'Pierette' is particularly revealing from a psychoanalytic point of view. Various themes that we have been developing in our analysis so far, the dynamics of projection and introjection, uncanny superimposition, gender ambiguity as well as psychic representations of castration and death appear to crystallize in this scene.

Haller is instinctively drawn to the fascinating figure of the Pierette whom he had not seen previously at the masked ball - their ensuing dance which is marked by an 'uncanny' synchronization of their movements is joyful and eclipses all of Haller's other dances of that evening. Then suddenly as Haller

tries to kiss the Pierette, he recognizes this enchanting figure as his double - Hermine. Of course, the Pierette had been rendered in the narrative in the same style suggestive of hypnotic allure as the Hermine-Hermann figure earlier.

Und plötzlich lächelte dieser Mund überlegen und altvertraut ,...
ich erkannte das feste Kinn, erkannte glücklich die Schultern,
die Ellbogen, die Hände. Es war Hermine, nicht mehr Hermann,
umgekleidet, frisch, leicht parfümiert und gepudert.
(S.200)

This sudden recognition which superimposes onto the Pierette not only Hermine, but Hermine as a figure that is now unequivocally gendered as feminine after her previous gender ambiguity is subtly uncanny. Psychodynamically, this sense of the uncanny is produced by the sudden eruption of something familiar ('altvertraut') but repressed onto the scene, that raises the Oedipal question of the en-gendering of the subject. We may thus argue that this uncanny effect at the conclusion of the masked ball results from a re-enactment of the archetypal Oedipal scenario, the introjection of previous narcissistic projections into the self that sets up the subject within a symbolic, linguistic framework in which he apprehends sexual difference.

The Oedipalisation of the subject implies that the loss of the phallus is retroped as symbolic lack, which retro-actively, assigns gender roles to the circuit of a previously ungendered narcissistic dyad (see section III). Lupton contrasts the act of (Oedipal) introjection, which requires a relation of three and therefore a structural division *within* the ego to the dyad of the imaginary relation. At the same time, introjection as the taking

in of a symbolic relation that splits the ego, operates on the foundation of previous narcissistic projections which are 'contiguously' infolded into the self.

The superimposition of the symbolic over the imaginary is the function that first introduces the gender question, and it is this dialectic that makes it possible for uncanny retroversion effects to emerge. According to Lupton, the genealogy or birth of the subject depends on this effect of retroversion.

Retroactively, from the vantage point of the Oedipus complex in decline, these positions become gendered as the subject tries to accede to one of them.¹¹⁷

From this perspective, we can appreciate the full significance of Haller's dance with the Pierette. The dance initially unfolds in the uncomplicated dual-specular realm of imaginary deception and lure, of sumptuous narcissistic display. However, the sudden emergence of Hermine beneath the mask radically alters the entire scenario and signals a retroactive generation of meaning - a move to the subjectivity associated with the symbolic register. Hermine's hermaphrodite ambivalence is erased with the accession to a specific gender role which nonetheless incorporates (contiguously infolds) a reference to the previous associations - Hermann or Maria. This is the key to the factor that constitutes the uncanny retroversion effect: While the triad Harry/Hermine/Hermann can be taken to correspond to a pre-Oedipal configuration with gender indeterminacy, Haller's sudden recognition of Hermine alludes to modalities of introjection and

retroversion that give rise to the subject of linguistic and gender relations.

To sum up, the Oedipal dialectic of projection-introjection which fixes gender roles and designates the nodal point of subjectivity in the Freudian-Lacanian system, emerges in this scene as an uncanny return of the repressed.

This reading illustrates the advance that can be achieved by a movement from a Jungian to a Lacanian framework of interpretation. Haller's relation to his imaginary double Hermine is intermittently linked to eruptions of the uncanny, sometimes explicitly designated in the text ('*Hermine's unheimliche Rede*') and sometimes conjured through a subtly uncanny mood and colouring. Conceptualising Hermine as a Jungian anima figure, which is an expression of a purely imaginary-narcissistic function devoid of any integration within a symbolic network, would not allow us to link these eruptions of the uncanny to instances of a specific, identifiable structure within the text - retroversion effects which are related to a superimposition of a symbolic, introjective mode of function over a dual-specular one or the structural issue of gender.

There was a sense of the uncanny in the strange circumstances of Harry's acquisition of the "Traktat" which broke the linear causal chain of the narrative which had hitherto been observed and introduced the "Traktat" as sui generis the subject's 'missing link' which exemplified the modalities of retroversion of the symbolic order (see section V). Furthermore, Hermine

mutated into an 'uncanny double' when she darkly alluded to her death as the narrative overlaid the familiar but repressed knowledge of castration and death over their enchanted, narcissistic mirror relation. Haller's vision of the superimposition of Hermine over Maria also belongs to that register. And the 'pierette scene' at the masked ball is uncanny precisely because it re-enacts repressed Oedipal knowledge of the accession to gender roles. Thus as Harry's dance with the Pierette subsides, the narrative shifts to an exquisitely uncanny scene as the masked ball fluidly dissolves into the Magic Theatre. Haller suddenly becomes aware of a sublime and ethereal, but simultaneously cold and cruel laughter that appears to emanate from the realm of the Immortals:

Irgendwo, in einer unbestimmbaren Ferne und Höhe, hörte ich ein Gelächter klingen, ein ungemein helles und frohes, dennoch schauerliches und fremdes Gelächter, ein Lachen wie aus Kristall und Eis, hell und strahlend, aber kalt und unerbittlich. Woher doch klang dies wunderliche Lachen mir bekannt? Ich fand es nicht.

(S.202)

Throughout our analysis we have associated the Immortals with the symbolic function: we associated the "Traktat" written from the transcendent vantage point of the Immortals with the introjective mode of the linguistic register, the Lacanian Other (Hesse himself explicitly associated the "Traktat" and Immortals in the postscript to one edition of the novel as indicated earlier). The ghost of the Immortal figure of Goethe which Haller had encountered in a dream was conceived in terms of the virtuality of a subjective function based on symbolic introjections, and in our section on melancholia - advancing to Hermine's death in the

Magic Theatre - we have already interpreted Hermine's strange transformation into a figure that evokes the spiritual realm ('Geist') as an expression of a predominant tendency within the novel to elaborate a dialectic of contiguous infolding between the sensual and the spiritual, the imaginary and the symbolic. From a psychological vantage point this denotes an act of translation that is fraught with the dangers of inscribing a melancholic void into the self.

The Immortals' uncanny laughter, which proceeds from the uncanny apotheosis of the masked ball subtly lays the foundations for the virtual world of the Magic Theatre. Again, it plays on an ambiguity of the familiar that has become estranged through repression but reappears (*'woher doch klang dies wunderliche Lachen mir bekannt? Ich fand es nicht'*) and alludes to the presence of 'death in life and at the origin of life'. (Bronfen)

XI. The Magic Theatre

Hesse can be seen to have prepared the novel's apotheosis - Haller's exorcism within the Magic Theatre - rather skilfully along the narrative line. The narrative of the second part had assumed a progressively more surreal quality which is particularly marked after the transition to the masked ball whose essential features are to be seen as projections of subconscious psychology rather than realistic references. From there the narrative fades almost imperceptibly into the kaleidoscopic and surreal world of the 'Magic Theatre'. The analysis of the modalities of subjectivity that emerges from the Magic Theatre will allow us to confirm numerous aspects of our preceding analysis.

The figure Pablo emerges as crucial to the Magic Theatre. Pablo initiates Haller into the theatre and re-emerges in various guises throughout in a number of the booths. It emerges that Pablo's role here is akin to that of a 'puppet master' who runs the entire show and in that sense a new light is cast on his initial role as the sensual and exotic, but somewhat naive and uncultured saxophone player. It is crucial to grasp the modalities of this narrative device which cannot be reduced to the revelation of a new aspect of Pablo's character in the context of the Magic Theatre. More radically, the retroversion effect here suggests that Pablo 'always already' held a different position beneath his uni-dimensional sensual self and thus not only assumes a dominant function in the Magic Theatre but 'retroactively subverts' the meaning of the forgoing narrative

(this parallels the crucial role of Leo in 'Morgenlandfahrt' who appeared to be a servant within the League but later turned out to be its leader or master signifier).

Within the Magic Theatre the figure of Pablo becomes closely associated with the 'Immortal' Mozart and he functions as a sage in one of the booths as he instructs Haller on the infinite possibilities for the reconfigurations of his personality beyond the boundaries of the the narrow dualism of man/wolf in which he had conceived himself. In that sense, the novel's predominant mode of uncanny retroversion effects and superimpositions is crystallized in the figure Pablo as the narrative dissolves into the Magic Theatre. Here again a Lacanian view of the specific structure of subjectivity can be derived - an essentially temporal structure, in which the subject at every stage becomes what he has been through the identification with a signifier which generates meaning retroactively (see sketches, appendix B). From that perspective, Pablo functions as a 'quilting point' or master signifier which retroactively 'integrates' the signifying field of the novel. Pablo's virtually omnipresent and omniscient role as a 'puppet master' in the theatre would confirm an interpretation which regards him as structural anchor, a privileged signifier within the symbolic framework of the novel that functions as a point of reference and identification for Haller. The field of meaning which is 'quilted' by Pablo refers to the realm of the Immortals into which Haller can be integrated only through identification with Pablo as a tangible reference point which totalizes the otherwise dispersed or elusive realm of the spirit.

In that sense, the novel's 'field of meaning' doesn't emerge cumulatively or linearly along the narrative line but is rather generated through discontinuous retroversion effects reflecting the structure of subjectivity in a Lacanian system.

This identification with Pablo as the 'quilting point' of a field of meaning opening up a transcendent dimension which is essentially that of Haller's own 'soul' is evident even as Harry enters the Magic Theatre.

**Wo waren wir? Schief ich? War ich zu Hause? Sass ich in einem Auto und fuhr? Nein, ich sass in einem blau erleuchteten, runden Raum, in einer verdünnten Luft, in einer Schicht von sehr undicht gewordener Wirklichkeit. Warum war denn Hermine so bleich? Warum sprach Pablo so viel? War denn nicht vielleicht ich es, der ihn sprechen machte, der aus ihm sprach? Blickte nicht aus seinen schwarzen Augen nur meine eigene Seele mich an, der verlorne bange Vogel, ebenso wie aus den Augen Herminens?
(S.204)**

Haller is then handed a magic mirror by Pablo which reveals to him his previous narrow conception of himself in terms of the dualism of man and wolf and Harry is only allowed to proceed further into the Magic Theatre after committing an 'imaginary suicide' which consists in a 'narcissistic' death symbolized by the destruction of that mirror (see section IV). Then a greater, unfathomable depth within his personality is suggested by the appearance of countless mirror images which reflect Harry in different forms, moods and ages.

We can investigate the function and mode of the Magic Theatre by initially focusing on one particular booth, entitled '*Anleitung zum Aufbau der Persoehnlichkeit - Erfolg garantiert*' which has a 'paradigmatic quality'. That is, it incorporates

within itself a microscopic image of what the Magic Theatre as a whole is about. The countless mirror images of Harry at different ages that were introduced earlier are here utilized as the basis for a figure game which may be taken to anticipate the structure of Castalia's glass bead game.

The mirror images are transformed into the figures of a game - conducted under the supervision of the 'sage' Pablo- which flexibly assembles Haller's personality. The language describing the game is evocative of the combinative-associative - i.e. metonymic mode - which equally characterises the Castalia's glassbead game in Das Glasperlenspiel:

Mit stillen, klugen Fingern griff er meine Figuren, alle die Greise, Jünglinge, Kinder, Frauen, all die heiteren und traurigen, starken und zarten, flinken und unbeholfenen Figuren, ordnete sie rasch auf seinem Brett zu einem Spiel in welchem sie alsbald zu Gruppen, Familien, zu Spielen und Kämpfen, zu Freundschaften und Gegnerschaften sich aufbauten, eine Welt im kleinen bildeten..

(S.229)

Furthermore, an analogy of the structure of the game to music is also reminiscent of one of the most crucial aspects of the glass bead game. Pablo wipes out a first configuration and starts anew.

...es war diesselbe Welt, dasselbe Material, aus dem er es aufbaute, aber die Tonart war verändert, das Tempo gewechselt, die Motive anders betont, die Situationen anders gestellt.

(S.230)

We can see Castalia emerging here in embryonic form. This description of the figure game is indeed highly suggestive of the Lacanian idea of language or symbols as the 'material' that creates or encodes subjectivity in the eternal, metonymic

stretching forth of desire. Any Lacanian analysis of Das Glasperlenspiel should be oriented towards aligning Lacanian notions of the subject of language and desire to the psychological structure of the game. In Der Steppenwolf as well a dialectical relation between the infinite combinations and variations of the figure game and the underlying structure of subjectivity is articulated. In the figure game, subjectivity is not fixed within limited parameters but unfurls in the endless repetition of a process determined by a pattern of symbolic combinations. This process by definition resists closure since in the metonymic mode, the desire which is encoded in symbols is always short of fulfilment.

**Und so baute der kluge Aufbauer aus den Gestalten, deren jede ein Stück meiner selbst war, ein Spiel ums andere auf, alle einander von ferne ähnlich, alle erkennbar aus derselben Welt, derselben Herkunft verpflichtet, dennoch jedes völlig neu.
(S.230)**

From a Lacanian perspective, this underlying substance which informs each game, is the substance of *jouissance* which lies at 'the origin' and precedes all psychic organization but is later alienated into the metonymic rail of symbols. In Seminar II, Lacan has interpreted the modalities of symbolic combinations and substitutions which characterise the enigmatic abyss of a Romantic nature philosophy ('Naturphilosophie') to aim at a subjective 'essence':

Und die Rätsel, die das Begehren jeder 'Naturphilosophie' aufgibt. Seine Raserei, die den Abgrund des Unendlichen mimetisch wiederholt, die innige Verbindung, in die es die Lust zu wissen und die Lust zu herrschen mit dem Geniessen bringt, diese Rätsel verdanken sich keiner anderen Regellosigkeit des Instinkts als seinem Gefangensein in den ewig auf das Begehren nach etwas Anderem ausgerichteten Bahnen der Metonymie.¹¹⁸

A dialectic of desire and the metonymic encoding of desire in symbols thus underlies both the world of Castalia and the figure game in the Magic Theatre.

In terms of this conceptualisation we can appreciate the paradigmatic position that the figure game occupies within the wider context of the Magic Theatre. Lacan conceives the subject of the signifier - operating in terms of the infinite regress of metonymy - to be based on a primary fading of the narcissistic-imaginary mode which is repressed to form the unconscious engine of desire.

This correlates to the purpose of the Magic Theatre itself which aims at an expansion of subjectivity in a realm of symbolic combinations and substitutions. Lacan has associated the realm of the signifier with the death drive since it constitutes an 'inanimate margin' beyond the homeostases of the imaginary [see Boothby, Lacan]. This is encapsulated in Haller's 'Scheinselbstmord' as the founding gesture of the Magic Theatre. The narrow imaginary, narcissistic self of Haller is symbolically annihilated at the outset to give way to the countless booths which compose the symbolic field of the Magic Theatre. This designates a new mode of the representation of Haller's subjectivity - a symbolic one in which the figure of Pablo occupies the important role of a quilting point or master signifier totalising the field of the Magic Theatre and the 'Immortals' - an essentially symbolic, 'inanimate' margin.

There is another booth within the Magic Theatre which can be seen to repeat a structure we are already familiar with: In *'Alle Mädchen sind dein'* Haller regresses in his biography and falls in love with many girls whom he never conquered in 'real life'. Here, Haller's Magic Theatre *'Doppelgänger'* regresses to his youth and revels in a string of erotic adventures that represent Haller's unfulfilled desires. This may be analysed in terms of Zimmermann's interpretation of the role of double figures in Hesse.

According to Zimmermann, the 'double' in Hesse denotes a configuration of secondary narcissism, split off from the factual personal at crucial developmental stages in a person's life and representing what 'could have been' had another path been chosen. From that perspective, Haller's double here effectively enacts what was closed off in real life.¹¹⁹ I would like to argue that Zimmermann's notions on the double in Hesse find a restricted application that is particularly relevant to the booth *'Alle Mädchen sind dein'*. However, our reading of Haller's doubles in the novel - most significantly Hermine - in terms of the mirror stage moi appears more constructive in explicating the structure of the novel as a whole.

But another very important point emerges from that particular booth. A closer examination will reveal a 'structural repetition' of the diverse functional roles that we found to be associated with Maria and Hermine in the novel. Again a distinction is drawn between objects of desire and Other of demand, and a conflation of the two modes or a subversion of desire by demand is

suggested. None of the many girls Harry encounters here is invested with the kind of subjective significance that is associated with Hermine. Let me quote a passage that reveals a rather explicit differentiation in the text between Haller's string of erotic conquests and Hermine. There is an underlying structure which is virtually identical to the subordinate role which Maria held relative to Haller's more encompassing relation to Hermine.

Aus dem unendlichen Strom der Lockungen, der Laster, der Verstrickungen, tauchte ich wieder empor, still, schweigend, gerüstet, mit Wissen gesättigt, weise, tief, erfahren, reif für Hermine/: Als letzte Figur in meiner tausendgestaltigen Mythologie, als letzter Name in der unendlichen Reihe tauchte sie auf, Hermine, und zugleich kehrte mir das Bewusstsein wieder und machte dem Liebesmärchen ein Ende, denn ihr wollte ich nicht in der Dämmerung eines Zauberspiegels begegnen, ihr gehörte nicht nur jene Figur meines Schachspiels, ihr gehörte der ganze Harry. Oh, ich würde nun mein Figurenspiel umbauen, dass alles sich auf sie bezog und zur Erfüllung führte.

(S.243-244)

Subjectivity in terms of the metonymic movement of the signifying chain is symbolized by the eternal process of the figure game in Der Steppenwolf or the endless string of erotic adventures in 'Alle Mädchen sind dein'. According to Lupton, within the Lacanian system, a return of 'metaphor within metonymy' designates an **immobilization** of the metonymic movement of the signifying chain in the fascinating image of the fetish which petrifies or derails that movement. According to Lacan:

Daher seine 'perverse' Fixierung an demselben Anknüpfungspunkt der Signifikanten Kette, an dem die Deckerinnerung sich festsetzt, an dem das faszinierende Bild des Fetisch Gestalt annimmt.¹²⁰

If we have read the 'Figurenspiel', as well as the glass bead game, as the configuration of symbols on a metonymic rail in which desire is encoded, we may designate the function of Hermine at this stage as the return of the metaphor within metonymy - the fetishistic lure projected by desire which functions as a promise of a restored wholeness or 'meaning' at the centre.

This notion of 'meaning at the centre' - betraying the Romantic tradition - lies at the core of the glassbead game as its apotheosis and as the factor which ultimately animates it. The bead game, as the narrator takes great pains to point out, aims at a centre - the One - beyond the manifest surface of its symbolic-metonymic configurations.

In our analysis we designated a fetishistic function for this 'centre' in the unconscious: a fetishistic screen memory functions as the effective substitute for the lost substratum of the maternal. The 'Ur-Mutter' in Narziss und Goldmund and the 'centre' in Das Glasperlenspiel could then be shown to share an equivalent position in the psychic economy as 'fetishistic lures'.

This can now be seen to be paralleled in Haller's reordering of the 'Steppenwolf's' figure game so that the motion of the game is immobilized in Hermine as the site where Haller presupposes the fulfilment of his desire or *jouissance* ('...dass sich alles auf sie bezog und zur Erfüllung führte').

The following quote by Lupton may be taken to disclose the two essential functions of Hermine in the narrative at this stage. She exerts a mesmerizing, fetishistic lure upon Haller but

simultaneously keeps an obsessive desire for death - the death drive - in motion.

...the object as the return of metaphor within metonymy operates both as the lure projected by desire to keep it moving and as the hypnotic image of the fetish.¹²¹

In that context - '*Wie man durch Liebe tötet*' - emerges as crucial in the Magic Theatre. Haller first of all recalls Hermine's uncanny speech which we have examined earlier and now looks on, as if from an external vantage point at their critical dialogue.

...in ein abgründiges Gespräch verloren, furchtbaren Ernst im Blick, wie sie mir sagte, dass sie mich nur darum in sich verliebt machen werde, um von meiner Hand getötet zu werden. (S.244)

This revealing statement articulates the formula for Haller's death drive in the novel. It alludes to an intimate relation between the death drive as a conflation of demand and desire and Hermine's murder ('*dass sie mich nur darum in sich verliebt machen werde, um von meiner Hand getötet zu werden*'). In other words, Hermine crystallises as the conflation of demand and desire in Haller's psychic economy and thus embodies for him the fetishistic object of a fatal attraction, of his death drive.

Furthermore, this implies that the realm of the sensual and desire in the narrative, represented by Maria or the string of girls in the booth retroactively becomes associated with a vanitas dimension since these 'objects' are relinquished by Haller in favour of Hermine as the embodiment of the death drive.

This is how Lacan denotes the stakes in Hamlet's fatal duel against Laertes, the 'objects a' of desire in Hamlet.

...these precious objects, gathered together in all their splendour, are staked against death. This is what gives their presentation the character of what is called vanitas in the religious tradition.¹²²

We may note that the staking of Maria against Hermine, against martyrdom, suffering and death is articulated explicitly in the passage in the text which we quoted above. It is certainly strongly implied by the termination of the infinite figure game of sensual love in the Magic Theatre booth which Haller intends to replace by Hermine situated at the core of a game which is to be entirely reconfigured in her fetishistic image.

Considering that many critics have regarded Hermine's death as coincidental or as a mere expression of Haller's immaturity, the consistency of the dynamics that we have described above is indeed striking and is also reflected in the rhetoric suggestive of obsession and drive that accompanies Hermine's imaginary death in the Magic Theatre.

The metaphoric substitution of Hermine for the metonymic combination of figures in the game is graphically symbolized in the narrative as Haller tries to retrieve his figures from a pocket in his jacket where they had been placed.

Statt der Figuren zog ich ein Messer aus der Tasche.

Paraphrasing from a Lacanian point of view we might say that instead of the flexible movement of the symbols along a metonymic rail (*the figures of the game*) he hits upon the petrified fetish (*knife*) which encodes the lure of his desire and his death drive.

This intimate relation of the hypnotic image of the fetish and drive becomes even more evident in the next passage:

**Hatte er auch seine hübschen Schachfiguren wieder verloren, so hatte er doch ein braves Messer in der Tasche.: Vorwärts alter Harry, müder Kerl! In einer trüben Welle schwamm ich dahin, trüb gezogen, Sklave, Steppenwolf.
(S.251)**

In commenting on these passages we may note three essential factors.

1. The rhetoric here closely parallels the language which Hesse used in evoking Haller's poise on the brink of suicide at the end of part one. The drive which is here symbolized by the injunction (*Vorwärts alter Harry, müder Kerl!*) and the image of a murky stream which pulls him finds a close analogue in the style adopted to render Haller's brinkmanship at the end of part one:

Geh heim Harry, und schneid dir die Kehle durch! Lang genug hast du damit gewartet.

2. As stated above, the knife that substitutes for the infinite figures represents the immobilizing return of metaphor within metonymy - in its hard phallic form it suitably embodies the petrification of the fetish.

3. Finally, the knife which he retrieves - a symbolic representation of his own personality - induces him to complete his act. Significantly, we may argue that its provenance is from an Other. Pablo, the master behind the 'Figurenspiel', the puppet master behind the entire Magic Theatre who embodies the 'quilting point', the point of reference which totalises the signifying field of the Magic Theatre, endows Haller with the knife indicating to which extent his murderous act hinges on an identification with the Other or the 'mortal phallus'.

Let me again quote from Lacan's article on Hamlet to illustrate these dynamics.

Because the important thing is to show that Hamlet can receive the instrument of death only from the other, and that is outside the realm of what can actually be represented on stage. The drama of the fulfilment of Hamlet's desire is played out beyond the pomp of the tournament, beyond the rivalry with that more handsome double, the version of himself that he can love. In that realm beyond there is the phallus. Ultimately the encounter with the other serves only to enable Hamlet to identify himself with the fatal signifier.¹²³

This passage is extremely dense and serves to illustrate numerous analogies, in terms of psychological subtext rather than narrative content, between Hamlet and Der Steppenwolf as works of literature that are ultimately both concerned with the dramatization of human desire.

Lacan situates an aggressive rivalry at the heart of the imaginary relation, so that one feels impelled to kill the one one loves most. The relation between Hamlet and his more handsome double Laertes is cast by Lacan as an imaginary relation that is

conducted outside the domain of symbolic identification. But it is only through an identification with his symbolic mandate to avenge the murder of his father that Hamlet's desire can be fulfilled. In Der Steppenwolf it is of course Pablo's figure game which introduces a structural, symbolic dimension beyond Haller's narcissistic captivation in his double. The game which is oriented towards Hermine does not, however, abolish their specular relation but rather reconfigures it. When Hermine dies at the apotheosis of their predominantly narcissistic relation, she serves to condense Haller's symbolic sense of self which is constructed by the figure game as paradigmatic of the Magic Theatre as a whole.

Oh ich würde nun mein Figurenspiel umbauen, dass alles sich auf sie bezog und zur Erfüllung führte.

The knife which emerges from the "re-construction" of this figure game thus emerges from outside the realm of Haller's mirror relation to Hermine, that is it derives from the 'material' signifying dimension of the Other which is here concretely embodied by the Pablo-Mozart figure. Somewhere at the centre, amongst all the infinite booths of the Magic Theatre, Haller's imaginary double, Hermine lies waiting. Her role, if we take Lacan seriously, is to be ultimately secondary to Haller's identification with the 'fatal signifier'. This reading accords with our previous result that all the instances of the uncanny in the narrative are produced precisely by a superimposition of a symbolic mode (denoting death, castration or gender division) over a purely projective mirror relation.¹²⁴

Haller then stabs Hermine, ostensibly in a jealous rage since he encounters her in the company of Pablo whose presence is so ubiquitous in the Magic Theatre. As Hermine strangely transmutes following her 'death', her role as ultimately subordinate to Haller's identification with Pablo's universe of the Immortals is confirmed:

Und von dem toten Gesicht, den toten weissen Schultern, den toten weissen Armen hauchte, langsam schleichend, ein Schauer aus, eine winterliche Öde und Einsamkeit, eine langsam wachsende Kälte, in der mir Hände und Lippen zu erstarren begannen. Hatte ich die Sonne ausgelöscht? Hatte ich das Herz alles Lebens getötet? Brach die Todeskälte des Weltraums herein? Schauernd starrte ich auf die steingewordene Stirn, auf die starre Locke, auf den bleichkühlen Schimmer der Ohrmuschel.
(S.254)

As Hermine's face is transformed into a gorgonic mask, Hesse's chillingly beautiful, lyrical language here literally embodies the petrification of desire into a fetish in the melodrama of fantasy. We could say that at this stage in the narrative a circle is closed and we can see the connection between the fantasmatic developments in the second part (at the masked ball and in the Magic Theatre) and the more realistic mode of Haller's existential moods in the first part.

Certainly, the language used to evoke Hermine's uncanny transfiguration ('eine winterliche Öde und Einsamkeit', 'eine langsam wachsende Kälte', 'die Todeskälte des Weltraums') strangely echoes the language used by a despondent, depressed Haller to describe the stifling isolation in his intellectual-spiritual world (see section IV). At that stage we had placed projection-introjection dynamics, mourning the imaginary phallus and the

symbolic en-ryption of the self into a void or lack at the core of Haller's melancholia. Here, in terms of the 'consummation' of Haller's relation to Hermine, which involves the transformation of Haller's projective semblable into the petrified-fetishistic cipher for a spiritual realm, we can see that this fundamental structure is firmly inscribed into both parts of Der Steppenwolf. Behind the fascinating image of the fetishistic fantasy, according to Lacan, there is no substance, there only lurks the gaping hole of the lack in the Other which is effectively disguised by the fetishistic fantasy.

We may thus conclude that there is an underlying consistency and homogeneity of both parts of Der Steppenwolf, a psychological substratum common to both sections. This relates to both the ubiquitous tendency of a drive towards death and the tendency to elevate the object of loss that has become introjected into the self to the focal point of a fetishistic-symbolic identification - giving it the status of a sublime object. Haller himself sums up this relation between the modality of Hermine's death and the existential condition of his life which is marked by a mood of melancholic grief very succinctly.

**So war mein ganzes Leben gewesen, so war mein bisschen Glück und Liebe gewesen wie dieser starre Mund: ein wenig rot auf ein Totengesicht gemalt.
(S.254)**

Thus, in both parts of the novel a certain central deficiency of Haller's general approach is indeed being acknowledged. Confessional self-criticism is never far from Haller. In the first part this relates to an acknowledgment of Haller's isolation and despair as partly self-inflicted. In the second

part, he is reprimanded and (mildly) punished by Pablo for this killing of a 'mirrored girl' in his 'mirrored world' as a flagrant contravention of the 'rules' of the Magic Theatre. There is thus some ground for considering the two parts of Der Steppenwolf to be related in a form of 'symmetrical inversion' which is suitably symbolised as Haller wonders whether he had struck at the 'heart of all life' by killing Hermine.

The reanimation of Haller's own 'frozen heart' by the touch of Hermine's hand reverberates in this remark which returns a circle to its starting point. The shock of this stagnation is recognized as a terrible mistake at the conclusion of the narrative and as the novel draws to a close there is a promise of a resumption of the modality of metonymic movement.

The fetish of the Hermine figure, which had shrunk into a minuscule pawn of the figure game in the hands of Pablo, is cast aside and a new round of the playing of the metonymic game in which subjective meaning ('Sinn') is created, the metonymic leaps from booth to booth of the Magic Theatre as infinite regress of desire in terms of a metonymic stretching forth, is hinted at.

Oh, ich begriff alles, begriff Pablo, begriff Mozart, hörte irgendwo hinter mir ein furchtbares Lachen, wusste alle hunderttausend Figuren des Lebensspiels in meiner Tasche, ahnte erschüttert den Sinn, war gewillt das Spiel nochmals zu spielen, seine Qualen nochmals zu kosten, die Hölle meines Inneren nochmals und noch oft zu durchwandern.

(S.264)

- ¹ In Cremerius, Schuld und Sühne ohne Ende: Hermann Hesse's Psychotherapeutische Erfahrung, 180
- ² Ibid., 193
- ³ Ibid., 194
- ⁴ Ibid., 198
- ⁵ see Boulby, Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art, 187
- ⁶ Cremerius, op.cit., 201
- ⁷ see also section V. in our Demian chapter which contains a discussion of Hesse's metaphysical perspective on psychoanalysis.
- ⁸ Boulby, op.cit., 164
- ⁹ Hesse, Gesammelte Schriften VII, 495
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 525
- ¹¹ Ziolkowski, The Novels of Hermann Hesse, chapter 6, A Sonata in Prose, 178-228
- ¹² Boulby, op.cit., 162
- ¹³ Jacques Lacan, Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet, henceforth we shall refer to this work as DH
- ¹⁴ Hans Dieter Zimmermann, Hermann Hesse's Doppelgänger, in Text und Kritik:Hermann Hesse, ed. Arnold, 33-42
- ¹⁵ Lacan, DH, 28
- ¹⁶ Lupton, Reinhard, After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis, Chapter Three: *Hamlet's Flesh and the Desire of the Mother*
- ¹⁷ Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, Act IV, Sc.1
- ¹⁸ see McCannel, Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious, Chapter Two: *Word, Gift, Promise*
- ¹⁹ Lacan, DH, 15
- ²⁰ Ibid., 22
- ²¹ Ibid., 14
- ²² see Lupton, op.cit., as well as Lacan's DH
- ²³ see Karalasvili, Hermann Hesse's Romanwelt
- ²⁴ Žižek, Looking Awry, 12
- ²⁵ According to Žižek 'the phantasmatic value of the window in painting has already been pointed out by Lacan.' , Looking Awry, 92
- ²⁶ Ibid., 9
- ²⁷ Referring to Hitchcock's 'The Lady Vanishes' and Cornell Woolrich's *roman noir* 'Phantom Lady' Žižek asserts: ' In spite of the utter improbability of these plots, there is something 'psychologically convincing' about them – as if they touched some chord in our unconscious.' , Looking Awry, 79-80
- ²⁸ This 'Reich der Unsterblichen', as we shall elaborate in more detail later on, can be taken as another anchor for Haller's symbolic self, to allude to the locus of the signifier, the Other. In other words Der Steppenwolf presents us with the same duality of alternative discourses or signifying spaces (bourgeois, metaphysical) that we encountered in Demian.
- ²⁹ Haller refers to occasional intimations of metaphysical bliss within his misery as 'die goldene Spur'.
- ³⁰ Lacan, Das Seminar Buch XI, 102
- ³¹ Ibid., 102
- ³² Hesse, Krisis: Ein Stück Tagebuch (Berlin 1928), According to Boulby 'Crisis reflects a desperate and vain effort to drown the corrosive, cauterizing intellect in sensual experience, in the blur of wine and dancing, perhaps above all the former.' , Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art
- ³³ Ziolkowski, The Novels of Hermann Hesse, 179
- ³⁴ Lacan, Schriften II, Das Drängen des Buchstaben im Unbewussten
- ³⁵ Freedman, Romantic Imagination: Hermann Hesse as a Modern Novelist, in Hermann Hesse: A Collection of Criticism, ed. Judith Liebman, 42
- ³⁶ Freud, Vol. X, Trauer und Melancholie, 431
- ³⁷ Ibid., 437
- ³⁸ see Lupton, op.cit., Chapter One: *Shapes of Grief*
- ³⁹ Lacan, DH, 48
- ⁴⁰ Lupton, op.cit., 25
- ⁴¹ Freedman, op.cit., 44
- ⁴² i.e. Manfred Mixner, Hesse Lesen. Erfahrungen mit seinen Romanen, in Text und Kritik: Hermann Hesse
- ⁴³ Ragland-Sullivan, Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis

- ⁴⁴ see Lacan, DH.
- ⁴⁵ especially Lacan, Schriften II, Das Drängen des Buchstaben im Unbewussten.
- ⁴⁶ Benjamin, Der Ursprung des Deutschen Trauerspiels, cited in Lupton, op.cit., 62
- ⁴⁷ Ziolkowski, The Novels of Hermann Hesse, The Crisis of Language, 70-84
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 77-78
- ⁴⁹ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 133
- ⁵⁰ Lupton, op.cit., 66-67
- ⁵¹ Muller, Lacan and Language, 168-169
- ⁵² Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do, 200
- ⁵³ see Cersowsky, Mein ganzes Wesen ist auf Literatur gerichtet: Franz Kafka im Lichte der Literarischen Dekadenz, Kapitel 2, Das Motiv des Abgrunds
- ⁵⁴ Boothby, Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 87
- ⁵⁶ Muller, Lacan and Language, 230
- ⁵⁷ Lacan, DH, 15
- ⁵⁸ Lacan, Seminar XI, 214, cited in Lupton, op.cit., 77
- ⁵⁹ Boothby, Death and Desire, 41
- ⁶⁰ Žižek explains the dynamics of this object in terms of Patricia Highsmith's short story The Button. The story revolves around a Manhattan family with a freakish, handicapped child. The father finds himself unable to adapt to life with this child which to him represents a senseless intrusion of the real reminding him daily of 'the inconsistency and indifferent contingency of the universe.' One night on a stroll through town he has the opportunity to vent his frustration when he comes across a drunk in a dark corner whom he stabs in his blind rage. In the process a button from the drunk's coat is cut off which he keeps as a kind of souvenir. According to Žižek, 'It is a little piece of the real, a reminder both of the absurdity of fate and of the fact that at least once, he has been able to take his revenge by means of a no less meaningless act. The button confers on him the power to keep his temper in the times to come, it is a kind of token guaranteeing his ability to cope with the everyday misery of life with a freak.' Žižek's description of this object echoes the function of Haller's razor in Der Steppenwolf: '...it reassures and comforts, its very presence serves as a guarantee that we will be able to endure the inconsistency and absurdity of the universe.' Žižek, Looking Awry, 134
- ⁶¹ Boothby, op.cit., 196
- ⁶² Schopenhauer, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung, cited in Boothby, op.cit., 196
- ⁶³ Ziolkowski, op.cit., 186
- ⁶⁴ Lacan, Das Seminar Buch XX, 9
- ⁶⁵ This fascination with saints is indicated by Hesse's early monograph Aus der Kindheit des heiligen Franz von Assisi. Beyond Der Steppenwolf, the saint appears as an important literary motif in, amongst others, Siddartha and Narziss und Goldmund.
- ⁶⁶ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 114-115
- ⁶⁷ see Bronfen, Over Her Dead Body: Death Femininity and the Aesthetic, Chapter 9: Sacrificing extremity
- ⁶⁸ Lacan, Schriften II, Das Drängen des Buchstaben im Unbewussten, 22
- ⁶⁹ see Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do, On the Other
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 198
- ⁷¹ passage cited earlier
- ⁷² Fineman, The Structure of Allegorical Desire, 44, cited in Lupton
- ⁷³ see Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do, On the One, particularly The Logic of the Signifier, 42-46, and The Subjectivized Structure, 46-48
- ⁷⁴ Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do, 201
- ⁷⁵ Lacan, Écrits, 845, quote appeared in Boothby, Death and Desire, 64
- ⁷⁶ Lacan, Seminar II, 321 (English Edition), this quote appeared in Boothby, op.cit., 116
- ⁷⁷ In Schriften II, Die Subversion des Subjekts, Lacan adopts Hegel's master-slave conflict as a paradigmatic example of the equivalence of alienated desire and aggressivity underlying narcissistic identification. The constituted rivalry at the heart of the self thus becomes the dynamic driving force in conflicts with others: '...nämlich die Agressivität, die zum Balken an der Wage wird, um die herum sich das Gleichgewicht zwischen Gleichen auflöst in jener Beziehung zwischen Herr und Knecht. [...] Der Kampf, der die Knechtschaft instauriert ist, wie man mit Recht sagt, ein Kampf um die reine Geltung, und der Einsatz – es geht ums Leben – entspricht der Gefahr, die in der generischen Vorzeitigkeit der Geburt liegt, die Hegel nicht erkannt hat, die wir aber zur dynamischen Triebfeder des Verhaftetseins im Spiegelstadium gemacht haben.' 185

- Subsequently, however, Lacan stresses the preponderance of 'the pact', of symbolic identification, outside of which the distribution of the roles of master and slaves is inconceivable: 'Denn schliesslich darf der Besiegte, soll er Sklave werden nicht draufgehen. Mit anderen Worten, der Pakt geht allenthalben der Gewalt voraus, die er dann verewigt und das von uns sogenannte Symbolische beherrscht das Imaginäre, woraus folgt, dass man sich fragen kann, ob der Mord wirklich der absolute Herr ist.' 185
- ⁷⁸ According to Ragland-Sullivan, 'Lacan has called the first six months of human life the pre-mirror stage and described it as a period in which the infant experiences its body as fragmented parts and images' and 'the radical idea that the infant actually becomes the image or object in primordial fantasy is an experience Lacan called primary identification.' , Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis, 18
- ⁷⁹ see Boothby, Death and Desire, *Chapter Two: Lacanian Reflections on Narcissism*, particularly 40-41
- ⁸⁰ Lacan, DH, 16
- ⁸¹ Bronfen, Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic, 191
- ⁸² Ragland-Sullivan, Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 202
- ⁸⁴ Lacan, Schriften II, 195
- ⁸⁵ According to Bronfen, 'what distinguishes the allegorical mode is that it reveals at the same time that it hides and so explicitly points to the incommensurability or disjunction between signifier and signified. Based on the Greek *allos* (Other), allegory indicates a figurative speaking, a speaking in other terms, of other things. Its rhetorical turn is such that it articulates the difficulty of determining a conclusive or binding referential relation between signifier, signified and non-semiotic reality.', Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic, 9
- ⁸⁶ Lupton, *op.cit.*, 62
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 81
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 185
- ⁸⁹ Žižek, The Sublime Object of Ideology, 135
- ⁹⁰ for a discussion of Freud's Kasten memory see Lupton *op.cit.* , *Chapter One, Shapes of Grief*
- ⁹¹ Muller, Lacan and Language, 371
- ⁹² McCannel, Figuring Lacan: Criticism and the Cultural Unconscious, 45
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, 48
- ⁹⁴ see Lacan, Schriften II, *Die Subversion des Subjekts*
- ⁹⁵ Muller, Lacan and Language, 359
- ⁹⁶ According to Lacan: 'The drama of the fulfilment of Hamlet's desire is played out beyond the pomp of the tournament, beyond his rivalry with that more handsome double, the version of himself that he can love. In that realm beyond there is the phallus. Ultimately the encounter with the other serves only to enable Hamlet to identify himself with the fatal signifier.' , DH, 32
- ⁹⁷ Lacan, DH, 34
- ⁹⁸ Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do, 13
- ⁹⁹ Žižek, Looking Awry, 72
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 72
- ¹⁰¹ Lupton, *op.cit.*, 66
- ¹⁰² Sloterdijk, Weltfremdheit, 289-290
- ¹⁰³ Zizek, For They Know Not What They Do, 202
- ¹⁰⁴ Hermine's remark, 'Wozu hat er gelebt und so furchtbar gelitten, wenn den Leuten schon so ein dummes Bild von ihm genügt', evokes this original murder of the thing.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ragland-Sullivan, Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis, 94
- ¹⁰⁶ Žižek, For They Know Not What They Do
- ¹⁰⁷ Lacan, DH, 17
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 50
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 17
- ¹¹⁰ see also our discussion of Jungian archetypes in the Demian chapter
- ¹¹¹ see Grubacic's article on the Hesse reception in Jugoslavia in Hermann Hesse's Weltweite Wirkung, 106-127
- ¹¹² Bronfen, Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic, 114
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 114
- ¹¹⁴ Zimmermann, *op.cit.*, 33-42
- ¹¹⁵ Lupton, *op.cit.*, 81
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 85
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 23

¹¹⁸ Lacan, Schriften II, 44

¹¹⁹ See Zimmermann, op.cit.

¹²⁰ Lacan, Schriften II, 44

¹²¹ Lupton, op.cit., 71

¹²² Lacan, DH, 30

¹²³ Ibid., 32

¹²⁴ In Demian, the hero Sinclair has a dream in which he is seen stabbing his father. In that scene also, he is suddenly handed a the murder weapon by an external agent(Kromer).

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION - TOWARDS A LACANIAN READING OF HESSE'S GLASPERLENSPIEL

It is hoped that our Lacanian analysis has brought new insights to bear on Hesse's work. Beyond the discussion of Demian and Der Steppenwolf, preliminary outlines for an analysis of Narziss und Goldmund and Das Glasperlenspiel were devised for inclusion in this thesis but for reasons of space the discussion was limited.

It is hoped that future studies will follow this path. The theoretical scope of an analysis of Hesse could conceivably be expanded by drawing in other prominent representatives of the French school, such as Derrida or Foucault. With regard to a specifically Lacanian analysis, an investigation of Hesse's utopian novel Das Glasperlenspiel which has an intricate structure appears promising. In chapter three, a possible approach to a Lacanian analysis of the beadgame itself was suggested in connection with our discussion of Pablo's *Figurenspiel*. Let me sketch a brief outline for a more comprehensive approach to Das Glasperlenspiel.

In describing the evolution of the beadgame the narrator of the novel informs us in the introductory chapter that the game which has several antecedents in the history of the spirit, such as Plato's realm of ideas or medieval alchemy, underwent a number of developmental stages. It was originally devised in connection

with a new method for musical notation with a certain arrangement of beads representing a musical score but was soon expanded to include mathematics. Eventually, in its mature form as practiced in the province of Castalia, it encompassed a wide array of arts and sciences with players moving flexibly between disciplines by means of appropriate associative connections. While the game requires formidable knowledge from its players who will normally have attended a succession of elite schools in preparation, its ultimate purpose is not a mere display of academic brilliance *per se*. Rather, amidst all the skilful manipulations of knowledge that constitute the game, it is designed to encourage an attitude of reverence, a Platonic contemplation of pure essence, a *unio mystica* in its players.

Since the game is kept in motion by the search for new connections, by constant displacements, a Lacanian reading will likely discern a 'metonymic chain' as its underlying structuring principle. Hesse's game could be seen as a semantic encoding of desire as a metonymy. To elucidate these issues, one may focus on Lacan's discussion of *Naturphilosophie* in Das Drängen des Buchstaben im Unbewussten given the game's underlying ontology. Any Lacanian reading will certainly indicate the relation between truth and knowledge stressing that to Lacan the desire for knowledge - which is itself an important engine of the game - is dialectically related to the desire of the Other:

An diesem Punkt erschliesst Freud der Beweglichkeit, aus der die Revolutionen hervorgehen, neu die Verbindung zwischen Wahrheit und Wissen. Darin, dass das Begehren sich hier an das Begehren des Anderen knüpft, und zwar so, dass in dieser Verbindung die Wissbegierde liegt. ⁴

From that perspective the glassbead player who is presented in the novel as a 'transcendental ego' which knows, gathers together, etc. in order to find his 'centre', emerges as displaced, as 'strung along the signifying chain.' In support of this thesis, which sees the desire of the beadgame player displaced into the desire of the Other, the locus of the signifier, one might cite the frequent references to the 'grammar' of the game in the novel, its secret *Formelschrift*. Attention should also be devoted to identifying a possible tendency in the game towards halting the dialectical movement of desire in 'fetishistic' fixations.

Beyond the structure of the game itself there are numerous other features in Hesse's last, major novel that allow for an exploration from a Lacanian angle. There is a schematic division between the tiny enclave of the province of Castalia, with its monastic lifestyle, ordered hierarchy and esoteric devotion to the realm of the intellect and the outside world where amidst frequent wars a brute struggle for existence reigns. It is not difficult to discern in this scheme the same dialectical relation between a social sphere organised and ordered by the Other and the excluded real which we identified in Demian and Der Steppenwolf. A close analysis of the language in which the outside world is rendered with the connotations of an organism will likely support this claim. On that basis one can proceed to see how the dramatic potential of the plot is developed on the basis of the protagonist's movement between these spheres. Knecht's somewhat agonised departure from Castalia is soon

followed by his death and in this death there appears to lie a certain inevitability, but also a coincidence of Knecht's fate with its heroic assumption. Can we, therefore, read Knecht's departure as an identification with the 'mortal phallus'?

Finally, there is the issue of Knecht's three autobiographies, his *Lebensläufe*, which were written secretly for in Castalia artistic self-expression is considered vain and therefore forbidden. These three biographies, 'Der Regenschmager', 'Der Beichtvater' and 'Indischer Lebenslauf', conclude the novel. If viewed from a metaphysical perspective the biographies are suggestive of Eastern, mystical notions of re-incarnation. From a more rationalist perspective, the question is what motivates Knecht to portray his appearance in three different eras in different guises if not the desire to find an indestructible kernel inside him, *objet petit a*, the element that stays the same beyond all symbolic permutations, that remains unaltered in all possible worlds. One might argue that this element does not pre-exist but emerges as a remnant, a retroactive product of the symbolic process of the compilation of the *Lebensläufe* itself. Throughout this thesis we have stressed the traumatic nature of this kernel as an element that the symbolic process fails to integrate. The reader of Das Glasperlenspiel confronted with the *Lebensläufe* may indeed find himself somewhat overwhelmed, intuiting the insistence of an element that resists attachment to a fixed, stable signification. Reading these sections of the novel may inspire an experience of the uncanny, an ambivalent reaction of fear and awe of the sublime. This effect is

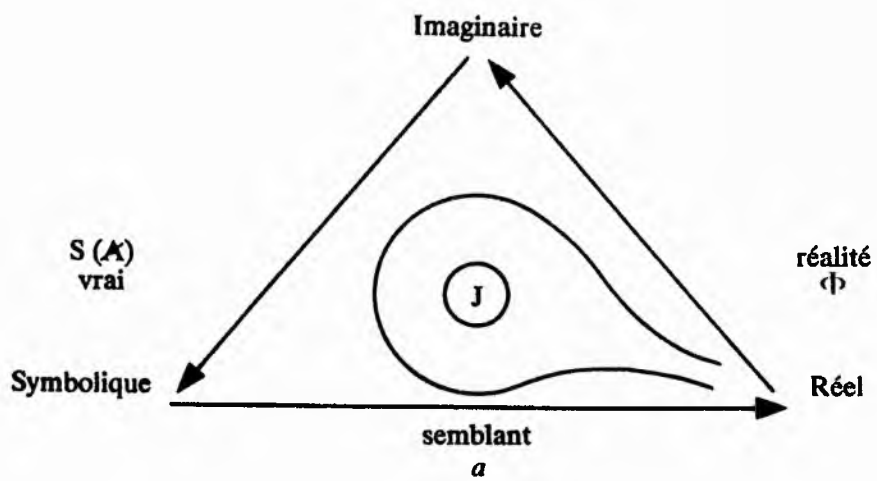
supported by the 'fractal' nature of the biographies which on a small scale repeat central notions and structural features of the main body of the work.¹¹ At this point a link could be drawn to the beadgame itself. Is not its ultimate purpose the 'secretion' of a sublime kernel? Thus, in the light of critical accusations that Hesse insufficiently portrays the details of the beadgame in the novel, the main contribution of a Lacanian study of Das Glasperlenspiel could be the insight that the novel itself with its network of connections and its structural complexity exemplifies the nature of the game.

¹ Lacan, *Schriften II*, 177

¹¹ Repetition, as we saw in the Demian chapter, can produce a sensation of 'Thingness'

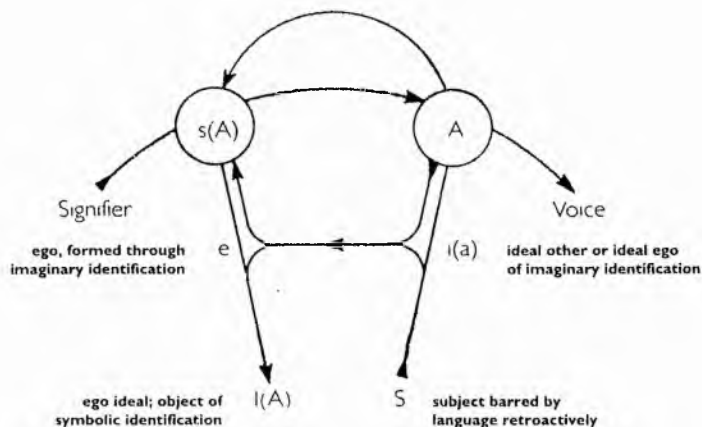
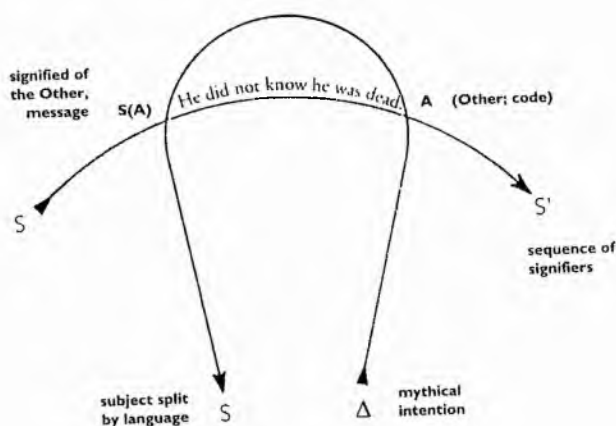
Appendix A:

Diagram from Lacan's Seminar XX, Encore

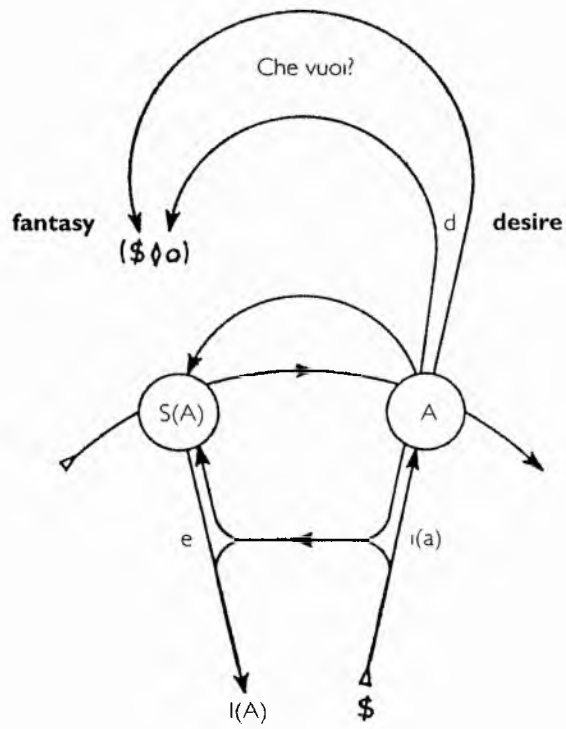


Appendix B:

These diagrams representing a Lacanian topology of subjectivity were adapted by Lupton from Lacan's original diagrams in Schriften II, Die Subversion des Subjekts.¹



¹ Lupton, After Oedipus, 333, 337



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