

Title	Dynamics of self-discovery in Hermann Hesse's novels (1919–43): an analysis of the influence of Jung, Freud and Nietzsche on Hesse
Authors	Linehan, Uschi
Publication date	2019
Original Citation	Linehan, U. 2019. Dynamics of self-discovery in Hermann Hesse's novels (1919–43): an analysis of the influence of Jung, Freud and Nietzsche on Hesse. PhD Thesis, University College Cork.
Type of publication	Doctoral thesis
Rights	© 2019, Uschi Linehan. - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/
Download date	2025-08-13 09:29:39
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/7874

Abstract

My thesis explores the protagonists' developmental sequences in five novels by Hermann Hesse, namely, *Demian* (1919), *Siddhartha* (1922), *Der Steppenwolf* (1927), *Narziss und Goldmund* (1930) and *Das Glasperlenspiel* (1943). These five novels place more emphasis on the ongoing process of personal self-discovery than any other works by Hermann Hesse.

I examine the influence of Jungian and Freudian psychoanalytical patterns of thought on the specific narrative composition of Hesse's novels and also how Nietzsche's psychology of self-composition (cf. Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Philosophy*, 1994) and his ideas of philosophy as autobiography have impacted on Hesse's interpretation of the *Entwicklungsroman* (i.e. "novel of personal development") genre of literature.

Hesse started to read Nietzsche at the age of eighteen in 1895, and later began to read psychoanalytical books by Jung and Freud whilst simultaneously undergoing a mid-life crisis. Hesse had three separate periods of Jungian psychoanalysis sessions during his life: 1916–18, 1921 and 1925–26, and seems to have been more attracted to Jung's concern with imaginative and aesthetic processes in the human psyche than Freud's clinical psychoanalytic approach. Like Hesse, Jung talks about the development of the Self in a creative way in his psychoanalytical theories. The main difference between Jung's idea of the Self and that of Hesse is that Jung saw the Self as reaching a static point in self-realisation, whilst Hesse saw the Self as something that was being constantly reinvented. This is immediately redolent of Nietzsche's concept of the Self as involving dynamic processes of Dionysian self-excess. My interpretative perspective focuses on how Hesse's protagonists undergo processes of self-

discovery in certain transitional periods of their lives. Processes of self-discovery and self-composition are thematised and examined both in Jung's psychoanalytical theories and Nietzsche's philosophy of life. My analysis suggests that Hesse's works became more Nietzschean than Jungian in nature as his oeuvre progressed, as is particularly evident in his last two novels, *Narziss und Goldmund* and his magnum opus *Das Glasperlenspiel*.