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The Excursion to Self-Realization in The Selected Novels of Hermann Hesse

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Abstract
Hermann Hesse is a prolific German literary writer whose writings highlight the archetypal approach, as identified in Vedas and Upanishads and Buddhist and Chinese philosophy. The archetypal approach determines the form and function of literary works that cultural and psychological myths shape a text's meaning. The present study analyzes the archetypal approaches in the selected novels of Hermann Hesse. The novel's archetypes are the consciousness, beatific smile, guru-disciple relationship, mother figure, and psychological myth. Hermann Hesse effectively uses these symbols to reveal the secret of ultimate reality. The discussion deals with the theme of self-realization and various bodily practices to attain self-realization. "Self-realization" is the recognition – in body, mind, and soul – that we are one with God's omnipresence; that we do not have to pray for it all to come to us, that we are always not merely near it, but that God's existence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we will ever be. It also traces the origin of German Literature until the age of Hermann Hesse. Psychosynthesis methodology developed by Assagioli helps get the study's core idea, including the human drive towards personal and spiritual growth. Therefore, through the novels, Hesse has portrayed the various paths leading to the attainment of self-realization, which help the man realizes himself, and ultimately, he attains eternity. The study finds the worldly endeavor to become perfect proves the need for self-realization. Even the inanimate things struggle to become animate and, in due course, evolve as self-realized souls.

Keywords: self-realization, consciousness, archetypal literature, ultimate reality, psychological myths, individuality.

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Introduction:

Human beings constantly strive to achieve the purpose and goal of their existence through the myriad experiences of their life's journey. Determining one's objective is a persistent question that plagues people outside of their daily lives. Birth marks the start of the self-realization path, and death marks its conclusion. The invisible traveler resides inside the gross physical body that acts as the vehicle for the trip. However, this car develops, ages, and eventually falls to dust after fulfilling its function. Therefore, it is the everlasting traveler known as reality, truth, soul, or self and not the physical body. "Soul is neither born nor does it die," Lord Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita. Originating and ending outside of it, primordial, uncreated, unchanging, and old. When the body is killed, it does not die (Mohapatra 36).

A.R. Mohapatra opines that soul is “unleadable, incombustible and neither wetted nor dried” (Mohapatra 36). Soul or inner self cannot identify with body or mind. Even when a part of the body is mutilated, the self cannot be battered. Hence, truth seekers neglect the visible and sensible ephemeral body as an illusion. The man adds comfort to his livelihood. He works hard for his physical well-being. He gives more importance to sensory impulses (Kher 24). When a man suffers from an injury, he complains that his parts of the body are in pain but not his Soul or Self. The parts belong to the body, a vehicle that carries the self. Since the self is a passenger in the bodily vehicle, it remains unaffected by pain and pleasure.

Man hankers after worldly pleasures one after another to satisfy his sensory desires. But one can never attain satisfaction forever. There always remains a quest for permanent happiness.

When a person finds peace, he attains indestructible joy. “God is ever-existing, ever-conscious, all-powerful, ever-new Bliss–Satchitananda. The soul is ever-existing, ever-conscious, all-powerful, ever-new Bliss manifesting as an individualized Being. The perpetual question of man is: what is conceived as his goal? “Vedanta reminds us that self-realization is the highest goal, attaining which there is nothing more to be gained or known” (Ishwarananda 17).

This study is based on the theme of self-realization in the three novels -- *Siddhartha, Narcissus* and *Goldmund.* The theme is established by analyzing the life of the central figures in these novels. To attain self-realization, men need a mentor or a spiritual guide to attain this state. Lord Krishna in the Mahabharatha drove the chariot for Arjuna in the Warfield of Kurukshetra. He guided Arjuna as a guru when Arjuna, in a state of despair, was unwilling to wage war against his kith and kin. Arjun revealed the soul's secret to the ignorant Arjuna, who was enmeshed in delusion. As soon as Arjuna's ignorance was cast off and the veil of Maya removed, he became a Self-Realized person through Krishna's "Gita Upadesa." It is universally accepted that seeking a spiritual guru's help becomes inevitable for a person to attain self-realization. Hence the guru-disciple archetype can be traced to the myth of Krishna, the charioteer.

Research Questions:

1. What are motifs of these novels to attain self-realization?
2. What are the phases which these selected novels suggest achieving the desired destination?

History of self-realization concept:

The word "self-realization" is employed in Indian religions as well as Western psychology, philosophy, and spirituality. It is the "fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one's character or personality" in the sense used in Western culture. According to the Indian perspective, self-realization refers to the freeing realization of one's true self, which can be understood as either the absence (sunyata) of a permanent self or as the eternal, undying Purusha or witness-consciousness, which is atman (essence) (Rusu 1098).

The purpose of the paper is to define the significance of familial and interpersonal relationships as well as the roles that knowledge and emotional experiences play in the growth and realization of each person's potential. In order to become self-aware, one must go through certain phases, overcome obstacles, and, most importantly, learn how to control one's own emotions and behaviors. In addition to offering insight and understanding, education also offers the logical and scientific foundation for surpassing the stages of self-realization. However, education also entails overcoming theoretical barriers via individual participation in deeds that uphold moral and humanistic principles (Lombard 471).

Research Methodology:

Psychosynthesis is essentially the synthesis or combination of psychology (spiritual growth and process) with religion (spiritual development and process). Psychosynthesis combines several techniques and strategies. According to Assagioli, a person's physique, emotions, and thought process are the three basic parts that comprise their personality. In this way, he went against the definition of the four elements given by Jung (48): thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition. In addition to working concepts such as the human drive for personal and spiritual growth, the fundamental need for relationships, different aspects of will—including a transpersonal will—and the individual's interconnectedness to

everything in the universe, psychosynthesis offers an open model of the human psyche that incorporates a Higher Self (52).

From Restlessness to Serenity:

The "desire" that propels folks to action to realize their desires is one of the most significant motivational factors in human existence. When they can't meet his needs, he becomes restless. The degree of restlessness increases with necessity. There are three main categories of desire: spiritual, mental, and physical. A strong need becomes a spiritual quest when it transcends the visible. For some people, this quest is the main one. "The journey of the Soul to enlightenment and awakening is the subject of Hesse's Siddhartha" (Bhambar 53). Siddhartha, the main character, is traveling across time to discover who he really is. The Hindu philosophy holds that it is all-pervasive since it is Universal Brahman.

The protagonist of the book, Siddhartha, crosses a river to symbolize how his life cycle shifts from a winter to a summer. The extremes of a riverbank are comparable to two extremities, signifying the austere and fertile aspects of life. As a result, the river's banks—Asceticism and Samsara—are divided. In the austere life, all pleasures of the senses were shunned. As a result, everything is contained in the river, including good and evil, light and dark, joy and sadness, etc. Humans have the freedom to choose their own course, just as the river had polar ends. Townsend says, "Hesse views art, music, poetry, meditation, and humor as eternal values, i.e., phases of the absolute, the awareness of which makes man's striving worthwhile" (Misra 121). Misra (1986) quotes Townsend on this point. "In the context of demythologization, it has to be noted that no interpretation of myth can lay bare its soul and explain its character thoroughly, for myths are couched in symbolic language, and symbolic language can never be emptied of its meaning, nor can it be transposed to another level or medium

satisfactorily" (Menon 93). In other stories, the charm is broken, and it begins to rain as soon as the hero steps foot on the land.

The calm inner sanctuary of the self is only accessible to those who possess inner peace, regardless of their anxieties, hatred, fear, rage, envy, or happiness. Despite spending a great deal of time together, Siddhartha and Kamala are not in love with one another or anybody else in the world. When "Siddhartha" unreservedly gives up his masculine ego, she gives up her love as well. This expressive mutuality is symbolized by Kamala's relationship with Siddhartha. In fact, the entire expressive force of the dynamic feminine principle that unites them to the fundamental elements of the universe's guiding principle, both active and passive. "A fusion of 'anima' and 'animus' in Jungian terms, an aesthetic blend of human counterparts" is what Siddhartha and Kamala accomplish (Menon 85).

Hesse gives a new dimension to the imagery of "stone," which indicates Siddhartha's strength. Hence it also represents his determined quickness. Siddhartha will find his quickest way to reach his goal as the stone finds its quickest way to the bottom of the water. He finds salvation like a stone dropped in water without stirring or revolting; it takes its course to reach the bottom of the water. Likewise, without following any teaching, his life takes its course to reach salvation.

Hesse has depicted the protagonist's experience well through universal symbols, images, dreams, and myths. From the state of delusion, Siddhartha attains peace by undergoing various ordeals. Despite a healthy childhood, he tastes the bitterness of discontentment early and eventually becomes a Samana, a Samsara, and a ferryman. His positive thinking attitude, strong belief, and reflective nature lead him to unfold the mystery of the self. At each step, he has an awakening, such as: living with detachment, the release from the enmeshed existence of

Maya; the destruction of his ego; the understanding of the cause-and-effect theory, perception of divinity in everything, and the omnipresent nature of the All-Radiant. Thus, Siddhartha, who begins with a restless and delusion-ridden life, attains the serenity of a Self-Realized soul at the novel's end. Not just restlessness but desire can be devastating too. To overcome desire and move into the realms of contentment can be an arduous journey in consciousness, as will be seen in the next novel for discussion.

From Desire to Contentment:

Every living being has a natural desire to lead a life of its own, catering to its biological and basic needs with security. All living species may go for any risky encounters for survival to fulfill their desire. It is natural for all creatures to wage war for their lives. Man is considered rational but not free from desires, which may sprout from his physical, mental, and spiritual necessities. According to the third noble truth of Buddha, desire is the root cause of suffering– "DuhkhaSamudhaya" (Mohapatra 134).

Hesse makes the argument that desire can lead to self-realization in *Narcissus* and *Goldmund*. *Goldmund*, the main character, achieves Self-realization when he is happy and devoid of desire. The tale begins with a lovely account of the daily activities of the Mariabronn Cloister and a description of a foreign chestnut tree that decorates its entrance. All the people in the Cloister hold the revered elderly Abbot Daniel and the youthful Brother Narcissus in high regard. Abbot Daniel was adored by all. "The Abbot's simplicity, kindness, and humility won the hearts of most of his brothers" (Hesse 3).

At midnight, he witnessed his host's wife delivering a baby. It was strange for him to look at the facial expression of a suffering lady. He compared the lines on the lady's face with those on another lady in ecstasy. Surprisingly, he realized that

"pain and joy could resemble each other so closely" (Hesse 128). This realization emphasized that there was no difference between pain and joy. He also found this paradoxical nature blended and sustained in art.

He perceived that they were inexpressibly beautiful when they contained paradox and mystery. After retrospection, he found that the art which conceived mystery was beautiful. He visualized the Universal Mother as a peaceful amalgamation of the greatest contrasts that could never be combined, like East and West, birth and death, cruelty and kindness, and ecstasy and pain. His mother's image had taken a new shape and transformed into the Universal Mother. He could listen to Her call and respond. So, he rejected his master's proposal to marry his daughter and settle in life. He gave away all the gifts given by the women he loved to his neighbors, bade farewell, and led a wanderer's life again, exposing himself to rain, snow, wind, and sun. He fell in love with Agnes, the mistress of the governor. He courted her and was caught. He was released by Narcissus and was taken care of by him. Goldmund worked very hard in the Cloister. He concentrated only on his work. Erich, a young twenty, was his assistant. One day Goldmund confessed to Narcissus that though he had had adventures with women, he had always been duty conscious.

Goldmund was honored by *Narcissus*in, the party hosted by the latter. His next work, a statue of Mary, bore a close resemblance to Lydia, whom he loved. Goldmund did not work continuously. When bored, he went for a long walk in the woods and returned after a few days. During the wanderings, he wondered how his art could be lovable and detestable simultaneously. Goldmund returned to the Cloister very tired and with the feeling of sickness but strangely felt contented and detached from worldly life. He turned a new leaf. He, who had always had an inferiority complex in the presence of Narcissus, as when he met

him accidentally as a prisoner and a pardoner, now felt bold enough to address him with an air of superiority. It was a new awakening. He did not feel ashamed even in front of Narcissus as he had proved himself worthy through his art.

The guru-disciple relationship is a pattern of the archetypal symbol. Throughout the novel, Narcissus guides Goldmund and helps him deliberately whenever he needs his help; as Narcissus reveals to Goldmund that Goldmund's real nature is not the world of spirituality but the world of senses, Goldmund starts realizing his true disposition. That was like his first initiation into the world of senses, and soon, his mother's image came floating down his memory lane. In a swift movement, Narcissus pressed his lips against Goldmund's hair and forehead with his lips. Narcissus confessed that he loved Goldmund more than anybody else. It was Goldmund who taught him to love others. Even Abbot Daniel once commented on Narcissus as an arrogant scholar. Goldmund followed his inner voice, which was not like God to him but like his mother, though God is the usual image giving faith and leading to the realization of one's potential. "Goldmund had rediscovered his soul and was ready to follow its call, but he did not know where it would leave him" (Hesse 56).

Hence Goldmund started his journey searching for the divine mother by following his call. He could not think of his life in Cloister without Narcissus. When Narcissus joined the order and started fasting and exercising, Goldmund could not meet him. He felt that without Narcissus, the Cloister's life was tedious to him. It was not hard for him to bid farewell to others.

Goldmund's Universal Mother was a peaceful amalgamation of the greatest contrasts that could never combine, like east and west, birth and death, cruelty and kindness, ecstasy and pain. His mother's image had taken a new shape and

transformed into the Universal Mother. He listened to the call of his Universal Mother and responded to it and rejected his master's proposal to marry Lisbeth.

In his vision, the Universal Mother reflected his mood. When he passed through the plague-stricken village, he witnessed horrible death. Sometimes he would glimpse the image of the Universal Mother, whose smile resembled suffering and death. The smile of the Universal Mother was a symbol. It represented the prevailing situation and his state of mind. If Goldmund was sad and suffering, she reflected the same in her smile.

Three sections make up Goldmund's life retrospective: his waking and existence in the Cloister, his maturing harvest and journey as a man, and lastly, his reunion with Narcissus. The prodigal son returning to his father's house paralleled Goldmund's encounter with Narcissus. Narcissus said that his thoughts were his masters. He was a learned scholar and a responsible church leader. He possessed the appearance of a brave and confident knight. Goldmund was impressed by Narcissus's learned manner. He did not therefore tell Narcissus about his transgressions. Goldmund was a humble vagabond before reaching the pinnacles of the art world. With him rose his sense of superiority. He thus acknowledged his misdeeds and bowed himself to the Cloister's laws.

Finally, Goldmund found peace and welcomed death to reach his Universal Mother. Goldmund realized that if a man sinned, its cause would follow him like a shadow, whether he liked it or not, and that he should suffer its consequences.

Religion and self-realization:

Self-realization does not require religion; spirituality is an individual endeavor that centers on inner consciousness transformation, whereas religion was once a communal endeavor. In Goldmund's situation, he answered the voice within of him. His mother's voice in the wilderness came first, followed by the voices of all

the ladies he loved the Lydia-Madonna statue that Master Niklaus had made, and everything else. He became an artist who crafted lifelike statues out of the incessant flame of desire that shone within him. But the motivation to pursue women or create new monuments had faded. There was nothing more for him to do. He thus waited to die.

The title *Narcissus* and *Goldmund* suggests that there are dynamically opposite characters whose roles are juxtaposed. Narcissus is a representative of the world of the spirit, whereas *Goldmund* is a representative of the world of nature. Narcissus decides according to his intellect. *Goldmund* decides according to his senses and fantasies. Though they possess contrasting qualities, they depend on each other's growth. *Narcissus* compared himself with *Goldmund* and not with anybody else in the monastery. *Goldmund* realized as a boy that two extreme ways lay before a man – the way of the senses and the spirit.

Hesse depicted two individuals that were spiritually and naturally completely opposed to one another yet found redemption via their selected paths. One of the two became an abbot and lived a monastic life, while the other pursued an amorous adventure. Hesse illustrates the climax of the opposing forces with equal energy distribution in the title *Narcissus* and *Goldmund*. Although they oppose one another on the route they have chosen, they are drawn to one another in the achievement of their goal—to understand the essence of the soul and become one with the spirit.

Style of Siddhartha, Narcissus and Goldmund:

This style is used throughout the novel, especially when comparing *Narcissus* and *Goldmund*. The plot of the novel is taken from Hesse's uncompleted work Berthold. His father, Johannes, sends the motherless Berthold to the monastery of a professional churchman, his close friend. Goldmund and Berthold are

handsome, seduced by older girls, and fled from the monastery. Johannes is the ascetic name of Narcissus after he joins the order. The novel ends when Berthold kills Johannes. Hence Hesse resurrects Johannes in the guise of Narcissus. *Narcissus* and *Goldmund* is a popular novel by Hesse. Apart from the standard edition, it has sold more than two hundred and twenty-two thousand copies and seen eleven editions.

Ten chapters are devoted to the life of Goldmund and another ten to *Narcissus*. A critic says, “In Goldmund’s imagination, the image of his mother becomes the symbol of his blissful and violent life" (Ziolkowski 245). The story's structure was like the prodigal son, who deserted his father, wandered in the outside world, and finally returned to his father. Likewise, Goldmund left the monastery, led a wayfarer life, and returned to the monastery.

Narcissus was an analytical thinker, whereas Goldmund was a dreamer. Narcissus was dark, whereas Goldmund was a fair and radiant youth. They both had a remarkable fate. Goldmund strived to attain the ideals of the humble Abbot and emulate the extremely intelligent Narcissus. He was obsessed with the thoughts of Goldmund as he found his opposite in him. Man and woman, Yin and Yang, are in the east, two aspects of one, complementary, not opposing (Kelman 260). Narcissus’ goal was to enlighten himself spiritually.

From Darkness to Light:

A person’s life begins as a movement from darkness to light, a process between the embryonic existence that begins from the dark enclosed walls of the womb and the bright, vast world of life, just a step forward for which a leap is sufficient for the baby. It is not only that the baby's growth from childhood to youth, manhood, and old age is a progressive journey of the physique, but it is also the journey of the mind and the soul. The baby learns through imitation, practice, and

experience in each step of life. The child learns and perfects himself, but no one can predict the time when he will attain perfection. Human progression of life's journey moves from a womb cage to cease with a wooden cage.

It is a metaphysical journey of a soul from an ignorant, confined seed of earth that has delved deep into the darkness to an intelligent liberated fruit of omnipresence that has sprouted out of enlightenment. This fruition of the soul is conceived of as man's highest goal in life. Dr. S. Radahakrishnan says: "The whole world is the process of the finite striving to become infinite, and this tension is found in the individual self" (Radhakrishnan 204). The primitive man started his journey by hunting for food by sheltering in protective caves. Human beings spot their journeys for their biological needs and mental satisfaction, which depends on the requirements of their never-ending search for such things as food, shelter, money, hunting after treasure, excitement in pleasure, and identity in a civilized society.

The journey is a movement from an uncomfortable zone to a comfortable zone physically, mentally, and spiritually. Be it the journey of a thirsty crow, which quenches its thirst out of a little water in a pot by dropping pebbles to raise the level of the water, or of a bird that migrates to a foreign land in search of comfort, and the journey begins as soon as the endeavor begins. Even the roots of single-sense beings like plants and trees journey for kilometers to absorb water. The journey of ants and honeybees begins when they collect their food to store them for their future. Fish and reptiles start to reach for food through their sense of smell. First, animals look after their biological needs, and to fulfill them, they begin their journey in their way. Hence, from a single-sense organism to a five-sense living being, their life journey begins with their struggle to keep themselves alive in this world. With his added sense of reasoning, the sixth sense of human

being perceives and journeys beyond the mortal level of satisfaction to achieve invulnerable peace.

Vibrant energy is present in every atom of this world. This overwhelming energy is the essence of creation. In *Siddhartha*, the protagonist at the time of self-realization realizes that he has become everything created in the world. He becomes a stone, plant, and bird, different types of people, from a sinner to a saint, creatures, and God. The theme of simultaneity of space is represented by the League's travel to the different parts of the globe and Ages within a fraction of time.

Human beings are always in a state of a journey in which they move from one stage to another through the vehicle of experiences. One can achieve realization through worldly experience, but it is long progress. Some get it quick, and some get it late. It depends on their perceiving power of the mind.

Hesse has tried to identify the purpose of men's existence through his writings. Humanity's spiritual yearning for calm is universal, despite surface-level differences in our need for physical comfort and intelligence. Man achieves this Ultimate Goal by abiding by specific values and beliefs. A protagonist's natural thirst for true wisdom, patience, a willingness to hear reasoned counsel, endurance, a non-egoistic nature, penitence after despair, faith in the existence of the Supreme Being, intuition, cause and effect knowledge, and a willingness to make sacrifices are among the necessary traits found in a few selected novels.

Yet with these qualities, a spiritual guru is inevitable for uplifting a person’s spiritual aspirations. The soul is engulfed in the delusion or the Maya of the ego and duality, which will have to be shed in due course. The realization of the simultaneity of time and the totality of space dawns on the perception of Ultimate

Reality. Self-realization is the goal of humanity. It is achieved through various paths, as witnessed in the novels *Siddhartha, Narcissus*, and *Goldmund.*

However, a spiritual guru who possesses these attributes is unavoidable in elevating a person's spiritual goals. The illusion, or Maya, of the ego and dualism envelops the soul and must eventually be released. When one perceives the Ultimate Reality, they come to understand that time and space are simultaneous. For humans, self-realization is the ultimate objective. There are multiple ways to attain it, as demonstrated in the novels *Siddhartha, Narcissus,* and *Goldmund*.

The central characters of all these three novels begin on a quest for the Ultimate Truth as they are introduced. Siddhartha has an unquenchable thirst for knowledge; H.H. joins the League of Journeyers to the east that takes him to enlightenment; Goldmund gets admitted to the abbey to become an Abbot of high order in the monastery. Hesse says every person goes through three stages of mental states in life, which provides greater and greater clarity in thought and attitude, leading him to a complete understanding of life. It is a step closer to self-realization. The first stage is the identification of a faint ray of hope despite existing confusion, suffering, and problems.

Conclusion:

The journey is the major archetype represented in the novel's title. The members of the League participate in various journeys. The other archetypal symbols expressed in this novel are the east, the snake of Kundalini, the treasure of Tao, Solomon's Key, and the beautiful princess Fatima, which aid that person to rise above duality and to perceive the unity underlying all religions. It leads man to the Third Kingdom or Ultimate Reality.

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knowledge; H.H. joins the League of Journeyers to the east that takes him to enlightenment; Goldmund gets admitted to the abbey to become an Abbot of high order in the monastery.

The journey is the motif of Hesse. Siddhartha's journey to self-realization comprises Shamanism, Buddhism, Samsara, the realization of follies, destruction of the ego, and attaining self-realization. H.H.'s journey to the east consists of his admission to the League, his journeys undertaken in the mission, his suspicion and desertion of the mission, redemption from despair, acquaintance with Leo, submission for trial before the President; realization of his mistakes, destruction of his pride of writing and attaining self-realization. Goldmund's journey begins from the abbey and moves to the world of nature. He tastes the world of pleasure, realizes the duality as a totality, visualizes the Universal Mother, destroys the ego, and attains self-realization.

Hesse says a man goes through three stages of mental states in life, which provide greater and greater clarity in thought and attitude, leading him to a complete understanding of life. It is a step closer to self-realization. The first stage is the identification of a faint ray of hope despite existing confusion, suffering, and problems. In the second stage, the rebirth of spirituality is witnessed through the faith that lets the protagonist continue the journey. The third stage comprises a comprehensive understanding of the Third Kingdom and a preparation for entering it as visualized earlier.

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