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HERMANN HESSE AS AMBIVALENT MODERNIST

by

Theodore Saul Jackson

A dissertation presented to the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

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*for everyone who believed this was possible*

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## Introduction

### Genesis

When I began this project, I was primarily interested in finding out what kind of literature, if any, was associated with German youth groups around the turn of the century. These groups perplexed me. Though often politically conservative, they seemed in other ways completely liberal by my twentieth-century American standards. Instead of discovering literature loved by the *Wandervogel* movement, I found an author who was, throughout his life and work, enamored of and loyal to the most enduring ideals of the *Wandervogel*: the experience and respect for nature, finding time for self-renewal, and finding oneself. These values are partly responsible for the blossoming popularity Hesse's works enjoyed when they began to be read on a widespread basis by American youth in the 1960s and 1970s, for these adolescents and young adults found themselves many times in the same situations as those of the *Wandervogel*: old enough to make their own decisions but forced to carry out the decisions of their parents. Though the young Hans of Hesse's second novel, *Unterm Rad*, was practically forced into a regional seminary and then relegated to an apprenticeship in a clockworks shop when his theological studies failed, he felt

himself caught under the weight of his parents and teachers as many of the generation that was “born to be wild” did.<sup>1</sup> As Ingo Cornils notes in the introduction to the recent *Companion to the Works of Hermann Hesse*, the generation of Americans who ravenously consumed Hesse’s work “are reaching retirement age.” Furthermore, “their idealism has become jaded, their legacy uncertain” (1). Since the years of the “Hesse Boom” as Joseph Mileck put it in 1978, scholarly interest in Hesse has declined dramatically although his books remain popular.

My interest in Hesse does not stem from his popular success in the United States or the lack thereof. Instead, I became interested in Hesse as an author who thoroughly examined the communal aspects of contemporary life (that is, that time in which he lived) and its state and process of ongoing technological development. Hesse constantly questioned the implications of the increasing influence of technology on the lives of individuals. While other authors writing at the same time as Hesse embrace these quickly-developing technologies, Hesse depicted in his first

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore Ziolkowski’s essay, “Saint Hesse Among the Hippies,” outlines some reasons why American youth might be drawn to Hesse. In general, he rejects more traditional forms of academic criticism of Hesse’s works, at least as far as they provide explanation for Hesse’s success. He asserts that “it is . . . certain that the sneering critics of the literary Establishment reveal little but their own provincialism in the failure to understand the forces that move the post-modern generation and the reasons for Hesse’s appeal” (23). Ziolkowski posits that “[y]outh respects individualists 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” (20). Hesse, of course, is one of these individualists “who embedded in his life and works the rejection of a dehumanizing technological society for the sake of personally meaningful values” (20–21). He also suggests that Hesse might serve as a link between political action and the growing practice of meditation. He cites one student who suggests that “meditation in Hesse leads to action and commitment” (23).



two novels, *Peter Camenzind* and *Unterm Rad*, the lives of individuals who were, in fact, not helped by technology but in some cases, done injustice by it. What soothes the stress of these books' protagonists, rather, is usually akin to a walk in the woods or an afternoon of fishing. These depictions, though, are not cheaply escapist; they offer, as all of Hesse's novels do, examples of psychological *rejuvenation* from the stresses of modern life.

As Hesse's writing changes over the years, the theme of walking and wandering takes on an increasingly metaphorical role. In the early novels, especially *Unterm Rad*, walking is directly representative of the rebellion that Hesse's protagonists feel towards the injustices done to them by society, school, and parents. The bourgeois, indoor world of the novel focuses on the improvement of the individual through traditional academics; readiness for the seminary entrance exam will secure the young Hans a respected position in society as a pastor. This preparation is grueling, though, and must be undertaken at the expense of Hans's free time spent outdoors doing activities like wandering freely. Eventually, Hans steals back what has been taken from him by fleeing school. The first two chapters of this dissertation focus on aspects of walking and wandering as a physical antidote to the difficulties of the protagonists' lives. The first chapter examines the literary roots of wandering in Rousseau and Nietzsche while the second is a more direct examination of wandering in Hesse's early novels.

By *Der Steppenwolf* (examined in the third chapter), wandering no longer

stands in for the purely physical freedom of being able to change locations as the protagonist sees fit. Quite to the contrary, Harry Haller has chosen to make his life as an academic and freely spends large amounts of time indoors, in his “nest” surrounded by books, manuscripts, and empty wine bottles. The problem now is that Haller has not spent enough time *away* from books to feel like he can interact with the rest of the world. Moreover, he is troubled by what he perceives as his failed ability to be neither fully man nor fully wolf. In the case of this novel, it is at first Haller’s seemingly aimless walking that brings him to the location where he can transcend the man/wolf dichotomy—first, to a bar where he meets his alter ego, Hermine, and then to the Magic Theatre. Hermine teaches Haller to dance, which is for him a key to interacting with other individuals. Walking later allows Haller to navigate the hallways of the Magic Theatre. The various doors in the Theatre are labelled with fantasies that Haller can experience by merely walking through them. Walking thus gives him the ability to tease out the intricacies of this interior journey in a somewhat more orderly fashion than having to face a deluge of emotions all at once.

In the fourth chapter I show that the role walking plays in *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel* is even more removed from Hesse’s original method of using wandering to signify a reclamation of freedom. Yet, a reclamation of freedom is exactly what Josef Knecht achieves when he leaves the community of glass bead game players in order to become a private tutor. Walking

in Hesse's final novel represents not his escape from a stifling intellectual environment (such as that depicted in *Unterm Rad* in which the students have no academic freedom), but rather an intellectual environment in which theory sees itself as superior to practice and where academic freedom is seemingly unending. Knecht, having spent his entire career and personal life in the perfection of a theoretical game, though, thirsts for experience in and of the real world. Knecht's wandering brings him to places where he can absorb knowledge that is unavailable in the pedagogical province's scholarly archives. In *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, the notion of a communal journey is essential, yet the physical act of walking has little to do with the pilgrimage on which the characters embark. More so, the narration relies on the notion that each journeyer is dependent on the other and that their common pilgrimage is essential to meeting their own individual goals. Wandering represents the flexibility each member of the League must exhibit; likewise, the group must continue to have new experiences and undergo changes for their metaphorical pilgrimage to continue.

Hesse's use of the motif of wandering or walking in each of the works discussed in this project thus allows the reader to gain a sense of how the author adapts to changes in himself as well as the societal changes that take place during the span of his life. At the beginning of his career, Hesse deeply feared the extinction of Naturalism—the literary attempt to replicate an everyday reality which the reader can believe—from German literature. As a literary autodidact, Hesse read

Goethe and the Romantics, and according to Peter Huber, his pietistic upbringing “verschmolz dieser Bildungshorizont zu einer traditionalistischen Kunstauffassung” ‘fused this educational horizon to a traditional conception of art’ and that with his encounters with contemporary French, Russian, and Scandinavian literature confirmed his “antinaturalistischen Kunstauffassung” ‘antinaturalistic conception of art’ (178).<sup>2</sup> Though this fact seems at first glance to be a strike against an understanding of Hesse as *any* type of modernist, I assert that his desire to fuse a more traditional, Romantic style of writing with that of one that embraces literary Modernism is one reason scholars can consider him an ambivalent modernist.

Huber reminds us that Hesse read Hermann Bahr’s book *Zur Kritik der Moderne* and found in it a “prophetisch-visionäre Diktion” ‘prophetic-visionary elocution’ which was congruent to the “Weltbild des dichtenden Fremdgängers oder verlorenen Sohns einer pietistischen Missionarsfamilie” ‘worldview of the poetizing traveler or lost son of a pietistic missionary family’ (179). Bahr writes:

Daß aus dem Leide das Heil kommen wird und die Gnade aus der Verzweiflung, daß es tagen wird nach dieser entsetzlichen Finsternis und daß die Kunst einkehren wird bei den Menschen – an diese Auferstehung, glorreich und selig, das ist der Glaube der Moderne.

(qtd. in Huber 179)

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<sup>2</sup>Throughout this dissertation, translations of shorter quotations appear directly after the German. If only one page number is indicated in the reference, the translation is my own. Otherwise, the first page number refers to the original text and the second to its English counterpart.

[That salvation will come out of suffering and grace out of doubt, that it will dawn after this abominable darkness and that art will return to humans—modernity believes in this glorious and holy resurrection.]

Today's understanding of the trajectory of literary modernism could not be farther from Bahr's, but we must remember that Bahr is writing in 1890: he was pushing back against the—and resists the prevalence of Naturalism. Hesse would have understood Bahr's book as support for what Hesse understood as his own "modern" Neoromanticism, as Huber points out.

### **Hesse's Recent Lay and Scholarly Reception**

The reception of Hesse's work around the world changed significantly after his death in 1962.<sup>3</sup> Though Hesse was translated into numerous languages after receiving the Nobel Prize in 1946 for *Das Glasperlenspiel*, readers' appetites for these translations remained weak until the mid 1960s. At that time, American readers and critics were quick to devour Hesse's works, praising them with "unabashed enthusiasm" (Mileck 348). Scholarship on the author increased dramatically as well. Mileck reports that "fifteen books and pamphlets, some seventy-five articles, and twenty doctoral dissertations were written" in the period between 1965 and 1975. Hesse himself never expected such a warm reception from Americans. Mileck writes that in a

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<sup>3</sup>Space does not allow for an explanation of the intricacies behind this change and the sources that do explain Hesse's changed reception are numerous. See Bauschinger and Rey, Pfeifer, and Michels (several articles from 1971 to 2005) for a clearer picture of Hesse's reception history.

conversation he had with Hesse in the mid 1950s, Hesse had insisted that “America was never likely ever to be taken with him, with his inward-directed individualism and his almost exclusive preoccupation with the individual” (349). Perhaps this radical individualism is what shines through most in Hesse’s work and what, in turn, lead Americans to embrace him. A certain striving for individuality and feelings of urgency to develop and discern feelings for oneself seem to be the predominant way that readers during the Hesse Boom identified with the author. David Richards writes in 1987 that “[t]he emphasis [Hesse] gave to inwardness and the individuals striving for wholeness and for the full development of his or her innate personality gave support to the hippies and other youth in their questioning of conventions and their rejection of the personas being imposed on them by the authority of school, state, and religion” (*Hero’s Quest* 111). These reactions to the oppression perpetrated by societal authority and authorities is not new; the Transcendentalists had already pointed them out. Yet Hesse, not having yet been integrated into the canon (at least in English translation), provided a source for young persons to discover themselves and their struggles with authority reflected in literature on their own.

In Germany, literary critics and academics have long been ill at ease with Hesse and never read him with the same enthusiasm as their American counterparts. The problem was exacerbated after Karlheinz Deschner cited him as a prime example of kitsch in his book *Kitsch, Konvention und Kunst: Eine*

*literarische Streitschrift (Kitsch, Convention and Art: A Literary Polemic, 1965).*

Hesse's scholarly reputation in Germany has been undergoing a painfully slow recovery ever since. A few devoted scholars remain actively engaged with his work, though, as represented by the Internationale Hermann-Hesse-Gesellschaft (International Hermann Hesse Society) and its publication, the annual *Jahrbuch*, now in its fourth volume.

### **Structure and Scope of the Project**

This dissertation is organized roughly chronologically according to the order in which Hesse wrote the novels discussed. In the first chapter, I outline the role of philosophical and literary walking in Hesse's work as well as how these depictions differ from those produced in earlier times. Additionally, I show how Hesse's writing about walking allows his readers to embrace and successfully process life at the turn of the twentieth century. The ways Hesse writes about walking span from obvious to concealed. Hesse's collection of watercolor paintings, short stories, and poetry entitled *Wanderung* extols the pleasures of wandering the countryside on the one hand. On the other, Hesse reinterprets the theoretical writings of Rousseau and Nietzsche by choosing to use their motif of movement by foot to highlight that which technology has pushed out of life around 1900.

The second chapter takes Hesse's reinterpretation of Nietzsche and Rousseau and applies it to three of Hesse's early novels, *Unterm Rad*, *Peter Camenzind*, and

*Knulp*. In this chapter, I detail how Hesse's texts make use of walking and its German counterparts, *wandern* (wandering, hiking) and *spazieren gehen* (pleasure walking). After that, I examine how youthful characters encourage self-reflection in the bourgeois reader. Finally, I suggest that Hesse synthesizes youth and *wandern*. I bring in arguments about the role of time and space from Stephen Kern as well as the social history of walking compiled by Rebecca Solnit. At this point I must indicate what might appear to those readers already familiar with Hesse's novels as a glaring omission. I have consciously chosen to omit the discussion of two of Hesse's major novels, *Siddhartha* (1922), and *Narziss und Goldmund* (*Narcissus and Goldmund*, 1930). Though both novels involve protagonists who engage in ample amounts of walking, I felt that the spirit of this walking is more akin to that of the early novels, which I had already discussed thoroughly in the first and second chapters. *Der Steppenwolf*, on the other hand, was an obvious departure from the more Romantic aesthetic prevalent in those early novels and I envisioned the discussion of Hesse's 1927 novel to provide more engagement with the further development of Hesse's ambivalent stance towards Modernism.

The third chapter examines *Der Steppenwolf* as an ambivalently Modernist autobiography. Using Eugene Stelzig's concept that Hesse's work forms a *Seelenbiographie* 'soul-biography,' I situate the novel in a time of crisis within Hesse's own biography. The novel is the story of a recently-divorced, aging academic who, through some uncanny experiences, is encouraged to explore popular culture



as he reinterprets his relationship with his “Unsterblichen” ‘immortals’—cultural heroes like Goethe and Mozart. I argue that Hesse calls not only for a state of balance in the life of the individual but also for reconciliation of all opposites. I additionally detail how Hesse embraces, but also responds to several of Modernism’s literary devices such as the use of documentary style, the uncanny, and his synthesis of popular and high culture.

In the last chapter, I examine Hesse’s two final novels, *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel*. I argue that these two novels, this time set in the future, exemplify Hesse’s ambivalence towards modernist literary techniques. The novels are mirror images in which the protagonists have strikingly different relationships with the hierarchical systems in which they find themselves. Yet in both, the individual still manages to come to terms with himself as an entity separate from the collective, a process which John Krapp likens to Hegel’s process of individuation.

The overarching argument of all four chapters is that Hesse’s novels (at least every one that can be construed as part of his *Seelenbiographie*) are on one level a depiction of the artist’s own struggle with modernity and on the other a depiction of how he struggles to portray this modernity. I argue that Hesse transcends typical one-sided views of modernity by suggesting and implementing syntheses of the polar opposites (past/future, purity/diversity, nature/culture) between which the modern individual is drawn.

The words “modern” and “modernist” are, of course, extremely difficult to

define, and exact scholarly definitions of them are hard to pin down. Scholars speak of modernity seemingly endlessly but almost never pose a working definition. Tim writes (summarizing Braddick in the first part) that the adjective “modern” can be understood as

First, a historical shift which begins as early as the seventeenth century, producing new forms of capitalist organization, social relations, government and technology, accompanied by the development of a scientific, secular world-view. Second, the rise in the Enlightenment of a discourse which actively promotes the modern against the inherited: the discourse of rationalization, progress and autonomy; the abolition of superstition and the mastery of nature. (2)

This definition is one that sets the boundaries of modernity to be as far-reaching as possible and what is referred to as the modern era. Scholars speak of another “modernity” that coincides roughly with the industrial revolution and the railroad. This narrower understanding of modernity represents an acceleration from that first surge of “mastery of nature” and makes the way for an additional wave of acceleration that takes place in roughly the first third of the twentieth century. Technological modernization manifests itself in new literary and artistic techniques, or *Modernism*. Martin Swales offers a list of modernist novels that share three concerns: “an acute awareness of cultural crisis, a high degree of narrative self-consciousness, and an urgently expressed utopian aspiration which, while

present throughout the novels, can be felt with particular intensity in the closing sections of the texts in question” (33) and continues a page later: “[i]n this vacuum of values, this Vanity Fair of ideas and ideologies, the quest for a positing of the human self in its full endowment becomes as urgent as it is problematic, perhaps even chimerical” (34). This definition, seemingly appropriate to Hesse, still neglects to mention the economic changes that arise from the ability of new media that allows mass reproduction. Russell Berman’s definition of literary Modernism, and the one that this project takes as a baseline, insists that the culture industry is a force with which literature must reckon:

Modernism rebels against the culture industry, not with better or higher prose but with multifarious strategies of destroying the iron cage. Its central concern is the emancipation of the reader from the system of deception perpetuated by established culture. . . . In place of the literary system of imprisonment, modernism envisions a charismatic renewal, the thorough destruction of bureaucratic culture, through aesthetic means; the social rejuvenation it preaches is to be carried out through the specific restructuring of the reception process. (181–82)

Berman’s definition works best for interpreting Hesse as a Modernist author, whose protagonists all rebel against the status quo late in their lives. They insist on a life that serves the individual in its quest to break out of what Max Weber calls in *Die*

*protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1905) the “iron cage” into which modern society has confined such lives. One can interpret that “iron cage” in many ways, but for Hesse it tends to stand for maintaining one’s individuality in the face of dictatorial and, in many cases, damaging cultural norms. But as I consistently assert, this individuality is not rebellious merely for the sake of rebellion. With Hesse, rebellion is almost always tempered by the assumption that too much of it is unhealthy. Harry Haller, in *Der Steppenwolf* at first oscillates between the extremes of making himself either a human or a wolf, but eventually realizes that his personality does not merely encompass a balanced mixture of the two, but of a thousand or more souls. Krapp (with the help of Joseph Mileck) confirms this in his article, which asserts that Hesse uses the Hegelian concept of individuation in *Das Glasperlenspiel*:

When polarities are finally drawn together and reconciled, and the boundaries between them are suspended, a synthesis of opposites is ideally produced. Synthesis, in the service of self-fulfillment, is the “compelling and directive urge” in all of Hesse’s protagonists; everything revolves about life’s polarities and is directed toward it.<sup>4</sup> (349)

It is outside the scope of this dissertation to investigate each and every instance of resolved polarities in Hesse. Nevertheless, I will uncover as many of them as possible

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<sup>4</sup>The same happens with other modernist authors like André Gide and Nikos Kazantzakis.

as I outline ways in which his novels embrace the characteristics of modernist writing ambiguously, much as Hesse himself embraced the characteristics of modern culture and society ambiguously.

## Chapter 1

### Hesse and the European Tradition of Philosophical and Literary Walking

This chapter seeks first to broadly outline how literary depictions of wandering distinguish themselves from the literary wandering of past ages, and second, how the writing of Hermann Hesse itself, relying heavily on the motif of wandering, accepts the challenges of life in the new century and allows his readers to overcome them in productive ways. At the writing of this dissertation, no monographs about walking in twentieth-century German literature in general have been published; scholars have at their disposal only single treatments of individual works or authors.<sup>1</sup>

Andrew Cusack, in the introduction to his monograph on the wanderer in *nineteenth* century German literature, gives a working definition of wandering.<sup>2</sup> He writes that

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Barta's monograph, *Peripatetics in the City Novel*, covers Bely, Joyce, and Döblin; Elisabetta Niccolini's book, *Der Spaziergang des Schriftstellers*, treats Büchner, Walser, and Bernhard.

<sup>2</sup>I will use the German *wandern* and the English verb "to wander" interchangeably despite the different cultural connotations of these words.

“[t]he German verb *wandern* denotes traveling, primarily the action of walking, which may or may not be directed at a particular goal. In this respect it is closer to the transitive senses of its English cognate” (2, his emphasis). He goes on to specify that wandering is “used . . . to denote travel, frequently (but not exclusively) in the sense of a journey taken on foot . . . but also to refer to nomadism, those forms of existence distinct from the settled life” (2). If we begin only with these two definitions, the possibilities of which literary figures might be included under the umbrella term “wanderer” seem endless.<sup>3</sup> One must also not forget the literary flâneur, which we might distinguish from the more general wanderer insofar as the flâneur tends to make the city his beat, observes the visual signs of human society and creation at work and uses them as his text. The wanderer, on the other hand, walks through the countryside, only seldom encounters other humans, and typically uses his journey to escape or mitigate the effects which industrial modernization and the life changes that result from it have had or continue to have on him.

The twentieth-century wanderer has a rich ancestral history of “itinerant players, peddlers, journeymen, gypsies, . . . artists, scientists, explorers, and students,” as Cusack explains (2). These wanderers, though, embarked on journeys out of societal pressure to travel. Journeymen were expected to remain outside their home region for a certain period of time after their apprenticeships; these travelers

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<sup>3</sup>Hesse’s *Narziss und Goldmund*, Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*, and the works of Jack Kerouac and John Steinbeck or even the contemporary German comedian Hape Kerkeling come to mind. Furthermore, one could cite Hesse’s *Knulp* as a literary nomad.

who predate the twentieth century understood their travel as “noch etwas ganz Selbstverständliches, eine schlichte ökonomische Notwendigkeit, da ihre Kunden ‘aufgesucht’ werden mußten” ‘still something quite self-explanatory, a homely economic necessity, because their customers had to be sought out’ (165).<sup>4</sup> Kaschuba explains that this is “noch nicht jene Bewegungsform, bei der das Unterwegssein der eigentliche Zweck ist” ‘not yet that form of movement that has as its only purpose being in motion’ (165). By the turn of the twentieth century, though, the act of wandering itself takes on the aspect of being pleasurable—something chosen by and not forced upon, the individual.<sup>5</sup> These pre-twentieth-century wanderers moved about while creating their own subculture, according to Kaschuba (166). This chapter asserts that models of wandering in the twentieth century co-opt the more nineteenth-century cultural significance of wandering in order to express their state of being at odds with twentieth-century life.

Cusack expresses in the conclusion of his tome that “[a]ny continuation of this survey would have to attend to the function of the wanderer motif in Hesse’s fictions, in particular to its role as a conduit for Nietzschean vitalism, and to ask to what extent such ideas shaped the ideology of the *Wandervogel*” (230). I find Hesse’s fiction a particularly interesting subject for a study of wandering precisely

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<sup>4</sup>*Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* is probably the most canonical literary exemplar of wandering because of social pressure, particularly in conjunction with guild and apprenticeship practices.

<sup>5</sup>This is due largely in part to the nobility’s lack of “things to do,” i.e. walking becomes an activity in which one sees and is seen.



because so many of his characters rely on wandering as a refuge from the ills of modernization such as polluted city air, oppressive bourgeois parents, or merely lack of contact with nature. Most of them stem from bourgeois or petit-bourgeois backgrounds for which wandering is never a necessity as much as something done either for fun or as a respite from contemporary life. Travel deemed necessary by commerce or social life could now be undertaken through the use of new technologies such as the automobile or locomotive. Travel done for the sake of pleasure is undertaken by foot; as the prominence of machine-powered travel increases, so does the effect of electing to do so by means of the body alone. Hesse's convictions about the benefits of travel by foot (and more importantly the experiences gained by doing so) are so strong that even his Nobel Prize-winning futuristic *magnum opus*, *Das Glasperlenspiel*, set in the twenty-fifth century, includes practically no mention of mechanical transportation. The hero, Josef Knecht, travels in this science fiction novel by foot, often for days on end.

It is fitting to note in this chapter a passage from the first section of Hesse's collection of essays, poetry, and watercolors entitled *Wanderung* (1920). He admits here to being stuck in between the poles of "Wanderer" and "Bauer" 'farmer.'<sup>6</sup> In this short essay, he associates the farmer with "Tugend" 'goodness,' but admits that he will never be able to achieve this "Tugend" and that the assumption that he could was "[sein] Irrtum, [seine] Qual, [seine] Mitschuld am Elend der Welt" '[his]

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<sup>6</sup>We will eventually see that Hesse's life work involves synthesis of polar opposites again and again.

mistake, [his] pain, [his] participatory guilt in the world's suffering' (13). The complete person, he asserts, knows no homesickness.<sup>7</sup> Since he is not that complete person, he "kostet" 'tastes' this homesickness as well as his joys (14). The analogy between nomad and farmer, though, has deeper roots than Hesse's own perceptions; indeed this idea undergoes a paradigm shift over the time between the preindustrial era and Hesse's life.<sup>8</sup> Annette Simonis points out in the introduction to her article entitled "Vom ästhetischen Blick zur ‚Bricolage“" that the differentiating factor between literary wandering in the nineteenth century versus that of the twentieth century is a new self-reflexivity (9). While wandering in German literature seems to be used more frequently in the nineteenth century, it survives into the twentieth century, but becomes more keenly aware of itself as it stands in opposition to an ever-accelerating pace of life, as Simonis points out. Hesse, as I argue in this chapter, dovetails into and makes aesthetic use of this self-reflexive wandering in many of his works, of which *Wanderung* is probably the clearest example.

The aesthetics of walking, though complex, can be understood as operating on three levels when it comes to its effect on the reader. In the first, walking and the pure enjoyment of nature and one's surroundings is the sole factor that propels the reader through the text. In the second level of aesthetic engagement, the reader,

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<sup>7</sup>One could argue as well that Hesse's entire life is a quest for the authentic self. His literature, which mimics his biography (what some scholars term Hesse's *Seelenbiographie*), is also a metaphor for the author's own search for the authentic self. For further explanation, see Stelzig.

<sup>8</sup>As Schneider will show us later.

through the act of reading, experiences that which one might consider psychologically “just as good as actual walking” and/or an inspiration to go walking him- or herself. In the third level of aesthetic engagement, the reader is inspired by either his virtual walking or his own philosophical engagement with the text and because of that decides to put his thoughts into action that causes a change in her life. For the sake of argument, we will assume that the reader has access to modes of transportation other than walking which she decides *not* to use. In the age of the automobile, locomotive, and bicycle, walking long distances sheds its life-sustaining and economic necessity and takes on the symbolism of freedom, wholeness, and the like.

Many strains of Modernist literature and aesthetics concern themselves with speed as a pathway to new art and culture, as Roskothen explains in the introduction to his philosophical study entitled *Verkehr*. He writes, citing Sloterdijk, that

Die technologische und soziale Sphäre des Verkehrs wäre mithin die sinnenfällige Konkretisierung einer sich beschleunigenden und zugleich funktional ausdifferenzierenden Gesellschaft; Fortschritt wäre in diesem Sinne „Bewegung zur Bewegung, Bewegung zur Mehrbewegung, Bewegung zur gesteigerten Bewegungsfähigkeit.“ (21)

[The technological and social spheres of traffic would be part of the sensible concretization of an ever-accelerating and at the same time

functionally differentiated society; progress would be in this sense  
“motion to motion, motion to more motion, motion to an increased  
capability of motion.”]

Marinetti’s Futurist manifesto, “The New Religion-Morality of Speed,” to give an example, touts the virtues of speed and violence insofar as they provide pathways for new modes of expression for either escaping or destroying old cultural growth.

Hesse, on the other hand, though a Modernist in many ways, seems to recognize the *dis*advantages of accelerated contemporary life and to depict them accordingly in his prose works. Moreover, he positively reinforces the virtues of human-powered transportation (i.e. walking) by creating figures who participate in this form of transportation, which seems to foster the humanist ideal of questioning the culture in which they live. While some scholars might lump Hesse together with traditionalist and naturalist writers who refuse to accept modernization, one must acknowledge that Hesse embraces at least some aspects of Modernist aesthetics. In *Der Steppenwolf*, for example, the bourgeois home in the city in which Harry Haller lives provides an important contrast to the wild home of the Steppenwolf as the protagonist struggles to find balance between these two symbolic extremes. In this novel, contemporary music also provides a point of access to the present day for Harry who is otherwise stuck in the world of his academic heroes: the world of Goethe, Hölderlin, and Novalis. New forms of transportation and communication are, for Hesse, not virtuous in and of themselves as the futurists would argue. But,

for Hesse the act of contemplative walking (which stems back to the peripatetic philosophers) is somehow steeped in humanism's tradition of scholarly questioning and the ideal of academic freedom. Haller, to give one more example, wrangles emotionally with his actions while wandering the city after having insulted a nationalist professor's kitschy picture of Goethe.

In addition to providing an examination of the tradition of walking in literature, I go one step further and propose that we may understand walking not only as a particular phenomenon of, but also as a criticism of life after and during modernization.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Huber implies that Hesse's writing itself is also a phenomenon of modernization, but also that it represents a critical stance toward it. After explaining Hesse's strong ties with Romanticism, Huber asserts: "Nun ist die Neuromantik zusammen mit anderen literarischen Zeitströmungen wie Symbolismus, Décadence, aber auch dem Impressionismus und dem Jugendstil ganz allgemein, eine Reaktion auf den ersten Einbruch der Moderne in die Kunst. Gemeint ist der Naturalismus. Diese Gegenströmungen repräsentieren ihrerseits eine Kritik der Moderne innerhalb der Moderne und verweisen so auf deren im Keim angelegte Ambivalenz, wobei es nötig wäre, eine antinaturalistische Moderne von einer generellen Antimodernen sauber zu unterscheiden, eine Aufgabe, die an dieser Stelle nicht umfassend, sondern nur in Bezug auf Hesse geleistet werden kann" 'Now Neo-romanticism together with other literary trends of the time like Symbolism, Decadence, but also Impressionism and Art Nouveau in general, is a reaction to the first outbreak of the reflection of modernity in art. What I mean is Naturalism. These countermovements represent for their part a criticism of modernity from within modernity and thus point to an ambivalence which lies at their core. Because of this it is necessary to differentiate between an antinaturalistic modernism and a general antimodernism. This is an exercise, which at this point is not inclusive, but can only be used in Hesse's case' (175–76). I intend for the entire dissertation to expand on Huber's notion of differentiating between a general antimodernism and antinaturalistic modernism. Hesse is not against modernism itself, but against what, for him, that modernism represents—the complete abandonment of Romantic ideals.

## The Walking Tradition in Enlightened Europe: Rousseau

Hesse's depictions of wandering can be more readily contextualized if one probes the history of the philosophical and literary wandering upon which Hesse builds his work. It is no secret that Hesse greatly admired Nietzsche and even mentions him specifically in *Peter Camenzind*, for example.<sup>10</sup> To understand walking as a metaphor for the quest for self-realization is one that predates even Nietzsche, perhaps most markedly in Rousseau's work.

This chapter relies on Solnit's assertion that "[n]ew purposes keep being added to the pedestrian repertoire, but none are dropped, so that the walk constantly increases in meanings and uses" (101). Though, in the strictest sense of the word, pedestrians have been in action since the dawn of humanity. The act of moving by foot first gains significance when the individual is allowed to choose between wandering for enjoyment and wandering out of necessity. This happens in the eighteenth century. Schneider elaborates:

Das 18. Jahrhundert, das Jahrhundert der Aufklärung, war auch das  
Jahrhundert, das das Gehen zu Fuß entdeckte. Damit ist freilich eine

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<sup>10</sup>Peter's friend Richard brings up Nietzsche and Wagner and is astounded that Peter has never heard of them. These cultural figures represent here two of Hesse's favorite parts of contemporary culture. It is no problem that Peter is unfamiliar with them because, as Richard points out, "Sie sind [dafür] viel auf Schneebergen gewesen und haben so ein tüchtiges Oberländergesicht. Und ganz gewiß sind Sie auch ein Dichter. Ich kann das am Blick und an der Stirn sehen" 'You have been on snowy mountains and have a stalwart Highlander's face. And most certainly you are also a poet. I can see that by looking at your brow' (44). Wandering experience is thus a suitable replacement for these philosophers.

besondere Art des Gehens gemeint – denn gegangen wurde natürlich immer, ausgiebig beispielsweise von Wandergesellen, Vaganten, Spielteuten, Pilgern, und vor allem: den Armen. Aber es machte sich – in vormoderner Zeit – keiner auf den Weg, der es nicht aus solchen ständischen, zünftischen, religiösen, sozialen oder materiellen Gründen tun *mußte*, sei es aus äußerem oder selbstauferlegtem Zwang; denn natürlich ist das Gehen, ist die lange Fußreise äußerst beschwerlich und strapazenreich, und sie war dies unter den schlechten, in jeder Beziehung höchst unsicheren Wegverhältnissen früherer Jahrhunderte umso mehr. Das Zufußgehen aus Lebensnotdurft und unter kulturellen Sanktionen mußte gerade zurücktreten, bevor das neue Gehen, das „Fußwandeln,“ wie Seume es nennt, aufkommen konnte. Dies war ein von äußerlich-pragmatischen Zwecksetzungen *entlastetes* und freiwillig gewähltes, ein auf den eigenen Vollzug gerichtetes, ein gewissermaßen intransitives Gehen, das als lustvoll erlebt wurde; mit einem Wort also ein ästhetisches Gehen, jenes Spaziergehen oder Wandern, wie wir es heute noch kennen. (135)

[The eighteenth century, the century of Enlightenment, was also the century that discovered walking. By this, I mean a specific kind of walking, for walking has always been undertaken, for example by wandering tradesmen, vagrants, gamblers, pilgrims, and above all: the

poor. But in premodern times, no one went onto the trail because of class, guild, religious, social, or material reasons unless it was of his or her own volition. Naturally, traveling long distances by foot is wearying and difficult, and even more so dangerous in earlier centuries. Walking out of necessity and because of cultural sanctions had to die down before the new walking, the “Fußwandeln,” as Seume calls it, could come to the fore. This was a walking that was decidedly free of pragmatic goals and freely chosen, an intransitive walking experienced as entertaining: an aesthetic kind of walking, that kind of strolling or wandering as we know it today.]

Thus walking becomes something done for the sake of pleasure and not out of necessity. More specifically, though, in order to explore the full scope of this newly discovered pleasure, we must first acknowledge the formative role of volition in this reformed mobility. Solnit writes that for Rousseau, walking was specifically the “ideal walking that he described—chosen freely by a healthy person amid pleasant and safe circumstances—and it is this kind of walking that would be taken up by his countless heirs as an expression of well-being, harmony with nature, freedom, and virtue” (19). Previously, being on one’s feet (that is, walking as a mode of mobility without technological aid) was a sign of inferior class standing if not an indication that one was a member of the peasantry. Wolfgang Albrecht takes this idea one step further in the introduction to the volume *Wanderzwang – Wanderlust* and posits



that a tension between these two modalities of walking has existed since the beginning of recorded history. He writes that

Neben (und später vor) die berufs- und sozialbedingte Mobilität der Handwerker und Vaganten rückte ein freigewähltes Fußreisen, das alsbald gemeinhin zur puren Lust-Wanderung wurde. Es trat eine – zunächst an die Aufklärungsbewegung gebundene – Entwicklung ein, die unter den Stichworten Arbeitswanderung und bürgerliche Bildungsbewegung sowie Freizeitwanderung zwar prägnant benannt ist, doch im einzelnen noch der genaueren Erforschung und umfassenderen monographischen Darstellung bedarf. (4–5)

[Alongside (and later on, before) the occupational and socially determined mobility of handworkers and vagrants appeared a freely chosen form of wandering by foot that generally became one that turned into a pure form of leisure walking. There was a new kind of walking (bound to the Enlightenment) which developed under the headings of wandering for work and the movement for civil education. This kind of walking is in need of research in individual cases.]

One must, of course, differentiate between social history and the history of literature. The walking depicted in a literature aimed at the educated classes is not necessarily the same as that which they actually undertook. The wandering that

appears in eighteenth century literature,<sup>11</sup> of course, has its attendant challenges and problems. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, for example, carried out wandering which was expected of him socially. "Beschwernisse" 'hardships' such as these, according to Albrecht, become all the more problematic when "erstens je unwegsamer und unerschlossener einen Gegend ist, zweitens je mehr traditionelles Fahren und dann vor allem moderne Verkehrstechnik vom Gehen entwöhnt<sup>12</sup> haben" 'first, the more off-path and undeveloped a region is, second, the more traditional driving, and third, the more that modernized transportation technology has been separated from walking' (3). The time period leading up to the eighteenth century had its own version of modern technologies of transportation such as the horse and carriage. Once the carriage became a reliable form of transportation and could be hired out, one could use it in order to pursue excursions for pleasure. Indeed, modern transportation technology has found itself to be the subject of much scholarship as of late. Rousseau, as we will see later, comments about his distaste of riding in a coach. The most important consequence of the individual who chooses to walk for

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<sup>11</sup>Albrecht presents a working definition of *Wanderliteratur* as "Schriften, die nach unterschiedlichen narrativen Grundsätzen ganz oder partiell handeln von authentischen Wandern im Sinne einer Reise zu Fuß, bei der in Orts- oder Raumwechsel zur Begegnung mit Fremden führt" 'texts, which by different narrative bases, entirely or partially deal with authentic wandering in the sense of a trip by foot, by which there is a change in location or space and leads to an encounter with Others' (2).

<sup>12</sup>That Albrecht would choose the word "entwöhnen" (to wean) is particularly interesting. The philosopher Paul Virilio asserts that man walking alone represents a conscious form of transportation that is distinct from the first form of transportation one experiences in the mother's womb (39).

pleasure (for our purposes) is that she must first and foremost acknowledge the presence of her own physical body—A marker of twentieth-century literary wandering. Again, Albrecht: “Der Wanderer wird auf sich selbst, auf seinen Körper verwiesen und kann oder muß auch ihn wahrnehmen, womöglich zumindest partiell neu entdecken” “The wanderer is relegated to himself and his body and thus can or must experience it, and, when possible, discover it anew’ (3). The reality of reflexively acknowledging one’s body is for Rousseau the first step at chipping away at Descartes’s *cogito ergo sum*,<sup>13</sup> which asserts that thinking is being. Walking, though a stimulus to thinking, is also a formal acknowledgment of the physical body. The concept of being is, after Rousseau, no longer solely based on thought, but can be realized and understood through the body’s experience. Walking thus allows one an exit from the logical mind, or at least provides for an alternate way of organizing thoughts.<sup>14</sup> As we shall see, though, this is not necessarily an escape

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<sup>13</sup>Solnit highlights how Rousseau breaks the mold of Western philosophy: “Like Rousseau, Kierkegaard is a hybrid, a philosophical writer rather than a philosopher proper. Their work is often descriptive, evocative, personal, and poetically ambiguous, in sharp contrast to the closely reasoned argument central to the Western philosophical tradition” (26).

<sup>14</sup>Friedlander writes in his commentary on the *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (a philosophical work structured as a series of dreams) that “[t]he formless record of the *Reveries*, then, is not merely opposed to Descartes’ orderly and methodical inquiry that puts together one day after another. It also sets an opposition between establishing knowledge based on first principles and discovering the soul by way of its world. Existence is not a matter of knowledge, it is sensed in the return of the self that opens to the world. And the world is not an object of knowledge to be reconstructed step by step, methodically, by way of its facts or things. Knowledge requires method, but it is necessary to find ways in the world, to make one’s way in it” (36–37).

from a mind that precludes thought *per se*, processing and understanding the world, or of self-understanding.

Rousseau writes that “I can scarcely think at all when I stay in one place, my body has to be in motion if my mind is to be” (97). Solnit reminds us of Rousseau’s importance in this matter, that he supports walking with purpose: “[t]he history of walking goes back further than the history of human beings, but the history of walking as a conscious cultural act rather than a means to an end is only a few centuries old in Europe, and Rousseau stands at its beginning” (14). Rousseau’s critique of *cogito* is not only a philosophical one, but is a stance that pits the collective against the individual, and encourages the individual to abandon the intricate structures of society and revert back to a natural state. Solnit writes that “[t]he Rousseauian reversal that insists that men and nature are better in their original condition is, among other things, an attack on cities, aristocrats, technology, sophistication, and sometimes theology, and it is still going on today. . . .” (18). It is precisely this suggestion of a return to nature which Hesse picks up and continues in his writing, as we will see later. In other words, the malaise of “cities, aristocrats, technology, sophistication, and sometimes theology” motivates Hesse’s figures to search for an alternative: self-realization—a more complete understanding of the self, unmediated by these technologies.

Rousseau faced many of the same societal forces which propelled Hesse away from society. According to Solnit, Rousseau restructures the Christian story of

human origin as a fall from nature into culture (18). He attempts to return to a state of nature and peace through movement. Friedlander writes that “[t]he repose, the peace of mind associated with the sentiment of existence, appears to be achieved lastingly for Rousseau only in putting thinking in motion” (30). We can liken the motion of wandering as a function of the body to dreaming as a function of the brain—a completely free and largely safe venue for expression. Rousseau overturns the place of traditional analytical thought by structuring his last great philosophical work, *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, as a series of “dreams,” a radical departure from more rigid philosophical theorems and proofs. Wandering<sup>15</sup> becomes a valid structure for thought, not only in the actual act of walking, but also in the way the subject’s brain operates *while* wandering. If Rousseau’s wandering-like textual structure is suitable for philosophy, other types of writing based on a structure of

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<sup>15</sup>Schneider differentiates between “Wanderung” and “Spaziergang.” He writes, “[d]as Spazierengehen führt von einem festen Ort – dem Zuhause – in die Umgebung und wieder zurück; dabei kann es frei ab- und umherschweifen, es kann sich sogar vom Weg verlieren, aber es bleibt stets innerhalb vorweggesteckter Grenzen, die ihm – bei aller Offenheit für Überraschungen und Zufälle – doch grundsätzliche Sicherheit garantieren. Die symbolische Schwelle zu einer existenziellen Ungesicherheit ist durch die Nacht markiert, vor deren Einbruch der Spaziergänger zurücksein muß. Dagegen ist die Wanderung räumlich und zeitlich offen, sie ist prinzipiell ins Unbegrenzte gerichtet, auch wo sie ein vorherbestimmtes Ziel hat. Ein Wanderer kann sich verirren, ein Spaziergänger allenfalls verlaufen” ‘Wandering (Spazierengehen) leads from a set location—the home—into its surroundings and back. During this, it may ramble around freely, it can even leave the path, but it always remains within predetermined borders, which guarantee the wanderer (while being open to surprises and coincidences) basic safety. The symbolic threshold to an existential state of insecurity is represented by nightfall, before which the wanderer must be home. The walking trip however, is spatially and temporally open and it is principally structured around the Unbounded, even if it has a predetermined destination. A wanderer can get lost (sich verirren), a walker (Spaziergänger) can lose his way (verlaufen)’ (146).

serendipity and free association (much like the physical act of wandering) can thus assume a beneficial role in human life. Friedlander summarizes the idea:

Rousseau hints at his odd conception of the soul in the title of his work, as he relates the wandering of the mind to the vagabonding of the body. But rather than form a parallel between two realms, he points to the concreteness of reverie. The imagination always requires some sensuous matter to rework, even to figure thought itself.

Walking, preeminently, is such a figure of thought. (35)

Thus for Rousseau (in complete opposition to Newtonian physics), walking becomes the only possible locus of rest, of stasis. Friedlander suggests that one should not read walking as steps toward a destination, but instead as a scan of the area within particular boundaries over and over. In this way, he argues, “the world as a resting place can only be achieved in movement” (37). If Rousseau enjoyed walking as a form of mental rest as Solnit claims he did, we can read his and even others’ walking as a symbolic act. She points out that in Rousseau’s ideology, a rural, lone walk is a temporary exit from society. Walkers are like travelers in that they are “unadorned and unaugmented” because they are unattached to their surroundings. What makes them special, though, is that they rely on their own strength for movement rather than the strength that can be bought or made (such as that of a horse or a carriage) (18). The countryside, when chosen in lieu of the city as a place of ambulation, becomes a “Gegenraum zur korrupten, stagnierenden

feudal-patrizischen Gesellschaft” ‘alternative space to a corrupt, stagnating feudal-patrician society’ (Schneider 138). Rousseau’s type of walking involves leaving the borders of the city. When the young Rousseau returned late at night, the gates were locked and he could not re-enter. This prompted him to go on a week’s journey alone. Rousseau’s new type of “gehen” is that one that brings the subject across the city border into the countryside (Schneider 135). Hesse builds on this tradition by making his protagonists leave the city in *Peter Camenzind* and *Der Steppenwolf*. Even the hermit Harry Haller leaves his warm, cluttered city apartment to become a demi-flâneur in order to discover the magic theater and to be handed the Steppenwolf tract. In *Der Steppenwolf*, the city streets become a wilderness for Hesse: they are the place where Harry walks around in a scared, lonely, and cold state—the environment in which the wolf side of his personality is the most at home.

For Rousseau, bodily autonomy (i.e. freedom from technology and traditionally structured logic) is both symbolic and empowering of mental autonomy. This concept is also important for Hesse when delivering his literary reactions to the traditional German school system such as when he contrasts life-learning achieved while hiking with the sedentary forced learning that takes place in the classroom. Schneider reminds the reader that Rousseau had already pointed out some of the self-liberating aspects of walking:

Die Fußreise . . . bezeugt die Anstrengung, in diese andere, neue Welt

zu gelangen, eine Anstrengung des selbstmächtigen Subjekts, wie sie sich nicht in solch plausibler Weise etwa von einer Kutschenfahrt symbolisieren ließ: körperliche Autonomie als Sinnbild der geistigen. Im Gehen erfährt sich dieses Subjekt im Übertritt einer Grenze zwischen Bekanntem und Unbekanntem, die es in eine Spannung zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft stellt, und wird somit zum potentiellen Agenten in einer geschichtsphilosophischen Konstellation. . . . Gemeint ist zunächst schlicht eine Erfahrungsform, in der das Ich sich seiner unmittelbaren physisch-geistigen Selbstgegebenheit vergewissert, indem es das Hergebrachte verläßt und sich buchstäblich auf die eigenen Füße stellt. Sie läßt sich – mit Modifikationen – auch an Rousseau beobachten. (139–40)

The journey by foot . . . attests to the effort made to reach into this new and different world, an effort of the sovereign individual, which does not lend itself to being symbolized by a trip in a coach: bodily autonomy as a emblem of the spiritual autonomy. When walking, this subject experiences the crossing of a border dividing known and unknown. This situates it in a state drawn between past and present, and because of that becomes a potential agent in a historical-philosophical constellation. What is primarily intended is simply a form of experience in which the “I” becomes certain of its



immediate physical-spiritual actuality, in that it abandons the manufactured and that it literally stands on its own two feet. We can also observe this, with modifications, in Rousseau's writings.]

During this process, the subject becomes certain of its individuality, thus we can also understand walking as an opportunity for strengthening self-will. The empowerment of the self becomes even more emphasized in the context of Nietzsche's philosophy.

If walking symbolizes freedom for Rousseau, then freedom can also stand in as a motivation for the walker. One who is socially independent is free to roam as he or she wishes. Schneider reminds us that

dieses Ich definiert sich geradezu als gehendes, als im Gehen zu sich selbst kommendes, seiner Identität gewiß werdendes Individuum.

Hierfür wiederum ist wichtig das neu hinzutretende Moment der inneren Bilder, die die äußeren ergänzen bzw. überdecken; es geht jetzt in erster Linie um die wandernde Belebung der Phantasie. (140–41)

[This "I" defines itself straightforwardly as an individual who comes to himself by walking and becomes certain of his identity. For this purpose the newly appearing moment of minor images is important—those that complete and in some cases overlap with the outside ones; it has to do primarily with the stimulation of fantasy through walking.]

Wandering, then, can infuse new life into one's imagination. This is a tool that Hesse will use as a midlife crisis<sup>16</sup> begins to take its toll on Hesse's own writerly energy. *Steppenwolf*, written when Hesse turns 50, is in many ways his statement of creative renewal. The renewed imaginary output, though, requires a new framework and relies on more Modernist literary techniques. That Haller wanders not in nature, but from the dark city streets into the magic theatre and that he has conversations with Hermine in the pub, allow him to temporarily exit the drudgery of his day-to-day life as a suffering, isolated academic analogous to Hesse's own self understanding. Rousseau writes that after one walk he had never been so much himself (as opposed to the member of a collective). Schneider confirms this when he writes that

soziale Ungebundenheit setzt sich hier um in die körperliche  
Bewegung, in der sie sich – sozusagen mit jedem Schritt – realisiert  
und bestätigt; Freiheit des Blicks und Freiheit der Einbildungskraft  
eröffnen dem wandernden Ich einen unmittelbaren Zugang zu sich und  
der Welt, die sich seinem Wunsch scheinbar mühelos  
darbietet . . . (141)

[social unattachment translates to bodily movement, in which it  
realizes and confirms itself with every step, so to say. Freedom to look

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<sup>16</sup>Hesse, not insignificantly, published a cycle of poetry entitled *Krisis* in which he treats many of the aspects of his midlife crisis. The parallels between this book of poetry and *Der Steppenwolf* are obvious.

and freedom of imagination open to the walking subject direct access to the self and to the world, which offers up the subject's wish seemingly effortlessly.]

Indeed, a strong sense of the self and its prime importance forms the cornerstone of Hesse's life philosophy.

A realization of the importance of the self allows us to see the beginnings of an alternate face<sup>17</sup> of modernity—one in which the individual returns to nature for pleasure, despite present-day conveniences and pleasures. Moreover, this face of modernity, though it involves walking, observing, and reading these observations as a “text” (much like Anke Gleber's flâneur) it is not one based on shock, i.e. a sense of amazement at the wonder of the city and the spectacle of modernity, but of the distance that this mode of living has traveled from the realm of nature. The “Selbstmächtigkeit des Wandernden” ‘self-might of the wanderer’ stems from an “impulse of modernity,” yet this impulse in particular works against other modern impulses, I would argue, such as those that create socially-framed entities like cities, mass production, schools, religion, and mores—those that arise from what the collective understands as its needs. If, in the modern era<sup>18</sup> the body does not *move*

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<sup>17</sup>I borrow this term from Matei Calinescu's *Five Faces of Modernity*. Incidentally, his five faces are Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch and later, Postmodernism.

<sup>18</sup>Solnit comments that in *postmodernity* the body ceases to exist: “The body presented to us in these hundreds of volumes, this passive body for which sexuality and biological function are the only signs of life, is in fact not the universal body, but the white-collar urban body, or rather a theoretical body that can't even be

but *is moved*, the individual deciding consciously to move her body in one way or another displays an extra allotment of independence, or even of radical subjectivity.<sup>19</sup> We can see from Rousseau's biography how his walks serve the function of liberation. Damrosch points out that Rousseau found these episodes of walking satisfying precisely because they were his escape from his usual obligations, or in Rousseau's words, "The remoteness of everything that makes me feel my dependence, and of everything that would recall my situation to me, all of this sets my soul free and lends great boldness to my thoughts" (97–98). Furthermore, he asserts how Rousseau's thought is dependent on walking: that the daydreaming he would eventually call "reverie" gradually turned into powerful ideas. Rousseau felt confined and stupid while sitting at his desk; his mind could expand on the go. Or, in Rousseau's words: "I never foresaw that I would have ideas; they come when they please, not when it pleases me. They don't come at all, or they come in a crowd, they overwhelm me with their number and power" (98). Schneider codifies Rousseau's thoughts about walking into a more scientific observation about writing

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theirs, since even minor physical exertions never appear: this body described in theory never even aches from dragging the complete works of Kierkegaard across campus. 'If the body is a metaphor for our locatedness in space and time and thus for the finitude of human perception and knowledge, then the postmodern body is no body at all,' writes Susan Bordo, one feminist theorist at odds with this version of embodiment" (28).

<sup>19</sup>Solnit writes that "[m]uch of the terminology of location and mobility—words like *nomad*, *decentered*, *marginalized*, *deterritorialized*, *border*, *migrant*, and *exile*—are not attached to specific places and people; they represent instead ideas of rootlessness and flux that seem as much the result of the ungrounded theory as its putative subject" (28).

in general. He writes that “[v]erbunden mit dieser reflexiven Rückwendung des Spaziergängers auf das transzendierende Wandern ist weiterhin die Reflexion auf den Schreibprozeß, der sich so als eine Gang-analoge Erkundung innerer Erfahrung anschaulich macht.” ‘Bound together with the walker’s reflexive turn towards transcendental wandering is the reflection on a process of writing, which makes itself observable as an exploration of internal experience that is analogous to walking’ (148).<sup>20</sup>

Scholarship thus suggests that in the age since Enlightenment, walking is a reflection of writing, and that writing is a reflection on walking. Solnit laments that scholars have largely ignored movement as a constitutive aspect of modernity. Instead, critics concentrate on facets of life which are far less prevalent in the lives of most persons, namely, sexuality and trauma. Scholars tend to ignore other forms of corporeality, she asserts. Despite the radical changes in how bodies move as a result of modernization, movement as having an effect on corporeality has been largely ignored in the literature. In the modern and post-modern world, the body does not move but *is moved*. Furthermore, if one understands the era of Modernism as one in which self-criticism prevails, can one not understand *wandern* as a type of protest, as numerous scholars suggest? Hentschel writes that

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[e]ine Wanderung, ist sie nicht eine wegetechnisch, gesundheitlich oder

<sup>20</sup>Schneider then mentions that this moment continues into the twentieth century, but that for the purposes of the article in question, he cannot elaborate on it (148).

sozial begründete unabdingbare Notwendigkeit, muß im 18. Jahrhundert als bewußte Ablehnung etablierter Verkehrsmittel angesehen werden. Sie ist – und dies scheint sie über den konkreten historischen Zeitpunkt hinaus zu charakterisieren – die Entscheidung für eine alternative Bewegungsform und damit stets – im Angesicht der etablierten Beförderungssysteme – Zivilisationskritik <sup>21</sup>. (124)

[A trip by foot, if it is not indispensable for navigation or health or socially-founded, must be considered as a conscious denial of established means of transportation in the eighteenth century. It is—and this appears to characterize it beyond this historical time period—the decision made in favor of an alternative form of movement and therefore always (in view of the established support systems) critical of civilization ]

Later on, he writes that “[d]er Gehende befindet sich, genauer eben: er versetzt sich in einen Zustand glückhafter Selbsterfahrung, der doch gerade in der Selbstüberschreitung, in der Entfernung vom Gegebenen besteht und dem daher seine Spaltung und Zersetzung immer schon innewohnt” ‘the walker finds himself or rather places himself into a circumstance of pleasurable self-experienced which is due to his going beyond his own boundaries into an area that is distanced from the

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<sup>21</sup>Additionally, Helmut Schneider writes in “Selbsterfahrung . . .” that “[d]ie euphorische Selbstmächtigkeit des Wandernden verdankt sich einem entschiedenen Modernitätsimpuls” ‘the euphoric self-empowerment of the wandering person is the result of a conscious impulse of modernity’ (142).

given area. Separation and dislocation are always part of this' (144). This begs the question of whether modernization and technology are thus, at least partially to blame for the sense of being pulled in more than one direction—between nature and technology in our case—seemingly one of the most pervasive tropes of European culture since the Enlightenment.

Societal criticism is not the sole agendum of the writers I discuss, though. Rather, authors subtly couch this social criticism in symbols and language which the reader can understand. Solnit points out the accessibility of Rousseau's and Kierkegaard's writing about walking:

they wrote about it in more personal, descriptive, and specific works—Rousseau's *Confessions* and *Reveries*, Kierkegaard's journals—rather than staying in the impersonal and universal realm of philosophy at its most pure. Perhaps it is because walking is itself a way of grounding one's thoughts in a personal and embodied experience of the world that it lends itself to this kind of writing. This is why the meaning of walking is mostly discussed elsewhere than in philosophy: in poetry, novels, letters, diaries, travelers' accounts, and first-person essays. Too, these eccentrics focus on walking as a means of modulating their alienation, and this kind of alienation was a new phenomenon in intellectual history. They were neither immersed in the society around them nor . . . withdrawn from it in the tradition of

the religious contemplative. They were in the world but not of it. A solitary walker, however short his or her route, is unsettled, between places, drawn forth into action by desire and lack, having the detachment of the traveler rather than the ties of the worker, the dweller, the member of a group. (26)

Hesse, as his biography reveals, dealt with alienation for the duration of his life. For him it was self-imposed and, at times, necessary. His radical understanding of the individual was incompatible with nearly every type of social grouping imaginable, with the exception of family, with which he had a checkered relationship. Hesse's *Seelen*biographical writing, though, is very personal in nature, and allows itself to be readily absorbed by the reader. If Rousseau and Kierkegaard write about their philosophical walking in "personal [and] descriptive" ways, Hesse writes in the same way, only using fiction. It is precisely this creative engagement with the outside world that allows Hesse's fictional narrators to flourish.

Hesse's connection between wandering and youth parallels Rousseau's connection in at least one way: Wandering brings Hesse back to his youth, as I will outline in the next chapter, and brings his youth back to him as an old man. Schneider claims the same for Rousseau: "so dienen Rousseau seine späten Spaziergänge als Altersersatz für die jugendliche Wanderlust" 'thus for Rousseau his later walks serve in his old age as a replacement for youthful wanderlust' (146).



## Nietzsche: Wandering and Reason

Nietzsche continues the tradition of writing and thinking about walking. Nietzsche considered himself a wanderer (Schank 465); I assert that he thus influences Hesse powerfully. He considers wandering to be like a time machine (a sense of wandering that Hesse will later adapt for his own *Seelenbiographie*), a means for sensory intake, and likens the wanderer to the enlightened self. Hesse and Nietzsche both write often and at length about their own inner worlds. Both had very religious upbringings, yet continued their own personal searches for truth. Both thought of educators as ideal liberators who help young persons discover the fundamental workings of their genuine interior selves. For Nietzsche, much like for Rousseau, philosophy and wandering go hand in hand. Only thought that wanders and explores will satiate the hunger of the thinking brain:

Dasein als wanderndes Denken geschieht in einer dauernden  
Bewegung, die nie an ein Ende kommt, die nie fertig werden kann.  
Wandern als Lebens- und Denkform bedeutet für Nietzsche Offenheit  
gegenüber der Vielheit und Buntheit der Welt. Das heißt für ihn sich  
nicht in einem Subjekt, in einem System, in einer Zeit einzurichten  
und niederzulassen. So schreibt er einmal: „Der Wanderer redet. Um  
unser europäischen Moralität einmal aus der Fern ansichtig zu werden,  
um sie an anderen Moralitäten zu messen, dazu muß man es machen,  
wie es ein Wanderer macht, der wissen will, wie hoch die Thürme

einer Stadt sind: dazu verläßt er die Stadt.' . . . Wandern verschafft dem Philosophen also Distanz, die den Blick auf die Vielheit der Phänomene erlaubt. Distanz zu der Gesellschaft, in der man lebt, und Distanz zu der Zeit, deren Kind man (zunächst) ist. (Schank 265)

[Being as a kind of wandering thinking happens in a movement that is long, that never comes to an end, and that can never be finished.

Wandering as a form of life and thought means for Nietzsche an openness to the plurality and colorfulness of the world. That does not mean for him the immersion of the self in a subject, in a system, or in a time. He once wrote, "The wanderer speaks. In order to make our European morality more easily visible out from the distance, in order to measure it against other moralities, one must do it as a wanderer does it—one who wants to know how high the towers of a city are. For this, he must leave the city." . . . thus wandering creates for philosophers a distance which allows one to see the plurality of phenomena. Distance to the society in which one lives, and distance to the period of time, whose child one (initially) is.]

Moreover, when one engages in this type of wander-thinking, the walking functions as a time machine ("Wandern wird zur ‚Zeitmaschine‘" (466)) in which one's spirit unites with a history of great thinkers. Schank explains further: "Der Wanderer, der allein wandert, ist nicht wirklich allein oder einsam. Er führt ein ‚Geistergespräch‘

über die Zeiten hinweg, und dies mit Vorliebe mit jenen Toten, die für ihn lebendiger sind als die Lebenden seiner Zeit” ‘The wanderer, who does this alone, is not really alone or lonely. He conducts a “conversation of spirit” above and beyond time, and this he does with a preference he shares with the dead. For him they are more alive than the living of his own time’ (466). When Nietzsche wanders alone, he engages intellectually with people like Goethe and Spinoza, for example. Nietzsche does not merely make an analogy between thinking and wandering, but also connects the physical experience of walking with the philosophical act of thinking, as Schank points out: “Aber, wie gesagt, nicht die Logik liefert die Richtschnur für die Textabfolge, sondern sie ,ordnen‘ sich am Leitfaden des Wanderweges, den der Philosoph mit seinem Leib erfährt” ‘But, as I said, logic does not deliver the standard for the succession of the text, rather it “organizes” itself along the guidelines of the pathway which the philosopher follows with his body’ (467). Nietzsche himself elevates the wanderer to someone who has at least some connection to “freedom of reason.” He writes that “[w]er nur einigermaßen zur Freiheit der Vernunft gekommen ist, kann sich auf Erden nicht anders fühlen, denn als Wanderer” ‘the person who has come only partially to freedom of reason can feel as nothing else but a wanderer’ (638).

Prior to the educational efforts and cultural influence of naturist groups, the working and Bourgeois classes thought of wandering as merely a leisure time activity, if not an old-fashioned and obsolete type of work. At first glance,

Nietzsche's opinion would lead one to believe that walking is a new type of intellectual work, but as the Nietzsche scholar Gödde emphasizes, intellectual work is in need of its own particular type of leisure (*Muße*). First off, successful *Bildung* requires leisure time, that is, time for the thinking mind to relax and to let the physical body exercise itself. This is not because the mind is in control of the body, but because Nietzsche considers the mind to be a tool (*Werkzeug*) of the body. Instead of “[eine] Sklavenhaftigkeit in der Gesellschaft” ‘[an] element of slavery in society,’ society instead needs a more relaxed relationship with work, needs to value leisure more, and needs a calculated rhythm between work and free time (72). For Nietzsche, the body is a center of power which allows leisure to take place, that is, the “eigentliche Ruhestätte und Heimat des Menschen” ‘true resting place and home of the person’ (87). Leisure requires, then, control over one's body.

There are several areas where a quick comparison allows us to see the influences Nietzsche had on Hesse. First, Hesse gains from Nietzsche his obsession with self-discovery and preservation of the self at all costs. Second, Hesse memorializes the philosopher in an essay entitled “Zarathustras Wiederkehr” (1919). In it, Nietzsche's Zarathustra returns to give parabolic advice to the young men who have recently returned from fighting in World War I, many of whom first read “Also sprach Zarathustra” (1883–85) during their formative years. After the war, they are overly concerned about the wounded German *Volk* and busy themselves with street politicians. Zarathustra's reprise concentrates around the notion that one should be

true to oneself and grow as a human, not as a cog in a societal machine. First, Zarathustra asserts that he never advocated pleasing others or for the improvement of humanity. He admonishes the listeners to think beyond the fatherland and betterment of the world. He compares the young Germans to children who are developmentally stunted. The world, he exclaims, is not warm and protected like a mother's womb, but cold and brutal. Hesse writes, "[d]ie Welt ist kühl und ist kein heimatlicher Brutort wo man in ewiger Kindheit in geborgener Wärme sitzt" 'the world is chilly and is no longer a brooding ground where one sits as an eternal child in protected warmth' (36). Furthermore, one must leave the comfort of society and walk the path to individuality. This is, in Zarathustra's mind, much better than concerning oneself with the lofty goal of "Weltverbesserung" 'world improvement' (29). Once one does this, one becomes an adult. The theme here is about growing up: though his audience is adult in many ways (one of which is their having served in the deadliest and bloodiest war thus far in world history), they are not completely mature. This can only happen once they grow into themselves. The fatherland will suffer, Zarathustra proclaims, if his listeners do not reach a state of adulthood.

In "Zarathustras Wiederkehr" we see a marked change from Hesse's earlier fictional writing which encourages youth and delights in it as an aesthetic device. After the war, persons who remain in a state of youth and who refuse to accept responsibility for themselves are no longer pleasing, and are even likened to the unfaithful. Zarathustra's speeches echo those of Jesus; it is as if Zarathustra, in his

second incarnation, has grown up, while his audience has remained in an infantile state. Ultimately, though, it is the stale state of immaturity which Zarathustra is against, not a state of wandering or movement, for movement allows one to continue on one's life path. He says at the very end of the essay: "Zarathustra is immer ein Spaßvogel und launischer Wanderer gewesen" 'Zarathustra was always a jokester and moody wanderer' (40). Dietsch writes about Nietzsche that "[h]ier verlagert sich der dominante Bezug von der Weltkenntnis auf die Selbstkenntnis. Kurz: Wandern ist weltverschonend und selbstverzehrend" 'here the dominant reference to world-knowledge is changed to self-knowledge. In short: wandering is world-saving and self-consuming' (68) and

Zarathustra ist, wie er selber sagt, „ein Wanderer . . . ich kann nicht lange still sitzen.“ Mehr noch: Das Wanderer-Sein gehört wie ein Schatten zu ihm. Werkgeschichtlich wird seit 1878, als er einen Titel entwirft, *Der Wanderer und die Freunde*, „die Figur des ‚Wanderers‘ . . . auf der begrifflich-metaphorischen Ebene zu einer zentralen Instanz in der Dramatisierung der Philosophie durch Nietzsche.“ (79)

[Zarathustra is, as he says himself, “a wanderer . . . I can not sit still for very long.” Further, being a wanderer follows him like his shadow. In this history of the work, since 1878 when he first came up with a title, “*The Wanderer and Happiness*”, “the figure of the wanderer . . .

on the cognizant-metaphorical level of a central instance of the dramatization of philosophy through Nietzsche.”]

Zarathustra is not a serious wanderer, though, but a figure that spreads joy and humor. Nietzsche’s thought behind humor like Zarathustra’s is that it helps one deal with an impossible situations (Nietzsche writes that “wir sollen uns nicht totlachen, sondern die Welt, wahr-lachen” ‘we shouldn’t laugh ourselves but the world dead: we should laugh ourselves into truth’ (79). Dietzsch continues by linking laughing with wandering:

Dieses „Wahr-Lachen“ erfordert eine ganz neue geistige Anstrengung, nicht mehr bloß des Begriffs, sondern auch der Sinne, der Phantasie und des Leibes. . . . Der Lachende im Sinne des Wanderers Nietzsche benötigt keine „stabilisierenden“ Instanzen des Moralisierens, Zivilisierens oder Missionierens. „Nur von Selbst-Erziehung sollte man als Denker reden“ (79–80)

[This “laughing into truth” creates a quite new spiritual exercise, no longer just of a term, but also of the senses, of fantasy, and of the body. . . . Laughter in the sense of the Nietzschean wanderer requires no “stabilizing” instances of moralization, civilization, or missionization. “One should, as a thinker, only speak of self-education.”]

The idea of autodidacticism also dovetails with Hesse's insistence that one learns from living and does not learn to understand oneself in the classroom. Rüdiger Safranski continues with this notion in his biography of Nietzsche when he cites Hesse as one of Nietzsche's followers:

Hesse emphasized the outrageous abuse to which Nietzsche, and in particular his Zarathustra, had been subjected. After all, Nietzsche was a foe of "herd mentality," was he not? In pondering this question, Hesse had Zarathustra return once again to address the men coming home from war. The lesson of Zarathustra's reappearance is a variation on Nietzsche's call "Become who you are!" The will to be true to oneself was now mobilized against any form of obsequiousness, even in a military or heroic guise, and Nietzsche was cited as an authority. Hesse defended him against the songs of rancor of his militant admirers: "Haven't you noticed," Hesse has his Zarathustra say, "that wherever this song is struck up men reach for their pockets; it is a song of self-interest and self-seeking—alas, not the noble self-seeking that elevates and steels the self, but the self-seeking that hinges on money and money-bags, vanities and delusions." (330)

Apart from his quoting the figure Zarathustra for this essay, Hesse makes mention of Nietzsche at numerous other points in his works. Zarathustra understood as a wandering figure, though, is the most important Hesse-Nietzsche link for the



purposes of this chapter because of Nietzsche's attitudes towards walking and emphasis on nurturing a sense of self.

### **Hesse's Theory of Walking: *Selbsterfahrung***

Literary depictions of walking in German literature in the early twentieth century are reinterpretations of a long tradition of philosophical writing about walking.

Hesse in particular is one example of an author who participates in this historical discourse. Peter Huber, in his contribution to the volume *Alte Mythen – neuer Sinn* suggests that Hesse reinterprets the tradition of *wandern*. He asserts that “[m]it der Neuinterpretation von Traditionalismen im Kontext von Moderne und Modernisierung verleiht Hesse in der Tat alten Mythen neuen Sinn und leistet damit seinen Beitrag, Tradition neu zu strukturieren und so für die Moderne verfügbar zu machen” ‘through his new interpretation of traditionalisms in the context of modernity and modernization, Hesse brings a new understanding to old myths and along with it his contribution in which he restructures tradition and thereby makes it accessible for modernity’ (201). Hesse makes similar comments in 1932 when he looks back on an essay he wrote concerning *Wanderung*. He writes the following:

Es war die Wanderung in einem Europa ohne Krieg, durch ein Graubünden ohne Staub, durch ein Italien ohne Automobile, damals konnte es noch eine Wonne sein, tagelang auf einer Landstraße zu Fuß zu gehen. Ich wußte damals nicht, daß die Mehrzahl meiner kleinen

Reisefreuden einer untergehenden Welt angehörten und bald nirgends mehr zu finden sein würden. . . . Man lief damals so ahnungslos in der Welt herum. Nun, es war schön, und ich bin froh darüber, jene Zeit des “faulen” Friedens noch erlebt zu haben. (Hesse “Wandererinnerung” 97)

[It was wandering in a Europe without war, through the Grison [mountains] without dust, through an Italy without automobiles; back then it could still be a delight to walk by foot along a country road for an entire day. I didn’t know then that the majority of the small pleasures I took in wandering belonged to a perishing world and would soon vanish. . . . In those days one ran around so cluelessly in the world. Now it is a nice—and I am happy about this—to have experienced that time of “lazy” peace.]

In a changing and intensely urbanizing and industrializing Germany, Hesse realizes after the fact that the youthful, innocent aspect he had once ascribed to wandering about the countryside is no longer possible. The next best thing is to try and deal with the loss of the ability to freely enjoy nature through the act of writing.

I assert that some German literary texts at the turn of the century reinterpret traditional literary walking in several respects. First, I argue, they use the long-forgotten motif of *wandern* for a new purpose, namely, to highlight the negative aspects of their own present day. The cultural institutions against which

these writers take up their weapons of reappropriation might be seen by the mainstream public as “good the way they are.” If subculture selects an artifact from bygone days, raises its status, and uses it to represent its group, not only is the subculture empowered by this reappropriation of cultural material from their elders, but also through the notion of rebellion.<sup>22</sup> Dick Hebdige writes that “[t]he advent of the mass media, changes in the constitution of the family, in the organization of school and work, shifts in the relative status of work and leisure, all served to fragment and polarize the working-class community, producing a series of marginal discourses within the broad confines of class experience” (441). Though Hebdige has a different historical period in mind, his idea also applies well to those enthusiasts of *Wanderliteratur* at the turn of the century. It is the same type of shift in the status of work and leisure which prompts a new understanding of walking in literature. Russell Berman considers literary Modernism to be that which rebels against the culture industry and liberates the reader from orthodox culture’s systems of deception. These two reevaluations of the places of work and leisure are constituent parts of a single type of cultural reform. The propellants of both instances make use of a contrasting subculture and cultivate marginal discourses. Furthermore, the need for both originates in technological development, be it modern transportation or mass media.

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<sup>22</sup>Thomas Böhm-Christl writes that “wer spazierengeht, verhält sich negativ gegen Haus, Arbeit, Handlung, Rolle, Funktion, Pflicht” ‘he who goes walking poises himself against house, work, plot, roles, functions, duties’ (262).

One may certainly debate as to whether or not respected literary authors could fit into Hebdige's notion of subculture, but one can certainly not deny that culture is wrought with myriad subtle currents and that some regions of culture are always, in fact, one minute reacting against and the next minute assimilating with other regions. Thus an examination of walking as one element of the literature of one language is nearly impossible, even working within a limited time span. The scholar must tease out exemplars of those cultural directions she deems important. A Modernist author who chooses to dig up a relic of the past and to put it at the center of his writing must fit at least partially into the role of helping define a subculture. Thomas Koebner asserts that these authors do, in fact, take part in a "literarische Gesellschaftskritik" (Trommler 36).<sup>23</sup> Simonis suggests that the flâneur is a "Lebenskünstler" 'life-artist' who is not only influenced by the present, but who is always accompanied by the "Geschichtsbezug." Flâneurs are distinct from wanderers in that they primarily walk within and take in the sights of the city, reading them as their own text. It is not unlikely that the flâneur, as a kind of wanderer who makes the city his inspiration, could be an influence for Hesse, not necessarily in *how* he writes about the city and its contemporary aspects, but *that*

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<sup>23</sup>The whole quote is: "Mit der Bewegung, die man bald als Expressionismus bezeichnete, entwickelte sich eine literarische Gesellschaftskritik, die die Aggressionen und Konfrontationen, die im Alltag kaschiert wurden, im Bildlich-Metaphorischen theatraalisierte und sich vor allem als Kritik der Sprache und in der Sprache artikulierte. Jugend wurde dabei zum Codewort des Andersseins." 'With the movement, which one labels Expressionism, a literary criticism of society developed itself, that articulated the aggressions and confrontations stored in the mundane.'

he writes about it.

In addition to the Hebdigean reappropriation of walking, we must examine also what it means to be a walking subject. In *The Art of Taking a Walk*, Anke Gleber scrutinizes how the moving observer (the flâneur) perceives exterior reality. Flâneurs who also write “enter the public sphere in order to ‘read’ the texts of modernity” (117). Though the flâneur is typically understood to be a creature of the city, we could easily apply Gleber’s theory to the subject who walks anywhere. After all, not all of life takes place within a city, and external “texts” can certainly be read anywhere. If what the moving eye “sees” while on a self-determined walk in the woods is comparable to the flâneur’s visual intake, is this scenery not also just as valid as what the same eye would observe in the city? Moreover, I assert, the eye might very well choose to see this pastoral scenery for particular reasons which are tied to what it has already observed in the city.

Schneider defines the wanderer as a moving eye. He writes that

Der Spaziergänger ist in erster Linie bewegliches Auge, dem die Welt sich in Bildern darbietet und verfügbar macht; sein kultiviertes Sehtalent ‚gibt ihm‘, wie Addison . . . ausdrückt, ‚eine Art Eigentum an allem, was er sieht, und macht die wildesten unbebauten Naturgegenden seinem Vergnügen dienstbar‘. Gegenüber dieser Zweidimensionalität des Visuellen verstärkt der größere körperliche Einsatz des Wandernden die Räumlichkeit der (Natur-) Erfahrung

und liefert das Subjekt ihrer unberechenbaren Tiefe aus. (147)

[The pleasure walker is first of all a movable eye, which offers up the world in pictures and makes it accessible. Its cultivated talent for seeing “gives it,” as Addison expresses it, “a kind of ownership of everything that it sees and makes the wildest, most undeveloped areas of nature serve its pleasure.” On the other side of this two-dimensionality of the visual, the larger bodily use of the wanderer strengthens the spatiality of the (natural) experience and delivers the subject from its unthinkable depth.]

Anne Friedberg, author of the essay “The Mobilized and Virtual Gaze in Modernity” might well agree with Schneider here. Though she discusses various seeing “machines” that were precursors to cinema, their existence somehow necessitates a certain amount of *Wanderlust*. These contraptions serve as the prosthetic legs which enable the viewer to travel to distant times and places. She writes that these “[p]hantasmagorias, panoramas, dioramas—devices that concealed their machinery—were dependent on the relative immobility of their spectators, who enjoyed the illusion of presence of virtual figures” (401). I think it makes sense, then, to understand a resurgence of descriptive writing that also involves a moving narrator as comparable to these “seeing machines.” These machines, though, are not the only indicators of a new culture of visibility. Illustrated journalism, for one, expands rapidly at the turn of the century, and is another medium which newly

offered not only a visual excursion, but also by extension a virtual release from the confinements of everyday space and time. This visual excursion gives the illusion that one can have mastery over the constraints of space and time, but one must question whether these visual excursions deliver the promised product. Hesse's worlds differ slightly from these "seeing machines" in that they are set (at least for the turn-of-the-century city dweller) *outside* the typical sphere of experience and thus contributed to an exodus from these restrictive spheres. Just as the diorama offers customers the ability to "make the journey without leaving," Hesse's walking depictions and mobilized narrative eyes allow the reader to make the same journeys as his protagonists. Karalashvili asserts that the reader can even read spiritual development from movement in the form of *Reifungsprozesse* (processes of maturity) (113) and that trips within Hesse's fiction lead to "Menschwerdung" 'one's becoming a person' (138).

I argue, in fact, that the walking narrator reads texts everywhere she goes, be they external or part of their own internal monologues. Manfred Hausmann's *Lampioon* (1928), for example, is a novel with a plot seems to go nowhere. Lampioon, the protagonist, appears in unrelated and random places (each place has its own chapter), yet it is clear from the text that these are merely episodes selected as important from a continual journey which is the protagonist's life. *Wandern* is, in fact, a mere walking forward, but with no particular goal in mind. One could even argue that the wandering plot Hausmann creates in *Lampioon* fits nicely into our

Simmel's definition of Modernist literature, for he sacrifices a traditionally satisfying plot in favor of a fragmented selection of episodes. Lampoon, in the course of the book, has journeyed to all kinds of cities (including Berlin, the veritable German seat of *flânerie*) yet prefers to observe the goings-on of villages where life seems as if it is no different that it was a hundred years earlier (168). I would suggest that Hausmann's method of weaving walking together with more intense observations of reality than we typically allow ourselves to have is comparable to Hesse's. They both view the past through the past's eyes, though they do so under the influence of Modernist aesthetics. Williams asserts that time spent outdoors, in particular for city-dwellers and factory workers, led to a greater discussion and knowledge of natural phenomena (85). For Hesse, *Wandern* is part and parcel of character as well as author development, and if we consider it in Hebdigean terms, we could say that he appropriates the act in order to add it to his toolkit for the development of his *Seelenbiographie*. According to Reso Karalashvili, one of the characteristics of Hesse's *Seelenbiographical* writing is its confessional nature. He writes that

[e]in weiteres Wesensmerkmal der seelenbiographischen Form ist ihre deutlich ausgeprägte Bekenntnishaftigkeit. Wenn wir aber von dem Bekenntnischarakter der Seelenbiographie sprechen, dürfen wir uns nicht entgehen lassen, daß das Bekenntnis nicht nur eine formale, sondern auch eine inhaltliche Eigenschaft der epischen Struktur ist und daß dessen eigentlicher Sinn nicht so sehr in einem aufrichtigen



Bericht der erlebten Begebenheiten besteht, sondern im Fixieren und Begreifen der Selbstveränderung, die sich im Erzähler vollzieht. Dieser Moment der Selbständerung und inneren Wandlung . . . ist von einer prinzipiellen Bedeutung für das Verständnis der Strukturorganisation des Erzählstoffes in Hesses Seelenbiographien, die den Vorgang der Selbstwerdung des Helden darstellen und folglich auch die sukzessiven Veränderungen in dessen Seelenstruktur miteinfassen. (10)

[a further marker of being of the *seelen*biographical form is its marked confessionality. But when we speak of the confessional character of the soul-biography, we cannot escape from the fact that the confession is merely a formal, but also a constituent property of epic structure and that its truest sense consists not so wholly in a straightforward report of the experienced occurrences, but of the fixing and understanding of self-change, which takes place in the narrator. This moment of self-change and inner transformation . . . is of principal importance for understanding the structural organization of the narrative material in Hesse's soul-biographies, which depict the events of self-development of his protagonists and the resultant successive changes in their soul structure.]

One can easily find an example of how Hesse's writing displays the confessional thoughts of the narrator about the emotional release he experiences while walking.

In Hesse's short story "Eine Fußreise im Herbst," the narrator tells the reader:

Ich dachte: was treibt mich jetzt, mich freien Mann, nach dem Städtlein Ilgenberg, wo Häuser und Menschen mich nichts mehr angehen und wo ich kaum anderes als Enttäuschung und vielleicht Leid zu finden hoffen kann? Und ich sah mir selber verwundert zu, wie ich ging und ging und zwischen Humor und Bangigkeit hin und wider schwankte. (386)

[I thought, "What is driving me now, a free man, towards the small town of Ilgenberg, where houses and people no longer mean anything to me and where I can hope to find nothing but disappointment and perhaps suffering?" And I looked at myself with confusion in how I walked and walked and swung back and forth between humor and disquietude.]

Here we see the emotions that drive the narrating eye away from the metropolis and into the countryside. Two pages later, the narrator is relaxed and feels comfortable in his humanity: "Da greift einem das ewig Rätselhafte so beschämend und so süß ans Herz, daß man allen Hochmut ablegt, mit dem man sonst über das Unerklärliche redet, und daß man doch nicht erliegt, sondern alles dankbar annimmt und sich bescheiden und Stolz als Gast des Weltalls fühlt" "The eternal puzzles grip one so shamingly and so sweetly in one's heart, that one lays down all arrogance. One otherwise speaks of the inexplicable, but that which one tries to explain

anyway. On the contrary, one takes on everything with a sense of gratitude and feels proud to be a guest of the universe' (388). Somehow the act of walking has transformed "Enttäuschung und vielleicht Leid" 'disappointment and possibly pain' into a "Stolz als Gast des Weltalls" 'pride to be a guest in the universe.'

Apart from the emotional aspects of this nature-flânerie, the act as observation also functions when one encounters other humans. They along with human-made objects become part of the landscape which helps refine the wanderers' sense of perception.

Du siehst ihn herkommen und sagst grüß Gott, und er dankt; aber kaum ist er an dir vorbei und du wendest dich und schaust ihm nach, so siehst du ihn alsbald undeutlich werden und spurlos ins Graue hinein verschwinden. Nicht anders ist es mit den Häusern, Gartenzäunen, Bäumen und Weinberghecken. Du glaubtest die ganze Umgebung auswendig zu kennen und bist nun eigentümlich erstaunt, wie weit jene Mauer von der Straße entfernt steht, wie hoch dieser Baum und wie niedrig jenes Häuschen ist. . . . Alles das hat etwas Märchenhaftes, Fremdes, Entrücktes, und für Augenblicke empfindest du das Symbolische darin erschreckend deutlich. (395)

[You see him coming and say hello and he thanks you. But just as soon as he's past, you turn yourself around and look at him so you can see him become invisible as he disappears into the grayness

without leaving a trace. It's not much different with houses, garden fences, clouds, and grape trellises. You think you know the entire surroundings by heart, but now you are astounded at how far that wall is built from the street, how high this tree and how low that house is. . . . Everything takes on a quality of a fairy tale, something foreign, something dreamy, and for a few moments, you perceive the symbolic in everything—it is frighteningly clear.]

That Hesse's narrator embraces the ephemerality of all that his or her mobilized gaze takes in (but also the somewhat unreliable gaze which observes) puts him on par with those authors who do the same with city flânerie. These authors, among them Döblin, Gurk, Benjamin, and Hessel, focused on "the concrete experience of perceiving 'self,'" at a time in which one was forced to observe his or her own insignificance, according to Gleber. "Flaneur Literature," Gleber writes, "can therefore be understood as a nonchronological and fragmentary autobiography of its authors' sensory experience" (43). Though not usually nonchronological and fragmentary (except for *Die Morgenlandfahrt*) Hesse's early writing can be understood as an autobiography of his sensory experience.

The youngest of readers understands what it is like to lose oneself in a book, and indeed many volumes have been written about the reading experience. Surprisingly little cultural attention, though, has been devoted to how the reader might find herself lost within a narrator's actions, namely, walking or wandering.

Williams writes about walking that

[p]roprioceptive stimuli, signals from the muscles, indicate among other things the slope underfoot and one's rate of movement. Even taste can be involved in a walk, if the mouth intercepts berry bushes or bakeries. These various sensations, as trivial as they may seem to a person habituated to mechanized transportation, are the basis of a close connection to place and are likely to be recalled with great fondness when one thinks back on the places one has loved. The reduction of experience from such multisensory intake to the scanning gaze is fundamental to the loosening of ties between person and place that have preoccupied more than one generation of human geographers. (188)

The reduction about which Williams writes is due, in part, to modern media and work habits. He restates that nudist and naturist organizations at the turn of the century intended to promote gymnastics and movement like walking and continues:

immobility is not an inevitable consequence of any particular cultural development but rather is a cultural development; it is technologically enabled but not technologically driven. The driving force is culture, which shapes the social incorporation of new technologies with an infinite range of possibilities. (191)

If culture in general is responsible for a transformation of "multisensory intake" to

“scanning gaze,” is there a literary equivalent of this change?

While Weppen focuses on the sociocultural aspects of experiencing nature, Paul Adams in his essay “Peripatetic Imagery and Peripatetic Sense of Place,” concentrates on the imagery one takes in and processes. When sensory intake fails (such as the example he gives of the contemporary office worker) the physicality of the body becomes a burden to the individual; transportation becomes a chore to be taken care of instead of a journey on which one embarks and experiences life. He writes that “place-experience is not binary, a simple matter of knowing or not knowing; knowledge arises from actions, and place-experiences thus present innumerable shades of differentiation depending on what one is doing in a place” (186). He here supports the notion that one can develop one’s senses through use, much as one exercises the body. Similarly, the senses and ability to perceive the landscape atrophy like unused muscles. He goes on to clarify this:

The labor force of the information economy sits at the breakfast table, takes a few steps to the car, drives to work, takes a few steps to and from the elevator, sits at a desk until noon, and similarly passes the rest of the day sitting, with only fleeting moments on their feet. If walking is engaged in at all, it is likely to be structured as a special kind of work, “getting in shape,” an endeavor clearly indicated to observers on the street by an uncomfortably rapid pace, a fixed forward gaze, and pumping L-shaped arms; but increasingly often it is

relegated to treadmills in climate-controlled workout spaces. (186–87)

When compared with the experience of nature, these “workout spaces” appear just as barbaric as sweatshops. Solnit even goes as far as to call the treadmill “perverse.” She asks,

What exactly is the nature of the transformation in which machines now pump our water but we go to other machines to engage in the act of pumping, not for the sake of water but for the sake of our bodies, bodies theoretically liberated by machine technology? Has something been lost when the relationship between our muscles and our world vanishes, when the water is managed by one machine and the muscles by another in two unconnected processes?<sup>24</sup>

Adams’s next observation supports naturist organizations as well as secondary writing about the experience of nature. Reading about nature experiences is admittedly not the same as actual outdoor time, but it is a start. His idea is that if production changes such that it requires immobility and this immobility deprives us of stimuli, our obsession with walking and our imagining of it in art is not at all an indulgence, but both strategic and necessary to “the good life” (187).

Walking, for Hesse, serves as a buffer against the caustic nature of technology. Solnit remarks that walking “is a state in which the mind, the body, and

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<sup>24</sup>On a related note, for Adams, technological developments such as superhighways result in the “marginalization of the walker by late modernity” (264). In this regard his idea of a body-machine disconnect is similar to the one Solnit mentions.

the world are aligned, as though they were three characters finally in conversation together, three notes suddenly making a chord. Walking allows us to be in our bodies and in the world without being made busy by them. It leaves us free to think without being wholly lost in our thoughts” (5) and that it “shares with making and working that crucial element of engagement of the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world” (29). Thus the physical act of wandering, much as it does for Rousseau and Nietzsche, serves as a balanced, middle ground between the mental and physical spheres. In a technological world, an awareness of one’s physicality and one’s ability to move at one’s own speed, pleasure, and to do so in a way that engages the mind becomes increasingly important.

It is no coincidence, I assert, that walking would flourish at precisely the moment in history when “a remarkably fast-paced urbanization commenced” and when German industrial cities like Duisberg grew by almost 2000 percent (Williams 8). Solnit reminds us that “[the golden] age [of walking] peaked around the turn of the twentieth century, when North Americans and Europeans were as likely to make a date for a walk as for a drink or meal, walking was often a sort of sacrament and a routine recreation, and walking clubs were flourishing” and “rural developments such as national parks and mountaineering were in first bloom” (249). Walking is, more importantly though, she writes, “an indicator species for various kinds of freedoms and pleasures: free time, free and alluring space, and unhindered bodies” (250).



Though in the case of the factory worker or business clerk, walking would symbolize a respite from this inside, stationary work, the money that these persons earn in their capitalist economy lets them, in effect, buy their free time. The freedom gained by means of money then allows the subject to go on to seek additional freedoms, as Solnit posits. Walking helped then and continues to help make political statements, if not partisan, at least in favor of basic human freedoms. One need not strain to think of the latest mass protests that take the forms of parades and marches; even charities gain power and solidarity through walks in which the participants find sponsors. In the end, both the group and the individual benefit, or at least feel as they have benefited. The collective gains power while developing in the individual a sense of accomplishment and further ingrains the sense of belonging to a community. This is the focus of this chapter's final section, and part of what defines the trajectory of the *Wandervogel*, as I hope to show in the next chapter.

### **Political Walking: Wandering Towards Democratization?**

Whether we consider various forms of walking and wandering philosophical or spiritual is in a way irrelevant, as Hesse's understanding of this aspect of wandering as a symbol of and a means toward freedom is based on Nietzsche's philosophy. Walking, at least in Hesse's early work, indicates freedom, and freedom is necessary for individuation and self-determination—both of which Hesse asserts to be of utmost importance. Hesse feels most able to be himself when isolated on one of his

rural getaways; Hans, the protagonist of *Unterm Rad* is the freest when not imprisoned by his father's home or society's imposing and restrictive institution of school; and Knecht marvels in the freedom he gains by walking at the end of *Das Glasperlenspiel*.

Scholars universally accept that Hesse stood in opposition to groups and societies (especially those of a political nature). Many groups with walking as their concentration sprung up at the turn of the century, however, and collectively attempted to embody the same ideals that Hesse seems to support in his early writing. Williams writes of the naturist groups which recognized the need for individuals to spend time away from the physical and emotional restrictions of the city. These sprang up to meet the needs of those subject to industrial work and became immensely popular across the political spectrum.<sup>25</sup> It seems as if these groups paradoxically support Hesse's ideas regarding a balanced life and nature's role in it, yet their status as groups seems to undermine Hesse's need for individuality and complete mistrust of groups. After the First World War, the individuality taught by wander groups finally appeared valuable, especially once the nation had seen that group conformity in the name of the nation had failed. Hesse was in favor of democratization so that the individual might be free to express him or her self. However, the path to this democracy must be undertaken with others,

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<sup>25</sup>Examples of these groups are numerous. In one chapter, Williams describes socialist nudism, the pedagogy of which, he writes, "was both to liberate and to regulate the body in a self-consciously 'modern' way" (64).

and once established, the democracy requires individual participation in it. How then, can a democracy come into existence if one is also to avoid participating in groups? Walking ends up becoming a political act, whether idealists and centrists like Hesse want it to or not, especially if it achieves the bonus of allowing one to assert one's individuality. Could we then as logicians accept a wandering group that allows for individual difference? Is there any possible way that a group can take care of its members without compromising the nature of the individual?

Willams reports that after the war, *Jugendpflege*, public extracurricular institutions and facilities responsible for entertainment and leisure activities for youth, had developed such that group conformity and individuality could finally be synthesized in a productive way. He reports the sentiments of one author, Ernst Kemmer, who writes that “we do not make people happier when we arrogantly teach them to conform and submit. . . . [Exercise] should not be allowed to suffocate the nobler emotions and brutalize the individual; it must help the person's better self to unfold” (178). Another contributor, Schönbrunn, goes even further and posits that in such communities every member should be allowed to display his own identity proudly and writes that “‘awakening every single boy to true individuality [and] educating him to individual daring and cheek [is] the final goal of all modern education. . . . That is the basis of freedom. . . . The feeling should gradually prevail of just how valuable the complementary mix of very different characters, talents, and attitudes is’” (178). Progressive thinking about educational reform in

Germany in the early twentieth century at least had in its sights the value of fostering individualism within youth groups.

Walking, in the context of these youth groups, from this point on, becomes a tool to bring about changes that lead towards democracy, with the Nazi regime as the major exception in my application of Solnit.<sup>26</sup> She writes that “[t]he taste for walking and landscape became a kind of Trojan horse that would eventually democratize many areas and in the twentieth century literally bring down the barriers around aristocratic estates” (86).<sup>27</sup> But we have seen in the case of German walking that the emphasis eventually comes to rest upon the individual and that individual’s power over the forces that control it. Though social wandering during Hesse’s lifetime has moved between the poles of utter subjectivity and freedom, the synthesis between the two has prevailed, especially in the case of literature. While leaders and parents may argue over what their children should gain from their walking in order to shape such structures as Nation and Society, Hesse hopes, based on his fiction and numerous letters to youths, that they will learn to understand themselves from walking. In the next chapter, I endeavor to scrutinize Hesse’s early texts as I situate them in the context of the recently changed and changing position of wandering as a pastime and as a controversial pedagogical tool.

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<sup>26</sup>Under the Nazi regime, membership in the *Hitler-Jugend* was compulsory for all boys over ten years old.

<sup>27</sup>She refers here to country walkers in England who walk on long-established rights-of-way after they have been privatized.

## Chapter 2

### The “Hesse before Hesse”: The Constellation of Movement and Youth Culture in *Peter Camenzind*, *Unterm Rad* and *Knulp*

#### Introduction

If one could make a general statement about the trajectory of all of Hermann Hesse’s writings, that statement might likely be that he seeks to guide the reader in the discovery of his or her true (and perhaps even enlightened) self. That a writer such as Hesse would feel the need to do so makes sense considering the uncertainties and changes in the structure of society taking place during his early life. Historians understand the turn of the century in Europe as a time and place deeply influenced by the anxiety felt about how the future would develop. The cultural landscape in Western Europe and the United States, as it moved into an age of unprecedentedly swift transportation and increased mass production of goods, began to have feelings of vertigo due to an ever-accelerating lifestyle. During this time, youth from the bourgeois class in Germany faced extreme pressure from parents who expected educational performance, which would lead to a career with an ability to amass

capital, both social and financial, greater than or at least equal to what the previous generation had earned and to do so as if they themselves were machines. To add insult to injury, a rigid school system designed to produce bureaucrats and military officers instead of freethinking scholars grew increasingly inadequate as the movement for educational reform blossomed. Not insignificantly, this period was one during which the scare of youth suicide reached a peak, even though there was no actual change in the number of youth suicides, as York-Gothart Mix points out (63). The scare resulted from an increased cultural dialogue about the role and authority of schools in Wilhelmine Germany. Hesse, whose biography reveals a childhood touched and at some points even broken by these rigid educational and social systems, reveals throughout his work the harmful effects of growing up under these conditions.

Hesse chooses as his setting these very loci of oppression, but also includes their opposites or antidotes. By doing this, he encourages each individual to examine his or her own life, personality, and background in order to find his or her own solutions to life's problems which most often consists of striking a balance between these two extremes. In doing this, he transcends and discredits single-issue solutions to modernity's woes which the world might otherwise suggest, for example the belief that technology, science, or even gymnastics might be the only solution to life's difficulties.

Though society proved to be for the most part resilient to these changes, by

the time Wilhelm Flitner, a pedagogue, reports on societal changes affecting education in Germany in 1928 between the turn of the century and the point at which he writes, he still cites industrial and technological progress as complicating “persönliche Entfaltung und berufliche Chancenwahl” ‘personal development and choice of professional opportunities’ but notes that the generation at the turn of the century had a much easier time rebelling against these changes (Trommler 160). Flitner, according to Trommler, “weist darauf hin, daß diese Welt [der Technologie] um die Jahrhundertwende noch als etwas von außen, bedrohlich fremd Gewachsenes erschien, auch wenn sie humanisierende Konsequenzen besaß” ‘shows that this world of technology around 1900 appeared as something from outside—a foreign-grown thing, even if it possessed humanizing consequences’ (160). Educators like Karl Scheffler feared that youth had too much of an inclination toward adopting technology as a new deity (“[d]as Ideal [wird von der Jugend] praktisch, unromantisch und sachlich [gemacht]. Daher wird der Fortschritt der Technik so leicht zu einem Ideal an sich” ‘youth made the ideal practical, unromantic and objective. From there it was easy to make technological advancement into an idea of its own’ (226). Whether he was familiar with the ideas of Scheffler, Hesse seems to be acting in cooperation with this pedagogue, if only insofar as that he elevated the development of the self above the development of society.

That new technology penetrates and affects the lives of everyday persons is a fact which one, especially at the turn of the century, cannot underemphasize.

Stephen Kern, in his study *The Culture of Time and Space*, explains how speed fundamentally changed everyday life. As modernized forms of transportation shortened distances between points, older modes of transportation, which were once considered neither slow nor fast, could now not be regarded as anything but slow (129). The ability to run errands by car, file a newspaper report, or even ride a bicycle instead of walk had a profound effect on the persons who experienced these cultural changes. Technology allowed (or forced) the individual to spend increased amounts of time away from nature. Modern plumbing replaced trips to the well or outhouse, messages could be transmitted by telegraph or telephone instead of courier, and electric light brought the ability to work in enclosed spaces at all hours. To those who witnessed these developments firsthand, the old days seem as if filled with slowness, with a certain amount of surrender to nature that the advocates of technology tend to discount. Kern relays to us Stefan Zweig's recollection of the slower-paced universe of his childhood:

“It was a world with definite classes and calm transitions, a world without haste.” The adults walked slowly and spoke with measured accents; many were corpulent at an early age. He could not remember his father ever having rushed up the stairs or done anything in a visibly hasty manner. “Speed was not only thought to be unrefined, but indeed was considered unnecessary, for in that stabilized bourgeois world with its countless little securities, well palisaded on



all sides, nothing unexpected ever occurred. . . . The rhythm of the new speed had not yet carried over from the machines, the automobile, the telephone, the radio, and the airplane, to mankind; time and age had another measure.” (127–128)

One could argue here that Hesse, who had experienced the same transition into the world of modern technology had thoughts similar to Zweig’s, and though he rebelled against parts of this parents’ bourgeois world as we will see later, looks back on many parts of his childhood, especially the long periods of time spent alone exploring nature, fondly.

Of the constituent forces involved in this technological wave, movement is unquestionably one vital and significant component of the scholarly understanding of modernity. Johannes Roskothen, in the introduction to his book entitled *Verkehr: Zu einer poetischen Theorie der Moderne*, explains how increased speeds completely invade and permeate life, and that life itself becomes movement:

[D]er Straßenverkehr . . . metonymisiert eine allumfassende mentale, soziale und topographische Delokalisierung. In *wurzelloser* Transitorik verdichtet sich der universale Verlust von ‘festen’ Denksystemen, Normen und einer ortsstabilen Lebensführung, die den Körper-Transfer nur als Ausnahme (Reise, Kriegszug, Pilgerfahrt) kannte. Die vorindustrielle Ökonomie menschlicher Macht und Ohnmacht scheint außer Kraft gesetzt. Als technopolitische

Superstruktur greifen die Manifestationen der Moderne mit revolutionärer Wirkung in den Lauf der Geschichte, und gleichermaßen in den Alltag ein. (14–15)

[Road traffic metonymizes an all-encompassing mental, social and topographical delocalization. In *rootless* transitoriness the universal loss of hard and fast systems of thought, norms, and a locally stable way of life knows bodily transfer only as an exception (travel, war mobilization, pilgrimages). The preindustrial economy of human power and weakness seems to have been taken out of force. As a technopolitical superstructure, the manifestations of modernity together with revolutionary actions effect a change in the course of history and likewise in daily life.]

Scholars like Roskothen, though, typically examine the impact that new technology has on how Modernist artists use this new technology to translate the understanding and perception of life into an adapted literary form different from its predecessors. Though one can and should still consider Hesse a Modernist author, one should think of his version of literary Modernism as one that looks to the past for solutions to modernity's ills. Much of Hesse's narrative prose is inspired by his own walking trips which are, for him, sources of solace, contemplation, and spiritual centering. The direct experience of nature through walking speaks to the individual who is at other points in his life, pressured in various ways by culture and society.

According to another study, it is not only Hesse who consciously chooses “old-fashioned” tools such as walking to explain and convey his attitude. The fact that Hesse and others choose walking over other forms of transportation is, in fact, a direct result of modernization, as Gellhaus, Moser, and Schneider report in the introduction to their book *Kopflandschaften – Landschaftsgänge*:

Der Spaziergang kann sich erst in dem Moment als eigenständige kulturelle Praxis herausbilden, in dem alternative Fortbewegungsmittel größeren Bevölkerungsschichten zugänglich werden. Es ist kein Zufall, daß der Spaziergang genau in der Zeit seinen Aufschwung nimmt, in der weite Teile Westeuropas erstmals mit einem flächendeckenden Netz von schnellen Postkutschenverbindungen überzogen werden. Die Einführung der Eisenbahn im 19. Jahrhundert befördert diese Entwicklung. Der Spaziergang steht, so paradox dies erscheinen mag, in einem engen Zusammenhang mit dem verkehrstechnologischen Fortschritt. Der Spaziergänger entscheidet sich bewußt für eine langsame Form der Fortbewegung, die ihn in direkten Kontakt mit der Natur bringt. Er will sich nicht in einem abgeschlossenen Gehäuse durch die Landschaft transportieren lassen. Der Zweck des Spaziergangs besteht gerade darin, das Individuum—wenn auch nur für eine begrenzte Zeit—aus der Enge der städtischen Behausung zu befreien und in das Offene der

Natur hinauszuführen. (Gellhaus 8–9)

[The pleasure walk can first construe itself as a self-sustaining cultural practice at the moment in which an alternative means of transportation becomes available. It is no coincidence that the pleasure walk gains strength in exactly its time of popularity, in which the farthest parts of western Europe are being covered with a network of fast mail coach routes. The introduction of the railroad in the nineteenth century encourages this development. The walk, as paradoxical as it may seem, stands in narrow connection with the development of transportation technology. The walker consciously chooses for himself a slow form of movement which brings him into direct contact with nature. He does not want to be transported in an enclosed container through the countryside. The goal of this pleasure walk is to free the individual—if only for a limited time—from the crowdedness of urban dwellings and to lead him out into nature.]

If we consider what these scholars write, we can assert that artists and authors might choose walking as narrative material precisely because it is contrary to the fashions of the mainstream and suggests an alternative to it. Hesse, I argue, deliberately uses techniques in his writing which link speed with the unhealthy (if not dangerous) aspects and results of modernization. More importantly though, Hesse emphasizes walking, a mode of transportation which one seldom considers

particularly modern. Furthermore, his writing almost never relies on modern technology for subject material. The narration is seldom about the trip or the act of walking by itself, rather the development the character makes as a result of walking. Even in *Das Glasperlenspiel*, the narrator of which Hesse imagined to be writing at the beginning of the twenty-fifth century. The act of walking becomes a cipher for the metaphysical journeys his characters undertake. Hesse transforms walking into a leitmotiv that seems to propel the characters through their spiritual journeys, giving them comfort on the way, past and present, and allowing them to develop metaphysical syntheses between the extremes of modernity. Hesse depicts modern forms of transportation negatively in his works but conversely extols traditional movement by foot (especially if it does not involve reaching a goal). Kern reminds the reader also that speed had not only an effect on the mind, but also on language. Hesse accomplishes this comparison by formulating the life stories of his protagonists as exploratory journeys which involve different modes of transportation, both on literal and figurative levels. The telegraph, Kern reminds the reader, also affects language by “limiting adverbial phrases” and as Robert O’Brien notes in a 1904 essay on machinery and the English language, “‘The delicacy, intricacy, nuance of language is endangered by the wires’ as the need for speed, clarity, and simplicity shaped a new ‘telegraphic’ style” (115). Though Hesse’s sentences are not nearly as complex as those of some of his contemporaries such as Thomas Mann, they are in no way “telegraphic”; moreover, Hesse, who had

a keen appreciation of how the length of a story contributes to its pleasure, avoided at all costs writing without “delicacy, intricacy, and nuance” (7–13). Not only does walking appear in Hesse’s writing as the literal activity of strolling, but it also palpably influences the poetic structure of his writing.

In this chapter, I will detail how Hesse’s texts appropriate walking and other forms of movement, examine how he makes use of youthful characters to encourage self-reflection within the context of bourgeois culture, and finally suggest that Hesse synthesizes youth and *wandern* to form a new understanding of character development based on self-reflection.

Some scholars maintain that when seen as a whole, the reception of Hesse’s work was not given its due until the mid to late 1960s, when his writing was most forcefully discovered and sales of his books increased exponentially. This “Hesse Boom,” as Joseph Mileck refers to it (346–354), did not focus on Hesse’s earlier writing, which for many reasons was much different from that which he produced after the First World War. In this chapter, I will focus on the “Hesse before Hesse”: the earlier works which often seem at first reading more likely to be classified as an extension of realism because of their more traditional settings, plots, and literary devices (Karalashwili). Julia Moritz makes the important point that Hesse, because he makes use of these “traditional narrative structures and forms of thought,” has been dismissed by critics of German literature (401). Instead of fitting in with more mainstream notions of Modernist writing which uses experimental

language, multiple perspectives, and unconventional metaphors, the early Hesse remains firmly planted in traditional narrative techniques. I assert, though, that one can still understand these works in the context of literary Modernism because of how Hesse wrangles with the technological and psychological glitches humans encounter because of modernity.

Hesse's novel *Unterm Rad* (1906), among many other novels by different writers, was, to name one example, intended for an audience which had to endure an antiquated, bourgeois understanding of life with which society impregnated it in school and at home. The trials and tribulations of students in boarding schools is an oft-depicted setting of literature around the turn of the century. A number of these so-called *Schulromane* have survived in the canon.<sup>1</sup> The particularly stifling environment of the school classroom was, in one instance, acknowledged by the founders of the first Wandervogel group, *Fahrende Scholaren*. These students, after experiencing the new freedom of life at the university as opposed to their Gymnasium in Steglitz, a suburb of Berlin, sought to bring a taste of this freedom to their comrades still in captivity in the Gymnasium, and accomplished this by establishing groups of students who would go on weekend hiking trips. School administrations forbade such groups because they were not part of the official curriculum. While hiking was, at the time, a popular family pastime, the fact that such groups would be led by young persons who were sometimes only one year older

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<sup>1</sup>For a list, consult Marquardt, 11.

than the Gymnasium students, was unheard-of and scandalous (Kneip 28).

Walter Laqueur writes in his book entitled *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement*, that members of the *Wandervogel* read and treasured Hermann Hesse. In this source, the link between Hesse and the *Wandervogel* is reduced to one sentence,<sup>2</sup> yet I propose that the relationship between the two entities is both more prevalent and more important than Laqueur and other scholars would imply from the lack of scholarship which addresses this relationship. Some sources have stated that Hesse's *Unterm Rad* was a treasured book among these wandering groups. Others cite *Peter Camenzind* as the Hesse favorite of the members of these organizations (Steinbrinker 102–111).

In the course of this chapter, I will first show how Hesse's writing is infused with subtle criticisms of the bourgeoisie in turn-of-the-century Germany. The presentation of these criticisms necessitates a thorough analysis of Hesse's work (I will focus on prose) in such aspects as characters, plot, setting, and the criticisms Hesse implies pertaining to bourgeois life. Reso Karalashvili provides assistance with these areas in his study entitled *Hermann Hesse's Romanwelt*, as do countless other scholars, so I will not enumerate them here.

Secondly, I will establish a concrete relationship between Hesse and the

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<sup>2</sup>Laqueur writes, "The *Wandervogel* had no great literary ambitions, but under the influence of the students of the *Freideutsche* youth the leading writers and poets of the younger generation gradually became known among the youth movement: Stefan George and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rilke and Hermann Hesse, Spitteler and Trakl" (48).



*Wandervogel* not only by finding mention of Hesse in the primary sources pertinent to the *Wandervogel* (their publications, for example) but also by documenting the connections between youth (sometimes in groups such as the *Wandervogel*, sometimes as individuals) and Hesse in his own documents and writings. It is clear that Hesse maintains a lifelong commitment to assisting young persons with their problems by responding to their letters. This is well documented in a collection of Hesse's responses to readers asking for help as well as essays such as *Zarathustras Wiederkehr* which served to warn youth against political extremism. At least part of Hesse's concern for youth stems from his own struggle towards harmony with the world of his parents, as the editor of his collected works, Volker Michels, writes that

[Seine Bücher sind] eine Art Autotherapie, Selbstheilungsversuche von den Zumutungen des Lebens und der Zeitgeschichte Gegengifte, deren befreiende Energien sich gerade, weil er falsche Harmonisierungen, aber auch ideologische und politische Patentrezepte redet, auf den Leser überzutragen. Für Hesse waren neben den Gaben der Natur die des Geistes und der Kunst die einzigen, die uns nicht im Stich lassen, wenn es wirklich ernst wird. ("Auf den Einzelnen" 123)

[His books are a kind of self-therapy—attempts at healing the self from the unreasonable demands of life—and are antivenoms for history, the freeing energies of which can be brought to the reader.

Hesse speaks false harmonizations but also acts like an ideological and

political patent elixir. For him, these gifts of nature were, along with those of the spirit and of art, the only ones that do not leave us hanging when we are in trouble.]

A third part of this chapter examines how Hesse uses the aesthetic of movement he creates to impress upon the reader how to embody peaceful resistance to society's structural violence. I will argue that this use of movement is comparable to the peaceful rebellion in which the *Wandervogel* groups engaged. There is more to movement than rebellion, however—we must also examine what constitutes movement, how it has been employed in literature leading up to Hesse's work. The recognition of movement is an element of literature that has been documented since *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, but with the advent of new technologies spurred by the Industrial Revolution such as the locomotive and telephone, movement began to be understood differently. Schivelbusch discusses these developments in greater depth. The *Spaziergang* first became more of a leisure activity for those with at least small to moderate amounts of wealth, as Rebecca Solnit demonstrates in her history of walking: "Walking is an indicator species for various kinds of freedoms and pleasures: free time, free and alluring space, and unhindered bodies" (250). Most importantly, though, Solnit recognizes the revolutionary nature walking can take on depending on its context in a post-industrial-revolution world (which one might easily compare to the turn of the century Germany). She boldly states that

[t]he disembodiment of everyday life I have been tracing is a majority

experience, part of automobilization and suburbanization. But walking has sometimes been, at least since the late eighteenth century, *an act of resistance to the mainstream*. It stood out when its pace was out of keeping with the time—which is why so much of this history of walking is a First World, after-the-industrial-revolution history, about when walking ceased to be part of the continuum of experience and instead became something consciously chosen. In many ways, walking culture was a reaction against the speed and alienation of the industrial revolution. It may be countercultures and subcultures that will continue to walk in resistance to the postindustrial, postmodern loss of space, time, and embodiment. Most of these cultures draw from ancient practices—of peripatetic philosophers, of poets composing afoot, of pilgrims and practitioners of Buddhist walking meditation—or old ones, such as hiking and flâneury. (276, my emphasis)

Solnit's statement about walking as an act of resistance is easy to apply to the *Wandervogel* groups. I understand the practice of walking by members of the German youth movement as well as Hesse's figures as an activity done in resistance of oppressive social forces (parents, teachers) as well as one done in the name of a search for oneself. It so happens that the *Wandervogel* achieved this rebellion and self-search as a group, but as we will later see, Hesse and his figures most often

embark on their self-search and rebellion alone.

Movement itself gradually became a focus of the philosophical world as well at the turn of the century. Precursors to film such as Eadweard Muybridge's series photography concentrate on movements such as a horse galloping (*The Horse in Motion*) or of a *Woman Walking Down Stairs*. Scholars like Paul Souriau began to dissect into its component parts the movement which one was newly able to record. Movement is essentially the change of an object's location over time; modern technologies such as the railroad and automobiles accelerated travel and movement to a point which precluded use of the same understanding of movement. A feeling of rebellion to these technological developments prompted a process of self-examination, which explored older forms of expression. I argue that Hesse takes part in this reflection and decides to use older forms of movement in new ways in order to create a literary Modernism for himself which simultaneously acknowledges the new but rearticulates the merits of the old technology within the context of the new.

### **A Brief Taxonomy of Wandering in Hesse's Early Works**

Representations of bodily movement (*Bewegung*) in art and literature help the reader become emotionally aware of modernity's Nature/Culture split. Technology between 1880 and the outbreak of the First World War developed faster than humans could process it. Stephen Kern argues that innovations and inventions such

as “the telephone, wireless telegraph, x-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile, and airplane” established the basis for a reorientation in how one thought about time and space (1). The most radical escape from the smoke and pollution of the modernizing city (but also from the ever-accelerating means of communication that made its presence known in the countryside) was a hike through the countryside. The use of one’s body for transportation instead of any of the modern external means was, at this point in history, a true getaway. While many artists became fascinated with those modern technologies to the point of deliberately highlighting them in their work, (James Joyce’s fascination with cinema, Thomas Mann’s discussion of x-rays in *The Magic Mountain*) Hesse all the while unites and synthesizes the Nature/Culture split which resulted from these developments, and by the end of his works achieves a state of balance between the two. He does this in a way that is not readily apparent to the present-day reader. In this section, I will present a taxonomy of movement (mostly in the form of walking) in Hesse’s early works. A teasing out of these different uses of movement will be foundational in a deeper understanding of not only how one might link Hesse to the youth movement, but also in how these forms of human-powered motion underscore Hesse’s ambiguous relationship with Modernist artistic discourse.

The first and most prevalent use of wandering in Hesse is that during which the figures involved use time spent outside the domestic sphere as a time of recovery from cultural stressors. Rebecca Solnit writes that “[w]alking is one way of

maintaining a bulwark against . . . erosion of the mind, the body, the landscape, and the city, and every walker is a guard on patrol to protect the ineffable” (11). In *Peter Camenzind* (1904), nature takes on the role of therapy for Peter throughout the entire novel. When he has rough or stressful times in life, he always goes on a walking trip. Peter walks in the woods and uses clouds to explain the way that he experiences his life. While walking, he considers:

[Wolken] sind das ewige Sinnbild alles Wanderns, alles Suchens, Verlangens und Heimbegehrens. Und so, wie sie zwischen Erde und Himmel zag und sehnd und trotzig hängen, so hängen zag und sehnd und trotzig die Seelen der Menschen zwischen Zeit und Ewigkeit. . . . [U]nd [ich] wußte nicht, daß auch ich als eine Wolke durchs Leben gehen würde – wandernd, überall fremd, schwebend zwischen Zeit und Ewigkeit. (17)

[[Clouds] are the eternal symbol of all voyaging, of every quest and yearning for home. And as the clouds are suspended faintheartedly and longingly and stubbornly between heaven and earth, the souls of men are suspended faintheartedly and longingly and stubbornly between time and eternity. (15)]

Not only does the protagonist structure his life as an extended episode of *Wandern*, but he does so while partaking in the act of hiking. Thus, the physical experience of walking in nature links an otherwise chaotic life to a very basic human

activity. Though Peter discusses clouds here, these floating objects of nature help him remain anchored in a more spiritual reality. Walter Erhart explains in his essay comparing various “Jugendschriften” ‘writings about youth’ that in *Peter Camenzind*

[die] Naturerfahrung artikuliert eine Therapie moderner Nervosität, die Kunstfigur des Bauernjungen aber tritt zugleich als eine jener Masken auf, mit denen der junge Hesse sein vielstimmiges Fin de Siècle orchestriert—zuletzt in einer Figur, die buchstäblich wieder verlorengeht. (423)

[the experience of nature articulates a therapy for modern nervousity. But, the artistic figure of the farmer boy shows up as one of those masks, with which the young Hesse orchestrates his polyphonic Fin de Siècle—in a figure that literally and ultimately gets lost.]

Though Peter does, in fact, lose track of where his life is going at certain points in the novel, the act of hiking always brings him back to a view of his life as if from afar, helps him make sense of the diverse longings he experiences.

Hiking takes on a similar role in *Unterm Rad*. In the beginning of the novel, Hesse establishes a link between wandering and the comforting forces which act as an antidote to the stresses of Hans’s academic career. The Shoemaker Flaig, who is an advocate for Hans’s spiritual development, serves as a foil to the Rector, who encourages the scientific side of Hans’ career. While the Rector embraces the development of the individual through “wissen” ‘knowing’ and “Leistung”

‘performance,’ Flaig’s figure concentrates on what Hans can and should be able to do for himself, and comments, as the narrator explains, “[d]urchzufallen sei keine Schande, das könne dem besten passieren, und falls es ihm so gehen sollte, möge er bedenken, daß Gott mit jeder Seele seine besondern Absichten habe und sie eigene Wege führe” ‘it would be no disgrace to fail. This could happen to the best of us, he said, and if it should happen to Hans he ought to keep in mind that God has a master plan for each and every soul and leads it along a path of His choosing’ (14; 11). Though both figures inhabit the realm of the religious, their duality foretells Hans’ own struggles with life and the tensions between the individual and society. That these two figures encounter each other with a sneer as Hans goes for a stroll with Flaig is also no coincidence; nature seems to provide in these early works of Hesse an arena outside the civilized and cultural world in which the individual is free to wrangle with societal and spiritual forces without threatening the imposed politeness which reigns indoors. Later, during this same walk, Hans encounters some dead remnants of his childhood: “ein morsches, längst nicht mehr benutztes Gartenhäuschen; darin hatte er seinerzeit einen Bretterstall gezimmert und drei Jahre lang Kaninchen drin gehabt” ‘a rotting summer-house in which he had once built a rabbit hutch and raised rabbits for three years’ (15; 12). The reader knows here instinctively that Hans has put his childhood behind him, at least metaphorically, when, instead of “sich hinwerfen und heulen” ‘throwing himself down and throwing a tantrum,’ Hans breaks the rabbit stall into a hundred pieces



(16). Despite his ever-watchful father, Hans is never brought to blame for the destruction that he commits in this incident. At the end of the day's journey outside, Hans comes to a shore where two rafts are docked. He reminisces about the fact that "mit solchen war er früher oft stundenweit flußab gefahren, an warmen Sommernachmittagen, vom Fahren auf dem zwischen den Stämmen klatschenden Wasser zugleich erregt und eingeschläfert" 'he used to untie them and drift downstream for hours on warm Sunday afternoons, excited and lulled by the sound of water splashing between the loosely tied logs' (16; 14). At this point he tries to imagine that he is on one of these rafts and that everything would be like before, back when "er noch am Kapfberg Hasenfutter holte, in den Gerbergärten am Ufer angelte und noch kein Kopfweh und keine Sorge hatte" '[everything was] the way it used to be when he fetched rabbit feed along the Kapferberg, fished along the shore by the tanneries, without headaches and worries' (16; 14). Again, a brief imaginary excursion into nature helps him put life in perspective.

Later in the novel, the idea of nature as a stage for character development shows itself in an even more concrete manner. After the seminary entrance examination, Hans' success allows him more free time outside initially, but soon his defense of the top position takes priority. Since Hans has surpassed the goals set by his father and the community, he can play outside while the others are still stuck in school. "Er hatte sie [the other students] überholt, sie standen jetzt unter ihm. Sie hatten ihn genug geplagt, weil er außer August keine Freundschaften und an ihren

Raufereien und Spielen keine rechte Freude gehabt hatte” ‘He had outstripped them, they were now below him. They had pestered him because he had made friends only with August and never really enjoyed their rough-and-ready games and pleasures (36; 37). On the other hand, the Rector will persuade him to do more work in preparation for his studies in the fall (41). Hans soon realizes that his success has actually cost him much of the freedom he thought he had won. The narrator writes,

[d]er in Angst und im Triumph des Examens untergetauchte Ehrgeiz war wieder wach und ließ ihm keine Ruhe. Zugleich begann wieder das eigentümliche Gefühl im Kopf sich zu regen, das er in den letzten Monaten so oft gefühlt hatte – kein Schmerz, sondern ein hastig triumphierendes Treiben beschleunigter Pulse und heftig aufgeregter Kräfte, ein eilig ungestümes Vorwärtsbegehren. (45)

[His ambition, diminished during the anxiety and triumph of the examination, had reawakened and would not let him retreat. Simultaneously he again felt that peculiar sensation in his head, felt so often during the last months, which was not precisely a pain but a hurried, triumphant pulsation of hectically excited energies, an impetuous desire to advance. (47–48)]

Though in *Unterm Rad* Hans’ emotions remain unbalanced, despite all his attempts at escape, when perceived as an arena where social and individual influences can fight to the death, one may still understand hiking and time spent outdoors as a

type of psychotherapy in which Hesse's figures participate; this activity provides a safe time and place for reflection on the figures' life events. Solnit writes that "[she] like[s] walking because it is slow, and [she suspects] that the mind, like the feet, works at about three miles an hour. If this is so, then modern life is moving faster than the speed of thought, or thoughtfulness" (10). In traditional Freudian therapy, the patient lies on his or her back, and is encouraged by the therapist to relax, both of which are intended to stimulate free associations which the therapist can use to help provide feedback. Once the therapist rewords the patient's own free associations in the form of feedback, the patient gains greater insights into his subconscious mind. Solnit argues that walking is done at the speed of thought and vice versa. Walking helps slow down one's stream of thoughts, allowing one to examine each as it arises. Thus walking helps one to calm down, to examine one's thoughts rationally, and least to take time to feel emotions. These were certainly techniques that Hesse would have encountered in his studies of eastern religion, if not on one of his trips to India. Be it in the form of a modified western psychological therapy or in a form of eastern walking meditation, Hesse's writing approximates healthy thought analysis both in its walking, meandering speed and its depiction of characters who engage in their own journeys of self-analysis.

In another use of wandering, Hesse transforms movement into a form of pedagogy. In addition to using walking as Hans' arena for imagination, stress relief, and a type of self-therapy, Hesse also constructs wandering as an educational

technique that complements traditional sorts of learning that would typically happen in a classroom. For Hans, the concept of walking lends him an additional setting to reflect on and participate in the mental acrobatics that give him pleasure. Conversely, being inside tends to stifle him and bring on headaches. As the narrator informs us, “[d]ie mathematischen Arbeiten und Lehrstunden kamen ihm vor wie das Wandern auf einer ebenen Landstraße; man kommt immer vorwärts, man versteht jeden Tag etwas, was man gestern noch nicht verstand, aber man kommt nie auf einen Berg, wo sich plötzlich weite Aussichten auftun” ‘[t]he assignments and lessons seemed to him like wandering on an even highway—you always make progress, every day you learn something you did not know the day before, but you never reach a great height from which you suddenly see new vistas’ (50; 52). Thus the reader is made privy to what is for Hans, the unfulfilling aspect of his intellectual life which could very well be caused by the structure of the Wilhelmine school system. For Hesse, the school system in which he was educated strove to meet the wrong goals. The years Hesse spent in such an oppressive system had a distinct influence on his philosophy of life, however. Claudia Bünger-Kohn writes about the Wilhelmine school system that “[e]s geht, wie Hesse persönlich erfahren hat, seiner Schule nicht um Charakter- und Geistesbildung, sondern um die Entwicklung eines elitären Bewußtsein” ‘it has to do at his school, as Hesse personally experienced, not with character and spiritual development, but with the development of an elite consciousness’ (164). Furthermore, as Bünger-Kohn

reports, Hesse understood school not as a propagator of truth, but of lies: “Er beschreibt Schule so, wie er sie erlebt hat. Aber er erhebt das zu einem objektivierenden Maßstab und nennt Schule und das, was er in ihr gelernt habe, ‚verlogen‘ und dehnt dieses Urteil auf die gesamte Institutionen aus” ‘He describes school in the way in which he experienced it. But he raises that to an objectivizing unit of measurement and calls school and that which he learned in it, “lies” and spreads this judgement over the entire collected institution of school’ (175). Hesse continues the theme of travel as education in *Peter Camenzind*. Here, Hesse feels the need to include the detail that Camenzind is allowed a “Studienreise” ‘study trip’ if his performance allows it: He fantasizes about his future studies also as if they themselves are the trip: “eine ernst freundliche Laube mit den Büsten Homers und Platos, ich darin sitzend über Folianten gebückt, und auf allen Seiten ein weiter, klarer Blick auf Stadt, See, Berge und schönen Fernen” ‘I visualized myself sitting in a friendly grove solemnly appointed with the busts of Plato and Homer, bent over learned tomes, and on all sides an unhampered view over the town, the lake and mountains, enchanting vistas’ (32; 37). Here we see a moment of stasis which is the result of the protagonist’s imagined trip, the apex of a mountain where he can see everything. Compare this moment of stasis which Peter might reach as a result of his own chosen movement to one imagined within the walls of strict and disciplined education or inside the restraints of bourgeois capitalism: the first apex can be achieved in real life, the second cannot. When Camenzind lets his father

know that he wants to study at the university, he writes that his father “begriff, daß ich von jetzt an eigene Wege gehen und seinem Leben schnell vollends fremd werden würde” ‘realized that I would go my own way from now on, and would soon be completely estranged from his way of life’ (37; 44). Camenzind’s father is stuck in a life of stasis which separates him irreconcilably from Peter. Thus, Peter embarks on a metaphysical quest for himself which Hesse chooses to relate to the reader using the framework of physical movement.

A third type of movement present in Hesse’s early works is that done in effort to help the figures participate more fully in the social world. I would like to discuss two instances of movement in *Unterm Rad*, as well as one aspect of *Peter Camenzind*. The trip Hans and his father take via train to Stuttgart, in contrast to Hans’s metaphysical wanderings of the day before, is described in only two sentences, and the only insight the reader gleans into how the travel affects both characters is that “[d]ie Reise war für beide eine Qual” ‘[t]he trip was sheer agony for both of them’ (18; 16). In the texts this dissertation has examined so far, and most likely in Hesse’s work up until this point, this is the first instance of modern travel he mentions. Not only is the mode of travel important here, but also the reasons for which the characters embark. Herr Giebenrath takes his son to Stuttgart to compete in the state seminary’s entrance examination. Since Hans is from a pastor’s family,<sup>3</sup> admission to this seminary is the only chance he has at raising his social

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<sup>3</sup>Hans’s admission through a scholarship to the Protestant Theological Seminary in Maulbronn was his parents’ answer to the costs of higher education for

standing. Hans's anxiety not only to meet the expectations of his father, but also to achieve what he wants for himself manifests itself in headaches, fever, and nausea during this trip, which city life seems only to exacerbate. Schivelbusch describes similar symptoms of increased speeds in his history of railroad travel. Here, Hans's physical maladies come not as a result of physical exhaustion, but of mental stress caused both by the modern nature of this mode of travel and pressure to succeed at the test, all while being a good person in the eyes of his father.

Later in the same novel, during the first weekend of Hans's apprenticeship as a metalworker, the advanced fellows from the workshop invite him to come along on a Sunday afternoon outing. At first they walk at a moderate pace, but then they begin to go faster to reach their goal. It is clear from the following pages that this is not in fact *wandern* (this word implies that the walker is free to go where his heart desires), but *gehen* (a word for walking which implies intended motion towards a goal, often permanent relocation) as a means to an end. Indeed, Hans also buys into the beauty of the moment, and enjoys his comrade's stories. Before long, they are given a choice in which road to take, and the narrator explains the differences between the two, and what kind of traveler would choose which one:

[J]etzt hatte man die Wahl zwischen einem langsam steigenden, im  
Bogen heran führende Fahrsträßchen und einem steilen Fußweg, der

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their son. Ralph Freedman writes in his biography of Hesse that the “vision of arbitrary teachers—which the mature Hesse contrasted with images of natural leaders or guides nurturing true knowledge—Maulbronn made concrete as an institution in which the adolescent Hesse had to participate” (43).

nur halb so weit war. Fußwege sind für den Werktag und für spazierende Herren; das Volk aber liebt, namentlich an Sonntagen, die Landstraße, deren Poesie ihm noch nicht verlorengegangen ist. Steile Fußwege ersteigen, das ist für Bauersleute oder für Naturfreunde aus der Stadt, das ist eine Arbeit oder ein Sport, aber kein Vergnügen fürs Volk. Dagegen eine Landstraße, wo man behaglich vorwärts kommt und dabei plaudern kann, wo man Stiefel und Sonntagskleider schont, wo man Wagen und Pferde sieht, andere Bummler antrifft und einholt, geputzten Mädchen und singenden Burschengruppen begegnet, wo einem Witze nachgerufen werden, die man lachend heimgibt, wo man stehen und schwatzen und ledigen Falles den Mädchenreihen nachlaufen und nachlachen oder des abends persönliche Differenzen mit guten kameraden durch Taten zum Ausdruck und Ausgleich bringen kann! (157)

[They . . . now had a choice between taking the gradually rising dirt road which curves lazily up the mountain or the steep footpath which was only half as long. They decided on the dirt road, though it was longer and dustier. Footpaths are for working days and for gentlemen on walks; but the common people prefer the regular country roads, especially on Sundays—these roads have retained their poetry for the people. To climb steep footpaths is something for farmers, or for



nature lovers from the city; that is either work or a sport but not a pleasure. On a country road, however, you can make leisurely headway and can talk and don't wear out your soles or clothes, see carts and horses, meet other people just as leisurely as yourself, overtake girls all dressed up and groups of singing fellows. People will call out jokes to you and you will laugh and parry them; you can stop and chat, and if you have nothing better to do, run after girls and laugh after them, and in the evening you can settle personal differences with your companions by taking direct action. (177-78)]

Hesse's narrator, somewhat atypically here, makes a distinction between two classes of people (those who relish nature versus those who want to protect their boots and Sunday clothes), but one must note that the group with which Hans is interacting has already come to this conclusion. More typically, Hesse employs comparisons between people and groups of people who are different at first glance in order to point out their similarity in humanity. Wandering is usually the activity that brings about this sort of realization, bringing calm and understanding to characters like Hans or Peter Camenzind. Here, though, the activity in question is definitely not wandering: the narrator explains how on this kind of street one can keep one's good clothes clean while putting on a display of one's personality through jokes, one can also run after females. All these activities seem to support the more bourgeois ideal of amassing capital, both social and financial. Not only can one advertise oneself as

convivial, one can also protect one's investment of Sunday clothes.

*Peter Camenzind* also contains two examples of how wandering serves as the key to healthy social interaction. Once Peter has settled in to university life, he encounters a neighbor and musician who becomes his friend. Peter confesses that he is not musical at all, but can yodel. The new friend, Richard, begs for a performance, and after some hesitation and a journey into the mountains (Peter refuses to yodel anywhere else), Peter confesses to himself that he felt like he was standing next to a friend for the first time. Peter's relationship with Richard symbolically and literally brings Peter into civilized society: not only does Richard bring Peter out of the mountains, but he also introduces Peter to Nietzsche <sup>4</sup>, his friends, teaches him how to socialize, and provides a positive role model for Peter (44). Richard is slightly older than Peter, which thus makes their relationship echo that between the *Wandervogel* leader and follower in which the slightly older comrade leads the younger follower(s) into the woods and takes responsibility for them. Whereas the *Wandervogel* leaders delivered *Gymnasium* students from the oppression of school and home life, Richard delivers Peter from student life by secretly submitting Peter's poetry to an editor friend. Peter exclaims that "[e]ines Morgens, da ich erwachte, war ich Schriftsteller geworden" '[s]uddenly, when I awoke one morning, I was a writer' (50; 62). After acquiring this new job, Camenzind can "throw away his forced studies" ("Zwangsstudium wegwerfen") and live off of his own

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<sup>4</sup>For more on Nietzsche, see 47 above.

income (50). Peter, once initiated into the success of authorhood, repays the favor given him insofar as he develops a friendship with Boppi, a handicapped man.

Peter's relationship with Boppi begins when Peter indulges in a Sunday afternoon stroll with Schreiner and his family. Because Boppi, who is sickly and confined to a wheelchair, insists that he will be fine alone, they go on the trip. Once the sun starts to set, Peter experiences a change of heart and begins to imagine the "disgusting cripple" no longer as such, but as a person whom he and his friends locked indoors. Because Boppi would not be in a position to open the door or light a lamp for himself, Peter takes pity and rushes back to the house to spend time with Boppi. Once there, though, Peter realizes that he forgot to bring a key and hears Boppi singing. Boppi shows Peter in this scene and for their entire relationship, that time spent alone is not completely miserable, but also that friendship and society enhance life. As Peter and Boppi become friends, Peter narrates, "ich wollte die Kunst des Schauens, des Wanderns und Genießens, die Lust am Gegenwärtigen [ihm] predigen" 'I wanted to preach to him the art of observation, of *wandern*, of enjoyment, of enjoying the present' (110). Peter soon gets a wheelchair for Boppi, (thereby symbolically giving Boppi legs) and they embark on their own particular brand of wandering through the zoo—a space which seems to be a compromise between the forest and civilization, one that lets them encounter nature on their own special terms: the animals are behind bars and the wheelchair rolls freely on the paved paths. In the walks they share in which Peter serves as Boppi's legs,

Peter finally applies his art of walking to someone who would otherwise not be able to leave home. Peter narrates, “[s]eit vollends Boppi mir nahe stand und mich mit dem wundervollen Wissen um ein beständiges, ehrliches Geliebtsein umgab, konnte ich meine Liebe ohne Gefahr als ein Stück Jugend und Poesie in mir leben lassen” ‘[s]ince Boppi had become my friend and I was aware of his constant and honest affection for me, I could safely let my old love linger as a part of my youth and poetry’ (133; 177). It is finally Boppi who confers upon Peter the ability within himself to return home and care for his aging father by filling a gap which has been empty since Peter’s youth, caused by the fact that Peter did not wake his father for his mother’s own passing away. In this way, Boppi and Peter complete each other’s humanity; Boppi teaches Peter spiritual joy while Peter helps Boppi experience the outdoors.

### **The Hesse–*Wandervogel* Connection**

Now that we have examined some of the various ways in which Hesse uses movement in his early works in order to establish a working knowledge base from primary literature, it makes sense to proceed on to the links between Hesse and youth culture in Germany around the turn of the twentieth century.

Claudia Bünger-Kohn is the first scholar to propose that there is an important connection between the themes of youth and movement in Hesse. She approaches this connection from the point of view that youth and movement unite

to criticize of the German school system at the beginning of the twentieth century. Furthermore, she asserts that Hesse intentionally aided the youth movement in Germany artistically. She writes that

[a]us dieser Rückschau auf vergangene Zeit der Kindheit, den Zustand eines Mensch-Natur-Harmoniegefühls, läßt sich Hesses Nähe zur Jugendbewegung verstehen. Denn interessant für die Jugendbewegten war ja auch der sich durch alle romantischen Bewegungen ziehende Ausdruck des Gefühls, durch naturnahe Motive bestimmt. . . . Nur im Naturerlebnis ist der von Alltags- und Zukunftssorgen und dazu auch noch von der Technik gequälte Jugendliche Hesses glücklich. (178)

[from this retrospective on the past time of childhood, the situation of a feeling of harmony between man and nature, one can observe Hesse's affinity for nature. Interesting for those in the youth movement was also the expression of emotion that runs through all romantic movements, and especially through movements that are in harmony with nature. . . . Only in the experience of nature is Hesse happy, the Hesse who was plagued by daily worry about the future and technology.]

In the next section, Bünger-Kohn describes the influence Hesse had “on the youth of his time.” Although Hesse “beabsichtigte zunächst wohl keinen direkten Einfluß auf die Organisationen der Jugendbewegung,” “Mittelbarer Einfluß bestand allerdings

aufgrund zahlreicher Veröffentlichungen in den damals der Jugendbewegung geistig nahestehenden Zeitschriften” ‘aimed not to have any direct influence on the organizations of the youth movement, he had some moderate influence due to his numerous publications in the periodicals that were then often read by the [members of the] youth movement’ (181). Later on, she describes exactly how, in her scholarly opinion, Hesse embodied the ideas and points of criticism of the youth movement:

Er teilte ihren Naturbegriff und thematisierte die Schlichtheit, Naturhaftigkeit des menschlichen Daseins und die Vorstellungen der Wandervogel-Bewegung von Verinnerlichung, Kameradschaft und Gemeinschaft. Hesse war sich der Parallele zwischen seinen Werken und der Wandervogel-Bewegung bewußt. (185)

[He shared their understanding of nature and thematized the frugality, naturalness of human beings and the ideas the *Wandervogel* movement had of internalization, comradeship, and society. Hesse was aware of the parallels between his works and those of the *Wandervogel* movement.]

She then goes on to cite specific examples from Hesse’s writings. For purposes of organization, I will cite three major similarities between Hesse’s work and the German *Wandervogel* groups, a movement within youth culture which we may, in theory, consider representative of youth culture in Germany. First, Hesse and the *Wandervogel* groups shared an affinity for nature as well as movement within

nature. A second commonality is the desire to guide and advise young persons.

Finally, they were both critical of the German school system and the customs and rigidity of the bourgeois lifestyle which accompanied it.

Christiane Völpel, in her monograph linking Hermann Hesse and the *Wandervogel*, documents Hesse's reception by the members of the youth movement. She writes that "[d]ie Jugend, die sich besonders mit den früheren Werken Hesses zu identifizieren schien, sorgte dadurch für ein plötzliches Bekanntwerden des vorher kaum gelesenen Hermann Hesse" 'the youths, who appeared to especially be able to identify with the earlier works, are responsible for a sudden [public] awareness of the previously barely-read Hesse' (188). Additionally, she suggests Hesse to be a type of Naturalist, or "Naturführer"; she reports not only that youth were drawn to nature because of the poetic level of Hesse's reflections of it, but also that this nature drew more youth to Hesse's writing. She cites *Peter Camenzind* as an example, saying "[d]iese jugendlich-schwärmerische Gefühlswelt scheint sich auch in Peter Camenzind nur in der Sehnsucht nach der Natur erfüllen zu können; die Natur allein vermag für ihn das die Welt durchdringende Prinzip zu offenbaren" 'this youthful, quixotic world of feelings seems to be present in Peter Camenzind only inasmuch as it fulfills the longing for nature; nature alone could reveal for him that world-penetrating principle' (197).

Apart from the extensive use of nature and wandering which we have seen thus far in Hesse's work, it is important to note that Hesse supported and

contributed to the youth movement more than some critics might care to admit. Two examples of Hesse's support of youth culture come in the form of published books which he either contributed to or edited. The first of these is a collection of German folk songs selected by Hesse, Martin Lang, and Emil Strauß, entitled *Der Lindenbaum*, which was published as early as 1910.<sup>5</sup> A return to and appreciation of folk songs is one of the hallmarks of the *Wandervogel* movement. Laqueur writes in his history of the movement that "[s]ongs played a vital part in all youth movement activities. . . ," that "[t]he romantic folksong was typical for the movement. . . ," and that "[t]he rediscovery of the folksong had been the great achievement of the Wandervogel" (29). Traveling groups could have very possibly carried this book along with another famous collection of folk songs called the *Zupfgeigenhansl*, which first appeared in 1909 and which remained in print up to the 1980s. A second publication, entitled *Wandervogelgeschichten*, and first published in 1922, is a collection of short fiction by Hesse, Emil Strauß, Robert Walser, Norbert Jacques, Alfons Paquet, and Wilhelm Schäfer. Hesse's contribution is a short story entitled "Ein Wandertag."

Apart from these publications that are the more tangible efforts Hesse made to encourage and speak to youth, he also communicated with young persons on an intensely personal level, through writing letters. Hesse, throughout the course of his life, answered approximately 35,000 letters, according to his principal editor, Volker

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<sup>5</sup>According to the catalog of the Berlin Staatsbibliothek.



Michels (17). A significant number of these were in response to letters from young in the ages 15 to 35. Michels, who collected and edited them in a volume entitled *Die Antwort bist Du selbst*, asserts that one can without doubt understand these letters as expression of Hesse's desire to help youth. Michels writes in the book's introduction that one may understand Hesse's life's work as an attempt at "die Verletzungen aus der Kindheit und frühern Jugend zu kompensieren und sein Unvermögen, sich gleichschalten zu lassen, zu rechtfertigen durch alternative Leistungen" 'compensating for the trauma from childhood and early youth, to harmonize the self, to explain the self through alternate efforts' (19). Two currents emerge within Hesse's responses to his readers that are useful in the context of this dissertation. First, he encourages young persons to concentrate on their own development as individuals before submitting to the ideals or agenda of any type of group. He writes to one reader, "Sie sollen also die ideale und Ziele solcher Gemeinschaften und ihrer Führer niemals gleich ernst nehmen wie Ihr eigenes Werden und . . . Ihre Person erst dann unterordnen, wenn sie den Ihnen möglichen Grad von Menschwerdung erreicht haben" 'you should thus never take seriously as your own the ideals and goals of such societies and their leaders . . . and only subject yourself to them once you have reached your highest possible level of becoming a person' (21). Second, Hesse encourages most of his readers to seek a life determined by individual will acting in concert with society and not one determined solely by society. This is something that comes naturally, in his opinion, to those

who seek their true selves. He writes to another reader, “[w]er jenes echte Ich sucht, der sucht zugleich die Norm allen Lebens, denn dieses innerste Ich ist bei allen Menschen gleich, es ist Gott, es ist der Sinn” ‘whoever searches for his true self also searches at the same time for a norm for all of life, for this innermost self is the same for all persons, it is God, it is meaning’ (24, Hesse’s emphasis).

Most importantly, though, besides Hesse’s publications which may only tangentially be related to the *Wandervogel*, and letters, which were directed at individuals, I would like to examine the contrast Hesse underscores between the great outdoors and the mechanisms of bourgeois society, the most prominent of which in Hesse’s writing is the Wilhelmine school system.

School was, for Hesse and also for many of his contemporaries, not only confining, but downright oppressive. For a snapshot of the nature and learning environment in Prussian schools at the turn of the century, let us turn to James Russell, a pedagogue who reports to an English-speaking audience of the state of German education at the turn of the century, writes in 1898 that “[e]very effort has been made of late years to control pupils by moral suasion. So far as possible the individuality of the teacher is given full play. There is no doubt that since 1870 a new type of school-master has come in, due in great measure to the military spirit that is in the air” (161). The key phrases here are “moral suasion” and “military spirit.” Indeed, Prussia was determined to educate future military officers and good middle class members of society who would both carry out orders with discipline

and not question their own position in the system. Samuel and Thomas write in their tome about education and society in modern Germany that “German education was certainly badly in need of reform, especially as far as secondary schools were concerned. In the grammar schools the tradition of ‘general education’ helped to foster superficiality and impede the development of the power of criticism” (17). For the poet Rudolf Binding, Samuel and Thomas report, industrialization clearly played a large part in forming a school system which existed to instill in its students the “habit of hard work for its own sake” (18). Binding writes, “[a]ll that remained of the ideal of the humane individual, bearing in his mind and heart consciousness of all mankind and its culture, such as had inspired the age of Goethe, all that remained was the enormous industry necessary to absorb the immense material involved, [which had] usurped as it were with satanic majesty, the throne of the old ideal of humanism” (18). Marquardt’s theory explains how schools function in society as centers of production:

Die Schule stattet Individuen durch die Vermittlung kulturellen Kapitals mit Handlungspotentialen aus, die sie an einen erfolgreichen Schulerfolg und einen schulischen Titel bindet. Die so erworbene staatlich autorisierte soziale Kompetenz des einzelnen bestimmt dann maßgeblich seine Stellung im sozialen, hierarchischen Gefüge – und insofern trägt jeder an seinem Ort zur Reproduktion der Gesellschaft bei. (41)

[The school equips individuals with potential for action by means of handing down cultural capital, which it also binds to a successful completion of schooling and the title one earns. The state-authored social competence of the individual that is earned in this way then definitively determines the individual's position in the social, hierarchical texture – in this way each person contributes to the reproduction of society in his own venue.]

Here, identity is handed down to the individual by means of the school system which expects it to solidify and stabilize the student's position in society. This model not only severely limits social mobility but also stunts imagination and true intellect in favor of reasserting that facts are always facts.

Protests against this rigid school system came from students themselves, the intended targets for this more business-friendly form of indoctrination. The *Wandervogel* groups were part of this protest, as Samuel and Thomas indicate when they write that “[t]hese groups wandered over the German countryside, singing folk-songs and often dressed in picturesque costume, and in all things abjuring the bondage of organisation and authority” (18).

Katrin Marquardt continues this reasoning as she explains Hesse's resistance to and disdain of the school system in which he was brought up. She writes in general of Hesse that

[d]er Schriftsteller sieht als “geistbestimmter” Intellektueller in der

institutionell verbürgten symbolischen Macht der Schule des Kaiserreichs einen Angriff auf eine nur ihm zukommende Definitionsmacht. Insofern ist der intellektuelle Legitimationskampf als eine prinzipielle Auseinandersetzung zwischen “Schaffenden” und “Lehrenden” zu beschreiben. (10)

[The author sees, as a spiritually-appointed intellectual in the institutionally warranted symbolic power of schools in the empire, an attack on the defining power that is accorded only to him. In this way the intellectual struggle for legitimation can be described as a conflict of principle between “those who create/work” and “those who teach.”]

Not only is there a conflict of interest, but an all-out struggle between the teacher and the students, which is typical of the school narratives of the time. While the Wihelmine school system seeks to produce “Schaffenden” (southern German dialect for workers, here literally “productive people”), Hesse insists that his and others’ individuality be allowed to remain intact. Hesse writes that

[e]chte Bildung ist nicht Bildung zu irgendeinem Zwecke, sondern sie hat, wie jedes Streben nach dem Vollkommenen, ihren Sinn in sich selbst . . . ebenso ist auch das Streben nach ‘Bildung,’ das heißt nach geistiger und seelischer Vervollkommnung, nicht ein mühsamer Weg zu irgendwelchen begrenzten Zielen, sondern ein beglückendes und stärkendes Erweitern unseres Bewußtseins, eine Bereicherung unserer

Lebens- und Glücksmöglichkeiten. (114)

[True education is not education for any kind of purpose, but rather, like every striving for the complete, has its own built-in sense.

Likewise, striving for “an education,” that is, toward spiritual and mental completion, is not an exhausting path to some sort of limited goal, but an uplifting and strengthening expansion of our conscience, an enrichment of our life and of the possibilities for happiness.]

Thus Hesse favors a liberal education which encourages development of the self in the tradition of Humboldt. This type of education, in fact, does not exist in Germany at the time Hesse writes, at least in secondary schools. The Wilhelmine system, though, insists on the strenuous path towards limited goals. By this reasoning, Marquardt insists,

Hesses Bildungskritik ähnelt an dieser Stelle der Stellungnahme der ‘Lebensreformer’ und der Jugendbewegung. Auch sie greifen das Monopol der symbolischen Macht der Schule des Kaiserreichs vom Standpunkt eines selbstbestimmten Individuums und eines natürlichen Entwicklungsgangs der menschlichen Natur an. (299)

[Hesse’s critique of education is similar in this regard to that of the ‘life reformers’ and that of the youth movement. They also understand the monopoly on symbolic power that the school of the empire has from the point of view of the self-determined individual

and that of a natural course of development of its human nature.]

It thus makes sense that Hesse's opposition to the Wilhelmine school system would be reflected in his early fiction. Völpel writes about the protagonist in *Unterm Rad* that "so lernt Hans bereits in der Schule den Kampf ums Dasein kennen. Die Schule tritt ihm als autonome Macht entgegen, die ihn völlig übergeht, ihn in seiner Person verunsichert und schließlich in Hilfslosigkeit zurückläßt, so daß er dieser Art von Autorität nicht zu widerstehen vermag" "thus Hans already gets to know the fight for his being. The school opposes him as an autonomous power that completely passes over him, unsettles him in his person, and finally leaves him alone in helplessness, so that he is unable to resist this type of authority" (205). When we consider Hesse's position regarding the development of the individual, it makes sense that Hesse would set him in such an authoritative school system, which not only reflects the oppression Hesse felt as a pupil, but would have also been immediately understandable to any reader who had experienced growing up within a similar school environment. For Hesse, both in his biography and his literary work, such repression calls for a specific type of nonviolent rebellion: physical escape from the repressive environment.

### **Rebellion and the Aesthetics of Motion**

Why, then, does a discussion of both youth and movement become important to a more complete understanding of Hesse's early works? For literary Modernism, of

which one could argue that Hesse is a part, both youth and movement represent the future, rebirth. It then makes sense that Hesse would successfully attempt to combine the two in his work. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the link between youth and motion appears to be the specific motion of *wandern* as practiced by Hesse's figures and the first *Wandervogel* groups. Other authors contemporary to Hesse have combined these two motifs, yet Hesse seems to be the only one who concentrates on the act of walking as a remedy to the other ills of modernity. In Musil's *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (*The Confusions of Young Torless*, 1906), for example, the protagonist partakes in rebellion from school life by stealing away with his friends to visit a prostitute in town. Here, the flight from school constitutes a rebellion against oppressive rules, but Musil does not thematize the movement towards the town on its own. In Hesse, though, wandering serves as a tool for character development in and of itself. The geography, for example, that Hans observes during his explorations allows him to become aware of social, political, and religious differences in the village. Through their experiences, Hesse's figures sometimes gain a sense of how to properly deal with these differences. Walking is rebellious for Hesse, not because it is forbidden by authority, but because it serves as an alternative to the established school system. It moves the protagonist both literally and figuratively away from the static authority of school. One could even go as far as to say that it opens up a Humboldtian path. If walking leads the protagonist away from the repressive institution of school in both literal and



figurative senses, then we could also assume that the protagonists' walking also leads the reader away from such institutions mentally and physically. Writing and reading about youth might have analogous outcomes to writing and reading about walking.

Though Hesse constantly looks to his own youth for material for his fictional works, he might have been unconsciously participating in a broader cultural tendency to value youth as a symbol for a healthy and prosperous Germany. It must, of course, be un- or subconsciously that Hesse does this, for he has only minor political allegiances; his citizenship switches from German to Swiss for practical purposes. Birgit Dahlke summarizes this cultural tendency of which I speak in the introduction to her book, *Jünglinge der Moderne*. A reevaluation of youth, she asserts, stems from the ascent of Kaiser Wilhelm II to the throne at age 29.<sup>6</sup> Thus if the public begins to see the Kaiser as in the prime of his life instead of inexperienced because of youth, this reevaluation results in Dahlke's idea that "[d]ie Betonung der Jugendlichkeit des Kaisers als symbolischem Garanten der Verjüngung des deutschen Volkes lässt vermuten, dass die Lebensphase der Jugend im Zuge der Modernisierung eine Aufwertung gegenüber dem Alter erfahren hat" 'the emphasis on the youthfulness of the Kaiser as a symbolic guarantor for the rejuvenescence of the German people lets one assume that youth as a period of life as opposed to

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<sup>6</sup>The Kaiser's own propaganda even seeks to highlight his youth. He declares in a speech that, "[w]ir leben in einem Übergangszustand. Deutschland wächst allmählich aus den Kinderschuhen heraus, um in das Jünglingsalter einzutreten" 'We live in a state of transition. Germany is growing out of her children's shoes in order to step into her adolescence gradually' (57).

maturity, experienced an appreciation over the course of modernization' (7).

Though imperial propaganda may have brought youth in part into vogue, the wandering which members of the youth movement in particular practiced was entirely contrary to the ideal of either an educated adult using his education to increase social and financial capital or youth devoting the most possible time to a traditional education. By this point in history, time spent outside (particularly, alone, in the case of Hesse) is a luxury because one is not working to amass financial or social capital. Once the technology of modernity had eliminated the necessity of humans spending time in nature (i.e. gathering wood, water), time spent outside gradually became a luxurious experience. Thus from the point of view of authority figures, *wandern* was more likely to be understood as a waste of time while from the point of view of the *Wandervogel* and idealists like Hesse, it could be understood as an integral part of life and development of the self.

Hesse takes wandering for pleasure one step further, and uses it to represent growth in the form of character development that happens as a result. Marquardt confirms this (citing Hesse's short story "Ein Flußreise im Herbst") when she notes why Hesse places youth at the center of his writing:

Auch hier ist die Verbindung zur Wandervogelbewegung zu erkennen, wobei "Wandern" bei Hesse ein Synonym von "Entwicklung" ist: "Man war ein Flößer, man war ein Wanderer, ein Nomade, schwamm an Städten und Menschen vorbei, still, nirgends hingehörig und fühlte im

Herzen die Weite der Welt und ein sonderbares Heimweh  
brennen.” (301)

[Here one can also recognize the connection to the *Wandervogel* movement, whereby “wandering” is a synonym with “Development” in the eyes of Hesse: “One was a rafter, one was wanderer, a nomad, swam past cities and people, belonging nowhere. One felt in one’s heart the vastness of the world and the burning of a peculiar homesickness.”]

I would argue that Hesse’s *Knulp* (along with *Narziß und Goldmund*) is a particularly good example of how character (and reader) development happens because of wandering. *Knulp* is a vagabond, yet friends with Gerber, a skilled handworker. For the protagonist, life is based entirely on the idea of movement by foot, so much so that *Knulp* is forced to live on the fringes of society in order to lead the life he values. In this work, Hesse couples *Knulp*’s life so directly with wandering that *Knulp* seems to lose vitality when he is not taking part in this, his favorite activity.

In the first section of *Knulp* entitled “Vorfrühling,” Hesse contrasts *Knulp* with Gerber. Though they were schoolmates, Gerber has made a career, home, and family for himself and takes the opportunity to remind *Knulp* that he could have long ago had what Gerber has. Gerber, though, is secretly jealous of *Knulp*’s freedom. Instead of pursuing a trade, *Knulp* has been wandering around the

countryside, living off the kindness of strangers. Knulp does not come off as a parasite in the novella, but rather as one who lives in a healthy symbiosis with his surroundings. He visits the blacksmith to borrow a hot iron for his shirt and Gerber provides lodging and meals for Knulp as he recovers from his hospital stay, to name two examples. Sikander Singh confirms in his commentary that Knulp's outsider position is relevant in the narrative tradition within which Hesse works:

Die einseitige Idealisierung einer eskapistischen und naturnahen Existenz steht motiv- wie gattungsgeschichtlich in der Tradition des Landstreicher- und Vagabundenromans. Sie ist zugleich im Kontext der individualistisch-antibürgerlichen Weltanschauungen in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts zu lesen, die ihren literarischen Ausdruck in dem . . . Dualismus zwischen dem sinnlich-schöpferischen Lebensprinzip des Künstlers und den normativen Ansprüchen einer moralisch rigiden bürgerlichen Gesellschaftsordnung finden. In der Figur eines Vagabunden chiffrieren die Erzählungen um Knulp die für den Künstler charakteristischen Spannungen zwischen der kreativen Erlebniswelt des Subjekts und den lebenspraktischen Ansprüchen der Gesellschaft, die eine existentielle Erfahrung von Alterität bedingen. (110)

[The one-sided idealization of an escapist and nature-friendly existence is part of the tradition of the vagabond or tramp novel, with

regard to genre and theme. It is also found in the context of individualist and anti-bourgeois world views in the first decades of the twentieth century. Their expression is in the dualism between the sensual-creative principle of the life of the artist and the normative demands of a morally rigid bourgeois social order. The vagabond figure allows the stories about Knulp to encode characteristic tensions between the creative world of the subject's experience and the practical demands of social life, which necessitate an existential experience of alterity.]

In *Knulp*, society allows only the vagabond to express his creativity through freedom of movement—his wanderings provide inspiration (to which the reader is made privy in Knulp's "Wanderbüchlein" 'little wandering book' and spiritual nourishment (evident at the end of the book, as God speaks with Knulp).

In the end, Knulp has developed into a figure whose life is rich with experiences and travels. Though he dies a painful death, God speaks to him in the end, which we could say gives him a certain amount of comfort. On the other hand, Hesse leaves the reader questioning what happened to Gerber after his life as an upstanding citizen, traditionally and socially defined. Knulp undertakes a life that is spent in what figures like Gerber would consider either luxury or a wasting of time; luxury in that Knulp could be working at a profession earning financial and social capital (and perhaps even a family), a waste of time because he is not working at all

in the traditional sense. Knulp, like other wanderers Hesse creates, still stands for freedom, though, and the individuality that it allows. To a reader, who already calls into question the validity of established customs, witnessing a figure such as Knulp develop is not only pleasurable in and of itself, but to see it happen by means of a method which is considered by many to be a luxury adds to the effect. Walking thus becomes a cipher for pleasure because of the audience's identification with Knulp as an alternative to what they have understood to be the norm.

As mentioned earlier, one could consider the luxury of walking to be a remedy for the ills of modern life. Scientists like Stephen Kellert in his book *The Biophilia Hypothesis* have recently examined the negative aspects of the indoor confinement which modern conveniences and inventions provide. Some have even identified developmental deficiencies in children, which are a result of less and less time spent outdoors exploring nature. The theory of biophilia suggests that human beings have a genetically derived need to be among and to interact with other biological systems such as plants and animals. For those who spend almost no time outside, psychological and developmental problems can take hold. Perhaps Hesse and other advocates for increased nature awareness were in their own time keenly aware of a nature deficit.

Finally, we must acknowledge that wandering has a recognizable effect on Hesse's writing at the sentence and paragraph level. Hesse relates the relaxed wandering his characters experience through equally meandering and leisurely

sentences. Consider this paragraph from *Knulp*:

Knulp setzte seinen Gang durch die Stadt fort, er stand eine Weile plaudernd am Werkstattfenster eines Drechslers und sah dem geschwinden Spiel der lockigen Holzspäne zu, er begrüßete unterwegs auch den Polizeidiener, der ihm gewogen war und ihn aus seiner Birkendose schnupfen ließ. Überall erfuhr er Großes und Kleines aus dem Leben der Familien und Gewerbe. (36)

[Knulp continued on his way through the town. He stood for a while chatting at the window of a turner's shop and watched the swift play of the curly wood shavings. Farther on he stopped to say hello to the constable, who was devoted to him and held out his birchwood snuffbox. Wherever he went, old friends related the lesser and greater incidents of family and workshop . . . (29–30)]

Not only does *Knulp* have the time to participate in these leisurely conversations and “experience great and small things from the life of the families and businesses,” but also Hesse has the time to describe them in a manner which evokes a relaxed stroll through the village. It is conceivable that through his manner of writing, Hesse appeals to a public in need of leisure time. First, the eye of the narration is never fixed on one object, but focuses on different objects as the narrator wanders on his path. This mimics how anyone might walk through the woods while striving for no goal in particular or how one might go about enjoying a day outside. Second,

Hesse's long sentences and complex choice of words tend to give the reader a feeling of meandering or to reinforce a mood of relaxation. This relaxation and leisure becomes increasingly important as officially-sanctioned time and attention devoted to it wane or disappear. Solnit writes, none too optimistically, that

[i]f there is a history of walking, then it too has come to a place where the road falls off, . . . where leisure is shrinking and being crushed under the anxiety to produce, where bodies are not in the world but only indoors in cars and buildings, and an apotheosis of speed makes those bodies seem anachronistic or feeble. In this context, walking is a subversive detour, the scenic route through a half-abandoned landscape of ideas and experiences. (12)

Solnit echos here for the twentieth-century inquirer into our topic what Hesse's writing and the German youth movement's actions were telling their own respective audiences; namely that humans must guard against becoming machines or at least operating themselves like they would operate machines. In the context of modern transit and other innovations, moving at the speed of one's own legs becomes outdated. Those who seek to preserve walking change it into a subversive and rebellious activity. What technophile would be interested in walking if he could travel by car or airplane? For Knulp and Hesse's other characters, their movements are a grand tour through the "half-abandoned landscape of ideas and experiences" of society and nature. Society, for them, has lost touch with the benefits of being a



vagrant much as it has lost touch with the ability to enjoy the outdoors while simultaneously extracting resources from it. Hesse thus encourages his reader to participate in an act which is itself both pleasurable, healthy, and revolutionary.

If we accept Georg Simmel's definition of Modernism as that art which is concerned with "the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life", the elements with which this chapter deals, movement and youth, then, as dual members of a constellation of elements in three of Hesse's early novels help underscore Hesse's connection with literary Modernism, prove his concern for and hope of imparting wisdom to his audience, and illustrate the lessons one can learn from observing the landscape of nature and society as one moves through them (52). Movement and youth thus constitute a subtle, yet powerful critique of bourgeois society and the German educational system at the turn of the century. Hesse's own style of literary Modernism, as we have seen in this chapter, looks to the past for solutions as it seeks to diagnose and treat the symptoms of the present and future.

### **Hesse's Youth and the *Seelenbiographie***

Hesse's life, particularly his childhood, serves as an enduring source of material for his writing. His fascination with writing about youth stems both from an obsession about his own youth, but this topic is also one embraced by *Jugendstil*, and

subsequently, Modernism.

Though born in the idyllic mountain village of Calw, his childhood was especially troublesome and frustrating, both for Hesse and his parents. Matthias Hilbert focuses on this troubled youth and adolescence in his book *Hermann Hesse und sein Elternhaus*. In particular, a clash between Hesse's even then incorrigible individuality and his pietistically religious parents serves as the most important motif. Hilbert writes that

In der Tat stand die pietistische Frömmigkeit der Eltern in einem Gegensatz zu einem Verständnis von Christlichkeit, welche lediglich routiniert in den allgemein üblichen kirchlichen Traditionen und Konventionen ablief. Für Hesses Eltern . . . bedeutete ihr christlicher Glaube immer auch ein existentiell gelebter Glaube in der Nachfolge Christi. (69)

[In effect the pietistic religiosity of the parents stood in opposition to an understanding of how Christ would have acted, which could have merely elapsed into general common ecclesiastical traditions and conventions. For Hesse's parents, their Christian belief also meant an existentially-lived belief in the succession of Christ.]

The parents' religion serves, in young Hesse's mind, though, as a way of exercising power over him. Furthermore, Hesse recognized at an early age the split personality of this *Scheinheiligkeit*. Hilbert points this out:

Ausgesprochen kritisch steht der junge Hesse allerdings einem bestimmten Typ, einer bestimmten Form von Glaubenspraxis gegenüber, die sozusagen gespalten ist in eine Sphäre persönlich-privater Frömmigkeit einerseits und ein unfrommes, profitorientiertes Geschäftsgebaren andererseits. (69)

[The young Hesse stands critical of a specific type, a specific form of religious praxis, which is, so to say, in a sphere of personal and private piety on the one hand and a non-pious, profit-oriented business integrity on the other.]

The restrictiveness of the parental household eventually changes into the restrictive nature of society when Hesse redirects his gaze from his own family to society at large. The pressure to fit in to socially acceptable paradigms such as matrimony and to be an exemplar of cleanliness and possibly boredom come to the fore. Yet, the author's look back to his his parental household is one in which he attempts to find refuge from the stresses of adult life. Once again, Hilbert: "Hesse hat sich zeitlebens das Elternhaus und die eigene Kindheit als eine Art Refugium oder innerer Zufluchtsort zu bewahren versucht" 'Hesse always tried to preserve his parents' home and his own childhood as a kind of refuge or inner place of shelter' (80).

The duality with which Hesse looks back to his childhood always reflects the other dualities in his work: as the entirety of the memory of one's youth is impossible to congeal into one single trajectory; so is the current situation of one's

life as one sees it. Youth, though, lays claim to many associations almost universally accepted. Almost anyone can look back to his or her youth as one that was pleasurable and even careless: how could one possibly avoid such nostalgia if one considers that children are free in that they are both taken care of and controlled by their parents until reaching adulthood. The tough decisions in life present no emotional struggle for children.

The distinction I am trying to make is especially evident in *Das Glasperlenspiel*. Those children at Knecht's Latin school who are designated "electi" and destined for the Order in Castalia completely avoid the traditional professions in exchange for relative poverty and austere living conditions. (On the other hand, they are subsidized by the state to study whatever they want for the rest of their lives!) The music teacher explains it best when refuting that the outside, "free professions" are not really free except for the fact that the subject is free to choose one at will. This, however, is the only choice: once the decision has been made, the student is subject to rigorous courses of study and faces competition with his or her peers to continually amass wealth—thus these free professions are barely free at all.

Most importantly, youth represents for Hesse the potentiality of his hopes and dreams that he must constantly strive to keep alive as he grows into adulthood. Paradoxically, though, when one reaches adulthood, one has fewer (if any) means for making these childhood dreams happen. It is this resistance to the mores of adulthood that characterizes Hesse's writing, even as it changes along the course of

his career. *Unterm Rad*, for example, depicts the freedom and quite literal dreaming in which Hans takes part. By the era of *Steppenwolf*, though, much of this artistic and creative freedom has been lost once Haller (a depiction of Hesse as a 50-year-old) has been subject to the professional life and pressures of existence there (as a professor for Haller, as an author for Hesse). If Hesse loses his freedom during the course of *Unterm Rad*, he regains it in full in *Steppenwolf*: indeed Hans dies at his own hand in the former, but in Harry, in the latter, because of his actions, is sentenced instead to eternal life—and to the continuation of his quest for his childhood dreams.

## Chapter 3

### *Der Steppenwolf*: Hesse's Ambiguously Modern

#### Autobiography

##### Introduction

Arguably Hesse's most famous and influential novel, *Der Steppenwolf* bears witness to the author's unique sense of how one might go about trying to situate oneself in contemporary life, that is, a life in which one is pulled back and forth between the poles of multiple continua. In other words, the subject, according to David Horrocks, who specifically refers to the novel's protagonist, Harry Haller, "indulg[es] in a ludicrously primitive form of binary thinking" (141). In the introduction to *Modernity and the Text*, Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick state that finding the link between these continua and the literature that reflects them is necessary for the study of literary Modernism. They write that "[i]f the literature of Modernism is in some fundamental way linked to processes of modernization (social, political, psychological, economic, technological, etc.), then it becomes important to inquire into the precise nature of that link" (5). *Der Steppenwolf* is one of the best

examples of Hesse's attempts both to come to terms with his place on these individual continua and to assert his realization that perfect balance is impossible, yet something for which the individual (either Hesse the author, or Haller, the author's self-representation) should always strive. I argue here that *Der Steppenwolf*, though a thinly-veiled account of Hesse's own coming to terms with life in the early twentieth century, still presents a new understanding of how the subject might learn to live with the tension between looking back to preindustrial times and looking forward towards the future's unknown territory. While many Modernist authors find their own expressions of how to deal with modern life in aesthetics that are radically different from those made use of in the past (such as decadence, futuristic language, nonlinear plots, manifestos, skewed perspectives, and surrealism), Hesse finds his mode of expression in one that is distinctly old-fashioned when compared to his contemporaries, one in which elaborate and experiential character development play a large role, yet one that is at the same time oddly at ease with modern technologies and developments.<sup>1</sup> Yet despite its aura of tradition, Peter Hutchinson points out that

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<sup>1</sup>We can consider psychology one new technology. Peter Hutchinson, for example, writes in his article about *Der Steppenwolf* that Hesse "takes the findings and theories of both Freud and Jung utterly seriously, seeing them not only as a means to understand, but also as cure and as inspiration. His post-war work represents the first major attempt to explore in literature the value of psychoanalysis—and especially Jung's 'analytical psychology'—for the understanding of individuals, human relationships, archetypes, and the unconscious. And *Der Steppenwolf* is the best example" (151–52).

[f]or its age this [novel] was a deliberately scandalising work with its views on free love and sexual relations across generations. It was also something of an elitist novel, one which encouraged intellectuals above all to come to recognise their unconscious and to explore, analyse, and become stronger through an understanding of the dark side of their psyche. (153)

What sets *Der Steppenwolf* apart, though, is that it draws unmistakably on the author's own personal encounters with the (seemingly) binary systems I mention above. Haller's struggles to accept radio music yet hold on to Mozart, to learn to drink, dance, and make love yet also to continue to remain home ensconced in his scholar's den, to embrace imagination yet keep one foot firmly planted in reality are, in fact, Hesse's own struggles. These struggles, when distilled down to the most essential conclusion, reveal that the Harry Haller at the beginning of the book is in danger of reaching complete loneliness. The Immortals, as he calls the great scholars, authors, and musicians cannot continue to be Haller's only source of interaction with the world. The story clearly reveals, I argue, that Haller's understanding of the world merely through the eyes of the Immortals is unsustainable. The world around Haller has modernized without him having realized it. Haller's wife and children have left him, radio and American dance music have become the norm, and the streets are dark and rainy. In order to establish a connection to the outside world, Haller must at least begin to attempt to



understand what has become for him an entirely foreign world.

Peter Nicholls, in his book *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, writes that “[t]he failure of metaphysical values destroys the hope that a coincidence between self and world might be achieved through sociality and a shared language” (24). The alternative to this is what he calls an “intense solitariness” which “is both ambivalent and dangerous . . .” (24). Harry Haller is immersed (perhaps even drowning) in this intense solitariness at the beginning of the novel. The symbol of the Steppenwolf conveys both Haller’s inability to communicate with others as well as his physical isolation from them. Haller’s depiction as an isolated wolf also carries with it undertones of a negativity that is associated with the wolf as a symbol: a savage, violent, bloodthirsty animal that cannot be domesticated without great effort.<sup>2</sup> David Artiss points out that Hesse’s use of animal imagery is very common for the twentieth century, but that Hesse, unlike other authors of his time, refuses “to accept their cynicism and nihilism.”<sup>3</sup>

Haller has had, though, a history of living successfully. We know that he has enjoyed a previous period of social integration and even success as a professor and

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<sup>2</sup>One could conversely understand Haller’s painful isolation in a positive light, as Horrocks explains: “Indeed it is similar to the kind of isolation and independence that Hesse had urged upon German youth in the aftermath of the First World War when in 1919, donning Nietzsche’s mantle, he published his pamphlet *Zarathustras Wiederkehr*” (138).

<sup>3</sup>Artiss writes that “[t]he wolf is not in fact for him the degrading absurdity it appears to be, like the ape in Huxley’s *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*. It is the initial bestial stage, a very necessary part of Harry Haller’s humanization from bestiality to humanity, a conscious, studied echo of the ancient Babylonian allegory of *Gilgamesh*” (88).

socialite, but has somehow incurred an acute isolation which is due both to the experience of modern life and to his academic concern with it. It is unclear from the text what exactly caused Haller's virtual removal, but to put it simply we could say that the times have changed without him realizing it. Ultimately, Haller's interactions with the other characters in the novel will return him to a harmonious position in society. These interactions enable him to come into a fuller self-understanding, that is, one in which he sees himself as a person who does not require complete solitude, but rather one which can live a more balanced life: a cloistered academic who can enjoy an evening of American dance music.<sup>4</sup> Haller's anachronistic experience and its rectification is only one of the many instances of reconciled and synthesized extremes which the reader encounters. I intend to explore others in the course of this chapter. The reconciliation of seemingly polar opposites such as the socialite and hermit are one reason I assert that *Der Steppenwolf* is a good example of Hesse's status as an ambivalent modernist.

Another reason is that instead of embracing forms of purely aesthetic art as many of his fellow modernists do, Hesse uses a much more pragmatic aesthetic: he imbues his writing with purpose on two levels: that as therapy for himself<sup>5</sup> and therapy for his reader, who is presumably in an anachronistic or other state of imbalance. Swales

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<sup>4</sup>Haller's dilemma is similar to that of the protagonist of André Gide's *The Immoralist*.

<sup>5</sup>Stelzig writes that "[a]utobiography as auto-therapy, as a way of spelling out and resolving and identity crisis, is very much part of Hesse's radical confessional poetics of the mid-1920s" (197).

writes that “what distinguishes Hesse from the cultural pessimists of his time is that the novel presents not so much a lamentation of the cultural losses necessitated by this process, but endeavours to diagnose the ills of the present and struggles to find a means of validating the new experiences as a redemptive form of virtual living” (33). The means of validating Haller’s new experiences are psychological in nature insofar as Hesse recognizes the endangered state of the individual in a world that increasingly favors the masses over the single thinking person.

Not only is *Der Steppenwolf* an account of the protagonist’s recovery from isolation and his process of accepting the “new” world, but it is also a form of therapy for the reader’s own affliction caused by modern life through identification with our protagonist. Hesse himself interprets the novel as one of “crisis and healing.” He writes that “Es wäre mir lieb, wenn viele . . . merken würden, daß die Geschichte des Steppenwolfs zwar eine Krankheit und Krisis darstellt, aber nicht eine, die zum Tode führt, nicht einen Untergang, sondern im Gegenteil: eine Heilung” ‘I would find it appropriate if many people would . . . recognize . . . that the story of the Steppenwolf depicts a sickness and a crisis, but not one that leads to death or downfall, but quite the opposite: to healing’ (Michels *Materialien* 160). The symbolism in *Steppenwolf* is almost too clear, meaning that it does not require deep literary analysis to be understood. This clarity not only makes Hesse’s psychological encouragement easier for the reader to grasp, but also emphasizes that, for Hesse, purely aesthetic fiction is not necessarily better fiction. Instead he

aims to write fiction which aids the individual in his or her process of growth. Hutchinson points out that the novel has an “admonitory tone . . . which seeks to change viewpoints, particularly with regard to conventional thinking on society. Above all, they have relevance to the position of the artist and the modern reader” (158). He notes four points that support the notion of Hesse as an author-therapist. First, Hesse encourages the reader to abandon the “bourgeois” idea of isolating and protecting the self. Second, learning to accept the absurdity of a situation and developing the ability to laugh about it helps one to transcend one’s position (Hesse borrows this from Nietzsche). That Haller would consist of only two halves (wolf and human) is absurd: human beings are much more multifaceted. Finally, he asserts, “in order to gain immortality one must constantly be prepared to sacrifice oneself by stripping off layers of one’s personality (*Hüllenabstreifen*)” (158).

The most general example of Haller’s development as a character takes the form of a gradual awakening of Haller’s self consciousness. His observation and near-reverence of the araucaria plant in the hallway provides a good frame of reference for this awakening. It is the first hint to the reader that an eventual appreciation for the pleasure that can be derived from the mundane and popular lies in his future. Another, more uncanny clue about his awakening comes in the form of

the “*Tractat vom Steppenwolf*”<sup>6</sup> which is personalized to fit his exact situation.<sup>7</sup>

The booklet first informs Haller that he wants to be loved as a whole person even though he remains divided into man and wolf. The tract says that these two divisions of his personality are fighting for control of him and that he cannot choose one or the other. Finally, it suggests that the bourgeois life he has grown to hate might eventually provide a solution to his ineptitude at navigating between the personalities of man and wolf. I assert in this chapter that an examination of life for solutions to one’s problems as a literary device is also a method that Hesse continually developed in his private life. We have already encountered examples of this with the schoolboy motif of *Unterm Rad*, for example.

In the first half of *Der Steppenwolf*, Haller is seemingly at odds with all parts of his soul: he leaves a professor’s house after making judgmental comments about the wife’s portrait of Goethe and runs through the streets wildly: “Hin und her lief ich durch die Straßen, vom Elend gelitten” ‘I paced the streets in all directions, driven on by wretchedness’ (93; 83). It is almost as if the moment of Haller’s forcing himself to tolerate the professor’s wife’s pedestrian appreciation of Goethe has caused Haller’s wolf side (a wild animal caught in the confines of society) to return

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<sup>6</sup>I choose to translate *Tractat* into English as ‘tract’ rather than ‘treatise.’ Hutchinson points out that “the more Latin-sounding ‘Tractat’ gives the impression of dignity”. Because the document “advocat[es] new forms of lifestyle, new ways in which many others, not simply the hero, can achieve knowledge and understanding,” according to Hutchinson, ‘tract’ proves a better translation. (157)

<sup>7</sup>Stelzig notes that the Treatise serves as one of a set of three mirrors through which the protagonist sees himself (41). I will discuss Stelzig’s thoughts on mirrors later in this chapter.

in full force, making him walk the streets alone and ashamed of how he acted. Goethe, after all, is one of Haller's many "Unsterblichen" 'immortals' who, in the words of Horrocks, "have escaped the gravitational pull of the 'bourgeois' world by making a daring leap into the icy realms of space" (137).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, while at the professor's house, he confesses that he is no longer interested in intellectual discussions and that their country would be better off politically if left to those who are capable of thinking—*die Denkfähigen*. This is probably the clearest moment of realization that Haller experiences regarding his transformation. He writes that

das war mir sofort klar, diese unerquickliche Abendstunde hatte für mich viel mehr Bedeutung als für den idignierten Professor; für ihn war sie eine Enttäuschung und ein kleines Ärgernis, für mich aber war sie ein letztes Mißlingen und Davonlaufen, war mein Abschied von der bürgerlichen, der moralischen, der gelehrten Welt, war ein vollkommener Sieg des Steppenwolfes. (92–93)

[it was at once clear to me that this disagreeable evening had much more significance for me than for the indignant professor. For him, it was a disillusionment and a petty outrage. For me, it was a final failure and flight. It was my leave-taking from the respectable, moral

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<sup>8</sup>Just because Goethe and Mozart are immortal does not necessarily imply that they are unchanging, at least from Haller's point of view. He at one point confronts Goethe in a dream and finds the man dancing (Cf. Nietzsche). This, in my opinion, is an indicator that Haller's rigid notions of his Immortals are beginning to buckle under the weight of his confrontation with and acceptance of the present world.

and learned world, and a complete triumph for the Steppenwolf. (92)]

This “triumph” is only a temporary one for the Steppenwolf, though. Haller will eventually, with the help of some other characters that are fragments of his personality, dismantle the aspects of the lone wolf which force him into isolation.

From the beginning, the reader understands Haller as an outsider (Hesse borrows this English word), but one who takes an active interest in observing his surroundings—one who longs to know the world from which he is separated. He is born of these surroundings (his mother was a bourgeois homemaker), but has become estranged from them because of “periods of extreme despair,”<sup>9</sup> having suffered the trauma of his wife’s mental illness, or a sense of being caught between two epochs, as the editor writes in the last paragraph.

Haller’s capacity for appreciating and observing the artifacts of the narrator’s building comes from an experience similar to *wandern*. Hesse uses the hallway setting (the area of the building most prone to bourgeois uniformity and cleanliness) to parallel the nature settings he describes in earlier novels. The hallway with its potted plants (which have been brought inside) represents what modern technology has done to the individual—it has put him on display and has forced him into an environment of uniformity and extreme cleanliness. Haller embodies the complete opposite sentiment of the wandering bourgeois subject transplanted into nature that

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<sup>9</sup>Ziolkowski asserts this in his study of Hesse’s novels, writing that “Hesse is clearly referring to his years of crisis and his struggle, in the period from *Demian* to *Siddhartha*, to construct out of the chaos of those times a new ideal in which he could believe—the ideal that he reached at the end of his Indian novel” (178).

Hesse describes in his earlier novels. Niefanger asserts that “der *Steppenwolf* sollte als Alternative zur bürgerlichen Biografie gelesen werden, die in der Weimarer Republik zum überaus erfolgreichen Literaturgenre aufgestiegen war. Um der Alternative Gehör zu verschaffen, war eine möglichst deutliche Engführung von Held und Autor notwendig” ‘*Der Steppenwolf* should be read as an alternative to the bourgeois biography, which had climbed to success as a genre of literature in the Weimar Republic. In order to develop an ear for this alternative, the closest possible connection between hero and author was necessary’ (89). Haller is, instead of a civilized burgher who can fully appreciate the cleanliness and orderliness of the hallway, a wild animal, stripped of all but natural instinct and action which has been transplanted into city life and must learn how to live there from his amalgamated experiences. As he explores the forest-cum-hallway, he sniffs the air and the plants placed there as a dog or wolf would. According to the narrator’s observations, Haller seems to conduct his life much as an “uncultured” man would—he smokes and drinks, makes a nest that consists of discarded cigarette butts, wine bottles, and books left open. Haller sees the world in which he is situated through the eyes of a foreigner (the narrator claims that he acts like a tourist) and prefers that the narrator’s aunt not report his presence for the customary police *Anmeldung*.<sup>10</sup>

Following the “Vorwort,” the reader takes in Haller’s own observations which are, according to the epigraph, “[n]ur für Verrückte” ‘for madmen only’ (31; 25), or

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<sup>10</sup>In Germany, citizens are required to register (*anmelden*) with the police when changing residences.



as Ziolkowski asserts, for those who “are ‘mad’ because they have learned to affirm the chaos of their nature without questioning the validity of the ideal” (180). In either case, that epigraph foreshadows the metaphysical journey the reader will take alongside Haller, in which both must embrace what from the outset can be understood as insanity, but what the reader learns along the way is really more of a controlled craziness or mental expansion.<sup>11</sup> The main section of narration also begins with Haller performing physical exercises (“Atemübungen” and going on an hour-long stroll in which he looks at the clouds) but that particular day neglecting to do his mental exercises (“Gedankenübung aber heut aus Bequemlichkeit weggelassen,” 31). By the end of the book, he will still practice both of these exercises, but in forms that will have been completely transformed. Haller’s *Atemübungen* will have taken the form of dance lessons with Hermine and the *Gedankenübungen* will become a form of transcendental meditation in which he reconciles polar opposites.

Haller’s transition is one in which he moves from vacillation between dangerous extremes on the one hand towards a state of relative unity of the self, stasis, harmony, and calm on the other. At the beginning of the book, Haller alternates between examining and building up in his mind the virtues of bourgeois life (as the reader witnesses in the scene in which Haller observes the araucaria) and

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<sup>11</sup>Drug culture of the late sixties and early seventies under the leadership of Timothy Leary would later associate Hesse with mind-expanding drugs, even going as far as to cite his work as good reading material to accompany “trips.” I will discuss this in further depth in chapter five.

the relative state of chaos and solitariness into which rational thought has driven him. Haller narrates that

[i]ch habe auch den Kontrast gern, in dem mein Leben, mein einsames, liebloses und gehetztes, durch und durch unordentliches Leben, zu diesem Familien- und Bürgermilieu steht. Ich habe das gern, auf der Treppe diesen Geruch von Stille, Ordnung, Sauberkeit, Anstand und Zähmheit zu atmen, der trotz meines Bürgerhasses immer etwas Rührendes für mich hat, und habe es gern, dann über die Schwelle meines Zimmers zu treten, wo das alles aufhört, wo zwischen den Bücherhaufen die Zigarrenreste liegen und die Weinflaschen stehen, wo alles unordentlich, unheimisch und verwahrlost ist und wo alles, Bücher, Manuskripte, Gedanken, gezeichnet und durchtränkt ist von der Not der Einsamen, von der Problematik des Menschseins, von der Sehnsucht nach einer neuen Sinngebung für das sinnlos gewordene Menschenleben. (34)

[I like the contrast between my lonely, loveless, hunted, and thoroughly disorderly existence and this middle-class family life. I like to breathe in on the stairs this odor of quiet and order, of cleanliness and respectable domesticity. There is something in it that touches me in spite of my hatred for all it stands for. I like to step across the threshold of my room where all this suddenly stops; where, instead,

cigar ash and wine bottles lie among the heaped-up books and there is nothing but disorder and neglect; and where everything—books, manuscript, thoughts—is marked and saturated with the plight of lonely men, with the problem of existence and with the yearning after a new orientation for an age that has lost its bearings. (28)]

In this period of Haller's life before his mental transformation, he takes an uncanny pleasure in the juxtaposition of chaos and order, in the unhealthy vacillations of his identity. Though they might perhaps not be strictly mentally unhealthy, they have caused him a great deal of emotional isolation. By constantly emphasizing the difference(s) between himself and the rest of the world, he has barred himself from genuine emotional or even social connections with other humans; hence the symbolism of the lone wolf.

It is my aim in this chapter to explore the major ways Hesse uses character development in *Der Steppenwolf* to accomplish Haller's transition from wolf to human, from hermit to balanced burgher, from a being split into two halves to one comfortable with and conscious of being split into an infinite number of pieces. I understand Hesse as doing this in two major ways: by incorporating autobiographical details in which he shares his own similar transition as well as presenting an ambivalent reliance on the techniques and methods typical of literary Modernism.

## *Der Steppenwolf* as Symbolic Biography or “Fiction of the Self”

A cursory review of the literature about Hesse’s life indicates that, like most of his other works, *Der Steppenwolf* is a remarkably transparent depiction of Hesse’s own life, and undoubtedly a cornerstone of his *Seelenbiographie*.<sup>12</sup> In short, Haller’s internal conflicts are Hesse’s. Eugene Stelzig points out that Hesse’s fiction in general, and *Der Steppenwolf* in particular, is confessional fiction: an almost religious act in which the writer discloses his or her life out in full so that the reader may make of it what he or she chooses. Stelzig reminds the reader as well that Hesse’s form of confessional fiction plays a unique part in Hesse’s personal life. First, writing down the past provides a form of therapy. Second, the insights acquired during the transcription of this past are included at the moment of writing and develop within the author’s psyche during and after the writing process (Stelzig 15–16). Thus Hesse is not merely using his past experiences as a field for harvesting topics about which to write. Instead, he possesses a deep need to process this personal history through the act of writing, which is essential for his own survival. This need is evident from Hesse’s prolificacy, both as an author of fiction and as a correspondent.

Nineteen twenty-seven was an eventful year for Hesse. *Der Steppenwolf* appeared in the S. Fischer Verlag, Hesse celebrated his fiftieth birthday, and

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<sup>12</sup>Ziolkowski writes that “[a]lmost every detail in the characterization of Harry Haller—from his sciatica and eyeglasses and general physical appearance to his reading habits and political views—is drawn from Hesse’s own life and person” (179).

separated from his second wife, Ruth. It is not insignificant that the protagonist in *Der Steppenwolf* selects his fiftieth birthday as an arbitrary date to commit suicide: the book reflects a thorough and deep process of self-reflection which Hesse has undergone. The “life education” which Haller experiences in the novel closely reflects Hesse’s own (Horrocks 134). Hesse’s tendency to draw on events from his own life stems back to his earliest work. However, that tendency changes around the time of *Der Steppenwolf*. Hutchinson writes that

[t]he author’s first novels had relied almost completely on the nineteenth-century tradition—a third-person narrator, authorial omniscience, and a coherent plot—but mental crisis, psychoanalysis, and intensive engagement with the work of Freud and Jung led to a new approach to writing, to the attempt to recreate in art some of the experiences and insights of analysis. (151)

Hesse’s life, and therefore his writing, is now centered around uncertainty and his attempts to remedy it. *Der Steppenwolf* reflects Hesse’s midlife crisis as well as his attempts to put down roots in new cultural areas—those that he had previously seen as off limits to himself.

One of these attempts is an interest in dance. Hesse responds to an advertisement offering a dance course in 1926. Dancing takes on a symbolic meaning for Hesse as he writes in a letter to Alice Leuthold: “Für mich liegt die Bedeutung dieser Tänzerei natürlich vor allem in dem Versuch, mich irgendwo ganz

naiv und kindlich dem Leben und Tun der Allerweltsmenschen anzuschließen. Für einen alten Outsider und Sonderling ist das immerhin von Bedeutung” ‘For me, the meaning of all this dancing lies above all in my attempt childishly and naively to latch on to the life and doings of common people’ (Hesse *Sein Leben in Bildern* 218). Likewise in the novel, Haller undergoes a series of exposures to the “real world” from which his academic and solitary life has removed him. In one of these, his new friend, Hermine, gives him dance lessons and encourages him to bring a gramophone into his home for those lessons.

Hesse’s separation from Ruth happened as he was drafting *Der Steppenwolf* towards the end of 1926 when she presented him with divorce papers. The opinion of the civil court in the canton of Basel from April 26, 1927 reveals Hesse’s uncanny resemblance to Haller’s figure at the beginning of the novel. The decision states that

Der Beklagte . . . habe eine Neigung zum Einsiedlerleben, könne sich nicht nach andern Menschen richten, hasse Gesellschaftlichkeit und Reisen. Der Beklagte habe diese Eigenschaften in seinen Büchern selbst eingehend geschildert . . . er nenne sich in diesen Schriften [*Kurgast* und *Nürnberger Reise*] selbst einen Eremiten und Sonderling, Schlaflosen und Psychopathen. Die Klägerin dagegen sei jung und lebensfroh, liebe geselligen Verkehr und ein herzliches Familienleben. (222)

[The defendant . . . has a tendency to the life of a recluse, cannot

comply with the demands of others, and hates sociability and travel. The defendant has pointed out these qualities in-depth in his books and names himself in these books a hermit and eccentric, insomniac and psychopath. The plaintiff, by contrast is young and happy with life, loves socializing and a hearty family life.]

Thus *Der Steppenwolf* is undeniably about the protagonist's journey of self-reflection, whether Haller desires it or not.<sup>13</sup> Though I have discussed the concept of Hesse's *Seelenbiographie* earlier, it is worthwhile at this point to further explore the concepts of autobiography and confessional fiction.

Eugene Stelzig points out in the first two chapters of his study entitled *Hermann Hesse's Fictions of the Self* that the author never wrote an autobiography in the true sense of the word. More accurately, we can use Stelzig's assertion that Hesse mines his own experiences and life for material about which to write and which to use as a lens for refracting out more universal concepts of self-development. In a sense, this universality is part of why Hesse's writing was so appealing. He writes that "it is a compelling version of a preoccupation very much with us at least since the subjective proclivities of the Romantics,<sup>14</sup> in literature as well as in life: the search for salvation introjected and translated into a search for the self, for one's

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<sup>13</sup>Haller does not want, at first, to accept the Treatise's recommendation of a "renewed self-encounter." Instead, he prefers the easy way out—suicide (Stelzig 208).

<sup>14</sup>I will later demonstrate how Hesse's romantic ties and the search for the self actually work to help us identify some reasons for his successful reception.

‘true’ identity” (33). The process of mining one’s own experiences for artistic material is not always apparent, even to the author himself.<sup>15</sup> This is not to say that Hesse merely selects a portion of his own life history and transforms it into fiction. The act of writing confessional fiction is both reflection of the author on his own life as well as a process of self-discovery. Stelzig writes that because Hesse’s “leading fictional incarnations both recapitulate growth and anticipate future possibilities of growth. They are at once the product and the producers of his self in a process enacted in and through language” (36). *Der Steppenwolf*, which Hesse writes at around the same time he delves into his own subconscious through psychoanalysis, is one of the best examples of Hesse’s own dual writing process both as a reflection and as a vehicle for self-development. The idea of Hesse as a confessional writer, though, leads to a much more interesting concept, as Stelzig points out: “[H]is self-mirroring narratives give us instead the temporarily self-segmenting metamorphoses of a writer whose sense of his identity was constantly changing” (41). That Hesse’s identity as a writer and human being was constantly in flux further complicates if not completely obfuscates our understanding of his work. For life influences writing and writing, in turn, influences life. Still, one can, at least on a larger scale, match major life upheavals with their representations in Hesse’s *Seelenbiographie*.

I have mentioned earlier that the therapeutic aspect of Hesse’s writing makes

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<sup>15</sup>Stelzig reminds the reader that “as he came to realize only after World War I, his popular prose narratives of the decade before the war were based on a critical failure of insight into the sources of his inspiration” (27).



it more easily understood and digested by the layperson as well as the literary scholar. Confessional and self-exploratory fiction offers a direct engagement with the author's own struggle at accepting modern life.<sup>16</sup> Confessional fiction, as opposed to autobiography, rests on a constructed series of events, settings, and characters which form what the reader would otherwise think of as completely invented. Stelzig writes that

Though these legendary self-images may loom larger than life, they are nevertheless considerably less than that complex individual, Hermann Hesse, for they incorporate only parts of a greater whole that remains hidden like the sage who, perceiving all, is unperceived. Hesse's development as a writer can be seen as his attempt to progressively express and clarify different areas of this shadowy entity, which for the lack of a better word we can call the mystery of the self.

(37)

We can understand, indeed, *each* of Hesse's fictional works to be different incarnations of the author's life story, each an attempt to reach the same goal—the creation of a functional yet artistic way of depicting his life as one centered on an

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<sup>16</sup>Stelzig reminds us that “Pascal has noted that readers of autobiography tend to take a judgmental stand outside the work, whereas readers of autobiographical novels are more apt to identify with its heroes, and participate in a “dream-alliance” with them. This gain of the fiction writer brings an added responsibility, as both Buckley and Pascal observe, because the novel demands a more firm and coherent narrative structure: fictional narrative must be able to stand on its own, as opposed to being propped up by an extratextual *vita*” (16).

“individualism that always involves (implicitly or explicitly) a marked degree of self-conscious differentiation from the mentality of the group and a strong measure of contempt for the conformity of the masses and its lowest embodiment, the psychology of the mob” (45). Though if one spends one’s entire waking life devoted to constructing oneself as an individual who is completely independent, the notion that one might need other individuals is troubling. These two poles, rugged individualism and the need for company, seem to form an additional continuum akin to the ones I describe in this chapter’s introduction. As seems to be the case with every source of tension in Hesse’s life, this aspect makes its way into *Der Steppenwolf*. Stelzig comments that the “conflict between Hesse’s poetic self-image as an aging and alienated outsider versus his need for contact with others is fundamental to his life and writings for the better part of the 1920s” (193). Hesse admits to the stress that living the life of an outsider brings him: that he lives without family, without any real community, and confronts the problem of suicide on a daily basis. Furthermore, the pressure he places on himself to be and remain an outsider takes its toll. Stelzig explains that

Hesse bridled against the bourgeois system of expectations and rewards that defines the role of the successful writer in our commercial culture. . . . More acutely than ever, Hesse faced the dilemma of being no longer sure of his vocation, his audience, and his subject matter, or even the worth of literature (his own, of course,

included) in an increasingly commercialized age of irresponsible and ephemeral print. (194–95)

Instead of seeing this “ephemeral print,” as having its own value, Hesse regarded the literature of his age as transitional, one that would act as a bridge between the romantics and a future form of literature that would move beyond the inadequacies of Hesse’s present.<sup>17</sup> “Since the mid-1920s,” Stelzig writes, Hesse “cannot discern in contemporary German literature anything more than an ephemeral and transitional period, and since the original writer cannot now retreat into mere imitation of the ‘fossilized model’ of the greater past[.] . . . [He] champions instead the ‘worth of a transitional literature . . . which becomes problematic and uncertain in its conscientious expression of its own shortcomings and the shortcomings of its time with the greatest possible candor’” (195–96). Hesse’s solution for producing this transitional literature is to write confessional fiction, which is exceedingly capable of expressing its own shortcomings. Indeed, Haller does not reach enlightenment or eternal life at the end of the novel, but he reaches what Jung would call a “door to the eternal.” The reader is left without knowing whether or not Haller actually walks through the door, however. The novel, then, leaves the reader and critic on

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<sup>17</sup>Stelzig writes that “Hesse’s particular solution to the modernists’ dilemma of a fragmented and meaningless world, the accent on autobiography, is crucial, for art as confession will be his narrow bridge from the old to the new: ‘I know that the value of what we people of today write cannot lie in the possibility of a form emerging valid for our time and for a long while to come, a style, a classicism, but rather that we in our distress have no refuge except that of the greatest possible candor’” (204–205).

shaky ground when it comes to discerning the author's relationship to his work. *Der Steppenwolf*, a form of autobiography that Stelzig would insist is Hesse's way of solving an identity crisis, falls within Hesse's idea of transitional literature. By considering it transitional, Hesse directly contrasts it with the literature and artwork that his "Immortals" produced. Instead of a kind of writing that is polished, clearly structured, complete with clear symbolism, this novel steps outside these requirements for a more classical literature and deliberately presents itself as one that is unpolished, unclear, and mysteriously symbolic. To accomplish this, Hesse tentatively embraces the artistic methods of his era, picking and choosing combinations of methods that strike dissonant chords. His use of Jungian psychology helps achieve this; even today scholars cannot agree on how exactly the novel takes advantage of Jung's paradigms.<sup>18</sup>

### ***Der Steppenwolf's Ambivalently Modernist Aesthetic***

Hesse's *Der Steppenwolf* uses some, but not all the aesthetic devices in vogue in the years immediately preceding the novel's publication. Because of his hesitancy to embrace some of these aesthetic devices, scholars in the past have interpreted the author as a traditionalist or even as an antimodernist.<sup>19</sup> Though numerous

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<sup>18</sup>The fifth chapter of David Richards's monograph attempts to enumerate the varied Jungian interpretations of the novel, while focusing mainly on symbols and Jung's archetypes.

<sup>19</sup>Hesse's characteristic respect for traditional literary methods as well as his questioning of new art stems back to the early days of his career. He writes in 1895

biographical facts confirm that Hesse did, in fact, mistrust many of the ideals of this new era in which he felt like an outsider, I maintain that the author attempts to embrace the world and time in which he lives. I assert in this section that *Der Steppenwolf*, as an exemplar of Hesse's literary output of the late 1920s, serves as a good example of how he selects a combination of traditional and modern literary devices which in turn convey his ambivalence towards prevailing attitudes of the era.

### **Narration: Between Reality and Illusion**

The narration in *Der Steppenwolf*, for example, is remarkably realist in its design, which stands in contrast to most Modernist writing. Artiss points out that the depiction of reality in the novel "should begin realistically with clear-cut demarcation lines and that reality should only gradually disintegrate, neatly structurally paralleling Haller's own spiritual disintegration, for by the time we enter the Magic Theatre, the story moves with ease from reality to illusion and back again without disturbing the reader at all" (92). Artiss cites Haller's spiritual disintegration, but I would instead argue that the change in narrative reality actually depicts spiritual integration if we consider the novel as a record of

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in a letter to his half brother, Karl Isenberg: "I view things aesthetically, and so I'm disturbed to see that this is an era in which even those with talent and genius come into the world equipped with sick, twitching nerves and then destroy themselves, especially the poets. . . . [T]hese twitching nerves have to entertain a populace that has declined both morally and aesthetically. The sick way those 'psychological' dramas and novels wallow in the dirt and dissect everything often horrifies me. . . . [W]oe to the age when there will be no champions of the 'old school' left, and the 'new art' will unfurl itself and take power" (*Soul of the Age* 22–23).

development from an isolated and bitter academic to someone who is ready to embrace reality and enjoy life. Peter Hutchinson points out that

the novel is striking . . . in its mixture of styles, registers and even genres (report, memoir, autobiography, verse, tract), its range of narrators, its repeated emphasis on analysis, argument, and discussion rather than action, and its inclusion of sections which obviously comment on other sections, such as a “Tractat”, which suddenly appears and which provides an alternative image of the central figure. As such the work is clearly Modernist in that it is concerned with self-referentiality, producing art which is about producing art, while at the same time it leans towards the disjointed, even the disintegrating (in its handling of drug-induced experiences). This complexity, although common in postmodernist fiction, clearly gave many of the author’s contemporaries the impression the aim was to bewilder rather than to entertain or enlighten. (154)

Bewilderment seems a fitting vehicle for conveying Haller’s uncertain and uncanny journey through his own psyche. Today’s reader is used to a prevalence of the uncanny in literature thanks in part to Kafka. At its time of publication, though, *Der Steppenwolf* proved scandalous not only in its depictions of sexuality and drug use, but in its structure, narrative style, and frank discussion of the subconscious—some of the traits of Surrealist literature. In Hutchinson’s words, the

author seeks to play with the traditional reader by “setting bizarre, improbable events against a traditional background of sharply observed reality and clear delineation of character” (157). Hutchinson goes on to point out that Hesse mixes a hallucinatory type of narration “unconcernedly” with the real (157). I would argue instead that this mingling is completely intentional and supports a reading of the novel that asserts this type of narration represents Hesse’s own mental anguish. Hesse furthermore, according to Richards, “had resolved to write primarily for himself, to examine and attempt to come to terms with his being in all its complexity” (3).

To look at it from another perspective, one could say that Hesse does not embrace those Modernist devices (like discontinuity, self-referentiality, multiple perspectives) that he uses for their own sake or merely because of their scandalous nature. He takes, in fact, a critical stance towards these formal means, but also the emotions they represent, in his 1922 essay “Recent German Poetry” printed in T. S. Eliot’s journal, *Criterion*. After a discussion of the characteristics of then contemporary literature, he turns his attention towards the effects of the World War I. He insists that it has created in young writers the impulse to revolt. Yet, this impulse is still in need of clear direction, or merely of an object against which to revolt. Hesse then comments that the young authors’ parents should not be the targets of this revolt; that the writers themselves must face the responsibility their

epoch demands.<sup>20</sup> In the essay he writes that

[t]he prevailing mood is complacently revolutionary, very comprehensible in the circumstances, but incapable of long duration. It is more concerned with making a noise and the assertion of self-importance than with progress and the future. The large majority of these young men give one exactly the same impression as a half-analysed psychopath who knows indeed the first main results of his psycho-analysis, but is unaware of its consequences. With most of them, their breaking loose and enlargement go no further than a perception of their personality, and the assertion and proclamation of the rights of that personality. Beyond this, there is nothing but obscurity and aimlessness. (390)

Hesse understands this lack of thought and predominance of emotion surrounding that circle of writers as one that is completely reactionary and not adequately crafted. Later in the essay, he writes that “[t]he war will, sooner or later, bring home to those who have returned from it the lesson that nothing is done by violence and

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<sup>20</sup>The war was not completely devoid of opportunities for reflection. Stelzig points out in his article about Hesse’s *Krisis* poems that the war brought on a tendency towards inner examination and consequently a gravitation towards literature of this type. He states that “[t]he hypnotic appeal of *Demian*, attested to by Thomas Mann, among other German intellectuals, is that they young men returned from the front were no longer enamored of public rhetoric and collective solutions, but willing to hearken to the inner voice, especially in the prophetic mystification and *clair-obscur* of a novel that was sufficiently compelling yet confusing to accommodate the private fantasies of a large number of readers” (Stelzig “Aesthetics of Confession” 57).



gunplay, that war and violence are attempts to solve complicated and delicate problems in far too savage, far too stupid, and far too brutal a fashion” (391). If the problems of real life cannot be solved as quickly and simply as possible, neither can the problems of the literature that seeks to depict it earnestly. In the following paragraphs, I would like to parse the literary aspects and techniques of the novel in question in an attempt to bring some order to this uncanny or “hallucinatory” type of narration.

## **Language**

Hutchinson points out that the novel’s language is pointedly believable as authentic, that is, the type of sentence structure and narrative rhythm that the audience is used to. This familiar language complicates the reader’s experience because “the impossible is put forward in the language of the everyday, and with the incredulity of a rational participant, thus tempting [the reader] into belief.” The narrator, Haller’s landlady’s nephew, is reliable to the extent that he mentions his own biases against Haller. “[T]he other events leave us uncertain,” Hutchinson continues, “[f]or the nineteen-twenties . . . this approach had few precedents, although an obvious one is Kafka” (156).

## Setting

Up until *Demian*, Hesse had used pastoral settings for nearly all of his prose. In *Steppenwolf*, though, the world surrounding the hero becomes urban: there is no shortage of persons with whom Haller can and may interact. In fact, that Haller's introvertedness is set against an urban environment makes his struggle with accepting the pleasurable parts of the world even more poignant. Hesse's change of setting to the city carries with it a tinge of ambiguity, as Delabar points out:

Der Held des *Steppenwolf* Harry Haller [bewegt sich] in einer auffallend reduzierten Szenerie, die dennoch städtisch und das heißt dezidiert modern sein sollte. Aber von der Dynamik der Moderne, wie sie bei Bertold Brecht, Erich Kästner, Alfred Döblin, Marieluise Fleißer und anderen Vertretern der neuen Literatur der zwanziger Jahre zu finden ist und die direkt auf die Dynamisierung der Verhältnisse zu reagieren und sie voranzutreiben versucht, ist bei Hesse nichts zu finden. Stattdessen sehen wir eine andere, eine kleinere und zugleich ein wenig langweilige und auch langsamere Stadt vor uns, die zwischen den Polen einer sauberen, kleinbürgerlichen Welt und den nicht weniger kleinbürgerlichen Lokalen des bürgerlichen Amüsierbetriebs gespannt ist. (259)

[The hero of *der Steppenwolf*, Harry Haller, moves about in a noticeably constrained setting, which is nevertheless urban, and is

supposed to be decidedly modern. But if we look at the dynamics of modernity as found in Bertolt Brecht, Erich Kästner, Alfred Döblin, Marieluise Fleißer and other representatives of new literature of the twenties and as they attempt to spur on and react to the dynamization of relationships, there is nothing of this to be found in Hesse. In its place we see a different, smaller, and at the same time slightly more boring and slower city in front of us. It is suspended between the poles of a clean, petit-bourgeois world and the slightly petit-bourgeois pubs of the bourgeois entertainment industry.]

Thus one cannot interpret *Steppenwolf*'s urban setting as strictly a marker of literary Modernism. In contrast to the flâneur, who seeks to record all the complexities of the city as his or her text, Hesse severely limits the geographical range of his protagonist's experience. Delabar points to Tucholsky's accusation that Hesse writes mere idylls. Though it is true that "Hesse reduziert die Komplexität und Dynamik seiner Gegenwart in seinen Spielwelten auf einfache, überschaubare und regelbare Verhältnisse" 'Hesse reduces the complexity and dynamism of the present in his imaginary worlds to simple, overlookable and controllable relationships' (261), I assert Hesse does this specifically in order to highlight the protagonist's struggle with himself—the development of his soul—and not with his environment alone.

## Structure: Transforming the Traditional

The structure of *Der Steppenwolf* is at once modern and traditional. Julia Moritz observes that “Das Interessante an Hesses Texten besteht darin, daß sie explizit auf die Tradition – u. a. auf die traditionellen Erzählformen und Denkmuster – Bezug nehmen, diese aber in entscheidenden Punkten transformieren” ‘what is interesting about Hesse’s texts is that they explicitly rely on tradition (on traditional narrative forms and patterns of thinking, among others) but transform it at decisive points’ (308).<sup>21</sup> The beginning sections are most interesting as the editor first addresses the audience with his own perceptions about the person he calls the Steppenwolf. Though the narrator (Haller’s landlord’s nephew) views Haller as a strange outcast, he seems to know many intimate details of Haller’s psyche, such that he hates averages (23) and mediocrity (61) but that he enjoys contemplating the contrast between his life and the lives of others (34). In no other part of the book does Hesse imply that this first narrator has had occasion to be made privy to Haller’s inner world, so in a way we can surmise that Haller’s emotions and relationships to the world external to him are in some ways universal to all humans, be they “normal” or wolves.

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<sup>21</sup>Incidentally, she continues by suggesting that “[d]ie besondere – paradoxe – Art dieser Transformationen, auf die ich unten ausführlicher eingehen werde, ist wohl der Grund für das Unbehagen der deutschsprachigen Germanistik an Hesse” ‘the special (and paradoxical) type of these transformations, of which I will explain in greater detail, is most likely the reason for the unease that German studies experiences with Hesse’ (308).

The novel's tripartite structure reveals three major perspectives. The Editor's preface, Haller's records, and the treatise all reflect each other and "each is interwoven with and mirrored in the other two," as Stelzig points out (209). Mirrors play a large role in the novel. I assert that the mirror symbols are themselves a symbol of Haller's internal reflection, the self-examination that he undergoes. Mirrors, though, are capable of reversing, bending, and distorting the image they reflect. Stelzig comments further that

[w]hile Hesse's perspectival self-mirroring in *Steppenwolf* seems to call into question the traditional psychological notion of personal identity as a function of memory from Locke to Erikson, Hesse's aim is not to refract and fragment the self out of existence, but rather to explore the fiction of an identity simplex, or simply unified, in order to work toward a more representative and inclusive sense of personal identity as a complex unity-in-multiplicity. The aim of his perspectival and perspicacious self-understanding in this novel is to destabilize or *derange* a "normal" and much-too-limited conception of identity in order to arrive at a truer arrangement, a more substantial mimesis, including of course that of the unconscious. (210)

I would count this, Hesse's intentional distortion and refraction of one self as a technique of literary Modernism that intends to liberate the reader from Berman's "systems of deception"—that the individual is internally unified and harmonized

with itself. In conveying an intentionally distorted (yet more realistic) image of the subject, though, Hesse at the same time reveals the temperamental side of that subject that had previously been expressed in Romanticism by means of plot.

The narrator's tone in the preface is serious enough to be considered a near-parody of bourgeois life for the second-time reader of the novel who understands Haller's existence as wolf to be diametrically opposed to the editor's structured bourgeois existence. On the other hand, for the first-time reader (and for the majority of Hesse's audience at the time of publication), the "[e]ditor is an artful bridge to Haller's 'deranged' records: to the extent that Hesse's audience can identify with his Editor, it is seduced into a sympathetic understanding if not acceptance of Haller" (211). The preface also serves to frame the entirety of Haller's story, which includes the Treatise he receives. Stelzig points out that the passage "displays the persistent tendency of Hesse's later fiction to inscribe within the text a 'reading' of itself" (212).

In the second section, the *Tractat vom Steppenwolf*, Haller literally has a version of an analysis of his own soul handed to him in book form.<sup>22</sup> In the tract, Haller becomes informed in a codified way about some of the ways he acts and why:

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<sup>22</sup>Hutchinson points out that Hesse deliberately emphasized the tract's source (i.e. a different narrator) through a new technique in publishing. He writes that "in early editions of the novel, the slim volume which Harry is handed, the 'Tractat vom Steppenwolf', is given a separate, coloured cover, it is printed on different, cheaper paper, and it is in a different font; this device was actually opposed by the publisher, but Hesse insisted on it, providing the first instance of such a technique in German literature" (157).

namely, that he values his independence above all else, but that at the same time he seeks to concentrate on and develop one side of his personality at the expense of the other. There is another restatement of Haller's situatedness within the structure of the bourgeois world and how he is somehow stuck between this state of ultra reliance upon others and culture and a return to nature, which is impossible. In the part of the book which follows the *Tractat*, Haller begins the work of synthesizing the observations the Treatise makes about him with his own emotional and spiritual orientation.

I assert that the structure of the entire book is somewhat akin to sonata form.<sup>23</sup> The first two sections are each statements of themes that will recur often in the rest of the book. In the third section, Hesse weaves them together in a complicated, experiential, and perhaps even messy way. Hesse forces the reader to confront Haller's uneasiness in his own development during this entire section: it is only after the transcendental experience at the very end of the novel that Haller and the reader learn to embrace the beauty of this developmental chaos and to stop trying to control it. The narrative climax at the very end forms one grand coda for the entire work.

Sonata form, of course, is remarkably traditional. I maintain that Hesse,

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<sup>23</sup>Richards enumerates the various ways critics have understood the novel as having sonata form (133–34). Furthermore, Hesse writes of the novel that it is “wie eine Sonate oder Fuge proportional gebaut” ‘built proportionately like a sonata or fugue’ and that it is “um das Intermezzo des Traktats herum so streng und straff gebaut wie eine Sonate und greift sein Thema reinlich an” ‘built just as stiffly and tightly around the tract as a sonata and grasps its theme neatly’ (qtd. in Voit 82).

though, uses this old form to highlight and to bring some type of order to Haller's struggle with how to survive modern life. The modern subject, for example, seems to rely less on nature and instinct for how she should behave and interact with her world than on being told how to understand her life through an external source of authority such as an omniscient narrator or book. One need only look at the turbulent political struggles taking place within German speaking countries at the time of *Steppenwolf's* writing to see this paranoia reflected in the novel. Though the structural sonata form is an old one, that Hesse applies it to literature is, in fact, innovative. Moreover, the way he combines the introductions of these two themes is, for its time, experimental. Both themes tells Haller's story in different registers. They explain from separate perspectives the situation in which he finds himself while at the same time leaving Haller's own thoughts and observations out of the picture.

### **Characters as Divisions of the Self**

Eugene Stelzig theorizes that the various characters in *Steppenwolf* are mirror images of Hesse-Haller's unified self. The unified self precludes the subject's ability to exist at either end of the wolf-human spectrum. Stelzig writes that "Despite his Nietzschean rhetoric and his reliance on certain conventions of Romantic narrative . . . Hesse's crafty manipulation of magical mirror images of the same subject makes *Der Steppenwolf* a masterpiece of modern autobiography" (209). Like physical mirrors, these symbolic mirrors are also subject to reflecting a distorted



image. Moreover, these mirrored figures compliment “the three major perspectives” or divisions of the novel: the editor’s preface, Haller’s personal papers, and the Treatise. These three iterations of Hesse-Haller’s position and mental state all reflect each other, and as Stelzig reports, “each is intervolved with and mirrored in the other two” (209). Stelzig’s point, then, is indicative of an auctorial consciousness that advocates (if only subconsciously) a multifaceted and multi-perspectival understanding of the complex self. He continues (lest the reader think he is merely against the idea of a single, acutely *accurate* model of the self) to assert that

[w]hile Hesse’s perspectival self-mirroring in *Steppenwolf* seems to call into question the traditional psychological notion of personal identity as a function of memory from Locke to Erikson, Hesse’s aim is not to refract and fragment the self out of existence, but rather to explore the fiction of an identity simplex, or simply unified, in order to work toward a more representative and inclusive sense of personal identity as a complex unity-in-multhood. The aim of his perspectival and perspicacious self-understanding in this novel is to destabilize or *derange* a “normal” and much-too-limited conception of identity in order to arrive at a truer arrangement, a more substantial mimesis, including of course that of the unconscious. (210)

Perhaps, then, a mirror is not entirely the best appliance for building an image of the self: mirrors cannot, at least physically, *add* any clarity or focus to the image

being reflected beyond a certain point. In order to gain the deeper kind of reflection, Hesse first has to split the personality before his mirrors can reflect multiple individual images back to the single eye.

*Steppenwolf* is not merely about self-reflection alone (no matter how one sees fit to describe it). The novel focuses also on a central dynamic figure who changes himself based on these reflections, as well as the erroneous reflections he has seen in the time before the novel's narration begins. For the novel's first printing Hesse insisted that the Treatise be printed on low-quality paper and merely inserted into the book.<sup>24</sup> This is itself quite a Modernist gesture since it draws attention to and challenges the book's medium.<sup>25</sup> The Treatise allows the reader to become aware of how Haller became a wolf in the first place (77), how he became so far removed

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<sup>24</sup>Kurt Fickert reminds us in his article that "this part of the book was printed within inserted colored cover pages and was separately paginated. (It is now distinguished from the rest of the text merely by italicized type" (n. p.). Hesse also mentions it: "Nämlich der grelle, gelbe Traktat-Umschlag ist mein Einfall, und es war mein spezieller Wunsch, den sonderbaren, jahrmärkthaften Charakter, den der Traktat in der Geschichte hat, recht kräftig sichtbar zu machen, und der Verleger war aus Geschmacksgründen sehr dagegen; ich mußte mich ernstlich stemmen, um es durchzusetzen" 'namely the gaudy, yellow cover of the tract is my idea, and it was my special wish to make the special carnival-like character that the tract has in the story powerfully visible, and the publisher was very much against it for reasons of taste. I had to fight seriously in order to make it happen' (Michels *Materialien* 119).

<sup>25</sup>Niefanger mentions that the treatise is only one of the many ways this book expresses its mediality. He writes that "So wird die Medialisierung des *Steppenwolfs* mehrfach betont: durch die Form des Traktats, das in die Aufzeichnungen inkorporiert, also eigentlich doppelt verschriftlicht wurde, und durch das magische Theater, von dem in den Aufzeichnungen berichtet wird" 'Thus the medialization of *Der Steppenwolf* is emphasized in many ways: through the form of the tract that is incorporated into the collection of chronicles and really printed doubly, and through the magic theater, which is reported in those chronicles.' (92).

from social life (81), and how he reflects on his connections with others (81) only after having read the editor's introduction and the Treatise. Haller's interactions with society immediately following his intake of the Treatise tend to make him lean towards being a wolf. After meeting the professor for the first time in the narration he explains that

Hin und her lief ich durch die Straßen, vom Elend gelitten. . . . In einer trostlosen Vorstadtkneipe ruhte ich einen Augenblick aus, trank Wasser und Kognac, lief wieder weiter, vom Teufel gejagt, die steilen krummen Gassen der Altstadt hinauf und hinab, durch die Alleen, über den Bahnhofplatz. Fortreisen! dachte ich, ging in den Bahnhof, starrte auf die Fahrpläne and den Wänden, trank etwas Wein, versuchte, mich zu besinnen. (93)

[I paced the streets in all directions, driven on by wretchedness. . . . I rested a moment in a tavern in an outlying part of the town and drank some brandy and water; then to the streets once more, with the devil at my heels, up and down the steep and winding streets of the Old Town, along the avenues, across the station square. The thought of going somewhere took me into the station. I scanned the time tables on the walls; drank some wine and tried to come to my senses. (83–84)]

This is another way in which Hesse transfigures Haller into a wolf: his first impulse when confronted with danger is to flee the situation.

Haller's evening walk of "pacing the streets in all directions" is also indicative of how the motif of walking plays an increasingly metaphorical role in Hesse's work. In this evening with the professor, Haller has attempted to reintegrate himself into his former human environment, but finds that he is no longer able to tolerate it. He throws himself back into what is—for a city-dweller—the equivalent of nature: the streets. The wolf side of Harry has taken over, forcing him to roam the alleys. A more integrated Haller might have thought to rush home in order to avoid such aimless wandering. This instance of walking still embodies a reassertion of Haller's physical freedom. After all, he is at least temporarily out of society's grasp and free to do as instinct permits. Furthermore, this walk is another major vacillation between the extremes of wolf and human, symbolic for Hesse of his own struggle between a natural and a contrived existence, or in other words, bachelorhood versus marriage and family. Hesse's biography reveals great tensions between these two poles—tensions that jeopardized his first two marriages inasmuch as he required extended amounts of time spent away from his families.

Eventually, though, Haller's animal energy drives him to the pub *Zum schwarzen Adler* where he meets Hermine, who acts much as a therapist in Haller's journey towards societal integration. At the very beginning of their relationship, Hermine serves as a mother figure for Haller: since he is only just reentering the

human world, it seems fitting that a mother figure who teaches Haller how to “gehörchen” (‘listen’ or ‘obey’) would come into play. Haller’s transition from wolf to human (beginning symbolically as Hermine’s child) runs parallel to Hesse’s own process of coming to terms with modernity. This makes sense on several levels: first of all, because Haller is obviously out of step with the world in which he lives, he must backpedal in situations like the incident with the professor, who possesses, in Haller’s opinion, a perverted understanding of society and of Goethe.

Haller is also out of step with contemporary life when it comes to technology. He exaggerates the effect the radio might have on society as he speculates that

Man werde . . . entdecken, daß nicht nur gegenwärtige, augenblickliche Bilder und Geschehnisse uns beständig umfluten, so wie die Music aus Paris und Berlin jetzt in Frankfurt oder Zürich hörbar gemacht wird, sondern daß alles je Geschehene ganz ebenso registriert und vorhanden sei und daß wir wohl eines Tages, . . . den König Salomo und den Walther von der Vogelweide werden sprechen hören. (113)

[The discovery would be made . . . that there were floating around us not only the pictures and events of the transient present in the same way that music from Paris or Berlin was now heard in Frankfurt or Zurich, but that all that had ever happened in the past could be registered and brought back likewise. We might well look for the day when . . . we should hear King Solomon speaking, or Walter von der

This sentence represents some of the vertigo inherent in looking towards the future. Unlike the beginning of the novel in which Haller clings to his Immortals and to his form of isolation that is strictly tied to the past, now, after befriending Hermine, navigatrix extraordinaire of contemporary culture and technology, Haller applies the immense potential of this technology to those objects of his previous study and obsession, his Immortals. On the other hand, he still finds new technology to be shallowly distracting. The narrator continues: “[u]nd daß dies alles, ebenso wie heute die Anfänge des Radios, den Menschen nur dazu dienen werde, von sich und ihrem Ziele weg zu fliehen und sich mit einem immer dichterem Netz von Zerstreuung und nutzlosem Beschäftigtsein zu umgeben” “[a]nd all this, I said, just as today was the case with the beginnings of wireless, would be of no more service to man than as an escape from himself and his true aims, and a means of surrounding himself with an ever closer mesh of distractions and useless activities’ (114; 103–04)

This near-panic over new technology increasing the amount of worthless busy-ness serves to underscore Haller’s undeveloped animal state. Even after a taste of what this technology is capable of, he identifies more with non-technological modes of existence, concentrating instead on the printed words and ideas of his Immortals.

When Hermine later introduces Haller to the gramophone, an equally puzzling example of technology for him, he meets it more open-mindedly. Perhaps this is because Hermine uses it in conjunction with a more corporeal and (for

Haller) a more distracting skill—dance. By first offering Haller dance lessons (dance is indeed an ancient art form, but one adaptable to modern sensibilities) and then demanding that they purchase a gramophone to help them practice, she deceives him into acceptance of the instrument. It is only after they have bought the device that the narrator mentions Haller's trepidation about bringing it into his living space. Hermine's actions foreshadow the magic theatre in that she juxtaposes ancient and modern art forms in order to aide Haller's spiritual development.

Dance is also, if understood as a refined mode of walking, also a type of “modern” technology. In learning to dance with Hermine's help, Haller reaches out to a more human understanding of himself while this aspect of himself physically embodied in Hermine teaches him a more refined or specialized form of walking. Dance, though arguably enjoyable, is also a ritual that underscores and aids the human process or mating and reproduction. Through this particularly practical element of human behavior, Harry is brought closer to a synthesis of his myriad selves. Dance, of all the access points Hesse could have chosen for Haller's entrance to the realm of socialization, is more tolerable for Haller precisely because the activity itself acknowledges its own natural aspects, i.e. continuation of the species.

Hesse further embraces modern tools in the way he integrates modern psychology into the text, that is, a psychology that embraces the idea of the personality split into three or more parts. Artiss agrees, stating that “[f]or his descent into the Underworld and the imaginary Magic Theatre, Harry is carefully

initiated by three ‘mirror’ characters—Hermine, Pablo, and Maria, each representative of repressed aspects of his own personality” (90). If we examine *Steppenwolf* from the viewpoint of Hesse’s struggle for individuality combined with this struggle’s necessary introspection, we can understand the novel’s figures as a refraction of Haller’s (or Hesse’s) personality which allows for a more careful analysis of the different segments of the spectrum of his soul and what it desires. At the masquerade,<sup>26</sup> these refracted personas recombine into an epiphinal moment of clarity which inspires Haller to “keep playing the game” (of trying to reconcile these disparate personas) and helps him to realize that the push and pull between the personas is a natural part of modern life, especially when one is faced with a plethora of choices. An example of this is Hesse’s struggle with his desire for solitude and his outlying political attitudes and pacifism on the one hand, but on the other, the need to enjoy life in non-academic ways such as listening to popular music or doing watercolors.

At the Magic Theatre, which appears within the context of dance at the masquerade, Hesse makes Haller walk through a hallway of closed doors with signs that say, i.e., “Alle Mädchen sind dein!” ‘All girls are yours!’ (190), “Genußreicher Selbstmord! Du lachst dich kaputt!” ‘Enjoyable suicide! You will laugh yourself silly!’ (201), or “Anleitung zum Aufbau der Persönlichkeit—Erfolg garantiert!”

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<sup>26</sup>Hesse attended various masquerades while he lived in Zurich, and even depicted the evenings in watercolor paintings. See Hesse, *Maskenball*, 1926, reprinted in *Sein Leben in Bildern*, 220.



‘Introduction to personality development—success guaranteed!’ (202). Each sign reveals a fantasy that different fragments of Haller’s soul desire. Walking allows him to move through this metaphysical-cum-physical place, giving him a kind of walkable menu for what would otherwise be a jumble of emotions. Using his feet, Haller can enter any door he chooses and explore the fantasy indicated on the sign.

Though the treatise mentions that Haller has thousands of personalities and that it would be wrong to accept and nurture just one, Hesse chooses to isolate only four segments of Haller’s personality. Stelzig, in the context of *Steppenwolf* as autobiography reminds us that “an individual author is always more complex than can be depicted in one single character” (17). First and foremost of the four in the present work is Haller the wolf, the isolated academic who is out of place anywhere but his study. He is driven by existential angst and seems to appear everywhere at the wrong time. (He arrives at the editor’s apartment building at noon, the exact opposite of when a wolf should make his appearance!)

The second figure is that of the editor, who speaks in the book’s “Vorwort des Herausgebers” ‘Editor’s Foreword’ (7). This figure at the same time admires and despises Haller for his alleged strangeness. Haller seems to rent his apartment from the editor’s aunt at a puzzling time, shows an uncanny appreciation for his neighbor’s araucaria plant in the hallway,<sup>27</sup> and comes and goes at strange hours.

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<sup>27</sup>Artiss writes that “[t]he plants mirror his dichotomy, for two conflicting characteristics attract him, their bourgeois ‘aspidistra’ cleanliness and well-tended air and their superb fragrance, so enticing that at times Harry is unable to pass by

The *Vorwort* is relatively short, however, and probably represents Hesse's rejection of societal norms: that is, he doesn't care if the world perceives him as strange. He would much rather nurture his own personality and thirst for insights about his Immortals. This section of the book, however, provides the reader with a valuable introduction to Haller's situation and mirrors the internal awkwardness of Hesse's relationship to the modern world: a child born of very traditional and pietist missionaries, one who grew up in a mostly agrarian environment, and one who must make peace with modernization.

The third major figure, Hermine,<sup>28</sup> represents the aspect of leisure and "low culture," which Haller has systematically neglected during his career as an academic and presumably during his failed marriage. Hermine teaches Haller how to enjoy popular music, and gives him dance lessons. She describes herself as a "Lebenskünstler," or life artist (136). Hermine opens the door to the fourth major figure, Pablo. Eventually, her actions lead Haller to attend a masquerade at which the great moment of unison between all the refracted figures takes place. Hermine does not purely focus on the passive activity of leisure, but insists that Haller take an active role in *cultivating* his enjoyment of dancing and that he work hard at enjoying life.

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and we frequently find him sitting on the stairway, delighting in their evocative fragrance" (93).

<sup>28</sup>Stelzig asserts that "Hermine is at once Hesse-Haller's opposite and double, as suggested by her name, which is the female version of Hesse's own" (217)

Pablo is the figure who represents bliss, more specifically pure enjoyment of life without the moral pressure of having to cultivate this enjoyment. Pablo does not care in the least what Haller thinks of him (141). His job is to play the saxophone in his band, to be beautiful, and to make women happy (134). Also though, as Artiss suggests, he is meant to act as a guru for Haller (91). Though he speaks to Haller, Haller is not persuaded by him, at least outwardly: perhaps Hesse notes Pablo's aspect of Haller's personality as one which should not be further developed or explored. Artiss writes, that Pablo does, in fact, have the "keys to all communication – both at a mundane level (he speaks all languages) and at a spiritual one (his is master of that – for Hesse – universal means of communication, music)" (91). Pablo's role as a representation of bliss, however, serves to highlight how much progress Haller has made on his journey of introspection. Pablo allows Haller an "Ausflug ins alte Leben" 'excursion into the old life' which allows Haller to compare the past and present in order to evaluate his developmental progress (144–45).

The most important point about these four main characters is that they do not exist in isolation, nor do they strive towards achieving their own individual goals. Instead, they contribute towards the protagonist's development as a person. Though Haller tends toward isolation, for example, Hermine draws him into the social world. Though the editor despises Haller, he is also oddly fascinated with him, enough so that he chooses to compile the extant textual material about him

into a book. Pablo seems to act in a solitary enough manner; he does not show a great affinity towards any of the other characters, yet when Haller thinks about him, Haller is able to parse his own accomplishments and development as a character. He writes that “[a]lle diese Gedanken, die da zwischen Hermine und mir aufgetaucht waren, erschienen mir so tief vertraut, so altbekannt, so aus meiner eigenen Mythologie und Bilderwelt geschöpft!” ‘It seems to me that it was not, perhaps, her own thoughts but mine. She had read them like a clairvoyant, breathed them in and given them back, so that they had a form of their own and came to me as something new’ (165; 153–54). Through his interactions with the other characters, Haller is able to piece together his own system for understanding the world.

The other characters’ interactions with Haller help him to understand for himself the validity of his dreams; that they are not meant to be discarded because of their impracticality or due to their incompatibility with real life. Hermine does this by first explaining her state of agony that her own dreams could not be fulfilled practically:

Ich war eine Weile trostlos, und ich habe lange Zeit die Schuld an mir selber gesucht. Das Leben, dachte ich, muß doch schließlich immer recht haben, und wenn das Leben meine schönen Träume verhöhnnte, so dachte ich, es werden eben meine Träume dumm gewesen sein und unrecht gehabt haben. Aber das half gar nichts. Und weil ich gute Augen und Ohren hatte und auch etwas neugierig war, sah ich mir

das sogenannte Leben recht genau an, meine Bekannten und Nachbarn, fünfzig und mehr Menschen und Schicksale, und da sah ich, Haller: meine Träume hatten recht gehabt, tausendmal recht, ebenso wie deine. Das Leben aber, die Wirklichkeit, hatte unrecht. (161)

[For a while I was inconsolable and for a long time I put the blame on myself. Life, thought I, must in the end be in the right, and if life scorned my beautiful dreams, so I argued, it was my dreams that were stupid and wrong headed. But that did not help me at all. And as I had good eyes and ears and was a little inquisitive too, I took a good look at this so-called life and at my neighbors and acquaintances, fifty or so of them and their destinies, and then I saw you. And I knew that my dreams had been right a thousand times over, just as yours had been. It was life and reality that were wrong. (150)]

She goes on to explain that the objects she and Haller seek no longer exist in reality, saying that “[w]er statt Gedudel Musik, statt Vergnügen Freude, statt Geld Seele, statt Betrieb echte Arbeit, statt Spielerei echte Leidenschaft verlangt, für den ist diese hübsche Welt hier keine Heimat” “[w]hoever wants music instead of noise, joy instead of pleasure, soul instead of gold, creative work instead of business, passion instead of foolery, finds no home in this trivial world of ours’ and goes on to waver that this disconnect is probably only possible in their own time: “Ich weiß nicht. Ich will zur Ehre der Welt annehmen, es sei bloß unsere Zeit, es sei bloß eine Krankheit,

ein momentanes Unglück” ‘I don’t know. For the honor of the world I will suppose it to be in our time only—a disease, a momentary misfortune’ (162). If Hermine, then, is a fragment of Haller’s personality, Haller has here come to terms with the fact that there is something wrong with reality, not with his mind, and that this is characteristic of their temporality.

### **Resistance Towards a Modernist Aesthetic?**

Complimentarily to his embrace of certain aspects of Modernist literature, Hesse seems, in many instances, to work against the main trajectories of Modernism. I argue that this partial resistance to literary trends merely strengthens the case of understanding this author as an ambivalent Modernist. Furthermore, Hesse’s ambivalence toward both traditionality and modernity rings true in Haller, who, in at least one instance states directly that he is neither a modern nor an outmoded person. When Haller visits a bar that he has not been to in a long time and drinks a bottle of country wine (this is virtually a leitmotif in Hesse’s writing and stems back to *Peter Camenzind*) and compares it to his more recent and more colorful, perhaps entertaining, indulgences. He shares that while he ate and drank, “steigerte in mir dies Gefühl des Abwelkens und Abschiedfeierns, dies süße und schmerzlich-innige Gefühl einer nie ganz gelösten, nun aber zur Lösung reif werdenden Verwachsenheit mit all den Schauplätzen und Dingen meines früheren Lebens” ‘there came over me that feeling of change and decay and of farewell

celebrations, that sweet and inwardly painful feeling of being a living part of all the scenes and all the things of an earlier life that has never yet been parted from, and from which the time to part has come' (170; 159). The modern person, Haller insists, would name his feeling sentimentality. The 'modern' man, however, no longer appreciates material objects such as the ones he does. Then he shares his ambivalence towards both camps, a direct restatement of the exhaustion he experiences trying to live in both worlds: "[m]ir lag nichts daran, ich war kein moderner Mensch noch auch ein altmodischer, ich war aus der Zeit herausgefallen und trieb dahin, dem Tode nah, zum Tod gewillt" '[b]ut all that was no concern of mine. I was not a modern man, nor an old-fashioned one either. I had escaped time altogether, and went my way, with death at my elbow and death as my resolve' (170; 159). Yet suicide, as the beginning of the novel posits when Haller promises to kill himself on his fiftieth birthday, is not the solution Haller ends up choosing.

Horrocks makes the case that Hesse (and especially *Steppenwolf*, on which his article focuses) has strong ties to Romanticism. Stelzig even suggests that Hesse creates a new type of literature: "twentieth-century Romanticism" ("Aesthetics" 61).

He writes that

the reader is faced, not with a complete break with the heritage of German Romanticism of which Hesse was probably the major literary exponent, but with a substantive transposition of basically Romantic themes and modes into a modern idiom, setting and mood where

Romantic nostalgia gives way to surreal and grotesque evocations of present and future. (60–61)

This adapted Romanticism, he asserts, confronts the chaotic modern world and for the first time allows the present to be seen through the perspective of Romanticism.<sup>29</sup>

At the end of the novel, after Haller has killed<sup>30</sup> Hermine, he receives, for this crime and for the crime of insulting high art, “the punishment of being laughed to scorn by all present and sentenced, not to death, but to eternal life” (143). He accepts the challenge of eternal life willingly, in an almost Faustian manner.<sup>31</sup> In his closing words, Haller writes that “Mozart wartete auf mich” ‘Mozart was waiting on me’ (230). Though Haller is really more on a quest to discover himself rather than

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<sup>29</sup>Stelzig describes how Hesse accomplishes this: “His procedure is to assimilate and subsequently transform and restructure a literary inheritance to come to terms with the unprecedented demands of an age of accelerating change and confounding discontinuity” (61). Hutchinson makes a similar point. He suggests that “[i]ts closest description may be as a form of neo-Romanticism, a search for the essence of life, and for the individual, in the irrational, the unconscious, and the world of dreams” (154).

<sup>30</sup>Swales asserts that the crime Harry Haller really commits when he kills Hermine is not murder, but confusing reality with the “schönen Bildersaal” ‘beautiful hall of pictures’ This is a crime because he “den schönen Bildersaal mit der sogenannten Wirklichkeit [verwechselt hat]” ‘had confused the beautiful hall of pictures with so-called reality’ (37).

<sup>31</sup>Artiss, in fact, cites a comparison with *Faust*. Horrocks writes that, “[v]iewed as an allegory, *Steppenwolf* bears comparison with Goethe’s *Faust*, in the sense that *Steppenwolf*, like *Faust*, ‘wandelt durch die Welt zur Hölle’ [‘wanders through the world into hell’] But Hesse’s hero embarks on a very different descent to hell – what Hesse calls ‘an ascent into the depths’ – for his journey, though hellish, is entirely an inward one through the painful chaos of his own multiple personalities to the ultimate goal of complete self-knowledge” (89).



eternal life, he finds that these two goals merge for him; namely, that finding his true self unites him spiritually with his beloved “Unsterblichen.” The catch is that he must find himself—a being situated in the present and not the past—and this cannot be achieved by embracing his life exactly as the Immortals would. On the contrary he must embrace his own era on his own terms, the way those great figures dealt with their own times in their own ways. Stelzig confirms this by first pointing out that “[w]hat Hesse relished in the literary milieu of the early German Romantics (of which he was a lifelong student and admirer), was their visionary program of a fantastic psychography of the inner self, whose imaginative energies they intuited as grounded in the cosmic whole” (29). Stelzig then cites Hesse’s self-proclaimed understanding of the romantics. He writes that Hesse understands the romantics as “a literary fellowship of kindred souls the foundation of whose ‘confession’ of faith he summed up in 1899 as ‘devotion to the voice of eternity, attending to the rhythm of the inner life, being-at-home at the hidden sources of the soul’” (29). The lesson of Haller’s journey is that transitory beings such as himself must approach eternity by first accepting their own temporality: by first achieving a unity and understanding with the *Zeitgeist*.

This understanding of temporality persists for Hesse, and perhaps becomes even more important during the writing of *Steppenwolf*. Dirk Niefanger asserts that authorship should be seen as a “Moment der kulturgeschichtlichen Analyse” ‘moment of cultural-historical analysis’ in the case of Hesse (89). There is support

for this in Hesse's own papers, yet for Hesse acknowledges only partially that his difficulties stem from the historical period in which he finds himself. Hesse writes in a letter to Hugo Ball in 1926 that "[s]oweit meine Biographie einen Sinn hat, ist es wohl der, daß die persönliche unheilbare, doch notdürftig bemeisterte Neurose eines geistigen Menschen zugleich Symptom ist für die Zeitseele" 'as far as my biography makes a bit of sense, it is likely in that the personal, incurable neurosis of a spiritual man that he mastered out of necessity, is also a symptom of the spirit of the times' (Michels and Hesse 97).

There are, in fact, several ways in which Hesse's art does not conform to the rules of Berman's pre-reform cultural institutions. It is clear that Hesse's soul-biography emphasizes his breaking away from stereotypes and social groups that might otherwise dictate his actions and as a writer and as a person. The ornament that exists within it is minimalist and always centers around Haller's struggles, his growth, and his genuine attempts at relationships with others. For Hesse, if he is indeed the "restructurer" Berman suggests, *Der Steppenwolf* would make the most sense when understood as a token of Stelzig's confessional autobiography—as an example of one journey towards the self which readers can compare against their own.

On the other hand, Hesse also thwarts Berman's assertions about literary Modernism. He points out earlier in his article that "[t]he innovative narratives of German Modernism are charismatic novels, because they both suggest an escape

from alienated social relations, providing literature with a new legitimacy, and reject the liberal individualism of the nineteenth century, endeavoring to produce a community of readers outside the culture industry” (182).<sup>32</sup> For the idealistic purposes of liberating oneself from an outside authority (society, parents, artistic rules and regulations), Hesse’s outsider status (and for that matter, Haller’s, as well) served him well. Berman’s idea of liberal individualism seems to be embodied precisely in Haller’s outsider status at the beginning of the novel, i.e. Haller is terribly lonely, even with his knowledge of the Immortals to keep him company. Outsider status does not merely yield art; it also produces emotional problems, which Haller attempts to overcome. Hesse struggles with the same problems, for he writes: “For seven years now I have been living beyond the human world, without family, without any real community, and confronting nearly every day the problem of suicide” (Stelzig’s translation, 193). The novel must suggest charismatically, however, that Haller is emotionally healthier when he is closer to the products of the culture industry such as the gramophone and radio. Only after consuming the output of these media—with the aid of increasingly more metaphorical forms of walking—does he experience the growth for which he yearns. The unanswered question that remains is whether persons like Hesse really need the culture industry

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<sup>32</sup>Swales echoes Berman’s idea as he writes specifically about *Der Steppenwolf* that the great Modernist novels share “an acute awareness of cultural crisis, a high degree of narrative self-consciousness, and an urgently expressed utopian aspiration which, while present throughout the novels, can be felt with particular intensity in the closing sections of the texts in question” (33).

for psychological fitness. If we consider Hesse's ideal of radical individualism, though, perhaps only he and Haller need that kind of exposure to achieve a state of balance between the popular and the eternal that can temper the example of his Immortals such that they can allow a productive existence in the present. The novel's reception, however, *does* suggest that Hesse creates a community of readers outside the culture industry. Countless academic readers could see themselves in Haller after the novel's initial publication. Too, the novel created a new community comprised of troubled university students: a community that was decidedly outside the culture industry if we consider their protests to the war in Vietnam. This community, however is best discussed elsewhere.<sup>33</sup>

The book ends as Haller acknowledges that he will play the game of life again and again and thus "die Hölle meines Innern nochmals und noch oft zu durchwandern" 'traverse not once more, but often, the hell of my inner being.' In contrast to this painful journey, though, Haller asserts that he will someday learn to play the game better (229). Haller's life here is decidedly a fusion of pleasure and agony, of past and future since both Pablo and Mozart await him. Hesse aims as an

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<sup>33</sup>Hutchinson takes up the discussion of how the novel's success is driven more because of its sociological success than its status as a work of art per se. He writes that "[t]he novel has also not stood the test of time as well as other near contemporary works . . . and Hesse's popularity has regularly been sociologically rather than artistically driven. For modern readers in particular, this novel may seem *insufficiently* experimental, too half-hearted in its exploration of the psyche, lacking true boldness in its conception and structure, only taking us to the brink of approaching the world anew. And in its content too, we may feel slightly cheated. As Martin Swales has pointed out, the novel's 'answer to modern disarray is troublingly dependent on traditional high bourgeois culture (Goethe, Mozart)'" (165–66).

artist, after all, to synthesize these extremes. Because of this, the novel remains uncategorizable as either Modernist or traditionalist. Swales writes that the ending envisages a utopia that offers release from confusion and turmoil by inculcating the values of humour and irony. Nonetheless, that glimpse of redemption is curiously backward-looking; . . . it involves great figures from bourgeois culture. . . . And if, conversely, there is also a future-directed utopia, then it resides in our intensified acceptance of the modern, technologically reproducible world – in the sense of a kind of postmodern release from weighty signification, a postmodern transposition of substantiality into insubstantiality. (38–39)

If one considers Hesse's novels as a whole, as a *Seelenbiographie*, one need not rely on Swales' "postmodern transposition." If one concedes the point that Haller's concluding thought is, in fact, "backward-looking," one may simply look to Hesse's next two major works, *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel* for instances of Hesse's orientation to the future. Just as Haller uses Goethe and Mozart as points of reference in the past for gauging his progress, Joseph Knecht takes as his point of reference the completely pure ideals of the community of Glass Bead Game players to judge his tenure as a *magister ludi*.

## Chapter 4

### *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel*: Two Paths to Individuation

Hesse's last two major novels, *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel* (*The Journey to the East*, 1932; *The Glass Bead Game*, 1943), express his ambivalence towards literary Modernism on two levels.<sup>1</sup> On the first level, the two books are, in many ways, mirror images of each other. One is short, the other long; one situates the protagonist in the midst of an isolated community, the protagonist of the other is part of a community that transcends the bounds of space and temporality. Taken together as halves of a whole, these books articulate Hesse's fear of extremes, both in politics and aesthetics. Lawrence Wilde writes that "in his final two novels, . . . [Hesse] creates alternative enlightened communities and grapples with the question of how they might relate to the world at large" (86). Hesse successfully processes

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<sup>1</sup>For clarity, parenthetical references will refer to *Das Glasperlenspiel* as GBG when quoted in English and GPS when quoted in German and to *Die Morgenlandfahrt* as JE when quoted in English, and as MLF when quoted in German.

the present through the eyes of the past, yet with the two novels examined in this chapter, Hesse expands that method by another dimension, adding to the mix a future setting. Written in the midst of uncertainty and fear of what the future might resemble, thanks to the Nazi regime, these works assume that the political and cultural extremes of the twentieth century have been purged and buried in order to make way for new Utopian societies. Though technology “does not seem to have advanced very far” according to Paul Bishop in his recent summary of scholarship on *Das Glasperlenspiel*, the mental attitude of the future is very different, having progressed by leaps and bounds<sup>2</sup> (217). Hesse is persistent in the tactics he uses to carry out his message of moderation, yet both novels paradoxically convey his lifelong message to the reader, namely: that individuality is paramount. Even once Hesse removes the political and economic stains of world war from cultural and academic life in *Das Glasperlenspiel*, the individual must still wrestle with and win the struggle against a powerful collective.

On the second level, both novels express Hesse’s ambivalence to Modernist literary themes as single works. The novels combine elements that are thoroughly Modernist (fragmentation, uncertainty, documentary style) with themes that Hesse resurrects from earlier literary periods (unity, wholeness, and Order; communion with nature; and omission of modern technology). In this chapter, I will first discuss the reasons Hesse chose to set these two works in the future. From there, I will

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<sup>2</sup>Technology, however, has stagnated in this world since the twentieth century.

analyze how each novel reflects Hesse's ambivalent stance toward Modernist literary themes. Finally, I will highlight how their differences in construction help underscore Hesse's insistence on balance between tradition and innovation.

Hesse's reasons for choosing future settings for *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel* are not immediately clear and must be extrapolated from his own commentary about the novels.<sup>3</sup> Hesse writes in 1933 in a letter to Gottfried Bermann that

[d]ie Schaffung einer gereinigten Atmosphäre war mir nötig, ich ging diesmal nicht in die Vergangenheit oder ins märchenhafte Zeitlose, sondern baute die Fiktion einer datierten Zukunft. Die weltliche Kultur jener Zeit wird die gleiche sein wie heute, dagegen wird eine geistige Kultur da sein, in der zu leben und deren Diener zu sein sich lohnt – dies ist das Wunschbild, das ich mir da malen möchte. (Claus 126)

[The creation of a cleansed atmosphere was necessary to me. This time I did not go back to the past or into a fairy-tale-like absence of time, but instead constructed the fiction of a dated future. The worldly culture of that time will be the same as that of today, but

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<sup>3</sup>While Crenshaw and Lawson write that *Die Morgenlandfahrt* is “exempt from the necessity of continuous narration, from the conventions of cause and effect, and from the consequences of time” because, as they assert, the novel is written in the form of a fairy tale, this sheds little light on why Hesse would choose to set the novel in the future.



there will be a spiritual/intellectual culture. Living in it and serving it will be worthwhile—that is the picture of a dream that I would like to paint for myself]

In another letter, Hesse comments that

[u]m den Raum zu schaffen, in dem ich Zuflucht, Stärkung und Lebensmut finden könnte, genügte es nicht, irgend eine Vergangenheit zu beschwören und liebevoll auszumalen. . . . Ich mußte, der grinsenden Gegenwart zum Trotz, das Reich des Geistes und der Seele als existent und unüberwindlich sichtbar machen, so wurde meine Dichtung zur Utopie, das Bild wurde in die Zukunft projiziert, die üble Gegenwart in eine überstandene Vergangenheit gebannt. (Claus 129)

[in order to create the space in which I could find refuge, strength, and courage for life, it was not enough to swear allegiance to some kind of past and to paint it lovingly. . . . I had to, in spite of the smirking present, make the realm of the intellect and the soul extant and overwhelmingly visible. In this way, my writing became a Utopia, the picture was projected into the future, and the evil present was banished to a surviving past]

This “überstandene Vergangenheit” ‘surviving past’ of which Hesse speaks translates into what the citizens of the pedagogical province in *Das Glasperlenspiel* refer to as

the “feuilletonistische Zeitalter” ‘feuilletonistic age.’ For Hesse, and for the Glass Bead Game players, the “feuilletonistische Zeitalter” is known as the time in which humans had no idea how to rightly use their knowledge and technology. According to one of *Das Glasperlenspiel*’s fictional historians, that time “hat dem Geist innerhalb der Ökonomie des Lebens und Staates nicht die ihm gemäße Stellung und Funktion anzuweisen gewußt” ‘had not known how to allocate the appropriate amount of intellect appropriate to him within the economy of life and state’ (GPS 18–19).<sup>4</sup> One can easily bridge the gap between the “feuilletonistische Zeitalter” of the novel and some of the technological disasters of the twentieth century, especially those used in two World Wars. The future setting of these two books clears the page of all but the struggles of the individual with his role in society. Hesse, in effect, removes the element of traditional internal ethical debates from these two novels. In turn, this leads the way to a clearer understanding of his message by the reader. In this way Hesse’s two futuristic novels differ from other futuristic Utopias or dystopias: the reader need not worry about interpreting the books’ events through his own moral lens, much less contemplate what will happen to his own society if it should turn into one resembling the one described. This is the case largely because

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<sup>4</sup>In these quotes, Hesse specifically refers to *Das Glasperlenspiel*. There are clues, however, which lead one to believe that *Die Morgenlandfahrt* takes place in a similar time and place. H. H., the protagonist of *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, writes that “[e]s war ja damals kurz nach dem Weltkriege” ‘it was at that time shortly after the world war’ (MLF 10). This is most likely a reference to the great war which ended the “feuilletonistic age” and which precedes the narrated time in *Das Glasperlenspiel*. Furthermore, *Das Glasperlenspiel* is dedicated to “den Morgenlandfahrern” ‘the Journeyers to the East’ (GPS 5).

the protagonists make few decisions that are based on their own mores. In fact, *Das Glasperlenspiel* is, for the majority of its narration, simply a historical account of the life of Joseph Knecht. Until he begins to decide to leave Kastalien, there is no pending sense of doom, and when this finally makes its way to the reader, it is on a logical, analytical level. In *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, the reader is simply disoriented: the problems with the futuristic community described within exist in that the individual does not understand his place within that community.

### **“Always Home”: *Die Morgenlandfahrt***

*Die Morgenlandfahrt* is the story of the protagonist and narrator H. H., who joins the League of Journeyers to the East, a secret society which has existed since the middle ages. The Journeyers travel communally through space and time (but mostly stay within the confines of Germany, at least during the episodes that Hesse shares with the reader), each in search of his or her own individually stated goal. H. H.’s objective could not be more traditional or formulaic: he wishes to see the princess Fatme (Fatima), and if possible, win her love.<sup>5</sup> The other Journeyers have goals which seem at first just as impossible—one searches for “a treasure that he names Tao,” another for a specific type of snake that he names Kundalini and to which he ascribes magic powers. Though each Journeyer has to have his own

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<sup>5</sup>Inder Kher reports that Fatima is “Knecht’s fate and *anima*, the archetypal mother who represents the center (Anima Pia) and the circumference of the psyche” (45).

personal goals, he stands in solidarity with the other Journeyers in their “gemeinsamen Idealen und Zielen . . . und unter einer gemeinsamen Fahne [kämpfen]” ‘communal ideals and goals, fighting under a common flag’ (MLF 12).

The journey described *Die Morgenlandfahrt* is one that is continuous and ongoing: it has no beginning and no end. Karen Crenshaw and Richard Lawson write that the novel, “since it is written in the form of a fairy tale, is exempt from the necessity of continuous narration, from many of the conventions of cause and effect, and from the consequences of time” (53–54). Yet, the journeyers are always “going home” as the narrator’s favorite Novalis quote states: “Wo gehen wir denn hin? Immer nach Hause” ‘Where are we going, then? Always home’ (MLF 15).

H. H. elaborates on this:

in Wirklichkeit, im höheren und eigentlichen Sinn, war dieser Zug zum Morgenlande nicht bloß der meine und nicht bloß dieser gegenwärtige, sondern es strömte dieser Zug der Gläubigen und sich Hingebenden nach dem Osten, nach der Heimat des Lichts, unaufhörlich und ewig, er war immerdar durch alle Jahrhunderte unterwegs, dem Licht und dem Wunder entgegen. (MLF 15)

[in reality, in its broadest sense, this expedition to the East was not only mine and now; this procession of believers and disciples had always and incessantly been moving towards the East, toward the Home of Light. Throughout the centuries it had been on the way,

towards light and wonder, and each member, each group, indeed our whole host and its great pilgrimage, was only a wave in the eternal stream of human beings, of the eternal strivings of the human spirit towards the East, towards Home. (JE 12–13)]

On one hand, ten pages later, H. H. corrects himself, writing that “unser Ziel war ja nicht nur das Morgenland, oder vielmehr: unser Morgenland war ja nicht nur ein Land und etwas Geographisches, sondern es war die Heimat und Jugend der Seele, es war das Überall und Nirgends, war das Einswerden aller Zeiten” ‘our goal was not only the East, or rather the East was not only a country and something geographical, but it was the home and youth of the soul, it was everywhere and nowhere, it was the union of all times’ (MLF 24, JE 27). “The East” is Hesse’s metaphor for enlightenment, one that most likely stems from Hesse’s extensive readings in Eastern philosophy and religion.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the East symbolizes for Hesse a refuge from an oft-recurring perversion that he saw ravage the images of his cultural heroes of the West: Novalis, Hölderlin, Goethe, and Nietzsche.<sup>7</sup> Kher writes that “in moments of frustration with the religious and cultural ethos of his time that ‘stifled the individual’s spontaneity’, Hesse turned to other cultures and modes of

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<sup>6</sup>Kher points out that Hesse’s maternal grandfather and his mother lived and worked in India as missionaries and that “[a]s a child, Hesse built his first images of the East from the enormous collection of ancient Hindu writings, icons, and objects contained in his grandfather’s cabinets. He was deeply impressed by the reality and the magic of whatever he beheld in those formative years” (41).

<sup>7</sup>See also the scene in *Der Steppenwolf* where Haller agonizes over a stylized portrait of Goethe, discussed on page 136 of this project.

thought ‘to find renewal, health and wholeness’” (42). The League of Journeymen to the East represents in its own way Hesse’s reverence of both East and West: as the group travels (mostly in southern Germany, as one can assume from his mentioning Swabia and Tübingen), it must stop and pay homage to all monuments and historical areas that have anything to do with the League. In sum, Hesse does not merely use Eastern symbolism for decoration, but in order to symbolically depict an interior way of finding refuge: a return journey to the Self. By presenting an uncertain picture of the objectives of the Journeymen to the East, Hesse creates a narrative that is detached from the reader’s own assumptions about the League, and allows him to evaluate it in terms of H. H., that is, through H. H.’s confusion.

Qualitatively, *Die Morgenlandfahrt* has both Modernist and traditional elements. While reading the book, the reader experiences the same kind of confusion and uncertainty about its bases as one would while reading Kafka.<sup>8</sup> The reader is at first thrown into the mind of H. H. without warning or context. Gradually, though, the reader gains enough knowledge of the surroundings to partially feel at home within Hesse’s framework, but never completely. By the final

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<sup>8</sup>Eugene Stelzig points out in his article about *Die Morgenlandfahrt* that the reason for the novel’s impenetrability is most likely due to Hesse’s trying to hide it from a poorly-trained reading public that would be likely to misunderstand the book’s message. He writes that “on another level the hide-and-seek tactics of this ambiguous narrative are not merely Hesse’s own overindulgence in a favorite idiosyncrasy, but also a considered choice which aligns it with the writings of many of his famous Modernist contemporaries in their desire to consciously render their works difficult and even inaccessible to a large and commercially-manipulated reading public” (487).

pages, the reader can begin to identify with the protagonist because he finally begins to understand the nature of the League and the Journeyers to the East, if only on a symbolic level and only after assembling snippets of information revealed in each chapter. Kher asserts that the idea of a journey is inextricably linked to the symbolism in *Die Morgenlandfahrt*. He writes that

Hesse had to learn by going where he had to go, as Theodore Roethke puts it. It is this attitude which helps him in his later years to integrate the East and West in the interior landscape of the Self. In the process of interiorization the external event is replaced by its symbolization, the topography becomes typology, reality is transformed into a metaphor, and one arrives at the realization that the external contact is no longer necessary. (44)

Seen from this angle, the narrative's inconsistencies and omissions (about the purpose of the League, its internal structure, Leo's importance, for example) become part of a symbolic journey for Hesse.

Throughout the novel H. H. has an uncertain relationship with the League. At the beginning of the narration, the reader understands H. H. to be a member of the League. Eventually, the group's servant and luggage-carrier, Leo, disappears. After this event, H. H. seems to drift away from the League as his fellow travelers fall into panic over lost personal items which have also mysteriously disappeared. Later on, after H. H. is clearly estranged from the League, Leo meets H. H., but does

not recognize him. Shortly thereafter, H. H. is brought to a Kafkaesque trial before the League's leaders. After agreeing to be tried by the high council, Leo, the former baggage carrier and servant appears as the "highest of the high" and sentences H. H. to mockery by his peers. Narrative uncertainty, such as that surrounding this nearly absurd trial as a symbolic part of Hesse's interior journey, as Kher points out, remains a characteristic of Modernist literature. That Hesse would use this uncertainty not merely as a literary feature in and of itself, but as one that suggests a process of growth towards a fulfilled self aids in his pushing back against the typical Modernist aesthetic. Hesse embraces techniques like these, but never wholly.

At the beginning of the novel, H. H. states that he is attempting to chronicle his travel experiences with the League. The story, though, quickly becomes less about H. H.'s travels than a book about his inability to write his chronicle. Stelzig writes that it is "in some sense a problematizing narrative about the feasibility of autobiographical narrative, and thus touches in a new key on Hesse's dilemma as a subjective writer" (489). The symbolism of walking colors this inquiry, for the narration is really less about the physical movement from place to place (i.e., walking or travel) than it is about the interior journey on which the members of the League embark. Whereas in *Der Steppenwolf*, walking through the hallway of doors in the Magic Theatre allows Haller to more accurately examine the depths of his own psychology and the myriad constituent parts of his soul, walking in *Die Morgenlandfahrt* barely represents the physical activity at all; the narrator seldom



mentions walking. Instead, walking becomes a metaphor for the pursuit of the varied goals of the individual League members and their group efforts at supporting those individual goals. Hesse represents the group's spiritual support of its members symbolically through the idea of a pilgrimage. H. H. explains that "es strömte dieser Zug der Gläubigen und sich Hingebenden nach dem Osten, nach der Heimat des Lichts . . ." 'this procession of believers and disciples had always and incessantly been moving towards the East, towards the Home of Light' (MLF 15; JE 12-13). Later on, he describes the East as the "Heimat und Jugend der Seele, es war das Überall und Nirgends, war das Einswerden aller Zeiten" 'home and youth of the soul, it was everywhere and nowhere, it was the union of all times' (MLF 24; JE 27). If, then, the group's goal is in all times and places, a physical journey in search of it would be of little benefit. Instead, the Journeyers engage in an interior, spiritual Journey.

H. H. complains that his memories are so varied and that he cannot remember which memory goes with which constellation of his comrades, or even if he was alone for a particular memory:

Was mir die Erzählung besonders erschwert das ist die große  
Verschiedenheit meiner einzelnen Erinnerungsbilder. Ich sagte ja  
schon, daß wir bald nur als kleine Gruppe marschierten, bald eine  
Schar oder gar ein Heer bildeten, zuweilen blieb ich aber auch nur mit  
einem einzigen Kameraden, oder auch ganz allein, in irgendeiner

Gegend zurück, ohne Zelte, ohne Führer, ohne Sprecher. Schwierig wird das Erzählen ferner dadurch, daß wir ja nicht nur durch Räume wanderten, sondern ganz ebenso durch Zeiten. (MLF 23)

[What makes my account particularly difficult is the great disparity in my individual recollections. I have already said that sometimes we marched along only as a small group; sometimes we formed a troop or even an army, but sometimes I remained in a district with only a few friends, or even quite alone, without tents, without leaders and without a Speaker. My tale becomes even more difficult because we not only wandered through Space, but also through Time. (JE 26)]

That H. H. has such trouble remembering whether he was alone or in a group in a way helps Hesse chip away at those benefits an individual has when he or she is part of a group. Though one might join a group in hopes of connecting over a common experience, one is ultimately left only with one's own memories. Furthermore, H. H. experiences difficulty in telling his story because it seems that reality itself is disappearing. H. H.'s friend Lukas, who has written a book about his experiences in the war, comments that the past is, out of necessity, not longer reachable despite the quality of his memories.

Die Wirklichkeit, welche ich samt meinen Kameraden einst erlebt habe, ist nicht mehr vorhanden, und obwohl die Erinnerungen daran das Wertvollste und Lebendigste sind, was ich besitze, scheinen sie

doch so fern, sind so sehr aus einem Stoff, als wären sie auf anderen  
Sternen in anderen Jahrtausenden geschehen, oder als wären sie  
Fieberträume gewesen. (MLF 39)

[The reality that I once experienced, together with my comrades,  
exists no longer, and although its memories are the most precious and  
vivid ones that I possess, they seem so far away, they are composed of  
such a different kind of fabric, that it seems as if they originated on  
other stars in other millennia, or as if they were hallucinations. (JE  
55–56)]

Subsequently, he questions whether reality can even be recorded at all; even the  
best account cannot make the reader understand what it was like to be part of the  
described experience. He tells H. H., “ich glaube nicht daran, daß zehn solche  
Bücher, jedes zehnmal besser und eindringlicher als das meine, dem  
wohlmeinendsten Leser irgendeine Vorstellung vom Kriege geben können, wenn der  
Leser den Krieg nicht selber erlebt hat” ‘I do not think that ten books like it, each  
one ten times better and more vivid than mine, could convey any real picture of  
the war to the most serious reader, if he had not himself experienced the war’ (MLF  
39–40; JE 56–57).

The breakdown of H. H.’s ability to narrate his own story is only one of the  
glitches in *Die Morgenlandfahrt*’s Utopia. As mentioned before, the small group  
breaks apart at times and causes H. H., as Kher points out, to suffer “from the

tensions and polarities of the Journey” (47). Leo is, according to Kher, much like “Demian, Siddhartha, Pablo-Mozart, and Joseph Knecht,” that is, “the symbol of the Self which H. H. has yet to *find within himself*” (47, his emphasis). Leo’s disappearance, then, represents a struggle with one of those tensions or polarities of the Journey. Instances of wrangling with such tensions are not at all new to Hesse’s mode of operation—in fact, they appear in every novel discussed in this project. In *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, H. H. resolves most of his tensions by learning to see life as a game. Leo explains to H. H. that “[g]erade das ist es ja, das Leben, wenn es schön und glücklich ist: ein Spiel! Natürlich kann man auch alles mögliche andere aus ihm machen, eine Pflicht oder einen Krieg oder ein Gefängnis, aber es wird dadurch nicht hübscher” “[t]hat is just what life is when it is beautiful and happy—a game. Naturally, one can also do all kinds of other things with it, make a duty of it, or a battleground, or a prison, but that does not make it any prettier’ (MLF 49; JE 77). After having been laughed at in payment for his faults, H. H. is welcomed back into the League, whereupon Leo (who is now mysteriously President!) hands him his lost ring. H. H.’s journey may now recommence. The thesis—antithesis—synthesis structure of this novel allows Hesse to deal with Kher’s “tensions and polarities” while at the same time making the reader symbolically privy to how the resolution of this tension plays out. Hesse’s mode of teaching by example at first harmonizes well with Russell Berman’s definition of literary Modernism. He writes that “modernism emancipates the individual from the desiccation of a mechanized

rationality and reinvigorates the charismatic community. . . . Yet modernism often defines this mechanism of transition precisely within itself: it describes itself as the agent of the renewal within its own texts in an inscribed aesthetics” (195). Wilde, in his article about the alternative communities that Hesse creates in *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel*, asserts that Hesse allows such communities to stand for the highest ideals. He writes that “[i]t seeks to encompass the ideals of an aesthetic excellence, dedication, and integrity. The external goals, the objects of the quest, are secondary to the development of self-realisation gained in the process of seeking to understand” (90). Over the course of *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, H. H. leaves and returns to the group, but upon returning, realizes that his reintegration is possible insofar as he has not lost sight of the group’s requirements, but of his own principles, by assuming that he can write a complete account of his journey understandable by any reader. Instead, H. H. must work towards accepting his life more as a game than as a series of impossible tasks. Only by embracing humor can H. H. approach wholeness and serenity, as Kher points out: “[Hesse’s] art . . . highlights the process which underlines the struggle towards the goal; it dramatizes the tension and anxiety of Hesse’s fragmented heroes before they finally envision the everlasting possibility of becoming whole and serene” (45). Life should be, according to Leo, “beautiful and happy—a game” (JE 47). In his final novel, *Das Glasperlenspiel*, Hesse takes the notion of life as a game to the extreme by depicting a society that takes its own game too seriously—and to the detriment

of its future possibilities for survival.

### *Das Glasperlenspiel*

*Das Glasperlenspiel* is Hesse's longest and final novel, set in the twenty-fifth century. Most of it takes place in the pedagogical province of Kastalien,<sup>9</sup> which has been created as a holy land of sorts where intellectuals are allowed to practice pure scholarship without having to worry about money, food, or shelter. Once its inhabitants have progressed through the hierarchy of elite schools and have joined the Order of Glass Bead Game Players, they are free to pursue any kind of intellectual activity they desire, no matter how impractical.

A principal part of life in the province consists of playing the Glass Bead Game.<sup>10</sup> In this activity there seem to be no winners or losers. It consists of meditation and other mental exercises in which information from different fields of knowledge is converted into the music-like language of the Game. Once the information is translated into these universal "hieroglyphs," it can be manipulated in much the same way a musical composer modifies a melody: through transposition,

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<sup>9</sup>Although translators of the novel in question choose the anglicized "Castalia," I will use instead the German "Kastalien," which allows Hesse to make the province grammatically neutral, which has implications for interpreting the sexual symbolism of the work in question. For further explanation, see Lewis Tusken pp. 632–33.

<sup>10</sup>The Game, according to Hesse, is "nicht leicht anschaulich zu beschreiben, da so kompliziert und außerdem noch gar nicht erfunden" 'not easy to describe clearly, because so complicated and besides not even invented yet' (Michels *Materialien* 314; Bishop 218).

inversion, diminution, and augmentation.<sup>11</sup> Hesse purposely makes the structure and rules of the Game abstract: the idea is that intellect has changed radically since the twentieth century and has probably eliminated from itself a need for the players to rely on concepts such as keeping score or winning. Paul Bishop writes of the Game that “to be fully Utopian, [it] must be unimaginable to us, readers in a pre-Utopian state, and so it turns out to be” (218).

The protagonist, Josef Knecht, seems destined for the intellectual life of Kastalien from his birth. He moves through the system of elite schools after receiving a jump-start from the “old music master” who visits him while he is still in grammar school. Along his path to becoming *magister ludi* (master of the Game), Knecht encounters three persons who call in to question the supremacy of Kastalian life. The first, Elder Brother, from whom Knecht learns Chinese, has decided to leave the province in order to live a life of solitary monasticism. The second, Plinio Designori, was one of Knecht’s fellow students. Designori had the privilege of

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<sup>11</sup>Hesse describes the Game in a letter to Theo Baeschlin at the end of 1943: “Wie man aus Notenzeichen ein Musikstück, aus mathematischen Zeichen eine algebraische oder astronomische Formel ablesen kann, so haben die Glasperlenspieler sich in Jahrhunderten eine Zeichensprache aufgebaut, welche es ermöglicht, Gedanken, Formeln, Musik, Dichtung, etc. etc. aller Zeiten in einer Art Notensprache wiederzugeben. Das Neue dabei ist lediglich, daß dieses Spiel für alle Disziplinen eine Art Generalnenner besitzt, also eine Anzahl von Koordinatenreihen zusammenfaßt und zu Einem macht” ‘Just as one can read a musical composition from the printed notation or read an algebraic or astronomical formula from mathematical symbols, the Glass Bead Game players have built a symbolic language over the centuries which makes possible the transmission of thoughts, formulas, music, and poetry etc. etc. The new thing here is merely that this game provides a common denominator for all disciplines and thus centralizes a number of types of coordinates and makes them one’ (Clauss 134).

receiving a Kastalian education, though his family was from outside Kastalien.

Once their secondary schooling is finished, Designori decides to return to the outside world, where he is allowed to pursue education leading to a vocation. The caveat is that this outside education discourages free thinking and prepares the recipient for that vocation only. Many years pass before Knecht and Designori meet again:

Designori visits Kastalien for a vacation refresher course in the Glass Bead Game.

The third person who calls Knecht's career path into question is Father Jakobus, the leader of a Benedictine monastery.

Though the majority of the narration is the narrator-historian's attempt at a purely objective account of Knecht's career, eventually that narrator becomes privy to Knecht's thoughts, which contain doubts about the future of Kastalien and the Glass Bead Game. Knecht continues to serve Kastalien as his name would imply—"Knecht" translates to "servant" in German—but eventually decides to resign from his duties as *magister ludi* and to leave the Order of Glass Bead Game players. His friend Designori provides an outlet for Knecht's desire to have a change of pace and a new type of work. Knecht is to become the private teacher of Designori's son, Tito. At the very end of Knecht's story, the morning his work is to begin, Tito playfully challenges him to a swimming race. Knecht jumps off a cliff into the water after Tito and dies, but not before having realized part of what he had been missing all those years administering a Game based on abstract knowledge. Working with Tito brings Knecht great joy and forces him to think back



to his own youth and the ideals he created for himself there, which ultimately reinforces his decision to leave Kastalien.

Instead of combining both Modernist and traditional literary techniques as he does in earlier works, Hesse chooses to use mostly Modern literary techniques together with Hegel's philosophy of history when he constructs *Das Glasperlenspiel*. The novel is narrated and edited by a Kastalian scholar whose lifetime begins after that of Josef Knecht. In the first paragraphs, he writes that the most important ideal of life within Kastalien is anonymity. On the other hand, this anonymity must necessarily be breached in order for him to chronicle the life of Knecht. On the other hand, he is allowed to write the book and to sketch his personality because he is doing it not to encourage any kind of cult or personality, but out of service to Truth and Science.<sup>12</sup> The narrator then precedes to present what the reader assumes to be an objective history of the Glass Bead Game and of the childhood of Josef Knecht—a history in which everything functions according to plan. The reader gradually finds out, however, that Knecht has been growing weary and ever less faithful to the Glass Bead Game, over which he presides. The final section of the book consists of Knecht's own writings, "Josef Knechts Hinterlassene Schriften" 'Josef Knecht's Posthumous Writings' (GPS 475). The documentary structure that Hesse uses for *Das Glasperlenspiel* is reminiscent of *Der Steppenwolf*: though the

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<sup>12</sup>The German reads, "so taten wir es nicht aus Personenkult und aus Ungehorsam gegen die Sitten, . . . sondern im Gegenteil nur im Sinne eines Dienstes an der Wahrheit und Wissenschaft" (GPS 11).

present editor might make more of an informed attempt at objectivity, the structure of texts by different authors collected into the same volume remains similar: an “objective” history of the province is first laid out, then a history of Knecht’s life, then the texts which Knecht himself has written. Knecht’s own texts consist of poems and short “Lives” that he wrote during the course of his schooling. Each year, pupils were instructed to write resumes of sorts; Knecht, to the disappointment of his teachers, wrote fictional accounts of himself set in faraway lands. It is only after reading the “historical” sections of the novel that the reader is given a glimpse into Knecht’s personality and creativity. Up until then, what little of Knecht’s personality the reader receives is constructed as contrary to the structure of Kastalien (i.e. Knecht’s friendship with an outsider, his thought-out decision to leave the Order). In this way, Hesse first constructs a system and leads the reader to believe that it is indestructible, but then lets the reader destroy that system by allowing him to process those documents that run contrary to it.

The motif of walking contributes to the deconstruction of the Kastalian system. Walking signifies Knecht’s search for the types of knowledge that he cannot gain from the archives of the pedagogical province. The first and most prominent example is when Knecht travels a great distance by foot to meet Elder Brother. From him, Knecht learns Chinese and about the *Book of Changes*. For the purposes of this novel as a whole, this excursion foreshadows Knecht’s eventual need to leave his post of magister ludi in order to pursue a more earthly life away from the refined

theoretical knowledge which appears to be only useful in playing the game. Other citizens of Kastalien seem unwilling or not eager about leaving the province for any reason; they have been taught that all the information they need for a lifetime of scholarly production is contained in the province's archives. Knecht slowly grows weary of this cloistered culture of abstract knowledge and sets out on another, less physically-determined journey when he agrees to tutor Plinio Designori's son, Tito.

Hesse combines this technique of construction and destruction with a form of self-referentiality. The Game is, according to Kurt Fickert, "a unifying factor in the novel, the focal point in the life of its protagonist, and the touchstone by which he judges his associates. As a symbol of such monumental import, the game has unfortunately, but perhaps necessarily, rather vague contours" (219). The novel, though first and foremost a "history" of Knecht, Kastalien, and the Game is, in its own way, cast as if Hesse were playing his own Glass Bead Game with the cultural and autobiographical references with which he is familiar. He does this by combining and recombining them in ways that hint at and construct a believable alternative reality.

Hesse refers over the course of the novel to his other fictional works and their characters, to cultural figures from the past, and to his own friends and colleagues. The novel is dedicated to the *Journeyers to the East*. Knecht's name is a reference to Hesse that "depicts the author as servant and conveys Hesse's belief that the artist has a mission"—to live his life and "recreate it in service to mankind" (Fickert

221). Knecht's first name, Josef, refers to Thomas Mann, with whom Hesse "felt he had a special affinity" and who "was publishing his series of Joseph novels, concerning the outsider-intellectual who becomes a 'provider,' the protector of his people. Bastian Pierrot, Fickert points out, refers both to the clockworks factory in which Hesse once worked and to Johann Sebastian Bach (221). The old music master is a "literary portrait of Goethe, drawn by Hesse in blind devotion" (222). Finally, the capsule history of the Game refers to the general state of culture in the twentieth century. Fickert reminds us that the Game itself came into being "in a bourgeois age as an activity that provided a refuge for those overwhelmed by the sham culture of a money-oriented society" (220). Paul Bishop points out that in Knecht's "letter to the Order, Knecht envisages the possibility that, once again, the generals will dominate parliament, a belligerent ideology will arise, and education and scholarship will be made to serve the ends of war" (217). These both refer to the aspects of culture which ultimately persuaded Hesse to leave it in favor of the isolation of his country home in Montagnola. While the early Kastalians played the Game as a refuge from hostile society, the reader who plays the Game while reading the novel and trying to tease out all of Hesse's references realizes that it is, in fact, only a game that this kind of referentiality depicts and thus *not* real life. Once Knecht sheds his deep association with the Game, he allows himself to cross not only the physical border of Kastalien into the world where theoretical knowledge of the Game becomes virtually useless, but also allows himself to experience the Real

with all its inherent joys as well as pitfalls. Whereas Hesse's descriptions of the Game, of those who play it, and of where and when the Games take place are vague and unfulfilling to read, the narration seems to come to life once Knecht decides to leave Kastalien.

The reader understands by this sudden change in perception that Knecht is doing the right thing by leaving the theoretical world in favor of the real world. Berman writes that “[m]odernism rebels against the culture industry, not with better or higher prose but with multifarious strategies of destroying the iron cage. Its central concern is the emancipation of the reader from the system of deception perpetuated by established culture” (181). It seems to me that the iron cage out of which Knecht breaks is that which the ideology of Kastalien has built and reinforced since its inception, a mirror of Weber's conception of the cage as a loss of meaning and freedom. If the strict notion of perfection and the crushing of the individual under pressure of the collective in the name of Kastalien's “highest ideal” of anonymity and theoretical knowledge of the Game does not symbolically qualify as an iron cage, it should at least qualify as an example of Berman's notion of a “system of deception perpetrated by established culture.”

John Krapp suggests, contrary to many Hesse scholars, that Hesse's lifelong fascination with all things Eastern is not the only factor in determining the themes he chooses to incorporate into his fiction.<sup>13</sup> Instead, he posits, Hesse's writings

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<sup>13</sup>This runs contrary to many previous interpretations of Hesse's literary fascination with the East. See Kher, for example.

(especially *Das Glasperlenspiel*) make use of Hegelian ideas. He asserts that this perspective will help better understand Hesse's interest and knowledge of Romanticism as well as provide a new theoretical entry for new interpretations of Hesse's work.

Hesse proposes a three-stage sequence of humanization: innocence, a state of knowledge and demand for culture and ideals, and finally disillusionment. Krapp asserts that "[c]onsciousness at the second stage of humanization must strive to re-member its identity with the undifferentiated unity of the Spiritual world, and to realize that the perfected self-realization is tantamount to Absolute self-consciousness" (347). Striving for individuation is nothing new, at least in the usual development of Hesse's protagonists, and certainly not new in the case of Josef Knecht.<sup>14</sup> Krapp reminds us that this stage is rife with stumbling blocks. Hegel codifies this as an individual consciousness struggling to perceive "itself as clear and distinct from the objective world, against which it battles constantly for definition" but that as one which "is terrified of separation from this world that is the sole source of its self-realization" (347). "Consciousness," Krapp continues, "is thus dependent on a world that it wants to renounce. *It must actively involve itself in the world in order to free itself from it*" (347, his emphasis). If we compare the plot of *Das Glasperlenspiel* to this scheme, Knecht's experience seems to make

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<sup>14</sup>For more detail on the stages of humanization in *Die Morgenlandfahrt*, see Eugene Stelzig, "*Die Morgenlandfahrt*: Metaphoric Autobiography and Prolegomenon to *Das Glasperlenspiel*."

perfect sense; Knecht is at first undifferentiated due to the absence of his parents (at least in the narration) and through his generic elementary education. The process of differentiation begins when he encounters the old music master, who jump-starts Knecht's career by placing him in an elite school. From this point on, Knecht studies and perfects the ways of Kastalien, ascending his way to the office of *magister ludi*. Once he reaches this pinnacle, he begins to define himself in opposition to the supposedly time-honored virtues of Kastalien, one of which is the institutionalized ignorance of the province's historical and political origins. The period that the character has to achieve this development is limited, however. Knecht seems to complete his transformation with just enough time left to begin his final task of becoming Tito's teacher. Krapp reminds us that time is of the essence during the process of individuation. On the other hand, time ceases to be "[w]hen consciousness finally realizes itself to be identical to the Absolute Spirit that contains and creates all things" (348). Knecht's arrival at a state of peace with himself in choosing to leave Kastalien could be seen as the point at which he realizes himself to be one with the Absolute Spirit. Hesse chooses to embellish and augment what Hegel would insist is a single moment: the end of time. In terms of the novel, this moment is the morning during which Tito's education with Knecht is to begin.

After agreeing to become Tito's tutor, Knecht makes his way to Designori's household only to find that Tito has already ascended by foot the mountain, on top of which his tutoring is to take place. Instead of following the boy by foot, Knecht

elects to ride in a carriage with the housekeeper. By not taking the more grounded, slower form of transportation to the mountain peak, Knecht shows that he is perhaps too eager to begin this new type of work. Because of this quick mode of transportation, his body is unable to adjust to the altitude and he becomes sick and must lay down once he reaches his goal. The quick journey also symbolizes Knecht's flight from the oppression of Kastalien—oppression which appears in Hesse's writing as a veiled reference to the author's own troubled marriages. Having been left with a weak body from the journey, the swimming race in which Knecht engages the next morning proves to be too great a shock and results in Knecht's death. Before this final incident, though, Tito and Knecht realize that they have made it to the correct place and time. Consistent with Hesse's personal preferences, the two bond by speaking about and sharing knowledge of nature. Hesse additionally underscores this ideal tableau by alluding to Thomas Mann's "Tod in Venedig" ('Death in Venice'). Knecht encounters Tito on an excursion from the regimented life that has worn him down, repressed his artistic spirit much in the same way that Aschenbach encounters Tadzio while vacationing from the dreary north in Venice. The main difference between the two stories is that Knecht goes into the situation knowing instead of wondering about Tito's background. Knecht learns more than he thought possible from observing the way Tito acts and interacts with nature. Tito, Knecht observes, is in many ways the opposite of his father: he enjoys and appreciates the "noble" nature of life. Knecht unfortunately recognizes these qualities in himself



upon observing the boy. Though the two men have different backgrounds, they share the common denominator of Designori as well as both being at odds with the bourgeois values that Designori represents—this allows them to forge a spiritual connection. Krapp reminds the reader that Hesse was enamored with the intersection of world and spirit. He writes “[h]ow an individual could be in the world but not of it was a problem that never lost its fascination for Hesse; Spirit, seeking to attain to self-realization and perfection, has to stride willingly and fully through the physical world before its transcendent goal can be reached” (348). I count Knecht’s story as yet another iteration of Hesse expressing an example of a person who reaches individuality or individuation.

What makes *Das Glasperlenspiel* even more interesting in Hegelian terms, though, is that Hesse seems to situate Knecht’s story within another frame of individuation: a thesis-antithesis-synthesis that happens in Kastalien because of Knecht the individual. Paul Bishop summarizes the viewpoints of Theodore Ziolkowski and Otto Bolnow, which will assist us in understanding the novel’s plot in terms of the Hegelian dialectic. The former asserts that “the Glass Bead Game, the Order, and Kastalien are valued positively, negatively, and finally positively again” (Bishop 217). The latter situates the entirety of Kastalien into merely one page: “‘der Dichter selbst [hat] die Welt Kastaliens ja nur als eine Seite dargestellt, die im Verlauf der Darstellung relativiert wird’” ‘the poet himself represented the world of Kastalien only as a page that is relativized in the course of the

presentation' (Bishop 217). Bishop takes these viewpoints and summarizes them understandably in a chart:

x	FUTURE 3 [present of novel]	Narrator prepares account of Josef Knecht's life: time of narration	Kastalien #3 (valued positively)
	FUTURE 2	Josef Knecht's later life as Ludi magister	Kastalien #2 (valued negatively)
	FUTURE 1	Josef Knecht's childhood	Kastalien #1 (valued positively)
xx	PAST 1 [our age]	Age of the Feuilleton	
	PAST 2	History of culture and humankind	

x = location of the reader in narrative time  
 xx = actual location of the reader in historical time

Kastalien, following the course of time, is first valued positively, then negatively, then positively again. I would modify this chart by noting that we could also understand Kastalien #3 as valued positively due to Knecht's struggle with individuation. By embracing his individuality at the end of the novel and thereby questioning the age-old, self-insistent supremacy of Kastalien, he is able to serve Kastalien by example. Krapp reminds us that

[t]he demands attending individuation are inexorable and severe, and service is experienced as a painful existential burden producing confusion and anxiety. When all conflict is fully eradicated, and ego no longer requires attention, service is re-directed towards the community. The characters who are successful in attaining to

self-realization are able to enjoy their freedom in the act of service to others. This latter expression of service is not properly Hegelian. It is Hesse's figural indication that the third stage of humanization has been reached; it verifies diegetically the culmination of Hegelian metaphysics. (353)

Hesse thus embraces, but also modifies Hegel's concept of individuation.

I have enumerated some ways in which these two novels call into question Hesse's ambiguous embrace of Modernist literary themes and devices. I would now like to bring the discussion back to the first level I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, namely, that *Die Morgenlandfahrt* and *Das Glasperlenspiel*, seen together, question Hesse's acceptance of the role of Modernist ideas for use in his work. As I have mentioned before, the two novels present the individual-communal relationship in ways that are, in many cases, diametrically opposed. Where Knecht is certain of and happy in his place in Kastalian society for the great majority of the narrative, H. H. is confused and insecure about his place in the collective. Knecht learns the truth of his individuality only three days before his life ends, while H. H. seemingly has many more years to exercise his individuality within the collective. Both cases illustrate, despite their radical differences, that the individual, in order to reach an optimal state of being, must clearly differentiate himself from the collectives that eat away at his vitality. Hesse was always a pessimist when examining the collectives which he abstained from joining. As long as collectives

help individuals in some ways while working against them in others, the individual must continue to resist their call in favor of more self-directed paths.

## Concluding Remarks

I have attempted in the previous chapters to outline some ways in which Hesse's novels embrace the characteristics of Modernist writing ambiguously, much as Hesse himself embraced the characteristics of modern culture and society with ambiguity. It is important to remember that the ambiguous embraces I suggest are not outright rejections, especially if seen holistically. Harry Haller begins *Der Steppenwolf* having almost completely rejected contemporary art, life, and even society altogether: "Denn dies haßte ich, verabscheute und verfluchte ich von allem doch am innigsten: diese Zufriedenheit, diese Gesundheit, Behaglichkeit, diesen gepflegten Optimismus des Bürgers, diese fette gedeihliche Zucht des Mittelmäßigen, Normalen, Durchschnittlichen" 'For I hated, detested, and cursed above all this peacefulness, this health, comfort, this manicured optimism of the bourgeois, this rich, thriving cultivation of the mediocre, the normal, the average' (33). His experiences throughout the novel reveal to him that living completely on the margin of society is not only unpleasant, but lonely.<sup>15</sup> Hesse, as in almost all his novels, brings to the table the ability to create in the protagonist an appetite for balance

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. Thomas Mann's "Tonio Kröger."

that is often never achieved or achieved fleetingly: an evening of dancing to balance out Haller's secluded studies of Novalis and Goethe or Josef Knecht's resignation as the master of a completely theoretical game of the mind for real-life interaction with a student who loves nature. Eventually, Hesse's protagonists find some semblance of inner peace, but that period of rest is usually fleeting. Haller, after the transcendent experience of the Magic Theater, proclaims at the end of *Der Steppenwolf* that both Pablo and Mozart (representatives of Jazz and classical musics, respectively) are waiting for him, perhaps symbolically in his future state of synthesis. Though Joseph Knecht dies, he does so after coming to a life that is for him, even if only three days long, more fulfilling than thirty years at the top of the Order's hierarchy.

Bathrick and Huyssen, in the introduction to *Modernity and the Text*, proclaim

we do not suggest a return to some unproblematic notion of experience as somehow unique, immediate, and spontaneous that would then be adequately reflected or expressed in the artwork. Neither do we advocate a notion of experience that would draw its legitimacy from the accumulated knowledge of past generations, from tradition as codified by the past. If anything, modernity has vaporized this notion of experience as tradition, thereby opening up new relationships to both tradition and experience. The longing for the immediacy of experience, however, may represent the impossible desire of the modern subject to find a substitute for the loss of tradition. (6)

In the case of Hesse, tradition never seems to totally disappear. There is still a longing for experience, though, which seems only to be remediated through this partial abandonment of tradition. If one is to receive the needed experience, one must necessarily make room for the new, the unfamiliar, and the uncomfortable. If one is to understand and gauge properly this new experience, one needs tradition/past to remain in play not only as a baseline but as a counterweight to the draw of embracing *only* the new. Ralph Freedman, in his biography of Hesse, asserts that it was Hesse's goal to expose modern society and its damaging technology: "[t]o expose modern society, its technology that split men from their roots, was to become the underlying motif of his life and work" (35). I agree with Freedman, but inasmuch as Hesse's exposé of contemporary society is based on reform and instead of revolution.

One example of Hesse's use of a traditional motif which illustrates the changes that arise in literature as a result of modernization is walking. As stated in the introduction, walking is at the beginning of Hesse's career a concrete, austere marker of protagonists' freedom from the restrictions of society. As Hesse's writing progresses, walking becomes increasingly more metaphorical. In *Der Steppenwolf*, for example, the physical act of walking allows Haller to explore the inner workings of his mind by bringing him to various doors in the Magic Theater. By Hesse's final novels, though, walking has become a pilgrimage by means of which the protagonists seek and find knowledge that is unavailable by spiritual stasis. Josef

Knecht flees from the completely rarefied and theoretical world of the Glass Bead Game in order to find his true calling and happiness as a tutor. More examples of Hesse's hidden process of exposing "modern society" as Freedman calls it, require further research in order to be uncovered.

Much as there exists a "Hesse before Hesse" which I mentioned in the introduction, there is also a "Hesse *after* Hesse" represented by his extraordinary reception in the 1970s by American youth. The story of Hesse's reception after his death is outside the scope of this dissertation, but which I hope will continue to be the subject of new study. It branches into both German and American popular music as well as to two English-language films. Hesse's continued popularity is a testament to his applicability to all kinds of identity crises by virtue of his respect for the human. Ingo Cornils writes in the latest scholarly volume about Hesse in 2009 that

this [humanism] is what makes Hermann Hesse relevant for the twenty-first century. His holistic view of a human being as an evolving, struggling, ever-changing individual chimes with modern experience. He confronts us with uncomfortable truths about human nature but encourages us to face them to discover what lies beneath. . . . All these experiences are explored from the perspective of the individual self, in Hesse's eyes the repository of the divine and the only institution we are accountable to. (13)



With the increasing ubiquity of access to the Internet, the shortening of and the stripping of ornament from lines of communication such as text messages, and the prevalence of “reality” television in place of the viewer’s actual experience of reality, we citizens of the twenty-first century, however well-balanced, may effect a new Hesse wave in our own searches for the individual and the divine.

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