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THE RECEPTION OF HERMANN HESSE IN THE UNITED STATES

by

Reinhold Siegfried Steinbeisser

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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To My Mother

ABSTRACT

The INTRODUCTION begins with a short sketch of the Reception of Hermann Hesse in the United States and identifies the groups which received Hesse. Subsequently, a brief outline of the theories of reception is given with emphasis to what factors are involved in the receptive process and how they applied to the reception of Hermann Hesse.

CHAPTER I summarizes the events of the Hesse reception in the United States from its meager beginning in 1946 to its tumultuous conclusion in 1976. Emphasis is placed on the progression of the Hesse reception from the critics to the counter-culture, with particular attention given to the latter group because their acceptance of Hesse's works was unexpected and of great impact.

CHAPTER II examines the groups which received Hesse's works. Emphasis on the 'Beat' and the counter-culture and their particular beliefs and philosophies are examined. Identified are those concepts which separated these groups from the mainstream of American society. In addition, the times during which these groups emerged and flourished are discussed.

CHAPTER III focuses on the identification of the groups which received Hesse with the characters and concepts within the novels of Hesse. Among those concepts with which youth identified are Oriental mysticism, drugs, anti-war and

technology.

CHAPTER IV investigates the identification of the 'Beat' and the counter-culture with the author, Hermann Hesse. The personal philosophy of Hesse is examined and the correlation between Hesse's personal philosophy and the philosophy of the youth is drawn.

CHAPTER V summarizes the impact mass communication had on the Hesse reception with stress on the paperback as a means of distributing information to large groups of readers at a relatively low cost. Other areas examined are the role of records, films and popular periodicals and their effect on the Hesse reception.

The CONCLUSION discusses the decline of the groups which received Hesse and the subsequent decline in sales figures for this author's works. It establishes a direct correlation between the decline of the counter-culture and the popularity of Hermann Hesse, thus establishing the relationship between the reader and the reception of the literary work.

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INTRODUCTION

The German-Swiss author Hermann Hesse received nationwide recognition in the United States when his novel Siddhartha sold more than 100,000 copies in 1965.¹ Shortly thereafter, some of Hesse's other works, most notably Demian and Steppenwolf also sold in the six digit figures and beyond.² At approximately the same time a number of articles concerning the popular appeal of Hesse's novels appeared in Time, Life and The Saturday Review.³ Even newspapers such as The Tulsa Daily and The San Francisco Examiner proclaimed Hesse to be one of the greatest and most influential writers of our time.⁴

These facts by themselves, however, seem meaningless until it is considered that only two decades before, in 1946 when Hesse was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, this author was virtually unknown to the majority of American readers.⁵ Even a decade of exposure resulted in limited interest in Hesse's works and prompted one critic to write that Hesse would never occupy a position of prominence on the American literary scene.⁶ A few years later, on the occasion of Hesse's last birthday, a similar view was expressed in The New York Times.⁷

It was to the surprise of critics not only that Hesse became successful, but that his novels sold by the hundreds

of thousands. As surprising as the sales figures were, the facts that Hesse's popularity bordered on a 'cult' and, as Theodore Ziolkowski has mentioned, it was a 'cult' largely carried by the youth of America, the college-aged and by the unconventional groups in American society.⁸

The unexpected enthusiasm with which Hesse's works were received in the United States spawned numerous questions concerning his reception. It was wondered why Hesse was received in the U.S. at a time when most critics had already pronounced his epitaph and had discounted his popular appeal. In so far as Hesse was not received by the 'traditional' groups of readers, rather, by the 'unconventional readers', many wondered what the youth of America found in his novels. To compound this dilemma, it must be remembered Hesse wrote more than four decades before he became popular in the United States, and he came from a milieu which was considerably different from that of the American way of life during the 1960s. These questions and others motivated the following investigation and retrospective analysis of the Hesse reception in the United States.

In order to examine the Hesse reception and effectively analyze and trace it, I am employing the theories of reception - or that field of study which seeks to establish the relationship and interaction of literature, author and reader.⁹ I choose the theories of reception because they offer a number of tools with which to examine and analyze reception of literature, as they take into consideration

what the author wrote, his style, the social factors involved in the receptive process, mass media and the expectations of the readers and others. In fact, there are so many divergent theories which reception incorporates, that it is often difficult to establish where one begins and another ends and where the overlapping exists. Accordingly, a brief summary and outline of the major tenets of reception, as may be applied to this study, are in order. It is hoped, thereby, a workable model for this study may be established.

Literary reception is, as Uwe Hohendahl has postulated, both an old field and a new one. It is old because studies of reception, or the interaction of reader, author and work appeared over 70 years ago. It is new because most of the theoretical work has come about during the last 20 years.¹⁰

One of the earliest efforts attempting to establish the interaction between reader and author was Levin Schücking's Soziologie der Literarischen Geschmacksbildung published in 1913.¹¹ In this study Schücking drew two conclusions: firstly, reception of a particular work is due primarily to its acceptance by groups of readers who carry a similar taste or 'Geschmack'; secondly, he proposed the groups receiving a particular work were comprised of certain social, ethnic, cultural and racial groups. In so doing, Schücking attempted to establish the direct correlation between specific groups of readers and the reception of a literary work. In addition, Schücking "...demanded the localization of these social strata groups which, as vehicles of taste, sustain and steer

literary reception".¹²

Although Schücking may have been close to the crux of the receptive process by ascribing reception to certain groups, he nonetheless offered no means by which to identify those groups, nor did he take into consideration the possibility of a number of individuals all of different racial, social or ethnic persuasion receiving the same author or even the same literary work. In addition, Schücking did not, or could not, examine the reasons for a group's preference of one literary work over another, or what the basic motivating factors for reading a particular work were.

Whereas Schücking's theory on groups did shed light on an important aspect of reception, it took almost 50 years before the correlation of groups and their particular preferences was established. In 1964 Robert Escarpit published Sociologie de la littérature.¹³ In it Escarpit stressed the viewpoint expressed by Schücking that groups are paramount in the receptive process. Escarpit, however, went further and reasoned that there exists a nexus between the reception of a literary work and the groups receiving that work. This nexus, he claimed, was the common denominator between readers and the literary work, or as he states "Ein erfolgreiches Buch ist ein Buch, das zum Ausdruck bringt, was die Gruppe erwartet, ein Buch, welches der Gruppe ihr eigenes Bild offenbart".¹⁴ That is to say, a book will be successful or received if it lives up to the expectations of the reading public and if it offers the reader at least a small

portion of his or her expectations. The sharing of these expectations may be in the form of similar life-styles, as found in the literary work, or perhaps of similar topics, political manifestations or other factors.

What Escarpit did not take into consideration was the possibility that a literary work could be received by a number of groups each with a totally different reason, or by single individuals also each with different reasons for accepting or receiving a work.

Hans Robert Jauss addressed himself to this dilemma when he wrote Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft in 1967.¹⁵ In this study Jauss did not acknowledge the impact of groups per se, nor did he recognize the impact of groups as a force in the receptive process. Rather, Jauss postulated that it was the individual who remains anonymous, who is in the center of the receptive process. He claims it is the identification between that individual reader and the literary work which is paramount in reception. Jauss offers another important concept to his theory when he states if a reader is able to identify with the work or with concepts found within the work, then the messages he receives may determine, or at least alter and influence his subsequent actions. This process Jauss calls the social function of literature.¹⁶ Thus, we may deduce, Jauss established, where others had not, the active force of the literary work as a partner in the reception process. That is to say, the literary piece is as much a contributing

force in reception as is the reader.

After Jauss' study, numerous other studies appeared which similarly stressed the identification between reader and literary work as a primary force in the reception of an author. Wolfgang Iser, in particular, suggested if reception is to occur, there must first be a common denominator. In other words, the literary work or some portion of it must strike a chord in the reader. This could be the existence of a similar milieu; the characters portrayed in the novel, or the story could be a close resemblance of the reader, or it could be a number of other variables. The interrelationship between reader and literary work are summarized by Iser when he states, "The literary work has two poles, the artistic and the aesthetic. The artistic refers to the text created by the author and the aesthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader."¹⁷

While the theories of Jauss and Iser gained widespread recognition, others were not so enthusiastic in accepting their theories. Instead they offered other theories and suggested other areas of concentration for successfully analyzing reception. One of those was Bernhard Zimmermann who advocated a sociologically and historically based theory of reception. Zimmermann claimed that in earlier efforts (here he presumably means those of Jauss and Iser) the concept of the reader remained too theoretical and too abstract for practical purposes. Zimmermann maintained that by utilizing a sociologically-historically based investiga-

tion, concrete reasons for an author's reception could be established. Hence, following Zimmermann's theory, the social condition of the times, the individuals and groups which emerged from those times would have to be examined.¹⁸

The theory proposed by Zimmermann has much to offer in terms of possible areas of investigating the reception process. But as was the case with Schücking and Escarpit, the tools which Zimmermann offers still create only a portion of the whole picture of reception. Examining the social conditions of the times may be an integral part of reception and one of the key elements in determining the receptive process; nonetheless, there are other areas of investigation.

One critic of reception who recognized early that more was involved in the reception of an author than the examination of the groups and the social condition of the times was Karl Robert Mandelkow. He maintained reception was the product of many factors, each as important as the other. Among those factors which Mandelkow stressed was the influence of mass communication as a vital contributing force in the reception process.

Durch die Einbeziehung neuer Medien wie Rundfunk, Fernsehen und anderer Mittel der modernen Bewusstseinsindustrie in das Feld wirkungsvermittelnder Faktoren entsteht eine dem 18. und 19. Jahrhundert gegenüber völlig neue Quellenlage, die eigener, komplizierter Methoden rezeptionsästhetischer Verarbeitung bedarf.¹⁹

Mandelkow reasoned that by examining the modern communicative processes, critics of reception would be in a better position to analyze an author's reception. But one realization which

Mandelkow was quick to point out was that little was known regarding mass communication and a few critics had the tools and expertise with which to examine the impact of mass communication on reception. It is with some justification that he states, "Hier tappen wir noch so gut wie im Dunkeln".²⁰

Whereas Mandelkow listed only a few areas which comprise mass communication, namely television and radio, other areas of investigation exist and may be even more crucial to the reception of an author. These would include: the inexpensive paperback as a means of transmitting information to a large group of readers, films, records, magazines with a large circulation, and newspapers. Presumably all of these would have to be examined and their impact on the reception of an author measured.

Although the theories of Mandelkow, Zimmermann, Jauss and others are some of the more important contributions to literary reception, it is questionable whether any one of these theories by themselves could adequately explain the reception of an author. Rather, one would have to agree with Peter Uwe Hohendahl when he claims reception cannot be reduced to a one dimensional field of study, but that reception is the result of many factors.²² Some of these factors have already been mentioned and may be summarized as follows:

A) Groups are responsible for the reception of a literary work; B) It is the social factors existing which give rise to these particular groups; C) A literary work is received

by the groups because a common denominator is perceived between the readers and the work they are reading; D) Reception could be the cause of certain communicative processes which fall in the area of mass communication. Any one of these areas could be responsible for the reception of an author, but it is more probable that each is a contributing factor towards the total reception of an author. Accordingly, each area should then be examined and incorporated in a study of an author's reception.

I have chosen these four areas as a basis for the study of the reception of Hermann Hesse in the United States, but first of all I shall trace the emergence of Hesse by outlining the events which led to his reception. Accordingly, the first chapter will contain a quantitative analysis of the Hesse reception. In other words, I shall trace the development of the Hesse reception with the aid of statistical data, articles from magazines and newspapers, and articles authored by critics and scholars. The aim here will be to highlight the crucial factors which aided in the reception of Hesse. In addition, grounds for the further investigation will be established. The examination of the Hesse reception in the United States shall begin with 1946 because, as Marjorie Gouwens and Theodore Ziolkowski have pointed out, not much existed prior to that time in terms of interest in Hesse's writings. The study concludes with 1976 because most available material seems to indicate a sharp drop in interest in the novels of Hermann Hesse.²³

Having established what occurred during the years between 1946-1976, in the second chapter I shall, following the concepts proposed by Schücking and Escarpit, examine the groups which received Hesse. Here the groups will be examined in detail with particular attention given to their philosophies, life-styles, attitudes and actions. Furthermore, following the theory offered by Zimmermann, the social conditions of the times will be examined.

The third chapter, following the theories of Jauss and Iser, will examine the possible identification between reader and literary work. Here the concepts or beliefs outlined in the second chapter will be used as a basis for identification. That is to say, the philosophy and characters in the writings of Hesse and the concepts which are dominant in Hesse's works will be examined with special emphasis given to those concepts and characters with which the groups receiving Hesse could identify.

Closely associated with the identification of the groups with characters and concepts within the works of Hesse, is the possible identification of those groups with the author himself. Consequently, the fourth chapter will examine the identification of the groups which received Hesse's works with the author.

After having established which groups received Hesse and what their particular reasons for their acceptance of Hesse was, the final chapter shall deal with the influence of mass communication on the Hesse reception. This chapter

will attempt, through the use of available statistical data, to answer the call made by Mandelkow. Here the role of films, paperbacks, records and articles in popular publications will be examined and analyzed. Wherever possible, statistical data will be provided to pinpoint how mass communication influenced the reception of Hermann Hesse, or how the reception of Hermann Hesse within one area influenced the receptive processes in another area of the reception of this author.

Although these four areas of concentration in the reception of Hermann Hesse do not necessarily exhaust the various means by which this author's reception may be analyzed, it is hoped that two basic objectives may be fulfilled. First, reception is a relatively new field comprised primarily of theoretical material which has yet to be applied in a practical study. The reception of Hesse represents an ideal case, by virtue of its chronological proximity, to offer an excellent example upon which to test the various theories of reception. It is thereby hoped that this study will show that a number of reasons exist which are responsible for the reception of an author, and that no one theory is more important than another in the receptive process. Secondly, by examining and determining what factors contributed to the reception of Hermann Hesse, critics may be able to determine more accurately why any author is read and received. These reasons then could supply us with an answer as to why authors were received in the past, are received in the present, and why authors will be received in the future.

CHAPTER I

THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RECEPTION OF HERMANN HESSE

The reception of Hermann Hesse in the United States spans a number of decades. It is agreed by critics the reception reached its apex during the latter part of the 1960s and the first part of the 1970s. Divergent views exist regarding the events prior to the 1960s and 1970s. Critics have traced the beginning of the reception to 1946 when Hermann Hesse was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.¹ Whereas some critics, as the noted Hesse critic Theodore Ziolkowski, claim that since the Nobel Prize a continuous reception has taken place, and cites the numerous articles which have appeared since then to sustain his claim.² Others do not agree. Egon Schwarz and Marjorie Gouwens agree that the reception of Hesse began with the Nobel Prize, but they take issue with Ziolkowski whether the reception can be viewed as continuous.³

Gouwens views the reception as comprising three main periods and labels each as follows: 1) 1946-1957 is classified as being a period of scholarship as most interest in Hesse stemmed from critics; 2) 1958-1968 she terms as the period of fashion, since it was during this time Hesse became popular among the youth and the college-aged; 3) 1969-1976 she classifies as a period of prominence, as

it was during this time that Hesse's position in the American literary scene became favorable;⁴ that is: it was during those years that Hesse became accepted as a bona fide European writer.

Schwarz, on the other hand, does not ascribe specific dates, nor does he label the periods. Rather, he views the reception in terms of events which had a profound effect on the reception of Hesse. Schwarz also considers the Nobel Prize as the first and major event of the reception of Hesse, since it was the Nobel Prize which awakened the American reader to this author and prompted the first serious studies on his works. Schwartz sees the second event as the appearance of Hesse in the writings of Colin Wilson and Timothy Leary. In these writings Hesse's works form a cornerstone and his writings are often quoted. Coupled with this Schwarz also takes into consideration the impressive sales statistics which coincide with the mentioning of Hesse in Wilson's and Leary's writings. The final event Schwarz considers to be the acceptance of Hesse by the dissatisfied American youth, during the latter part of the 1960s and early 1970s, who consumed his works by the millions and thus elevated Hesse to a position of prominence.⁵

The divisions offered by both Gouwens and Schwarz are similar in many respects. Schwarz' outline of events coincides with Gouwens' dates. In addition, each utilizes three divisions. But here the similarities end. Gouwens' divisions seem too rigid and arbitrary as she attempts to ascribe

specific dates to developments which cover a number of years and which do not let themselves be pinpointed. Schwarz, on the other hand, assesses the reception much more practically, since he does not confine himself to specific dates, but takes into account that trends take a number of years to complete. As such, Schwarz has basically identified the crucial factors in the Hesse reception which altered the reception.

Therefore, based on the outline proposed by Schwarz, I have also divided the reception of Hermann Hesse in the United States into three parts: A) The reception commencing with the Nobel Prize; B) New directions in the Hesse reception with the mention of Hesse in the writings of popular figures; C) The "Hesse-Cult", the time during which Hesse was idolized and revered by the American youth.

A) The Hesse Reception Commencing with the Nobel Prize.

When Hermann Hesse received the Nobel Prize for literature in 1946, the American reading public was in a quandary as to who this German-Swiss author was and why he was awarded the prize. The opening statement of Robert Pick's article expressed this sentiment well: "The recent award of the Nobel Prize in literature to the Swiss, Hermann Hesse, has puzzled even the most well read men of letters in this country."⁶ Although Hesse was known in the United States prior to 1946 and, as Marjorie Gouwens has indicated, had even enjoyed some success, it was evident that Hesse was a

virtual anonymity in the United States, at the time of the Nobel Prize.⁷

There are several reasons for Hesse's lack of renown in the United States. Theodore Ziolkowski has attributed it to the rise of the Nazis in Germany. In addition, Ziolkowski has cited the Second World War as a major reason for the lack of interest in literature from Europe, and Hesse being no exception. Furthermore, Ziolkowski reasoned that if Hesse was to be received in the United States, it would have to be shown that Hesse had ~~nothing to do with the Nazi regime.~~⁸

Immediately following the award, two articles appeared which not only sought to acquaint the American readers with Hesse, but which also served the purpose of showing that Hesse had nothing to do with Nazi Germany, and, in fact was anti-Nazi. The first article was Thomas Mann's "Hermann Hesse - Liberator of a 'Stifling Provincialism'", which appeared in The Saturday Evening Review.⁹ In this article, Mann not only extolls Hesse's pacifism, but also praises Hesse's significant contributions to the anti-Nazi movement and to literature as well. In commenting about Hesse's pacifist attitude, Mann highlighted Hesse's literary achievements and his treatment of Jewish authors which was fair and equitable. The second article, which appeared some time later, was André Gide's "Preface to the Journey to the East". This article again stressed Hesse's contribution to world literature, and was even more pronounced in the praises of Hesse's pacifist attitudes. Gide states:

Although profoundly and fundamentally German, it is only by turning his back on Germany that he succeeds. Those in his country who were able to remain loyal to themselves, and not allow themselves to be defeated are rare; it is to them that he addresses himself...¹⁰

These articles sought to enlighten the American reader as to the virtues of this author and to a large extent they succeeded. Four of Hesse's works were newly released or appeared in reworked editions shortly after the Nobel Prize: Steppenwolf (1947), Demian (1948), Magister Ludi (1949), and Siddhartha (1951).¹¹

It is difficult to assess what impact the articles by Mann or Gide had on the sales of these books, or what impact they had on the greater American reading public. Of the four newly released editions, only Siddhartha seemed to have enjoyed any measurable success, selling over 13,000 copies.¹²

Critics and scholars, on the other hand, showed much more interest in Hesse's works. Whereas very few articles on Hesse had appeared prior to the Nobel Prize, the years between 1946 and 1955 produced 50 critical studies.¹³ Most of these articles dealt with specific topics such as "Der Leidende Dritte", "The Masochistic Rebel in Recent German Literature", or "Der Steppenwolf. Hesse's Portrait of the Intellectual".¹⁴ In view of these articles, one would have to agree with Marjorie Gouwens when she labels this period as "scholarly".

Even though Hermann Hesse received substantial coverage from critics and even had some of his works released or re-

released, he was still not very well received by the American reader. As one critic stated, "Solange Hermann Hesse lebte, kümmerten sich die U.S.A. so wenig um ihn wie dieser um die U.S.A.". ¹⁵ By 1955 a new trend was developing which was hardly noticeable to critics and yet was the beginning of a whole new era in the Hesse reception.

B) New Directions in the Hesse Reception.

The mid-1950s seemed to bring about a shift in the Hesse reception. As early as 1955, Theodore Ziolkowski reported, Hesse began receiving letters from avid admirers who discussed with fervor the importance and influence his works had on their lives. ¹⁶ Although these letters were sporadic, they do reveal the beginnings of an idolatry on the part of Hesse's readers. As one high school student wrote, "My heart opens itself to you as to no other person. I could confide many, many things to you". ¹⁷ Though these letters may be seen as the start of an idolatry, they can hardly be considered a major breakthrough.

It was not until Colin Wilson's The Outsider appeared in the United States, that Hesse received a new and dramatic boost. ¹⁸ This book, which was extremely well received and which enabled Wilson to go on a speaking tour of the United States, dealt with the individual's search for truth and meaning in life. One particular chapter dealt with the works of Hermann Hesse. Wilson considered the novels Demian, Narcissus and Goldmund, Siddhartha, The Glass Bead Game, and

Steppenwolf as manifestations of the outsider in society, in that these novels and their character portrayals are attempts to illustrate the search for truth.¹⁹

Approximately the same time Wilson's book was published in the United States, Hesse's Siddhartha, which appeared as a New Directions paperback, was beginning to be read on the West Coast.²⁰ Edwin Casebeer, one of the few Hesse critics who has given an account of those times, states: "When I first began to read Hesse in 1958, it (Siddhartha) was particularly popular among those college students attracted to figures of San Francisco's North Beach 'beat' movement".²¹ Casebeer, however, goes on to point out the popularity, or at least the growing interest in Siddhartha, may have been the result of the general affinity by readers on the West Coast to books dealing with Oriental mysticism. When one considers it was Alan Watts' The Way of Zen which enjoyed enormous success during this time, the trend toward Eastern thought becomes even more obvious.²²

Any relationship between the appearance of Wilson's book and the rising popularity of Siddhartha may be problematic, since statistical data for this time seems to be lacking altogether. Nonetheless, Casebeer's remark indicates Hesse was beginning to enjoy some success. This is even more evident when we consider that Hesse was being mentioned in the literature of the 'Beat'. One such mention was in Jack Kerouac's Big Sur, a book very popular among the 'Beats'.²³ Even though Kerouac's mention of Hesse was negative, it did

show this author had penetrated the inner circle of the 'Beat', since Kerouac was considered one of their prime spokesmen and founders.

The next major development of a profound influence on the Hesse reception occurred when the drug-culture adopted Hesse's works as a manual for the psychedelic experience. The drug-culture of the 1960s began when Timothy Leary, then a lecturer at Harvard University, advocated the use of psychedelic drugs as a means by which to achieve greater awareness. Leary published numerous articles and was constantly giving lecture tours. One article, in particular, co-authored with Ralph Metzner, was "Hermann Hesse: Poet of the Interior Journey". In this article, the authors claimed Hesse to be "...the master guide to the psychedelic experience".²⁴ They also listed Hesse's Siddhartha and Steppenwolf as ideal guides to be read before the next LSD experience. In addition, the authors went so far as to suggest Hesse himself probably used mind-expanding drugs, and cite numerous examples from his works to substantiate their claim.

Leary's adulation of Hesse did not stop with this article. In an effort to spread his psychedelic gospel, Leary founded the "Castalian Society", borrowing the term from the futuristic society in Hesse's The Glass Bead Game. This society, later called "The League for Spiritual Discovery", again reminiscent of Hesse's league in The Journey to the East, was "...a legally incorporated religion dedicated to the ancient sequence of "turning-on, tuning-in, and

dropping out."²⁵

The inclusion of Hesse and his works in Leary's psychedelic cult certainly gave the Hesse reception new impetus. Through Leary's many lecture tours, Hesse's fame spread throughout the United States and prompted one critic to say, "...Timothy Leary seems to have been more powerful in the cause of Hesse than the Nobel Prize committee."²⁶

C) The Hesse Cult.

The year 1956 was a pivotal one for the Hesse reception. It was in that year Hesse's Indic novel Siddhartha sold more than 100,000 copies and became one of the best-selling paperbacks.²⁷ By 1967, Siddhartha had sold more than one quarter million copies.²⁸ Another of Hesse's novels, Demian, sold more than 100,000 copies in the same year.²⁹

Publishers were quick to respond to the apparent success of Hesse's works. Gigantic editions were planned by publishers. One particularly rewarding effort was undertaken by Bantam Books, who between 1956 and 1976 released 13 of Hesse's works.³⁰ To make these books even more appealing, the publishers designed fascinating covers depicting mystical scenes, half nude women and an assortment of demonic creatures. In view of Hesse's popularity, other publishers planned gigantic editions in hope of capitalizing on a trend. New Directions, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, The Noonday Press, and Farrer, Straus and Giroux all planned releases.³¹

The editions released by various publishers were indeed very successful. Bantam Books reports that between 1966 and 1976, 7,000,000 copies of its editions sold.³² In one month alone, the novel Steppenwolf sold in excess of 350,000 copies.³³ All in all, Suhrkamp reported that Hesse's novels had sold more than 11,000,000 copies by 1976.³⁴ In view of the fact that Hesse's novels are still available in many bookstores, the total sales figure may now be substantially higher. Works which enjoyed the highest popularity were Siddhartha, which had sold 3,000,000 copies by 1975, and Steppenwolf, which had sold 2,000,000 copies.³⁵

When Hesse's novels became increasingly popular, several articles appeared in the press. Some of these articles were "Learning to Live with Chaos", "A God Within", "Portrait of Adolescence", and numerous others.³⁶ These articles dealt with specific topics concerning Hesse's works, his philosophy and certain problems to which Hesse addressed himself. Although not all of these articles voiced positive opinions of his novels, they do indicate there was much interest among critics for Hesse's novels.

Although the early articles dealt with the works themselves, by 1967 a change could be noticed as more and more articles appeared which sought to explain the reasons for the Hesse reception. Whereas previous studies concerned themselves with the philosophical or theoretical aspects of Hesse's works, later articles dealt with and explored why Hesse was popular and with whom. One of these attempts was

George Steiner's "Eastward Ho!", which appeared in The New Yorker.³⁷ Steiner claimed that Hesse was popular among the youth, but in particular, among the unconventional segments of the youth, and he relates his experience with the members of the Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco. A similar article which tied the novels of Hesse to the youth even more so, was Webster Schott's "German Guru Makes the U.S. Scene Again",³⁸ and Theodore Ziolkowski's "Saint Hesse Among the Hippies".³⁹ As the titles readily suggest, interest in Hesse's works was not of an ordinary nature, but bordered on a cult. Stephen Koch illustrates this quite accurately when he stated, "Hesse has been standard psychedelic equipment, along with water pipes, day-glow art, the Maharishi, Jim Morrison and the I-Ching".⁴⁰ Egon Schwarz, in one of the first articles to be authored by a "Germanist", comes to the same conclusion: "It does not take much detective work to perceive the Hesse fad in this country is carried by the Hippies, the alienated, and the young radicals".⁴¹ Furthermore, such articles, as "Hesse und die Gegenkultur", and "How Hermann Hesse speaks to the College Generation", seem to sustain the view proposed by Schwarz and others.⁴²

The assessments made by critics during the late 1960s are quite accurate, especially when one considers the various areas in which Hesse's name or a reference to his works could be found. There was a bar in Berkeley called "The Steppenwolf", and a theater there appropriately called "The Magic Theater", and a coffeehouse in Philadelphia by the same name.

One could also visit "Demian's Rathskeller" in Princeton, a boutique called "The Bead Game". And there was the rock group "Steppenwolf" which spread Hesse's fame from coast to coast.⁴³ Finally, one could find mention of Hesse or his works in such counter-culture publications as Tom Wolfe's The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test,⁴⁴ Timothy Leary's High Priest and in underground newspapers, such as the Berkeley Barb.⁴⁶

Even though Hesse enjoyed much popularity with the counter-culture, it would be a gross simplification to confine Hesse to this area. It must be stated that Hesse did enjoy immense popularity with the unconventional segments of American society, but he was also accepted by the more traditional readers. Theodore Ziolkowski stated:

Mademoiselle printed Hesse's views on Peace, while Seventeen cited Hesse, along with Paul McCartney of the Beatles and Neil Armstrong of the Moon, in an article on graphology ("What A Boy's Handwriting Tells you"). The Hallmark Company brought out greeting cards bearing "Words of Love" from Siddhartha. The humor magazine National Lampoon featured a "classy comics illustrated" version of Siddhartha, and that same novel had the distinction of being parodied in The New Yorker.⁴⁷

In addition, Hesse's novels became incorporated into the high school curricula throughout the United States.⁴⁸ Finally, the best example of Hesse's popularity came when Charles Schultz' comic strip "Peanuts" featured Snoopy perched on top of his doghouse reading Hesse.⁴⁹

Whether the acceptance of Hesse, by the 'traditional' segment of society, came as a result of his popularity with

the counter-culture, or as a result of clever merchandising, is debatable. Nonetheless, by the 1970s, Hesse had saturated the very basic fiber of American society. Not only was Hesse read by the counter-culture, but in colleges and high schools, and by parents who wanted to know what their children were reading.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER I

Prior to 1946, Hermann Hesse was virtually unknown to the American reader. By the late 1960s, Hesse's novels were read more widely than those of any European author in the United States in 100 years. What precisely occurred during those years has become the focus of much attention by critics.

As was pointed out, the bulk of the Hesse reception was not of an ordinary nature. It bordered on a cult and idolatry. Some critics have claimed it was the youth, the counter-culture and the alienated who took to Hesse. Others have claimed it was partly this segment of youth, but the more traditional segments of society had as much to do with catapulting Hesse's novels to the top of the best seller list.

There were several reasons for Hesse's success in the United States, some of which have already been alluded to. There was the rock band bearing the name of his popular novel, Steppenwolf, articles and lectures, comments of

authors such as Timothy Leary, Colin Wilson and Tom Wolfe, the Nobel Prize and the films all contributed to his reception. But these facts do not fully explain the reception of Hermann Hesse and critics have concerned themselves with further studies.

Many critics have written about Hesse's reception. At first, a primary concern was that Hesse was being read. As time wore on, increasing attention focused on why Hesse was read and by whom. Critics found it difficult to comprehend how the youth, particularly American youth, could take to this author. It was, therefore, with some justification that Joseph Mileck wrote:

....emerged as he is in the romantic tradition of Novalis, a tradition which is neither understood nor appreciated by the American, Hesse is not likely to attract many readers here except for kindred spirits in our university circles, and for the German speaking intellectuals who have immigrated to America in the past two decades.⁵⁰

It appears that this author had little in common with the youth who bought his novels. The two were separated by two wars, three generations, different cultures and interpretations. And yet, something existed which struck a mutual chord - a shared impulse.

It has been suggested if we are to comprehend and understand why Hermann Hesse was received in the United States must examine these shared impulses and how they manifest themselves in reader and literary work. Only then can we fully understand what transpired during the 1960s and the 1970s. Accordingly, it is the groups which received Hesse who

must be examined, and their political and philosophical views investigated.

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURE OF THE 'BEAT' AND THE COUNTER-CULTURE AND THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE TIMES DURING WHICH THESE GROUPS EMERGED

Why an author's works are received by the public has come under close scrutiny with the increasing interest in reception. Critics have established a number of reasons for the reception of an author's work and they have outlined the receptive process in terms of stages.¹ Critics view reception beginning when the author conceives the initial idea and develops it. This has been called the artistic stage. It is in this stage that the author composes his literary piece and readies it for publication. It is also during this time that the plot is developed, the characters are refined and the style is polished. The fact that the plot is superb, the style the author uses is flawless, and the characters well formed, in no way guarantees the literary piece will be received or that it will even enter the second stage. If, however, the literary work is accepted by the publisher for examination, it enters the evaluatory stage.

In the evaluatory stage the manuscript is examined by the publisher. Here particular attention is paid to the marketability of the manuscript, profitability to the publisher, and the potential readers and their willingness to consume the work. If, during this stage, it is felt that

the work is worthy of publication, the publisher may then make whatever changes are necessary and plan for a marketing strategy. The strategy the publisher uses may consist of expensive advertising, the release of a trial edition, or the release of a large inexpensive paperback edition. If during the evaluatory stage it is felt that the manuscript is a sure seller, and if the publishers expend huge sums on advertising, these measures in no way guarantee the literary work will be received by the public. If, however, the manuscript is published it then enters its final stage - the stage of reception by the reading public. It is this stage which critics have examined more closely during the last decade, for it is within this stage that the ultimate reception takes place.

Critics of reception certainly consider the artistic and the evaluatory stage when examining the reception of an author, but it is felt, if a work is to be successfully received by the public, then a number of factors must be met. Paramount among these is the identification between literary work and reader, or as Walter Hohmann has stated: "Die wichtigste Voraussetzung der ästhetischen Rezeption ist die Identifikation des Lesers mit den literarischen Figuren...".² That is to say, literary reception is contingent on the capacity of the reader to identify with the literary work, concepts found within the work, or with the hero or heroine in the literary piece.

In order to establish whether the identification between

reader and literary work does exist, a number of aspects must first be clarified. Identification implies similar beliefs or views on the part of the recipient. That is to say, if a reader is to identify with a concept or philosophy found within a particular literary piece, then those concepts and philosophies must already be established within the reader. And, if a reader is to identify with a character, or even with the author, then there must exist a similarity on part of the reader and the character within the literary work, or with the author. Accepting this, in order to establish identification between the groups which received Hesse and the works of Hermann Hesse, the groups must first be examined and their particular beliefs and outlooks isolated. Coupled with the examination of the groups, the times during which the groups emerged must also be examined, since specific social conditions give rise to specific groups. Only when the groups which received Hesse are examined and their particular beliefs isolated can an attempt be made to match the concepts shared by the groups which received Hesse with the concepts found in Hesse's works.

A) The 'Beat' Generation.

The first decade following the Second World War witnessed the American soldier returning home, galled by the destruction he had seen in Europe and anxious to resume his own life. The technology of the American nation, which had supplied the various Allied powers with sophisticated

weapons, was now utilized by the private sector. Through the use of this technology, the standard of living rose considerably and the grim reminders of the depression and of the Second World War, although still present, gave way to an optimism in the future.

Even though the decade following the war was one of prosperity, and Americans were working hard to obtain a high standard of living, the time also had its darker side. One only need consider the spy trials of the 1950s, Joe McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Hearings, the cold war and the abject poverty, that all was not well in American society. Bruce Cooke summarizes the times when he states that the conditions within the United States "...spread a brooding pall of suspicion over all the American society. It was a time during which most of the adult population was trapped in artificial edifice of social conformity, built of fear, suppressed hostility and the simple desire to get along."³

It was this paradox, the affluence and the fear, which in part spawned during the 1950s the movement known as the 'Beat'. It was called 'Beat' because members felt themselves beaten or frustrated by the development of American society, as well as their own belief that their mission to change American society was beatific. The 'Beat' was initially a literary movement and had as its prime spokesmen poets and authors. Men such as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Gary Snyder all became affiliated with it.⁴

The 'Beat' had no clearly defined goals, however, they had one common viewpoint. They questioned, challenged and rejected the American desire for material wealth.⁵ How the 'Beat' felt and what they represented is best expressed by Bruce Cook:

And what they symbolized to a world grown dyspeptic from swallowing too much of the American myth was the relief of regurgitation. The Beats rejected... They said they didn't want the sort of material success that everyone else in America was working so hard to achieve.⁶

This challenge and rejection of American values was seen as a threat to the American way of life. Consequently, the 'Beats' were seen as rebels. In so far as they also refused to partake and share in the American dream, they were seen as outsiders, meaning they existed outside of the established American society. Hence, they became suspect and were often severely criticized by the media.

In order to counter the negative view that the 'Beat' was receiving from the press and the public, such authors as Norman Mailer became the unofficial spokesman for the group.⁷ Furthermore, the 'Beat' accepted any viewpoint which was sympathetic to their cause, or which represented their own views. One such viewpoint was offered by Colin Wilson, a British 'Beat'. When his book, The Outsider, was published in the United States, it struck a chord with the American 'Beat'. In his book, which was a study into the nature of the sickness of mankind in the 20th century, Wilson expressed the sentiments and the position the 'Beat' found themselves

in. As Wilson summarized it, "At first sight, the Outsider is a social problem. He is the hole in the corner man".⁹ Even though Wilson considers the outsider a social problem, he, nonetheless, also places much importance on him and does so because the individuals who represent outsiders in a society offer the society a different viewpoint or perspective.

For the Outsider, the world is not rational, not orderly. When he asserts his sense of anarchy in the face of the bourgeois' complacent acceptance, it is not simply the need to cock a snook at respectability that provokes him; it is a distressing sense 'that truth must be told at all costs', otherwise there can be no hope for an ultimate restoration of order.¹⁰

The 'Beat' questioned, rejected and objected to the American way of life. This rejection manifested itself in a number of ways. The poetry of the 'Beat' attests to their dissatisfaction as do the many coffeehouses in which the poetry was recited or read. For it was within the coffeehouses they congregated and it was there many of the 'Beat' reaffirmed their beliefs and outlooks. In addition, thousands migrated from the East to the West, establishing common ground for their movement, as was popularized in Jack Kerouac's On The Road. Oriental philosophy and mysticism became popular as was illustrated by Alan Watts' The Way of Zen.¹¹

The 'Beat', however, were not the only ones to question societal values and to reject the American dream. In a sense, the 'Beat' were only precursors to a far more popular

movement which has been called the counter-culture of the 1960s and early 1970s. The counter-culture accepted many of the values the 'Beat' had, and picked up where the 'Beat' left off.

B) The Counter-Culture.

A number of reasons for the emergence of the counter-culture in the United States existed. The 'Beat', which was in essence a forerunner to this movement may very well have provided the stimulus, since many of the ideas and philosophies which comprised the philosophical core of the 'Beat' also served as a rallying point for the counter-culture. In addition, many of the spokesmen for the 'Beat' became the same for the counter-culture. Notwithstanding this, the counter-culture was also different. Ken Kenniston has called it the first "post modern generation".¹² Here, Kenniston presumably makes reference to the technological advances, the heavy reliance on computers and other developments. Kenniston believes it is this that "distinguishes it from previous generations and helps create a mood born out of modernity, affluence, rapid change and violence".¹³

Even though Kenniston may be quite right in his assessment and reasons for the emergence of the counter-culture, it would seem the prime criterion was age. This view is not shared by all. Jack Kerouac believes it was not age at all that separated the 'Beat' from the counter-culture, but that it was a greater reliance on the use of drugs by the latter

group.¹⁴ Whatever the differences, the counter-culture accepted many of the views which the 'Beat' had earlier. They, like the 'Beat', considered themselves as outsiders in society. Because of the mood which Kenniston offers, these individuals could not identify with the mainstream of American society. The feeling of not belonging Kenniston calls the alienation syndrome, which is to mean an explicit rejection of what are seen as the dominant values of the surrounding society.¹⁵

The feeling of alienation may be attributed to many causes, one of which is the individual's feeling of being an outsider. Kenniston believes this to be a major reason, and Frank Musgrove elucidates this when he mentions that the youth are "...facing the problems inherent in a heightened awareness-identity and a weakened belonging-identity", and believes that the world in which we live will consequently have a "...steeply rising proportion of outsiders".¹⁶

Another consideration of the causes of the feeling of alienation is again offered by Kenniston. He believes alienation may have come about because the youth of the 1960s and 1970s saw themselves trapped between childhood and adulthood. Whereas youth was a relatively easy time, with much play and enjoyment, adulthood was seen as rigorous, demanding and frightening. The youth merely needed to look at their parents to see life was not all joy and that at the end of a blissful youth lay the harsh reality of adulthood.

Several explanations are given as to why the youth felt

alienated. Again Kenniston offers a reason that has been accepted by many critics, which is the belief that the alienation of the youth came about due to the rapid technological and social changes taking place. The computer society, the technology with which the United States was fighting in Vietnam, the political situation during the 1960s "...created a negative view of the possibility of meaningful involvement with the established institutions of the society..."¹⁷

Theodore Roszak agrees with Kenniston but defines the reason as being the rise of technocracy, "...that social form in which an industrial society reaches the peak of its organizational integration"¹⁸ When this occurs, as Roszak theorizes, the individual is confronted by a situation that is so complex he must defer on making any decision and he must leave the decision up to others. A similar view to man's plight when confronted by technology and by decision making is given by Jacques Ellul: man will lose some of his individuality in the face of technology.

Technique must reduce man to a technical animal, the king of the slaves of technique. Human caprice crumbles before this necessity; there can be no human autonomy in the face of technical autonomy.¹⁹ The individual must be fashioned by techniques...

If we can accept these assessments, then we would have to say the reasons for the emergence of the counter-culture were heightened awareness. This placed the youth in a quandary as to what they should do with their lives. They saw where the mainstream of American society was heading and they could not identify with that. Furthermore, they felt alienated

because of technocracy, which provided them with a sense of frustration, not belonging, of being outsiders.

While many of the youth wanted to belong to society and contribute towards its betterment, there were others who chose to withdraw from it. These individuals, known as "dropouts", comprised a large part of the counter-culture and were more interested in drugs than in social issues. One area the youth found especially inviting were the hallucinogenic drugs. Theodore Roszak believes the use of hallucinogenic drugs was demonstrative of their attitude toward society.

The fascination with hallucinogenic drugs emerges persistently as the common denominator of the many protean forms the counter-culture has assumed in the post-World War II period. Correctly understood, (which it seldom is), psychedelic experience participates significantly in the young's most radical rejection of the parental society.²⁰

Timothy Leary advocated the use of drugs and suggested that in order to achieve greater awareness the use of psychedelic drugs was paramount. In particular, he stressed the use of LSD. To achieve credibility, he enlisted a number of influential individuals to verify the virtues of LSD. Among these were Ken Kesey, Alan Watts and Allen Ginsberg, all of whom extolled the use of LSD. Watts states:

In the course of two experiments I was amazed and somewhat embarrassed to find myself going through states of consciousness which corresponded precisely with every description of major mystical experiences that I had ever read.²¹

Leary, however, not only advocated the use of mind-expanding drugs, he turned it into a religious experience as well. He

and others founded the 'Castalian Foundation', a religion based on the consumption of drugs for spiritual awareness. He went so far as to write a Bible for his religion, The Psychedelic Experience, which was largely based on The Tibetan Book of the Dead.²²

Closely associated with the drug culture was the popularization of Oriental mysticism and philosophy. In part, it came about because of the counter-culture's rejection of American social values and partly due to the profound void felt within. To counter this void, youth turned to mysticism and philosophy.

Interest in Oriental thought manifested itself in many areas in the United States, but in particular, it was extremely popular on the college campuses, especially when "Maharishi Yogi of India drew an outburst of publicity as the 'guru' of famous figures in the popular entertainment world, including...Mia Farrow...and the Beatles".²³ Such terms as Hare Krishna, Bhagavad-Gita, Transcendental Meditation, I-Ching, all became virtual household words. Thousands were embracing it, and in a survey of major cities around the United States, Life proclaimed 1968 as the "Year of the Guru".²⁴

Influential to the avid interest in Oriental thought were the post-war era, the rapid technological advances, the inability for youth to take part in American society. As one observer summarized: "And because times of war and social turmoil like the present reveal with shocking clarity the

transcendence of material things and turn men to inner seeking, we may see more, not less, mysticism".²⁵ Theodore Roszak saw the acceptance as an effort to provide a balance "...to the gross distortions of our technological society".²⁶ This point seems to be sustained by others, most notably,

S. Radhakrishnan.

The suggestion set forth in the Gita about the meaning and value of existence, the sense of eternal values and the way in which the ultimate values are illuminated by the light of reason and moral intuition provide the basis for agreement in mind and spirit so very essential for keeping together the world which has become materially one by the acceptance of the externals of civilization.²⁷

Presumably, what Radhakrishnan means is that in order for man to live harmoniously he must bring together the spirit and the mind. The dualism of which Radhakrishnan speaks is graphically illustrated by the Yin and the Yang in the I-Ching.

There were still other reasons for the acceptance of Oriental thought in the United States. Theodore Roszak suggests that Zen and Oriental mysticism were basically amoral. "If there was anything Kerouac and his colleagues found especially appealing in the Zen they adopted, it was the wealth of hyperbolic eroticism the religion brought with it...".²⁸ In a sense, Zen and Oriental mysticism brought with it a means of escape from the everyday life and pressures, in that it provided ritualism and a hope of finding one's own niche. Ken Kenniston labels this the "alienated phantasy", whereby the adherents to Oriental thought could

live out their fantasies.²⁹ The means of achieving this was through meditations, living in a religious commune, or even travelling to Tibet and thereby acquiring a first hand experience in Oriental mysticism.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER II

The groups which emerged during the 1950s and 1960s did so largely because of the social condition of the times. Most members within the 'Beat' and the counter-culture were of the opinion that American society was striving for unacceptable goals. The materialism with which American society was occupying itself, the political role the American government was exercising in world affairs, the reliance on technology as a means for solving social problems, all these left a segment of American society feeling isolated and alienated. Consequently, many turned from the established social norms and created their own sub-culture. Some indulged in drugs, while others became involved with the many religious movements which emerged during this time, and still others became politically active.

These groups, for the most part, were labeled as radicals and outsiders, and their views were more often dismissed than accepted. Consequently, they often lacked credibility within the traditional segment of American society. Realizing this, the groups sought prominent individuals who were accepted and recognized by traditional society, but whose philosophies

corresponded to their own beliefs. To those figures the youth attached themselves.

One such individual, who seemingly attracted a great following for those very reasons, was Hermann Hesse. In his writings the youth may have found an affirmation of their own misgivings. His writings were quoted and the titles of his novels became the names for bars, theaters and shops. Presumably the youth took to this author because he was a prominent writer and because he was also recognized as such. But more importantly, Hesse expressed views in his novels with which the youth could identify and thus give credibility to their own views. If this was the case, and keeping in mind that paramount in the receptive process is identification, the novels of Hermann Hesse should contain views on anti-technocracy, anti-war, pacifism, a discussion on drugs and Oriental mysticism, and a view of alienated individuals within a corrupt and diseased society.

Accordingly, the works of Hermann Hesse should be examined to determine if those concepts with which the 'Beat' and the counter-culture concerned themselves with can be found.

CHAPTER III

IDENTIFICATION WITH CONCEPTS AND CHARACTERS IN THE NOVELS OF HERMANN HESSE

The counter-culture's acceptance of any view which sustained and gave credibility to their particular view led many to the novels of Hermann Hesse. The youth found in these novels a wealth of material with which it could identify and which subsequently reaffirmed their own beliefs. In this respect, A. Goldmann explains:

To the young who very much wish to know and yet cannot accept knowledge on authority, the writings of Hermann Hesse speak with a voice instantly recognizable and persuasive. Not only is the central concern of his career the same as theirs, the paths and paraphernalia of his novels are precisely those in favor today.¹

In these novels Hesse addressed the very questions which concerned the counter-culture. Among those themes to be found in Hesse's novels were technology and man's subservience to it, pacifism in face of fervent nationalism, a too regimented society which stifled individualism, Oriental thought as an alternative to occidental philosophy and religion, and the use of drugs. Coupled with these were the belief that meaningful involvement in a technological society was increasingly more difficult, that society was decaying, and that the individual had to embark on a quest to find his own niche and truth.

Although not all of these themes appear in every one of

Hesse's novels, and in some cases their appearance is secondary at best, the youth identified with the concepts as they saw them and with the characters as they viewed them. Each of these concepts should now be discussed.

A) The Theme of Technology.

The novels of Hermann Hesse contain numerous references to technology. From his earliest novel, Beneath the Wheel (1906), to his last novel, Magister Ludi (1943), technology is discussed and decried. The treatment which is accorded technology ranges from condemnation in Steppenwolf (1929), to the establishment of an ethical and moral code by which technology could be controlled and made subservient to man in Magister Ludi. Generally speaking, however, technology is not viewed in positive terms in the novels of Hesse.

For the most part Hesse places technology in direct confrontation to man and to the characters within his novels. In one of his earliest books, Beneath the Wheel, it is Hans Giebenrath who is crushed by the technological society - here represented by the wheel.² In Demian (1918), a similar fate awaits Max Demian who is killed by the ruthless machinery of war. But whereas Hans Giebenrath's death is an escape or a final resignation, the death of Max Demian can be viewed as a necessity in order for the establishment of a new society.

In the novel Steppenwolf, the polarity between man and technology is brought to the forefront most strikingly. Man is perceived as subservient to mechanization, here represented

by the automobile. The two are portrayed as being unable to co-exist. This subservience results in war between technology and man.

There was a war on, a violent, genuine and highly sympathetic war where there was no concern for Kaiser or Republic, for frontiers, flags or colors and other equally decorative and theatrical matters, all nonsense at bottom; but a war in which everyone who lacked air to breathe and no longer found life exactly pleasing gave emphatic expression to his displeasure and strove to prepare the way for a general destruction of this iron-cast civilization of ours.³

Whereas in Beneath the Wheel, Hans Giebenrath succumbs to technological society, in Steppenwolf the opposite may be said. No longer does man play the passive role; rather, man rises and crushes the technological advances. This task in Steppenwolf is carried out by Gustav and Harry as they embark on an automobile hunting spree. The two not only attack the automobiles, but the drivers as well.

Although the anti-technological view expressed in Steppenwolf is carried to extreme, a somewhat more conciliatory viewpoint is expressed in both Magister Ludi and in Demian. The main objective in Magister Ludi is no longer to eradicate the symbols of technology and its adherents; rather, it is to live with technology. In order to achieve this, a basic code of honesty must first be adopted by which technology can be controlled.

It took long enough in all conscience for the realization to come that the externals of civilization - technology, industry, commerce, and so on - also require a common basis of intellectual honesty and morality.⁴

Presumably then mankind could live in harmony with technology and technological advances and not be subservient to it.

The condemnation of technology in Demian is no longer present. Rather, the blame for technological society was placed with the subscribers of technology - presumably the scientists and the businessmen.

For a hundred years or more Europe has done nothing but study and build factories. They know exactly how many ounces of powder it takes to kill man, but they don't know how to pray to God, they don't even know how to be happy for a single contented hour.⁵

The light in which technology is portrayed in the works of Hermann Hesse corresponds precisely to the way the youth perceived technology and technological society in the United States. In much the same way as the characters in the novels of Hesse were subjugated by technology, so the youth of the United States envisioned itself to be. No longer did mankind control technology, but technology controlled the individual. In view of this, involvement in technocratic America was virtually impossible for the counter-culture, as it was for Harry Haller in Steppenwolf, or Hans Giebenrath in Beneath The Wheel.

Although technology comes under much criticism in the works of Hermann Hesse and the same sentiments were echoed by the counter-culture, Hesse's novels do not merely condemn, but they offer hope. In Demian the triumph of mankind is voiced by Max Demian.

The will of humanity, which Europe has shouted down for a time with its frenzy of technology, will come

to the fore again. And then it will become clear that the will of humanity is nowhere - and never was - identical with the will of present day societies, states and peoples, clubs and churches. No, what nature wants of man stands indelibly written in the individual, in you, in me.⁶

It was this positive outlook, that man could triumph over the machines and over his subservience to technological society, which reassured youth that there were alternatives to technocratic America. With this in mind it is understandable why so many chose to spend their energy and time in the Peace Corps or in Vista, rather than in the service of the large multi-national corporations.

The light in which technology and technological society are portrayed in the novels of Hermann Hesse is similar to the way society in general is perceived. In every novel, but especially in Demian, Steppenwolf and Siddhartha, society is projected in negative terms. In particular, it is the complacent middle class which receives the most severe attack, and this attitude is voiced by Harry Haller in Steppenwolf.

For what I always hated and detested and cursed above all things was this contentment, this healthiness and comfort, this carefully preserved optimism of the middle class, this fat and prosperous brood of mediocrity.

Although the sentiments expressed by Haller are representative of the view expressed in the other novels, it should be remembered that Haller was, more or less, an outcast because of his pacifist attitudes, and consequently his reflections on society may stem from bitterness. But similarly, the views expressed by Haller are also voiced by Siddhartha,

though only after he has experienced the excesses first hand.

I have had to experience so much stupidity, so many vices, so much error, so much nausea, disillusionment and sorrow, just in order to become a child again and begin anew.⁸

Interesting to note in both Steppenwolf and in Siddhartha, the main characters exist not within society but either on its fringes as is the case with Haller, or outside of it as is the case with Siddhartha.

It is in the novel Demian that Max Demian and Emil Sinclair strive for a better society. Accordingly, Max Demian and Emil Sinclair enter the army in order to fight for a new society which both believe to be coming shortly.

The soul of Europe is a beast that has lain fettered for an infinitely long time. And when it's free, its first movements won't be the gentlest. But the means are unimportant if only the real needs of the soul - which has so long been repeatedly stunted and anesthetized - come to light.⁹

The emergence of the new society of which Demian speaks and for which he fights, is the first step. The complete cycle is the society which Hesse forms in Magister Ludi. It is in this society that individual spiritual needs can be nurtured because culture is purposely set apart from the remainder of society. Theodore Ziolkowski summarizes:

⁹ Castalia is clearly another attempt, this time projected into the future, to represent the same ideal: A symbolic realm where all spiritual values are kept alive and present, specifically through the glass bead game. In this sense, then, the novel was originally envisaged as yet another variation in Hesse's continuing search for a spiritual dimension of life, for it depicts a future society in which the realm of culture is set apart to pursue its

goals in splendid isolation, unsullied by the 'reality' that Hesse had grown to distrust.¹⁰

The realization that society was decaying left the characters in the novels of Hermann Hesse alienated and perceived as outsiders. Similarly, the youth who so closely identified with the concepts in the novels of Hermann Hesse viewed themselves in much the same light, and they could readily identify with such characters as Harry Haller, Demian and Siddhartha. Accordingly, this aspect, the feeling of alienation and of being an outsider, should now be discussed.

B) The Alienated in the Novels of Hesse.

Occurring frequently in the novels of Hesse is the concept of alienation or of the outsider. Although Hesse does not specifically label them as such, most of his characters, nevertheless, are outsiders of society. Among those are the characters, Siddhartha, Harry Haller, and Max Demian. Each of these characters, for some reason or another, is set apart from his peers. Siddhartha is so because of the search for truth and knowledge. He associates with society on a peripheral level, as an outsider looking in. This is most apparent when Siddhartha is alone by the river, meditating.

Within Siddhartha there slowly grew and ripened the knowledge of what wisdom really was and the goal of his long seeking. It was nothing but a preparation of the soul, a capacity, a secret art of thinking, feeling and breathing thoughts of unity at every moment of life.¹¹

An extreme example of the outsider in Hesse's novels is Harry Haller in Steppenwolf. Haller exists, or was forced

to exist outside of traditional society because of his pacifist attitudes and strong nature - a nature represented by the wolves of the steppes. "There are always a large number of strong and wild natures who share the life of the fold. Our Steppenwolf, Harry, is a characteristic example."¹²

The outsider predominates in Hesse's other works as well. To a certain degree, the main characters in Demian and Magister Ludi qualify under the heading. Max Demian does so by virtue of his physical prowess and his "peculiar conceptions". Joseph Knecht does so because of his constant striving for perfection and his spiritual goals.

The concept of the alienated and outsider struck a chord with the youth. Many of them considered themselves as being outsiders. Whether it was because they, too, were searching, or because of their particular views, or because they did not feel comfortable within society is questionable. It was most likely a combination of all these factors.

C) Oriental Thought in Hesse's Works.

In so far as Hesse's works contain numerous descriptions of an ill society and its bankrupt ways, his novels offer some salvation in the form of Oriental thought or mysticism. Of his novels, a number concern themselves with Oriental thought. Among these are Siddhartha and Magister Ludi. Siddhartha has often been referred to as Hesse's Indic novel, since its setting is in India. Even the title character is an historical figure who lived at about the time of Buddha, 560 - 480 B.C.

In Siddhartha, Hesse utilizes many of the same concepts as are found in the Bhagavad-Gita, namely that the spiritual must overcome the mundane, and that by accepting the spiritual, mankind is able to transcend the everyday.

Siddhartha represents an effort on the part of Hesse to come to terms with Eastern spiritualism, but it is by no means his only work to do so. Another example, although not as pronounced, is Magister Ludi. There too, Hesse utilizes Oriental philosophy. The game "represents an elite, symbolic form of seeking for perfection, a sublime alchemy, an approach to that Mind which beyond all images and multiplicities is one within itself".¹³ Again, the quest for combining the spiritual with the worldly, and the striving for perfection is reminiscent of the Bhagavad-Gita.

The inclusion of Oriental mysticism in the works of Hesse attracted many of the youth. It was a simple yet profound introduction to Oriental thought. Theodore Ziolkowski, however, sees the acceptance of this novel because "...the hero is a flower child ante-datum who drops out of society in order to find a life of blissful meditation on the banks of a river that might as well be Haight-Ashbury as in the India of Hesse's novel".¹⁴ Ziolkowski's reason, although valid for many within the counter-culture, may be a simplification. Hesse's Siddhartha and Magister Ludi are an attempt by the characters to come to terms with themselves, to bridge the void within their lives. Oriental religion was a means of achieving that goal. The same can be said for the youth.

Oriental religion, if it did nothing else, brought them closer to understanding themselves and their situation. And it offered them an alternative and an affirmation of their beliefs.

D) Drugs in the Works of Hesse.

The subject of drugs occurs rarely in Hesse's novels. Only in Steppenwolf is the topic discussed, although it has been claimed that its inclusion is also to be found in Siddhartha.¹⁵ It is in Steppenwolf the musician, Pablo, offers Harry Haller a white powder, which Haller assumes to be cocaine.

Once when I showed a certain irritation, and even ill humor, over one of these fruitless attempts at conversation, he looked in my face with a troubled and sorrowful air and, taking my left hand and stroking it he offered me a pinch from his little gold snuffbox.¹⁶

Following the use of the powder, Haller describes that he became more cheerful and that his head became clearer. A similar description occurs somewhat later when Haller is readied for the 'Magic Theater'. Again, it is Pablo who offers him a "long, thin yellow cigarette". Haller described the effects as "...immeasurably enlivening and delightful - as though one were filled with gas and had no longer any gravity".¹⁷

These two examples illustrate, for the most part, Hesse's inclusion of drugs in Steppenwolf. Meager as they are, the examples persuaded Leary and Metzner and countless others to consider Hesse one of their own. Presumably, they do so

because few authors incorporated the subject of drugs in their work. In their article, "Hermann Hesse: Poet of the Interior Journey", Leary and Metzner claim not only in Steppenwolf was there a mention of drugs, but in Siddhartha as well, and they suggest Hesse himself used drugs.

Those who have taken one of the psychedelic drugs may recognize Govinda's vision as a classic LSD sequence... Whence came to Hesse these concrete sensations? The similarity to the consciousness-expanding drug experience is startling. The specific, concrete 'is-ness' of the illuminated moment usually escapes the abstract philosopher of mysticism. Did Hesse reach this visionary state himself? By meditation? Spontaneously? Did H.H. the novelist himself use the chemical path to enlightenment?¹⁸

It is ironic that the topic which Hesse utilized in only one book caused such an effect on so many people. The few lines which deal directly with drugs, helped the "Castalian Foundation" to emerge, attracted untold numbers to Hesse and his novels and aided his reception more than, perhaps, the Nobel Prize.¹⁹

Hesse, himself, saw the dangers of misinterpretation in Steppenwolf and addressed this point in his forward.²⁰ Whether or not the concern Hesse voiced is justified, the inclusion of drugs in Steppenwolf and the subsequent affirmation by youth was one area of interest and identification for aiding the reception of Hesse.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER III

The concepts of Oriental thought, drugs, anti-war and anti-

technocracy are found within Hesse's novels and are mentioned frequently, but only a handful served as a common denominator with which the youth could identify. From the extreme example of drugs to the most obvious, Oriental thought, these concepts abounded in the works of Hesse.

What Hesse offered youth was an affirmation; society was decaying and technology was destroying the individual. To stop this destruction, Hesse stressed individuality. Whether it was achieved through Oriental mysticism, through drugs, or by dropping out of society, did not matter. The stress was on the individual's truthfulness to himself. In this way, the pacifist Harry Haller provides youth with such an ideal. In addition, Joseph Knecht also provides an ideal with which youth could identify. Having risen to the top of his profession, Knecht invariably resigned his position in order to follow his own beliefs.

Hesse portrays the characters Emil Sinclair, Hans Giebrath and Joseph Knecht as being pure in nature. In these characters, the cornerstone of Hesse's beliefs are revealed; that man is, above all, the most important aspect in the universe.

But every man is more than just himself; he also represents the unique, the very special and always significant and remarkable point at which the world's phenomenon intersects only once in this way and never again. That is why every man, as long as he lives and fulfills the will of nature, is wonderful, and worthy of every consideration. In each individual the spirit has become flesh, in each man the creation suffers, within each one a redeemer is nailed to the cross.²¹

With this in mind, Webster Schott is quite correct when he states: "In Hesse, youth sees itself unchained. Kicking the past and burying parental authority...Hesse's heroes crack their shells..."²² And so it was with many of the youth.

CHAPTER IV

IDENTIFICATION WITH HERMANN HESSE

Examining the Hesse reception with consideration of various areas with which the youth could identify, it is evident that adulation of the author also played a role. It can be stated that the groups could identify with Hesse the person as well as with his works. There are a number of reasons for the youth's identification with Hermann Hesse. Jeffery Sammons, in his nonobjective analysis of the Hesse reception, perceived one of the reasons as Hesse's ability to come across as a sincere writer. "The purity of Hesse's highmindedness and character accounts, in part, for his appeal to young Americans, who in literary matters have great opinion of a quality they call sincerity."¹ Here Sammons touches upon an important fact. Hesse wrote, in many of his novels, about topics he experienced. Although it would be a misconception to state that his works are purely autobiographical, it would not be misleading to claim that in at least a few novels, Hesse wrote about his own life. Therefore, the youth who received Hesse could claim that Hesse's topics were not merely fiction, but they had been experienced by this author as well. The youth could, at the very beginning of this writer's life, see the correlation; not only between topics in the works of Hesse and Hesse's own life, but also between the characters and Hesse.

The similarities the youth saw in Hesse's life and their own were substantial. Hesse was born to protestant missionaries. Whereas his parents wanted him to become a member of the clergy, Hesse professed to be a writer. In due course, this brought about a confrontation between Hesse's own wishes and those of his parents. By the age of 12, he was unmanageable and his parents sent him away from Calw to school. There it seemed he would succeed, having passed his entrance examination and continuing his studies at Maulbronn. However, the industriousness and promising future gave way to disinterest and, finally, Hesse quit. Subsequently, he went to other schools, but with no success. Shortly thereafter, Hesse attempted suicide while suffering a nervous breakdown. Following a lengthy recuperation, he settled on a job at a clock factory, only to quit and apprentice in a book shop.

While apprenticing at the book shop, Hesse seemed to have peace of mind and time to write. Later, he resigned the job and lived from his earnings as a writer. As early as 1904, Hesse's restless and troubled nature took him on numerous journeys to Switzerland, Italy, and finally to India. But the respite was very brief. Upon the outbreak of World War I, the last vestiges of Hesse's happy life were shattered. Hesse's disillusionment continued and intensified by the loss of his father, the breaking up of his marriage and the illness of his son. Complicating matters was Germany's call for service, which Hesse refused. These events led to his second breakdown and subsequent analysis with Josef Lang. After

dozens of sessions, Hesse experienced a sort of "rebirth". Between 1918 and 1939, Hesse launched on a new literary career. The years in seclusion in Switzerland were his most productive period. He wrote novels and stories, reviewed dozens of books and took provocative stands by favorably reviewing books of Jewish authors. This brought him to disfavor with the Nazi propaganda machine and caused his works to be burned in Germany. But Hesse was undaunted, continuing his writing until his death in 1962.²

The counter-culture considered Hesse's own youth and upbringing to be exemplary of their own. They saw it as an affirmation of their own beliefs, their own actions and experiences. Hesse's rebellious nature as a child, being forced by parents to do what was against his wishes, and dropping out of schools, reaffirmed their own beliefs that choosing one's own way, after all, was not wrong.³

A similar conclusion could be drawn from Hesse's attitude toward war. Since he refused to serve in the German Army, Hesse was labeled a traitor. "The best-selling author was now branded publicly as a 'viper nourished at the breast' of an unsuspecting audience."⁴ Consequently, his seclusion in Switzerland may not have been solely of his own choice and, with this in mind, the youth could readily identify. Many among the counter-culture chose the same path by refusing to fight in Vietnam. Even for those who did not refuse to serve in the United States Army, an affirmation could be found in Hesse's attitude toward war.

Der Krieg bringt die Welt nicht vorwärts, er schiebt nur auf, wirft nur den Leidenschaften vorübergehend neue Ziele hin, und nachher, früh oder spät, wird die soziale Not wieder dastehen, gross und furchtbar wie zuvor.⁵

Another aspect of Hesse's beliefs that youth could claim as their own was the attitude toward society. Hesse, as did many of his generation, felt society had sunk to unacceptable levels.

Ich finde, unser Leben, das durchschnittliche Leben eines heutigen Abendländers, ist so scheusslich, das es nur von Klötzen von Idioten, von Leuten ohne Nerven, ohne Geschmack, ohne feine Schwingungen ertragen werden kann...⁶

This was partly due to the rapid industrial growth, and the rise of the middle class. Hesse viewed the middle class with contempt. He viewed the collective will of society as hindrance to the individual's quest for personal freedom. Hesse often stressed the individual should take the forefront to collective society, and this may have struck a chord with the youth. As a writer for the Times Literary Supplement stated:

His description of a sick society in need of spiritual regeneration, his appeal for a new consciousness and awareness and his concern with individualism and community, find ready affirmation among the alienated and the idealist.⁷

Closely associated with his view of degenerated society was Hesse's personal quest for spiritual freedom. As early as his visit to India, Hesse sought alternatives to conventional beliefs. Particularly appealing were the Indic religions. Hesse was quite knowledgeable about these religions, especially having come from a family of missionaries,

some of whom had spent time in India.⁸

The fact that Hesse had spent time in India and was knowledgeable about these religions and life-styles, undoubtedly attracted some youths to him, or at least gave credibility to his writings.

The final aspect concerning Hesse and the youth's identification was Hesse's belief that it was the individual's responsibility to change the systems which stifled mankind. That his outlook was positive in that changes could come about, undoubtedly had a positive effect on the youth.

Wir verlangen, das Leben müsse einen Sinn haben - aber es hat nur ganz genau so viel Sinn, als wir selber ihm zu geben im stande sind. Weil der Einzige das nur unvollkommen vermag, hat man in den Religionen und Philosophien versucht, die Frage tröstend zu beantworten.⁹

Here Hesse brings to the forefront one of the central beliefs of the counter-culture; old beliefs and old religions had no place in the world as conceived by the youth. Old ideas, or ideas which had been the cornerstone of the previous generation, were violently discarded.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER IV

Hesse, the author, represented to the youth an embodiment of their own ideals and beliefs. Here was a man who, four generations before them, had preached the very concepts which they now claimed for themselves. What heightened their regard for Hesse was that he wrote of topics with which youth

could identify and since he wrote of many personal topics which he himself experienced, the youth considered his writings authentic. What the youth saw in Hesse is perhaps best described by Theodore Ziolkowski:

The figures who emerge as the new spiritual heroes are not those who lay down new laws, but men whose lives exemplify a sense of independence and self-reliance. Youth respects individuals who have come to terms with themselves despite the turmoil and confusion of the world: men, in the idiom of the day, who do their own thing without selling out to the establishment.¹⁰

CHAPTER V

MASS MEDIA AND THE HESSE RECEPTION

As with any author, the reception of Hermann Hesse cannot be attributed to one particular reason. Uwe Hohendahl has stated: "Rezeption ist nicht auf einen eindimensionalen Vorgang...zu reduzieren".¹ An area of significance in the analysis of the Hesse reception is the role of mass media, or mass communication, which makes available to the public the opportunity to receive a particular work.

Mass media, "...the means by which print and electronic media bring education, entertainment and information to millions",² is a relatively new field. That is not to say mass communications is new, only that it has been during the last few decades mass media has had its greatest impact. The 20th century has brought a measure of expertise to this field, which has revolutionized this industry. Advertising, preselection of celebrities, films, television and radio, all are part of our everyday existence.

Taking into consideration that mass communication affects nearly every aspect of our lives, and to some degree controls it, few empirical studies exist which seek to determine to what extent we are influenced by mass communications, or clearly defines the impact it has on us. This is particularly true for reception of an author, which acknowledges the possible impact of mass media, but which has done very

little to examine and evaluate its role. Karl Robert Mandelkow has stated that the relationships between mass communication and the impact it has on the reception of an author is new, and that critics do not have the means by which to analyze what effect mass communication has on reception.³ As few methods exist by which the impact of mass media on an author or his works can be measured, Mandelkow may be quite right in his assessment.

As previously stated, mass media includes preselection, advertising, films, radio and television. Also included with these, however, is the book. Whereas prior to the 20th century most novels and plays were published in hardcover form, it has only been during the past 40 years that a growing reliance on the paperback book has developed as a means of distributing literature to the public on a grand scale. Charles Steinberg believes one of the factors contributing to the rise of the paperbacks' popularity is the rising cost of production. "Since the rising costs of production have made the hardcover book an increasingly costly item, the millions of paperbacks in circulation literally have made the book a medium of mass communication."⁴

However, other reasons exist for the popularity of the paperback. Paperbacks, unlike hardcover books, are easily distributed. It is estimated there are 80,000 retail outlets for the paperback, compared to only 10,000 such outlets for the hardcover books.⁵ Unlike hardcover books, which are sold primarily in bookstores, the paperback is sold in bookstores,

drugstores, discount stores and even in small corner grocery stores.

Statistical data available illustrates, as in the case of Hermann Hesse, the paperback has been instrumental in the rise of popularity. Hermann Hesse was first published in the United States during the 1920s in the form of hardcover books. Although at this time little interest existed in Hesse, his books were available. If the public shows little or no interest in an author, the chances of success are far slimmer if the only available book is an expensive hardcover. We can only speculate as to how well Hesse's works would have sold had they been released in paperback form. To illustrate this point, we should consider the following examples. During the mid-1960s, Holt, Winston and Rinehard released two of Hesse's works in hardcover. As of 1978, this company reported sales of 8,946 for Steppenwolf and 32,231 copies for Magister Ludi.⁶ In comparing Holt, Winston and Rinehard's hardcover figures to the paperback figures released by Bantam Books, Inc., which lists paperback sales for Steppenwolf at 1,600,000 and sales of Magister Ludi at 536,000 copies, the difference is astounding.⁷ Another example is the success story of New Directions Publishing Company. In 1951, New Directions released Siddhartha, selling 13,000 hardcover copies and in 1957 re-released the same book which again sold well. Upon the release in paperback form, Siddhartha became their best selling paperback and to date has sold more than 2,000,000 copies.⁸

These impressive figures are by no means conclusive. For instance, we do not know how many of Hesse's books would have sold if there had been no paperbacks. In addition, if we take into consideration the bulk of the Hesse popularity, rested with the college-aged and with the counter-culture, then we must also consider these groups are often hard pressed for money. Therefore, the paperback is readily affordable to these groups, whereas the hardcover often is not.

One point is clear. If a hardcover enjoys any success, monetary gain is realized in the release of paperbacks since the initial cost of publishing is much higher for the paperback, though the overall cost is much less if hundreds of thousands of books are sold. It is estimated the break-even point for a paperback is about 10 times as high as that for a hardcover, or approximately 25-30,000 copies.⁹ If a literary work is to appear in paperback form, there must first be some success with the hardcover, as was the case with New Direction's publication of Siddhartha.

A second factor of mass communications which may have aided the Hesse reception in the United States was the inclusion of Hesse in the popular press. As was already discussed, magazines, such as Time, Life, Saturday Review and others, gave space to this author. When we consider that circulation of these magazines is in the millions, the possible impact they may have had is quite astounding. To illustrate this, we need only consider the reply The Saturday Review received

after it published Henry Resnik's "How Hermann Hesse Speaks to the College Generation".¹⁰ In this article Resnik is quite severe with the college-aged for failing to interpret Hesse properly. In response to this, readers leveled condemnations at Resnik's "simple-mindedness" for several weeks thereafter.

The final example of Hesse's popularity is the inclusion of Hesse in Charles Schultz' "Peanuts". When Snoopy was pictured sitting on his doghouse reading Hesse, the comic appeared in 1,340 newspapers and had a circulation of approximately 60 million people. Certainly, it gave an indication as to what Americans were reading, but what effect this had on the Hesse reception is inconclusive.

Yet another example of mass media and the reception of Hermann Hesse is the rock-group "Steppenwolf" and its relationship to the popularity of Hesse's works. The group took its name from Hesse's novel of that title. Furthermore, as Theodore Ziolkowski has mentioned, the members of the group dressed in costumes resembling the characters of Hesse's "Magic Theater", which forms a part of the book.¹² Their music, which has been called "acid-rock", had a tremendous following in the United States, especially among the youth, whose predilection was to drugs. Len Thuesem, music director for Edmonton's CHED Radio and specialist on music, describes this type of music as "loud, harsh sounds that are supposed to be meaningful if the listener is on a trip, or taking 'acid'".¹³ When we consider earlier statements concerning the

counter-culture's affinity to drugs, especially among those on the West Coast, then we could expect the group to have some popularity. This was precisely the case: One of their first records released, "Born to be Wild", a title which also describes Hesse's character, Harry Haller, in the novel Steppenwolf, became a million seller and rose to the top 10 on the popular music charts.¹⁴ Other records followed and by the end of the decade, four of their records had sold over a million dollars, making them "gold records". In all, the group had sold more than 7,000,000 records and had performed for more than 2,000,000 people. In view of the group's four-year existence, from 1968 until 1972, these figures are impressive.¹⁵

Now consideration must be given as to whether the success of the group had any impact on the popularity of Hesse's works, and/or whether it was Hesse's popularity which aided the group. Len Thuesem suggests it was because of the group's success that many bought Hesse's work. It should be remembered that Thuesem, although a music specialist, is no literary expert and his analysis may be easily dismissed. But, if we consider the existing statistics available, Thuesem may not be far from the truth. When Bantam Books, Inc., brought out Hesse's Steppenwolf in September of 1969, the book sold more than 360,000 copies in 30 days.¹⁶ Taking into account the group had by that time four gold records, a cause-effect relationship may exist. Nonetheless, considering Hesse was popular in the United States prior to the emergence of this

rock-group, the opposite may also be true. However, there can be little doubt as to the impact this group had on the American cultural scene, and if there was any effect, it was most likely positive in nature for the Hesse reception.

The final aspects concerning mass media and the Hesse reception are the films. In view of Hesse's popularity in the United States, it is of no surprise two of his most popular novels, Siddhartha and Steppenwolf, were made into films. Surprisingly, however, the films did not appear during the high point of his popularity, but after it. Nevertheless, logically, because the novels were extremely popular, the movies should certainly benefit. David Clark and William Blankenburg have stated: "The producer begins by seeking a story, and if it is presold to the audience, sure fire, so much the better. A best-selling book, he reasons, is a good story, and even if it isn't a good story it has some publicity value".¹⁷ But almost the opposite may be said about Hesse's films. To be sure they are popular in the specialty theaters catering to East-Indians, for example, but their popularity can in no way be compared with that of the novels.¹⁸

Theodore Ziolkowski offers several reasons for the mis-success of the films. First, he considers the reviews as one reason. Generally they were poor and in no way aided the films. Secondly, he believes the producers and directors were not anxious to capitalize on the popularity of Hesse and took their time to release or finish the films. "It would be not only uncharitable, but also misleading to imply that the film

represents a calculated attempt by shrewd Hollywood producers to exploit the current Hesse vogue among the American youth."¹⁹ This becomes increasingly clear as we take into consideration the director of "Siddhartha", Conrad Rooks, who spent four years just to find the proper location for the film, and the entire project lasted for more than 15 years. Fred Haines, the director of "Steppenwolf", likewise was in no hurry to finish the project. The script was ready by 1970 and the film was not released until 1974. The late releases of these films are also a major factor in their mis-success. "Siddhartha" was released in 1972 and, as previously mentioned, "Steppenwolf" was released in 1974, during which time the interest in Hesse was already beginning to fade.²⁰

A further reason the films were not successful was that the film directors seemed unable to capture the essence of the novels and correctly bring them onto the screen. It was the danger Hesse himself foresaw and thereby refused to have his novels made into films. With Siddhartha, this point is readily noticeable. Whereas the novel flows by virtue of the language and style, and still retains its simplicity, in the film this simplicity "...comes across as mere simple-mindedness".²¹ A similar statement has been made concerning the film "Steppenwolf". "He (Harry Haller) probably should have been left forever to the printed page, an actor both in Hesse's 'Magic Theater for Madmen Only' and in the inexhaustible theater of readers' imagination."²²

However, whether successful or not, the films are a part of the Hesse reception and serve as a sign of the immense popularity of the author. Effects of the films are questionable especially as a means of transmitting or spreading Hesse's fame. It cannot be determined whether the films furthered the Hesse reception. Had the films appeared several years earlier, then it may have been a different story altogether. Nonetheless, the films have not disappeared. If we take Seattle as an example, Hesse's "Siddhartha" has been shown at least three times during 1978, and "Steppenwolf" twice and, furthermore, with success. One can, from time to time, see these films in any specialty film theater across the United States.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER V

The appearance of Hesse in the popular press, the making of films, or the rock-group may have aided in the spreading of his popularity. However, due to the insufficient statistical data available, we are reduced to speculation regarding the effectiveness of the role of mass media and the Hesse reception.

Signs indicating the possible effect which one event may have had on another do exist. Among these, most notably, is the popularity of the rock-group, "Steppenwolf". Simply by spreading the name of Hesse's work from coast to coast, it is feasible to determine the group was an aid in the reception.

of this author.

Due to the rapid growth in mass media, adequate statistical methods have not been developed by which the impact of mass communication on the reception of Hermann Hesse can be measured. For example, if we could determine what the sales of books were for a particular week, then we would be able to assess what impact the appearance of Hesse in Charles Schultz' comic strip had. But, this can be accomplished only with the aid and cooperation of publishers.

CONCLUSION

Beginning with the cold war and continuing with the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy, Malcom X and Martin Luther King, the times during which Hesse was received in the United States were times of tension and uneasiness. Unmistakably, it was a period of social and racial unrest as America awakened to the riots of Watts, Newark and Detroit. Politically, the era was unstable as well. The highly controversial war in Vietnam, combined with related violence at the Democratic National Convention and the Kent State and Jackson State shootings were integral elements of the political turmoil.

Emerging from this historical period were such groups as the 'Beats', 'Hippies', 'Yippies', and others. Whereas some were socially and politically active, others turned to mysticism, drugs and/or alternative life-styles. The majority were seekers of themselves, for an alternative to technocratic, educational and political America. Many felt alienated and lost in their search for alternatives and significant quality in life. Individuals who comprised the counter-culture became absorbed in anyone or anything that seemed to share their beliefs or aspirations. Thus, seekers responded to Hermann Hesse, whose works were influenced by similar frustrations and anxieties and similar beliefs that society had decayed.

The suggestion of socio-political conditions of the times and groups emerging from those times being responsible for the reception of Hesse can hardly be disproved. The nexus has been established; what Hesse discussed in his novels, the youth readily accepted. For the most part, this was the criticism of technology and man's subservient role within it, society and its decadent ways, war and its ruthlessness. In another sense, and for another segment of youth, Oriental thought, the consumption of drugs, was also accepted. Thus perceiving, youth found an affirmation of its own beliefs; in the works of Hesse, youth could always claim that another, of a different generation, felt as they felt.

Moreover, the acceptance of Hesse was due to the socio-political condition of the times, which is to say, the turmoil of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s spawned and nurtured his reception. Conversely, the conclusion could be drawn; if the socio-political condition of the times change, any change would manifest itself in the reception as well.

The turbulence, so characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s has given way. There have been few major political demonstrations, riots, or violent street confrontations. Universities, once the center for opposition to Vietnam, are now functioning placidly. Students are more concerned with grades and "good" jobs than with the social issues or political ideals. The groups that emerged during the 1950s and 1960s have all but disappeared. The counter-culture, once flourishing, has dissipated.

One of the explanations given for the decline of the counter-culture is the end of the war in Vietnam and the introduction of the volunteer army. With Vietnam settled, the reason for demonstration was gone, and the cohesive force of the counter-culture dissolved.¹

If a date can be placed on the decline of the counter-culture, it would have to be between 1972-1973, when George McGovern lost his bid for the presidency of the United States. Already, it was clear the youth could not be counted upon as a viable political force. Their vote, which McGovern so voraciously sought, was not to be.²

In comparing the decline of the counter-culture and the reception of Hermann Hesse, all statistical information available indicates a correlation. New Directions, Inc., reports sales for its best seller, Siddhartha, at 279,000 copies for 1971. By 1972, the figure had dropped to 94,000 and by 1973, to 73,400. In 1974, the novel sold 47,700 copies and, in 1975, the figure further reduced to 28,270.³ On the university campuses, Hesse also no longer enjoys the popularity he once had. As Roman Struc stated in 1978: "No one seems to be reading Hesse any more".⁴

The direct correlation between Hesse's decline and the waning of the counter-culture has prompted many critics to view the reception as a fad. Even titles of various articles published during the 1960s suggest the same: "Top of the Pops", "Hesse Vogue" and "Hesse Fad", to name a few.

In addition, critics have argued that youth really never

understood Hesse, having only bits and pieces with which they could identify. Oddly enough, Hesse addressed these problems in his foreward to Steppenwolf and warned of the dangers of misinterpretation.

Yet it seems to me that of all my books Steppenwolf is the one that was more often and more violently misunderstood than any other, and frequently it is actually the affirmative and enthusiastic readers, rather than those who rejected the book, who have reacted to it oddly. Partly, but only partly, this may occur so frequently by reason of the fact that this book, written when I was fifty years old and dealing, as it does, with the problems of that age, often fell into the hands of very young readers.⁵

The critics' suggestion that the reception may have been only a fad is a simplification. Currently, Hesse is well received in Japan and his works have sold more copies there than in the United States. In view of the fact Japan is not currently facing the problems the United States confronted during the 1960s and 1970s, the reasons for Hesse's popularity may be different.⁶

Whatever the reasons for Hesse's success in the United States, we must understand that during specific times, different aspects of an author's work are received. Taking this into consideration, it would be of no great surprise if one day, under favorable conditions, Hesse's works are again avidly consumed in the United States.

Although this study has focused on a number of aspects of reception in evaluating the acceptance of Hermann Hesse in the United States, there are other aspects not included here. The four points utilized for this study; groups, socio-politics

of the times, the author, and mass media, are merely a beginning in evaluating why an author's works are received. Whereas in the case of Hermann Hesse these four areas do answer, for the most part, why this author was received in the United States and why his popularity was of such an extraordinary nature.

In the case of Hermann Hesse, the identification between reader and literary work was paramount in the reception of this author, yet other factors worthy of investigation have contributed to the reception as well. It would be of great interest, for example, to examine more closely the role other well-known authors had in the reception and how they aided its success. For instance, when Mann and Gide published articles on Hesse, how were the articles received and did they significantly alter sales figures? The same inquiry may be applied to Kurt Vonnegut's article on Hesse. To investigate this effectively, however, changes in the availability and compilation of statistical data must be made. Currently, few statistics are available and most publishers are not open with the information they have.

Another area of reception that could quite successfully be applied to Hesse is what Eberhardt Frey calls "Stilqualität", meaning a detailed analysis of the structure and language found within a particular work.⁷ Hesse's novel, Siddhartha, because of its flowing style and simplicity, lends itself well to such a study.

By utilizing these aspects and others, critics of reception

can better learn why an author's works are received and why they are received in one decade and not received in another. Furthermore, readers, publishers and authors alike may better understand the functions of literature.

A final point to be made is that critics of literature have focused too long on the author and the literary work. Both are important in the reception process, but it is the reader who, after all, brings to life the written page. It is upon the page that the reader discovers something with which to identify and often finds an affirmation of personal beliefs. And by so doing, literature achieves its "social function".

What must be realized is that whatever interpretation youth chose, it nevertheless represents reception. Similarly, the questions as to whether the reception of Hesse was a fad remains, in the view of critics of reception, unimportant.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹Robin White, "The Search", New York Times Book Review, 27 Feb., 1966, p. 9.

²Egon Schwarz, "Ein Fall Globaler Rezeption", LILI, Heft 15 (1974), p. 52.

³Theodore Ziolkowski, "Introduction", in Hermann Hesse: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Theodore Ziolkowski, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1973), p. 1.

⁴S.V., "Hermann Hesse in den U.S.A.", in Siegfried Unseld, Hermann Hesse eine Wirkungsgeschichte (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 3.

⁵Robert Pick, "Nobel Prize Winner Hesse", The Saturday Review of Literature, 7 Dec., 1946, p. 38.

⁶Joseph Mileck, Hermann Hesse and his Critics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1958), p. 199.

⁷Gisella Stein, "Hermann Hesse at 85", New York Times Book Review, 1 July, 1961, p. 20.

⁸Theodore Ziolkowski, "Saint Hesse among the Hippies", The American-German Review, 35, No. 2 (1969), p. 20.

⁹Gunter Grimm, Rezeptionsgeschichte (München: Fink Verlag, 1977), p. 52.

¹⁰Peter Uwe Hohendahl, Sozialgeschichte und Wirkungsästhetik: Dokumente zur empirischen und marxistischen Rezeptionsforschung (Frankfurt: Atheneum Verlag, 1974), p. 9.

¹¹Levin Schücking, The Sociology of Literary Taste (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966),

¹²Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Introduction to Reception Aesthetics", New German Critique, 10 (Winter 1977), p. 31.

¹³Robert Escarpit, Sociologie de la littérature (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964).

¹⁴Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Introduction to Reception Aesthetics", p. 78.

¹⁵Robert Jauss, Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag GmbH, 1969), p. 14.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁷Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach", New Literary History, 3, No. 2 (1972), pp. 279-300.

¹⁸Bernhard Zimmermann, "Der Leser als Produzent: Zur Problematik der Rezeptionsästhetischen Methode", Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik, 15 (1974), pp. 12-26.

¹⁹Karl Robert Mandelkow, "Probleme der Wirkungsgeschichte", Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik, 2 (1970), p. 94.

²⁰Ibid., p. 94.

²¹For a further discussion of the various theories on Reception consult Gunter Grimm, Rezeptionsgeschichte (München: Fink Verlag, 1977), pp. 22-28.

²²Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Introduction to Reception Aesthetics", p. 9.

²³Both Theodore Ziolkowski's "Saint Hesse among the Hippies", p. 19, and Marjorie Gouwens, "Hermann Hesse in The United States (and England)", p. 165, have traced the emergence of Hermann Hesse in the United States, and both have concluded that prior to 1946 not much interest was shown in the works of Hesse.

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¹Joseph Mileck, Hermann Hesse and his Critics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), pp. 250-308. And Marjorie Gouwens, "Hermann Hesse in the United States (and England): A Bibliography and Commentary" Diss. Indiana University 1975, p. 165.

²Theodore Ziolkowski, "Saint Hesse Among the Hippies", American-German Review, 35, No. 2 (1969), p. 20.

³Egon Schwarz, "Hermann Hesse, The American Youth Movement, And Problems of Literary Evaluation", Publication of the Modern Language Association of America, 85 (1970), p. 986. And Marjorie Gouwens, "Hermann Hesse in the United States (and England)", pp. 165-167.

⁴Marjorie Gouwens, "Hermann Hesse in the United States (and England)", pp. 165-167.

⁵Egon Schwarz, "Hermann Hesse, The American Youth Movement, And Problems of Literary Evaluation", pp. 977-987.

⁶Robert Pick, "Nobel Prize Winner Hesse", The Saturday Review, 7 Dec., 1946, p. 38.

⁷Marjorie Gouwens, "Hermann Hesse in the United States (and England)", p. 166.

⁸Theodore Ziolkowski, "Introduction", in Hermann Hesse: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Theodore Ziolkowski (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973), p. 8.

⁹Thomas Mann, "Hermann Hesse - Liberator of a 'Stifling Provincialism'", Saturday Review of Literature, 5 January, 1948, pp. 5-7.

¹⁰André Gide, "Preface to The Journey to The East", in André Gide, Autumn Leaves (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1950), p. 229.

¹¹Marjorie Gouwens, "Hermann Hesse in the United States (and England)", p. 64.

¹²Ibid., p. 64.

- ¹³ Ibid., pp. 204-208.
- ¹⁴ Marianne Bonwit, "Der Leidende Dritte", University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 35 (1952), pp. 91-111; Peter Heller, "The Masochistic Rebel in Recent German Literature", Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 11 (1953), pp. 198-213; S.L. Flaxman, "Der Steppenwolf. Hesse's Portrait of the Intellectual", Modern Language Quarterly, 15 (1954), pp. 349-358.
- ¹⁵ S.V., "Hermann Hesse in den U.S.A.", in Siegfried Unseld, Hermann Hesse eine Werkgeschichte (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 309.
- ¹⁶ Theodore Ziolkowski, "Saint Hesse among the Hippies", p. 21.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.
- ¹⁸ Colin Wilson, The Outsider (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956).
- ¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 51-68.
- ²⁰ Edwin F. Casebeer, Hermann Hesse (Indianapolis: Purdue University, 1972), p. 26.
- ²¹ Ibid., p. 26.
- ²² Alan Watts, The Way of Zen (New York: New American Library, 1964).
- ²³ Jack Kerouac, Big Sur (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1961), p. 31.
- ²⁴ Timothy Leary and Ralph Metzner, "Hermann Hesse: Poet of the Interior Journey", Psychedelic Review, 1 (1963), p. 181.
- ²⁵ Timothy Leary, High Priest (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1968), p. xi.
- ²⁶ Egon Schwarz, "Hermann Hesse, The American Youth Movement, And Problems of Literary Evaluation", p. 986.

²⁷Robin White, "The Search", New York Times Book Review, 27 Feb., 1966, p. 9.

²⁸Marjorie Gouwens, "Hermann Hesse in the United States (and England)", p. 111.

²⁹Egon Schwarz, "Ein Fall Globaler Rezeption", Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik, Heft 15 (1974), p. 52.

³⁰Between the Years 1965 and 1976, Bantam released the following works of Hesse's in paperback form: Beneath the Wheel, Demian, Gertrude, The Journey to the East, Klingsor's Last Summer, Magister Ludi, Narcissus and Goldmund, Peter Camenzind, Poems, Rosshalde, Siddhartha, Steppenwolf, and Stories of Five Decades. Hermann Hesse, Magister Ludi (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), p. ii.

³¹Rudolf Koester, "USA", in Hermann Hesses weltweite Wirkung: Internationale Rezeptionsgeschichte, Hrsg. Martin Pfeifer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), p. 163.

³²Ibid., p. 170.

³³Kurt Vonnegut, "Why They Read Hesse", Horizon, 12, No. 2 (1970), p. 111.

³⁴Martin Pfeifer Hrsg., Hermann Hesses weltweite Wirkung, p. 2.

³⁵S.V., "Hermann Hesse in den USA", in Hermann Hesse eine Werkgeschichte, p. 311.

³⁶Joseph B. Bauke, "Learning to Live with Chaos", The Saturday Review, 19 June, 1965, p. 38. Anon., "A God Within", Time, 30 July, 1965, p. 8. Guy Davenport, "Portrait of Adolescence", Christian Science Monitor, 32 December, 1965, p. 11.

³⁷George Steiner, "Eastward Ho!", New Yorker, 18 Jan., 1968, pp. 87-90.

³⁸Webster Schott, "German Guru Makes the U.S. Scene Again", Life, July 1968, p. 8.

³⁹Theodore Ziolkowski, "Saint Hesse Among the Hippies", pp. 18-23.

⁴⁰Stephen Koch, "Prophet of Youth", The New Republic, 13 July, 1968, p. 23.

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⁴³Compare with: Theodore Ziolkowski, "Introduction", pp. 1-2.

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⁴⁵Timothy Leary, High Priest (New York: World Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 153-155.

⁴⁶Allan Coult, "A Piece of Leary", Berkeley Barb, 3, No. 14 (1966), p. 6. Jaakov Kohn, "Laughing Leary", Berkeley Barb, 7, No. 22 (1968), p. 15.

⁴⁷Compare with: Theodore Ziolkowski, "Introduction", pp. 1-2.

⁴⁸Esther C. Gropper, "Literature for the Restive", English Journal, 59 (1970), p. 1225.

⁴⁹Theodore Ziolkowski, "Introduction", p. 1.

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³Bruce Cook, The Beat Generation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, (1971), pp. 151-152.

⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁵Allen Ginsberg, Howl and Other Poems (San Francisco: City Light Book, 1972), p. 31.

⁶Bruce Cook, The Beat Generation, p. 152.

⁷Ibid., pp. 93-98.

⁸Colin Wilson, The Outsider (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956).

⁹Ibid., p. 11.

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¹¹Jack Kerouac, On the Road (New York: Viking Press, 1957). Alan Watts, The Way of Zen (New York: New American Library, 1964).

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¹³Ibid., p. 288.

¹⁴Jack Kerouac, as quoted in Bruce Cook, The Beat Generation, p. 89.

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- 16 Frank Musgrove, Ecstasy and Holiness (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1974), p. 124.
- 17 Ken Kenniston, Youth and Dissent, p. 252.
- 18 Theodore Roszak, The Making of a Counter-Culture (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1969), p. 5.
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³Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf (New York: Bantam Books, 1977), p. 206.

⁴Hermann Hesse, Magister Ludi (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), p. 26.

⁵Hermann Hesse, Demian, p. 115.

⁶Ibid., p. 116.

⁷Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf, p. 31.

⁸Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1957), p. 78.

⁹Hermann Hesse, Demian, p. 124.

¹⁰Theodore Ziolkowski, "Introduction", in Hermann Hesse, Magister Ludi (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), p. xii.

¹¹Hermann Hesse, Siddhartha, p. 106.

¹²Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf, p. 61.

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²⁰Hermann Hesse, Steppenwolf, Author's Note, p. vii.

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CHAPTER IV

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