

**From Anti-humanism to Posthumanism:
Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf***

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Hermann Hesse's Steppenwolf (1927) can be regarded as a post-humanist novel for several reasons. It is post-humanist in a temporal sense because it engages with the nineteenth-century humanist legacy from a twentieth-century perspective. The novel's brazen critique of traditional bourgeois values does not simply reject humanism and its philosophy of individual autonomy. It dislodges idealist concepts of wholeness and self-perfection and replaces them with a multi-perspectival view of a continuously changing human consciousness, an open-ended process toward an ever-elusive self-awareness.

The protagonist of Hesse's novel, Harry Haller, even though still heavily influenced by the humanist tradition, can no longer be viewed as a clearly defined individual personifying the Cartesian dichotomy of body and mind. On the contrary, Hesse's novel depicts Haller's gradual disillusionment with this idealist world view by giving a detailed account of the deconstruction of his personality – a personality that, as it turns out, does not consist of a spiritual essence but dissolves into an accumulation of acquired conventions, habits, cultural and philosophical traditions, even specific historical constellations. Yet Hesse's attempt to go beyond a mere negation of humanist values implies transcending the humanist paradigm in many respects, including its form.

This essay will focus on the novel's subversion of the humanist tradition. It discloses how Hesse's novel undermines universalist philosophical claims, regardless of whether they belong to the idealist or anti-idealist Nietzschean philosophy that heavily influenced both the protagonist and his author. In light of the novel's dismantling of binary reasoning, foregrounded in the protagonist's man-animal division, the essay challenges conventional wisdom among critics who regard Hesse's literary works as traditionalist.

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Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf* (1927) can be regarded as a novel that criticizes the humanist tradition to which it is still connected. It also aspires to overcome the Nietzschean anti-humanism of its protagonist, and, for several reasons, it anticipates posthumanist tendencies. Hesse's *Steppenwolf* is *post-humanist* in a temporal sense because it confronts the nineteenth-century humanist legacy from a twentieth-century perspective. The novel's critique of traditional bourgeois values does not simply reject humanism and its philosophy of individual autonomy. It dislodges idealist concepts of wholeness and self-perfection and replaces them with a multi-perspectival view of a continuously changing human consciousness in an open-ended process of self-searching. One might say that the novel is "as much *posthumanist* as it is *posthumanist*" (Badmington, "Theorizing" 15). While *posthumanism* succeeds the humanist paradigm, it still must engage with the humanist tradition, even "acknowledge its persistence," from a critical perspective (15). The protagonist of Hesse's novel, Harry Haller, becomes gradually aware that the anti-humanist position that he obtained under the influence of Nietzsche's philosophy is still heavily influenced by the German humanist tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with which he was brought up. At the end of Haller's development, the protagonist comes to the realization that the Cartesian dichotomy of body and mind, a fundamental assumption of German neo-humanist philosophy, is a myth.¹ The multi-perspectival debunking of both the humanist premises of bourgeois individuality and the protagonist's anti-humanist opposition to these premises leads to the dissolution of a definable personhood, which in turn calls for a posthumanist awareness of the human subject's fluidity and evanescence.

This essay focuses on the novel's subversion of both the humanist tradition and the protagonist's anti-humanist rebellion against this tradition. It discloses how Hesse's novel undermines universalist philosophical claims, regardless of whether they belong to the idealist or anti-idealist, Nietzschean philosophy that heavily influenced both the protagonist and his author. My contention is that Hesse's novel reveals how nineteenth-century humanist

philosophy is based on an elitist mind-body hierarchy that is no longer justifiable at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Steppenwolf metaphor not only illustrates how traditional humanism established the supremacy of the spiritual over the animal nature of “Man” but also serves to expose binary reasoning, foregrounded in the protagonist’s man-animal division, as hypothetical. More precisely, the Steppenwolf metaphor takes on an emblematic function that illustrates both the protagonist’s personal dilemma as an artist and social outsider and the human conundrum in general created by humanism’s suppression of the abject biological reality of life. Yet it also serves to provoke the protagonist’s vacillation between the repression and acknowledgment of the subconscious, multifaceted dimensions of human existence. Although the protagonist has to realize that the Steppenwolf metaphor is a narcissistic self-projection, it plays a catalytic role as the gradual acceptance of Haller’s dark animal side leads him on a path that aims at overcoming the mind/body dualism. While Haller eventually fails to transcend the stifling, parochial moralist views of his bourgeois upbringing, his humiliating punishment of being laughed at for taking life too seriously forces him to witness the dismantling of his imaginary personality. Before focusing on the role of the animal metaphor in the *Steppenwolf*, I shall clarify my use of the term posthumanism.

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to provide a concise and clear-cut definition of the term posthumanism, as it has come to comprise a variety of approaches by numerous theoreticians.² For the purpose of this essay I shall adhere to the most commonly shared traits of a broad array of posthumanist theories that Neil Badmington, Martin Halliwell and Andy Mousley, as well as Stefan Herbrechter have identified.

Posthumanism can perhaps be best described in analogy to the other “postisms,” such as postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, etc. Like these, posthumanism denotes both a continuation and an opposition to its antecedent – in this case humanism (Braidotti 17-25; Herbrechter 42). As a working definition that by no means claims to do justice to all the possible

posthumanist approaches, the following proposition shall suffice: posthumanism contests the premises of humanist ideas that presume the unity and autonomy of the individual and the implications that are connected to these assumptions, such as the privileging and universalizing of the Western male subject, by exposing the logo-centrism of humanist ideology as historically, geographically, racially, and socially biased (Braidotti 28-30, 169-85; Haraway, "Manifesto;" Halliwell, 174-75; Herbrechter 149). In the case of Hesse's novel traditional humanist assumptions are contested by an array of diegetic and non-diegetic devices, such as multiple narrative perspectives that dispute or relativize the actuality of the protagonists and their claims, or self-contradictory accounts by the characters, the dissolution of fixed boundaries between individual characters, i.e., the blending, mixing, and multiplying of characters as, for instance, in doubles or gender-bending fusions of characters, and the disassembling of personalities. Finally, Hesse's *Steppenwolf* aims at revealing the human dependence on an instinctual, subconscious nature beyond rational control, thus exposing the assumption that individuals distinguish themselves from other living beings by their ability to rationally know themselves as a myth. Irony as an inconclusive dialogic mode of self-reflection is an effective device for communicating the perpetual human striving toward an elusive self-recognition. To be sure, one could argue that these narrative strategies can also be detected in humanist novels of education. However, within the humanist paradigm they do not serve the overall purpose of debunking the unity and agency of the human subject as a fiction, as Hesse's *Steppenwolf* does. Moreover, the posthumanist paradigm distinguishes itself from anti-humanist approaches (i.e., by Freud, Marx, or Nietzsche) in that it reflects on these and reveals that all attempts at delimiting the subject ontologically are arbitrary.

Conceding the difficulty of defining *posthumanism*, cultural critic Neil Badmington detects the incipient impulses for anti-humanist and posthumanist tendencies already in Marxist and Freudian thinking (4-6). Accordingly, the Marxist rejection of "the humanist belief in a natural human essence, which exists

outside history, politics, and social relations” (5) implicitly defies the sovereignty of human reason expressed in Descartes’s “Cogito ergo sum.” Assuming that human thinking is contingent on social, political, and cultural conditions, Marxism discards both the notion of individual autonomy and the supremacy of mind over body, an essential element of eighteenth and nineteenth-century humanism. With the emergence of the Freudian subconscious, however, the authority and independence of the human mind is not only contested from the world outside but also from within the human subject. The Freudian challenge to Cartesian dualism and the humanist paradigm is even more radical than its Marxist counterpart as it ultimately disputes the very existence of the *I* as a reliable entity. Jacques Lacan emphasizes the diminishing power of the Freudian ego in his essay on the mirror stage by detecting the self-deluding image-making process in the early stages of ego formation. Accordingly, the Cartesian mind/body duality proposed in humanist philosophy fails to recognize that the human subject is conditioned by a series of *méconnaissances* that constitute the ego from the very beginning of its development (*Écrits* 6).

As a writer who was sensitive to the challenges that bourgeois intellectuals had to face in view of the rapid social transformations at the advent of modernity, Hesse became increasingly aware of the unsustainability of the humanist beliefs of his education. With its numerous autobiographical references, the *Steppenwolf* can be considered as a fictional portrayal the author’s gradual disillusionment with the humanist worldview.³ Giving a detailed account of the deconstruction of his personality, Hesse’s alter ego, Harry Haller, gradually comes to realize after his soul-searching process that the Cartesian body-mind division is a simplification, inadequate to grasp the complexities of modern existence. Moreover, the protagonist’s self-interrogation reveals that his personality does not consist of a spiritual essence but dissolves into an accumulation of acquired conventions, habits, cultural and philosophical traditions, even specific historical events and constellations. Hesse’s novel inverts the traditional *Bildungsroman* by turning the protagonist’s progress toward completion upside down, into a process

of self-dissolution (Schwarz, "Erklärung" 197).⁴ The novel not only undermines the humanist notion of the perfectibility and homogeneity of the individual, it also questions the Enlightenment assumption that civilization means progress. The way it does so anticipates current notions of posthumanism.

Hesse's novel transcends the humanist paradigm in several respects, including its form. Rather than presenting a linear narrative, the author chooses three different viewpoints, which account for the novel's multi-perspectivity. It consists of an editor, who represents the bourgeois foil for Haller, also known as Steppenwolf; a first-person narrator, who depicts Haller's development from a personal point of view; and the third-person narrator of the *Tractat* or treatise, who analyzes Haller's human condition from a quasi-objective, philosophical and psychological perspective. The complexity of the narrative perspective illustrates the fragmentation of the self.⁵ The novel's formal and semantic structure is by no means traditional, although it does not take advantage of the stream of consciousness technique or experiment with syntactical and morphological structures.⁶ The insertion of dream sequences, a long epistolary passage of mysterious origin, and philosophical discourses, as well as the disintegration of the novel's main character into a multiplicity of hybrid characters that oscillate between fact and fantasy, reveal the novel's indebtedness to the romantic tradition. By integrating ideas of Nietzsche, C.G. Jung, as well as intermedial discourses on cinema, radio, and mass culture, Hesse transforms, criticizes, and plays with the conventions of *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlernovelle* in an attempt to overcome and question a fossilized idealist tradition (Herwig/Trabert 9).⁷

The fragmentation of the leading character is pointedly connected to the disintegration of the mind/body dualism. In idealist philosophy "Man" is portrayed as a rational animal. Likewise, the Steppenwolf is, of course, not an actual animal but a metaphor that refers to the protagonist Harry Haller. It characterizes its protagonist as a lonesome drifter who roams the streets at night and despises the false pretenses of civility. It also evokes the animalistic side of human existence that has been suppressed in the civilizing process.⁸ Thus the

Steppenwolf, as a symbol with manifold meanings, stands for “the Animal” in general, and as such for the human other, in that it both distinguishes itself from the human but also embodies it. In other words, the Steppenwolf on the one hand marks the uncivilized, abject and on the other a “more genuine,” uncorrupted human nature, worthy of preservation. However, this nature dualism, which represents Haller’s initial philosophy, is deconstructed during the course of the protagonist’s vacillating development and with it the entire mind/body duality of the Cartesian tradition.

Haller’s philosophy, laid out by the third-person narrator in the “Treatise on the Steppenwolf,” attributes the Steppenwolf’s personal tragedy to the incompatible “two natures, a human and a wolfish one,” within himself that “were in continual and deadly enmity” (HS 41) [zwei Naturen, eine menschliche und eine wölfische (...) sie lagen in ständiger Todfeindschaft gegeneinander] (SW 4:46). Raised in a bourgeois family, “those who brought him up had declared a war of extinction against the beast in him” (HS 41) [dass seine Erzieher versucht hatten, die Bestie in ihm totzukriegen] SW 4:45). The Steppenwolf regards himself “as a beast with only a thin covering of the human” (HS 41) [eine Bestie ... nur mit einem dünnen Überzug von Erziehung und Menschentum] (SW 4:45). While he “developed far beyond the level possible to the bourgeois [...], he is nevertheless captive to the bourgeoisie and cannot escape it” (HS 53) [weit über das dem Bürger mögliche Maß hinaus zum Individuum entwickelt (...ist er) dennoch ein Zwangshäftling des Bürgertums und kann ihm nicht entrinnen] (SW 4:56). In other words, the third-person narrator of the treatise is convinced that Haller cannot liberate himself from the damaging effects of his bourgeois education that “[i]nstead of destroying his personality [...] succeeded only in teaching him to hate himself” (HS 11) [Statt seine Persönlichkeit zu vernichten, war es nur gelungen, ihn sich selbst hassen zu lehren] (SW 4:14). His view of himself as a caged animal is the main reason for his despair and leads to his decision to commit suicide on his fiftieth birthday. At the bottom of his suffering is the Cartesian dichotomy of body and mind. It instills in him a yearning for pure

spirituality on the one hand and “a wild longing for strong emotions” on the other (HS 27, 30). Yet neither of these routes of escape from the self-imposed restraint is available to him because the internal struggle between his instinctual needs and his desire to be rid of them has become part of his disposition.⁹ Although Haller knows that his inner division and unhappiness are the result of his bourgeois upbringing, he is also aware that “he can never turn back again and become wholly wolf” (HS 63).

While Haller rebels against the mind’s supremacy over the body under the influence of Nietzschean philosophy, the novel’s multi-perspectival presentation of Haller’s struggles reveals that his rebellion is still indebted to the mind/body dualism. Viewing himself as the victim of a repressive education that failed to civilize him, Haller suffers from the lonely existence of an outsider. Yet he also clings to the image of the misunderstood intellectual as it allows him to preserve the illusion of his individual autonomy. Competing with the Nietzschean notion of “the savage born too late, born in the midst of a civilized society” (Lingis 13), who can ennoble himself by asserting the atavistic rights of the wolf-man and his healthy animal instincts over and against their repression in civilized society, are other monistic notions that no longer view the individual as an essentialist albeit divided entity. As I will show later, references in Hesse’s text to monist and scientific theories by Charles Darwin, Ernst Haeckel, and Carl Gustav Jung as well as Hinduist concepts resonate with these competing philosophies. While they all promise to overcome idealist metaphysics by viewing the mind as a result of evolution, they also try to counteract the fragmentation of the human subject. Yet at the conclusion of the open-ended novel not any one of the philosophies mentioned above can adequately represent the fragmentation, ambiguities, and transformational dynamics of human existence. The open-ended form portrays Haller’s life as an inconclusive example with many possibilities.

As the protagonist realizes, however, in the course of his development, viewing human nature according to the simplistic Steppenwolf-dualism cannot do justice to the complexities and inconsistencies of his existence (SW 4:122).

Therefore, he has to abandon his Steppenwolf posture that has allowed him to identify with a narcissistic self-image as both a maverick and as a victim. Hesse's novel not only exposes the self-preserving mask of a torn and misunderstood intellectual; it also depicts the Cartesian mind/body dualism as a fiction, entrenched in the legacy of eighteenth-century idealism. As the novel's title suggests, the animal – the inhuman other, whether perceived as an enemy from outside, a threat from within, or a desired ideal – takes the role of a catalyst in the deconstruction of the protagonist's personality that coincides with the deconstruction of his traditional humanist worldview.

Haller gradually comes to realize that what he deems to be the most frivolous leisure activities of modern civilization, such as dancing, have deep roots in earlier stages of the evolution of the human psyche.¹⁰ While he notices that he has unfulfilled instinctual and spiritual needs, the inhibitions of his bourgeois education prevent him initially from enjoying pleasures that appeal to the senses. By introducing his Faust-like protagonist – a highly educated but pessimistic intellectual – to the sensual pleasures of life, Hesse lets him reconnect with basic instinctual needs that he had lost in the process of his idealist education. Haller's cynicism with regard to his middle-class principles, such as decency, modesty, and propriety is, of course, linked to Nietzsche's cultural critique of nineteenth-century humanism: "We no longer derive man from 'the spirit' or 'the deity'; we have placed him back among the animals" (*Portable Nietzsche* 580).¹¹ Like Nietzsche, whom Haller esteems as a role model and brother, who was also born into an era that did not understand him, Haller admires the wild, strong animal species rather than the gregarious, domesticated ones.¹²

Haller's confrontation with the nineteenth-century cultural heritage that informs his entire persona is not simply a matter of intellectual or moral reorientation. It is both painful and liberating because his education has become his second nature. In other words, the metaphysical presumptions of the humanist legacy have conditioned the protagonist to the extent that he perceives

himself and the world through the lens of the essentialist biases of his protestant, bourgeois upbringing. The confrontation with modernity teaches him that his relationship with his precipitously changing environment cannot simply be understood from an intellectual point of view but must be relearned from a sensual, even sexual level of experience. As a symbol of a primeval, untamed nature that has been lost in the process of civilization,¹³ the Steppenwolf image is a reminder of the protagonist's dependence on a dualist worldview and at the same time becomes a stepping-stone on his path to emancipation from his limiting perspective.

The fact that the protagonist reconnects to his bourgeois origins through his olfactory sense reveals that his upbringing has not just influenced him on an intellectual level but also on a sensual level (SW 4:8). Haller has internalized the bourgeois ideology standard of cleanliness so that it becomes fully embodied. It is ironic that the Steppenwolf as a creature of the wild is attracted by the scent of cleanliness, the odor of civilization. In other words, the instincts have been civilized to the point that they reject their own "animalistic" nature. This domestication of the instincts is at the core of Haller's self-hatred because the instinctual side of his being has been trained to reject its very disposition.¹⁴ Haller is partially aware of this self-denying aspect of his bourgeois upbringing and therefore rebels against all forms of superficial propriety as it represses his true feelings and instinctual needs.¹⁵ Yet he initially does not comprehend the extent of modern civilization's transforming influence on the individual psyche including his own. This is why he clings to his Steppenwolf-personality as a possible route of escape from the constraints of civilization, not knowing that civilization also controls his sensual perception.¹⁶

Haller's fascination with the "simple honest sensuality" of jazz music must also be seen in this context of the body-mind dualism (HS 37). In fact the anthropomorphic description of jazz not only describes the exact opposite of Haller's phenotype "all pomade and sugar and sentimentality on the outside" and "savage, temperamental and vigorous" on the inside, a description that also fits

Haller's alter ego, Pablo (HS 37). In contrast, Haller was introduced as having a rough, wild appearance and a surprisingly refined and sophisticated character. While his attraction to the "raw and savage gaiety" of jazz may come as a surprise, his explanation leads back to the clash between the old humanist education of his upbringing and the "unashamedly primitive and childishly happy" American brand of music (HS 38). In other words, Haller's secret fascination with the boyishly fresh and childlike is still connected to his desire to gain access to an exclusive circle of immortals, of "kingly men" (HS 64). Although Haller is intellectually aware that he is a "captive to the bourgeoisie and cannot escape it" (HS 53), he does not fully comprehend that his anti-bourgeois rebellion against the "pomposity of the sciences, societies and arts" (HS 69) is influenced by the epistemic assumptions of these discourses. Haller's dualistic view of the human privileges the mind over the body regardless of his fascination with the sensual allure of raw emotions conveyed in Jazz music. After all, the "Magic" of the senses promises a means to gain access to a spiritual realm as the connection between the neon-sign and the golden track shows (HS 30, 32-33).

The renunciation of sensual needs and desires that promised the bourgeois subject's spiritual freedom, the contrastive duality of duty and inclination, of agape and eros, of mind and body remained part of the humanist education throughout the nineteenth century in spite of — or perhaps because of — the growing awareness of the unconscious.¹⁷ The humanist ideals intended for the moral betterment of the individual manifested themselves in social restrictions and the implementation of bourgeois etiquette and propriety. Hesse's novel illustrates this process of civilization in the "Tractatus of the Steppenwolf." There the "animal nature of man" becomes tamed, yet during the process of taming, the rules of propriety are internalized and eventually dominate the human to the point that they repress "true" human nature. Hesse invokes Nietzsche to challenge the humanist belief in self-improvement and progress to show that the repression of instincts equals dishonesty and self-denial.

The domestication of Haller, the wolf, is enacted when Haller accepts the invitation of an acquaintance, a professor with whom he used to discuss oriental mythology, out of sheer politeness and against his genuine inclination (HS 74-75). Hesse's first-person narrator emphasizes the dishonest repression of will by comparing his, Haller's, meek politeness to the submissive behavior of a "starved dog" ["verhungertes Hund"] that "laps up" the professor's praise and cordiality. The Steppenwolf's behavior has been conditioned to succumb to flattery and recognition like a domesticated animal: "Ich blickte dem artigen Mann in sein gelehrtes Gesicht, fand die Szene eigentlich lächerlich, genoß aber doch wie ein verhungertes Hund den Brocken Wärme, den Schluck Liebe, den Bissen Anerkennung" (SW 4:76). The metaphors of "Brocken Wärme," "Schluck Liebe," and a "Bissen Anerkennung" call attention to the self-abnegation brought about by the taming of the instincts. Haller's servile desire to be liked takes the place of the untamed animal's drive for self-preservation, like hunger and thirst, so much so that his learned behavior assumes the function of the instincts: "Gerührt grinste der Steppenwolf Haller, im trockenen Schlunde lief ihm der Geifer zusammen, Sentimentalität bog ihm wider seinen Willen den Rücken" [The Steppenwolf stood there and grinned as his animal instincts filled his dry mouth with slobber and sappy feelings began to bend his spine against his will] (SW 4:76; HS 75). Here the narrator follows Nietzsche in stressing the continuity between animal and human phylogeny by implying that human characteristics and moral values stem from the instinctual behavior of animals:

The beginnings of justice, as of prudence, moderation, bravery – in short, of all we designate *Socratic virtues*, are *animal*: a consequence of that drive which teaches us to seek food and elude enemies. Now if we consider that even the highest human being has only become more elevated and subtle in the nature of what is good and in his conception of what is inimical to him, it is not improper to describe the entire phenomenon of morality as animal (Nietzsche, *Daybreak* 27).

Accordingly, Haller's deceptively submissive behavior toward the professor has its origins in the animal's drive to avoid conflict. The difference between the tamed wolf and Haller is, however, that Haller can reflect on his domestication. While this capacity of self-reflection seems to increase Haller's suffering because he must watch helplessly how his will gets broken and his spine gets bent, the process of spiritual and physical degeneration does not necessarily end in utter despair. For the ability to ponder his own situation also provides Haller with a certain distance that is supposed to allow him to laugh about his quandary.

Haller's adherence to the body-mind dichotomy is also evident in his interactions with Hermine, whose name and appearance reminds Haller of a friend from his youth, or younger self, named Hermann (SW 4:88, 107). Hermine, who calls Haller "little brother" and "my boy" (HS 109; SW 4:107) and who plays with him a game "for life and death" (HS 109; SW 4:107) embodies Haller's thinly disguised alter ego. Her androgynous appearance, her youth, her maternal wisdom, intellectual acumen, and philosophical mind underline her ambiguity, her diverse roles as Haller's mother figure, promiscuous seductress, and younger self (SW 110). Hermine views herself as a kind of mirror ["eine Art Spiegel"] for Haller, "weil in mir innen etwas ist, was dir Antwort gibt und dich versteht" ["because there is something in me that answers you and understands you"] (SW 4:106; HS 108). Haller agrees with Hermine's self assessment but also recognizes her as someone who is "so ganz und gar anders als ich!" ["And yet you are so entirely different from me"]. Hermine's intangible, scintillating personality appears to Haller as his "opposite" ["Gegenteil"] that has "all that I lack" ["alles was mir fehlt"] (HS108; SW 4:106). Indeed with her sensuality, her social skills, she seems to embody Haller's narcissistic fantasy of a self that complements his impoverished, ascetic reclusiveness. Hermine assumes the role of Haller's guide, and in this sense she is similar to Haller's other mentor figures, such as Mozart and Goethe, who teach him to overcome his bourgeois restraints. Like these so-called immortals Hermine initiates the transformation of Haller's personality that will eventually liberate him from the limitations of his dualistic

point of view. Hermine's ability to transcend seemingly fixed borders between man and woman, child and teacher, mother and seductress make her appear to Haller "like life itself, one moment succeeding to the next, and not one to be foreseen" ["wie das Leben selbst: stets nur Augenblick, nie im voraus zu berechnen"] (HS 112; SW 4:109-110). In contrast to traditional masculinist representations of Woman, Hermine is not subject to a childlike identity. On the contrary, Hermine is in control of the effect that she has on Haller and able to use it to her advantage. Her personality that is both highly sensual and youthful, albeit worldly-wise, seems mind-boggling and defies characterization in terms of Haller's idealist categories.¹⁸

When Haller tells Hermine about his inner division between man and wolf, she replies that his self-image as a Steppenwolf is a poetic fantasy (SW 4: 111; HS 113). She sets him straight by telling him that, in contrast to human beings, animals never act embarrassed or pretentious to impress their audience. For her animals belong to nature and therefore act in agreement with their natural disposition (SW 4:111; HS 113). In Hermine's opinion there are moments, however, when human beings resemble animals: "And when a man is sad – I don't mean because he has a toothache or has lost some money, but he sees, for once in a way, how it all is with life and everything, and is sad in earnest – he always looks like an animal." ["Und wenn ein Mensch sehr traurig ist, nicht weil er Zahnweh hat oder Geld verloren, sondern weil er einmal für eine Stunde spürt, wie alles ist, das ganze Leben, und er ist dann richtig traurig, dann sieht er immer ein wenig einem Tier ähnlich"] (HS 114; SW 4:112). For Hermine animals are more in touch with the sincerity of existence than humans. Culture and civilization, on the other hand, enable humans to deceive themselves about the inevitable realities of life. While human existence on the whole seems less authentic than that of animals, it does have a much wider range of modes of experience. Hermine's observation that Haller had the looks of an animal when she first met him confirms a human's ability to experience multiple states of mind: "You are no wolf today, but the other day [...] there was really something of the

beast about you. It is just what struck me at the time.” [“Heute bist du kein Wolf, aber neulich, [...] da warst du schon so ein Stück Bestie, gerade das hat mir gefallen.”] (HS 113; SW 4:111). Introducing Haller to a whole range of sensual experiences that he had repressed because of his education, Hermine, both as a dancing teacher and at the same time spiritual mentor, represents the revaluation of idealist philosophy at the turn of the twentieth century. Echoing Darwin, Haeckel, Nietzsche, Freud, and Jung, Hermine rejects Kantian dualism. Instead she and Haller eventually agree with phylogenetic models that view the human subject as “constituted by evolutionary stratification” (Wolfe, *Animal Rites* 3). While these models present the evolution toward the human as progress toward a more complex organism of a higher rank, “the ‘animalistic’ or ‘primitive’ determinations inherited from our evolutionary past [...] coexist uneasily in a second-order relation of relations, which the ‘human’ surfs or manages with varying degrees of success or difficulty” (Wolfe, *Animal Rites* 3). The Tractatus’s narrator’s hypothesis, “that [a human] being was actually a beast with only a thin covering of the human” [“daß [der Mensch] in der Tat eigentlich eine Bestie sei, nur mit einem dünnen Überzug von Erziehung und Menschentum darüber”] (HS 41; SW 4:45) testifies to the influence of late-nineteenth-century paleontology and biological anthropology. Hesse makes use of another scientific discovery, namely that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny (Haeckel, Jung). According to this hypothesis of Haeckel every individual undergoes a primeval transformation from primitive mononuclear organism to primitive animal, to mammal to primate to human. This theory, of course, resonated with Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious, according to which each living organism inherited primordial states of consciousness.¹⁹

Biologists like Darwin and Haeckel, for instance, kept stressing that human civilization developed very late in the history of the species. Their historical point of view was to counteract human hubris and its narrow-minded moral values (Haeckel, *Welträtsel* 26). In spite of all their deviances from the Darwinian point of view, as well as from each other, Nietzsche and Jung agreed with Darwin’s

anti-creationist, anti-transcendental, and seemingly anti-idealist views. Haeckel's eschewing of Kant's dualist idealism in favor of a dynamic monism resonates in Hesse's novel and especially in the idea that every human being does not consist of one or two souls, "sondern aus zehn, aus hundert, aus tausend Seelen" (SW 4:122; HS 126).

Hermine serves as a mediator between Haller's idealist outlook and his later, more unprejudiced attitude that is able to appreciate the sensual aspects of life. In her multi-faceted roles as Haller's complementing other, as his soul-sister (SW 4:122; HS 126), as a mother-figure (SW 4:115; HS 118), a worldly-wise philosopher, youthful prostitute, and dance teacher her seemingly incompatible characteristics defy the very notion of a specific individuality, the metaphysical hallmark of idealist philosophy. Her dazzling personality (SW 4:106-8; HS 108-110) is living proof for her philosophy that a human being is devoid of a definable essence.

Hermine opens Haller's eyes to the heterogeneity and instability of human existence. Her constant presence allows him to perceive a much fuller spectrum of life and introduces him to the dark side of human existence that Haller's idealist upbringing tended to deny (SW 4:124; HS 128-29).²⁰ Under Hermine's influence Haller realizes that his old self was a kind of "illusion of my former personality" ["Wahn meiner bisherigen Persönlichkeit"] (HS 128; SW 4:124). Instead of limiting life to the mind-body dichotomy of his idealist education that suppressed "das ganze Chaos von Fähigkeiten, Trieben, Strebungen," — in other words everything that could not be subsumed under the supremacy of reason, "(to which death too belonged)" ["(wozu auch der Tod gehörte)"] (SW 125; HS 130) — Haller now begins to accept Hermine's "doctrine of the thousand souls" ["Lehre von den tausend Seelen"] (HS 128; SW 124). His adoption of Hermine's point of view is, however, a slow and agonizing process that implies the dissolution of his old, familiar personality in favor of a much less dependable and predictable outlook on life. While Hermine seduces Haller in the guise of an

alter ego, she transcends the border of Haller's dualist philosophy by introducing him to aspects of life that he has hitherto ignored.

Pablo is another figure whose appearance changes in Haller's perception. Pablo represents, to some extent, a contrast to Harry as he is introduced as a superficial bon vivant and jazz musician whose main goal in life is to make his audience happy by playing popular tunes to which they can dance. His carefree lifestyle and loose morals resemble those of Hermine, yet he seems to lack her philosophical perspicacity. Haller is reluctant to befriend Pablo because he considers the latter's hedonism frivolous and immoral. He also feels envious of this young, easy-going crowd-pleaser who possesses all the social skills and popularity that he himself lacks. If it were not for Hermine, the elitist intellectual recluse, Haller would never have warmed up to Pablo. Only after Hermine introduces him to the sensual aspects of his personality by teaching him to dance to Pablo's music is Haller prepared to get to know the musician.

Hesse's novel associates Pablo's naive, anti-intellectual, uninhibited "nature" with the Steppenwolf's characterization of jazz as "wild, launisch und kraftvoll." Moreover, jazz is described as a musical style that has the advantage of being "sincere, unashamedly primitive, and childishly happy" ["einer großen Aufrichtigkeit, einer liebenswerten, unverlogenen Negerhaftigkeit und einer frohen, kindlichen Laune"] (HS 4:38; SW 4: 38-39). These descriptions point to Haller's romantic and Eurocentric concept of a history that associates earlier stages of civilization with the ignorance and innocence of childhood. Haller's belief in a hierarchical progression of human civilization that reaches its apex in the European culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries echoes idealist narratives of human development by Kant, Lessing, Herder, and Schiller among others.²¹ Although these accounts differ, they all share a euro- and logo-centric point of view and make an essentialist distinction between humans and animals. As Derrida points out in his essay *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, for many philosophers from Descartes to Lacan and Heidegger "the animal" is simply

defined as the other of the human or vice-versa so that the definition of the human depends on delineating what the human is not: the animal (Derrida 27).

As in Schiller's *Universalgeschichte*, for instance, the pristine cultures of non-European parts of the world, especially Africa, were equated to those of pre-historical Europe.²² Haller looks at jazz as an expression of a primeval form of art because it appeals to uncivilized, instinctual nature in contrast to the spiritual refinement of his musical idols, such as Mozart. His ambivalent feelings towards jazz betray a perplexity toward modern culture that he tries to cover up with his patronizing, condescending posturing as a misunderstood intellectual. Although Haller seems to admire the disposition of the "Negro" and the "American," "who with all his strength seems so boyishly fresh and childlike to us Europeans" [der "uns Europäern in all seiner Stärke so knabenhaft frisch und kindlich" erscheint] (HS 38; SW 4:39), he also looks down on the culture of the new world as a deplorable regression. Haller's perception of Pablo as a representative of Europe's cultural decadence on the one hand and as a happy and carefree child on the other confirm the protagonist's wavering between disgust and secret admiration when he is confronted with an incomprehensible modernity. While the Steppenwolf's philosophy and self-image as it is represented in the *Tractat* is also based on the distinction between human and animal, Haller's first-person narrative questions and subverts this distinction by confronting the protagonist with characters like Pablo and Hermine.

Although Haller associates Pablo initially with uninhibited sensuality, he gradually realizes that the musician with the dark animal eyes also has a human, even a spiritual dimension: "Pablo [...] beamed on us out of his jolly eyes that were really animal's eyes except that animal's eyes are always serious, while his always laughed, and this laughter turned them into human eyes" [...Pablo (...) leuchtete uns aus den frohen Augen an, welche eigentlich Tieraugen waren, aber Tieraugen sind immer ernst, und seine lachten immer, und ihr Lachen machte sie zu Menschaugen"] (HS 173; SW 4: 163). First it is Hermine who recognizes in immoral Pablo a "saint in hiding" ["versteckter Heiliger"] (HS 153; SW 4:146). She

explains the seeming contradiction by adding that even sin can be a path toward sainthood (146; HS 153). Her explanation is, of course, a clear reference to a monistic philosophy that considers all of nature, both the good as well as the bad, divine. Another reference to monism is the *unio mystica* that Haller experiences at the masked ball where he celebrates “the mysterious merging of the personality in the mass” [den Untergang der Person in der Menge] (HS 168; SW 4:159). During this event Haller experiences a state of ecstasy as all the borders between self and other vanish and the individual merges with the masses. As in Schopenhauer’s philosophy happiness can be achieved if individuation, the source of all suffering, is annihilated: “I was myself no longer. My personality was dissolved in the intoxication of the festivity like salt in water” [“Ich war nicht mehr ich, meine Persönlichkeit war aufgelöst im Festrausch wie Salz im Wasser”] (HS 169; SW 4: 160). Not only the borders of the self disappear in this *unio mystica*, but so do the differences between the sexes and the parameters of space and time. At this moment Haller feels entirely free “released from myself, a brother of Pablo’s, a child” [“meiner selbst entbunden, ein Bruder Pablos, ein Kind”] (HS 170; SW 4: 161). The fact that Pablo is equated to an animal with his “schöner Tierblick” [beautiful animal’s gaze](SW 4:156, 164; HS 165, 173), to a child, and to a saint evokes the embodiment of innocence. Nevertheless, he has also a diabolic streak as a decadent seducer who introduces Haller to drugs and sexual adventures (SW 4:138; HS 145). Pablo does not have any moral scruples to sell Hermine’s friend Maria’s sexual favors to Haller (SW 4:139; HS 145). Yet, he uses the money for the charitable cause of helping a sick friend (SW 4:139; HS 145). Pablo resembles Hermine in that he too changes constantly (SW 4:138). As these examples show, judging these characters according to the clear-cut standards of bourgeois morality does not do justice to their complexity and multi-faceted personalities. Their intriguing transformations induce Haller to revise his opinions and become more open and accepting toward their non-conformist behavior. Their stunning mutations lead Haller to think that their gazes mirror the changing face of his own soul (SW 4:164; HS 174).

After all, Hermine's and Pablo's surprising transformations are meant to prepare Haller for the eventual rejection of his Steppenwolf identity (SW 4:165; HS 176). Pablo introduces Haller to his magic theater, a sequence of dreamlike scenes that lets Haller look at different aspects of his multi-faceted personality with the intention of teaching him to laugh about himself. More concretely, Haller's theater has a multiplicity of doors, behind each of which is a segment or theme that is connected to Haller's life. Most of the episodes are linked to the themes that have been addressed earlier in the narrative, such as the war of mankind against the machine, the suppression or justification of instinctual needs through reason, the debunking of the myth of the unity of the subject, the taming of the Steppenwolf, the role of art in contemporary society, and finally the possibility of escaping the Steppenwolf existence through humor. Haller fails in the attempt to laugh about himself because he takes Pablo's theater as reality and kills Hermine in a bout of jealousy. While it would be intriguing to examine the connections of the various segments of the Magic Theater, I will limit myself to examining the episode entitled "Marvelous Taming of the Steppenwolf" ["Wunder der Steppenwolfdressur"] (HS 194-96; SW 4:182-85).

In this episode, Haller watches an animal tamer who looks like him leading a tamed wolf to do tricks that resist his animal nature. The wolf has been trained to refrain from eating a rabbit and a lamb placed before him. The clenching of his teeth, the saliva dripping from his mouth, and his trembling body reveal, however, that the wolf's abstinence is achieved under extreme repression of his instincts. The wolf displays a canine submissiveness that Haller finds painful to watch: "Es war eine Qual mitanzusehen, bis zu welchem phantastischem Grade dieser Wolf seine Natur hatte verleugnen müssen" (SW 4:183; HS 195). In the second part of the act the roles are reversed. Now it is the wolf that forces the animal tamer to act like a tamed wolf. However, the docile wolf-man then begins to act like a wild beast mauling and killing the rabbit as well as the lamb. Haller flees the scene deeply shocked and comments: "This magic theater was clearly no paradise. All hell lay beneath its charming surface." ["Dieses magische Theater, sah ich, war

kein reines Paradies, alle Höllen lagen unter seiner hübschen Oberfläche”] (HS 196; SW 4:184). The allegorical episode reiterates Hesse’s Nietzschean critique of a civilization that has asserted itself through the repression of nature. After Haller has been socialized and educated to control his instincts, nature asserts itself and returns with a vengeance as the tamer’s beastly behavior is a result of the taming of nature. To distract himself after the horrific scene, Haller spontaneously hums the first line of the fourth movement of Beethoven’s ninth symphony: “O Friend[s], not these notes” [O Freunde nicht diese Töne] (HS 196; SW 4:184).²³ Beethoven introduces the words of Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” [“An die Freude”] with the admonition to intone something more pleasant and joyful. The citation of Beethoven’s symphony as a symbol of the victory of humanity can be read as an ironic comment on the regressive beastliness of the docile animal tamer. Compare, for instance, the lines “Brüder – überm Sternenzelt / Muß ein lieber Vater wohnen” (SchW 1:133) to the cold laughter and childish behavior of the immortals of Hesse’s novel. In other words, the optimistic, quasi-Christian belief in a meaningful universal order of the Schiller poem: “Freude heißt die starke Feder / In der ewigen Natur / Freude, Freude treibt die Räder / In der großen Weltenuhr” (SchW 1:134) has been replaced by a cold, inhuman universe and an image of organic nature that is driven by aggression and self-preservation. The deceptive optimism of German idealist philosophy is underlined by Haller’s memories of photographs from World War I that disturb his longing for “more bearable, friendlier pictures” [“erträglichere, freundlichere Bilder”] (HS 196; SW 4:184). While humming the Beethoven tune, he is reminded of “jene Haufen ineinander verknäuelter Leichname, deren Gesichter durch Gasmasken in grinsende Teufelsfratzen verwandelt waren” [“those heaps of bodies entangled with each other whose faces were changed to grinning ghouls by their gas masks”] (SW 4:184; HS 196). It is significant that the dead soldiers are not depicted as innocent victims but as grinning ghouls. Haller thinks that he was naïve to be appalled about these horrific pictures as a former war opponent because aggression appears to be simply part of human nature. Haller’s

comment, “Today I knew that no tamer of beasts, no general, no insane person could hatch a thought or picture in his brain that I could not match myself with one every bit as frightful, every bit as savage and wicked, as crude and stupid” [“Heute wußte ich, daß kein Tierbändiger, kein Minister, kein General, kein Irrsinniger Gedanken und Bilder in seinem Gehirn auszubrüten fähig war, die nicht ebenso scheußlich, wild und böse, ebenso roh und dumm in mir selber wohnten”] (HS 196; SW 4:184) expresses his disillusionment with the idealist belief in a good and true humankind.

Does this mean that Haller’s development ends in a state of utter despair over the evil disposition of the human species? This would imply that German humanism and its “immortal” representatives, such as Mozart and Goethe, were nothing but a vain fantasy. To be sure, Hesse’s novel exposes traditional humanism’s neglect, even suppression of the instinctual, irrational, and immoral side of human nature. However, reading Hesse’s text merely as a criticism of humanist hypocrisy from a Nietzschean point of view would not do justice to the ambiguities, incongruities, and conflicting voices that the novel articulates. Such a reading would also ignore the text’s historical dimension, for instance, the changing roles of bourgeois intellectuals and artists in modern mass culture, the loss of spiritual belief systems in an increasingly violent, war-stricken world that shattered the belief in a unified subject and meaningful universal order. Haller’s ambivalent relationship toward his humanist education, which causes his internal struggle and arduous suffering, has meaning although he has to abandon the purportedly eternal values on which he based his identity. While he has to dispose of his elitist belief in the immortal’s spiritual purity for a much less stable outlook that considers human fallibility, he manages to detect the spiritual dimension of art in the midst of the modern age that he despises. After all, Mozart admonishes Haller to accept the changing times and listen to the music of the immortals as it is transmitted in the new technological invention of the radio because this seemingly profane technology “cannot destroy the spirit of this music” (HS 213; SW 4:198-99). Another example for the spirit of art in modern

disguise is Haller's epiphany triggered by the dancing letters of the "electric sign" that announces the magic theater (HS 32; SW 4:34). Certainly, the novel is ripe with unflattering remarks about modern civilization and popular culture, but Haller's skepticism toward modernity is also subject to investigation and as such cannot be seen as Hesse's final word. While the protagonist criticizes modern mass culture from a sentimental point of view, he is also aware of his reductive idealization of the past. The fact that "*The Steppenwolf* is a text that keeps on commenting on itself, talking about itself" characterizes it as a multi-perspectival work in the tradition of romantic irony (Swales 180). The denigration of Hesse's work as "schematic, simplifactory, perilously close to earnest kitsch" by German academic critics during the 1950s certainly does not do justice to the novel's complexity and multi-perspectivity (184). Swales' contention that the text "is worryingly uni-vocal" because "the three narrative strands tend to merge into one" also conflates the different and often contentious points of view of the various characters. Although Hermine and Pablo turn out to be all projections of the protagonist, Haller's inner voices are far from homogenous and continue to vacillate between the yearning for a universally valid spirituality and the desire to overcome the limiting fiction of his Steppenwolf existence that he inherited with his idealist education.²⁴ Harry's development is an open-ended process of disillusionment. It does not have a static objective, but the objective is the protagonist's development itself, a process that exposes the illusion of the mind-body dichotomy, embodied in the Steppenwolf metaphor, as a deceptive hypothesis that both veils and unveils the plethora of intangible possibilities that reside in human existence. Thus the novel seems to probe the attempt to define what is human along the lines of the narrator of the Tractatus:

*Der Mensch ist ja keine feste und dauernde Gestaltung (dies war, trotz entgegengesetzter Ahnungen ihrer Weisen, das Ideal der Antike), er ist vielmehr ein Versuch und Übergang, er ist nichts anderes als die schmale, gefährliche Brücke zwischen Natur und Geist (SW 4:63; HS 61).*²⁵

[Man is not by any means of fixed and enduring form (this, in spite of suspicions to the contrary on the part of their wise men, was the ideal of the ancients). He is much more an experiment and a transition. He is nothing else than the narrow and perilous bridge between nature and spirit.]

The attempt at defining what is human at the same time defies an ontological definition. While the human subject as bridge between nature and spirit seems to take the mind-body dichotomy for granted, it remains unclear whether this dichotomy only exists because of the bridge. Taking into account the precariousness and transience of the mediation between nature and spirit one can infer that the dichotomy does not exist without human effort. The Steppenwolf is always already humanized, regardless of whether he denotes the wild, uncontrollable beast that we fear, or the trapped, tamed creature that we pity. Yet the human itself is still defined as what idealist philosophers called a mixture between animal and angel. What has changed is, however, the dynamic and unstable nature of the human subject that makes human existence both more negotiable and uncertain. Being sentenced to be the object of ridicule at the end, Hesse's protagonist is not allowed to assume the subject-centered agency that the humanist paradigm presumes. Haller's humiliation as punishment for taking life too seriously is an expression of the *posthumanist* condition that condemns the subject to witness the debunking of its humanist illusion of self-importance.

¹ While most neo-humanist philosophers and writers of the German idealist tradition, such as Kant, Herder, Schiller, Humboldt and Hegel, deviated from the Cartesian claim of the *cogito ergo sum*, they nevertheless adhered to the mind-body dichotomy, despite their attempts to harmonize the body-mind division.

² Cary Wolfe delves into the dimensions of posthumanism and attempts to map out the correspondences to post-structuralist, post-Freudian, and post-Marxist approaches (99-126). Wolfe rearranges these approaches according to a new model that distinguishes four categories: "Posthumanist Humanism" (Rorty, Zizek, Foucault), "Humanist Humanism" (Habermas, Rawls, Ferry, Heidegger), "Posthumanist Posthumanism" (Latour, Maturana/Varela, Luhmann, Haraway, Derrida), and "Humanist Posthumanism" (Nussbaum, Singer, Regan). The intricate theoretical distinctions of Wolfe's model are not helpful for the analysis of Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, however, not only because each of the authors is rooted within his or her historical and philosophical paradigm but also because Wolfe favors certain theories over others and excludes authors that could also be considered posthumanist, such as Merleau-Ponty or Catherine Hayles.

³ Hesse wrote the novel to overcome a crisis after two painful separations from his partners, Mia Bernoulli and Ruth Wenger. Likewise, Hesse's protagonist finds himself in a midlife crisis that triggers the self-finding process. Both Hesse and his protagonist publish newspaper articles criticizing Germany's nationalism and involvement in World War I. Like Harry Haller, Hesse had to confront the challenges of a rapidly changing society. For a more comprehensive description of the *Steppenwolf's* autobiographical allusions, see Schwilk 284-305.

⁴ In this context it is noteworthy that Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* made a deep impression on Hesse (Schwilk 74-76).

⁵ The subordination of the body to the mind in German idealism was very much indebted to the Cartesian "I think therefore I am." The mind remained the defining characteristic of humanity as the biological and genetic differences between human and animal became less obvious. Likewise Jacques Derrida states that "logocentrism is first of all a thesis regarding the animal, the animal deprived of the logos, deprived of the *can-have-the-logos*: this is the thesis, position, or presupposition maintained from Aristotle to Heidegger, from Descartes to Kant, Levinas, and Lacan" (*The Animal That, x*).

⁶ For instance, Henriette Herwig and Florian Trabert challenge Thomas Mann's claim that the *Steppenwolf's* "experimental audacity" ["experimentelle Kühnheit"] (Mann, GW 13: 840-43) was comparable to James Joyce's *Ulysses* or André Gide's *Faux Monnayeurs* (Herwig/Trabert 9). They point out that Hesse's novel makes use of neither the stream-of-consciousness technique, nor of "the dissolution of morphological and syntactic structures" ["Auflösung morphologischer und syntaktischer Strukturen"] as Joyce's novel does (9). According to their opinion, the *Steppenwolf* also lacks a fragmentation of the plot when compared to André Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*.

⁷ While one can certainly find reasons for calling Hesse's works traditionalist — reasons that may be responsible for Hesse's waning presence in academic scholarship in recent years — there have also been some innovative approaches that challenge the conventional wisdom among critics. In their introduction to a collection of essays Henriette Herwig and Florian Trabert, for instance, point out that the self-reflective nature of Hesse's work and the inclusion of intermedial discourses, such as cinema, music, visual arts etc. shows romanticism's affiliation to modernist tendencies (9). They call the author therefore a "Grenzgänger der Moderne" (12). In view of the novel's ironic commentary on the modern era of Hesse's own time, its open-ended dialectical reflections on traditional humanism and modernist anti-humanism, as well as its contrastive and playful juxtaposition of competing discourses of mass culture and high culture, I would go further and place the novel on the cusp of postmodernist/posthumanist tendencies. The discussions surrounding the reception of cultural icons, such as Goethe and Mozart, as well as their ironic defamiliarization are vital for Hesse's critical revision of Germany's humanist legacy.

⁸ The narrator of the "Tractatus of the Steppenwolf" emphasizes that the "*Zweiteilung in Wolf und Mensch, in Trieb und Geist, durch welche Harry sein Schicksal verständlicher zu machen versucht*" is a fictional simplification, which does not do justice to a human being's inner contradictions. Instead of the Faustian "*Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach, in meiner Brust!*" each "I"

consists of “eine höchst vielfältige Welt, ein kleiner Sternenhimmel, ein Chaos von Formen, von Stufen und Zuständen, von Erbschaften und Möglichkeiten.” Hermann Hesse, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Volker Michels, vol. 4: *Die Romane: Der Steppenwolf, Narziß und Goldmund, Die Morgenlandfahrt* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), 59. Subsequent references to this edition of Hesse’s Works will be cited parenthetically as SW including volume and page number. References to the English translation are taken from Hesse, *Steppenwolf*, Trans. Josef Mileck and Horst Frenz (New York: Picador, 1963) and will be cited parenthetically as HS followed by the page number.

⁹ By advocating that the abyss between body and mind is a human construct that teaches more about man than about animals, and that the man/nature opposition needs to be overcome through a monistic philosophy, Hesse is following Nietzschean and Darwinian perspectives of looking at human development in terms of a continuum of the animal species. Hesse’s *Steppenwolf* also anticipates Deleuze’s and Guattari’s claim that “each individual is an infinite multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities.” *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), 254.

¹⁰ This is why the narrator of the Tractatus comments that Harry deludes himself over the borders between the human and animal aspects in his soul: “Harry rechnet, so fürchten wir, ganze Provinzen seiner Seele schon zum ‘Menschen,’ die noch lange nicht Mensch sind, und rechnet Teile seines Wesens zum Wolfe, die längst über den Wolf hinaus sind” (SW 4:63).

¹¹ For an in-depth analysis of the textual correspondences between Nietzsche’s philosophy and Hesse’s *Steppenwolf* see Dagmar Kiesel’s essay “Das gespaltene Selbst: Die Identitätsproblematik in Hermann Hesses *Steppenwolf* und bei Friedrich Nietzsche.” Kiesel points out that many of the novel’s underlying themes, such as the division of the self, self-hatred, suicide, loneliness, the individual’s relationship to the bourgeoisie are also important aspects of Nietzsche’s criticism of idealist philosophy.

¹² Nietzsche removes the terms ‘noble’ and ‘servile’ from their historical context of feudal society and presents them as natural traits of animal species. According to Alphonso Lingis, this “transference of the identifying characteristics of the noble animal upon the human animal that rises from the herd is far older than feudal class society; we see the falcon-man, lion-man, stallion-man, eagle-man, bull-man, cobra-man in the necropolises of Egypt, on the temple friezes of the Assyrians, the Hittites, and on the seals of Mohohendo-daro and Harrappa on the Indus two thousand years older still” (*Animal Philosophy* 9).

¹³ The writings of Rousseau exerted a significant influence on Hesse (Schwilk 68, 143). Yet Hesse takes issue with Rousseau’s nature/culture division by claiming that Rousseau’s return to nature is no longer a possibility for the *Steppenwolf*.

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud’s *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930) [*Civilization and Its Discontents*] connects the diminished importance of the sense of smell in humans to the process of civilization: “Diese Veränderung hängt am ehesten zusammen mit dem Zurücktreten der Geruchsreize, durch welche der Menstruationsvorgang auf die männliche Psyche einwirkte. Deren Rolle wurde von Gesichtserregungen übernommen” (Freud, SA 9:229). Cary Wolfe has also pointed out this connection (Wolfe, *Animal Rites* 2).

¹⁵ Haller’s disdain for politeness is first mentioned by the editor (HS 9). There the editor interprets Haller’s contemptuous “look which criticized both the words and the speaker of them” in the spirit of a Nietzschean critique of civilization: “‘See what monkeys we are! Look such is man!’ and at once all renown, all intelligence, all the attainments of the spirit, all progress toward the sublime, the great and the enduring in man fell away and became a monkey’s trick!” (HS 9). A second instance is when Harry is a guest at a professor’s house and insults his hosts with his blunt criticism of their bourgeois taste (HS 81-83).

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have focused on what they call the theme of “becoming-animal” as a kind of escape from preconceived notions of identity and sameness: “To become animal is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape in all its positivity, to cross a threshold, to reach a continuum of intensities that are valuable only in themselves, to find a world of pure intensities where all forms are undone as do all the significations, signifiers, and signifieds to the benefit of an unformed matter of deterritorialized flux, of nonsignifying signs” (*Animal Philosophy* 96). In view of the later deconstruction of the Steppenwolf image, one could say that Hesse coincides with Deleuze and Guattari by attempting to disrupt oversimplified abstractions, correspondences, dichotomies, analogies.

¹⁷ Stefan Zweig illustrates the constraining, anachronistic bourgeois moral code of honor at the end of the nineteenth century in his autobiographical work *Die Welt von gestern*.

¹⁸ Some feminist approaches may not agree with this assertion because Hermine still reveals the masculinist division of mother and whore. On the one hand, Harry perceives her as an all-knowing mother-figure, and on the other she is introduced as a prostitute. In her article on “Hesse, Women, and Homoeroticism,” Kamakshi P. Murti argues “that the female characters in Hesse’s works,” including *Der Steppenwolf*, “are either reduced to an object or allegorical status [...] or become increasingly hermaphroditic to reflect and enable the consummation of the protagonist’s homoerotic desires, both processes resulting in the annihilation of woman as a subject” (270). While Murti’s observation is indeed very well taken, Hermine differs from traditional masculinist fantasies as the novel exposes her as the male protagonist’s projection. Moreover, the blurring of the boundaries between Hermine’s spiritual and sensual qualities calls the mind-body split as well as the gender division into question.

¹⁹ Hesse had already undergone psychiatric treatment with Joseph Bernhard Lang, a student of Jung, beginning in April 1916. Hesse also studied the dualism of the gnostic worldview with its dual divinities for light and darkness, spirit and body. According to Heimo Schwilk, Hesse was fascinated by the Manichean teachings and their ascetic rejection of bodily pleasures. He is particularly intrigued by the idea of a creator that unites both the good and the bad (Schwilk 201). Likewise for Jung the self is divine, which erases the distinction between good and bad. One could read the *Steppenwolf* as a literary response to his examination of these ideas.

²⁰ In this respect Hermine resembles Goethe’s Mephistopheles who introduces Faust to the sensual pleasures of life.

²¹ See for instance Kant’s “Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte,” Lessing’s *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, Herder’s “Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit,” and Schiller’s “Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?” Herder’s narrative deviates from the other accounts as it replaces the Enlightenment model of linear progress by an organic development that views the phylogenesis of mankind in analogy to the postnatal ontogenesis of a human being. It anticipates Haeckel’s claim that ontogenesis repeats phylogenesis even though it was still beholden to Christian creationism and did not espouse the theory of evolution.

²² Friedrich Schiller, “Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?” *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, ed. Peter André Alt (Munich: dtv, 2004), 754-55.

²³ Hesse published an article with the same title on November 3, 1914 in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* pleading “for a civil tone among intellectuals” in view of the heated nationalistic fervor at the beginning of WW I (Cornils, “Introduction” 4).

²⁴ The irony and self-irony with which both the third and first-person narrators ridicule Haller’s elitist adulation of spiritual qualities and his concomitant desire to overcome these sentimental yearnings also contradicts Jörg Drews’ contention that Hesse’s novel is something for “Ratsuchende” (Drews 26).

²⁵ Swales points out the similarity to a passage in section 4 of Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*: "Der Mensch ist ein Seil geknüpft zwischen Tier und Übermensch — ein Seil über einem Abgrunde. / Was gross ist am Menschen, das ist, dass er eine Brücke und kein Zweck ist" (176).

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