

## Hesse's *Demian* as a Christian Morality Play

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The key to understanding *Demian* is to realize that, at the end, Emil Sinclair is in Hell. This may come as a shock; it is meant to come as a shock. The novel is based on a grand, masterful irony. The reader is tricked into identifying with Emil Sinclair, the hero, and then finds that he has followed Sinclair right to perdition.

Granted, most readers seem to miss this. A scan of comments at *Amazon.com* shows no trace of such an understanding. The same could be said of a scan of the standard literature on Hesse. *Groliers* comments, on the novel, that it is “based on the conviction that Western civilization is doomed and that man must express himself in order to find his own nature.” (1) Hesse’s biographer, Ralph Freedman, speaks of “the saviors like Demian who wisely lead him [Sinclair] out of his despair.” Demian is a story in which “Emil Sinclair learned how to overcome the guilt and shame of his childhood and to achieve with the help of his school friend Demian” (2). Theodore Ziolkowski, in his seminal study *The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure*, sees Demian as a Christ figure (3). Kathryn Byrnes, in her plot summary for the Hesse Page, also sees salvation, not damnation:

Sinclair realizes at this moment that Demian is his salvation. Demian leaves Sinclair with a kiss from Frau Eva, and he leaves him with the assurance that he would forever be a part of him. Sinclair had found himself, his search was over, he had been saved. (4)

Most readers seem to find the ending, especially, difficult; one writer on the Hesse email list notes “I still feel this book is unfinished, the ending comes unnatural to me.” (5) Another concurs: “It is undeniable that the beginning is strong and gripping ... but the novel fails to capitalize on this.” (6)

Why? Because the ending defies this interpretation of the novel. Here is a line from the book’s last paragraph: “Everything that has happened to me since has hurt.” (7) If salvation is intended, this line rings false. Is it only trite hyperbole, a

romanticism of suffering? If not, other than hell, what else might this describe? Physical injury, even if it results in permanent physical pain, is not sufficient. But it is definitive of the Christian hell. As St. Robert Bellarmine puts it in his classic description:

...the penalty of the damned is not one specific kind of sorrow ... but is a certain general penalty spanning all the sufferings of the body's members, joints and senses. (8)

To accept this new reading of *Demian* requires that we see the book as, in effect, a huge irony, a joke played upon Hesse's audience.

And that would be entirely characteristic of Hesse. Although Ziolkowski (in *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 65), sees "*Demian* and *Siddhartha*" as "works almost devoid of humour," he points out Andre Gide's observation that Hesse's work is imbued with "a certain indefinable latent irony," (p. 65), a view which Thomas Mann echoes (p. 65). "Humor remains a central theme" of Hesse's work throughout (p. 68); "Humor becomes the perspective from which Hesse chooses to view reality" (p. 69). Ziolkowski concludes, "readers who completely missed this ironic or parodistic element totally misconstrued the meaning of ... [Hesse's] novels." (p. 65).

*Demian* without humour? It would be dangerous to assume no joke or element of irony in *Demian*, alone or almost alone among Hesse's novels. That the conventional reading allows for none should in itself make us suspicious of it.

The traditional interpretation of the novel requires, moreover, an absolute trust in the perceptions of the narrator. This is a risky proposition in any twentieth-century novel, and especially one written, like *Demian*, in the first person. Were this not enough, Hesse signals in the book's prologue that the narrator is not to be trusted. The fictitious Sinclair there himself writes "Novelists... tend to take an almost godlike attitude toward their subject, pretending to a total comprehension of the story...nothing standing between them and the naked truth...I am as little able to do this as the novelist is..." (Hesse, p. 3). We are presented with a hall of mirrors, a Magic Theatre, worthy of Hesse. He tells us plainly that the narrator does not himself understand the significance of the story he is about to tell. This is not a reliable narrator, and we have been warned in so many words.

It now becomes clear why, in the place where Sinclair is at the end of the book, Max Demian cannot visit him:

"...I will have to go away. ... You'll have to listen within yourself, then you will notice that I am within you..."  
(Hesse, *Demian*, p., 140).

This is cheap mysticism, or it is literal. Literally, for Max to be so definite in saying this, one of two things must be true by the end of the novel: either he is dead, or Emil Sinclair is dead.

On the evidence of the text here, it is hard to say whether it is Demian or Sinclair who is dying. Ziolkowski is certain it is Max Demian (*The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, pp. 94, 101). Richard Matzig, in *Hermann Hesse in Montagnola*, is certain it is Sinclair (Ziolkowski, p. 143).

However, if it is Demian who dies, the novel is saddled with an unnecessary narrative difficulty. Germany in the First World War had millions of men under arms; how likely is it that Demian and Sinclair should end up in the same field hospital? And Hesse, far from reconciling this problem, seems to exacerbate it: when war breaks out, it is with Russia first, and Demian is called up in the first mobilization (Hesse, p. 135-7). This implies he will be on the Russian front, as far as possible from Sinclair's location, given as Flanders (p. 138).

If Hesse is not making a mistake here, and if Sinclair is unreliable, Hesse is signalling the truth above the voice of his narrator: if Demian is present in the field hospital, it is best explained by his having come to his friend's bedside. Sinclair, then, is mortally ill, and Demian is not; no other explanation seems as plausible.

Significantly, as Sinclair describes Demian, there is no mention of wound, bandage or injury on his face or body; Sinclair feels blood in his mouth. Demian moves and speaks freely, in order to kiss Sinclair; Sinclair can neither move nor speak. Demian describes Sinclair as "in a bad way" (Hesse, p. 140). Cumulatively, these clues make it overwhelmingly probable that Sinclair is dying, not Demian.

With *Demian* we have, I suggest, a modern version of the morality play. Morality plays -- the early English play *Everyman* is a classic example -- end with the death of the protagonist, and his ascent to heaven or descent to hell. The Faust legend, so central to German literature, is a survival of the form. Essentially, the morality play is "a representation of the struggle between Good and Evil for the soul of man." (9) In his *History of English Literature in the Middle Ages*, Albert Baugh describes it as "distinguished by certain characteristic themes treated allegorically. These include such subjects as the summons of Death, the conflict of vices and virtues for supremacy in man's life, and the question of his ultimate fate ... they all seem to center in the problem of man's salvation and the conduct of life as it affects his salvation." (10) All three themes can be found in *Demian*.

Hesse alerts us that he is writing of the immortal soul in his preface, when he comments:

If we were not something more than unique human beings,  
if each one of us could really be done away with once and  
for all by a single bullet, storytelling would lose all  
purpose... (Hesse, p. 3)

In other words, he is speaking of man's ultimate fate, as in a morality play. Sinclair will die, and his story will not end with death. He is indeed killed by something like a bullet; he is not, for that, "done away with."

We should in no way be surprised if Hesse here borrows from an old and traditional form, such as the morality play. This, too, is characteristic of him. In his own words, "As a writer, I believe, I have always been a traditionalist. With few exceptions I was always satisfied with the traditional form, a standard pattern, a model" (letter, 1949; quoted in Ziolkowski, p. 83). He turned to the Christianity of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance for inspiration again in *Narcissus and Goldmund*. Indeed, Ziolkowski represents him as something of an expert on the medieval period:

Hesse owned and knew the major works of medieval literature, from the great French and German courtly and heroic epics to the troubadours and Minnesinger, from Dante to the Goliards. At the beginning of his career he wrote booklets on Boccaccio and Saint Francis, relying on sources in the original Italian and Latin. Later he translated selections from Caesarius of Heisterbach's delightful *Dialogus miraculorum* for the German audience, edited a selection from the *Gesta Romanorum*, and, in 1919 and 1925, published two short collections of stories *From the Middle Ages* (*Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 234).

One common feature of the morality play is that the main characters are allegorical. Their significance is usually evident from their names: *Everyman* features characters named Death, Fellowship, Knowledge, and so on (McNiff, p. 122). The very title, "Everyman," establishes the form.

The original subtitle of *Demian*, similarly, can be read in the German quite generically: "The Story of a Youth." (so Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 89, who opines that "it is intended generally and symbolically—not specifically." Thomas Mann gives the same reading in the Introduction to the American edition of the novel – Hesse, p. x). "Youth" seems to speak for the human condition, no less than "Everyman."

Throughout the book, as Ziolkowski notes, Sinclair as narrator stresses the idea that his story is “characteristic and typological for his entire generation” (*The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 94). “From the very beginning Sinclair makes it clear that he regards his own story as typological” (p. 116).

Hesse even seems to refer directly to the earlier English morality play, and by name, in the preface, when he writes: “every man is more than just himself... every man’s story is important, eternal, sacred; that is why every man, ... is wondrous, and worthy of every consideration.” And he continues, expressing very much the spirit of the morality play, “In each individual the spirit has become flesh, in each man the creation suffers, within each one a redeemer is nailed to the cross.” (Hesse, p. 4).

Let us then examine names. Max, as his name (Demian) suggests, is a demon, a devil -- my spell-checker insists the name is a misspelling for the former. Names in general seem to be instructive both in this novel and throughout Hesse’s corpus; his biographer Freedman cites his “elaborate games with names and pseudonyms” (Freedman, p. 81). They seem to identify the characters just as do the names in a morality play: here is Goldmund (“Goldenmouth”) the artist; “Narcissus” is regularly accused of the sin of pride; Hermann Lauscher (“Listener”) is a recorder of life. Here is Vice, here is Everyman, here an angel, here Mother Eve.

As striking is the main character’s name: Sinclair. It would mean nothing special in German, but we have the benefit of being able to recognize the English “sin,” and perhaps also the French “clair,” “obviously.” Put together, we have Mr. “Plainly Sin.” (11)

*Demian* seeks, as morality or miracle plays commonly did, to tell the story of man’s fate, from beginning to the end, Eden to Apocalypse, “from the Creation to the Last Judgement” (McNiff, p. 121). It begins in the Garden of Eden; it ends with direct references to the Apocalypse.

At the end of the novel, Max looks at Emil “almost as with pity” (Hesse, p. 140). Almost -- yet one would expect, in the circumstances, if Sinclair is dying or even merely wounded, pity as a matter of course, as a natural human reaction. Unless there is some special, unstated reason here for pity to be suspended; unless Max himself is responsible for leading Sinclair to this point, is his Mephistopheles.

In the end, Emil sees Max as “my master” (Hesse, p. 141). A jolting phrase, after all his talk of being an individual and seeking his own fate. Max seems not a human friend, but an agent to whom Sinclair has given his essence, his soul. Does Emil belong to Max and not himself, because he is of the devil’s party now, and of the devil’s dominion?

Sinclair fears this very fate, if one cares to listen. Midway through the novel, he muses: "Perhaps I would reach this goal, but it would turn out to be an evil, dangerous, horrible one?" (Hesse, p. 80). Awakening from the dream of embracing Frau Eva, he remarks, "Sometimes I awoke from this dream with a feeling of profound ecstasy, at others in mortal fear and with a racked conscience as though I had committed some terrible crime." (Hesse, p. 79).

Max's kiss (Hesse, p. 140) confirms it. It has no sinister undertone to Hesse's biographer ("He was finally saved in the hospital where a dying Demian bestowed on him his mother's saving kiss" - Freedman, p. 191). Yet a man kissing a man cannot but allude powerfully to the most famous male-to-male kiss in Western civilization: the kiss with which Judas betrays Jesus (Matthew 26: 48-9; Mark 14: 44-6; Luke 22: 47-8). The archetype of the false friend: Judas feigns affection in the act of betrayal. The implication is that Max feigned affection for Sinclair up to this point. And the meaning of the kiss is: Take this one. Take him and crucify him.

Whether Hesse intended this message is, in the end, irrelevant; the entire novel might as easily have erupted from his unconscious. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that Hesse was the son of missionary preachers (Freedman, p. 15); it is improbable that he would not have noticed Biblical parallels in his tale. Anything that looks like a reference to the Bible, therefore, probably is. And Hesse was always a moralist at heart; his biographer Freedman speaks of a "profoundly moral concern" (p. 17). The faith in which he was raised, German Pietism, is described by Hugo Ball, also a biographer, as having "the most ascetic features" (Freedman, p. 17).

It is plain wrong, on the evidence, to suppose that Hesse ever rejected this religious background, for Jungian psychology, Eastern religion, or anything else. Just the contrary; he is found railing, as a young bookseller, at the "blasé godlessness" of his literary circle (Freedman, p. 74). In Basel, he roomed with theologians, but "found their religious fervor wanting" (Freedman, p. 90). *Demian*, the novel, published in 1919, was preceded in 1904 by a book on St. Francis of Assisi (Freedman, p. 116). Speaking after writing *Demian*, Hesse muses that he might have chosen by himself to be a Catholic or a Confucian, but "I should have done this ... out of a longing for my polar opposite ... for it was not by accident alone that I was born the son of pious Protestants." (Freedman, p. 217, quoting "Life Story Briefly Told.") Still later, he refers to himself as "the Protestant Steppenwolf" (Freedman, p. 236, p. 278). In a 1930 essay, Hesse observes, "I myself consider the religious impulse as the decisive characteristic of my life and my work." (quoted in Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 106).

In *Demian*, Hesse refers to the Bible often, as if setting a motif or theme: when Sinclair reconciles with his family, for example, it is "the return of the Prodigal Son" (Hesse, p. 37). Chapters are titled "Cain," "Among Thieves," and "Jacob

Wrestling.” Ziolkowski notes of this novel that it is “lavishly spiced with Christian and Biblical overtones” (*The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 105); “religion definitely establishes the tone and atmosphere” (p. 108).

One Biblical reference spotted by Ziolkowski is Sinclair’s dream of burning his painting and eating the ashes:

During the night I awoke from deep sleep: ... I lit the lamp, felt that I had to recollect something important but could not remember anything about the previous hour. Gradually I began to have an inkling. I looked for the painting—it was no longer on the wall, nor on the table either. Then I thought I could dimly remember that I had burned it. Or had this been in my dream that I burned it in the palm of my hand and swallowed the ashes? (Hesse, pp. 100-1).

This, Ziolkowski points out, is a reference to a passage in Revelations:

And I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.” And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.” And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. (NKJV: Rev. 10:9-10).

Unless Hesse is using Biblical references merely for atmospheric, this seems to carry a message about the nature of *Demian*, the present “little book,” as a whole: it is bitter, although it seems sweet. Its true meaning is not what it appears.

Demian tells Sinclair why he is in Hell in one phrase: ““Can you remember Franz Kromer?” he asked.” (Hesse, p. 140).

A striking comment: to this point both Max and Emil have carefully avoided any reference to this incident. It cannot fail to draw our attention.

Kromer is how it began. Franz Kromer, of course, is the neighboring boy who bullies Emil Sinclair about the fictional theft of apples (Hesse, pp. 9-13ff). Emil traps himself into blackmail with a lie.

A theft of apples ... is this not an allusion to the theft of the apple in the Garden of Eden? Mankind’s Original Sin, then, is reenacted in our stage play as Emil Sinclair’s original sin.

Sinclair himself speaks of it in such generic terms: “My sin was not specifically this or that; but consisted of shaking hands with the devil.” (Hesse, p. 14).

It is intimated that the identity of the owner of the garden is important, and yet Hesse never identifies him--as if to point out that there is more here than is apparent; as if to point to something symbolic:

Softly Franz Kromer asked: “You know who owns the orchard by the mill, don’t you?”

“I’m not sure. The miller, I think.”...

“Well, I can tell you for certain whose orchard that is. I’ve known for some time that someone had stolen apples there...” (Hesse, p. 11).

In the Bible, of course, the owner of the garden is Yahweh.

And the apples in Sinclair’s garden are somehow special, are “by no means ordinary apples ...” (Hesse, p. 9) --another clue to an allusion or a symbolic significance.

Sinclair speaks of the world he has lost through this sin, the world of his childhood, as the Garden of Eden. “I raised between myself and my childhood a locked gateway to Eden with its pitilessly resplendent host of guardians” (Hesse, p. 64). “I fled from the valley of sorrow, my horrible bondage to Kromer... back to the lost paradise that was opening up again now...” (Hesse, pp. 36-7).

Next, Sinclair makes a literal Faustian bargain by swearing his soul away at the conclusion of his story of the apple theft:

“Would you swear to it?... Then say: By God and the grace of my soul.”

“By God and the grace of my soul.” I said. (Hesse, p. 10).

Demian later refers to Sinclair as Faust:

“Can you see Faust sitting night after night stooped over the bar?”

I took a swallow and looked at him with hostility.

“Well, not everybody’s Faust,” I said curtly.

He looked at me somewhat taken aback. (Hesse, p. 72).

Is Demian surprised that Sinclair personalizes the comment? Or is Demian surprised that Sinclair denies it? In fact, Max’s criticism of Sinclair’s drinking seems to be that it is not evil enough:

“Yes, for one night, with burning torches, a real wild drunk! But again and again, one little glass after the other, I wonder whether that’s the real thing or not?” (Hesse, p. 72).

Hesse gives many hints of Demian’s true diabolic nature; if we, along with Sinclair, choose to follow his teachings and his glamour, we have only ourselves to blame. When he first appears, he is, ominously, wearing a mourning band (Hesse, p. 22). Sinclair’s first reaction is negative: “I couldn’t say he made a favourable impression on me; on the contrary, I had something against him...” (Hesse, p. 23).

This new boy is not a boy like the others:

“In fact, he did not strike anyone as a boy at all. In contrast to us, he seemed strange and mature, like a man, or rather, like a gentleman.” (Hesse, p. 22).

“The devil is a gentleman” is a common saying throughout Europe.

“...He did his best not to be noticed; his manner and bearing was that of a prince disguised among farm boys, taking great pains to appear one of them” (Hesse, p. 23).

“Prince” is in fact Satan’s rank. He is called in the gospel the “Prince of this World” (John 12:31). He is Prince of Darkness, Prince of Death, Prince of Cherubim (12).

And again:

All I saw was that he was different from us, he was like an animal or like a spirit or like a picture, he was different, unimaginably different from the rest of us (Hesse, p. 43).

Like a spirit. Just so.

Speaking of Demian's perceptiveness, Sinclair sees him as godlike: "His voice seemed to come from within myself. And it knew everything." (Hesse, p. 33). Twice, Demian lapses into a strange state resembling death (Hesse, p. 55, p. 128). His hands are "lifeless"; "Dead, I thought... this is the real Demian...this lonely death!" (p. 55). "The brown hair was without luster, as though lifeless" (p. 56). "Slumped on a stool," "his eyes ... were unseeing and dead.... He did not seem to breathe." (p. 128). This image of death is associated with self-absorption, Demian's creed. "Now he has gone completely into himself, I felt" (p. 55). "The wan face was absorbed in itself" (p. 128).

The wages of sin are death.

If Demian is a mere mortal, how is Sinclair able to send him a pictorial message with no text, not knowing his address and giving no name (Hesse, p. 74)? How can a response appear on a slip of paper in his textbook, in the middle of a history class (Hesse, p. 76)? Ziolkowski is just able to account for this without assuming Demian has supernatural powers: "it is implied that the note was put there by the practice teacher, Dr. Follen, who has just come from the university and probably knew Demian there" (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 92). Still, this is quite a stretch. We must conclude, either that Hesse is here technically awkward, or that he means to tell us Demian is not human.

Were such broad hints not quite enough, Hesse gives the game away in the book's last sentence: Sinclair twice refers to Demian with the third person singular pronoun "He," capitalized. In German as in English, this usage is reserved for a divine or spiritual being (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 140).

Demian makes his malicious intent plain, if we read his words carefully.

"Let's assume," he began again, "that I don't mean to do you any harm ..." (Hesse, p.32).

He may well intend harm; that he does not is purely an assumption on our part, for which Demian himself takes no responsibility.

“... I’ve merely thought it over and I’d never do it Kromer’s way ...” (Hesse, p. 34).

He does intend harm. He merely has a different approach from Kromer’s, a different technique.

This seems confirmed soon after by Sinclair’s dream:

For I was still dreaming of being tortured. Yet this time it was Demian who knelt on me. And--this was totally new and left a deep impression on me--everything I had resisted and that had been agony to me when Kromer was my tormentor I suffered gladly at Demian’s hands ... (Hesse, p. 28).

Sinclair later is more explicit:

He too--though differently from Kromer--was a tempter; he, too, was a link to the second, the evil world... (Hesse, p. 37)

“The Tempter,” used as a title, refers expressly to the devil (viz. OED, entry “tempter”).

There is at least one more curious and unexplained reference that may identify Demian with the devil full bore. In confirmation class, he boasts to Sinclair of how he can make almost anyone uneasy by simply staring in their eyes.

“I actually know only one person where it doesn’t help me.”

“Who is that?” I asked quickly.

He looked at me with narrowed eyes, as he did when he became thoughtful. Then he looked away and made no reply. Even though I was terribly curious I could not repeat the question.

I believe he meant his mother. (Hesse, p. 49)

Possibly so; yet if so, Demian’s reticence seems disproportionate. There is, on the other hand, only one man who, in the Christian doctrine, is without sin. One

man, uniquely, is able to stare down the devil without fear, and does, famously, in the desert beyond the Jordan (Matthew 4:1-11): Jesus of Nazareth.

As in Eden, the symbolic theft of apples leads to a fall from grace. “My life was wrecked” is almost Emil’s first thought (Hesse, p. 13); “my way, from now on, would lead farther and farther downhill into darkness” (p.14). This seems silly and overblown, unless we read this as something like Original Sin; Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden is fairly petty as well. Here, the initial sin leads to the sin of lying to conceal the sin, and so on. Had Emil acknowledged promptly to himself and to those around him that he had done wrong, all might have been well: “I would tell him [Emil’s father] everything, would accept his verdict and his punishment, and would make him into my confessor and saviour” (Hesse, p. 14). Instead, Emil avoids doing this. As a direct result, he suffers under Kromer. To escape this suffering, he makes a tacit deal with Demian. Demian first proposes killing Kromer, and when Sinclair makes no response, amends this, “Go on home. We’ll find a way, even though killing him would be the simplest.” And Sinclair leaves, presumably with his silence accepting the bargain (Hesse, p. 34).

From this point, he gradually, with the assistance of Demian, adopts a view of the world that maintains that evil is clever, good foolish. This is Eve’s view when she accepts the apple; cleverness or “subtlety” is the serpent’s distinguishing feature.

Demian says:

“What is forbidden, in other words, is not something eternal; it can change. ... Those who are too lazy and comfortable to think for themselves and be their own judges obey the laws ...” (Hesse, p. 53).

He shall be his own God, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:5).

This teaching of Demian’s is directly counter to Hesse’s own stated beliefs: “I believe in laws of humanity that are thousands of years old, and I believe that they will easily outlast the whole turmoil of our time.” (letter, 1930, quoted by Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 38).

Explaining his interest in the young Sinclair, Demian says, “You’re bright and most people are stupid. I like talking to a bright fellow now and then ...” (Hesse, p. 32).

The serpent, most cunning of creatures, promises knowledge (Genesis 3:5).

And he promises godlike power: “If a person were to concentrate all his will power on a certain end, then he would achieve it” (Hesse, p. 47).

He shall be as God (Genesis 3:5).

Demian also brings up the story of Cain and Abel, drawing attention obliquely to the Eden story. Several times, Kromer and Sinclair are compared expressly to Cain and Abel, with Sinclair seeing himself as Abel. "I had been a kind of Abel myself ..." (Hesse, p. 26; compare p. 37, p. 38). The sequence is even, cleverly, that of Genesis: first a theft of apples, then the contention between Cain and Abel.

Yet it is he, Sinclair, after all, as Demian points out, who has the mark of Cain. It is he whose sacrifices of atonement to Kromer, like Cain's (Genesis 4:3-5), seem forever insufficient. And it is he who, in the end, with Demian's help, gets rid of Kromer, as Cain gets rid of Abel. Here we have plain notice--if the lie about the apples was not enough--that we are dealing with an unreliable narrator: Emil says he is Abel, but the action of the story makes him Cain. If we choose to see subsequent events only through Sinclair's eyes, we have only ourselves to blame for the results.

If one looks at Demian's "novel" interpretation of the Cain and Abel story, it is not really unorthodox. He allows that Cain killed his brother, and in an inglorious way (Hesse, p. 25). He allows that Cain pleads for mercy (Hesse, p. 24)--and so, implicitly, that there is a God who punishes him. His only novelty is to suggest that in spite of all this it is a clever and a grand thing to kill anyone weaker than you, and only cowardice prevents us from doing so (Hesse, p. 25).

Nothing in the Bible actually indicates that the mark of Cain is in the face or forehead, as Demian persistently claims. Interestingly, however, a mark on the forehead does figure in the book of Revelations (Rev. 13:16, 14:9-11). It marks the followers of the Beast of the Apocalypse, those who are condemned to hell:

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God...; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone... And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever... (KJV: Rev. 14:9-11).

Accordingly, the principal significance of this so-called mark of Cain may be to single Sinclair out, to the eyes of this demon (Max), as someone ripe for damnation.

Demian's version of the story of the Good Thief is presented as a parallel to the Cain and Abel story. But it is curiously silly, untenable on the face of it. Demian says:

“But now comes this sentimental little treatise about the good thief. At first he was a thorough scoundrel, had committed all those awful things and God knows what else, and now he dissolves in tears and celebrates such a tearful feast of self-improvement and remorse ... No, the other fellow, he's a man of character. He doesn't give a hoot for 'conversion,' which to a man in his position can't be anything but a pretty speech. He follows his destiny to its appointed end and does not turn coward and forswear the devil...” (Hesse, pp. 50-51)

Here is what the Bible story says:

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on the right, and one on the left... One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other one rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” (RSV: Luke 23:32-42)

There is no dissolving in tears, and there is no seeking to avoid his fate. It is the thief Demian praises who seeks to avoid his fate, not the Good Thief. And, even more clearly, Demian's objection here undermines his professed admiration for Cain elsewhere; for Cain, Demian himself admits, indeed comes “sniveling” to God pleading for mercy (Hesse, p. 24). The point seems rather to buck up Sinclair, to keep his mind off the promise of redemption, even at the last moment, that the story of the thieves implies. Such a deathbed conversion might be disastrous for any devil's bargain.

This is the traditional means by which the Christian devil or Antichrist is supposed to subvert souls: through “cunning argument or false exposition of the scriptures” (13).

Demian never denies the existence of devil, of God or of punishment for sin. He just tries to suggest that sin is a grand thing to do anyway. The message is no more than this: for the devil's sake, Sinclair, don't repent at the last minute--you might still be saved if you do.

When Sinclair asks him forthrightly about the nature of evil, he prevaricates rather than answers:

“But there are forbidden and ugly things in the world! ... Of course I know that murder and all kinds of vices exist in the world but should I become a criminal just because they exist?”

“We won't be able to find out all the answers today,” Max soothed me. (Hesse, pp. 52-3)

Sinclair also catches him saying in rapid succession, first that we have no control over what we want, and then that if we exercise our will we can achieve whatever we want. His explanation of this paradox is unsatisfactory, seems only to repeat the contradiction: a moth gets what it wants because it wants what it can get (Hesse, pp. 47-8).

The choice of a moth as image here, however, is interesting and ironic--since moths so frequently want, and get, death in the candle flame. This at once serves to disprove Demian's contention and to render it a dark allusion to hellfire.

Part of the subtlety of the tale is that Sinclair gets no enjoyment out of his choice of the path to hell, as Hesse points out already in the preface: “My story is not a pleasant one...” (Hesse, p. 4). Had he actually been enjoying himself, it might be plainer to us in our habitual literal-mindedness that Sinclair was doing wrong. The fact that he does very little, and nothing shocking, obscures this, and the fact that he actually seems to suffer for his beliefs, perversely, gives an attractive patina of martyrdom.

Sinclair says of Demian's influence in Confirmation class, “A disenchantment falsified and blunted my usual feelings and joys...” “The peculiar emptiness and isolation that I came to feel for the first time after Confirmation (oh, how familiar it was to become afterwards, this desolate, thin air!) passed only very slowly.” (Hesse, p. 57). “Often I felt a great longing for Max Demian, but no less often I hated him, accusing him of having caused the impoverishment of my life that held me in its sway like a foul disease” (Hesse, p. 58). “I had already felt much loneliness, now there was a deeper loneliness still which was inescapable” (Hesse, p. 108)

Demian plainly does not bring him happiness.

Though sexuality and sexual pleasure is implied in Demian's and especially in Frau Eva's teaching, Sinclair gets no sexual pleasure as a result of his discipleship either. "... I never accompanied my friends when they visited women... For a time I could not even bring myself to enter Mrs. Jaggelt's stationery store because I blushed looking at her remembering what Alfons Beck had told me." (Hesse, p. 63). "But my desires remained unfulfilled and it was more impossible than ever for me to deceive my longings and hope for something from the women with whom my comrades tried their luck." (Hesse, p. 79).

His alcoholic period is also not pleasurable to him.

... For the first time in my life, I was drunk. It was not pleasant. In fact, it was most painful... (Hesse, p. 61).

The sober reality to which I awoke after a brief death-like sleep coincided with a painful and senseless depression... (Hesse, p. 61)

Nonetheless, I felt wretched. I lived in an orgy of self-destruction and, while my friends regarded me as a leader... deep down inside me my soul grieved... (Hesse, p. 62)

I really don't know any longer whether boozing and swaggering actually ever gave me any pleasure. (Hesse, p. 63).

Later, he says to Pistorius, offered a glass of wine, "No thanks, I don't like drinking." (Hesse, p. 85).

Nevertheless, for Christians, morality is not in the act but the attitude. As Augustine says, famously, "Love, and do what you will" (*Tract on the Epistle of John*, viii, 8). Augustine defines sin as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law." (14) Just so, the Ten Commandments of Moses separately outlaw adultery, but also *coveting* your neighbour's wife; stealing, but also *coveting* your neighbor's goods. (15) Jesus declares, "first cleanse the inside of the cup and of the plate, that the outside may also be clean" (Matthew 23:26), and, getting down to cases, "... every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:28). So too St. Paul: "The commandments ... are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Romans 13:9).

In fact, Demian has committed the greatest sin of all: pride. Gregory of Nyssa calls it "queen and mother of all the vices" (*Moral*. xxxi, 45). Thomas Aquinas describes it as "the last in those who return to God, and the first in those who

leave God" (16), "the greatest sin in man" (II-II, 162, 6) "the worst of all vices" (II-II, 162, 6). It is "the beginning of all sin" (Aquinas here quotes Sirach 10:13).

It appears in *Demian*, as in Aristotle, as "feigned fortitude and daring" (17): in, for example, the lie concerning the theft of the apples, and in Demian's version of the parable of the Good Thief. His preoccupation with self, indeed, is what makes sexual love, in that it intimates true love, closed to him. This, too, is orthodox understanding. As Aquinas observes, "he who is in the clutches of pride and feels it not, falls into the lusts of the flesh, that being thus humbled he may rise from his abasement ... just as a wise physician, in order to cure a worse disease, allows the patient to contract one that is less dangerous, so the sin of pride is shown to be more grievous by the very fact that, as a remedy, God allows men to fall into other sins" (Aquinas II-II, 162, 6).

Pleasure in the table and the jar is equally closed to the truly damned, as this, Demian notes, can lead to comradeship and even to sainthood (Hesse, p. 120, p. 72). In *Narcissus and Goldmund*, the model monk Narcissus makes the same point: "Don't you know that a wastrel's life may be one of the shortest roads to sainthood?" (18) Sharing wine, after all, is the Christian sacrament.

Indeed, Sinclair's experience of drunkenness seems to break through his pride specifically:

... everything looked ravaged and damned, was mine no longer, rejected me, regarded me with disgust. ... everything had been laid waste, everything had been trampled on by me! If the arm of the law had reached out for me now, had bound and gagged me and led me to the gallows as the scum of the earth and a desecrator of the temple, I would not have objected, would have gladly gone, would have considered it just and fair.

So that's what I looked like inside! I who was going about contemptuous of the world! I who was proud in spirit... (Hesse, pp. 61-2).

Hesse, as Sinclair, almost seems to echo Aquinas. "There are numerous ways in which God can make us lonely and lead us back to ourselves. This was the way he dealt with me at that time" (Hesse, p. 64). This is at base a religious call, a call to repentance. So the name of the older student who introduces him to the world of drink and boastfulness: Alphons Beck (Hesse, p. 59), whose name suggests the English/Germanic complex of meanings "call" or "beckon."

While they are represented as boasts, the confidences young Emil shares with Beck and later with the other boys are the same things one would share with a confessor or spiritual director: religious doubts and transgressions. "Beck very

much wanted me to confess to having slept with girls” (Hesse, p. 60). And it feels like a sort of welcome back to the human fold to Sinclair: “my heart swelled ecstatically at this opportunity to luxuriate in the release of a long pent-up need for talk and communication” (p. 60).

This repentance and reconciliation, of the sort one is supposed to feel in the confessional, is in contrast to the pride Sinclair feels on the path preferred by Demian:

On that fatal evening when my misery had begun, there had been that matter with my father. There, for a moment, I had seen through him and his world... and had felt nothing but contempt for it. ... I stood higher than my father and the pious, the righteous. (Hesse, p. 26)

As the disciple of Demian, then, in contrast to his pub-crawling period, contempt for others, not love, rules him: in preparatory school, he muses, “I began to regard the students in my age group contemptuously as mere children” (Hesse, p. 58). Returning from school on vacation, he speaks of “peering into the same old, despised faces of the philistines” (Hesse, p. 71). Enrolling in university, he muses, “everyone was doing the same thing, and the exaggerated gaiety on the boyish faces looked depressingly empty and ready-made.” (Hesse, p. 112). Later, after visiting Demian’s home, he thinks, “Let the students have their drunken orgies and tattoo their faces; the rotten world could await its destruction -- for all I cared. ... I had lost all appreciation of the outside world” (Hesse, p. 117). Later Demian says the same: “We both know that the world is quite rotten.” (Hesse, p. 131).

In a dream apotheosis, Sinclair comes to worship -- himself (Hesse, pp. 79-80).

This being was no longer confined to my dreams, no longer merely depicted on paper, but lived within me as an ideal and intensification of myself. (Hesse, p. 103).

I wanted only to try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self. (Hesse, p. 80).

An enlightened man had but one duty -- to seek the way to himself. (Hesse, p. 107)

...what I learned from him [Pistorius] represented a further step on the road towards myself (Hesse, p. 92).

Soon after, he declares himself no longer afraid of others, because “I was always preoccupied with myself.” (Hesse, p. 81).

The classic Christian teaching, in direct contrast, is that one must “die to self.” This Christian idea is apparently Hesse’s own view. He speaks of the period of his life when he was writing *Demian* as “the hellish journey through myself” (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 9). Not *to*, note, but *through*. In 1924, he declares in another essay that “All suffering and all evil stem from the fact that men as individuals no longer feel themselves to be inseparable parts of a great totality” (“At the Spa,” Ziolkowski’s paraphrase, p. 25). Hesse’s hero Harry Haller in the novel *Steppenwolf* also speaks of the “hell of himself” (quoted in Freedman, p. 285).

Yet Demian diabolically declares, counter to Hesse’s own stated belief, “to lose yourself is a sin.” (Hesse, p. 54).

Emil also admits to the sin of ingratitude; as Aquinas goes on to note, “pride ... scorns to be subject to a creature for God’s sake” (Aquinas II-II, 162, 7, Reply to Objection 2).

Gratitude is not a virtue I believe in, and to me it seems hypocritical to expect it from a child. Thus my total ingratitude toward Max Demian does not astonish me too much. (Hesse, p. 36).

Later: “It was so unpleasant to be obligated to him” (Hesse, p. 71).

He casts off Pistorius as well, without much thought, and “no attempt at reconciliation” (Hesse, p. 108).

Sinclair finds a respite, and breaks through this preoccupation with self, when he falls into distant love with the girl he calls Beatrice. Sinclair has not read *The Inferno*, he says. But the reference is, tellingly, to a woman who saves Dante from the path to hell and guides him to paradise. *The Inferno* begins:

Midway along the journey of our life  
I woke to find myself in a dark wood  
for I had wandered off from the straight path ... (19)

Beatrice intervenes from Heaven with the words:

“I fear that he has gone so far astray  
From what report has come to me in heaven  
That I may have started to his aid too late.”  
(Dante, Canto 2, ll. 64-6).

As a character in our morality play, Beatrice represents Love, or the saving power of love. This, again, is the Christian message: God is Love; love conquers all; the first commandment is to love God, the second to love your neighbour.

Interestingly, she seems to emerge from, be a product of, Sinclair's period of drunkenness and remorse. She appears in the same park where he had met Alphons Beck: he in the autumn (Hesse, p. 59), she the next spring (p. 65). First Confession, as it were, in the Catholic formula, and then Communion. The park again suggests Eden, and so again a return to the state of grace lost by the apple theft, just as every Christian Communion is a return to the Last Supper and the Crucifixion.

Beatrice has exactly the same effect on the wastrel Sinclair as does Dante's Beatrice on the lost poet: she draws him to the path of salvation.

In place of all this [lust ] I raised my altar to the image of Beatrice, and by consecrating myself to her I consecrated myself to the spirit and to the gods, sacrificing that part of life which I withdrew from the forces of darkness to those of light.... I sought to transform myself by introducing purity and nobility into every aspect of my life (Hesse, p. 67).

Unfortunately, in Sinclair's story, his Beatrice is gradually overshadowed by Demian; when he tries to paint her face, Demian's face emerges instead. Instead of being driven to contact Beatrice, he is driven to contact Demian. Soon, he allows, "I'd forgotten all about her" (p. 75). Though salvation is offered, Beatrice has indeed started to his aid too late. Sinclair has already sold his soul to the devil, and is obstinate in sin.

I often caught sight of the girl I called Beatrice but I felt no emotion during these encounters ... My longing for Max Demian overwhelmed me again ... (Hesse, p. 71).

The figure of Beatrice with whom I had occupied myself so intimately and fervently gradually became submerged or, rather, was slowly receding, approaching the horizon more and more, becoming more shadowy and remote, paler. She no longer satisfied the longings of my soul. (Hesse, p. 78)

Abraxas, the name proposed by Demian for the God who combines good and evil, is the name used for their divinity by some of the Gnostics, an early Christian heresy (20). The Cainites, cited by Sinclair's father (Hesse, p. 38), were one Gnostic sect (21).

How much did Hesse himself actually know about Gnosis? Probably a lot. An interest in the Gnostics was everywhere in his own youth. The novel itself shows this: Sinclair's father instantly recognizes the Cainite doctrine (Hesse, p. 38), and

Pistorius instantly recognizes the name Abraxas. The important Gnostic text we know as the *Pistis Sophia* had been translated into German in 1905, and was the subject of much interest among Orientalists of the time (22). G.R.S. Mead's *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten: The Gnostics*, went through two German editions, in 1902 and 1906 (Rudolph, p. 2). Richard Noll, in his study of Jung, claims that:

Starting in the 1880s ... any clerk, waiter, businessman, ... housewife, ... politician, institutionalized mental patient, indeed anyone, could easily find the ubiquitous Theosophical publications that summarized in plain language ... the ideas of ... Egyptian religion, ... the Greek magical papyri..., Gnosticism, alchemy, Hermeticism, and the various Hellenistic mystery cults. (23)

Theosophical books ... began to appear in abundance in the late 1880s in original German editions. (Noll, p. 68).

Add to this the activities of the German/Swiss theosophical publishing house Eugen Diederichs Verlag, which operated from Leipzig 1896 to 1904, and thereafter from nearby Jena (Noll, p. 68). Diederichs' program involved "publishing works for the lay public on Gnosticism between 1903 and 1910" (Noll, p. 88). Scholars such as Hermann Usener, Wilhelm Bousset, Albrecht Dieterich, and Richard Reitzenstein, all writing in German, had "begun to publish densely inaccessible scholarly studies on Gnosticism starting in the late 1890's" (Noll, p. 88). Among Dieterich's works was *Abraxas: Studien zur Religionsgeschichte des späteren Alterums*, published in 1891 (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 110).

If such books were available, as Noll says, to every clerk and housewife, far more were they available to Hesse. He was, after all, a professional bookseller at this time. Moreover, Hesse's grandfather was a noted Orientalist, and the young Hesse "read eagerly in his grandfather's library" (Freedman, p. 54). Ziolkowski notes that "Hesse grew up surrounded by the symbols not only of Christianity, but of oriental religions." (*The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 107) And he knew the Theosophical program well enough, indeed assumed enough general knowledge of it, to have Sinclair's classmates, in the present book, accuse him of being a theosophist (Hesse, p. 97).

Accordingly, it is fair to expect that Hesse himself had a good idea of what Gnosticism was about.

And yet, curiously, the Gnosticism represented in the novel does not tally with the historical truth at all. Is this not a plain sign to the discerning reader that Demian's doctrine is not Gnosticism at all, but something else? Gnosticism was not a doctrine that united or went beyond good and evil, as Demian describes it. The main reason why the Gnostics were considered heretics by Catholic Christians--and so died out--was their strict *dualism*. Kurt Rudolph, the leading modern authority on the Gnostics, defines the Gnosis in so many words as "a dualistic religion ... which took up a definitively negative attitude to the world ... and proclaimed a deliverance ... of man precisely from the constraints of earthly existence" (Rudolph, p.2). It is "a strict dualism which subjects everything visible or belonging to the world to criticism and rejection; the only secure foundation is a world beyond which can be described only in negative terms" (Rudolph, p. 33). Robert A. Segal defines it as "the belief in an antithetical dualism of immateriality, which is good, and matter, which is evil. Gnosticism espouses radical dualism..." (24).

Far from being a God who combines good and evil, then, as Hesse represents him here, Abraxas is referred to formulaically by the Gnostics as "The Good God," to distinguish him from the Evil God supposedly responsible for the fall of man ("Gnosticism," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; Tertullian, Appendix, 1; Rudolph, p. 2). In the *Pistis Sophia*, the fallen Aeon laments,

I have become like a material body, which has no one in the height who will save it.

I have become like material things whose power has been taken from them as they were cast into the Chaos which thou hast not saved ...

I have been placed in the darkness below, in dark things and in material things which are dead; and there is no power within them. (25).

The material world was to the Gnostics both evil and irredeemable. The Gnostic teacher Cerdo, according to Tertullian, taught that there were "two Gods--one good, the other cruel: the good being the superior; the latter, the cruel one, being the creator of the world" (Tertullian, Appendix, Chapter 6).

This blatant anomaly suggests, in sum, that there is something hidden, a secret agenda, in Demian's philosophy: he has reversed the positions of the Gnostics and the Catholics as if mischievously. Gnostic terminology is a ruse to cover plain sin.

Hesse has Abraxas appear in a lecture on Herodotus. As Hesse must have known and checked to confirm, Herodotus in fact never mentions Abraxas (Ziolkowski,

*The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 110). Surely this too, is a signal that there is something odd here, that the book's "Gnosticism" is not historical.

The true Gnostic in the novel is Knauer, as his name, again, suggests. It seems to be a multilingual pun on "Knower." That is the literal English translation of the term "Gnostic."

Like the Gnostics, Knauer believes the created world is evil. He shouts to Sinclair: "You're a fine saint! You're depraved yourself, I know. You pretend to be wise but secretly you cling to the same filth the rest of us do! You're a pig, a pig, like me. All of us are pigs!" (Hesse, p. 99).

Like the Gnostics, Knauer believes in magic: "white magic" (Hesse, p. 97) is how he describes his faith. The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, while finding it hard to pin down much about the Gnostics' actual beliefs, refers to a strong reliance on magic as their "original sin." (26)

In fact, Knauer's ideas are even specifically those of the Cainite sect Emil's father cites. They believed, according to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, that "The demiurgic angels, attempting to create man, created but a miserable worm." Accordingly, to free themselves from the bondage of "evil" matter, they abstained "from flesh meat and marriage ... leading an ascetic life" ("Gnosticism," *Catholic Encyclopedia*) (27).

Had we doubted it before, the presence of Knauer in the novel seems Hesse's deliberate tipoff that he is himself under no misapprehensions regarding what the Gnostics actually believed. It is another clue for the discerning reader that all is not well with Demian's teaching, that it is intrinsically misleading. It is not Gnosticism. It is something else. It is plain sin.

Essentially, Knauer and the Gnostics start from the same position as did Sinclair at the beginning of the novel, believing there are two worlds, one good, one evil. But he and they have chosen the path opposite to Sinclair's and Demian's, rejecting the "evil" physical world entirely.

Accordingly, Knauer's goal is expressed in terms completely opposite to that of Sinclair. The latter seeks to express his self; the former speaks instead of the need for "self-control" (Hesse, p. 97).

The chapter in which Knauer appears is called "Jacob Wrestling." This is again a Biblical reference: Jacob wrestles with an angel on a mountaintop until the angel agrees to bless him (Genesis 32:22-32).

Who is Jacob, and who is the angel? Sinclair identifies the angel with the painting he has made of himself/Abraxas (Hesse, p. 100). Tellingly, however, he cannot recall whether he heard the phrase "Jacob wrestling with an angel," from

Pistorius or Demian. These two seem then to stand then as alternatives in his life; the issue is perhaps to discern which one speaks for the angels, and which one does not.

When Sinclair stumbles on Knauer's suicide attempt, he comments, "We create gods and struggle with them, and they bless us," (Hesse, p. 102) a reference to the same story. This sets up another choice of two characters: who is the angel, Sinclair or Knauer?

On the surface, Sinclair seems in this encounter to be the superior being. Knauer certainly seems to ask Sinclair for something like a blessing.

But Sinclair is no angel; unlike the Biblical spirit, he refuses to bless Knauer.

Knauer, on the other hand, seems by Sinclair's own grudging admission to have brought *him* blessings:

Yet it was strange that he would often come to me with his puzzling and stupid questions when I was faced with a puzzle of my own to which his fanciful notions and requests frequently provided a catchword and the impetus for a solution ... I sensed that he, too, had been sent to me, that from him, too, came back whatever I gave him, in double measure; he, too, was a leader for me --or at least a guidepost. (Hesse, p. 103).

So it is, in the end, Knauer who is the angel. Once again, Sinclair proves an unreliable narrator. And, if Knauer's path is that of the angels, what does this say of the path of Demian?

As with Beatrice, so with Knauer, the blessing offered to Sinclair is based, as it should be according to Christian doctrine, on love: with Beatrice romantic love, with Knauer a fraternal or paternal love. Knauer seems deliberately crafted to awake pity and sympathy in Sinclair. Knauer seems to invite Sinclair to take him under his wing like an older brother. That this might have been Sinclair's salvation is suggested by the observation that the house in which he finds Knauer is just like the house in which he found Kromer (Hesse, p. 101). He is back at square one; just as, in the Medieval Christian legend, the cross of crucifixion was made from the wood of the tree of good and evil, and Calvary was on the site of the Garden of Eden (28). Amends might now be made, all that proceeded from that first mistake might be cancelled out. He is being offered, as it were, a fresh start. But Sinclair loses the opportunity. He takes no interest in helping another. He is beyond love. He brushes Knauer off.

Later Knauer slipped unnoticed out of my life. We never came into conflict with each other; there was no reason to. (Hesse, p. 103)

As the saying goes, the opposite of love is not hate. It is indifference.

Asked for help, Sinclair says, "I can't tell you anything, Knauer. We can't help anybody else. No one helped me either" (Hesse, p. 99). This is an obvious lie, and alerts us once again that Sinclair is an unreliable narrator. Sinclair has hardly taken a step without the help of some "master." This, not incidentally, makes all his talk about following the urges of his true self ironic. Demian saves Sinclair from Kromer. As soon as he has brushed off Pistorius as of no more interest, Sinclair writes "A leader has left me. I am enveloped in darkness. I cannot take another step alone. Help me." (Hesse, pp. 109-10). And the claim that no one can help another comes within a page of Sinclair's acknowledging Pistorius's help with the words "I remembered what Pistorius had told me. But much as I agreed with his ideas I could not pass them on ..." (Hesse, p. 98).

For the purposes of our morality play, if Beatrice is Love, and Beck the Call to Repentance, then Knauer, as true Gnosis, represents something like Reason. As is conventional in the morality play, here the various faculties of man are called or appear in turn to aid the hero in his quest for salvation.

Pistorius, who appears the chapter before but figures prominently in the "Jacob" chapter, may also be an angel with whom Sinclair wrestles. Certainly, he seems named for a human faculty. His name seems to be a Latin masculine formed from the Greek "*pistis*," "faith"; as if Hesse is hinting at "*pistis*" plain. So our parade of helpers continues: first Repentance, then Love, then Reason or Knowledge, now Faith, each of them pulling fruitlessly against the initial devil's bargain.

Pistorius tells Sinclair at one point, in a seeming offhand way, that he might encounter angels at any time:

"You wouldn't consider all the bipeds you pass on the street human beings simply because they walk upright and carry their young in their bellies nine months! It is obvious how many of them are fish or sheep, worms or angels, how many are ants, how many are bees!" (Hesse, p. 89).

Unless it is a knowing aside to the audience, the reference to angels here is anomalous. All the other cited beings are animal, subhuman, unflattering.

So, given the two candidates Demian and Pistorius, it seems it is Pistorius who speaks in the voice of angels. Demian, interestingly, does not appear in the

“Jacob Wrestling” chapter, perhaps another deliberate though subtle clue to his identity. He is not an angel. He is something very different from an angel.

The first encounter between Sinclair and Pistorius is indeed, as the passage about Jacob would suggest, rather like a verbal wrestling match, with Sinclair seeking a blessing.

He gave me a look as though he wanted to shoo me away ...  
 “What on earth are you staring at? Is there something you want?” ... (Hesse, p. 83).

Freedman is convinced that Pistorius represents Hesse’s Jungian analyst, Josef Lang (Freedman, p. 191). However, the details of the character suggest more strongly Hesse himself. Like Hesse, Pistorius is the son of a preacher. Like Hesse, he is a dropout from seminary. Like Hesse at the time of writing, he is middle-aged. Like Hesse, he is an artist. Like Hesse, he is suspected by his parents of being mad (29). Like Hesse, and apparently unlike Sinclair, he is Protestant (30).

Pistorius is not in rebellion against religion, even if Sinclair is. His religion, as expressed, seems well within the bounds of orthodox Christianity, if not Protestantism, but for the quirk of referring to the Deity as Abraxas -- and this, given his pedantic nature, may be mere technique, a matter of humoring his junior. He does not say, “The true God is Abraxas,” but “our new religion, for which we have chosen the name Abraxas...” (Hesse, p. 94). It is, then, to him only a random detail, only a name. On the other hand,

Everything he played was full of faith, surrender, and devotion. Yet not devout after the fashion of churchgoers and pastors, devout the way pilgrims and mendicants were in the Middle Ages, devout with that unconditional surrender to a universal feeling that transcends all confessions. (Hesse, p. 83)

In other words, he is devout in a classically Christian way. And more religious than others, not less so.

“Oh, yes, each and every religion is beautiful; religion is soul, no matter whether you take part in Christian communion or make a pilgrimage to Mecca.” (Hesse, p. 93).

Hesse speaks of himself in other works in distinctly Pistorian terms, as “the friend of ... old books and religions.” (*A Guest at the Spa*, quoted in Freedman, p. 246).

This is wildly different from the teaching of Demian that Sinclair cites much later: “All of these faiths and teachings seemed to us [who bore the mark] already dead and useless.” (Hesse, p. 123)

Although an artist, Pistorius does not believe in art for art's sake: "I find it nauseating to be crazy about music," he tells his new fan (Hesse, p. 84). Presumably he sees his music as a religious expression; after religion, all else is secondary.

Sinclair asks him the same question he tries on Demian: aren't some things, like murder, intrinsically evil? And this time he gets an answer: "Instead of crucifying yourself or someone else you can drink wine from a chalice and contemplate the mystery of the sacrifice" (Hesse, p. 95). Ironically, Sinclair thinks this response is similar to Demian's words on the subject (Hesse, p. 97-8). In fact, they are very different. Sinclair's comment merely serves to alert us to this, and to the fact that Sinclair is unreliable as a narrator.

For the reference here is plainly to the Christian Eucharist: Pistorius is advocating religion in general and it seems Christian ritual in particular as the solution to Sinclair's quandary, albeit he talks also of the need for some "new" religion. He says at one point,

"If worst came to worst, I might become a Catholic, but a Protestant pastor --no! The few genuine believers -- I do know a few -- prefer the literal interpretation..." (Hesse, p. 94).

This is no rejection of Christianity, and it need not be read even as a rejection of Protestant Christianity. If Sinclair is, as seems to be intended (by his attendance at a confirmation class--see note 30), a Catholic, Pistorius may mean, as a shrewd teacher, merely to encourage Sinclair's own religious allegiances.

Pistorius may also here be expressing Hesse's own view. Hesse does seem to have moved closer to the Catholic side of the Christian spectrum as he grew older. In 1939, he was prepared to say "As a church, as form, as tradition, as a power that both creates and preserves culture, Catholic Christianity is vastly superior to the Protestant type." (letter, Ziolkowski, *Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 237).

It is conventionally said that the novel is based on Hesse's experiences under Jungian analysis. Ziolkowski calls it a "direct product" (*The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 89). This is Jung's own proud claim as well (Ziolkowski, p. 11, p. 126); it is denied, in a sense, by Hesse, who claimed Jung "did not supply him with anything new" (Ziolkowski, p. 11). If true, however, it does not necessarily imply that Hesse or his book endorses Jungianism. Hesse entered psychoanalysis with the Jungian Josef Lang in 1916, at the urging of his physician, due to the state of his mental health, not out of personal interest (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 9). After the experience, he had much to say that is critical of Jungian analysis.

While the doctrine of Abraxas expressed in the novel does not fit that of the Gnostics, it does seem to fit the thinking of Jung at about this time. Gilles Quispel states that the connection between *Demian* and Jung's privately published work *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* "must be obvious to everyone who has read both works." (31). Jung refers to the Gnostic God as "Good and evil united in the flame" (*Sermo 4*; in Segal, p. 188). "From the sun he draweth the *summum bonum*; from the devil the *infinum malum*: but from Abraxas LIFE, altogether indefinite, the mother of good and evil" (*Sermo 3*, p. 186). "Abraxas begetteth truth and lying, good and evil, light and darkness" (*Sermo 3*, p. 187). There is certainly much that is Demian-like in these statements.

Like Sinclair, Jung calls for self-expression throughout his writings, for "individuation" or "the striving after your own being" (*Sermo 1*, p. 185). And, Jung reports in his autobiography later, he had a vision of the coming First World War very much like that of Sinclair in the present novel (32). *Septem Sermones* was the product of a semi-psychotic period in Jung's life circa 1913-1916, first privately circulated at the latter date (33). *Demian* was written in 1917, following a Jungian psychoanalysis in that year (Freedman, p. 184; Noll, , p. 234; Ziolkowski, p. 89). The parallels are far too great to be coincidental.

Jung got Gnosticism wrong; as Segal points out, "Gnosticism advocates the opposite of Jungian psychology" (p. 25). Whether Hesse knew this is not in the end material. But it is possible to suspect the novel deliberately lampoons Jung's beliefs. If so, it is doubly satisfying to discover that Jung loved the novel and claimed he had inspired it (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 11). What a triumph of irony!

There are some clues to Hesse's opinion of Jung's prospects for salvation. Hesse and his original Jungian analyst, Josef Lang, "remained friends for life" (Freedman, p. 187), but, significantly, not as analyst and analysand. Rather, according to Hesse biographer Freedman, "gradually their relationship was reversed and the analyst took on more and more the role of his patient's disciple" (p. 187). Ball, his first biographer, saw no such gradual shift: from the beginning, "Hesse contributed even more to the interviews than he received" (34).

Hesse's mental state does not seem to have been helped much, in his own estimation, by analysis (Freedman, p. 189, p. 348). Through the twenties and thirties he publicly criticized psychoanalysis at least in its effect on the artist (Freedman, pp. 207-8, p. 352). Dissent was clear even as early as 1918, a year after his initial sessions, in the essay "Artists and Psychoanalysis." "The poet," he writes here, "revealed himself as the representative of a special kind of thinking that actually ran counter to analytic-psychological thought." (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 12). Hesse wrote this even before *Demian* was published. In *Siddhartha*, soon after, he turned overtly against the Jungian goal, for to Buddha, he said, "the saved soul must struggle away from the error of individuation" (Freedman, p. 232).

This “skepticism” towards psychoanalysis (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 10) remains pronounced over the years. In 1921, after analysis with Jung himself, Hesse observed, “For analysts, a genuine relationship to art is unattainable; they lack the organ for it” (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 11). There is a dry passage in *Journey to the East* (1932) which may give his final word, on psychology and on moral relativism. “It is possible that the practitioners and psychologists who attribute all human action to egoistic desires are right; I cannot indeed see that a man who serves a cause all his life, who neglects his pleasures and well-being, and sacrifices himself for anything at all, really acts in the same way as a man who traffics in slaves or deals in munitions and squanders the proceeds on a life of pleasure. But no doubt I should immediately get the worst of it and be beaten in an argument with such a psychologist, for psychologists are, of course, people who always win. As far as I am concerned, they may be right.” (35). In a letter, Hesse writes a friend, “pain is pain and ... nature has its limits. Only when other people are in pain and can’t manage any more, the psychologists smile ironically.” (Freedman, p. 307).

Demian speaks of morality as being purely relative, arbitrary -- a construct, to use the currently fashionable term. Pistorius, like Hesse, does not concede this: “You told me,” he said, “that you love music because it is amoral. That’s all right with me. But in that case you can’t allow yourself to be a moralist either ...” (Hesse, p. 92). He allows the point for the sake of argument, it seems. Pressed, the “amorality” he is prepared to endorse is strikingly similar to that of St. Paul and of the New Testament: “You aren’t allowed to be afraid of anything, you can’t consider prohibited anything that the soul desires.” (Hesse, p. 95). Not, importantly, the self or the will -- the soul. Just so St. Paul:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other... But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:16-8)

But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit. (Romans 7:6).

And so St. Peter, several times, in Acts: “What God has made clean, you have no right to call profane.” (Acts 10:15, 11:9).

The scene when Pistorius first invites Sinclair up to his room seems a thematic statement.

Once I was startled. My companion threw a piece of resin into the embers: a slim flame shot up and I recognized the bird with the yellow sparrow hawk's head (Hesse, p. 87).

Is Sinclair watching his own soul cast into the fires of hell? Is this a premonition, a message from the Angel Pistorius or from Sinclair's own conscience? At the very least, it is a foreshadowing of a piece with Demian's metaphor of the moth. And it is interesting here to note Plotinus's comment that the Gnostics feared fire above all things (36). They saw the end of the world as a universal conflagration (Rudolph, p. 196). As the incident happens soon after Sinclair has spoken of Abraxas, the Gnostic God, this seems intended by Pistorius, and/or Hesse, as an evil omen or warning of damnation.

Although Sinclair remains unaware of it, Pistorius seems to be ironically weaning him away from the Demianic doctrine. Perhaps countering the obsession with self, he suggests:

We always define the limits of our personality too narrowly. In general, we count as part of our personality only that which we can recognize as being an individual trait or as diverging from the norm. But we consist of everything the world consists of, each of us ... we bear everything in our soul that once was alive in the souls of men (Hesse, pp. 88-9).

By this doctrine, following one's will, as Demian advises, is pointless. There is no longer any self.

Later, Pistorius argues "And now you will realize how little 'individuality' your soul has in its deepest reaches." (Hesse, p. 90).

He seems to be nudging Sinclair away from his preoccupation with self again when he says "A lonely religion isn't right either. There has to be a community" (Hesse, p. 94).

The meaning of the sparrow hawk is not obvious. Ziolkowski believes the egg symbol is from J.J. Bachofen, a Swiss scholar of comparative religions, and comes to him in turn from "Roman antiquity" (*The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 111). But to Bachofen, the egg is the image, and "symbolizes the two poles of the world—the 'light' and the 'dark.'" (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 114). Hesse focuses instead on the bird. The egg only appears in one version of Hesse's symbol, and is vague, indefinite: "perhaps a flower or a basket or a nest,

or a treetop” (Hesse, p. 74). Moreover, if the egg represents a unity of opposites, then Hesse’s image, of a bird breaking the egg to emerge, suggests the polarities being split apart, not drawn together. This is in direct contradiction to the stated goal of Sinclair and of the bird, which seeks “Abraxas,” defined as a unity of opposites. Again, this seems another clue set by Hesse that the superficial reading of the book is untenable.

The world egg is a symbol known to Gnosis and cited by Hippolytus (37). But to the Gnostics its opening represented creation and the fall from Godhead, not liberation; nor is there any tradition of a hawk emerging from it. So, once again, Hesse’s treatment suggests there is something wrong here, something going on that contradicts what appears on the surface.

The bird seems also to represent Sinclair’s own soul. It is first found over the door to his home, as if his heraldic emblem (Hesse, p. 23). Sinclair dreams of it bursting from inside him.

When I had swallowed it, I felt to my horror that the heraldic bird was coming to life inside me, had begun to swell up and devour me from within ... (Hesse, p. 74).

Elsewhere he identifies himself with the bird with the words: “... all of them helped me to form myself, all of them helped to peel off layers of skin, to break eggshells, and after each blow I lifted my head a little higher, a little more freely, until my yellow bird pushed its beautiful raptor’s head out of the shattered shell of the terrestrial globe.” (Hesse, pp. 89-90).

The use of a bird to represent spirit would be conventional: witness the Holy Spirit, traditionally shown as a dove. The hawk specifically was used by the Egyptians as an image of the *ba*-soul (38). It seems to have been known to the Gnostics as a soul-image; Rudolph indeed notes “the importance of Egypt in the history of Gnosis”(39). It is quite possible, as well, that the Egyptian *ba*-soul was known directly to Hesse at this time. It is most familiar to the West from one poem, “The Dispute between a Man and His Ba.” The relevant papyrus was kept in Hesse’s time in Berlin, and it was translated into German in 1896 (40). Hesse’s grandfather, the celebrated Orientalist, might well have had it or references to it in his library.

If this is the significance of the sparrow hawk, then Sinclair’s vision of it leaving the world egg, exiting his body, and his sending it to Demian, are also darkly allusive. It again suggests Sinclair’s death as the essential event of the novel, for that is what the leaving of the soul means. The *ba*, apparently, flies one to heaven at death. So an epitaph from the Old Kingdom reads:

Grown are his falcon wings,  
 Plumes of the holy hawk;  
 His *ba* has brought him,  
 His magic has equipped him (41)

Accordingly, to lose one's *ba* before death would be horrifying to any right-thinking Egyptian. This supplies the entire narrative thrust of the ancient poem:

Angered by his complaints, his *ba* threatens to leave him. This threat fills the man with horror, for to be abandoned by his *ba* would mean total annihilation, instead of the resurrection and immortal bliss that he envisages. (Lichtheim, p. 163).

Emil Sinclair has lost his *ba*. He has, moreover, symbolically, given his soul to another in advance of death, in the act of mailing his sketch of the falcon to Demian. How much more symbolic this is if Max Demian is the devil.

Doubly dark, and doubly ironic, then, Frau Eva's later comment:

"You never made Max happier than with this picture [of the sparrow hawk bursting out of the world egg]," she said thoughtfully. "And me, too. We were waiting for you and when the painting came we knew that you were on your way." (Hesse, p. 119)

This surely suggests some sort of pact, some sort of promise, represented by the hawk. A contract, in which the hawk represents the deliverable. Emil Sinclair has sold his soul to the devil.

Later still, Demian seems to confirm that the flight of the yellow sparrow hawk is to be read as a bad omen. Sinclair reports seeing his hawk in the outer world:

"It was yellow and gigantic, and it flew off into the blue-black clouds."

Demian heaved a great sigh. (Hesse, p. 130).

If Hesse does not know the Egyptian *ba*, he may know its alchemical descendent. The hawk, with its golden head, may be the alchemical eagle of the sun, representing quicksilver and, in spiritual terms, the "vital spirit," that subtle power which unites the individual soul with the body and the corporeal world as a whole" (42). This significance of the eagle continues in such late alchemical texts as *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz*, published in German in 1616 (43). The meaning is essentially the same as for the Egyptian *ba*: the hawk is the human *anima* or soul. The significance of losing this hawk would be

exactly the same as in the Egyptian example; it is the animal soul, and its departure would mean death. Moreover, this golden eagle seems to have passed into alchemy from Gnosticism (44).

It is not necessary to assume that Hesse knew of either the Egyptian *ba* or the Gnostic/alchemical eagle, although his use of it in a Gnostic context surely suggests the latter. These references at the very least demonstrate the consistency of the symbol in Western culture.

Hesse certainly understood the symbol in this sense. This is clear from his comment on the death of his own father at about this time: "The rope is torn. The bird is free." (Hesse, "Zum Gedächtnis," quoted by Freedman, p. 183).

Pistorius seems to warn of the danger of letting the sparrow hawk fly off, confirming again that it is something like the Egyptian *ba* or the alchemical eagle:

"The impetus that makes you fly is our great human possession. Everybody has it. It is the feeling of being linked with the roots of power (45), but one soon becomes afraid of this feeling. It's damned dangerous! ... Lacking that [an 'air bladder'], you would be drawn up to the heights, powerless--which is what happens to madmen." (Hesse, p. 90)

In this odd passage, Pistorius claims that Sinclair is able to control his flight in his dreams because he has developed an "air bladder" like those of fishes (Hesse, p. 90): "it has existed for thousands of years." (Hesse, p. 90). Perfect nonsense, on the face of it; air bladders in fish have been around for millions, not thousands, of years, and a new physical organ is hardly needed to achieve something in one's dreams. Even if it were, the air bladder would not suffice. For swimming, yes. Most fish, however, do not fly, and puffing them up with air would not help them to.

Nonsense, that is, unless you read Demian here as elsewhere as Christian allegory: the fish is an early Christian symbol, thousands, not millions, of years old in this sense. And air or breath is, in both Latin and Greek, the term used as the standard Christian word for soul (Gk *pneuma*, Latin *spiritus*). Pistorius's air bladder is perhaps the Spirit that, in the Christian tradition, descends at Pentecost, made possible by the sacrifice of Christ, *ichthus*, the fish (Tresidder, , p. 83).

Like Hesse (Freedman, p. 36), Pistorius is a dropout from seminary. Like Hesse, Pistorius's father is a pastor. If we read Pistorius as Hesse's alter ego, the tossing of the resin in the fire may also give the theme of the present book as a whole: a warning to Everyman, to all of us as Emil Sinclairs. This too, explains the need for allegory and for irony: if we are on the wrong path, Hesse means to catch us

up with his protagonist, get us convinced or half convinced by Demian's nonsense ethic, then show us with a final shock where this path leads: to hellfire.

Disreputable urges, Hesse's Pistorius seems to say, can be worked out or countered in the art and rituals of religion-- or perhaps not worked out or sublimated in the Freudian sense, but rather vanquished and alchemically transformed.

But such faith, like love, is not enough for Sinclair:

There was too much didacticism in what he said ... All of this seemed to me ... not of vital importance; there was something vaguely pedagogical about it ... (Hesse, p. 105)

Pistorius is a teacher. Sinclair is no student.

“Pistorius,” I said suddenly in a fit of malice that both surprised and frightened me. “...What you're telling me there is all so--so damned antiquarian.” (Hesse, p. 105).

Sinclair has already mailed the heraldic bird to Demian: he has already given his soul away. He has ample time and opportunity to apologize or to make up with Pistorius, who, in the Christian way an angel might, turns the other cheek.

How much I wished then that he become enraged, defend himself, and berate me! ... By accepting this blow so quietly, from me, his impudent and ungrateful pupil, by keeping silent and admitting that I had been right ... he made me detest myself ... (Hesse, p. 106).

This sounds like a conscious echo of St. Paul:

Repay no one evil for evil ... if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. (Romans 12:17-20, NKJV)

The Christian manner of Pistorius's leaving, again, seems in deliberate contrast to Demian, who believes instead in revenge at any price. Demian practices extravagantly in order to beat a Japanese associate in a boxing match, because “There's a very slight humiliation for which I have to pay him back” (Hesse, p. 121). The qualifier “very slight” seems to be there purely to highlight the centrality of revenge to Demian's ethic.

As Pistorius represents religion and the sublime, art, Sinclair on breaking with him also expressly breaks with religion and art. He muses that “I did not exist to

write poems, to preach or to paint, neither I nor anyone else. ... Each man had only one genuine vocation--to find the way to himself." (Hesse, p. 108).

Sinclair accordingly returns to the orbit of Demian--who is now preaching a social, apocalyptic gospel:

"The real spirit will come from the knowledge that separate individuals have of one another and for a time it will transform the world" (p. 115).

The otherwise bold, assertive phrase includes an odd qualifier, "for a time." Why only "for a time"-- as if the change will itself be annulled and things be restored to their previous condition?

The term "for a time" is a very Biblical one, a stock phrase found in apocalypses. Accordingly, it has an ominous, foreboding sound. Can Demian be referring to the Christian Apocalypse proper, which predicts a rule of the Antichrist, a Satanic figure, to precede the just reign of God?

And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another ... [of the fourth beast] and dominion was given to it ... And as I looked, the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. As for the other beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time... (Daniel 7:3-12)

For forty two months the beast was allowed to mouth its boasts and blasphemies and to do whatever it wanted; and it mouthed its blasphemies against God, against his name, his heavenly Tent and all those who are sheltered there. It was allowed to make war against the saints and conquer them, and given power over every race, people, language and nation; and all people of the world will worship it... (Rev. 12:5-8)

Indeed, this "spirit of the age" is described by Demian precisely in the Biblical terms, as a beast:

The soul of Europe is a beast that has remained fettered for an infinitely long time. And when it's free, its first movements won't be the gentlest ... (Hesse, p. 124)

The beast that is fettered in the Biblical account, of course, is the devil, the Antichrist, the great serpent Leviathan:

And the angels that did not keep their proper domain ... He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. (NKJV: Jude 6. Compare 2 Peter 2:4).

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years ... But after these things he must be released for a little while." (NKJV: Rev. 20: 1-3, C.f. Isaiah 27:1).

Demian's and Sinclair's concern with "the soul of Europe," as in the passage quoted above, runs directly counter to Hesse's own expressed beliefs. "I believe not in Europe," he wrote in 1917, the same year he wrote this comment of Demian's, "but only in humanity: in a kingdom of the soul on earth in which all peoples participate and for whose most noble expression we are indebted to Asia." (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 35). Gnosticism may have come from Asia, although others say Egypt; Jungian psychology certainly does not; Christianity certainly does.

As the novel begins with the Garden of Eden, the beginning of Every Man, so it ends with the Apocalypse, the end of time -- as a complete morality play or miracle play cycle would.

But not before Sinclair is given one more chance at salvation. Eden is alluded to again in the house of Demian's mother.

The Demian home is described as "a garden by a river." (Hesse, p. 116) Just like the garden where the apples are stolen; and just like Eden in the Bible, from which four rivers flow. The house is hidden "behind tall, wet trees" (Hesse, p. 118). There even seems a visual echo of the forbidden fruit in the sandbag Demian has suspended from some tree for his boxing practice (Hesse, p. 121).

And, of course, the woman of the house is Eva, Eve (46). The reference is made explicitly by Sinclair himself, who says "The name fits her perfectly. She is like a universal mother" (Hesse, p. 121).

Indeed; Eve was not just the mother of mankind, but also the mother of sin. And, in fact, the association of sin with a female figure is far stronger in Gnosticism than in Christianity. At least in the Syrian-Egyptian schools, according to Rudolph, "If we fix attention upon the ... primary principle of the fall into the lower regions, we can ... find ... a female being represented" (Rudolph, p. 71-2). This figure is identified with Eve (Rudolph, p. 97). She is called the "mother of all" (Rudolph, p. 294, 336).

It is perhaps meaningful that Frau Eva never actually says that Eva is her name; only that "a very few close friends call me [that]..." (Hesse, p. 121). Demian

pauses a little, as if doing a double take, when Sinclair first uses this name for his mother (Hesse, p. 121). She may have other names. She may transcend her present identity. She may be a symbol, a goddess.

Sinclair, in dream, suggests this:

I called it mother and knelt down in front of it in tears. I called it my beloved and had a premonition of its ripe all-fulfilling kiss [note the irony here in light of the novel's ending chaste, non-sexual kiss]. I called it devil and whore, vampire and murderer. (Hesse, p. 81)

I stood before it and began to freeze inside from the exertion. ... I called it mother, called it whore and slut, called it my beloved, called it Abraxas. (Hesse, p. 100)

If the female figure in Sinclair's painting has been identified on the one hand as mother, as Eve, universal mother and mother of sin, then his repeatedly calling it slut and whore, equally, seems to identify it with the Whore of Babylon, an image of evil appearing in the Apocalypse (Rev. 17:1 ff).

When Sinclair is killed (if we assume that he is indeed killed) on a field in Flanders, he sees in the clouds a "huge city" which is swallowed up by a giant image of Frau Eva. She then, a goddess, "cowered on the ground, the mark luminous on her forehead." (Hesse, p. 139)

This seems to identify Frau Eva quite plainly as the Whore of Babylon:

And the woman that you saw is the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18)

... and on her forehead was written a name of mystery: 'Babylon the great, mother of harlots and of earth's abominations.' (Rev. 17:5).

Like Frau Eva, this Mother of Harlots, the Whore of Revelations, is a widow (Rev. 18:7).

Demian suggests that his mother is more than human. Reporting the coming war, he observes of Frau Eva "We don't have to worry about her. She is safe, safer than anyone else in the world today" (Hesse, p. 136). It is hard to understand why this should be so, unless she is, by nature, immortal.

Given the references to Abraxas and Gnosticism, Pistis Sophia may be another name for the being formerly known as Frau Eva. Pistis Sophia, or Achamoth, according to the Gnostics, was a female demigod or Aeon who, by seeking to create on her own account without reference to God, produced the evil physical

world (“Gnosis,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*; Rudolph, pp. 72-3). She is, by the Gnostics, explicitly identified with Eve (Rudolph, p. 97).

The vision Sinclair sees in the Flemish sky is indeed in two ways reminiscent of Pistis Sophia specifically. First, the cloud goddess’s forehead sprouts forth stars (Hesse, p. 139), a possible reference to Pistis Sophia as the creator of the planets and the subplanetary realm. And she is in anguish, her countenance “twisted with pain,” (Hesse, p. 139) as is the goddess in the *Pistis Sophia*, largely a long lament in her voice.

In the Gnostic legend, she falls due to desire (*Pistis Sophia*, Ch. 32, ll. 1 ff; Tertullian, Appendix, Chapter 4; cf. Rudolph, p. 72, 81-2). One of her titles is “the Lustful One.” (“Gnosis,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*). As in Buddhism, to Gnostics desire was the root of all evil. Most especially, sexual desire (*eros*) is the cause of death (Rudolph, pp. 71-2).

Tellingly, desire is just what Frau Eva coaches in Sinclair.

“Once you are able to make your request in such a way that you will be quite certain of its fulfillment, then the fulfillment will come ...” (Hesse, p. 126).

“Love must have the strength to become certain within itself. Then it ceases merely to be attracted and begins to attract ... Once it begins to attract me, I will come. I will not make a gift of myself, I must be won.” (Hesse, p. 126).

When Frau Eva refers to love, she does not mean a giving love, a Christian *agape*; it is not the love represented by Beatrice. She means lust and the urge to possess. She makes this plain when, in her tale of successful love, she notes, “He had loved and found himself. But most people love to lose themselves.” (Hesse, p. 127). The latter sounds like the Christian virtue, not the former: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

The tale Frau Eva tells here to illustrate her teaching seems oddly discouraging:

... she told me about a youth who had fallen in love with a planet. He stood by the sea, stretched out his arms and prayed to the planet, dreamed of it ... And at the height of his longing he leaped into the emptiness toward the planet, but at the instant of leaping ‘it’s impossible’ flashed once more through his mind. There he lay on the shore, shattered... (Hesse, p. 126).

The stated moral is to have “strength of faith in the fulfillment of ... love.” (Hesse, p. 126).

But contrast this with Demian's story of the moth:

If for example, a night-moth were to concentrate its will on flying to a star or some equally unattainable object, it wouldn't succeed. Only-- it wouldn't try in the first place ... (Hesse, p. 47).

Both teachings cannot be true; they contradict one another. The result is to suggest that Sinclair is being led to the fate he actually does meet at the end of the book, that of being "shattered": like a moth drawn to the flame. And the reference to being in thrall to a planet is doubly ominous in a Gnostic context. For the Gnostics, the planets were symbols of evil, the archons, rulers of the fallen world, keeping men enslaved in the tyranny of time (Rudolph, pp. 67, 88).

It is indeed as Sinclair is practicing his lust that the trumpets of the Apocalypse sound. He is trying to summon Frau Eva with the sheer strength of his desire when Demian brings the fateful message of war (Hesse, p. 134). He has been misled; heightened will brings not fulfillment in love, but death in war.

In the Gnostic system, as in Demian, the Aeon Achamoth or Pistis Sophia has a son. He is the evil and terrifying Demiurge, ruler of the material world ("Gnosis," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; Rudolph, p. 78). "Demiurge" sounds close enough to "Demian" to suspect that this, too, is no coincidence. The name can be seen as a combination of "demiurge" and "daemon."

Nevertheless, the present identity of Pistis Sophia as Frau Eve suggests some chance at restitution even at this late date. Indeed, the mother of sin and her demon son are not the only beings present. There are representatives of various world religions in the garden (Hesse, p. 123). Sinclair seems in particular to subtly emphasize the presence of a "disciple of Count Tolstoy," oddly referring to him twice within two paragraphs (Hesse, p. 123). Later he singles him out for mention again (Hesse, p. 133). Unless this is a subtle hint of Hesse's own affiliations, it is awkward, redundant writing.

The teachings of Tolstoy are, essentially, the traditional Christian message, with an especially strong ethical component influenced by Kant.

He who does good will know the truth, and he who knows the truth will be liberated from evil and from death. For anyone who errs becomes the slave of his error (48).

Given this, and given Tolstoy's elaborate personal repentance of his past life (as detailed famously in his *Confession*) this otherwise oddly repeated reference to Tolstoy may represent again the Christian opportunity of repentance for sin, for the purposes of our morality play. Tolstoy may be Sinclair's last angel.

Tolstoy had in fact long been a personal model for Hesse (Freedman, p. 123).

Since 1906, Hesse had been influenced by a local (originally Hungarian-German—Freedman, p. 134) figure, Gustav Gräser, who seems to have been, like the anonymous character in the book, a disciple of the Russian writer (Freedman, pp. 134-5). It is the testimony of Hesse's biographer that "*Demian* was written at a time when Hesse evidently renewed some of his contacts with the 'guru' Gustav Gräser" (Freedman, p. 192); "most letters [between the two] that have been preserved are dated from 1917 onwards" (Freedman, p. 192), *Demian* having been written in that year and published in 1919. This seems, then, to have been the path Hesse chose for himself as the best one, defying the fate he foresaw for his book's protagonist.

How and how deeply Gräser influenced Hesse is debatable, as is, indeed, how deeply Jung and Lang did. His close friend Ludwig Finckh claims, however, that when Hesse encountered the religious figure he "caught fire," (Freedman, p. 134). It seems also to be the testimony of the author's son, Heiner, that Gräser was deeply important to Hesse the elder (Freedman, p. 402). Hesse's biographer Freedman even suggests that Gräser is perhaps the model for *Demian* (Freedman, p. 192). However, the two characters are in fact almost polar opposites. *Demian* is a wealthy man; Gräser, on the verge of success as an artist, like Tolstoy, destroyed his work and gave away all his possessions (Freedman, p. 134). *Demian* is a military officer and a reasonably willing participant in the war; Gräser, like Tolstoy, was a notorious pacifist and anti-war activist (Freedman, p. 192). Hesse seems to have been induced by Gräser to take some rather more dramatic actions than Jung or Lang were ever able to inspire, including living naked in the Swiss mountains (Freedman, pp. 136-7). It is also symbolic of Hesse's own conclusions that at the time that *Demian* was being published, he left Bern and German Switzerland permanently for Italian and Catholic Montagnola (Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 12). This was Gräser's theatre of operations (Freedman, p. 134), as Zurich was Jung's.

Another clue that seems to point in the same direction is this offhand comment regarding the religious studies of Frau Eva's circle: "we became acquainted with the wonderful thousand-headed tangle of gods from prehistory to the dawn of the Christian conversion" (Hesse, p. 123). This makes Christianity seem the crown and end of all religious speculation, which should be anomalous in a group seeking new religious directions for Europe at the turn of this century. And the conclusion of their studies is given again, soon after, as "Europe had conquered the whole world only to lose her own soul." (p. 123). This points emphatically to a return to Christianity, being an exact quote from Jesus of Nazareth:

For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (NKJV: Matthew 16:26).

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (NKJV: Mark 8:36-7)

This is no call of some new religion, much less a declaration of a brave new world that no longer needs religion. It is a call to repent and return to Christianity, for all of Europe, for all of us Sinclairs, for all the youth of Hesse's time.

Sinclair, by this point, however, seems so far along the path to perdition that he barely notices such other options. He cleaves to Eva/Sophia and to the notion of being superior to other men.

We in the inner circle listened but accepted none of these teachings as anything but metaphors. We, who bore the mark, felt no anxiety about the shape the future was to take. All of these faiths and teachings seemed to us already dead and useless ... (Hesse, p. 123).

The images of Apocalypse grow more urgent.

It is as Sinclair is practicing his desire, his self-will, his lust, that Demian arrives on horseback to announce the advent of war. "He was very pale" (Hesse, p. 135). "The pale rider," proverbially, is Death; Death being one of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse.

When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, 'Come!' And I saw, and behold, a pale horse, and its rider's name was Death, and Hell followed with him. (Rev. 6:7-8)

Later, Eva observes cryptically that it was somehow necessary for Demian, and not herself, to answer this summons: "You know why I didn't come myself." (Hesse, p. 137). This stage whisper is left unexplained, as if a dropped reference to the Biblical allusion. "These things were done so that scripture should be fulfilled," as the Bible often formulaically explains.

Demian further reveals, in the manner of a guilty secret, that he is an officer in the German reserves. This makes him, in fact, literally an "archon," an earthly commander, and so a personification of evil in Gnostic terms (49).

And so we are left with Sinclair in hell.

Even if you accept Gnostic principles *and* buy the premise that Demian preaches real Gnosticism, it still looks as though Sinclair is in hell, in which the Gnostics fervently believed (Rudolph, p. 184).

Gnostic salvation is not merely individual redemption of each human soul; it is a cosmic process. It is the return of all things to what they were before the flaw in the sphere of the Aeons brought matter into existence and imprisoned some part of the Divine Light into the evil Hyle. This setting free of the light sparks is the process of salvation, when all light shall have left Hyle, it will be burnt up, destroyed, or be a sort of everlasting hell for the Hylicoi. (“Gnosticism,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*).

In Christian or in Gnostic Apocalypse, some part of humanity will perish, and some part will go on to build the new world, the City of God. Up to this point, Sinclair and his “inner circle” with the mark of Cain have seen themselves as the builders of the new. But, just before his death (given again that you accept our claim that it is Sinclair who dies at the end of the book, not Demian), Sinclair has a different revelation. He sees the common soldiers, the herd of ordinary people he had scorned, and he observes, “they were the clay of which the future could be shaped” (Hesse, p. 138). The unspoken implication is that Sinclair, who has separated himself from and contrasted himself with them, is not. He is Hylicoi.

Yet he has one last chance at salvation, it seems, even now. The path he takes away from the battlefield is suggestive: the direction emphasized is down, and wherever he goes seems to be covered in darkness. These are typical iconographic elements of the Christian hell. And of the Gnostic hell too:

“he will seize that man and cast him down from heaven into the abyss and he will be confined in a cramped dark place. He will not be able to turn or move because of the great depth of Tartaros and the grievous suffering of the underworld ...”(50).

But at one point Sinclair finds himself lying “in a stable, on straw” (Hesse, p. 139). Surely, again, for a preacher’s son like Hesse, there must be a deliberate reference to the Christ Child here, who was born in a stable, on the straw of a manger (Luke 2:7,12).

At just this point, Sinclair reports, “something inside me wanted to keep going and I was drawn on more forcefully than ever” (Hesse, p. 139). Note this: he is not being carried, as he would if this were merely a case of a war wound. He is moving by his own internal energies, as a spirit or a ghost could, and his internal

energies are again rejecting the intimated salvation. This is an important point of Christian doctrine: one in the end chooses one's damnation, judges oneself, rather than being condemned by God. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* currently states it, citing the Councils of Orange and Trent:

God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a willful turning away from God ... is necessary, and persistence in it until the end (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Para. 1037).

The present pope, in a recent talk, emphasized the point:

Hell is not a punishment imposed externally by God, but the condition resulting from attitudes and actions which people adopt in this life... hell is the state of those who freely and definitively separate themselves from God, the source of all life and joy... So eternal damnation is not God's work but is actually our own doing. (51)

And so, as with the English *Everyman*, this morality play ends with the transit of the soul to the next life. But in this case, like the bad thief, true to his destiny to the end, Sinclair chooses damnation.

This moral men may have in mind;  
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,  
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,...  
For after death amends may no man make,  
For then mercy and pity do him forsake.  
If his reckoning be not clear when he do come,  
God will say--*ite maledicti in igneum aeternum*.  
(*Everyman*, ll.902-915).

## Endnotes

- (1) *Grolier's Encyclopedia*, entry on Hermann Hesse, on-line edition, entry dated 1992. <http://go.grolier.com/>
- (2) Ralph Freedman, *Hermann Hesse: Pilgrim of Crisis*. (N.Y.: Fromm International, 1978) p. 7, p. 191.
- (3) Theodore Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 140.
- (4) Kathryn Byrnes, "A Summary of Hermann Hesse's *Demian*," Winter, 1998. <http://www.mcl.ucsb.edu/hesse/works/demian.pdf>. June 17, 1999.
- (5) Hajo Smit-Bread-Holland, on HESSE-L, March 1, 1999, 21:09:53. HESSE-L@UCSBVM.UCSB.EDU.
- (6) Lewis Crofts, on *ibid*, March 1, 1999, 19:57:02.
- (7) Hermann Hesse, *Demian* (N.Y.: Bantam, 1966), trans. Michael Roloff and Michael Lebeck, p. 140. All citations from "Hesse" refer to this edition.

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- (8) St. Robert Bellarmine, *Hell and Its Torments* (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1990; originally written circa 1574), p. 30.
- (9) Rev. William T. McNiff, O.S.C., *The Beginnings of English Literature* (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1961), p. 122.
- (10) Kemp Malone and Albert C. Baugh, *The Middle Ages*, vol. 1 of *A Literary History of England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 283.
- (11) Hesse knew both French (Freedman, p. 90) and English (p. 148) by this time. I discover that my etymology for Sinclair's name has already been half-suggested by J.C. Middleton, in an unpublished dissertation cited by Ziolkowski (p. 144). Middleton, however, sees "sin" and "clair" as opposites, and so, the name as merely an expression of the union of opposites in Sinclair's nature. The obvious objection to this interpretation of the English and French roots: "sin" and "plain" or "clear" are not opposites at all.
- (12) Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels, Including the Fallen Angels* (N.Y.: Free Press, 1967), p. 228.
- (13) Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*. Vol. 1. Trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 8.
- (14) Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, trans. Rev. Richard Stothert and Albert H. Newnam, 22, in *St. Augustin: The Writings against the Manichaeans and against the Donatists*. Ed. Philip Schaff. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989)
- (15) Standard formulations of the Decalogue are at Deuteronomy 5:6-21 and Exodus 20:2-17.
- (16) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, 162, 7, Reply to Objection 4, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Benzinger Brothers/New Advent, 1947/1996). <http://www.catholic.org/newadvent/summa/316207.htm> (February 20, 1999).
- (17) Aquinas II-II, 162, 7, Objection 5 and Reply; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, iii, 7.
- (18) Hesse, *Narcissus and Goldmund*, trans. Ursule Molinaro. NY: Bantam/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971, p. 30.
- (19) Dante, *The Divine Comedy, Vol. 1: Inferno*, trans. Mark Musa (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1984), Canto 1, ll. 1-3.
- (20) Tertullian cites the title as used by Basilides; the name's significance is said to lie in the fact that, numerologically, it represents the number 365, the days of the year. Tertullian, *Against All Heresies*, Appendix, 1. [http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/library/ter\\_appendix.htm](http://www.webcom.com/gnosis/library/ter_appendix.htm) (February 18, 1999). Rudolph identifies Abraxas instead with the God of the Jews, Yahweh; *op. cit.*, p. 311. However, this is based apparently on more recent scholarship; the identity as the Good God is more probably what Hesse would have been familiar with.
- (21) "Gnosticism," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. <http://www.knight.org/advent/cathen/06529a.htm> (December 17, 1998). Tertullian, *op. cit.*, Appendix, 2. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, I 31,1. Precisely what the Cainites believed concerning Cain's guilt and the murder of Abel is not clear from the sources. Cain is identified in the Berlin papyrus, the one most probably known to Hesse, with the sun (39, 4-44, 18; quoted in Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* [San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1987], p. 27). Given that the Gnostics saw the visible world as evil, this would make Cain still a negative figure, not a Gnostic hero. Elsewhere in the same papyrus, Cain is identified with the "unrighteous god," Jave. 62, 13f; Rudolph, p. 105.
- (22) Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1987), p. 27. Other works on Gnosticism circulating in Germany at the time include Hilgenfeld's *Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums* (1884) and Bousset's *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (1907). Rudolph, p. 32.
- (23) Richard Noll, *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 67.
- (24) Robert A. Segal. *The Gnostic Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 3.
- (25) *Pistis Sophia*, trans. Carl Schmidt and Violet MacDermott, Book 1, Chapter 41, ll. 3-6. <http://www.gnosis.org/library/psoph1.htm> (February 2, 1999). Note that the *Pistis Sophia* had been translated into German by Schmidt in 1892, and so would probably

- have been accessible to Hesse—"Gnosis," *Catholic Encyclopedia*. Rudolph cites a publication in 1905, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- (26) "Gnosticism," *Catholic Encyclopedia*. G.R.S. Mead, in his introduction to the *Pistis Sophia*, notes similarly, "Our Gnostics unquestionably believed in a high magic." G.R.S. Mead, *Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel* (1921), <http://www.webcom.com/~gnosis/library/psophint.htm> (December 12, 1998).
- (27) There were, certainly, Gnostic sects who advocated libertinism as a way to show their disdain for the material world. However, our only evidence for them comes from their adversaries, the Church Fathers, and even Irenaeus apparently doubts that they put their theories into practice on this score. Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 254. "The overwhelming majority of the sources give unequivocal support to this aspect [asceticism] of gnostic morality" (*ibid.*, p. 257). The (Gnostic) Gospel of Philip proclaims "the free does not sin. For he who sins is the slave of sin." (*ibid.*, p. 264).
- (28) An element of this legend appears, for example, in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, circa 1260. See de Voragine, p. 277.
- (29) Hesse, p. 86; Hesse was sent by his parents to an asylum at age fourteen or so (Freedman, p. 47).
- (30) I base this assumption on Sinclair's attendance, with Demian, at a Confirmation class (Hesse, p. 43, 44, 54). Lutherans do not recognize the Sacrament of Confirmation. Most South Germans are Catholic, not Lutheran, and the confirmation class is expressly represented as a matter of social expectation, of keeping up with the group. Demian later refers disparagingly to what "the priests and teachers" have told them (Hesse, p. 52). Pistorius is, on the other hand, the son of a pastor (Hesse, p. 86) and hence must be Protestant.
- (31) "Jung and Gnosis," in Robert A. Segal, *The Gnostic Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 222.
- (32) George Boeree, *Introduction to C.G. Jung*, Jung WebBiography 1, <http://www.jungindex.net/intro/index3.html> (February 20, 1999)
- (33) Segal, *op. cit.* p. 181; Richard Noll, *The Jung Cult* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 242.
- (34) Ziolkowski, *The Novels of Hermann Hesse*, p. 126, quoting Hugo Ball, *Hermann Hesse, Sein Leben und sein Werk* (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1947), p. 158.
- (35) Hermann Hesse, *Journey to the East* (Noonday/Farrar, Straus & Giroux: N.Y., 1956), trans. Hilda Rosner, p. 61.
- (36) Plotinus, *Enneads* II, 9, 13, quoted in Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
- (37) Hippolytus, *Refutatio* VII 20-27; Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 312.
- (38) Jack Tresidder, *Dictionary of Symbols* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1998), p. 77.
- (39) Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Rudolph describes Gnosis elsewhere as a syncretism of the beliefs of the lands conquered by Alexander; p. 54.
- (40) Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Volume 1: The Old and Middle Kingdoms*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 163.
- (41) "The King Joins the Stars," translated in Lichtheim, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- (42) Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), p. 140.
- (43) Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 60, 64.
- (44) Hippolytus indeed mentions a similar hawk or falcon as a Gnostic symbol; it attracts gold to itself. This tallies well with Hesse's sparrow hawk's golden head. Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, V, 16, in Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. V*, trans. Rev. J.H. MacMahon, rev. Rev. A Cleveland Cox (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), p. 68.
- (45) *ba* can be translated as "force" or "power" (Lichtheim, p. 33). It seems to be a concept similar to the Greek/Roman *anima* and the Chinese *qi*.
- (46) It is perhaps significant that one Gnostic document was named "The Gospel of Eva." It was an apocalypse. It is referred to by Epiphanius (*Adv. Haer.*, xxv) and Philastrus
- (47) *Corpus Hermeticum* I 18, quoted by Rudolph, p. 108.
- (48) Leo Tolstoy, *The Gospel*, ed. and trans. David Patterson (Montgomery: University of

Alabama Press, 1992), p.89.

- (49) Re archons as evil, see, e.g., Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 58, p. 67. Re Demian being an archon, see Hesse, p. 135.
- (50) *Nag Hammadi* Codex II, 7, 142.27-143.7, quoted in Rudolph, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
- (51) Quoted by Jude Webber, in "Pope John Paul II: Hell is not a physical place," *Detroit News*, electronic version, Wednesday, July 28, 1999.  
<http://detnews.com/1999/religion/9907/29/07280231.htm> (August 23, 1999)

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Demian most closely links Hesse's life and art in its account of its hero's young years. A glance at Hesse's childhood in a strict Pietist household, where he felt isolated as a rebel, suggests that with Demian he sought to exorcise a demon in himself. Sinclair's family in a small-town home with a fair but strict father, a protective and overpowering mother, and two prim sisters reflects Hesse's own childhood in the Black Forest town of Calw. This was also the region where the young writer went to boarding school and later to the university. Like Hesse's, Sinclair (Hesse, p. 3). In other words, he is speaking of man's ultimate fate, as in a morality play. Sinclair will die, and his story will not end with death. He is indeed killed by something like a bullet; he is not, for that, "done away with." We should in no way be surprised if Hesse here borrows from an old and traditional form, such as the morality play. This, too, is characteristic of him. In "Demian seeks, as morality or miracle plays commonly did, to tell the story of man's fate, from beginning to the end, Eden to Apocalypse, "from the Creation to the Last Judgement" (McNiff, p. 121). Hesse Page, also sees salvation, not damnation: Sinclair realizes at this moment that Demian is his salvation. Demian leaves Sinclair with a kiss from Frau Eva, and he leaves him with the assurance that he would forever be a part of him. Sinclair had found himself, his search was over, he had been saved. (4) Most readers seem to find the ending, especially, difficult; one writer on the Hesse email list notes "I still feel this book is unfinished, the ending comes unnatural to me."