Demian Study Guide

Demian by Hermann Hesse

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BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

Demian: The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth (1919) is a semi-autobiographical novel by German writer Hermann Hesse. *Demian* was published in the aftermath of World War I and grew out of Hesse's experience of psychoanalysis with Carl Jung and J. B. Lang.

The novel is set in Germany in the decade preceding World War I, roughly 1904 to 1914. Narrated by Emil Sinclair, *Demian* describes Sinclair's personal inward journey to a genuine understanding of his deep inner self. The character Max Demian, Sinclair's schoolmate, helps to open Sinclair's mind to unconventional ways of thinking that ultimately lead to self-discovery. Through his years of grade school, high school, and university education, Sinclair encounters several personal teachers who lead him toward a revelation of true self-knowledge. The novel ends during World War I, when both young men have been wounded in battle.

Demian applies concepts of Jungian psychoanalysis in a strongly symbolic narrative drawing from Christian theology, Nietzschean philosophy, and Eastern mysticism. *Demian* struck a chord with Germany's postwar youth, who felt it expressed a common search for personal identity. Hesse's novel also resonated with a generation of youth in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s.

Author Biography

Hermann Hesse was born July 2, 1877, in Calw, Württemberg, Germany. Both of his parents had been missionaries in the East Indies, and the young Hesse grew up in a Protestant family characterized by piety and religious devotion based on biblical study. Hesse was also freely exposed to Eastern philosophy and religion, as his maternal grandfather studied Indian culture. Hesse attended the Protestant Theological Seminary in Maulbronn, Germany, but found it unbearable and ran away. He then attended the Gymnasium in Cannstadt, Germany, from which he was later expelled. He eventually found steady employment in a bookshop. His first novel, *Peter Camenzind* (1904) is about a failed writer. The book was such a popular success that Hesse could afford to leave his job and become a full-time writer. His struggles with artistic aspiration are further expressed in the novels *Gertrud* (1910) and *Rosshalde* (1914).

When Germany engaged in the conflict that became World War I (1914-1918), Hesse moved to Switzerland, from where he openly opposed the war and German nationalism. Nonetheless, he aided German soldiers by serving as editor of a journal for German prisoners of war. Between the years 1916 and 1917, Hesse went through a personal crisis as a result of illness and death in his family. His personal distress lead him to seek psychoanalysis with both Carl Jung and his disciple, J. B. Lang. The novel *Demian* (1919) is based on his process of self-discovery through analysis. Hesse subtitled *Demian* "The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth," and published it under the pseudonym Emil Sinclair. However, when the novel was granted a prize for first-time novelists, Hesse admitted to being the author and returned the prize, since this was not his first novel.

In 1919 Hesse became a permanent resident of Switzerland, obtaining Swiss citizenship in 1924. His novel *Siddhartha* (1922) is based on the early life of Buddha, inspired by Hesse's travels in India before World War I. *Der Steppenwolf* (1927; translated as *Steppenwolf*) is about a middle-aged man struggling with spiritual yearnings and the desire to pursue artistic creation. *Das Glasperlenspiel* (1943; translated as *Magister Ludi: The Glass Bead Game*) is set in the future and takes place in an elite community of highly gifted intellectuals. In 1946 Hesse was honored with the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Hesse was married three times, the first two marriages ending in divorce. He had three children from his first marriage. Hesse died of a brain hemorrhage in 1962, at the age of eighty-five.

Plot Summary

Grammar School

The story of Emil Sinclair's youth, as narrated in *Demian*, begins when Sinclair is ten years old and attending a grammar school in the small German town where he lives with his parents and two sisters. Sinclair describes a formative childhood experience when he lied to another child, Franz Kromer, bragging he had stolen apples from a local farmer. Although Sinclair is innocent of any crime, Kromer blackmails him by threatening to report to the police or to the farmer that Sinclair has stolen the apples. For weeks afterwards, Kromer threatens Sinclair into providing him with whatever money he can pilfer from his house, as well as other items. Sinclair's life becomes dominated by his fear of Kromer and his fear of being found guilty by his parents or other authorities. Sinclair comes to feel that he has committed a sin, and that he now belongs to the evil, or "dark," realm of the world, rather than the good, "light" realm in which he was brought up.

In the second chapter, Max Demian, a new boy in Sinclair's school who is a few years older than he, begins to take an interest in Sinclair. Demian exposes Sinclair to unconventional interpretations of their religious studies. Eventually, Sinclair indicates to Demian that Kromer has been troubling him, and Demian manages to scare Kromer into leaving Sinclair alone. Although Sinclair is relieved to be rid of Kromer, he does not thank Demian or attempt to befriend him because he is ashamed that he did not solve the problem on his own.

In the third chapter, several years have passed and Sinclair and Demian develop a friendship. Though Demian is rumored to be atheist or Jewish, he decides to attend religious confirmation classes in the same year as Sinclair. Sinclair begins to feel a bond with Demian, who sits near Sinclair in confirmation class and frequently offers unconventional interpretations of the biblical stories they are being taught. Although he is disturbed by Demian's unconventional ideas, Sinclair feels that his mind is being opened by Demian's influence, and he begins to question his religious faith. However, both boys complete their confirmation.

Boarding School

In the fourth chapter, Sinclair is sent away to a boarding school, and does not see Demian for a long time. At boarding school Sinclair is not wellliked by the other boys. He becomes depressed and filled with self-hatred. One night, when Sinclair is out walking alone, Alfons Beck, the oldest boy in the school, runs into him on the street and invites him to go for a drink. At the bar Sinclair gets drunk for the first time in his life. The next morning he is filled with self-disgust and depression, feeling that he is a complete degenerate. After this event Sinclair enters a phase of debauchery and earns a reputation at school for drunkenness and unruliness. During this time he feels that he

belongs completely to the dark world of sin, and feels terrible about himself. He becomes a poor student and is on the verge of expulsion from school for his bad behavior. Although he is a "ringleader" among the rebellious students, Sinclair feels lonely and friendless. He also feels resentful toward Demian, to whom he has written twice from school, but from whom he has received no reply.

Sinclair's life changes after he encounters a young woman in a park, whom he admires from afar but never approaches. He becomes infatuated with the young woman, whom he thinks of as Beatrice, as he does not know her real name. Sinclair's feeling of worship for Beatrice has a profound affect on his life. He stops drinking and almost overnight ceases his unruly and rebellious behavior. He becomes contemplative and studious, feeling he has entered the world of light and good once again. During this period Sinclair begins to paint images from his dreams. He paints a face that appeared to him in a dream, which looks to him like both Beatrice and Demian. He later paints an image from a dream of a bird emerging from a shell, and sends the painting to Demian.

In the fifth chapter, Sinclair, still in boarding school, continues to have many symbolic dreams and to paint. He understands his desire to "try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self," but is unsure how to achieve this end. He begins to sit outside of a particular church to listen to the music of the organist within. One day the organist, whose name is Pistorius, invites Sinclair to come inside the church and listen. Pistorius then invites Sinclair back to his room, where they discuss religious and philosophical ideas. Pistorius explains that he believes in the god called Abraxas, who represents both the light and the dark elements of the world.

Sinclair spends many evenings with Pistorius, during which time he is exposed to a broad range of ideas and beliefs drawn from many different religions and philosophies throughout the world. Pistorius becomes Sinclair's role model and encourages him to find his true self through discussing his dreams and ideas. One of the younger boys in school, Knauer, seeks out Sinclair for guidance in his own path of self-development. Sinclair explains to Knauer that he must come to terms with himself on his own in order to discover his own heart. Sinclair completes another painting of a face he saw in a dream. He comes to realize that the face is an image of his own "daemon," an "ideal and intensification" of his inner self. Shortly before graduating from school Sinclair finds himself criticizing Pistorius for the first time. This conflict ends their friendship, but Sinclair realizes that the break with his "guide" is a positive step in the direction of taking his own path in life.

University

In the sixth chapter, Sinclair realizes that his painting representing his inner self resembles the face of Demian's mother. He becomes filled with the desire to find her, but has no idea where she lives. He enrolls in the University of H., where he is disappointed by his courses. One day he runs into Demian, whom he has not seen in years, on the street in the town where he is attending university. Demian can see that Sinclair has become more advanced in the discovery of his inner self, and the two

young men discuss religion, philosophy, and the politics and society of Europe. Demian invites Sinclair home to meet his mother, Frau Eva, whom Sinclair has only seen from a distance in the past. As soon as Sinclair sees Demian's mother, he realizes that she is certainly the face from his dream. She and Demian show Sinclair that they have hung his painting of the bird emerging from its egg in their home. Sinclair spends much of his time at their house discussing his ideas with their circle of friends, who engage in a variety of open-minded ideas about philosophy, religion, and society. Sinclair develops a special relationship with Frau Eva, and they often discuss his dreams and his desire to discover his inner self.

War

By the final chapter, Sinclair has achieved a sense of inner peace and harmony with himself. Soon, however, World War I breaks out, and both Sinclair and Demian fight in the army. When Sinclair is injured in the war, he awakens in a hospital bed to discover that Demian, also injured, is lying in the bed next to him. The next morning Sinclair discovers that Demian has died. Sinclair realizes that Demian has always been the key to his "daemon," his true inner self.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Emil Sinclair, a grown man, reflects on his coming of age in the early 1900s. His story begins when he is ten years old. In an effort to impress neighborhood bully Franz Kromer, Sinclair invents a story about stealing some apples. Kromer then demands money from Sinclair in return for not telling the merchant he claims to have stolen from. Sinclair doesn't have enough money, so he is subjected to stealing, running errands and being humiliated by Kromer to pay the debt.

Until he runs afoul of Kromer, Sinclair describes his world as a realm of love and lightness with wisdom, duty and words from the Bible. Now, he is experiencing firsthand the forbidden realm of darkness, replete with scandal, drunkards who beat their wives and workmen who tell ghost stories. At times these two worlds overlap, which confuses him all the more. Sinclair hopes to be clear-sighted and unspoiled, but is drawn to the seamier side of life. He fantasizes about enjoying the forbidden, then returning to his family as a prodigal son.

He is also afraid of the effect Kromer is having on him and of the growing distance he feels between himself and his family. Sinclair contemplates killing himself, confessing all to his father or being saved by his mother. He is physically ill at times, but continues to reject the ministrations of his family.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Demian is a novel about the intellectual and emotional development of protagonist and narrator Emil Sinclair. It is set in Germany before and during World War I, about 1904 to 1914. When it begins, Sinclair, 10, is beginning to sense that there is more to learn than what his parents and teachers impart. He has come to view his world as divided into two realms, good and evil. As he sees these realms overlap, he begins to question what might be permissible for him. The first steps he takes in his exploration occur as a result of his interactions with Kromer, which cost him some of his innocence and some separation from his family.

The novel is largely autobiographical, and some of the details parallel Hermann Hesse's life quite closely. Hesse wrote the novel in 1917, and it was published under the pseudonym "Sinclair." Like Sinclair, Hesse wrestled with issues of faith and intellect and was a rebellious youth. Born in 1877 to a missionary family, Hesse initially followed the prescribed path and studied for the ministry. He abruptly left Maulbronn Seminary in 1891 and attempted suicide.

Deeply affected by WWI, Hesse was heavily involved in anti-war activities such as writing tracts and novels and editing newspapers for German prisoners of war. After his first marriage failed, he studied Freud, underwent analysis with Jung, and was a patient

in a sanatorium. Thereafter, he began to combine his skills as a writer with his interest in psychoanalysis to produce works of fiction such as *Demian*.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Sinclair meets Max Demian, the strange, poised son of a wealthy widow, who is several years older. Sinclair is distracted by Demian's bearing, which he describes as "that of a prince disguised among farm boys." Demian is a fascination to other students as well, who piece together a profile of him based on bits and pieces each has gleaned: Demian and his mother don't go to church. Demian is incredibly strong. Demian is intimate with girls and knows everything.

They share a class in which the story of Cain and Abel is told, and Demian's interpretation gives Sinclair a new perspective on Cain as a man marked not for shame but for distinction, perhaps even strength and nobility. Sinclair wonders if Demian is being blasphemous or if he defended Cain because he somehow identifies with him.

Demian calls Sinclair's attention to the sparrow hawk painted on the keystone above the Sinclair front door. Sinclair hadn't noticed it before, but studies it now because Demian finds it significant.

Sinclair continues to despair of ever freeing himself from Kromer. Demian witnesses a run-in between the two and seems to read Sinclair's thoughts about Kromer. He shocks Sinclair by suggesting he get rid of Kromer, perhaps by killing him. Later, after Kromer has stopped bothering Sinclair, Demian confesses that he has spoken to Kromer. Sinclair isn't grateful or even curious, just relieved. He then confesses what has been going on to his bewildered parents and is restored to the fold.

Months later, Sinclair asks his father about Demian's interpretation of Cain and Abel. His father says Demian's thoughts on Cain's mark of nobility are hardly original as the Cainites teach the same as doctrine. However, he calls it heresy.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Demian challenges Sinclair by presenting an unconventional way of looking at the biblical story of Cain and Abel. It is the first serious intellectual challenge ever presented to Sinclair's Christian beliefs. Sinclair isn't sure how he feels about these ideas even though they are at odds with what he has been taught by his family. He is beginning to separate himself from them.

Demian also shocks Sinclair by seeming to have supernatural powers. He demonstrates this by reading Sinclair's thoughts about Kromer. He then makes the outlandish suggestion that Sinclair get rid of his antagonist by killing him. Defeating Kromer in any way has not occurred to Sinclair, who is too absorbed by fear to think his way out of the situation. Instead, he hopes and prays for the help he thinks he needs. Not only does

Sinclair lack the maturity to process radical thought, he can't even decide whether Demian is serious or making fun of him.

Demian also points out the sparrow hawk to Sinclair, a symbol that will be repeated throughout the story. The bird represents a desire to break free, to be independent, to literally leave the nest in pursuit of his own life. That it appears first at Sinclair's boyhood home indicates that the desire has been with Sinclair from the beginning. Demian is simply recognizing this desire in him. Nevertheless, Sinclair isn't ready yet. After Demian has freed him from Kromer's grasp, Sinclair retreats to the security of his family and abandons his "savior."

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

It has been years since Sinclair and Demian have had any interaction, but they find themselves taking the same confirmation class. While Sinclair feels indebted to Demian, he isn't comfortable with him. Yet, during a lesson on Cain and Abel, their eyes meet and the link between them is re-established. Demian shares with Sinclair the secret to his ability to read thoughts. He shows Sinclair how to closely study other students and predict their behavior. He goes a step further and tells Sinclair that it is possible to will things to happen.

Sinclair feels torn between the beliefs and practices of his parents, whose lives were not unworthy or hypocritical, and the new ways of looking at the world that he is learning. Demian continues to encourage Sinclair to interpret religious stories more freely and with imagination. As an example, Demian says the repentant thief on Golgatha is not the one he would have for a friend. The other, who did not repent, had character and saw his destiny through until the end.

Sinclair finds his theory of two worlds – the good and the evil – resonates with Demian's thoughts of half a world presided over by God, the other half by the devil. Demian tells him he cannot suppress the second half once he has begun to think. Sinclair recognizes that these revolutionary thoughts are threatening the childhood he still clings to. Likewise, he sees his emerging sexuality as an enemy of his security. As confirmation approaches, Sinclair is increasingly ambivalent about the pledge he is to make to the church.

Demian appears to be in a trance one day during class and later explains to Sinclair the art of withdrawing into oneself. Sinclair attempts unsuccessfully to do the same. Sinclair's parents decide to send him to boarding school. Sinclair would like to share the news with Demian, who is away on a trip.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Sinclair has begun to mature, to rebel, to question. One of the catalysts is his own emerging and irrepressible sexuality. Thus, it is not surprising that he renews his friendship with Demian whom he has always viewed as more mature, self-assured and intelligent. He has decided that Demian might make a good guide on the road to self-discovery. As further evidence, Sinclair begins to emulate Demian, attempting to predict the behavior of others, to will things to happen and to withdraw into himself. Sinclair is lonely when Demian is away and he cannot reach him with important news.

However, Sinclair continues to feel torn between his family and his emerging self. He feels as if he has a foot in each of two separate worlds -- one good, one evil. The kinship he feels grows deeper after Demian shares a similar theory of half a world

presided over by God, the other half by the devil. Sinclair's theory, though, continues to struggle with incorporating both good and evil in himself, seen in his ambivalence to his approaching confirmation.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Sinclair is indifferent as he enters boarding school, finding it surprisingly easy to leave his family. He blames Demian for his lack of feeling and alternately longs to see him. He doesn't think he likes the man he is becoming, and he feels unworthy of anyone's love.

Sinclair meets Alfons Beck, the oldest boy in the boarding house, who takes him out for his first glass of wine. Sinclair opens up and enjoys talking for the first time in ages. In turn, Beck tells him about his exploits with girls and women. Sinclair enjoys himself thoroughly, but castigates himself the following day for his hangover and the revulsion he feels for his behavior. He feels further separated from his family. He continues this pattern of affirming his place in "the world of darkness" then suffering bouts of recrimination, loneliness and longing for love. His health declines. His grades suffer. His relationship with his father deteriorates. Christmas at home is a joyless affair.

Back at school, Sinclair fixates on a tall, slender, boyish woman in the park. He names her for Dante's Beatrice in a print he owns. He sacrifices his darker desires to transform himself into someone pure and noble, worthy of such a woman. He tries to paint a portrait of Beatrice. Instead what emerges is a woman whose face is ageless with masculine qualities. It resembles someone he knows and seems to be asking something of him. He realizes he has painted Demian or perhaps a woman he could love. He adds these words to the portrait, "Fate and temperament are two words for one and the same concept."

He misses Demian and recalls something Demian once told him: "It is good to realize that within us there is someone who knows everything." He dreams of Demian and the sparrow hawk above the door of his home. He paints a picture of the heraldic bird with half of its body stuck in a dark globe from which it is struggling to be free. He mails the painting to Demian at his former address.

Chapter 4 Analysis

Sinclair enters boarding school, confused and unsure of what he believes, and looking for direction. He finds that direction in the person of an older boy, Alfons Beck. It marks the beginning of a not-so-unusual rebellious streak for a boy living away from home for the first time.

Sinclair begins going out at night, drinking and carousing. He does resist one of the more popular activities among his new friends: he refuses to chat up the easy women they go to for sex. Sinclair yearns for love, and sees the two as separate quests. Thus, he fantasizes about a woman he sees in the park, making her his ideal, a woman he would love if only he were worthy. He calls her Beatrice, and she is an interesting combination of masculine and feminine features. His desire for her prompts a

repentance of sorts. He leaves his baser activities and seeks new and healthier forms of expression.

He paints a picture of Beatrice so that he can keep an image of his ideal ever before him almost like a religious icon. When he sees the painting is also of Demian, he realizes that he and Demian are joined by fate and that at some level he has always known it. It is also significant that in his dream about Demian, he also sees again the sparrow hawk, the symbol of his struggle for independence. This time, when he interprets the symbol in a painting, the heraldic bird is winning its struggle and freeing itself from a dark world. The painting is a message to Demian that he has reached a certain level of understanding but needs to make contact with his mentor.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Sinclair finds a note in a book on his desk with the words: "The bird fights its way out of the egg. The egg is the world. Who would be born must first destroy a world. The bird flies to God. That God's name is Abraxas." He knows that Demian has received the painting and interpreted it. Sinclair's teacher startles him by saying the name "Abraxas." He goes on to describe this godhead as one whose task is to unite godly and devilish elements.

Sinclair begins to day dream about a woman who seems to be a combination of his mother rand Demian. He is alternately ecstatic and horrified. He senses a link between this image and Abraxas. Other students have begun to treat Sinclair with respect, and he has discovered he can read people's thoughts as Demian once did.

On his walks through town, Sinclair hears entrancing organ music and follows it to a church. One evening he waits for the organist and follows him to a tavern. Sinclair tells Pistorius that he likes his music because it is "amoral" and asks if he knows about Abraxas. The organist is immediately energized.

Sinclair visits the organist's home and learns that he is the son of a respected pastor, who has left seminary in favor of intellectual pursuits and has fallen from favor with the family. He lights a fire, and in it, Sinclair thinks he sees the sparrow hawk. Pistorius tells him that people define their personalities by traits diverging from the norm. He tells him that just as bodies contain a genealogical table of evolution as far back as the fish, the soul contains everything ever alive in men – good and evil.

Pistorius also interprets one of Sinclair's flying dreams in which Sinclair regulates the height of his flight by holding or releasing his breath. Pistorius points out that fish have regulated their equilibrium with an air bladder for thousands of years.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Demian's note to Sinclair is an interpretation of his painting. He sees Sinclair's dark globe as an egg from which Sinclair is emerging. He knows that Sinclair is breaking ties with the belief system he inherited from his family. Demian's message acknowledges this and foreshadows the next stage in Sinclair's development. He mentions the god, Abraxas, who contains both divine and satanic elements, and happens to be the subject matter for the day's lecture. This is a god who seems to meld Sinclair's two worlds – the good one and the evil one. The concept excites him because it could provide a peaceful resolution to his struggle.

This theme of good vs. evil is a major one throughout the story and is derived from Friedrich Nietzsche's, Beyond Good and Evil, which encourages readers not to be

influenced by accepted notions of good and evil, but to adopt other means of measuring morality. Another Neitzschean idea, founded in the author's personal experience with therapy, is the importance of the will. Someone who has transcended morality can express his or her will, unhampered by concerns about what others will think. Clearly, Sinclair has always feared the judgment of others and sought acceptance instead.

Sinclair is still tormented by his struggle with good and evil as evidenced by his dreams and fantasies about a woman who combines maternal and erotic qualities. He perceives a link between this image, his mentor Demian and Abraxas. Sinclair has begun to acquire some of Demian's abilities such as reading people's thoughts, but he tells no one, not even his newest mentor, the organist Pistorius.

Hesse in the character Sinclair relates to Pistorius' religious upbringing, the break he has made with his family and his struggle to find his place in the world. Pistorius is able to teach Sinclair a great deal about himself and about Abraxas. He even volunteers much personal information about himself and his dreams of being a leader in a community of others who share their beliefs. Sinclair is also beginning to realize that the series of events he is experiencing are not accidental. He seems to be supplied with exactly what he needs when he needs it.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Pistorius, an eccentric, encourages Sinclair to maintain his self respect. He reassures him that Abraxas doesn't take exception to any of his thoughts, good or evil, but will leave him only if he becomes "blameless and normal." He says that Abraxas prohibits nothing the soul desires. Sinclair continues to dream of his beloved, but can't shake his guilt. He recalls the words of Jacob as he wrestled with an angel: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

Pistorius tells Sinclair that he still wants to be a priest, but one who lives among believers not one who converts others to his beliefs. The worship of Abraxas, he says, is still a fledgling religion in need of a community. He tells Sinclair that those who follow Abraxas will have a difficult time, that others will find them disturbing.

Another student, Knaurer, follows Sinclair home. He feels compelled to speak of white magic, a form of self control in which he visualizes a form in his head, then fills his body with it until he is firm as stone – something Sinclair imagines is like Demian's trancelike state. Knaurer seeks guidance from Sinclair, telling him about his struggle to suppress his sexuality. Sinclair responds in cavalier fashion. Knaurer is frustrated by Sinclair's lack of empathy.

During another fitful night, Demian takes a walk and is drawn to a dark, abandoned building where he finds Knaurer trying to commit suicide. He saves him, and relates the story of Jacob and the angel to his situation, telling him that they are human beings who create gods, struggle with them and they bless us. Knaurer begins to follow Sinclair like a puppy, asking questions for which Sinclair has no answers but often providing the impetus for a solution to something Sinclair has been puzzling. Sinclair feels Knaurer has been sent to him.

Sinclair and Pistorius study a Greek text about Abraxas and become so close they can send each other thoughts. Sinclair now imagines his painting is his ideal of himself, incorporating male and female, good and evil. Sinclair senses a shift in his relationship with Pistorius and deliberately hurts him by calling him antiquarian. Sinclair feels "the mark of Cain" on his forehead and realizes that every man has a purpose but cannot choose it, and that each has only one vocation, "to find the way to himself."

Pistorius acknowledges Sinclair's criticism that he is antiquarian and says for that reason he could never be a priest of the new religion. Sinclair feels lost without Pistorius as his guide. He writes on a piece of paper that he is in darkness and needs help. School ends and Sinclair begins to travel before beginning philosophy courses at university.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Sinclair still has much to learn and his interaction with Pistorius is particularly important in this regard. In Pistorius, Sinclair sees many of the qualities he wishes to emulate, but he has also begun to understand that he is outgrowing his mentor. Sinclair realizes that he is far more original, creative and aware. Ironically, it is not through Pistorius' encouragement, but this comparison that gives Sinclair the self-confidence that will enable him to break free of societal constraints.

As he has sought mentors, now Sinclair becomes so singled out by Knaurer, a classmate. At first, Sinclair feels that he has little to offer to the boy and tells him only that he needs to be comfortable with his desires. When Sinclair saves Knaurer from suicide, he explains the conflict he is feeling and sets him on his own path the way Demian did for him.

Sinclair becomes increasingly disappointed in Pistorius' limitations and correctly identifies his shortcomings. He is restless to move on. Pistorius recognizes that he can only teach Sinclair about old gods and ideas of the past. Their relationship ends as Sinclair finishes preparatory school. However, Sinclair is not ready to strike out on his own and wishes for help.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

During his vacation, Sinclair visits Demian's former home where the owner shows him a picture of Demian's mother. It is his dream image, the woman who bears the features of Sinclair's destiny. Throughout his travels, Sinclair thinks he catches glimpses of her. Sinclair begins university and is disappointed with everything. He reads Nietzsche and rejoices that one man had followed his destiny relentlessly.

On a walk through town, he listens to the music and laughter coming from bars and thinks it false community – flight to the herd for warmth. He begins to follow two men who are having a conversation about not following the herd and realizes the speaker is Demian. Demian joins him and says he's been expecting him and recognized him by the mark of Cain that has become more distinct. He adds that his mother will be pleased to know he is here. Demian talks of a coming conflict that will sweep away present ideals and Stone Age gods. He believes that what remains of their kind will gather and humanity and nature will prevail.

Sinclair wakes elated and sees the world as lovely again. He goes to Demian's house where he is pleased to see his painting of the sparrow hawk hanging in the hall. He sees Demian's mother, who recognizes him immediately. Sinclair tells her he feels he has been on his way his entire life and is now home. He is overcome and tearful. Eva tells him his fate will be just as he has dreamed if he remains constant. She directs him to the garden where he finds Demian practicing for a boxing match.

From that day forward, Sinclair has access to the house as a son or brother, but also as someone in love. Sinclair is confused by his desire for Eva. Sensing this, she tells him that he must be certain, that she must be won. Sinclair dreams she is an ocean into which he streams, that she is a star and he is another on his way to her. He tells her this dream and she urges him to make it come true.

Their circle includes astrologers, cabalists, and vegetarians – all of who represent the will of nature for a new order. As Cain was marked to arouse fear and hatred, they are marked to drive men to more dangerous reaches. Demian likens the changes to evolution, saying that when sea creatures were tossed onto land and land creatures into the sea, those that were ready to follow their destinies made the biological changes necessary to survive.

Sinclair visits one day to find Demian in a trance-like state. Eva seems tired and distant. In the stormy sky, Sinclair thinks he sees a sparrow hawk. He returns to the house and tells Demian who shares with him that he and his mother have had a presentiment that some dreadful, vast even will soon involve them.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Before entering the university, Sinclair visits Demian's old house where he sees a picture of Demian's mother. He realizes that she looks exactly like the portraits he has been painting. He has been supplied, again, with the next step. He knows she is the help he needs, and he begins to search for her.

Sinclair runs into Demian, who doesn't seem surprised to see him. Demian tells Sinclair that his mother will be very excited to see him. They meet the next day, and Eva seems to recognize him. They speak of the long journey he has undergone to arrive at this point. It is as if she has been following his progress in some way. Sinclair's desire for Eva confuses him, but is simply a part of his evolution. Eva encourages him to be certain and win her, but she is actually encouraging him to exercise his will that she be his. In order to be free, she knows he must pursue his soul's innermost desires. She is demanding that his will transcend whatever remnants of traditional morality he has retained. Only then will he be the man he should be and deserve her.

Sinclair has essentially rejected his Christian upbringing and societal mores and joined a family of "like thinkers," who are reshaping his view of the world and providing him with the kinship he has longed for. Demian and Sinclair have premonitions of evil. Sinclair shares with Eva an image of them both as stars; she is fixed and he is on his way to her; an image that is also a premonition and foreshadowing of what is to come. Sinclair's image of the sparrow hawk in the stormy sky is also a significant piece of imagery. He has broken free and is flying on his own, but towards turmoil.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Sinclair tries to use his thoughts to summon Eva, but Demian comes instead and tells him there will be a war with Russia, and they will be drafted. They have supper with Eva that night, and she tells Sinclair that she heard his call and now he knows that he can contact her whenever he needs someone. Demian goes to the front. Sinclair follows later, and Eva kisses him goodbye.

Sinclair has a vision one night while standing guard. He feels the presence of a master, a mentor, then sees a city in the clouds with millions of people and Eva as a goddess with sparkling stars in her hair. She twists in pain, cries out and thousands of stars spring from her forehead. One seeks out Sinclair. At the story's climax, he is shot.

Sinclair feels he is being drawn on towards something or someone, so he fights to stay alive on his transport to medical help. Finally, when he is bedded down in a long hall, he sees Demian lying next to him. Demian tells Sinclair he has to go, but that if he ever needs him against Kromer or something, he can call him and he will find him within. He tells him Eva has sent him a kiss and he kisses him. Sinclair awakes to find a stranger next to him.

Sinclair says when he climbs deep into himself "where the images of fate lie aslumber in the dark mirror," he sees himself now resembling his brother and master, Demian.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Sinclair's successful attempt to telepathically contact Eva further connects the pair. Knowing that he will never again truly be alone, Sinclair finds the confidence to strike out on his own. She tells him that he now knows how to call her, and whenever he does, she will send help.

Sinclair's image of shooting stars and Eva's painful cries reminds him of Eva's promise, and after he is wounded in battle, he feels the presence of someone he needs. It is Demian, also wounded in battle. Demian gives Sinclair the next step in his evolution by telling him that he needs his help, he simply has to search himself and he will find that Demian is within him. He brings up Kromer, the conflict that Sinclair had been in when they first met. It is an assurance that all was foretold and all is still unfolding as it should. Demian gives Sinclair a light kiss on the lips to remind him of Eva's love and presence, and then dies.

Demian has left Sinclair for the last time, but this time Sinclair is prepared to face the world alone. He is confident in his decision to fulfill the desires of his soul and he no longer needs the constant support of others. Sinclair's reference to the "images of fate… in the dark mirror" where he sees himself now resembling Demian is a

particularly poignant passage packed with meaning. A similar biblical passage, "through a mirror darkly," refers to seeing this life without much comprehension. The "images of fate" are those who have lived and died, and on the other side, see so much more than we do. Finally, Sinclair's resemblance to Demian recalls Demian's promise that he would be within Sinclair, and also, that Sinclair has finally succeeded in shaping a life like the one he had, at first, only emulated.

Characters

Beatrice

While in boarding school, Sinclair sees a young woman from a distance, walking in the park. He becomes infatuated with the woman, to whom he never speaks. He thinks of her as Beatrice, a reference to Dante, based on a painting he has seen of the fictional Beatrice. Sinclair describes Beatrice as "tall and slender, elegantly dressed," with "a touch of exuberance and boyishness in her face." Sinclair first sees her during his period of debauchery, when he is often drunk, failing in school, and in financial debt. The sight of Beatrice, however, sparks his imagination, inspiring him to reform his drunken, rebellious ways. He states that his thoughts of Beatrice have a "profound influence" on his life, inspiring him to turn away from the "dark," sinful side of life and strive for "purity and nobility." He becomes self-reflective, and starts painting images of Beatrice. To Sinclair, the figure of Beatrice is an object of worship; he says that her image "gave me access to a holy shrine," and "transformed me into a worshiper in a temple." Eventually the image of Beatrice fades, but Sinclair continues to live out the transformation he underwent as a result of her place in his imagination.

Alfons Beck

Alfons Beck in an older boy at Sinclair's boarding school who encounters Sinclair on the street one evening and takes him to a bar, where Sinclair gets drunk for the first time in his life. After this night Sinclair enters a period of debauchery, during which time he gains a reputation for excessive drinking and raucous, rebellious behavior.

Max Demian

Max Demian is the central influence in Sinclair's personal development. Sinclair first meets Demian in grade school, when Demian encourages him to question traditional interpretations of biblical stories. Demian saves Sinclair from being tormented by Franz Kromer through means which are never revealed, although it seems as if he threatened Kromer with physical harm. When Demian enrolls in the same confirmation course with Sinclair a few years later, the two boys become friends. Demian continues to express unconventional ideas about religion, which Sinclair finds intriguing yet disturbing. After leaving his home town to attend a boarding school, Sinclair loses touch with Demian. He encounters Demian only once during his high school years, while in his drunken phase, and is embarrassed by his own behavior, which is rude and a turnoff to his childhood friend.

When Sinclair experiences a personal transformation, the image of Demian continues to haunt him, although he has completely lost touch with him. Sinclair next encounters Demian while he is attending university. The two young men immediately revive their friendship, and Demian takes Sinclair home to meet his mother. Demian is a formative

influence on Sinclair's life because he is the first person to open Sinclair's mind to a questioning of traditional values and ideas. Demian also has a strong symbolic significance, as he represents the true, deep inner self which Sinclair strives to discover. As the novel ends, Demian has died in an army hospital after being injured in combat during World War I. Sinclair, however, understands that Demian has become one with his own deep self, and now represents his "daemon," or true inner self.

Frau Eva

Frau Eva is Demian's mother. As a schoolboy, Sinclair never meets Demian's mother, although the two boys are friends. While on vacation from his boarding school, Sinclair comes across a picture of Demian's mother, and recognizes hers as a face from one of his dreams. He becomes overwhelmed with the desire to meet her, but has no idea where she and Demian are living. When he moves to a new town and enters university, Sinclair encounters Demian walking down the street, and Demian brings Sinclair home to meet his mother. Sinclair immediately recognizes Frau Eva as the image from his dream. He subsequently has many conversations with Frau Eva which help him further along the path of discovering his inner self. Frau Eva symbolizes many elements of Sinclair's search for himself, representing a mother, a lover, and a figure of the feminine element of his own psyche. Critics have interpreted the symbolic significance of Frau Eva in a variety of ways, psychoanalytically, religiously, and philosophically. Frau Eva is one of the most important elements of Sinclair's search to find his inner heart.

Dr. Follens

Dr. Follens is a young assistant professor in one of Sinclair's courses while at boarding school. In the course of one lecture, Dr. Follens mentions the ancient concept of the god Abraxas, who represents both the dark and light elements of the world. Although the professor mentions Abraxas only as an aside to his lecture, the idea sparks Sinclair's imagination, and becomes a central element of his personal belief system.

Knauer

Knauer is a younger boy at Sinclair's boarding school who seeks out Sinclair in search of greater wisdom and insight. Knauer is a sort of young disciple of Sinclair, in the same manner in which Sinclair himself was a sort of disciple of Demian during his school days. Knauer expresses to Sinclair his suicidal despair, his desire for insight, and his urge to discuss deep religious and philosophical concerns. Sinclair tells Knauer that he cannot show the younger boy the way to his true inner self, that each person must discover on his own his "innermost heart" and purpose in life. Knauer clings to Sinclair, always asking questions and seeking spiritual guidance, which Sinclair insists he cannot provide. Sinclair later realizes that he had learned important lessons of his own from the questions and ideas brought to him by Knauer. Toward the end of Sinclair's stay at the boarding school, Knauer slips out of his life.

Franz Kromer

Franz Kromer is a boy in Sinclair's home town who has a significant impact on Sinclair's life when Sinclair is ten years old. Franz Kromer is a tough kid, the type with whom the sheltered Sinclair rarely played as a child. However, one day, Sinclair tries to impress Kromer by making up a story that he had stolen some apples from a local farmer. Kromer claims he knows the farmer whose apples were stolen, and threatens to hand Sinclair over to the police for his crime unless Sinclair pays him a sum of money. Over the next few weeks Kromer bullies Sinclair into stealing change from his own parents and offering other gifts to the older boy in fear of being reported for the fictional crime he had supposedly committed. Sinclair's life becomes completely dominated by Kromer's threats and demands. When Demian learns that Kromer is the source of Sinclair's troubles, he engages in an unspecified confrontation with Kromer, after which Kromer leaves Sinclair alone and never bothers him again.

Pistorius

Pistorius is one of the important influences on Sinclair's development. He is an organist at a church but does not himself conform to any conventional religion. Sinclair hears Pistorius's organ music while out walking, and often sits outside the church on the steps to listen to the music. Eventually Pistorius invites him into the church to listen. One evening he invites Sinclair home with him, up to his attic room, where they lie on the floor staring into the fire. Pistorius is an unconventional thinker, and exposes Sinclair to a wide range of religious and philosophical ideas. He teaches Sinclair about the god known as Abraxas, who represents both the dark and the light elements of the world. Sinclair spends many nights in discussion with Pistorius throughout the remainder of his boarding school days. Shortly before leaving school, Sinclair learns that he has outgrown his teacher; he finds himself criticizing Pistorius for the first time, an event which brings an end to their friendship.

Emil Sinclair

Emil Sinclair is the protagonist and narrator of *Demian*, which is subtitled, "The Story of Emil Sinclair's Youth." Emil is a semi-autobiographical figure based on the youth of Hermann Hesse, and is the result of Hesse's own experience of selfexploration through psychoanalysis. Sinclair tells the story of his personal development from age ten to approximately age twenty. He is influenced in his personal journey of self-discovery by a number of people he meets during this period, most significantly Max Demian, a fellow schoolboy. Sinclair describes his major formative experiences and friendships that aid in his inward journey. Demian opens Sinclair's mind by inviting him to question traditional interpretations of biblical stories. Sinclair is discomfited but intrigued by the unconventional ideas expressed by Demian.

Sinclair attends a boarding school in his high school years, during which he goes through several distinct phases of development. In his drunken, rebellious phase he

becomes an unruly and undisciplined student, with a reputation for drinking and carousing. This phase of self-loathing ends abruptly when he sees a young woman from afar, to whom he never speaks, but who he thinks of as Beatrice. She represents an image of almost religious perfection which inspires him to transform himself overnight into a sober, selfreflective, conscientious person. During this period, he begins to paint faces and images from his dreams. Sinclair's other major influence is Pistorius, a freethinker who spends many evenings with Sinclair discussing a broad range of religious and philosophical ideas.

While attending university, Sinclair encounters Demian, with whom he had lost touch, and Demian introduces him to his mother, Frau Eva. Sinclair regards Frau Eva as a dream-image representing a spiritual, psychological, and emotional ideal. He becomes part of a larger circle of openminded, freethinking people who congregate at the home of Frau Eva and Demian. Sinclair develops a clearer sense of his inner self and his own personal identity. When World War I breaks out, Sinclair becomes a soldier. The final step in his personal development comes when he finds that Demian himself has died. He then realizes that Demian represents his own inner "daemon," or true self, and resides within his own soul.

Sinclair's Father

Sinclair's father represents the good, "light," pious world of his family. After Sinclair feels he has entered the "dark" world associated with Franz Kromer, he feels not just distant, but actually superior to his father, as if he possesses knowledge his Father does not have. When Sinclair mentions to his father Demian's alternative interpretation of the biblical story of Cain and Abel, his father immediately dismisses it as incorrect. While Sinclair is at boarding school, his father writes him many times to express disapproval of the rebellious, drunken life he is leading. At one point, his father even comes to the school to threaten Sinclair with expulsion if he does not reform his unruly ways. After Sinclair makes the transformation from his period of unruliness to his period of striving for purity, his father's letters to him at school become more congenial. Sinclair's father is a symbol of the traditional way of thinking, from which Sinclair breaks away in order to develop his own ideas and personal identity.

Sinclair's Mother

Sinclair's mother represents the good, "light," pious world of his childhood family life. After Sinclair becomes involved with the "dark" world of Franz Kromer, he feels distanced from his mother. By the end of the novel, Demian's mother, Frau Eva, comes to represent Sinclair's true spiritual mother. While Frau Eva is extremely open-minded in her ideas about religion and philosophy, Sinclair's own mother is very traditional in her beliefs.

Sinclair's Sisters

Sinclair mentions his two sisters, but makes no distinction between them and does not name them. His sisters represent the good, "light," pious world of his childhood home. After his experience with Kromer, Sinclair feels distanced from his sisters because he no longer feels a part of their world of "light" and good.

Themes

Discovering the Inner Self & Formulating a Personal Identity

The central theme of *Demian* is the process of discovering a deep, true, inner self. The novel opens with a statement set off from the rest of the text: "I wanted only to try to live in accord with the promptings which came from my true self. Why was that so very difficult?" The novel then traces the difficult task of finding this true self in the face of societal pressures to conform. Sinclair encounters many obstacles in his quest for personal identity, including family, religion, and school. Demian is a significant early influence on Sinclair because he is the first person in Sinclair's life to invite a questioning attitude toward generally accepted ideas, such as the interpretation of certain biblical stories. When Sinclair is sent to boarding school, he loses touch with Demian, and, symbolically, with his inner self. He enters a phase of drunkenness in which any tendencies toward self-reflection are squelched. Only the sight of Beatrice, an idealized image of a woman he does not know, inspires Sinclair to continue on the path toward self-knowledge. By the time he has entered university Sinclair is well on his way toward a full realization of his personal identity and a full understanding of his inner self. When he meets Demian again after several years without contact, Sinclair is fully open to what Demian and Frau Eva, as well as their circle of friends, have to offer him in the way of defining his personal identity.

Dreams

The importance of dreams in achieving selfknowledge is a central theme throughout *Demian*. It is widely understood that *Demian* was written by Hesse to express his experience of personal insight gained through psychoanalysis. Hesse was analyzed by Lang, a disciple of Jung, who wrote extensively on the psychology of dreams. Hesse was also influenced by the writings of Sigmund Freud, and Freud's theory of dream psychology. Sinclair describes powerful and recurring dreams which help him gain insight into his true inner being. In particular, his dream of a bird emerging from a shell allows him to visualize his own inner urge to break away from societal norms in order to develop a sense of personal identity.

The Artistic Impulse

An important step in Sinclair's search for personal identity is the development of his artistic temperament. Inspired by the sight of Beatrice, Sinclair begins to express images from his dreams through painting. He at first tries painting Beatrice, and later paints the image of a face he saw in a dream. Painting becomes a process of expressing his inner being through the exploration of his dream images. His paintings thus ultimately symbolize his striving for a sense of wholeness through integrating all

the elements of his true inner self. Hesse often wrote about young men struggling with an artistic temperament in a society that threatened to stifle individuality and thwart creative impulses. Thus, an important element of Sinclair's personal identity is his desire to unleash his impulse toward artistic creation.

Style

Narrative Voice

Demian is written in the first-person narrative voice. Emil Sinclair is both the narrator and the protagonist of the story. Hesse's choice of first-person narration is central to *Demian*, because Sinclair is describing his own inward journey toward selfknowledge and the formulation of his personal identity. Critics have noted that *Demian* does not have a strong or complex plot, because the novel is concerned with a process of self-reflection rather than a series of external events. It has also been noted that Sinclair's recollection of significant childhood events, powerful dreams, and internal struggles resembles the process by which a patient expresses himself to a psychoanalyst.

Setting

Demian is set in Germany during the decade preceding World War I, the early years of the twentieth century. It is interesting to note that Hesse's own youth did not coincide with these events, as he grew up during the final decades of the nineteenth century and was some forty years old at the point in history when his protagonist is about twenty years old. The setting of *Demian* is significant because Hesse drew a parallel between the historical transformation of Europe and the personal transformation of a youth coming of age. Toward the end of the novel Sinclair discusses the fate of Europe with Demian and his circle of freethinking friends. He comes to feel that the impending war represents the birth pangs of a new Europe. Although Hesse was opposed to war, he felt that the war was necessary for Germany and all of Europe to be redefined. When the war begins, Demian and Sinclair are swept up in the atmosphere of excitement with which Germans first entered the war. They both become soldiers and are wounded in battle, although Demian dies and Sinclair lives. The setting of the war is significant to the novel in part because the generation of German readers□who felt that Hesse's novel spoke to their own experiences of war and their struggle for personal identity□had experienced combat directly.

Symbolism

Hesse makes strong use of symbolism in *Demian*. Sinclair describes many vivid and powerful dreams which are symbolic of his own personal struggles. A recurring symbol, which appears in his dreams and is then depicted in his painting, is that of a bird emerging from a giant egg, struggling to free itself from the shell in which it has been contained. This image symbolizes Sinclair's struggle to free himself from the emotional, religious, intellectual, and social restrictions of his family and conventional society. Sinclair sends his painting of the bird to Demian, and is moved when, years later, he finds that it hangs prominently in the house of Demian and his mother, Frau Eva. The personal freedom and self-determination symbolized by the bird's escape from the egg

are realized by Sinclair in the company and the home of these two influences. Another recurring symbol is the face he sees in dreams and then paints. Sinclair recognizes the face, but his sense of who it resembles changes. At various points he sees the face as Beatrice, as Demian, and as Frau Eva. Ultimately the face symbolizes Sinclair himself, whose identity incorporates elements of the important people in his life.

Historical Context

Germany: 1871-1918

Demian is set in Germany, beginning approximately ten years before the start of World War I. The period of German history from 1871 to 1918 is known as the era of the German Empire. The German Empire was formed in 1871 from the combination of Prussia and three other German states. The government was ruled by an emperor, but also had a constitution and an elected legislative body. In *Demian*, Sinclair's school years are set during the reign of the emperor (also called the Kaiser) William II, which lasted from 1888 (when Hesse was ten or eleven years old) until the end of World War I (1918). William II also served as king of Prussia (the largest of Germany's five states).

Germany in World War I

World War I (also known as the Great War, or the First World War) began in 1914, when a Serbian nationalist assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro- Hungarian Empire. The war that grew out of this conflict pitted the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey) against the Allies (France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, Japan, and the United States). The war was initially popular among German citizens, who rallied together in a rush of nationalist pride. However, as the war progressed, German citizens on the home-front suffered the consequences of severe food shortages which led to massive malnutrition as well as starvation.

The War ended in 1918 when the Central Powers suffered defeat at the hands of the Allies. The Armistice of 1918 was followed by the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-1920, during which the Treaty of Versailles was drafted and signed. The Treaty of Versailles outlined specific principles for the restructuring of relations between the nations involved in the conflict. This included the call for a restructuring of Europe to create several independent nation states from the former empires of Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia, and Turkey. The Treaty of Versailles also required extensive war reparations to be paid by Germany.

Germany in the Post-War Years

German soldiers returning from a war in which they were defeated came home to find widespread hunger, high unemployment rates, and outrageous rates of inflation. Over 11 million German men, about 18 percent of the population, had fought in the war effort, which resulted in some 2 million casualties. To make matters worse, a flu epidemic spread throughout Germany in the aftermath of the war. Civil discontent resulted in revolution, and in 1918 the emperor William II was forced to abdicate from the throne, making room for the formation of a new democratic German republic, unofficially known as the Weimar Republic. The Weimar Republic included a newly written constitution that

called for a popularly elected president and provided women the right to vote for the first time. The Weimar Republic lasted until Adolph Hitler rose to power in 1933.

In the 1920s, during the early years of the new Weimar Republic, the German economy suffered. The Treaty of Versailles, ending World War I after German defeat, required Germany to pay enormous war reparations. In addition, Germany had gone into massive debt from wartime expenditures. The consequences of these conditions, and Germany's response to them, resulted in massive inflation in the early 1920s, reaching its peak in 1923. In that year the German mark fell rapidly by the minute, rendering the amount of a life savings almost worthless. After this point the German government initiated reforms and policy changes which allowed the economy to recover.

Critical Overview

The reception of Hesse's work by critics, both in Germany and abroad, changed over the course of several distinct phases in his life, as well as after his death. His first novel, *Peter Camenzind*, was popularly received by German critics and readers. However, during World War I, Hesse's move to neutral Switzerland and his public denouncement of war and German nationalism caused the German public to regard him as a traitor to his nation, resulting in the denouncement of his writing by most Germany readers and critics.

Demian was first published in 1919, within a year after the end of World War I. In an attempt to evade his declining reputation in Germany, Hesse submitted *Demian* under the pseudonym Sinclair (the same name as the novel's protagonist and narrator). The novel immediately struck a chord in German readers, particularly the generation of young men who fought in the war. In a 1947 introduction to *Demian*, German émigré novelist Thomas Mann described the impact of *Demian* on German readers at the time of its initial publication:

> The electrifying influence exercised on a whole generation
> just after the First World War by *Demian*,
> from the pen of a certain mysterious Sinclair, is unforgettable.
> With uncanny accuracy this poetic work
> struck the nerve of the times and called forth grateful
> rapture from a whole youthful generation.

By the time Hesse publicly claimed authorship of *Demian*, a year after its initial publication, the groundwork was laid for a revival of his popularity as a German writer.

During the era of Nazi Germany (1933-1945), however, Hesse was again denounced as a traitor to the German people because he criticized nationalism and praised a number of prominent German- Jewish authors. However, Hesse's outstanding contribution to world literature was given international recognition when he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1946. In the wake of World War II, with the fall of Nazi Germany and the award of the 1946 Nobel Prize in Literature, Hesse enjoyed another period of renewed interest and serious critical attention on the part of German critics.

Hesse's fiction enjoyed a popular revival during the 1960s and 1970s, when his impressionistic novels stressing self-reflection and the desire to turn away from conventional religion and thought in order to achieve a sense of deep personal identity resonated with the questioning ethos of the American youth counterculture. Anna Otten explains the phenomenon of three distinct generations that raised Hesse's status to that of a "cult" figure, explaining that, for German youth after World Wars I and II, as well as for American youth during the 1960s and 1970s, "In each instance it would seem that the cults were formed of young people who, profoundly dissatisfied with the world created by their elders, set out to seek new values."

In *Hermann Hesse* (1978), Joseph Mileck described the universal mythical elements of *Demian* which account for the novel's popularity among several generations of youth in different nations at different points in history:

> Sinclair's inner story emerges clear and his simple tale becomes mythic: a story of youth's timeless quest for the self, mirroring man's typological course from childhood innocence through doubt, sin, agony, and despair, to a hoped-for ultimate second innocence, his humanization . . . as Hesse would call it.

Discussion of *Demian* by literary critics often focuses on the element of Jungian psychoanalytic theory in the symbolic elements of the story. It is frequently pointed out that the characters of Demian and Frau Eva symbolize elements of Sinclair's inner psyche. Mileck, in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, describes the Jungian symbolism embodied by these two characters:

> Demian and Frau Eva are multidimensional symbols, concepts thinly actualized. Demian is Sinclair's Socratic *daimon*, his admonishing inner self, but he is also a Jungian imago, Sinclair's mental image of the ideal self, and is also the reflective, culturally unconditioned alter ego Sinclair must become before he can begin to "live himself." Frau Eva is Sinclair's Jungian anima, the soul, the unconscious with which his conscious mind must establish rapport in the process of individuation, and also life in all its fullness, heaven and earth, an actualized Magna Mater, mankind's origin and destiny.

In addition to the teachings of Jung and Sigmund Freud, the influence of the philosopher Frederich Nietszche in *Demian* has also been discussed, as have the many biblical references, from Cain and Abel to the Prodigal Son to Jacob.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Brent has a Ph.D. in American culture, specializing in film studies, from the University of Michigan. She is a freelance writer and teaches courses on the history of American cinema. In the following essay, Brent discusses the theme of religion in Demian*.*

Sinclair's struggles with religion, particularly Christianity, throughout *Demian*, are central to the development of his personal identity and individualized belief system. This process of development occurs in two distinct stages. First, Sinclair begins to question the precepts of devout Christian faith in which he was raised. Secondly, Sinclair learns to consider the spiritual wisdom of other religions and belief systems from throughout the world and throughout history. By the end of the novel, Sinclair does not completely renounce Christianity, but picks and chooses elements of various religions and philosophies□including Christianity□by which to make sense of his true nature and his experience of the world around him.

In the first phase of his journey, Sinclair learns to question traditional interpretations of Christian doctrine. He does not, however, completely renounce Christianity, as ideas, beliefs, and stories drawn from the Christian tradition continue to play a key role in his journey toward his true inner self. He does, however, learn to interpret Christian doctrine in unconventional ways.

As the novel opens, Sinclair is ten years old and his understanding of the world is firmly rooted in the Christian precepts of good and evil. The young Sinclair perceives the world as consisting of two realms: the good, light world of religious piety; and the evil, dark world of sin. The first time Sinclair experiences an inkling of religious doubt is after he tells a lie, the consequences of which result in his feeling that he has entered the dark world of evil and sin. Because he is keeping a secret from his parents, the feeling that he possesses knowledge unknown to his father results in a perception that the "holy image" he had of his father as all-powerful has been diminished. Sinclair's feelings toward his father represent his feelings about God□thus, his perception of the "holy image" of God is likewise diminished by his personal experience of the "dark" realm of sin.

Sinclair's path toward the realization of his personal identity is aided by the influence of key people who open his mind to independent thought. Demian is the first such influence, encouraging Sinclair to question traditional interpretations of biblical stories, such as Cain and Abel, the Prodigal Son, and Jacob. For example, Demian interprets the biblical story of Cain and Abel, in which Cain is a murderer of his own brother, in such a way that Cain is considered the hero of the story. Demian also provides a nontraditional interpretation of the mark that God is said to have put on Cain's forehead. Rather than being a mark of sin, Demian interprets the "mark" as a metaphor for an air of "distinction" others perceived in Cain. Demian explains that it is likely Cain had "a little more intellect and boldness in his look than people were used to." This point is significant later in the story, because Demian and his mother, Frau Eva, describe various people (and eventually Sinclair) as having "the mark"□by which they mean such

people have a quality of distinction about them which suggests a desire to strive for independent thought and true self-knowledge.

Demian goes on to explain to Sinclair that he is not claiming the biblical story of Cain to be inauthentic; rather, that "Such age-old stories are always true but they aren't always properly recorded and aren't always given correct interpretations." This explanation captures the attitude toward Christianity expressed by Hesse throughout *Demian*: Christianity contains some age-old wisdom, valuable lessons, and meaningful iconography, but each person must look beyond conventional interpretations of religion to find his or her own personal truths.

During confirmation classes, Demian's influence on the development of Sinclair's capacity for independent thought increases through the regular questioning of the teacher's traditional approach to biblical stories. Sinclair notes that, as a result of Demian's influence, "cracks had begun to appear in my religious faith." However, Sinclair asserts that these new ideas did not cause him to question the significance of a spiritual life, but, "On the contrary, I still stood in the deepest awe of the religious." Sinclair's strong feeling for the importance of some form of spirituality, although not necessarily a conventional Christian faith, remains constant throughout the novel.

Hesse's attitude toward religion as expressed in *Demian* thus calls for the importance of religious questioning on the part of the individual, while also acknowledging the value of some form of understanding of oneself and the world in terms of religious ideas. Sinclair explains that Demian "had accustomed me to regard and interpret religious stories and dogma more freely, more individually, even playfully, with more imagination." This freer, individualized interpretation of the Christian doctrine in which he was raised is the first step in Sinclair's journey toward his true inner self and the formulation of his personal identity.

In the second phase of his journey toward selfknowledge and self-actualization, Sinclair learns to draw from the wisdom of many religions, cultures, thinkers, and historical eras in order to formulate his own personal belief system. By the end of the novel, Sinclair's conception of himself and the world is no longer divided into "two realms" of light and dark, but includes a perception that both elements are part of a larger whole. Sinclair's concept of a god who encompasses both realms is referred to as Abraxas.

While in a class at boarding school, Sinclair finds a note stuck in his textbook that refers to a god called "Abraxas." Although he hasn't seen Demian in years, and has no idea where to find him, Sinclair is certain that the note has come from Demian by some mysterious means. The next day, his professor, Dr. Follens, lectures to the class about the ancient concept of Abraxas as expressing a "profound philosophy." He explains that the name Abraxas "occurs in connection with Greek magical formulas and is frequently considered the name of some magician's helper such as certain uncivilized tribes believe in even at present." Dr. Follens continues, "But it appears that Abraxas has a much deeper significance." He concludes, "We may conceive of the name as that of a godhead whose symbolic task is the uniting of godly and devilish elements." Sinclair

understands from the lecture that Abraxas combines both good and evil, light and dark, into one realm, and is thus "the god who was both god and devil."

Although Demian does not name the god Abraxas until years later, the ideas he expressed to Sinclair while they were still in grade school put forth a similar ideal of uniting both the "light" and "dark" elements of the world into one god, rather than separating the world of good from the world of evil. Demian argues that, in relegating part of the world to the realm of evil, "this entire slice of the world, this entire half is suppressed and hushed up." He asserts, "we ought to consider everything sacred, the entire world, not merely this artificially separated half!" Demian uses as an example the suppression of sexuality exerted through Christian teachings. His point is that the realm of life that includes sexuality should also be regarded as an element of the divine. (However, this does not mean that Demian advocates hedonism or debauchery; when Sinclair runs into Demian while on vacation during his period of drunkenness, Demian points out that excessive drinking seems to hold little spiritual or mystical value.)

The development of Sinclair's personal belief system is furthered by his exposure to a broad range of unconventional ideas as presented to him by key people in his life. Sinclair's friendship with Pistorius during his final year at boarding school further opens his mind to a wide range of religious and philosophical ideas. Rather than conforming to traditional Christian beliefs, Pistorius teaches Sinclair to consider Eastern religious beliefs, as well as philosophical ideas such as that of Frederich Nietzsche, and even scientific theories. Pistorius also exposes Sinclair to further exploration of the concept of Abraxas. Like Sinclair, Pistorius was raised in a deeply religious household, and yet has chosen not to follow the traditional practice of Christianity. Instead, he draws from a variety of sources of wisdom and mystical enlightenment to formulate his own understanding of the spiritual element of the world. Sinclair is further exposed to a broad range of unconventional religious and philosophical ideas toward the end of the novel, when he becomes part of the social circle of freethinkers who gather at the home of Demian and Frau Eva.

In *Demian*, Hesse ultimately does not renounce Christianity, but suggests the possibility of combining the beliefs and ideas of many different cultures, religions, and thinkers in order to formulate a personal understanding of oneself and the world. At one point in the novel, Pistorius comments that, although he is no longer faithful to the Christian church, "I'm still interested to see what kinds of gods people have devised for themselves." Hesse's message about religion in *Demian* may be summed up as the following: each individual must "devise" his or her own set of religious or spiritual ideas; this should come about a result of much selfreflection, or soul-searching, as well as contemplation of many forms of spiritual wisdom from throughout history and culture; and no one set of beliefs is necessarily meaningful to any given individual. Hesse seems to be calling for a sort of religion of the individual, which draws freely from the wisdom of the ages throughout the world and is constructed by each person in accordance with "the promptings of [his] true self."

Source: Liz Brent, Critical Essay on *Demian*, in *Novels for Students*, The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Stelzig considers the Jungian context of Hesse's Demian *.*

. . . Hesse's novel emerged in a burst of confession. Written between September and October 1917, in the last stage of Hesse's treatment by Dr. Lang, it was not published until after the war. It appeared in spring 1919 under the name of the narrator, Emil Sinclair, and became for several years one of the most popular and influential books among German youth. Hesse's choice of a pseudonym (which he was forced to abandon in 1920 when his authorship was guessed by the critics) reflects his belief that through the crisis of the war he had emerged as a different writer, and it was also his way of resisting "the stupid role" of "the beloved writer of entertaining literature" that no longer suited him and that might put off a new generation "with the well-known name of an old uncle."

Though Hesse (like most Germans) seems never to have heard of Blake, *Demian* is his autobiographical marriage of heaven and hell in a late-Romantic, early modernist *Bildungsroman* strongly marked by the impact of Jungian analysis. As he wrote about the book a decade later, creative writing (*Dichtung*) is not a mere transcription of life, but a poeticizing of it (*ein Verdichten*), and in *Demian* as in the psychoanalytic *Märchen*, Hesse's metaphorizing of his experience turns on the exploration of the unconscious through a pervasive mother myth. As a modern romance of the inner self and a fictional reworking of carefully selected aspects of Hesse's childhood and youth, *Demian* incorporates some basic features and tendencies of Jungian thought: the assumption that the individual is the primary reality, the portentousprophetic language about the challenges and hazards of individuation, the amoral or neutral attitude to the "dark" suggestions of the self, the sense of the mysterious connections between the inner and the outer worlds (compare Jung's concept of "synchronicity"), the endorsement of creative activity as an instrument of self-realization (for example, the "positive function" of expressing "for example, in writing, painting, sculpture, musical composition" the suggestions sent by the anima), the preoccupation with myth and religion transposed into psychic categories, the associative style of thinking and writing, and finally, some more bizarre aspects, like psychobiology (compare Pistorius's yoking, at the end of Chapter 5, of the vestigial air-bladder in fish with the "flying bladder" of dreams). Jung himself was not shy about seizing on the Jungian element of *Demian*, as a 1919 letter to Hesse shows, in which he first compliments him ("your book hit me like the beam of a lighthouse on a stormy night"), then proceeds to an interpretation of the ending that doesn't seem to fit the plot: "the Great Mother is impregnated by the loneliness of him that seeks her. In the shell-burst she bears the 'old' man into death, and implants in the new the everlasting monad, the mystery of individuality. And when the renewed man reappears, the mother reappears too□in a woman of this earth." Jung concludes with the enigmatic suggestion that *Demian* is indebted to him for more than Hesse is willing to admit:

I could tell you a little secret about Demian of which
you became the witness, but whose meaning you

have concealed from the reader and perhaps also from yourself. I could give you some very satisfying information about this, since I have long been a good friend of Demian's and he has recently initiated me into his private affairs—under the seal of deepest secrecy. But time will bear out these hints in a singular way.

I hope you will not think I am trying to make myself interesting by mystery-mongering; my *amor fati* is too sacred for that. I only wanted, out of gratitude, to send you a small token of my great respect for your fidelity and veracity, without which no man can have such apt intuitions. You may even be able to guess what passage in your book I mean.

The editor of Jung's letters suggests that the veiled reference is to Jung's "*Septem Sermones*, where the Gnostic figure of Abraxas plays a key role," and mentions that "the winged egg and Abraxas appear in a Gnostic mandala painted by Jung in 1916."

In any event, the tone of this letter is of a piece with what Mileck has characterized as Jung's "presumptuousness" about his influence on Hesse, which is evident in Jung's answer to an inquiry about their relationships: after noting that he met him in 1916, Jung mentions that Hesse had the benefit of the "considerable amount of knowledge concerning Gnosticism" that Jung had shared with Dr. Lang and that the latter "transmitted to Hesse. From this material he wrote *Demian.*" Jung further claims that "the origins of *Siddhartha* and *Steppenwolf* . . . are—to a certain extent—the direct or indirect results of certain talks I had with Hesse. I'm unfortunately unable to say how much he was conscious of the hints and implications which I let him have." The co-optive and condescending tone of this communication seems to justify Hesse's tart conclusion that "for analysts, a genuine relationship to art is unattainable: they lack the organ for it."

Granted that *Demian* is significantly influenced by Hesse's protracted encounter with Jungian analysis, it is nevertheless true that the book resists any simple or consistent Jungian schematization of its basic ideas and symbols. Its leading characters, especially Demian and his mother, have obvious Jungian overtones, but not exclusively or unambiguously so: they are not paradigmatic fictional instances of psychological concepts, for *Demian* is not primarily a Jungian allegory, but a revised version, under the pressure of analysis, of Hesse's ongoing personal myth and fiction of the self. While the Jungian note is clearly the dominant one in the composition of *Demian*, the book is in fact a composite of various influences, or rather, confluences: of the conceptual world of the German Romantics and of the tradition of dialectical thinking culminating in Hegel; of Nietzschean ideas, of Christian as well as Gnostic motifs and of assorted other strands from Socrates to Dostoevsky, Bachofen and Freud. Some of these "influences" make for strange bedfellows—Ziolkowski has noted, for instance, how "Hesse creates a conscious stylistic tension by pitting Christian phraseology against

Nietzschean thought"—and this matter is further complicated by the fact that Hesse and some of his "influences" may share a common source or tradition. In the case of Jung and Hesse, there is a shared literary and cultural heritage that can be readily invoked to explain similar symbols and ideas without getting into the quagmire (or infinite regress) of particular and demonstrable "influences."

Above and beyond the vexing question of Hesse's influences and borrowings, the autobiographical message of *Demian* is as direct as its symbolism is obscure: it is the creed of self-will proclaimed in a prophetic voice that gathers into itself echoes from Socrates and Jesus down to Nietzsche and Jung, and that also has strong affinities with the "inner light" tradition of Protestantism that in English literature finds its greatest expression in the late eighteenth century in Blake's prophetic books:

An enlightened man has but one duty—to seek the
way to himself, to reach inner certainty . . . The realization
that shook me profoundly . . . was . . . that
I did not exist to write poems, to preach or to paint
. . . All of that was incidental. Each man had only one
genuine vocation—to find the way to himself. He
might end up as a poet or a madman, as prophet or
criminal—that was not his affair, ultimately it was of
no concern. His task was to discover his own destiny
. . . and live it out wholly and resolutely within himself.

With its uncompromising gospel of the inner self forged in the crucible of psychoanalysis, *Demian* represents an autobiographical revolution in Hesse's career, and one that, for understandable reasons (and especially in the U.S. in the wake of the Hesse wave of the 1960s), has received an extraordinary amount of attention from his critics. As a writer, however, the "new" author of *Demian* is well below the level of formal and stylistic mastery Hesse had achieved in his best work before the war, *Rosshalde*. *Demian* is a remarkable and courageous book that breaks new ground as a consequence of probably the greatest crisis of Hesse's adult life, but it is also a "demonic" book whose author is as much controlled by as in control of his materials: too often its densely metaphoric and shrill confession comes across as a confused and confusing version of Hesse's disturbed state of mind during World War I.

Of its three major figures, only the narrator is a flesh-and-blood character, though from the perspective of the permissive late twentieth century, the summary of his student days as "a notorious and daring bar-crawler" is very tame stuff. Next to it the proletarian masculinity of Kromer, even if largely undeveloped, offers a breath of vitality. The two other major figures of this triptych of Hesse's inner self, Demian and Frau Eva, are more symbols than characters. The former, a composite of Socratic *daimon*, Christian conscience, Jungian Shadow, and Nietzschean *Übermensch*, and the latter, the most revealing projection of Hesse's mother myth, exist on the magical threshold of the inner and outer worlds, whose fundamental convergence had become an article of faith to the Hesse drawing on his Romantic heritage as reinforced by Jung. This esoteric

coincidence or identity is also the subject of his story "Inside and Outside", which turns on the (Goethean) slogan, "nothing is outside, nothing is inside, for that which is outside is inside," that Hesse also used as the epigraph of the 1919 essay, "The Brothers Karamazov, or the Decline of Europe."

The basic conception of *Demian* is a prophetic and highly didactic late Romantic version of the providential pattern of the Christian fall and redemption internalized in the life of the narrator. In the opening chapter we witness Sinclair's fall from the paradise of childhood and innocence as a consequence of his lie (to impress a group of boys) about stealing apples from a garden. This symbolic episode, which is probably Hesse's conscious equivalent of the adolescent Augustine's robbing of the pear tree, shows how Sinclair's imagination is instrumental in his "fall" by driving a wedge of guilt, shame, and sin between him and his family as he succumbs to the blackmail of his "evil" Shadow, Kromer. Conversely, toward the end of the book this "Prodigal Son" beholds an apocalyptic vision of World War I as the beginning of the rebirth of a corrupt humanity. Seven of the eight chapter headings are references to the Bible, and the single non-Biblical one, "Beatrice," shows young Sinclair's attempt to turn *eros* into *agape*. Like Blake in his prophetic books, Hesse in *Demian* wields elements of the Biblical tradition to subvert Christian orthodoxies from a radical Protestant perspective. In his bold revaluation of scriptural figures□Cain, the Prodigal Son, the Unrepentant Thief at Golgotha□Hesse is at once drawing on and liberating himself from the Pietist teachings of his childhood, just as a much earlier and more famous autobiographer, Augustine, wielded the elements of his early education□the classical rhetoric of which he was such a brilliant student□in order to subvert the classical viewpoint for the sake of celebrating the Christian.

With *Demian* Hesse seeks to present the stages of individuation in almost exclusively symbolic terms as a progressive integration of the "light" and "dark" realms of Sinclair's divided self (thus the punning appropriateness of his name: sin/clair) as a Blakean marriage of heaven and hell under the Gnostic sign of Abraxas (and his totem, the sparrow- hawk), whose esoteric function is "the uniting of godly and devilish elements." In this figural autobiography the revaluation of values beyond the standard middle-class conceptions of good and evil takes the form of a confusing double movement through which external reality is internalized, and internal reality is externalized: that is, images appropriated from the outer world (Beatrice) become psychic stuff and metaphors of self, and inner images are transposed into the external world to function as figures in the plot (Demian and Frau Eva). While this double pattern includes a good deal of authorial sleight-of-hand, there is also an experimental daring in the manner in which Hesse deploys his symbols. The World War I years were, after all, those of a burgeoning *avant garde* and assorted modernisms, one of whose centers was Zürich, and their impact on *Demian* is clearly discernible in the book's more surreal dream sequences. In this connection it is also helpful to keep in mind the Romantic distinction between symbol and allegory, as updated by Jung in *Symbol of Transformation*, which Hesse had read, and which might well stand as the subtitle of *Demian*: "A symbol is an indefinite expression with many meanings, pointing to something not easily defined and therefore not fully known. But the sign always has a fixed meaning, because it is a conventional abbreviation for, or a commonly accepted indication of, something known."

Demian's signature of the self is symbolic in this way, invested with a numinous aura, pointing enigmatically to the unknown.

The imagery of this prophetic book is also fluid and dynamic, with constantly shifting boundaries and domains. Hesse's ambitious experiment with such kinematic and transformational sequences is a not always successful attempt to express the metamorphic processes of the self. Though the proliferating imagery of *Demian* defies schematization, some of the patterns are carefully developed through an experimental combination of musical and pictorial elements. Unlike the ironically voiced despair of T. S. Eliot's roughly contemporaneous *The Waste Land* (which also explores through obscure symbols the terms of a personal and a cultural crisis) the affirmative (and sometimes even manic) creed of *Demian* seems to be, "I can connect everything with everything." Caught up in its visionary momentum, Hesse seems to have believed that the book was not only a totalizing trope of his, but also of humanity's□or at least Europe's□psyche.

Three leading symbol sequences are those of the sparrow-hawk, Beatrice, and Frau Eva. The first, already adumbrated in the Prologue's assertion that "each man carries the vestiges of his birth□the slime and the eggshell of his primeval past", is reintroduced in Chapter 2 when Demian points out the coat of arms (the sparrow-hawk) above the entrance of the Sinclair house, and is reinforced by his subsequent drawing of it in Chapter 3. The bird-egg leitmotif is later internalized when Sinclair dreams that Demian has forced him to eat the coat of arms: "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." Thus the process of individuation and the onset of *Eigensinn* is experienced by the narrator as a symbolic pregnancy leading to the birth of a new self. When Sinclair re-externalizes this image by painting it, we have a fuller development of the central avian metaphor: "Now it represented a bird of prey with a proud aquiline sparrow-hawk's head, half its body stuck in some dark globe out of which it was struggling to free itself as though from a giant shell□all of this against a sky-blue background." After mailing his "painted dream bird" to Demian, Sinclair receives the dramatic reply that relates the sparrow-hawk to the Gnostic deity who presides over this stage of Sinclair's development: "The bird fights its way out of the egg. The egg is the world. Who would be born must first destroy a world. The bird flies to God. That God's name is Abraxas." The spiritual midwife of this difficult birth is Pistorius (a version of Hesse's analyst) who liberates Sinclair- Hesse from his old self by helping to deliver the new. As Sinclair puts it, their conversations (read psychoanalytic sessions) "helped me to form myself . . . to peel off layers of skin, to break eggshells, and after each blow I lifted up 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."

If the greater sparrow-hawk pattern points to the future, the compact Beatrice sequence shows the adolescent Sinclair's futile attempt to escape the mounting pressures of individuation. His etherealized worship of the young woman whom he saw at a distance in a park is his second attempt to return (the first was after Demian had freed him from the clutches of Kromer) to the childhood world of purity and light. Yet the very name Sinclair chooses for this young woman is ambiguous, for it points as much to the "sin"

as to the "clair" of his self, since she is clearly the raptly sensuous and highly eroticized devotee of Rossetti's famous painting, Beata Beatrix: "I gave her the name Beatrice, for even though I had not read Dante, I knew about Beatrice from an English painting of which I owned a reproduction. It showed a young pre-Raphaelite woman, long-limbed and slender, with long head and etherealized hands and features." Far from checking his budding sex drive, Sinclair's Beatrice worship is a form of autoerotic fantasy that leads him right back to the "dark" self he had struggled to escape: the androgynous portrait he paints of her turns into a "mask, half male, half female," which he first recognizes as "Demian's face" and then as his "inner self," his "fate or . . . *daemon*." Sinclair's attempted flight has gone full circle to another selfencounter, which Hesse describes, with iconic references to Novalis and Nietzsche, as fated.

The Frau Eva sequence that dominates the latter part of the book is introduced under the sign of Abraxas and explicitly related to the "sexual drive" that Sinclair had sought to sublimate through his cult of Beatrice. More and more preoccupied by his inner world, Sinclair experiences a recurrent "fantasy" and "the most important and enduringly significant dream of [his] life," in which, returning to his father's house, he embraces under the aegis of the "heraldic bird" above the entrance a figure who is at once his mother and Max Demian:

> This form drew me to itself and enveloped me in a deep, tremulous embrace: I felt a mixture of ecstasy and horror□the embrace was at once an act of divine worship and a crime. Too many associations with my mother and friend commingled with this figure embracing me. Its embrace violated all sense of reverence, yet it was bliss.

This "dark dream of love" with its double violation of ancient sexual taboos that Sinclair is unable to "confess" even to his friend and guide Pistorius is *Demian*'s metaphorized burden of confession that Hesse shares with his readers. His critics have been reluctant to face the transparent Freudian suggestions of this mother myth, preferring instead the "safe" Jungian interpretation of mother-son incest as a symbol of rebirth. Thus Ziolkowski, while acknowledging the "eroticincestuous implications" and "the remarkable language of double-entendre" of Frau Eva's exchanges with Sinclair, interprets these, with the help of a long quotation from Jung, as the desire, "by visionary paths to reenter the mother in order to be reborn again." Such a view is defensible, given the metaphoric density and ambiguities of the text, but when a more recent critic rejects out of hand a Freudian interpretation because Frau Eva "is not a libido object but remains an . . . image of the divine," he can only do so by positively ignoring the ample evidence in Hesse's narrative that Frau Eva is indeed□like Rousseau's beloved "Maman," Mrs. Warens□very much a libido object: "There were moments when I sat beside her and burned with sensual desire and kissed objects she had touched." Even if Sinclair's Oedipal desires are never fulfilled in fact, they are consummated in his imagination: "I had dreams, too, in which my union with her was consummated in new symbolic acts. She was an ocean into which I streamed. She was a star and I another on my way to

her, circling round each other." The transfer of Sinclair's incestuous wishes from his own mother (whom he embraces in his recurrent dream) to Frau Eva, Demian's mother and the Magna Mater, is a masking myth that does not change the basic situation.

Before ever meeting Frau Eva, Sinclair has already painted the "half male, half female dream image of [his] *daemon*" and heaped it with lurid imprecations: "I questioned the painting, berated it, made love to it, prayed to it; I called it mother, called it whore and slut, called it beloved, called it Abraxas." When Sinclair is shown a photograph of Demian's mother, he has an ecstatic recognition in which again the internal and the external merge: "it was my dream image! That was she, the tall, almost masculine woman who resembled her son, with maternal traits . . . *daemon* and mother, fate and beloved." When the university student Sinclair meets up again with Demian after a long interval, his introduction to Frau Eva has all the earmarks of a homecoming to the Eternal Mother (the setting, a house in "a garden by the river," is Edenic, and the promise of an incestuous consummation. Under the symbolic aegis of the sparrow-hawk painting that he had earlier sent Demian, Sinclair perceives Frau Eva as the (Hessean) trinity of mother, goddess, and lover. The mythic aspect is heavily stressed ("Frau Eva! The name fits her perfectly. She *is* like a universal mother!", as she obligingly invokes the book's symbol of the "new" self: "It is always difficult to be born. You know the chick does not find it easy to break his way out of the shell."

The last part of *Demian* moves toward a sexual union between Frau Eva and Sinclair, something she seems positively to encourage:

> At times I was dissatisfied with myself and tortured
> with desire: I believed I could no longer bear to have
> her near me without taking her into my arms. She
> sensed this . . . Once, when I had stayed away for several
> days and returned bewildered she took me aside
> and said: "You must not give way to desires which
> you don't believe in. I know what you desire. You
> should, however, either be capable of renouncing
> these desires or feel wholly justified in having them.
> 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.

However, Sinclair□like Hesse□vacillates between the sense of Frau Eva as libido object and, as he puts it, "only a metaphor of my inner self . . . whose purpose was to lead me more deeply into myself." Because the erotic fulfillment to which Sinclair aspires never occurs, the apocalyptic ending of *Demian* is actually anticlimactic. In a concluding episode that finally merges the Frau Eva and the sparrow-hawk patterns, the momentum of incestuous wishes is diverted by the outbreak of World War I. Sinclair's sudden vision of a cloud formation as a "gigantic bird that tore itself free from the steel-blue chaos of the stormy skies and flew off into the sky with a great beating of wings" projects against the screen of the heavens the death and rebirth symbolism of the self;

and Sinclair's prophetic perception of Frau Eva as the muse of history is Hesse's portentous myth of Europe in the throes of World War I:

A huge city could be seen in the clouds out of which
millions of people streamed in a host over a landscape.
Into their midst stepped a mighty godlike figure,
as huge as a mountain range, with sparkling stars
in her hair, bearing the features of Frau Eva. The
ranks of the people were swallowed up into her as
into a giant cave and vanished from sight. The goddess
cowered on the ground, the mark [of Cain, which
is Demian's and now Sinclair's sign] luminous on
her forehead. A dream seemed to hold sway over her:
she closed her eyes and her countenance became
twisted with pain.

In short, Hesse has generalized his personal mother myth into an archetypal vision of cosmic import.

Demian closes, as it opened, with only the reflecting figure of the narrator who, himself injured in the war, receives in a field hospital Frau Eva's farewell kiss from the lips of the dying Demian□ an odd consummation, that. The Narcissus motif that Boulby has identified in the closing sentence is appropriate because in a sense all the symbolic permutations of character and episode in the book are confessional self-projections on Hesse's part that are now reabsorbed, like the figure of Demian, into Sinclair-Hesse's consciousness: "But sometimes when I find the key and climb deep into myself where the images of fate lie aslumber in the dark mirror, I need only bend over that dark mirror to behold my image, now completely resembling him, my brother, my master."

The confessional imagination of *Demian* is a highly selective one, excluding elements of Hesse's past treated in earlier works or dealing with them in very different context, and incorporating aspects of inner and outer biography not hitherto explored. Thus the Maulbronn crisis treated in *Beneath the Wheel* is not revisited, and the trauma of adolescent sexuality, so mawkishly mishandled in the Hans-Emma relationship, is now paradigmatically framed through the "light" and "dark" worlds of *Demian.* If the biographical material taken up in *Beneath the Wheel* is largely excluded, the period at a *Gymnasium* subsequent to the Maulbronn crisis is touched on with the student "lowlife" scenes of the Beatrice chapter. Conversely, the issue of Hesse's unhappy marriage and the problems of the mature artist, the autobiographical substance, as we have seen, of *Gertrude* and *Rosshalde*, are absent in *Demian*'s seriated psychoanalytic review of Hesse's early life. Nature too, the lyrical synecdoche of the mother world in Hesse's early fiction, all but disappears, to be replaced by the mythic presence of Frau Eva. And the animus to the father so marked in the brief caricatures of *Camenzind* and *Beneath the Wheel* surfaces now in Sinclair's "recurring nightmare" of a "murderous assault" on his father, but with the shocking suggestion of Oedipal violence shifted to Sinclair's evil and torturing Shadow: "Kromer whetted a knife, put it in my hand; we stood behind some trees in the avenue and lay in wait for someone, I did not know whom. Yet when

this someone approached and Kromer pinched my arm to let me know that this was the person I was to stab□it was my father." In contrast, the figure of the mother who is frequently absent or whose autobiographical significance is disguised or elided in much of Hesse's earlier fiction is now elevated into a looming *magna mater* symbol with explicit incestuous suggestions. It is only fitting that Hesse's autobiographical reinscription of the Christian story of the fall should change Eve's role from that of the weak female who succumbs to temptation into that of a wise and powerful Frau Eva, a blissful homecoming to whom constitutes Hesse's vision of paradise regained in *Demian*.

Source: Eugene L. Stelzig, "Chapter VI: Hesse's Marriage of Heaven and Hell," in *Herman Hesse's Fictions of the Self*, Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 130-58.

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, Rose examines the protagonist's search for his integrated self in Hesse's Demian*.*

The events and characters in *Demian* are symbolic experiences of the soldier Emil Sinclair who is searching for his integrated self. Sinclair, unlike his artistic predecessors, no longer wants to escape, but strives to accept life. He tries "to give life to that which wanted to come out of me by its own force." In his quest for his self he first returns to his childhood. Soon its protecting warmth is destroyed by the discovery of an outside world of violence and danger under the influence of Franz Kromer, a boy from the other side of the tracks. Sinclair himself for a while shares in Kromer's values and becomes a petty thief.

From this situation Sinclair is rescued by Demian, an older and more mature schoolmate. (The name is a distortion of the Greek *Daimon*, "demon," also "fate" and "conscience," and was found by Hesse in a dream.) While Kromer is actually introduced as Sinclair's base "shadow", Demian is his psychopompos and can set the negative forces into their proper perspective. He frees Sinclair from his shadow and becomes his intimate friend. Sinclair learns to appreciate the strong mentality of Demian, who is capable of thought transference and whose own thoughts go far beyond the platitudes of his teachers and his pastor. After a confirmation class Demian submits a spirited plea in favor of Cain. According to him, Cain did not commit murder but was blackballed because of his independent mind. This suggests a study of the Gnostic sects who worshipped the creative force, which they named Abraxas.

Demian uses this concept of Abraxas to instill in Sinclair an awareness of evil as a constituent part of the world and not as a mere outside force. We are all marked men like Cain, claims Demian, and Sinclair should therefore accept evil and no longer indulge in self-righteousness. He should no longer be afraid of the invisible divinity beyond bourgeois good and evil.

Sinclair first had to give up childlike innocence. Then he passed through a period where he could hope to become saved by a fixed system of moral values. He had to learn that there is no such salvation, as the good in man is inextricably intertwined with the evil. Now he must reach the third stage where he accepts God who is sending both good and evil and yet is meaningful in his own, inscrutable way.

The path to such an acceptance is beset with pitfalls. Sinclair revolts against Demian and for a while becomes a wastrel. But then he confronts his deeper and purer self in the figure of a lovely girl whom he never meets in person. This "Beatrice," as he calls her, saves him from the loss of his artistic abilities. He turns from his wasteful habits and begins to sketch her. As he draws, he recognizes himself in her and is able to design a better image of his self.

Another of Sinclair's pictures is that of a sparrow hawk breaking out of its shell. (At this point it should be remembered that Jungian practice encourages the patient to draw pictures in order to make him face his subconscious images.) Sinclair has reproduced this particular picture from memory, and it copies an escutcheon over the door of his parents' home to which Demian has once called his attention. In an unexplained manner Demian had inserted a note into Sinclair's notebook: "The bird is fighting to break the egg. The egg is the world. He who wants to be born, must destroy a world. The bird is flying to God. The God's name is Abraxas."

In his "flight" toward Abraxas, Sinclair meets a second guide in the person of the organist Pistorius, whose acquaintance he has made in a tavern where Pistorius is drinking to forget his sorrow at being an outcast and a seer. Pistorius encourages Sinclair in his restless pursuit of his true self, and the latter learns his lesson well. He now draws a picture of a woman he has seen in his dreams. The painting assumes the features of Sinclair's mother, but again, she actually represents his deepest unconscious, with which Sinclair must identify himself. Significantly, after Sinclair's evocation of his dream image Pistorius can no longer help his charge and drops out of the picture. He has represented the psychoanalytic physician whom the patient must finally reject, in order to become independent and be cured.

The cure is symbolized by Sinclair's meeting with Demian's mother. In a university town he again comes across Demian, who takes his friend home to his mother. Gossip has her living in incest with her son□a poetic transcription of her true character as a part of a mandala. The trio is united in the vision of a new Europe, a future world in which people who have forged their true personalities will emerge as leaders of a new humanity. Sinclair regrets only that he cannot win Frau Eva for himself. She tells him that she will come to him when his want of her is strong enough to draw her to him.

One night Sinclair marshals all his strength to call her. But instead, Demian enters with the news that the first world war has broken out. The two young men become soldiers, because as such they can help to sweep away the insincere bourgeois world and put the dynamic civilization of the future in its place. Since they move under the sign of Abraxas, the new world will of course not be traditionally humanistic.

The two friends are separated by the war and for the last time find each other again side by side in a hospital. Demian dies from his wounds, but before his death gives Sinclair a last kiss from Mother Eve, i.e., Sinclair becomes united with his real self. The latter looks into his soul and sees his "own image that now is entirely the likeness of him, my friend and mentor."

The basic theme of the book is the emergence of Sinclair's integrated self from his earlier schizoid separation into Demian and the conventional Sinclair. To be sure, the ultimate integration□the union with Demian's mother□is never attained. But it is at least visualized.

Source: Ernst Rose, "Chapter 5: The End of an Era," in *Faith from the Abyss: Herman Hesse's Way from Romanticism to Modernity*, New York University Press, 1965, pp. 45-56.

Topics for Further Study

Demian takes place during two distinct eras of German history, and was published in a third era. Research and write about the history of Germany during *one* of these eras: the German Empire (1871-1914); World War I (1914-1918); or the Weimar Republic (1919-1933). What was the political system in Germany during the era? What was the status of Germany's relations with other European and world nations? What major political and social issues and conflicts faced the German people during the era?

Hesse was strongly influenced by several authors roughly contemporary to his own life, including Thomas Mann, André Gide, and Franz Kafka. Write an essay about one of these authors. What are his major works of fiction? What central themes are addressed in his novels and stories? What similarities do you see between the fiction of this author and that of Hesse?

Demian was written by Hesse soon after his experience of psychoanalysis, and is based on the influence of psychoanalytic theorists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Hesse makes much use of the symbolism and imagery of dreams in *Demian*. Both Freud and Jung wrote extensively on the psychology of dreams and dream interpretation. Research and write about the dream theories of either Freud or Jung. What are his basic theories about the psychology of dreams? To what extent do you agree or disagree with this theory?

Hesse's fiction is often characterized as impressionist. German impressionism was an aesthetic movement that influenced many artistic mediums in addition to literature, including painting, film, and music. Research the major works of German impressionism in *one* of these three media. What are the major impressionist artists and works in this medium? How is impressionism developed in this particular medium?

Demian is the narrative of one young man's journey from childhood to adulthood, describing the development of his personal identity during the difficult years of adolescence. Write your own autobiographical narrative of your personal development up to this point in your life. What people or ideas have contributed to the formation of your ideas and personal identity? What struggles have you encountered in the process of becoming the person you are today? Describe the type of person you would like to be in the future. What obstacles might you encounter on the way to becoming that person?

Compare and Contrast

1871-1918: This period of German history is known as the era of the German Empire. In 1871, the German Empire is formed, and under a newly created constitution, the empire is governed by an Emperor and two houses.

1918-1933: This period of German history is known as the Weimar Republic. In the aftermath of World War I, Emperor William II is forced to abdicate. In 1918 a newly formed democratic German Republic is proclaimed, under a new constitution calling for a popularly elected president.

1933-1945: This period of German history is known as the era of Nazi Germany or the Third Reich. Hitler rises to power in Germany when he is named chancellor in 1933. During the years of World War II (1939-1945) Hitler oversees the murder of some six million Jews (and others) in his Nazi death camps.

1945-1949: In 1945, Germany is defeated in World War II by Allied forces and Hitler commits suicide. From 1945-1949, a defeated Germany is occupied by Allied forces.

1949-1989: This period of German history is known as the era of partition. In 1949, Germany is divided into two nations: The German Democratic Republic (East Germany), under Soviet influence, and The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), under Allied influence. In 1961, Soviet forces construct a wall, known as the Berlin Wall, sealing East Germany off from West Germany and the Western World.

Today: With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the Berlin Wall is brought down. East and West Germany are reunified after some forty years of partition. The reunified nation is named the Federal Republic of Germany.

1890-1914: During the late 1890s and early 1900s, Germany's economy becomes rapidly industrialized, urbanized, and successful. Germany becomes one of the major industrial nations of the world.

1914-1918: During the latter years of World War I, the German economy suffers. Severe food shortages result in malnutrition and starvation of many citizens. At the war's end, returning soldiers are left jobless and without adequate food supplies.

1918-1923: During the years following World War I, the German economy faces severe setbacks, with massive unemployment and astronomical inflation.

Today: The reunification of East and West Germany results in economic difficulties for the nation during the 1990s. Before reunification, West Germany had enjoyed prosperity and the most favorable wage rates and labor benefits in the world; however, merging with the economically stagnant former East Germany puts a severe strain on the economy. Other costs associated with reunification continue to weigh down the German economy, although the late 1990s see some economic recovery.

1914-1918: In World War I, Germany is part of the Central Powers, which include Austria- Hungary and Turkey, is at war with the six nations of the Allies, including Britain, France, and the United States. Germany is defeated by the Allies in World War I.

1939-1945: In World War II, Germany, part of the Axis Powers, is at war with the Allies, which include Britain and the United States. Germany, the initial aggressor in World War II, is defeated by the Allies.

Today: Germany is a member of the European Union, an organization comprised of most of the nations of Western Europe to facilitate international trade and maintain peaceful international relations throughout Europe. A single European currency is implemented to further create economic cooperation among the nations of the European Community. Germany also belongs to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

What Do I Read Next?

The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) is the seminal text on dream theory by Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis. Hesse was familiar with the theories of Freud and considered him a strong influence.

Dreams (1974) is a selection of writings about dreams by Carl Jung, one of the fathers of psychoanalytic theory. Hesse was a psychoanalytic patient of Jung, and *Demian* was written in part as an expression of the effect Jung had on him.

The Magic Mountain (1924) is one of the bestknown novels by Thomas Mann, a friend and fellow German writer to Hesse. *The Magic Mountain* is about a young man's experiences in a tuberculosis sanitarium in the mountains.

All Quiet on the Western Front (1929), by Erich Maria Remarque, is a now-classic narrative based on the experiences of a German soldier in World War I.

The *Complete Stories* (1983) of Franz Kafka includes many masterpieces by an author whom Hesse regarded as one of his major influences. Some of Kafka's most celebrated stories include "Metamorphosis" and "The Hunger Artist."

Siddhartha (1922) is one of Hesse's most celebrated novels. It tells the story of the early life of Buddha.

Magister Ludi: The Glass Bead Game (1943) is one of Hesse's most celebrated novels. It takes place in the future in an elite community of intellectuals and scholars.

In *The Fairy Tales of Hermann Hesse* (1995), the author combines elements of Eastern religion and European folktales to create original stories relevant to the modern world.

German Expressionism (1997), edited by Stephanie Barron and Wolf-Dieter Dube, provides images of German expressionist paintings as well as discussion of German expressionism in drama, music, film, and architecture.

The German Empire, 1870-1918 (2000), by Michael Stürmer, offers a social and political history of Germany during the era of the German Empire.

Further Study

Berghahn, V. R., *Imperial Germany, 1871-1914*, Berghahn Books, 1994.

Berghahn provides a history of the German empire, from its formation in 1871 until the beginning of World War I.

Hesse, Hermann, *Soul of the Age: Selected Letters of Hermann Hesse, 1891-1962*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991.

Soul of the Age is an edited selection of the letters of Hesse, including his correspondence with such notables as the writers Thomas Mann and André Gide, and modern Jewish philosopher Martin Buber.

Marrer-Tising, Carlee, *The Reception of Hermann Hesse by the Youth in the United States: A Thematic Analysis*, P. Lang, 1982.

Marrer-Tising offers discussion of the popularity of Hesse's novels among American youth during the 1960s and 1970s. Marrer-Tising explores thematic elements of Hesse's fiction which addressed ideas and concerns of the youth counterculture during this era of U.S. history.

Michels, Volker, ed., *Hermann Hesse: A Pictorial Biography*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.

Michels provides photographs and other visual materials in conjunction with biographical discussion of Hesse's life and career.

Moyer, Laurence, *Victory Must Be Ours: Germany in the Great War, 1914-1918*, Hippocrene Books, 1995.

Moyer provides a history of Germany during World War I.

Richards, David G., *The Hero's Quest for the Self: An Archetypal Approach to Hesse's "Demian" and Other Novels*, University Press of America, 1987.

Richards discusses Hesse's fiction in terms of its mythological elements.

Serrano, Miguel, *C. G. Jung and Hermann Hesse: A Record of Two Friendships*, Daimon Verlag, 1997.

Serrano offers discussion of the ongoing friendship between Hesse and the great psychoanalytic theorist Carl Jung.

Tusken, Lewis W., *Understanding Hermann Hesse: The Man, His Myth, His Metaphor*, University of South Carolina Press, 1998.

Tusken provides analysis of the works of Hesse in terms of recurring thematic, symbolic, and psychological elements.

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Mann, Thomas, "Introduction," in *Demian*, by Hermann Hesse, Harper & Row Publishers, 1965, pp. ix-x. Mileck, Joseph, "Hermann Hesse," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 66: *German Fiction Writers, 1885-1913*, edited by James Hardin, Gale Research, 1988, pp. 180-224.

□, *Hermann Hesse: Life and Art*, University of California Press, 1978, p. 99.

Otten, Anna, ed., *Hesse Companion*, University of New Mexico Press, 1977, p. xii.

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Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research
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Imaging and Multimedia
Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535