Chapter I

YEARNING

Man is not determinate, clearly defined once and for all; he is something in process of development, an experiment, an intimation of the future, the quest and yearning of nature for new forms and new possibilities.

H. Hesse: If the War Goes On

The early novels of Hesse, Peter Camenzind (1904), The Prodigy (1906), and Gertrude (1910), have not received adequate attention from the critics. Theodore Ziolkowski, an eminent critic of Hesse, finds no seriousness of thought in these books. Commenting on Rosshalde (1914), "the last major work" of this early period, Ziolkowski remarks that there are "no deep problems, no profound comments on society and the world, no penetrating analysis of the individual psyche --- just solid, respectable artistic workmanship." He finds "a distinct and undeniable difference in temper and quality," between these works and those of the later period. André Gide and Martin Buber do not make even the slightest reference to these novels in their famous essays. The two recent books by Joseph Mileck and Ralph Freedman do not throw any new light on these novels. To them his novels as a whole are autobiographically personal.

With reference to The Prodigy, Mileck writes: "Despite much exercising and poetic license, Unterm Rad (The Prodigy)
remained even more closely autobiographical than Peter Camenzind, and Gertrude like Peter Camenzind is "more portrait than story."

But there are other critics who have made cursory observations about these early novels. Mark Boulby finds Peter Camenzind and The Prodigy essential for an understanding of the symbolic structure of his works. In his famous essay "Hermann Hesse: The Exorcism of the Demon," Oskar Seidlin makes a valid comment on Peter Camenzind. He finds the opening words of the novel: "In the beginning was the myth," as the "Subsoil from which Hesse's works grew." Hans Mayer finds these early novels as important as the later novels. Linking Hesse's "early creations" with later works, he says: "... Yet it can be shown that while Hesse's war experiences summoned up a pronounced new goal and sense of responsibility for his art, the most important themes of his later work -- clearly evident in retrospect -- are already performed, often in an amazingly profound and clairvoyant manner, in his early creations."

So critics differ in their opinions about the importance of these early novels. But no full-length study of the novels of the early period has yet been attempted to show their importance for appreciating the total vision of Hesse, the novelist. The present study will make a sincere
attempt to show the immense importance of these three novels
for a realisation of the total vision of the novelist.
They constitute the first phase of the quest of the Hesse-
protagonist. These three novels rather form the basis of
the super structure of his philosophy.

The Hesse-protagonist reveals a quest for a
meaning in life in this apparently meaningless world. A
profound knowledge of one's own destiny is a necessary
pre-condition to make the quest meaningful. Hesse sets
this pre-condition in unambiguous terms in "Zarathustra's
Return": "So spake Zarathustra to us: One thing is given
to man which makes him into god, which reminds him that he
is a god: to know destiny." Zarathustra further adds:
"Few men live their lives. Learn to live your lives! Learn
to know your destiny!" 10

Consequently, the quest of the Hesse-protagonist
for a meaning in life becomes a search for his own destiny.
But destiny is illusive; and as the protagonist runs after
this illusion he confronts his own self. It is because, in
the words of Zarathustra, "destiny does not come from
idols; then at last you will know there are no idols or
gods! As a child grows in a woman's womb, so destiny
 grows in each man's body, or if you will, you may say in
his mind or soul. They are the same thing" (If the Var
Goes On, p. 32).
Thus the quest culminates in a confrontation with the self. This confrontation with the self is attempted in the first three novels by taking the protagonist through various experiential worlds. While the protagonist is the same personality appearing under different names in different novels, the experiential world in different novels changes. This is both for expediency as also for the reason that Hesse does not want to present slices of life but life in its totality. Thus among the three early novels the protagonist appears under the name of Peter Camenzind in the first novel Peter Camenzind and is studied in his relationship with nature. In the second novel The Prodigy, Hans Giebenrath is made to confront a materialistic world along with the antecedents, success and failures of worldly life. In the third novel Gertrude, the protagonist is named Kuhn, and this time, the experience is with the spiritual world.

Thus the protagonist is taken through three realms of experiences: nature, matter and spirit. The realms are taken piecemeal in the individual novels, but when the experiences of the three protagonists are put together, the sum reveals the totality of life's experience. They compose the totality conceived by Hesse. In this way Hesse exposes his protagonist to a totality of life's experience.
For the totality of life's experience, the heroes of these three novels pass through the different stages of life. The first stage is childhood, and this stage holds an important place in their development. Certain inclinations in their childhood shape their character that very often they remain as outsiders, and fare miserably in coping with the new equations of life that they face. Nevertheless, childhood becomes a priceless possession for them. In the words of Kuhn: "But the possession is far too precious and holy for me." The importance of childhood in Hesse's world can even be seen from his two stories "A Child's Heart" and "Childhood of the Magician." The hero of the story "A Child's Heart," says: "Distant as my childhood is, and incomprehensible and fabulous though it seems to me on the whole, I still sharply remember all the sufferings and doubts I felt at the time, in the midst of happiness." And the acts for which the hero of the story receives punishments and suffers become more real to him in his later life. He says: "they seem to be more ours than the others, and they cast long shadows over all the days of our lives" (Klingsor's Last Summer, p. 3). So however bitter or sweet may be the childhood, it has a positive role to play on the development of the Hesse-protagonist. He never forgets the "wisdom of childhood." In his story "Walter Köppf," Hesse reveals how the childhood of the boy
Walter sets a different tone for Köppfs. To explain Walter's difference from Köppfs, Hesse uses a symbol. He says: "Walter had the features and the build of the Köppfs, but his eyes, instead of being grey-blue, were brown like his mother's." The brown-eyes in fact, are going to reveal that the boy Walter will become an outsider in his life since his main concern will be to find a justification for his existence, and not to be wedded to the world of his father --- the world of profit and loss. In his lonely walk, Walter "was surprised and dismayed to see how artisans, and shopkeepers, workmen and servants went about their business, how each had his place and his standing and his aim, while he alone went about aimlessly, with no justification for his existence" (Stories of Five Decades, p.130). This attitude to life of Walter brings his ultimate failure and suicide. So in Hesse's world childhood is conceived as a deciding factor in the development of a personality.

The influences in the childhood of Peter, Hans and Kuhn are significant. They form their personalities, and with that personality they enter into the world. These influences in the childhood very often remain like possessions for the rest of their lives. Whenever the character passes through emotional stress and strain, he gets transported immediately to his childhood world.
sometimes to be rescued from the present agony and sometimes to be sunk deeper in his agony by making him conscious of his alienation from the world of childhood. In case of Peter, the memories of his childhood come again and again whenever he feels distressed and fails to cope with the new situations of life. This remembrance rather makes him conscious of the gulf that is created by his separation from his childhood. The world of childhood remains like a paradise, ever to be pined for and never to be regained again by Peter. In case of Hans, the childhood does not relieve him of his tension that is created by his friend Meilner; rather he is afraid of remembering his childhood that has crippled him in spirit. None the less, the favourite spots of his childhood exercise a magical power on him and detract him from an impending suicide. For Kuhn, the childhood remains a "priceless possession."

In their childhood the three characters pass through the influence of nature, matter and spirit. In case of Peter, the influence of nature is of greater significance than that of Hans and Kuhn. Remembering his early childhood when he did not understand the significance of this influence, Peter says: "And as my poor little heart was so blank and quiet, full of expectancy, the spirits of the lake and mountains inscribed their fine and stirring deeds upon it."15
While Hans remains alienated from the world of nature, Kuhn is wedded to the world of the spirit. Kuhn develops an exclusiveness, an exclusive personal world of his own inhabited by himself only. Kuhn says: "when I was about six or seven years old, I realised that among all invisible powers, I was destined to be most strongly affected and dominated by music" (Gert., p.6). Music remains his sanctuary, his heaven. No power on earth can take it from him and he does not wish "to share with any one" (Gert., p.6).

Since Nature seems to be the most important factor in Peter's childhood, it imparts a message to him through her elements. These elements are mountains, trees, fohn and clouds.

Mountains speak to him about the indomitable courage to endure the sufferings of life. They speak to him: "we have suffered indescribable horrors and we are suffering still" (P. C., p.6). From childhood Peter learns to have the courage to endure.

The trees also teach him: "... for each had to maintain its hard, silent struggle for existence and growth against wind, weather and rock. Each had to bear its burden, cling firmly, thereby gaining its individual aspects
and particular scars" (P. C., p. 7). Trees with their hard and silent struggle for existence, bring awe and amazement to Peter. In their struggle against many ups and downs they do not lose their individuality. Each tree is marked by its own firm individuality. Their power to endure sufferings like mountains to blossom the individual aspects of their character. No external power can obliterate this individual aspect of a tree. The young Peter says: "They gazed at me like soldiers and inspired awe and respect in my heart" (P. C. p. 7).

The fohn is an object of fear for him in his childhood, but in his adolescence he grows "to love this rebel, this perennially young, insolent fighter; the herald of spring" (P. C. p. 13). This spirit of revolt leaves an indelible impression on young Peter. It is reflected in Peter's strong desire to go to Basel, although he knows that his father will be alone after his departure. He feels like revolting against the futile labour of the artists in Zurich who try to be modern.

This rebellious spirit is very much perceptible in Hans and Kuhn, although with Hans it is not as explicit as it is with Kuhn or Peter. Much of Hans's rebellion against the established world of his father, teachers and the priests, as in Shelley, is engendered by his friend
Heilner. But there is evidence of this rebellious spirit in him from his childhood. He is much depressed by the authoritarian rules of his father, teachers and the vicars, who make ceaseless efforts to extinguish and stamp out the "wild, untamed, uncultured in him," only "to make him a useful member of the community and awake in him those qualities, the complete development of which is brought to a triumphant conclusion by the well calculated discipline of the barrack square." Hans expresses his inner rebellion and anger against this stultification through an action in the garden. Out of disgust he fetches an axe and flings it in the air which kills an innocent rabbit in the garden. By this action he hopes to have killed "the longing he still felt for the rabbits and August and all the old childish games" (Prod., p.15). Kuhn's disgust with the rules and regulations of music is a sign of rebellion against the intrusion of artificialities in the realm of the spirit. He ultimately leaves the music school and follows his own music framed by him. He too revolts against Muoth and his circle. However, the spirit of revolt in the early novels is not as much explicit as in the later novels like *Demian*, *Siddhartha*, *Narziss* and *Goldmund* and *The Glass Bead Game*, where the heroes rebel against either the established ethics of life or against a spiritual authority or institution. So the rebellious
spirit becomes an attribute with the Hesse-protagonist to evolve an individuality. Strong individuality stands as one of the perennial virtues with the protagonist.

Besides mountains, trees and fohn, there is another element in nature that appeals to Peter the most, and it is the cloud. To him clouds represent:

the spirit of play, the wrath of heaven and the power of death; they are a comfort to the eye, a blessing and a gift of God, as tender, yielding and gentle as the souls of new-born children. They are as handsome, rich and prodigal as Good Angels; as sombre, inescapable and merciless as messengers of death (p. 16-17).

The dual aspect of the clouds as the power to sustain life as well as the power to destroy reminds us the lines from Shelley's "Cloud" — "Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,/I arise and unbuild again." The glorious pacing of the clouds from heaven to earth and earth to heaven, makes them "eternal symbol of all voyaging, all questing, all yearning for home," and Peter imagines if he could also float like cloud and establish a rapport between time and eternity, heaven and earth.

These elements of "voyaging," "questing" and "yearning" contribute a major share to the development of Peter's personality. Peter grows up with the sensibility
of a poet, and Richard, his friend, finds in him a budding poet even without knowing Nietzsche and Wagner. In some of his verse Richard finds, "a very modern stuff with lots of Nietzsche in it" (P. C., p. 49). The name Nietzsche baffles Peter and he blushes with shame. But Richard tells him: "you do not know Nietzsche and Wagner but you have been on a lot of snow-mountains and you have such a sturdy mountain face. And you're certainly a poet too. I can see that by your eyes and forehead!" (P. C., p. 50).

So Peter grows up as a visionary, a dreamer whose heart always longs to mingle with the heart of nature. Nature relieves much of the tension of his youth. This powerful influence of nature generates in him a firm individuality with strong likes and dislikes.

In the case of Hans Giebenrath it is the material world, the world of his father, the teacher, the priest which sets the tone of his character. Peter does not have any influence from these quarters. Remembering his parental influence Peter says: "I cannot claim that my parents had particularly good or bad influence on the development of my youthful character" (P. C., p. 15). Rather he painfully remembers the whipping of his father every evening, without either my father or myself knowing exactly the reason" (P. C., p. 15). Hans, although he does
not receive any thrashing from his father, is yet frightened by his stern eyes.

From his very childhood, Hans's life is shaped by his father, his teacher and the local vicar who think that he is a boy of fine and quite exceptional intellect -- a prodigy. So his future course is mapped out. One day he will find his future home either in the world of business or theology. For this he is selected from his school to appear at the landexamen, an entrance test for entering into the protestant theological college at Tübingen and "from there either to the pulpit or the lecturing desk" (Prod., p.8). For this everybody is solicitous for the boy.

Although his philistine father grumbles about the extra consumption of oil for Hans's late night study, yet he regards this studying with "pleasurable pride" (Prod., p.9). He even asks his son, "above all keep your chin up" (Prod., p.10). Before his departure for the landexamen, the Headmaster sermonises to him: "Promise. You must arrive absolutely fresh in Stuttgart to-morrow morning. Go for an hour's stroll and then go to bed in good time. Young people must have a good night's rest" (Prod., pp.10-11).

This atmosphere of constant supervision and sermons stultifies Hans and stunts his growth. He looks sickly and melancholic. The author calls this a process of 'etherialisation' and describes the consequence of this
as: "Restless eyes with a melancholy light burned in his handsome boyish face, his noble brow was furrowed with fine wrinkles that spoke of much thought, and his slender delicate arms and hands hung down by his sides with the tired gracefulness of a Botticelli figure" (Prod., p.10).

While Peter can turn to nature after a thrashing from his father, Hans has no outlet but to be confined to his Greek and Latin grammar. His childhood leaves him with bitter memories. But it is not so with Kuhn. He says about his childhood:

All I will say about my childhood is that it was good and happy. I was given the freedom to discover my own inclinations and talents, to create my inmost pleasures and sorrows myself and to regard the future as the hope and product of my own strength and not as something fashioned by a strange power from above (Gert., pp.5-6).

Kuhn enjoys comparatively greater freedom than Hans and Peter. He finds music as his future home where he expects to achieve his salvation. He is more enthralled by the spirit of music than by any particular music. For the salvation, Kuhn says:

It did not need to be Beethoven or Bach: it has been a continual consolation to me and a justification for all life that there is music in the world, that one can
at times be deeply moved by rhythms and pervaded by harmonics (Gert., pp.6-7).

Complete devotion to the realm of the spirit alienates Kuhn from the worlds surrounding Peter and Hans. This makes the parents anxious. Although the father does not react strongly to the pursuit of the son, the mother’s cold glance is always felt by Kuhn. And naturally he becomes closer to his father and with the mother there is a "laissez-faire" relationship.

With these influences in their childhood, Peter, Hans and Kuhn come out to face the actual world. In their entrance into the world, all of them are severed from their childhood environment. Further, the school becomes the stepping stone for all of them.

In case of Peter, formal education begins abruptly. It is abrupt because Peter had not dreamt of leaving his village Nimikon and of the blessings of nature. But one day he finds the village Priest taking an interest in him when he comes to know that the application for the absence of his father from work was really written by him. He initiates Peter into the world of divinity, Latin, Botany, and Geography. He comes to Grammar School.
With Hans and Kuhn the school begins naturally since they are like Wilhelm Meister to seek their future outside their home-land. Education is an imperative with them. So these three characters enter into a new world with their school life. It is certainly a transition for them, and Peter is most acutely aware of this transition. For him it is a painful transition since it appears as a prison to be confined by the four walls and a rigid routine life. As a child of nature, Peter's "greatest joy was to idle among the rocks and meadows or by the water" (P. C., p.16). But the sudden transfer to a new environment makes him feel that he is out of his elements.

Referring to his life in school Peter says: "But here also my innate laziness intervened, bringing me all kinds of punishment, and then some new enthusiasm would fill me" (P. C., p.23). This infuriates his teachers and his Greek teacher says to him: "You are an obstinate fellow, an individualist; you'll break your head against a brick wall yet" (P. C., p.23). On another occasion his mathematics master says: "You have a genius for idling and my only regret is that nought is the lowest mark, for I assess your exercise today at minus two and half" (P. C., p.24). His history teacher reprimands: "You are a bad scholar, but you will become a good historian, all the same. You are lazy, but you know the difference between great and
trivial things' (P.C., p. 24).

That Peter is a genius and an individualist his teachers recognise even if he proves to be a bad scholar. However, Peter does not bother about these reprimands of his teachers, he rather pitied them. Peter says about his mathematics teacher: "I stare at him with a certain sympathy because he was cross-eyed, and so extremely boring" (P.C., p. 24). So the school appears boring and monotonous. To get rid of this dull and drab life in school Peter longs for a friend. We are told about his futile attempts to have friendship with a boisterous friend and the box he receives from his teacher for quarrelling with him. So even the prospect of getting a friend to chat and play with is denied to him. Thus Peter feels very lonely and this loneliness becomes very intolerable to him when he fails to get any response from his classmate, Rösi Girtanner, the daughter of a solicitor. The school does not leave him with a happy experience to remember in the future. However, one positive thing has been achieved by him during his school life, and that is, he has been exposed to the world of Schiller, Shakespeare, Goethe and Gottfried Keller. The experience with this world has a far-reaching effect on Peter. He is exposed to the great panorama of human life. Peter recounts his experiences of this strange but beautiful world.
in these words:

The godlike and the comic side of all humanity rose before me — the enigma of our divided, unruly heart, the reality of the world's history and the mighty wonder of the spirit that illuminates our brief span of life, and, through the power of discernment, raises our petty existence to the realm of the necessary and eternal (P., C., p. 28).

The adventure into this exciting realm stirs in Peter an unquenchable thirst to find his destiny in the activities of the intellect. So he comes to Zurich, leaving his father alone after his mother's death to further his interest.

Hans and Kuhn gather different experiences in their schools. Hans stands second in the Landexmän and is admitted in Maulbronn. He is put in Helles with a group of nine other companions. Maulbronn has altogether a different atmosphere from that of his childhood. Without parents, without their childish pranks, the boys are left alone in this world. Various types of boys come from various walks of life and the need of a friend becomes a necessity for them. But Hans Giebenrath is a different boy from the rest. He is a motherless lad and his childhood has been lonely. Further he has been deprived of having any friendship with anybody by his teachers, father and
the priest. So this new situation does not create any need in him for a friend. Rather he enjoys his own loneliness through study and cramming the rules of grammar. Friendship appears to him as a wastage of time.

It does not mean that he has no interest in it; rather the interest is awakened in him when he sees others enjoying their lives with their friends. We have a glimpse into his mind: "Thus he would linger on industriously at his desk though not without a pang of envy and longing as he saw the others enjoying their friendship" (Prod., p. 73). But he lacks courage to take the initiative. He waits like a "shy girl" for someone stronger than him to take the lead. And Hermann Heilner, another student of Helles, who has been frantically searching for a "congenial companion" finds Hans in his daily stroll through woods. Both are diametrically opposite in character. While Heilner is a dreamer and a poet at heart, the materialistic upbringing in Hans has denuded him of any poetic imagination. He can only gaze at the sky and say: "What marvellous clouds!" Heilner, at heart a romantic and a poet, sighs,"Yes, if only we could be clouds like that" (Prod., p. 75). Heilner, thus, finds in Hans, a product of the material world, a virgin ground for his friendship to grow. The intimacy between them deepens gradually, and both find in each other a congenial spirit. Thus while Peter longs for a friend Hans
Kuhn's school life passes smoothly. It is because he does not come under any strong influence in his childhood. From his childhood he has learnt to live with himself, within the confines of his exclusive world. He passes "unnoticed through the school as an ordinary, little talented, but quiet scholar" (Gert., p.6), and is finally left alone. Like Hans coming to Maulbronn after the Grammar School, Kuhn becomes a student at the school of music. Like Peter, Kuhn also feels disgusted with the rules and regulations of the school. He feels pain when he finds the spirit of music thwarted by the artificial rules and regulations. The strict obedience to rigid rules in school seems to kill the creative imagination in Kuhn. This makes him "disillusioned," and he remains "disconcerted." He considers his life in the school without any "meaning and rhythms" (Gert., p.12). His own words reveal his unpleasant experiences as a student in music school and the consequent disillusionment thereof:

Where I had looked for pleasure, exaltation, radiance and beauty, I found only demands, rules, difficulties, tasks and trials. If a musical idea occurred to me, it was either banal and imitative, or it was apparently in contradiction with all the laws of music and had no value. So I said farewell to all my great hopes. I was one of thousands who had
approached the art with youthful confidence and whose powers had fallen short of his aspirations (Gert., pp. 12-13).

The great incompatibility between his aspiration and actuality makes Kuhn restless. He is neither able to renounce music altogether nor can he accept it in the form it is available. However, this restlessness comes to an end with his accident which leaves Kuhn lame forever. The accident occurs when he takes up the challenge of his classmate Liddy to toboggan down the slope. The reward for this dangerous ride is a kiss. Such risk is also undertaken by Peter while collecting Alpine roses for Rosi from a precipice. Although he comes back keeping the roses on the staircase of her home, he has the satisfaction of doing something heroic for his love. Peter does not fail like Kuhn because he knows the pulse of the earth, the soft and hard rock, the grips of earth whereas Kuhn's unhappy experience was shattering to his spirit as he realised the heavy price that is demanded of him by the material world for a small gain. So this sad adventure leaves Kuhn to his own self. He fears it as the end of his youthful adventure and the future appears bleak. He says: "My youth was thus unexpectedly directed along a path to quieter regions, along which I travelled, not without a feeling of shame and resistance" (Gert., p. 18). In this dark hour of life, loneliness creeps in, and he withdraws into himself. In this
dark and lonely hour music, "which had so long been a stranger," comes back to him "like a suddenly revealed star" and he says "my heart beat to its rhythm and my whole being blossomed and inhaled new, pure air" (Gert., p.20). Since this awakening he becomes determined to follow his destiny in the realm of music despite the displeasure of his parents. He realises that "outside music there was no salvation" (Gert., p.21). He is happy because he feels in him "the intense desire to make music, to create" (Gert., p.22).

The intense desire to find his salvation through music leads Kuhn to a realm of the senses. Similarly the materialistic background of Hans crumbles before his eyes and he is dragged to a different world, completely different from that of his childhood — the world of nature. Peter, the child of nature, incited by Shakespeare and Schiller, wants to know his destiny in the realm of the intellect but finds himself in the realm of the spirit. So there is a transition from one realm to another in every one of these characters and this transition is accomplished through an agency — their friends. Muoth, the famous opera singer of the town brings Kuhn to the realm of the senses whereas Heilner opens the eyes of Hans and Hans sees the futility of all strivings in the material world and the uselessness of knowledge within four walls. Richard, the music student of Zurich makes Peter interested in the realm of the intellect.
The friends that help these heroes in their transition are often called "ill-matched pair" as in the case of Hans and Hermann Heilner. It is also true of Peter and Richard, Kuhn and Muoth. They are called "ill-matched pair" because they hold opposite views of life. If one comes with his spiritual world, the other comes with his sensual world, and they are bound to collide; but in Hesse's world there is no collision between the two, as in the Hegelian thesis and antithesis. Rather both the views need to coalesce and flourish simultaneously for a total synoptic vision of life. For Hesse, "life is not a computation, it is not a mathematical sum, but a miracle" ("A Guest at the Spa" in Autobiographical Writings, p.164).

Hesse is concerned with a totality of human experience which will necessitate a simultaneous existence in both the worlds: the world of the spirit and the world of the senses. He perceives Oneness behind multiplicity, and this Oneness behind multiplicity is for him "no boring, gray, intellectual, theoretical unity. It is, in fact, life itself, full of play, full of pain, full of laughter" (Ibid, p.164). Hesse perceives this Oneness behind multiplicity represented in the dance of the god Siva, "who dances the world to bits, and in many other images; it rejects no representation, no simile" (Ibid, p.164).
To Indian thinking, the dance of Siva symbolises Eternity, a continuous, creative symphony that permeates through all divergent cadences of life and matter. With this permeating creative symphony the two apparent antinomies i.e. creation and destruction, meaningful, as such, only in the context of 'time' and 'space,' become one continuous rhythmic pattern. The dancing Siva is Eternity. The beats symbolise constant creation and annihilation. The Oneness is the creative rhythm which goes unabated, while it permeates through the multiple, divergent, myriad notes symbolising created beings and objects.

Some writers and thinkers of the West, have been teased out of their thoughts by this symbolic meaning contained in the dance of Siva. The dance has revealed to them the continuous process of Cosmic creation and destruction. Even the recent physics has taken note of this dance. In his recent book *The Tao of Physics*, Prof. Fritjof Capra considers the dance of Siva as a "Cosmic dance of energy," which reveals the continuous conversion and reversion of matter into energy and energy into matter. To Hesse this dance symbolises the simultaneous existence of illusion and reality, time and eternity, Oneness and multiplicity. This is a mystical experience, and to enter into such experience,
Hesse writes:

when you know no times, no space no knowledge, no non-knowledge, when you desert convention, when you belong in love and surrender to all gods, all men, all worlds, all ages. In these instances you experience Oneness and multiplicity at the same time, you see Buddha and Jesus moving past you, you speak with Moses, feel the sun of Ceylon on your skin and see the poles rigid in ice (Autobiographical Writings, p. 164).

The Hesse-protagonist sets up this goal before him. But it becomes a difficult task for him in the first phase of his quest. In this phase he is not equipped with all that is needed of a Hesse-protagonist. He is unable to love and surrender to all experiences of life. He rather comes to face the world with a built-in ideal. Naturally when he finds any change from his built-in ideal, it creates tension in him. So the transition creates tension in the protagonist and very often it makes him an outsider.

In the case of Peter, the tension mounts up when he becomes disillusioned by Richard and his circle. He finds most of Richard's circle of friends devoting all their time and energy to the matter of trivial importance, such as, politics, state and science, but the greater question about the nature of human destiny and his relation to the eternity remain unanswered. But Peter's proximity with nature since his childhood has shaped his mind to be perturbed by such questions. He, therefore, wants to make
man conscious of his existence and his relation to the earth and cosmic whole. He says that "we are not self-created gods but children belonging to the earth and cosmic whole" (P.C., p.126).

A man with this mission in life is bound to meet his disillusionment in Richard's circle of friends in Zürich which comprises musicians, painters, writers, and foreigners from everywhere with their "unusual" artistic pursuits. These people with all their interests appear to Peter as 'unreal' who evade the real issues of man's life and his relation with the cosmos. So he fails to identify himself with any group in Zürich and ultimately is left alone with the growing loneliness and tension in him. He feels uncertain about his future. Peter says about his own condition: "I was obsessed with the idea of myself as an outsider, an imperfectly developed human being whose suffering no one knew, understood or shared" (P.C., p.95).

The same tension and uncertainty is also there in Hans Giebenrath whom Hermann Heilner says to him that all knowledge prescribed in books is useless: "The whole classics business is a swindle" (Prod., p.77). Hermann makes Hans aware of the hypocrisy and pretensions of their teachers. The study of Greek appears to him as a huge waste of time and energy if one is not allowed to follow
the Greek spirit in his thought and living. Hermann expresses his vehemence against the teaching of Greek in schools in these words:

"Here we read Homer," he continued with withering scorn, "as if the Odyssey was a cookery book; two lines per hour and then it is all chewed over and examined until we loathe the sight of it. And all the lessons end up the same way: "You see how well the poet has turned it. Here you have a glimpse into the secret of poetic creation!" So much sugar round the particle and aorist pill so we can swallow it down without choking. You can take away the whole of Homer from me, at this price. What's this old Greek stuff to do with us, anyway? If any of us wanted to try and live according to the Greek way of life, he would be flung out. And that's why our Study is called Hellas!! What an insult. Why not call it 'Waste-paper basket' 'Slave-cage' or 'Torture Chamber'? The whole classics business is a swindle" (Prod., pp. 76-77).

Hermann is more concerned with the spirit than with the actual realities. So he feels disgusted when he finds his teachers neglecting the spirit behind the Greek culture. They appear to him as a pack of hypocrites.

This is a shivering shock to Hans whose foundation has been built on the study of Greek and Hebrew. These words of Hermann are to him like a heathen denouncing Christianity in the most derogatory way. The very solid earth under his feet seems to be sweeping away and he seems to see the abyss. He fails to decide whether the world of his father, teachers and priests is real or the world as revealed to him by Hermann. It brings in him tension and
restlessness. He is further dismayed when he sees the books of his friend disfigured with comic rhymes and caricatures: "The west coast of the Spanish Peninsula had been distorted into a grotesque profile in which the nose reached from Oporto to Lisbon and the Cape Finisterre region had been stylised into a curley wig, while Cape St. Vincent formed the beautifully twisted point of a man's beard" (Prod., p.83).

Hans is accustomed to treat his books as sacred possessions and the disrespect seems to him "partly a desecration of the holy of holies, partly a criminal yet heroic act" (Prod., p.84). To Hans this is like a transgression of what has been taught to him, and to do this needs courage. So Heilner appears to him as a hero who has besieged his own citadel and made him a captive. Under Heilner's clutch he feels a novel experience, a kind of freedom which was not allowed to enter into his fortress. Heilner, therefore, appears to him "a strange fellow", "an enthusiast, a poet" (Prod., p.76).

Heilner is a rebel and he only waters the seeds of rebellious spirit which lay dormant in Hans's childhood. So both the friends come closer despite principal's cold glance and disapproval. When the principal asks him to shun the company of Heilner, Hans, once a docile and obedient
student of the institution, replies:

"I can't, Sir."
"You can't? And why not, I pray?"
"Because he is my friend. I can't just drop him." (Prod., p.105).

The more closely and contendly Hans clings to his friendship the more alien the school seems. Hans, once a favourite pupil of the teachers, becomes a problem for them. They are very much concerned about the boy and the influence of Heilner on him. He is no longer an exemplary pupil and potential top of the class. Every other student looks at him and he does not have any reason to look down upon them. But he does not mind this. It is an ample compensation for the loss he bore in his childhood. He sees in his friendship "a treasure that outweighed any loss, it was a higher, warmer life with which his former trivial and dutiful existence could not compare" (Prod., p.105).

Hans regards the new world revealed to him by his friend as a better world than that of his childhood whereas Peter sensitively reacts to the world that is opened to him by Richard. It is because Peter's childhood is spent in nature and he knows well that what nature has given him no books can give him. Nature has exposed to him "the basic things of life." Peter says:

I heard the wind sighing in the tree-tops, mountain-torrents roaring down the gorges.
and quiet streams purling across the plains, and I knew that God was speaking in those sounds and that to gain an understanding of that mysterious tongue with its primitive beauty would be to regain paradise. There was little of it in books; the Bible alone contains the wonderful expressions of the groaning and travelling of creation. Yet I knew deep down inside me that at all times men, similarly overcome by things beyond their comprehension, had abandoned their daily work and gone forth in search of tranquility so to listen to the hum of creation, contemplate the movements of the clouds, and anchorites, penitents and saints alike, filled with restless longing, stretch out their arms towards the Eternal (p. 103).

Nature seems to teach Peter what the poet Wordsworth learnt: "Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!" A boy with such background will naturally react to the hypocrisy and the unreality of the modern life. The silly chitchat among the people, the lavish compliments on the women and the insincerity in their pursuits of literature, make him disconcerted. He finds the modern city life "intolerable" (p. 96).

But the world of nature revealed to Hans is a challenge to the world of his childhood — a world of restraints, sermons and spying. Since the new world with its novel experiences is a challenge, it creates internal tension in Hans although he appears to be in harmony with his world. His internal disturbance is very much marked when he does not stand inspite of repeated requests by the
teacher. The teacher after the class asks him:

"Why did you not stand up when I called you?"
"I don't know."
"Perhaps you didn't hear me? Are you hard of hearing?"
"No, I heard you."
"And yet didn't stand up? You had a very strange look in your eyes. What were you thinking about?"
"Nothing. I meant to stand up."
"Why didn't you then? Were you unwell?"
"I don't think so, I don't know what it was."
"Had you a headache?"
"No". (Prod., pp.112-113).

Even Hans fails to fathom the depth of the whirlpool created in him. Ultimately the Principal refers his case to the doctor. The doctor says, "slight nervous disorders, " "temporary faintness — just a slight giddiness" (Prod., p.113).

With the loss of his childhood world, like Peter and Hans, Kuhn, too, is driven by his inner tension to seek a refuge. The refuge which automatically suggests itself to him is music. He, consequently, withdraws within himself, trying to become a composer. He says: "Music was arising from the turmoil, iridescence and conflict of my heightened sensibilities" (Gert., p.33). His acquaintance with Muoth, the famous Opera singer, brings in him the more confidence about his future hope in the realm of music. In Muoth he expects to find his ideal of music manifested, and thus wants to realise his companionship with music at the
human and physical level. The friendship grows, Kuhn visits Muoth at his place. But his expectations get belied. He is disgusted with Muoth’s circle of friends. They seem to him the people who are not interested in the spirit of music. They sing for their salary. They never sing out of pleasure. Kuhn replies to one of the men assembled there when he asks him “you have a crippled leg! Can music make you forget it?” “No, why? In any case, I can never make it better” (Gert., p.49). Although music cannot better his lot yet it does not bring him to despair. Kuhn firmly replies to the man: “It does not please me, you can be sure of that, but I hope it will never bring me to despair” (Prod., p.49). Kuhn’s reply is a shocking revelation to a circle whose members are more interested with the sensual aspect of music than its spirit. The man rather disbelieves his own ears when he hears the reply of Kuhn. So he says to Marian, “Marian, this is the magic of art that we read about so much in books” (Gert., p.49).

Kuhn looks for the spirit of music and the experiences with the music circle of Muoth is a shattering blow to his faith. He shuns this company and wants to cling to Muoth for his salvation. But Muoth is an enigma and a puzzle to him. He does not seem to understand him. Muoth is always restless and discontent. He does not know contentment. Marian, his mistress, says to Kuhn about.
Moot: "He drinks and is never drunk; he has women and is never happy; he sings magnificently and yet does not want to be an artist. If he likes anyone, he hurts him. He pretends to despise all who are contented, but is really hatred against himself because he does not know contentment." (Gert., pp.53-54).

Even Moot's relation with women becomes a shocking experience for Kuhn. He has seen Moot's relation with Marian and Lottie. Every time Kuhn finds Moot with a new woman, he is never constant. He has heard from Lottie the ill treatment of Moot towards her. He is at a loss to think how a man can beat somebody whom he loves. When Lottie says that she would prefer to be beaten to indifference, Kuhn exclaims, "Beat you!" (Gert., p.77). He fails to console her, refuses to plead for her before Moot because he does not have any experience of this type of relationship between man and woman. When Lottie charges him, "Oh what do you know about love!" Kuhn thinks: "If that was love, with cruelty here and humiliation there, then it was better to live without love" (Gert., p.79).

It is really a strange experience for a man who has been inclined to search for the spirit in everything from his early age. Gross realities of the world upset him and he finds himself ill-equipped to cope with this. So he develops a peculiar love-hate relationship with Moot. This
instead of relieving him of his tension, plunges him into greater tension. He gradually feels alienated from Muoth, from his associates and the world as a whole. He fails to get a satisfactory answer to the innumerable questions that arise in him: "was I really quite different from all these other people, from Marian, Lottie and Muoth? Was that really love?" (Gert., p.79). These questions torment him, and his belief in solitude gets doubly confirmed. He repents for the loss of it. But it is a past thought. Now he will also be an outsider in his former world. So his failure to belong to this world or to get back his former solitude at home makes his existence precarious. It creates further tension in him and he is left only with questions: "Oh, why was I not happy with what I had — my music? And why was Muoth not happy with what he possessed — his tremendous vitality and his women?" (Gert., p.81).

The transition has not left these heroes with a happy experience of life. It has created tension in them, their existence has been threatened, and life has appeared meaningless — almost a great void. But these heroes painfully strive to get rid of this tension and loneliness either through a woman or a friend, and failure to get either, suicide remains the only alternative.

Peter's failure to get happiness from Richard's circle brings him to the artist Erminia Aglietti. With
Richard sees the painting of the artist in a studio and both of them visit the artist. While Richard sees cows for the goats in the picture, Peter is reminded of his native pastures. The picture, in fact, represents a mountain with some goats on it. It brings Erminia and Peter closer and she expresses her desire to draw him. It lifts him up from his much depressed spirit and he remembers Rösi Girtsennor and the risk he undertook to present Alpine roses to her. He is possessed by her thought. He sees Erminia as "a woman battling for a livelihood, a quiet, suffering, courageous heroine (P. C., p.64). His rowing with her, her appreciation of his muscular body, makes him restless for her love. But Peter is just a child before Erminia who is an experienced woman in love making. She rather pities Peter and reads his mind. Before Peter's declaration of his love, she confesses her love to a man who is tied to another woman. Both of them love each other; "yet neither of us knows whether it will be possible for us to come together (P. C., p.66).

Peter like Kuhn, is more puzzled than shocked. He cannot think of a woman knowingly falling in love with a man who is tied to another woman. Like a child, Peter prattles: "May I ask you, whether this love brings you happiness or only distress? Or both?" (P. C., p.66). Erminia unravels to the child the paradox of love: "Alas,
love doesn't exist to make us happy. I believe it exists to show us how steadfast we can be in sorrow and endurance (p. C., p.66).

Peter fails to fathom the depth of Erminia's mind. So love instead of relieving him of his tension brings more tension in him. It makes him desperate and even the wine fails to save him from his despair. So again he clings to his friend Richard whom he had neglected during his affair with Erminia. He expects to get his happiness through friendship. He believes friendship to be more powerful than love or wine to relieve him of his tension. He says: "Nobler and more rewarding than fame, wine, love and wisdom was my friendship. That alone came to the rescue of my innate melancholy and kept my youthful years fresh, unspoilt and glowing like the dawn" (p. C., p.75).

With Richard, Peter goes to Italy and from there to Umbria and Florence. In Umbria he humbly follows the steps of St. Francis, "the musician of God" (p. C., p.32). Through his readings in Zurich Peter has been exposed to his vision and it has given him a glimpse of the fullness of life, making his life more real everyday. The story of St. Francis of Assisi's life relieves him of his tension. He gets back his strength to face life. But this peace of mind is again disrupted when he comes to Florence.
the first time he becomes aware of the "threadbare stupidity of the modern culture" (P. C., p. 82). Florence with the tradition of its classical and past culture holds an eternal source of happiness, and Peter feels at home in this world. The modern world seems to him an "unreal city," and he will remain a stranger in this world. This alienation from the world does not dampen his spirit since he has been transported to a different world and this spiritual experience has brought in him the realisation that 'eternal friendship' can only bring happiness, can give a meaning and a form to this apparently formless life.

Peter says about this 'eternal friendship' as:

We both had the inescapable sensation of approaching a rich, new life, worthy of our destiny. Work, struggle, enjoyment and fame lay so near, so effulgent, so much within our grasp that we felt able to savour those blissful days without undue haste. We were even reconciled to our separation which would only be provisional, for we knew now with ever-deepening certainty that we were indispensable to each other and could depend on each other for the rest of our lives (P. C., p. 83).

Richard fills up the vacuum created in Peter by the rejection of Erminia. Ralph Freedman rightly considers Richard as the central love of the novel. He says: "In the main episodes in Zurich, Erminia's counterpoint was Richard who actually functioned as the novel's central love."
Even this friendship is not going to give him lasting comfort in his loneliness. He is destined to live alone with his tension. Richard dies by drowning. Peter's dream of an 'eternal friendship' receives a rude shock. With Richard's death the 'centrality' in his life is lost, and things fall apart when the centre is no more. Peter feels "rudderless", and is "tossed around on waters that had all at once became dark" (P. C., p. 84).

A terrifying loneliness overcomes him. He feels alienated from the world. The alienation is expressed by Peter himself:

> Between me and other men and the life of the town, the squares, houses and streets stretched a broad unbridgeable gulf. A great tragedy might occur, important events appear in the newspapers but they did not touch me. Festivities were celebrated, dead were buried, markets held, concerts given — what meaning had they for me?" (P. C., p. 88).

To escape from this "terrifying loneliness" Peter leaves his job in Basel and moves from place to place. But wherever he goes he is haunted by loneliness and alienation. When

the tension becomes unbearable for him, he wants to put an end to this tension for ever by suicide. And in Paris suicide appears as the only alternative to Peter.

The same loneliness and the sense of estrangement from life and the world envelope Hans and Kuhn.
Hermann Heilner is expelled from Maulbronn and Hans loses contact with him; he feels "abandoned" and alienated. He becomes a stranger among his associates and is cast out by them as a "leper" (Prod., p.121). Even for his teacher, the priests and for his father Hans ceases to be "a vessel into which all manner of things could be stuffed, a field to be sown with a variety of seeds," and they think, "it was no longer rewarding to spend time and trouble on him" (Prod., pp.128-129).

The alienation has deadened his spirit so much that he fails to respond to the call of his former paramour, Emma, and Emma with a soft laugh pinches his ear and says, "What a lover you are!" "You seem frightened of yourself" (Prod., p.162). Hans, in fact, is frightened of his own existence. As with Peter, existence has become very agonising for Hans. Death appears the only alternative left to him. It becomes for him an "indispensable familiar" (Prod., p.129).

Death also appears as the only outlet for Kuhn from his painful existence. When he fails to realise his own dream through Muoth, Gertrude appears as the only salvation for him. Gertrude is the daughter of Imthor who is reputed to be a lover of music and a patron of young talent. Gertrude herself is a musician, a singer, in whom
Kuhn sees his "desire for unity and sweet harmony" (Gert., p. 87) satisfied, and her glance and voice make an instant response "to every throb of my pulse and every breath in my body" (Gert., p. 87). So "a very pleasant" relationship develops between Gertrude and Kuhn, and Kuhn says about his own reactions: "I again heard the divine music and had my youthful dream of the harmony of spheres. I again walked and thought and breathed to an inward melody; life again had meaning and I looked forward to a better future" (Gert., p. 89).

Kuhn's relationship with Gertrude becomes deeper and he falls in love with her although he fails to get any positive response from her. Even this relationship with Gertrude does not last long. Muoth comes as an intruder in between Kuhn and Gertrude, and Gertrude falls in love with Muoth. He finds himself discarded like Goethe's Werther. And when he is left by both the worlds, the world of Gertrude and the world of Muoth, death appears as the only inevitable and happy conclusion of his tormented existence. Like Werther he too becomes determined to shoot himself dead.

These heroes, whether thwarted by their incompatibility with the world they face in their youth or the loss of their friends, or the frustration in love, are destined to live with their loneliness and feel alienated...
from life around them. They are outsiders who fail miserably to cope with the new actualities. The values with which they grow up fail to hold them integrated before the onslaughts of the new realities. So they are deprived of getting a total vision of life, and instead reality appears to them as a fragmented chaos. This fragmented chaos would appear to Sartre and Camus as 'irrational' and 'meaningless'. In the face of this chaos the characters experience doubt and uncertainty when they aim at finding out a total vision of life. In this way these characters are as haunted by the meaning of their existence as the characters of Albert Camus and Sartre. What is 'doubt' and 'uncertainty' with Peter, Hans, and Kuhn, becomes 'anguish' or 'despair' with Maursault and Antoine Roquentin. And Hesse, in spite of Hugo Ball's comment as "the last knight in the glorious cavalcade of Romanticism," appears to be the "vanguard of existentialism." Ziolkowski comments: "For the rearguard of romanticism tends at many points to blur almost imperceptibly into the vanguard of existentialism." In the last chapter of his book Ziolkowski points out how it is wrong to label Hesse as a romantic writer. Hesse, if at all a romantic in his early novels, he is a romantic in the sense T. E. Hulme calls a writer romantic. According to Hulme a romantic writer considers man, the individual, as "an infinite reservoir of
possibilities, and he strives to trace out those infinite possibilities in man. Hesse attempts to find out the infinite possibilities in man in his early novels, and he achieves this only in *The Glass Bead Game*. If Hesse begins as a romanticist he ends up as a spiritual existentialist, that is, one who unlike Sartre does not give nothingness a central point in the metaphysics of life. It is not nothingness or neant but a 'becoming' which in course of time makes him aware of being as in *The Glass Bead Game* or as it was conjectured in *Siddhartha*. Such a development is complex in nature and testifies to Hesse's mature attitude to life. It is not piecemeal. Hence the existential concern that Ziolkowski finds in Hesse's later novels is perceptible in his early novels. From *Damian* onwards, the heroes rather strive to overcome the incoherency and meaninglessness of existence which the early heroes fail to do. These early heroes, Peter, Hans, and Kuhn fail like Sisyphus, only to climb and fall back again. So with them the resolution to put an end to their lives is not materialised. They would like, before the end, to taste "the bitter sweet of life for a little while longer" (*Prod.*, p.130).

In case of Peter his mother's death pre-empts his own. He is reminded of the "calm solemnity" of his dying mother's face. It lends him support to shed his despair.
and makes him determined to face life despite its uncertainties and failures. He realises the uselessness of suicide since death as a "good brother" knows the right moment for the final extinction of life. He begins to understand that "sorrow, disappointments and sadness do not exist to distress us, to make us worthless and undignified, but rather to bring us to a full state of maturity and enlightenment" (p. 37). So Peter is left with longing for a new beginning of his life.

Hans chooses the branch and arranges the rope for his final end. But before the end he chooses to remember his childhood memories and that brings him to "Falkon." "Falkon" with its altogether a different life mellows his desire for suicide. When he comes finally to Emma, the brush of her hair against his face brings a new sensation, a new excitement in him. In his ecstatic hour he fails to identify it as either "pain or joy." He ceases thinking of his suicide.

"Father dying. Please come at once. Mother" (Gert., p. 123), shatters Kuhn's preparation for his suicide. He remembers the words of his ailing father: "youth ends when egotism does; maturity begins when one lives for others" (Gert., p. 117). Whether Kuhn has reached the end of his youth and maturity has dawned in him, he does not know, but these words of his dead father encourage
him to begin afresh. Kuhn is also emboldened to look at life from a different perspective when his old music teacher explains to him the nature of his suffering. The old music teacher explains:

You are suffering from a sickness that is unfortunately common and that one comes across every day amongst sensitive people. It is related to moral insanity and can also be called individualism or imaginary loneliness. Modern books are full of it. It has insinuated itself into your imagination; you are isolated; no one troubles about you and no-one understands you. Am I right? (Gert., pp.136-137).

Mr. Lohe, Kuhn's old music teacher considers this 'sickness' as the 'fashion' of the time, especially among the people of the upper class who neither understand their life nor their suffering. They are, what Eliot would call, "Shape without form, shade without colour, Paralysed force, gesture without motion;" So the old music teacher says:

Those who suffer from this illness only need a couple of disappointments to make them believe that there is no link between them and other people, that all people go about in a state of complete loneliness, that they never really understand each other, share anything or have anything in common. It also happens that people who suffer from this sickness become arrogant and regard all other healthy people who can understand and love each other as flocks of sheep. If this sickness were general, the human race would die out, but it is only found amongst the upper classes in Central Europe. . . . It is pure fiction that there is no bridge between one person and another, that everyone goes about lonely and misunderstood. On the contrary,
what people have in common with each other is much more and of greater importance than what each person has in his own nature and which makes him different from others (Gert, p. 137).

This was the condition of Europe after the death of Nietzsche, and the youth of Germany was especially affected by his "nothingness." Mr. Lohe's words are meant to revive the spirit of life in them. Life appears 'nothing' and man becomes lonely when he becomes self-centred, thinks of himself only. Mr. Lohe's advice to Kuhn could be applied to the youth of Europe: "Learn to think more about others than about yourself for a time. It is the only way for you to get better" (Gert, p. 138).

This is not the morality of the helpless which Nietzsche would have said, but a perennial truth in Hesse's world that the heroes are to learn to make their existence meaningful in this apparently meaningless world. It is the truth that is found in all religions. The old Testament says, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Hesse says in "A Guest at the Spa":

One can love his neighbour less than himself -- then he becomes an egotist, a profitter, a capitalist, a bourgeois, and can, of course, acquire money and power but not a truly happy heart, for the finest, most delicious joys of the soul are locked away from him. Or one can love one's neighbour more than oneself -- then he becomes a poor devil full of inferiority feelings, longing to love everything but still full of rancor and discontent towards himself.
and living in a hell that he himself daily makes hotter. On the other hand the equilibrium of love, the ability to love without being at fault here and there, this love for oneself that is not stolen from any one, this love for others that does not diminish one's own I or do violence to it! The secret of all happiness, all blessedness is in this saying. And if one wishes, one can turn it to its Hindu side and give it the meaning: Love your neighbor, for he is yourself! A Christian translation of tat twam as (that art thou) /Autobiographical Writings, p.162

In stating the matter so Hesse is actually anticipating the existentialist's central problem as to how to live with one's own self, plagued by the arbitrariness in the phenomenal world. Whereas the later existentialists did not have an answer to this, Hesse as their precursor ventures a solution. Of course, the solution is not reached by the protagonists of these three novels but they do make a determined bid to reach it.

As per the advice of his music teacher, Kuhn tries to have a sympathetic understanding of his mother. But all his sincere attempts at the reconciliation with his mother fail since she prefers to stay with one of her cousins, Mrs. Schniebel whom her husband disliked. So Kuhn is compelled to go to R. to seek his fortune. This is also what happens to Peter when he comes to realise, after his "calf-love" affair with Elizabeth, that he should have loved and understood his father. He says: "I know well enough that love is at the heart of all goodness and joy,
and despite my recent deep sorrow concerning Elisabeths
I must start learning to love humanity in deadly earnest.
But how and whom was I to love?" (P.C., p.113). And, as
charity begins at home, Peter begins to love and understand
his father. But the cold response which he receives from
his father compels him to go out of his house again.

Hans is in a different position in his parental
relationship in contrast to Peter and Kuhn. Unlike Peter's
father and Kuhn's mother, Hans's father never loses his
autocratic interest in his son. Hans had never got to
like this autocrat. But at the moment of his existential
crisis he too, like Peter and Kuhn, feels that he should
try to be at peace with his father, and thus be at peace
with himself. So he acquiesces willingly in his father's
advice to be a mechanic. But he too fails. It ultimately
brings his death although he strove hard to learn the
"poetry of labour" (Prod., p.170). His death is the tragic
end of a lonely man who tries desperately to make his
existence meaningful. After his mysterious death his
good friend, Flaig, comments: "Oh nothing. Just that.
And you and I as well -- don't you think that perhaps we
failed the boy in many ways?" (Prod., p.187).

Any amount of rationalisation of accounting for
will not detract anything from the significance of his
death. Death was the inevitable conclusion to the life of
such a sensitive character who was so acutely conscious of
the tension resulting from the experience of a fragmented
life. Of course, he did long to escape from such

conclusion which is evident from the dream he once had, ---
that of "a slender, handsome man with quiet, godlike eyes
and beautiful, gentle hands step out of a boat, and he
ran towards him" (Prod., pp. 127-128). The dream occurs
to him in the moment of his spiritual crisis. In this
spiritual crisis he needs a spiritual guide to go through
the ordeal of life. In the "poetry of labour" he thinks
that he has got that spiritual guide. But it is not so.
And this is evident from the words that speak of his state
of mind while resting a while after the work: "He saw
himself once more a victim of his consuming but hopeless
passion. His head felt as if it would split in two and
his throat ached with his choked-back sobs" (Prod., p. 172).

Death is the inevitable conclusion for him and
consequently the form or the circumstances of his death
are immaterial. So Mark Boulby rightly observes:

"Beneath the Wheel (The Prodigy) on its deepest level is
unconsciously the most pessimistic novel Hesse ever wrote;"
but it is difficult to agree with him when he says: "for it
alone denies completely the value of inward way. The
novel does not deny "completely" the value of inward way;
rather there is a painful struggle on the part of Hans to
realise his inner reality against the hostile world set by his father, teachers, and pastors.

However, Peter and Kuhn do not meet the same fate like Hans. They survive but with a bruised and ruptured heart. In spite of their sincere attempts to be reconciled to their fates, they are left with eternal conflict in them.

In case of Peter conflict begins to wrack him within when he finds his faith in St. Francis of Assisi challenged by the presence of Boppi, a "wretched, half-crippled hunchback" who remains with his sister after the death of his mother. His presence in the family is considered by his brother-in-law, the carpenter, as "a blight over the uneasy household" (P.C., p. 140). Peter becomes conscious of the challenge and his responsibility to meet the challenge as a disciple of St. Francis of Assisi when the carpenter, while spending his Sunday evening with his family and Peter, remarks: "Well, out here at last we can occasionally enjoy ourselves for an hour without him to disturb us" (P.C., p. 142). This "thoughtless" remark of the carpenter conjures up a vision of the wretched cripple before Peter and he gets disturbed. He feels ill at ease and the sufferings of Boppi seem to torment him with questions: "What had been the point of my studying the saint's life and learning his wonderful hymn to
love and following in his footsteps on the Umbrian hills,
if a poor and helpless creature now lay there suffering
when I knew about him and it was in my power to comfort
him? (P. C., pp. 142-143). He hears his inner voice tearing
his heart and admonishing him:

'You, a poet! You, a disciple of the
Umbrian saint. You, a prophet who would teach
men to love and be happy! You, the dreamer who
would claim to hear my voice in the winds and
the waters!' (P. C., p. 143).

The voice which is like a messenger from God seems to make
Peter more conscious of his responsibility with these words:

'You love a home where you are treated with
affection. . . . 'Where you have spent
many happy hours. And yet the very same day
on which I honour this house as my resting-place
you flee from it and think of driving me away!
Saint, Prophet and poet that you are!' (P. C., p. 143).

Peter feels himself to be guilty, "a liar, a braggart
and coward." It becomes unbearable for him to hear his own
inner voice admonishing him. He makes a determined effort
to love and understand Boppi. Boppi opens a novel
experience for Peter: endurance of suffering with much
nobility. Peter finds in Boppi, "a noble human spirit," in
which all discordant elements of life are fused
together. Life has been made harmonious and beautiful.
The petty vices of life -- anger, impatience, mistrust,
falsehood all that disfigure a man's life have been
"cauterised in this man through intense suffering" (P. 2. p. 146). He is neither a god, an angel nor a sage, but a man "full of understanding and resignation," who has learned to sublimate his sufferings through endurance.

Boppi stands out different from all the faces Peter has met: Richard, Erminia, Elizabeth and his land lady in Assisi. With no anxiety, no pining for anything, the deformed Boppi appears as placid as a child and as innocent as St. Francis. He is the symbol of beatitude for Peter and his friendship with the cripple emboldens him to hope for a new world, awaiting him in his near future. He even considers Boppi as his teacher who has observed life in its "tiniest detail" and finds, "a treasure of experience, joy and understanding in every person he met" (P. 2. p. 154). Boppi becomes so much a part of Peter's life that when he sets up home with him in a newly rented dwelling he thinks: "It was like getting married, for now I had to exchange my usual bachelor quarters for a small, orderly household for two" (P. 2. p. 152). In Boppi Peter hopes to have realised his dream of "eternal friendship" which Richard's untimely death has shattered. But here also his dream remains unrealised. Boppi dies. With his death Peter's "quiet, cheerful days" come to an end. Peter is left alone to gaze at the invalid's chair.
However, Boppì with his limited experience of life is not the salvation for Peter with his varied experiences of life. Even Boppì realises this when he says: "Death will do me the service of ridding me of a hump, a sore foot and a deformed hip. It will be a pity when your turn comes -- you with your broad shoulders and fine, strong legs" (P.C., p.159). Peter with his "broad shoulders" and "fine strong legs" appear to Boppì as a Greek hero who has travelled extensively for the varied experiences of life. Death of such a beautiful life appears to Boppì a huge waste. Further Peter's entrance into the world of Nietzsche and Wagner has made it difficult for Peter to accept his suffering with unquestioning dignity like Boppì. Boppì's range of knowledge is limited to Gottfried Keller's Der Grüne Heinrich and Morik's Historie Von der Schöen Lau. Even Keller is introduced to him by Peter. So what Peter says about "Cheerful days" with Boppì is just a temporary relief of his tension and loneliness. It does not bring an end to his tension. Rather Boppì creates greater tension in him and leaves him with innumerable questions. That is why in the end of the novel Peter is left with the longing to go to Assisi and follow the steps of St. Francis. Even the help he renders to his father and his village does not relieve him of his inner turmoil. This tension in
Peter is due to his failure to establish any rapport between the three realms he traverses through: Nature, Matter and Spirit. He fails to get a total vision of life. The conflict of these three realms still persists in him.

Kuhn's return to R. has brought in him the problems that have created greater sufferings and tension in him than what he had. Of course, he has made a name as a great Opera singer and Muoth has recognised him as one of his equals. Further his relation with his mother has improved; she has understood her faults and stays with him. But Kuhn has been involved with the fate of Gertrude and Muoth. Their marriage has failed and Gertrude lives with her father. Muoth lives in Munich. Kuhn knew their marriage would fail since "... deep down in their nature they did not belong to one another; they only drew closer through passion and in the intoxication of exalted hours" (Gert., p.184).

The restless, ever longing and melancholic Muoth fails to comprehend the intensity of Gertrude's passion and the pride of her love. She is unlike Marian and Lottie. She is not afraid of Muoth's ill-treatment, but she fears that she may lose respect for Muoth. She does not want her love to be without any pride and respect. Gertrude suffers because of the conflict in her between love and pride. Kuhn studies her plight as: "She was not
afraid that he would beat her, but that she would no longer respect him, and while anxiously temporising, she hoped to regain her strength* (Gert., p. 192).

This separation of Gertrude from Muoth is as much a source of anguish to Kuhn as it is to Gertrude. But their common anguish does not in any real sense bring them closer. They live in their separate worlds with their own thoughts. While Kuhn suffers because of the suffering of Gertrude, she calmly accepts her suffering with "the knowledge that her good intentions and sacrifices were in vain, and that she could not comfort him and save him from himself" (Gert., p. 184).

Gertrude remains incomprehensible. She neither belongs to the world of Muoth nor to Kuhn. Even there is a great difference between Muoth and Kuhn in spite of their common allegiance to music. While Kuhn searches for the inner core of music, the spirit of it which remains to be felt and not to be heard, Muoth looks for the 'sensual ear' and not to the "Spirit ditties of no tone." Muoth belongs to the world of the senses. But in Gertrude there is a happy equilibrium of Muoth's too much concern for the senses and Kuhn's exclusive inclination for the spirit. So Gertrude, being herself a musician, holds the central position of the novel, and the entire action of the novel is centred round music. Gertrude herself appears as a piece of
music in whom discordant elements are fused and give us a sense of unity and serenity — 'Heiterkeit' — happy equilibrium between 'Geist' and 'Natur'. The supreme example of this is the old Musikmeister of The Glass Bead Game who is literally transfigured in 'Heiterkeit' before his physical demise. Joseph Knecht of The Glass Bead Game, with his keen awareness, can see this in the old Musikmeister whereas Kuhn, inspite of his devotion to 'pure music' fails to perceive this in Gertrude. It is because Kuhn is as one-dimensional as Muoth. Kuhn's too much concern for the spirit fails to fathom the depth of passion in Gertrude while Muoth with his restlessness and deep longing for the senses trembles before the quiet, dignified Gertrude. Of course Muoth feels the shortcomings of the world of senses before his death. So he says to Kuhn just before his suicide: "For instance, I believe as Buddha did, that life is not worth while, but I live for things that appeal to my senses as if this is the most important thing to do. If only it was more satisfying!" (Gart. p.204).

Gertrude remains an ideal for Kuhn and Muoth to long for. Like music she is mysteriously wrapped in peace that passes all understanding and remains divinely beautiful.
Gertrude is a powerful magnet that draws all characters to her. Even Kuhn's mother who reconciles and stays with him seems to be affected by the fate of Gertrude. Ralph Freedman finds Gertrude as a symbolic representation of all four major characters in the novel: Muoth, Kuhn, his mother and Gertrude. He says: "In fact, the ease with which Hesse passed from the love triangle of the two friends with Gertrude, to the involvement with the mother, and finally to the involvement with Gertrude herself suggests, symbolically, that all four major participants had been conceived as one." Ralph Freedman is right in describing Gertrude as a symbolic character but where agreement is not possible with him is in calling her the symbol of all the major participants in the novel. The major participants of the novel represent fragmented and mutually exclusive experiences of life while Gertrude is the symbol of the unified, harmonious whole, that is life. The other characters aspire to it but fail to achieve. That explains Muoth and Kuhn's failure to win her as also, Kuhn's mother's longing for Gertrude's proximity.

A woman with such depth and intensity remains beyond the reach of both, Kuhn and Muoth. However, Muoth gets rid of his loneliness and tension by his suicide whereas Kuhn has to live with his tension and loneliness. His mother dies, Brigitte, the sister of his musician-friend,
Tieser, who waits for him, also dies after her marriage to a musician. Even Tieser is lost to him. He is left alone with Gertrude. His condition is more poignant than that of Goethe's Werther. Werther gets rid of his sufferings by committing suicide whereas Kuhn lives beside Gertrude with the knowledge that "no change could be made in our relationship towards each other," and, "since that cold kiss on dead man's lips, she has never kissed another man" (*Gertrude*, p. 208). Thus Kuhn, like Peter, is left alone with his own despair and a longing.

*Gertrude* is an important novel of Hesse in the sense that this novel not only shows better technical skill than Peter Camenzind and *The Prodigy*, but it contains Hesse's theme that he will take up again and again in his later novels. Further, Gertrude as a character remains as an ideal for Hesse's heroes to long for. Up to his *Narziss and Goldmund*, all his heroes want to get that ideal realised in their lives. Image of Gertrude occurs in *Damiann*. Here she is Frau Eva who is a Goddess, mother and lover. Goldmund dies after carving his mother's image and he feels sorry for his friend and mentor, Narziss, who does not know his mother. This mother certainly is she in whom all discordant experiences meet to give a unified and a total vision of life. She is like a piece of music that brings to us a sense of unity and harmony despite
innumerable diversities. "Music," says Aldous Huxley, "can say four or five things at the same time, and can say them in such a way that the different things will combine into one thing. The nearest approach to a demonstration of the doctrine of the Trinity is a fugue or a good piece of counterpoint." 28

Gertrude is the first novel of Hesse where music is the nucleus and all the major and minor characters are musicians. Even Brigitte, the sister of Tieser marries a musician. Kuhn's mother gains faith in music. Lehtor is the patron of young musicians. The novel itself appears musical. G. W. Field rightly observes when he says, "from this novel music emerges with a message." 29 And music plays a vital role in his subsequent novels.

So the significance of this novel cannot be overlooked. But many critics have been very unkind to this novel. Ziolkowski does not make even the slightest reference to this novel in his book, The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure. Even Hesse was led to believe this book as a failure. Joseph Milock mentions in his book 30 how Hesse was not disappointed when this book went out of print, and regretted its republication in 1947.
One thing that some of the critics have missed in this book, is its technical superiority to *Peter Camenzind* and *The Prodigy*. Joseph Mileck finds "much better technical control"\(^{31}\) of his material in this book. There is economy in the use of words and no decorative style and prolixity of language like *Peter Camenzind*. There is neither deliberate extension of the story as in *Peter Camenzind* nor too much compression of the facts and, sudden, unexpected ending as in *The Prodigy*, rather there is a natural development of the story to an end.

Structurally also the book is sounder than the other two; each chapter of the story proper is centred about a major event or encounter.

So *Gertrude* after *Peter Camenzind* and *The Prodigy*, is a surprise for the public. The novel reveals a new development of Hesse's philosophy. But one should not forget that *Peter Camenzind* was the first novel that brought Hesse to lime light. Ralph Freedman points out, "*Peter Camenzind* was the first of several sparks that were to ignite Hesse's audiences throughout his career and to begin vogues or cults."\(^{32}\) Its importance was also felt by his contemporary writers. Freedman records in his book how this book was the favourite reading of Freud.

Freedman says: "It is no wonder that no less an expert of unconscious longing than Sigmund Freud praised
Peter Camenzind as one of his favourite readings.\textsuperscript{33}

Even his second book, The Prodigy, became more successful than Peter Camenzind, \textsuperscript{34} and in attacking the pedagogy of the time it trespassed on even holier ground. Joseph Mileck, in spite of his biographical approach to Hesse's works, finds this book as "Hesse's contribution to the tendentious literature fashionable in German letters at the turn of the century."\textsuperscript{35} It is one of the famous books among the School literature of the time that flourished in Germany between 1880 and 1914. It can be compared with other famous novels of the time like Emil Strauss' Freund Hein (1902), Robert Musil's Verruirungen des Zöglings Törless (1906), and Friedrich Huch's Mao (1907), and dramas like Frank Uedekind's Frühlings Erwachen (1891), Arno Holz's Traumulus (1905), and Georg Kaiser's Rektor Kleist (1905). This novel created a stir in German literature when it was first published.

The novel was considered as a satire against the educational system of the time, and an indictment of the adult world. The novel, however, does not depict the physical torture of a young boy that we find in Charles Dickens' young heroes like David Copperfield, Oliver Twist or Pip; it rather shows how the 'will' of a young boy is crushed and ultimately he is made to crawl. So Hesse's problem is deeper and more spiritual than Dickens' delineation of
Like Peter Camenzind and Gertrude this novel also bears the "seed" of Hesse's future artistic development. Mark Boulby says: "Beneath the Wheel (The Prodigy) implies a submission to social discipline as well as a rebellion against it. It is the conflict, however, not the compromise, which is the seed of future artistic development." 36

Thus these early novels are immensely important to get a total meaning of Hesse's philosophy as revealed in his novels. Although, the quest in the first phase ends with 'despair' and 'nothingness' yet the restlessness persists in the Hesse-protagonist to find his own identity and meaning of his existence. So he sees life from a different perspective in the next phase of his quest.

2 Ibid., p.5.


5 Mileck, Hesse: Life and Art, p.35.

6 Ibid., p.59.


13 Hermann Hesse, “Childhood of the Magician,” in Autobiographical Writings (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p. 4. All page references to text in parentheses are to this edition.


20 As quoted in Ziolkowski's *The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure*, p.342.

21 Ibid., p.343.

22 Ibid., p.343.
23 Ziolkowski in the last chapter, "Between Romanticism and Existentialism" of his book, The Novels of Hermann Hesse: A Study in Theme and Structure, discusses the difference between 'Romanticism' and 'Existentialism,' and shows how some of the writers who are called 'romantic' have been studied as 'existentialist' whereas some of the existentialists have been studied as romantic. So it is not safe always to label any writer as 'romantic' or 'existentialist.' This is also applicable to Hesse who eludes any particular critical jargon of the critics. So Ziolkowski, to be in safe side, puts Hesse in between Novalis and Camus. He considers Hesse's form or the structure romantic whereas his thought is existential. See pp. 341-364.


26 Mark Boulby, Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art, p. 67.

27 Ralph Freedman, Hermann Hesse: Pilgrim of Crisis, p. 139.


30 Millock, Hermann Hesse: Life and Art, p. 57.

31 Ibid., p. 59.

32 Ralph Freedman, Hermann Hesse: Pilgrim of Crisis, p. 108.

33 Ibid., p. 117.

34 Ibid., p. 121.

35 Millock, Hermann Hesse: Life and Art, p. 34.

36 Mark Boulby, Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art, p. 67.